

Natick 360

Honoring Our Past. Planning Our Future.



Vision for the Future Workshops Notes

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?

The small groups shared their ideas with their larger workshop group. 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?

The small groups shared their vision ideas with the larger workshop group. 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. The following pages are unedited transcripts of those notes.

The next step in the process is to share this information and work with the public and with the five boards and committees that sponsor the Natick 360 strategic planning process 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.

Natick 360

The Natick 360 strategic planning process is a citizen-driven approach to developing a long-range plan for the Town of Natick. The Natick 360 process is organized into four phases:

1. *Our Community Yesterday and Today* report by MAPC.
2. Our Shared Vision for the Future, with community workshops, Oct. 27-29, 2006, and writing Vision & Values statements for the Town.
3. *Our Strategic Options*, organized around focus areas and alternative scenarios, with policies, programs and projects, and associated costs.
4. *Our Strategic Choices*, with community workshops, May 18-20, 2007 and a scientific sample survey in June 2007.

The Strategic Planning Oversight Committee directs the process: Craig Ross and David Parish, Co-Chairs, Rosemary Driscoll, Terri Evans, John Heerwagen, Matthew Gardner, George Richards, Harlee Strauss and Fred Witte. Blackerby Associates, an independent consultancy, manages and facilitates the project.

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Common Themes – 1st Session*

- Affordable
- Elders
- Young children
- Economic/cultural diversity
- Welcoming
- Shift from car to public transportation to reduce traffic
- Preserve natural amenities and good environment
- Open space
- Preserve historic nature
- Level of services for all...police, fire, professional, schools, seniors
- Enhance downtown strong, vibrant, artistic
- Education: be top ten and Invest in the high school
- Friendliness and cooperativeness
- Intergenerational cooperation and connectedness
- Small town feel
- Control and plan growth

Values – 1st Session – Green

- Amenities, fabric and culture of Natick
 - Artist Colony
 - Youth sports and education
 - Broad number of volunteer and civic opportunities in a little Town
 - Transportation center/Crossroads of major highways west of Boston (Routes 90, 9 and 30)
 - Senior Center/Community Center
 - Diversity in education as well as integration of arts and education in town
 - Preserving and promoting diversity (cultural, generational, economic, etc)
 - Community/Senior Center with dedicated space for the seniors located on 135 where the current center is.
 - Generational Diversity
 - Economic Diversity
- 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. (scholarships, help, etc...)
- Natick Service Council
- Pride/Identity – Ability for the community to feel empowered to get together and create action town wide. Natick as a community is well engaged. There is an identifiable sense of pride in living in Natick.
- People settle here and people need to be able to afford to live in Natick in the future.

* Note: The common themes are drawn from all six workshops at the first session, though the individual workshop notes from the silver workshop were misplaced during the event, and are not reported here.

Vision – 1st Session – Green

- Maintain positive feeling of potential and forward vision
- Integrating intergenerational opportunities and abilities.
 - Better networking of new and old
- Fiscal responsibility – maintaining services we've come to expect and be able to take care of our seniors
 - We don't want to pit one group of Service Consumers vs. another (Seniors and Elderly *vs.* Schools and children)
 - People have better understanding of how town works
- A Strong vital Downtown -- affordable housing mix downtown
 - People who can afford to live there (affordable housing) as well as 'consume' there (restaurants, business, arts)
- 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.
- Website – community communications
- Volunteerism – Families helping families (for example, Natick Service Council)
- Whole Village model – neighbors helping neighbors, relying on the community to 'be' the family.
- Affordable, accessible, not just young families – meeting the needs of all generations going forward.
- Natick people being able to stay in Natick 20 yrs from now.
 - Safe sidewalks, minimize traffic,
 - Shifting the paradigm from better automobile traffic flow to reducing the number of cars or car trips on the roads.
 - Walking paths: need greater awareness
- Aesthetically pleasing downtown...a uniform 'look' of signs, street signs, etc..
- Improved schools that rival the rich towns in terms of offerings and results
- Cultural and ethnic diversity
- Strong youth presence
 - Youth Council
 - Drop-in area for non-sports, non school related
- Better transportation, less cars on the road
 - Local energy independence 0% emissions
- Clean lake, water green spaces
 - Sense of Community...What makes our Town feel small still

Wrap-up

- Intergenerational, culturally and economically diverse community
- Big town amenities with a small town feel
- Environmental responsibility
- Strong identity with a Downtown

Values – 1st Session – Blue

Preserve:

- Historic preservation
- Vibrant downtown
- Natural environment and open space
- Intergenerational interaction
- Common beliefs: small town feeling
- Family friendliness
- Acceptance and tolerance of differences, i.e. diversity: economic, political, philosophical, racial
- Education: strong schools at all levels
- Youth programs: rec and schools
- Commitment to seniors
- Nurture Natick's villages
- Sense of community
- Commitment to culture

