Preface
Over 325 Natick citizens gathered at Wilson Middle School Saturday and Sunday, October 28-29, to share their ideas about what they value about living in Natick, and their vision for Natick’s future.

The participants each invested two hours in Natick’s future by attending one of six workshops, four on Saturday and two on Sunday. At each workshop, the participants joined small groups of 10-18 (labeled by colors). After introductions, they further divided into smaller groups to consider first the Values questions:

• What would you like to preserve here in Natick?
• What are the community’s values that are so important to you in Natick that you would not want to lose?
• What do you value the most about living in Natick?

Participants then broke into smaller groups again to brainstorm their vision of Natick’s future:

• If you had one wish for the future of Natick, what would it be?
• Twenty years from now, what will an ideal Natick look like to you?
• What will Natick look like when your children choose a place to live?

Near the end of the session, all concurrent workshop participants came together to share their values and visions, to develop Common Themes among all the workshops.

Professional facilitators led each small group and took notes on easel pads. This document rearranges those notes to group the values information and the vision information together, while eliminating duplication. Numbers in parentheses show how many small groups reported the item.

The next step in the process is to share this information and work with the public and the five boards and committees that sponsor Natick 360 to write values statements and vision statements that will guide the remainder of the Natick 360 strategic plan. The five sponsors are: Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Finance Committee, Planning Committee and School Committee.
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Workshop Summaries: Common Themes

Affordability
- Affordability (3)
  - Public employees able to live here
  - Diversify housing stock
  - Redevelop existing properties…keep open spaces
- Housing
  - Affordable, but not overwhelming

Community and Regional Planning
- Community of communities
  - Share resources
- Comprehensive master plan
  - Overall plan
  - Understand funding
  - Understand process

Community/Senior/Teen/Recreation Center
- Recreation center, senior center, community center
- Community center and senior center: multigenerational with swim pool
- Community Center
  - Teens, young adults, seniors (2)
  - Pool, gym
  - Serve everyone – all day/night

Development and Growth
- Control and plan for growth and development (2)
- Balance
  - Better walking & fewer cars
  - Less traffic
  - Develop existing features
  - Pro-active planning
  - Balance 40B/Open space
- Manage growth
  - Density
  - Diverse options
  - Lifespan use
  - Friendly 40B

Diversity
- Elders, young children
- Intergenerational cooperation and connectedness
- Diversity in housing and socio economics (4)
- Related to development options
**Downtown, Common, History**

- Enhance downtown strong, vibrant, artistic
- Preserve historic nature
- Attractiveness of town
- Downtown area
  - Ease neighborhood burden
  - Walking only
- Downtown
  - Common
  - Destination, not drive-thru
  - Development downtown
  - Fully utilizing what’s there
  - Impact of Mall
  - Later evenings
  - Local businesses
  - More part of livability
  - Parking (2)
  - Preserve character, feel; this attracts people
  - Restaurants, Pub (2)
  - TCAN!
  - Walk
- Vibrant downtown (2): live/work, arts, amenities…groceries, housing, transportation hub, rail and bike trails

**Education & Schools**

- Schools…top ranked…good private schools…strengthen
- Schools…first class
  - Improving
  - Neighborhood pride
- Education: be top ten and invest in the high school
- Schools
  - Change from good to great
  - Keep staff; less turnover
  - Better instruction: Languages; Technology; METCO
  - Programs
  - New High School
- Excellent Schools
  - Improve system
  - Retain teachers and recruit
  - New High School
  - Become first-rate
  - MCAST
  - Curriculum: Art; Vocational
- Schools: educational standards and facilities, infrastructure, quality of education, superior teachers, costs dollars
- High school and pool
Open Space & Environment
- Preserve natural amenities and good environment
- Open space (2)
  - Natural Resources…green space
    - 1/3 green
    - Strong recreation activities
    - wildlife corridor…nature preserves
- Open space good
  - Connect green spaces
  - Trails, bikes
  - Control space/zoning
  - More trees
- Open spaces/green spaces
  - Need policies and guidelines
  - Open space…green space…sidewalks
- Open space
  - Assets
  - Development pressures