You would not want to lose:

- Commitment to education and schools
- Tolerance of differences (economic and racial)
- South Natick's countryside feel
- Social and political progressiveness and acceptance
- Volunteerism
- Character and scale of neighborhoods conversation within communities (houses relate and neighbors relate)
- Open space
- Friendliness
- Attractive for young families
- Affordability
- Intergenerational connectedness

Value the most:

- Commitment to education/schools
- Small town feel, large town amenities
- Convenience
- Open space
- Diversity
- Intergenerational connectedness
- Vibrant downtown

Vision – 1st Session – Blue

20 years from now:

- Connecting bike/walking trails throughout town
- Reliable public transportation through town. Regional
- New high school
- Intergenerational community center (facility)
- Downtown with more mixed use, night life
- Maintaining mix of large and small businesses
- Program for maintenance and investment in infrastructure
- Affordability
- Open space

When your children live here:

- Diverse, vibrant, inclusive community
- An affordable place to live (housing that is affordable)
- An involved community...residents and businesses

One wish for future of Natick:

- Strong, inclusive community
- One that carries out Natick 360 vision: boards were collaboratively on common goals
- Ethnic and age diversity
- Accessible and enhanced non government services/accessible non-car downtown
- Improved school curricula, geared to college prep
- Involvement by more of community

Values – 1st Session – Red

Like to preserve:

- Small town feel
- Caring about neighbors, and kids and old
- Community activities that make it happen...Friday night ball games and block parties.
- Question all the ways that people can tie in
- Traditions that are preserved
- Noting GAP in activities for middle group (not very young and not very old) where are these people?
- Maintain balance and growth
- Keeping sense of community and engagement
- Open space...natural environments, passive recreation very important conservation.
- Amazing town services
- Unique neighborhoods/satellite town centers

Values:

- Diversity
 - Economic diversity
 - Cultural and racial
 - Political lifestyle = allowing different perspectives, liberals, veterans, multi sided
 - Strong and different views
 - Age diversity demo trend
- Traffic? Preserve and improve traffic
- Fear that the mall, bad traffic drawing people from region...high end and environmental concerns
- Businesses are welcome, encouraged, they support infrastructure, integrating business with community
- Strong downtown center builds community engaging
- The common
- Density of residential places, close in downtown (off the Common)
- Economic diversity
- Balance of consumerism with awareness of diverse status. Reflects wider world.
- Affordability is a value but in jeopardy
- Preserving affordability
- Healthy diversity
- Town services

Vision – 1st Session – Red

I wish:

- Preserving feeling of small town, with connectedness and services for all ages.
- Open space and recreation bike and pedestrian friendly

20 years:

- More public transportation within town...shuttles
- Satellite town centers with open space
- Better communications/more varieties
- Community center used by all ages with pool
- Multiple gathering places for community gathering
- Less traffic
- Safer places
- Public transportation...even for 12 year old

Values – 1st Session – Orange

- Diversity: residential/business and economic
- Friendly town
- Farm and river

- Events: concerts, tour de Natick, book sales
- Neighborhood schools
- Small, friendly
- TCAN
- Town meeting: diverse, cooperative, dedicated
- Great recreational programs and facilities
- People care about the town
- Opportunities to become engaged in town life
- Town center: vibrant, handsome, libraries
- Open space: valued by community
- Open space, lakes, recreation
- Diversity, inclusion, volunteerism
 - Economic, people, 20% of taxes paid X businesses
- Natick Is a real town...it is not the Gap.” Buildings are locally owned businesses. Commons and jobs.
- Schools and hospitals: local, small, neighborhood.
- Cooperative, collaborative community
- Neighborhood mini Cores...as schools or churches close, we are worried.
- Diversity of businesses/jobs in Natick 20% of taxes paid
- Preserve Open Space/Rec Fac/Town Forest
- Save locally owned businesses
- Schools: preserve quality
- Historic buildings
- Neighborhoods
- Common usage
- Civic organization and energy (churches, volunteer organizations)
- Hospital
- Farms
- Substantial yards
- Space between homes
- Train lakes
- Water quality
- Military bases: large community supporter
- Dug Pond Hotdogs and beach
- Inclusion...open town...to new people
- Volunteerism
- Mixed economic groups
- Diversity: resident/business, open space, socio economic: preserve
- The “Core”...enhanced other cores...town centers
- River...country elements
- A real town
- It is all here!