Public Services & Government
- Accessible government: maintain what we have got…fewer studies, more action
- Level of services for all…police, fire, professional, schools, seniors
- Public Services…good
  - Hospital and emergency services
  - Self sufficiency in renewable resources

Recreation
- Recreation Opportunities
  - Seniors programs
  - After School
  - Town Government
  - Recreation
Town Culture

- Welcoming
- Friendliness and cooperativeness
- Sense of community (2)
  - Accessible government
  - Politics …involvement
  - Arts
  - Communications
  - Community center
  - Diversity
  - Events
  - Identity: Arts? Other?
  - Town center
- Connections
- Whole community
- Preserve the Character
  - Small town flavor (3)
  - How people treat each other
- Pride in Town
  - Be part of Natick
  - Sense of connectedness within Town
  - Vital energized engaged community

Transportation, Traffic & Roads

- Shift from car to public transportation to reduce traffic
- Traffic…pedestrian/bike friendly
- Transportation: bike walk in and out, trails (3)
- Eliminate traffic issues
- Traffic remediation
  - New condos
  - Rte. 27 and Rte. 135:
    - Link neighborhoods
    - Cross Rte. 9
  - Neighborhood bus
  - Regional solutions
- Route 27…do not want 4 lanes
Values: Common Themes

Affordability & Housing

- Affordability (7) is a value but already in jeopardy (3)
- Affordable housing, resources for people to not only get the housing, but also to maintain a living here and the ability to participate in all the activities Natick has to offer.
  - By State 40B definition, low
  - By comparing to surrounding communities, we're more affordable
- Affordability – want to preserve and increase/enhance. More affordable than local communities, but diverse economically; we need to maintain this.
- Affordability – well, houses used to be; Apts., sure. Condos
- Town service employees can’t live here…teachers, police, fire, etc.
- Affordability
  - Town zone land use for more housing opportunities
  - Elder living…assisted living not available
  - Redevelop places to preserve open space
  - Accessibility for disabled
- Expand housing options; strength is economic diversity (3)
  - Aging population – stay in home
  - Attractive for young families
- People settle here and people need to be able to afford to live in Natick in the future.
- Affordable / dense areas for affordability (2)
- Cost of living not as expensive as adjoining towns…Like to preserve affordability (don’t want Natick to be another Wellesley) (4)
- Housing balanced, affordable
  - Proximity to train
  - Create more affordable housing; don’t isolate it…disperse it
- We want to preserve an affordable range of housing choices. Not just one bedroom apartments by rail. Reflect diversity of population.
- Not just mansions, $1 mill plus condos & ranch homes
  - Density Concerns
  - Balance with infrastructure: roads, schools
  - Consequences of too much
  - Educate people about affordable housing
  - Loss of open space
- Rezoning by outside developers
  - Loss of local control, autonomy
  - Developers have too much control
  - Do the right thing
  - Teachers, firefighters can’t live here
- Rental vs. home-owning – more invested in Town
- More density leads to renting or short-term buying; still expensive
Arts & Culture, Library

- A very strong & burgeoning Arts & Cultural presence lends a whole new dimension – valuable – make good town (4)
- It's a cultural Mecca (4): Family oriented; family programs; youth exposure; community arts; activities; music school
- Arts
  - Downtown TCAN (6) expansion
  - Resources for young/old
  - Kids programs downtown – arts, dance
  - Recreation Department
  - Library
  - Artists studios (3)
- Libraries (7): children’s room

Business & Economy

- Businesses are welcome, encouraged; they support infrastructure, integrating business Community and Regional Planning
- Collaboration including local businesses (3)
- Growing and vibrant
- Balance of residential and commercial
- Balance of consumerism with awareness of diverse status; reflects wider world.
- Unique tax base
- Good economic base
  - Big employers
  - Mall
  - Segregate to preserve open space
- Mall (3)
  - Pays taxes
  - Fun to go to
  - Congestion especially during holidays
  - Connect rail trail to Mall
  - Low wages and benefits employer
  - Brings visitors
  - Higher prices coming
  - Kid hangout; no trouble; kid-oriented stores; distraction
  - Mall is in the right place
- Military bases: large community supporter (2)
Community/Senior/Teen/Recreation Center

- Preserve commitment to seniors (2)
- The Senior Community Center is a shame!
  - The building needs improvement (2)
  - Lack of public transportation…handicaps getting around (north of 9…none)
- Recreation Center / Senior Center / Community Center
  - In 15 years, ¼ of population will be 65+
  - Integrate older, younger, not to polarize politics, but to create one community
  - Integrated programming
  - Multi-use – with schools?
  - For kids not on sports teams (2): robotics, arts classes, etc.
  - Consider donations – big businesses – Mall
- How prioritize? Senior Community Center and/or high school? Strategic planning issues.
  Or Parking Garages and community center

Development, Neighborhoods & Growth

- Maintain balance and growth
- Neighborhood mini Cores…as schools or churches close, we are worried.
- Sense of neighborhood (3)
- Parks for the neighborhood
- Neighborliness & ‘tree-lined street’-ness
- Keep density lower in neighborhoods (2): substantial yards; space between homes
- Proximity and housing accessibility to outside
- Housing density concerns:
  - Development
  - Traffic concerns
  - Safety for kids
  - Pollution
  - Gain control
  - Preserving some low density
- Maintain current housing density (apartments vs., single family homes)
- Accessory apartments
- Single family neighborhoods: owner occupied dwellings…perhaps a tax incentive to live there?
- Small town feel (neighborhood)
- Development
  - Building on open spaces (2)
  - Affects drainage of existing homes
  - Redevelopment: historic houses out; McMansions or condos in (2)
  - Should conform to neighborhood – original footprint
- Zoning:
  - Community learn about zoning & Planning Board
  - Control development in a responsible way
- Our population size is manageable now
Diversity

- Diversity: tolerance, acceptance of differences (5): socio-economic (18), political (4), religion (4), cultural (4), racial & ethnic (5), backgrounds; not as diverse racially and ethnically
  - We don’t want to become another Wellesley (homogeneous) rather than the socio-econ diversity which is good and the openness to diverse opinion; “It’s not just rich people;” bit less white-bread than the W’s

- Intergenerational diversity (11), interaction, connectedness (2);

- Remember, the challenges are connected and we need to draw on our diversity to address them; question all the ways that people can tie in

- Diversity of businesses/jobs in Natick; 20% of taxes paid (5)

- Less division between old and new residents: inclusion, open to new people (6); could be more inviting

- Support for vulnerable populations
  - Elderly, social life, health screening, recreation, focus/support for widow(er)

- Diversity of housing options:
  - Concerns about affordability for seniors; housing, taxes, overall cost of living; information gap
  - One-million-dollar homes attract different type of people, freeze out the non-affluent; control the McMansionization
  - Attract kids back (2)

- Diversity of town
  - Community, neighborhood, family
  - Relates back to community character

- METCO: wish it would extend to elementary and get buses for sports/activities after school.
Education & Schools

- Education: preserve strong schools at all levels (8)
  - Teachers
  - Good pre-school program & all day kindergarten
  - Elementary schools are great and getting better (5)
  - Value middle schoolers as individuals
  - Natick High School Pride (3): Home of Champions; NHS Sports; good coaches
  - Strong special ed
  - Strong curriculum: 15 AP courses, 3-4 languages; library programs

- Maintain and improve schools (9)
  - Improving but need to improve more; potential to be great, not there yet (3)
  - Quality of teachers varies (5); half of teachers have 5 years or less: recruitment; teacher salaries; burnout?
  - Leadership is variable
  - Elementary MCAST scores need improvement
  - Middle schools is have challenges (5): equalize middle schools (2); mixing 5th-8th grade middle schools is problem (3)
  - Small class sizes (3): contain class size, now 18-25, too wide a range
  - Average kids left out
  - Not strong in programs for students who are gifted (2)
  - Electives are limited
  - Real estate objection to schools quality

- Compared to neighboring towns (8)
  - Fact vs. perceptions?
  - Factoring in economic diversity…we outrank other towns
  - We outperform others in sports, community inclusiveness, music
  - Academic quality relative to neighbor towns (3): Sherbourne, Newton and Wellesley
  - I moved her but I am trading education for affordability; good, but not great (2)