- Unique and welcoming
- People can't all work together
- Right size
- Not partisan
- Less division between old and new residents
- Charter change was positive
- Good administration...has been stable

Vision – 1st Session – Orange

20 years:

- Use air space over tracks
- Preserve and restore historic buildings...the look and feel...downtown needs to develop a niche!
- Transportation network that deploys alternatives to automobile
- Green, sustainable, energy independent
- Diverse housing options for every generation and economic strata
- Preserved outdoor assets

One wish:

- More public transportation
- More sidewalks
- More accessible trails
- Better access to nature and recreation
- Cars to alternative transportation
- Affordable alternative housing for all generations
- Invest in diverse, imaginative uses of town center magnet
- Educational excellence for all
- Outsource and regionalize certain functions ...rationalize cost/service...health...pension...WIFI...trash...payroll
- Visual attractiveness (zoning) old and new integrated architecturally
- Natick acknowledged as a leader/center in governance/education/environment economy
- More welcoming
- Small/large town
- Preserve and develop small town feel and large town amenities

Ideal Natick:

- Affordable housing, i.e. our children can live here
- Keep open to business and residences
- Good schools
- Communication among citizens who participate

Values – 1st Session – Gold

Schools issues

- Funding constraints...nationwide issues
- High school...very much in need of replacement!

Small town

- Dichotomy of single lane street vs. mall/9
- Life in Natick is convenient
- Neighbors know each other...people show up for events
- Post war close built housing
- Kids can run in some of the neighborhoods
- Variety of neighborhoods

Friendliness

- Family
- Events at recreation department
- Halloween Fest
- Commons: in 20 years...friendliness, how much is Commons? How much is the mall?
- PTOS

Schools

- I moved her but I am trading education for affordability.
- Proximity to Boston and affordable
- Great good not great
- Not what they used to be
- Above average
- Factoring in economic diversity...we outrank other towns
- We outperform others in sports, community inclusiveness, MUSIC!!!, e.g. Weston's, Wetlands: different economic issues

Neighborhoods

- We value the mix
- We have chased seniors out!
- The Senior Community Center us a shame!
 - The building
 - Lack of public transportation...handicaps getting around (north of 9...none)
- How prioritize? Senior Community Center and/or high school? Strategic planning issues. Or Parking Garages and community center
- Rural nature, open space
- Burgeoning arts community: TCAN, artist galleries, open studios
- Need to preserve our cultural activities, especially exposure for youth
- Civic participation
- The most wonderful library...find time to take advantage of this resource.

- Open space, farms, trees,
- But the roads need repair and are in poor condition
- Roads/walks crumbling
- Inattention to infrastructure
- Remember community clean up days?
- Respect for where we live. Shovel your own drive and hydrant?

Vision – 1st Session – Gold

- We have fewer fees - trash, athletic, school, school bus, and we have included that in taxes
- We have aggressively implemented even more innovative recycling strategies. We are a leader as a green community.
- People ask us, how did you:
 - Go from good to great: schools and senior life
 - Community participation
 - Bike paths
 - In town transportation
 - Green community
 - Sidewalks
- Revitalization
- Green blog
- We have maintained our excellent medical facility and system
- A desirable and guaranteed place for leading docs to live and work and practice close to home
- We have new programs for families...playgrounds...a swimming pool at the Senior Center.
- We have more accountability for fiscal responsibility
- We have found more sources of revenue for the town
- We are paying more taxes. The first test was in 2007/08.
- We have implemented a split tax rate, separating business from residential.
- We have maintained senior discounts too.
- We have many volunteers.
- Parking: commuter? Downtown businesses...remember, more public transportation and bike paths and sidewalks...safer crosswalks...invite participation
- We have great in town transportation...shuttle bus loop
- We have a grocery store or own indoor farmer's market downtown.
- We have more restaurants downtown.
- 25% of our population is senior.
- Once again, this year, in top 10 list for best schools.
- Roads better, sidewalks and bike paths, get from here to there.
- The tone of discussion with/about the malls is friendly, better relationships, etc.
- We see "Gen Growth Props" engaged with community. \$ yes, but more.
- Natick is part of RTA...Regional Transportation Authority...mall has built the terminal.

- The town takes advantage of some mall open space.
- Natick is a good participant effort. Transportation and bike paths.
- You can take public transportation to Riverside and commuter rail more easy
- Great parking in place.

My wish for Natick in 20 years:

- Maintaining economic diversity in age, housing, incomes
- Everyone participates...Gdn, volunteerism
- The high school is 10 years old
- We have a senior friendly community and a 17 year old senior community center...hovercrafts or other appropriate transportation and advocacy programs
- The town is pedestrian friendly
- Seniors (multi generations) are involved in schools/community
- The senior community center is multi generational use
- The town has been smart about is use of money, e.g. wood paneling not necessary in school...brick crossings.
- We still have open space preserved and added to
- We have increased affordable housing stock...use existing stock...meet 10%
- We have a cohesive town...integrated "condo community". We have a welcome wagon! Still! You get a list of volunteer opportunities.
- The traffic signs are clear and the traffic moves along.
- Small town based businesses are maintained by local owners.
- Malls...held more accountable to contracts made with the town
- Mall businesses will jump at chance to sponsor activities