- High school: very much in need of replacement! (6)
  - High school is about teaching more than the building
  - Good facility leads to good enthusiasm
  - No proposal to correct high school; too much discussion, not enough action
  - Kennedy middle school also needs refurbishment or replacement

- We need to be willing to spend more on education (10)
  - Funding constraints: Average per pupil…$7-8,000/student; kids are our future…put our dollars there
  - Distribution of dollars: where do we want the dollars to go, i.e. attract high quality
  - Willingness of town to invest in its schools, i.e. Wilson, Ben-Ham; not just buildings but the teachers and value system; commitment to education and schools (3)
  - Fee for bus for close parents
  - Taxes a double edge for seniors

- Neighborhood schools (5)

- Schools and the community (5)
  - Like elected School Committee – representation
  - Community, parents involvement (2)
  - Cooperation between school community and rest of town
  - One generation looks after the next…we never lost our connectedness (schools)
Government & Participation

- Town vs. city government (4); open diverse, cooperative, dedicated, accessible, caring, active, giving, volunteers (2)
- Opportunities to become engaged in town life; participation (8); 300 participate in Natick 360; group participants involved in 35 organizations & institutions
- We’d like to see the next generation of community involvement leaders, e.g. school committee elections.
- People who work in town hall as employees or volunteers really care about the doing the right thing (2)
- Charter change was positive
- Good administration…has been stable
- Balance between commercial tax rate and lower property rate
- Preserve single tax rate: residential and business (3)
- Natick Days and Town Government Open House…people love Natick Days
- Interagency cooperation
  - Natick Center Association and Town Government
  - Planning board re: downtown…Hoop District…Smart growth, etc.
  - School and Natick Service Council
- Financial stability of town: how to measure?
  - Challenges ahead
  - Discuss revenue options
  - Health care costs
  - Salaries and related expenses comprise 80% of budget
  - Stable tax base much better than any town council…no big jumps or surprises
  - Invest in community
  - Some have already paid for years
  - Educate seniors: someone had done it before us
  - Sacrifices of people in the past (school)
  - Downtown buildings
- Commitment to long term improvement
- Need to have more public forums; broader perspective in planning initiatives (2).

Location

- Proximity to Boston (6: close and far enough; good commuter location
- Physical location …transportation and shopping
Natick Center, Common, History

- Character of downtown (3); strong downtown center builds community; engaging; wide mix of uses: residential, commercial, retail, professional
- Maintain historical integrity & preservation (8): town hall, fire and police station look historical; we have been sensitive to retain the historical look
- Vibrant downtown (9), handsome, libraries, economic base
- Convenient, inviting, lush (3)
- The Common (10)
- Density of residential places, close in downtown (off the Common) (4)
- Locally owned businesses (13): Natick Is a real town; not the Gap; No chains; Casey’s; would like women’s or men’s clothing stores; want more diversity of business downtown
  - But not Harvard Square; perhaps more akin to downtown Wellesley
  - Access to shopping and movies
  - Need a grocery (2)
- The “Core”…enhance other cores…town centers
- Focal point to gather (8); would like to see more; family oriented (4)
- Keep downtown art component (4); encourage it: TCAN (3) karate, music, concerts on common, flea market, restaurants, art shows, museums, associations, Kids Connect
- Walkability (4)
- Preserve ease…traffic concerns (3)
- Parking downtown is problem(6); insufficient park and ride
- Neighborhood bus
- Commuter rail downtown
- Downtown: mixed use. Balances.
- Programs (3): after school, events, mix of uses
- Revitalize downtown Natick (2)
- Library (2)
- Downtown gentrifying; middle class; less class structure

Open Space & Environment

- Open space (19), natural environments (2); passive & active recreation (3); conservation; parks (2); lakes (4); beaches (2); Town forest (8); trees (3); Dug Pond; river (2); Audubon (2); playing fields; wetlands; wildlife (2); vernal pools
- Farms (14): “I would really hate to see this disappear” “Spiritually refreshing that it is there.” “That would be a sad loss.” “If it goes on the market, Town should buy it up.”
- Rail Trail – establish it! (3)
- Water quality
- Rural nature, countryside (2)
- Remaining open space (3); development chewing away at open space (2)
- Open spaces and community in South Natick (3)
- Historical sites (2); Indian burial ground
- Accessibility (5): walkable / bikeable
Public/Health/Human Services & Amenities

- Amazing town services (5): firefighting, trash(3), schools, etc.
- Natick Service Council (3)
- The most wonderful library…find time to take advantage of this resource.
- Hospitals (2) / Health Care
  - In town
  - Region – top quality

Public Safety

- Feeling of safety (8): Sidewalks (2), Police, fire; some folks feel OK not locking doors!
- Safe place for kids evenings & weekends – low crime (2)
  - Activities, Recreation & Parks
  - Community Farm
  - Natick Coop Play Group
  - TCAN

Recreation & Sports

- Noting GAP in activities for middle group (not very young and not very old) where are these people?
- Great recreational programs (4) and recreational facilities (2)
- Events (6): Natick Days, Concerts, Farmer’s Market, concerts, tour de Natick, book sales; Friday night ball games; block parties
- Preserve senior service programs, i.e. classes, something going on all the time
- Youth sports programs (6)
- We like how people can interact through recreational opportunities…like Wood Trail, Concerts, etc.
- Recreation and Parks Department (3)
  - Always something going on
  - Outstanding programs
  - Oversubscribed…near capacity
  - Down side is that it is fee based…some kids are closed out by fees
  - KidsConnect – after-school support
Town Culture

- Amenities, fabric and culture of Natick
  - Events (5); activities (4); culture, artist colony, TCAN (4); youth sports and education
  - Transportation center / crossroads (2) of major highways west of Boston
  - Senior Center /Community Center (3)

- Small town feeling (19); large town amenities; common beliefs; convenient; real town; right size; small town values; identity (3); pride (7) sense of place; heart and passion (2); “Old fashioned” feel (2); more than a Mall

- Dichotomy (2) of single lane street vs. mall/Rte. 9; Common vs. Mall

- Sense of community (19); volunteerism (7), friendliness (9), neighborly (8); continuity, multigenerational, kids (4) and seniors; people care about the town (3); unique; welcoming (6); family (6); clean-up days; respect for where we live; opportunity to meet people (4), live, work, play, pray in Natick; belonging; cooperative, collaborative; character of town (3)

- Unpretentious (3): people are down-to-Earth; regular folk.

- Preserving and promoting diversity: cultural, generational, economic, educational etc. (3)

- Unique neighborhoods, satellite town centers, villages (8); community of communities; character and scale of neighborhoods

- Civic organization and energy (7), churches (2), organizations; Natick 360

- Involvement and participation (5); community gets together and creates action

- Accessible government (4); good communications; Town meeting form of government;

- Value of history (8): praying Indian; heritage; housing stock; traditions

- The livable scale of Natick (4): downtown; Common; local businesses; walkable, bikeable

- Open space and trails (2)

Transportation, Traffic & Roads

- Improve traffic (7): it should be easy to get around; worse than 20 years ago

- Fear that the mall, drawing people and bad traffic from region; environmental concerns

- Roads in poor condition and need repair (3); repairs not coordinated

- Town has outgrown roads

- We have and value alternative transportation; commuter rail between Boston and Worcester (9); need commuter rail for West Natick

- Accessibility to Mass Pike

- Speeding Lime to Oak bad and Speen too

- Traffic cutting through – Regional planning absent; regional money absent

- Enforce speed limits

- After school activity traffic

- Need sidewalks (2), curbs, walking is a dangerous problem

- Neighborhood bus (3); seniors can’t drive; make more frequent
  - Need neighborhood bus on Rte. 9
  - Not connected to other towns [no regional—MetroWest—approach]
  - LIFT Bus…Framingham

- Access for bikers (2) – paths / trails
Vision: Common Themes

Business & Employment
- Small biz, people live and work here
- Keep open to business and residences (2)
- The tone of discussion with/about the malls is friendly; better relationships; Malls held more accountable to contracts made with the Town
- Retail / Mall jobs / high end Mall condos
- Mall businesses will jump at chance to sponsor activities
- Major employers in the town: Boston Scientific, Mathworks, Cognex
- Attract employment (2), but there are some limits on space
- Largely bedroom community; place to live, not industry, but large businesses
- Place with good paying jobs and housing that people can afford (concordance!) (employees, young families, seniors, teachers, Town employees, etc.)
- Keep major commercial activity on route 9

Community Center/Senior Center/Teen Center/Public Pool
- We have an intergenerational (11) community center (11); senior center (2); downtown (2); pool (3); gym; youth center (4); expand on artistic cluster that is currently downtown
- 25% of our population is senior.
- Reevaluation of educational and recreational opportunities for kids, seniors and all ages
- Areas for kids to socialize: skateboard park; what do kids have to do other than party? In past, we went to movies/mall, but no longer does that happen.

Development, Neighborhoods & Growth
- Development: proactive planning for town center and mini centers (3)
- Strengthened identities of the many neighborhoods (3). Scale the town facilities, etc. to a neighborhood size; parks for the neighborhood (2)
- Lower neighborhood destinies (2), higher density downtown; density leads to loss of sense of community
- Zoning:
  - Understand and educate the public
  - Control our own destiny (2); controversy promotes ideas and discussion
  - Zoning to cap development, control density, increase affordability
  - Work with developers – don’t litigate
- More single family owner occupied homes, perhaps through tax incentives
- Develop where there is already transportation; should add to Town, not just to traffic (2)
- No more development; want small town and less traffic; already can’t handle traffic
- Planned town where you can work and live close by…more green…self sustaining
- Balance space (2): residential, public, commercial; mediated by green space; manage growth to avoid over-development, some space must be retained as open (2).
- No high rise “beautification”
**Diversity**

- Maintain our identity as family and friends and tolerant
- Integrating intergenerational (8) opportunities and abilities; integrate with youth.
- Better welcoming, networking of new and old (2)
- Cultural (7), religion and ethnic (7) diversity
- Socio-economic diversity (7);
- Housing diversity (4): smaller units and condos downtown and other affordable housing; affordable rental stock; 55+ housing; assisted living
- Multi generations are involved in schools/community
- Socio-economic and ethnic/racial diversity strengthened
- Expose students to options away from home, to learn different and new opportunities but most are told to “stay near by”
- No more Redmen, tomahawk chop or painting on post office wall. Use the name of the Indians that were here.

**Education and Schools**

- Educational excellence at all levels (19): improved schools that rival the rich towns in terms of offerings and results;
  - Improved school curricula (3), geared to college prep
  - Small class sizes (3)
  - Reason to move town rather than to leave (3)
  - Higher test scores in schools (3); deemphasize MCAST
  - Diverse extracurricular activities
  - More electives (7); foreign languages at lower levels; international baccalaureate; technical skills alternatives (2); driver’s education; music; encourage students to take risks, learn new things through broad range of programs, electives, academic support
  - Home of Champions means more than athletics; home of scholars (3)
  - Teachers are the best (6); honor and respect kids and learning; history teachers teach history; it’s the people; more than a building
  - Teach kids how to think, to want to think
  - State-of-the-art technology (4), for students and for administration
  - Additional funding with accountability (3); look to grant funding and expertise from foundations and think-tanks
  - Special populations; special education programs; gifted programs
  - Libraries
- New high school (14); in 20 years, the high school is 19 or 10 years old; point of community pride (2); design for better instruction
  - Swim team pool (2)
  - Integrates with senior center… parents, seniors, non-parents are committed to the entire school system.
  - Energy efficient (2); ventilated, lighting, healthy
  - Monitor construction, budget
- Renovated elementary schools; accommodate population growth; retrofit green buildings
- Commitment to keeping of physical infrastructure of schools current (3)
- No 5th grade in middle school
Energy, Sustainability, Environmental Protection

- We are a leader as a green community (3); responsibility.
- Clean lake; water (2); green spaces
- Green, sustainable, more energy independent (2); diversified renewable energy sources
- We have aggressively implemented even more innovative recycling strategies (2).
- Continue recycling effort: look at town wide energy use, green buildings
- New high school: “green” building
- Native landscaping without chemicals

Government, Participation, Taxes

- An involved community (6), residents and businesses; volunteers
- Acknowledged as a leader/center in governance/education/environment economy
- Inclusive, transparent (4) government (4); open town meeting
- Financially stable
  - Sufficient financial resources that are planned without huge jumps in taxes
  - We have stable finances…predictable revenue streams and cost projections…fewer state surprises.
- Managed growth, with an eye to impact for services, schools, infrastructure
- We have more accountability for fiscal responsibility (7)
  - We have found more sources of revenue for the town
  - We are paying more taxes. The first test was in 2007/08.
  - We are paying less taxes (2)
  - We have fewer fees – trash, athletic, school, school bus – services included in taxes
  - We don't have confiscatory tax rates…we have continued good planning
  - We have maintained senior discounts too.
  - We don’t pit one group vs. another (seniors vs. schools and children)
  - People have better understanding of how town works
  - Outsource certain functions: health, pension, WIFI, trash, payroll
  - A rainy-day fund to be kept for years when state payments dip.
- We have implemented a split tax rate (2), separating business from residential (2).
- We have not implemented a split tax rate (3); business friendly
- State needs to commit to invest in town
- Network with other institutions, other towns; regional solutions to some problems (2)
Health Care & Hospital
- We will have kept our hospital (5), emergency room facilities and flu shots and well baby clinic; clinics in other parts of town; community health
- Health insurance cooperatives (2)
- Personal: care for all
- Affordable, consistent health care for children
- Partner with others nearby in regional health network

Housing & Affordability
- Owner-occupied housing whereby the neighborhood remains safe and cared for.
  Neighborhoods where the owners are responsible for making certain that the ‘renters’ maintain the property and keep undesirable/illegal activities out.
- Affordable (19); wide variety of quality housing meeting the needs of all generations going forward, children, seniors, teachers, firefighters, students, young families, retirement, rentals, downsizing.
- Affordable town and a family oriented town with good schools and recreation
- Smart growth (3); based on good urban planning
- Have integrated housing (2) so you don’t feel like you are separated from the community; young & old together
- Develop some areas; keep others open and accessible
- Control residential growth through less dense housing

Natick Center, Downtown, Common
- Natick Center has evolved to a retail and business center. Upstairs spaces are in use...offices and apartments. Separated and mixed. A strong vital, vibrant, thriving downtown (3); mixed uses (4); smart growth
- Downtown with small town feel; a hub of the community that maintains its character (2)
- Affordable housing mix downtown (10); live, work, play, shop
- Continue to grow as a cultural center and meeting place; magnet (4)
- Maintaining mix of large and small businesses; local businesses; diverse stores (4)
- Visual attractiveness of old and new, integrated architecturally; use upper floors of existing buildings (7); aesthetically pleasing consistency; social, political, architectural, cultural; historical buildings (4)
- Downtown parking (15): commuter(2); outside downtown, keep cars out (5), walkable (4); 400 spaces
- Accessibility: more public transportation; bike paths; sidewalks; safer crosswalks; invite participation (9)
- We have a grocery store or own indoor farmer’s market downtown (12).
- We have more restaurants, bookstore, cultural (TCAN) (5) activities downtown, with night life (13), 24-hour town; movie, shopping, bowling
- A destination downtown where outsiders shop and spend money (6); see Needham.
- Maintained infrastructure: streets, sidewalks, schools, municipal buildings
Open Space, Parks

- More open space (7), connected (4) throughout Town; 1/3 of Natick is green; wildlife corridors; dog park;
  - Use the space above the rail lines; like Millennium Park in Chicago!
  - Open a big park, throughout town; place to fly a kite; sports fields; hiking woods
  - Tie within Natick to downtown

- Open space and recreation areas are bike and pedestrian friendly

- Preserve and maintain outdoor assets (6); Cochituate Rail Trail; passive uses such as skating

- More accessible (3); trails (3); forest, lake Broadmoor

- Better access to nature and recreation

- The town takes advantage of some mall open space.
  - Active/passive recreation

- Controlled growth (2): preservation of open space, water supply, and neighborhood parks for gathering old and young; balance open space with development

- Open space leads to improved health; allows healthful aging and wellness

- Tree City
  - Along sidewalks
  - Underground utilities

- Kids won’t live here because they value open land and public spaces; they may not want to live here unless there is still farmland.
Planning Processes

- Program for maintenance and investment in infrastructure (2) to keep pace with growth
- People ask us, how did you (3):
  - Go from good to great: schools and senior life
  - Community participation
  - Bike paths
  - In-town transportation
  - Green community
  - Sidewalks
  - Make Cochituate State Park so inviting?, make Pegan Cove so great?
  - Make it so livable?
  - Mobilize so many?
  - Make the schools listed a number 1 in the state?
  - Continuously invigorate the schools?
  - Maintain your neighborhood feel?
  - Achieve the regional transportation that was affordable and realistic?
  - Get resources from the state…back?
  - Retain the economic diversity?
- Natick 360 Process (4)
  - Reflect voices of all of Natick
  - Do it regularly, ongoing (3)
  - Accomplishment; early successes
  - Vote!
  - Boards work collaboratively on common goals
  - Town is too reactive; conduct pro-active years-out planning with community involvement
- Comprehensive master plan: schools (new high school), traffic (calming), zoning, open space, bike lanes, housing affordability
- Conduct a study: do families with kids cost more than those families without kids?
- Civil discourse when there are disagreements
- Controlled planning and development and keep citizens involved
- Government / process
  - Endless studies…little action (high school, community center)
  - Form of government appropriate
  - Don’t trust government (2); what’s the agenda? Trust but verify
  - Natick is inward focused…benchmark other communities other perspectives
  - Recognize committee work
- Smart growth (2): traffic, housing, business, flexibility (can we respond to cases individually re: affordability and their ability to pay taxes)
- Not excessive population jump
Public Services, Human Services
• Maintain and improve: Recreation programs (2) breadth of offerings; okay to pay for services, i.e. pool
• Expand Natick after school program(2)
• Effective dissemination of information, coordinated, consistent; activity programs could have an add on to let people know about town resources
• Stay the way it is with conveniences
• Need for social services: Natick Service Center funded by private donations only; get a social services agency in place
• More active Natick American Legion
• TCAN: outreach to all ages for classes; movies
• Longer library hours and funding

Public Safety
• Public safety (5); no crime, appropriate fire/police, paramedical services, emergency situations, disasters, terrorism.

Town Culture
• Maintain positive feeling of potential and forward vision
• Volunteerism (4); families helping families; weave community together;
• Big town amenities with a small town feel (9)
• Preserve sense of community (5); events; community of communities; place; clubs; character; place for children to live when they grow up; keep the essence of community with more services and amenities; Whole Village model – neighbors helping neighbors, relying on the community to ‘be’ the family; preserve community values
• Diverse (2), inclusive (2), welcoming (3), vibrant, cohesive community, with connectedness and services for all ages; caring
• Make history of Natick more open and available (2); Praying Indians.
• Open forum for all ideas (2); faith community collaborations
• Cooperation with surrounding communities for services
• Full life fitness for all ages…walking trails, weight room facilities open to public, community will be a healthier place to live
Transportation, Traffic

- Better transportation, fewer cars on the road (4); change the paradigm away from improving traffic flow; create fewer trips
  - Local energy independence 0% emissions
- Traffic managed (4); overall plan; less congestion; traffic signs are clear; interchanges; timed lights (2); north-south artery across Rte. 9, bypassing neighborhoods (3); solve traffic on Rte. 27 without making a four lane highway; no 18-wheelers on Speen St.
- More public transportation options (19) within town: neighborhood bus (8); major employer shuttles to commuter rail (4); regional solutions; Mall (2); carpooling; solutions for seniors (2)
- More sidewalks (12); safer; walk or bike to school (3)
- Natick is part of RTA, Regional Transportation Authority (4); mall has a terminal
- Roads infrastructure in better condition (4); repairs coordinated
- Access to downtown: bike (18), walk (10), rail trail (5); cross Rte. 9 on footbridge; streetcars
- With 1,200 condos in three years (potentially), that’s a major concern.
- We have taken advantage of air space above rail lines (2).
- Physical continuity – able to get around the town, walk, commuter rail
- Commuter-friendly transport & parking