Common Themes – 2nd Session

- Traffic...pedestrian/bike friendly
- Energy efficient within town
- Schools kids
- Route 27...do not want 4 lanes
- Schools...top ranked...good private schools...strengthen
- Attractiveness of town
- Sense of community
 - Events
 - Arts
 - Politics ...involvement
 - Small town feel
- Natural Resources...green space
 - 1/3 green
 - Strong recreation activities
 - wildlife corridor...nature preserves
- Public Services...good
 - Hospital and emergency services
 - Self sufficiency in renewable resources
- Diversity...economic...social

Sense of community

- Town center
- Community center
- Communications
- Diversity
- Accessible government
- Identity: arts? Other?

Schools...first class

- Improving
- Neighborhood pride

Open space good

- Connect green spaces
- Trails, bikes
- Control space/zoning
- More trees

Downtown area

- Ease neighborhood burden
- Walking only

Community of communities

- Share resources

Open spaces/green spaces

- Need policies and guidelines
- Open space...green space...sidewalks

Values – 2nd Session – Green

- Small town feel...Natick days, farmers market
- Family center
- Central access (location)
- Remaining open space...no more development
- Maintain and improve school standards...middle and high school...elementary MCAS scores need improvement
- Sense of community
 - Opportunities to meet people
- Cost of living not as expensive as adjoining towns...tax rate equity between businesses and homes
- Town government vs. city government...selectmen, town meeting, etc.
- Neighborhood
- Downtown (arts public facilities TCAN)
- Events ...Natick Days, Concerts, Farmer's Market
- Past history...need to reclaim our common heritage...we have lost opportunity in not promoting and leveraging this...striking to me how much was missing from timeline

Preserve:

- diversity...socio-economic and ethnic
- Sense of community (downtown)...library/common events
- Public services...trash removal, recreation etc.
- Community participation
- Natural resources
- Preserve senior service programs, i.e. classes, something going on all the time
- Trash service
- Arts Center
- Economic diversity
- Recognition of need to improve public education
- The livable scale of Natick
- Lake Cochituate
- Community arts
- Youth sports programs
- Open space
- Downtown

Values:

- The “real” center of downtown
- The core of community involvement
- Growing services of downtown
- Balance between commercial tax rate and lower property rate

Vision – 2nd Session – Green

- Balance space...residential, public, commercial...mediated by green space
- Energy efficient...diversified, i.e. renewable energy sources...solar panel, green, wind turbine
- Transportation network...pedestrian and vehicular
- Treasure Natick’s history...social, political, architectural, cultural
- Superb public and private education opportunities
- Green space enhanced and preserved
 - 1/3 of Natick green
 - Active/passive recreation
 - Wildlife corridors
- Socio-economic and ethnic/racial diversity strengthened
- Healthy/strong community involvement...activities, political, social
- Public transportation within Natick
 - Seniors
 - Kids...sports after school
 - From train to bus and mall
- Not such a commercial identity. Continuing the development of Natick Center.
- Make history of Natick more open and available.
- Invite back descendants of Natick Praying Indians.
- Score in Top 10 Public School Districts in state.
- Commitment to keeping of physical infrastructure of schools current....small classroom sizes.
- Making bicycle and pedestrian friendly.
- Sidewalks where needed
- More ethnic diversity...more than 3%
- Make 27 a four lane highway...NO...solve traffic on 27 without doing this!
- Continue community involvement programs like Natick 360
- Public safety...emergency situations, disasters, terrorism.
- New senior center and community center together
- Recreation department...breadth of offering...okay to pay for services, i.e. pool revenue generating
- Schools: new high school
 - High ranking
 - Reason to move town (rather than leave)
- Preserve sense of community
- Affordable housing...smart growth

- Downtown restaurants and parking and some place to go downtown in the evening
- Roads/infrastructure
- Traffic...managed
- Hospital...emergency room facilities and flu shots and well baby clinic
- Improve public transportation...Mall, train parking (MBTA)...this all could be life offering if safe for children

Values – 2nd Session – Red

Involvement:

- Superintendent of schools
- Planning board
- School committee
- Cancer studies
- Library board of trustees
- US Army Natick Labs Rest.
- South Natick Neighbors and Newcomers
- Rail Trail Task Force
- Natick Historical Commission
- SPOC 360 Process
- Center for Arts Associate Director
- Benham School Council
- Natick Community Organic Farm
- Town Meeting
- Rike Committee
- Conservation Commission
- Lake Cochituate Watershed Association
- State Park Adv. Committee
- Finance Committee
- MetroWest Medical Center Board
- League of Women Voters
- High School Council
- Mem School Council
- BOD-TCAN
- BOD-NEF
- Natick Environmental Concerns Committee
- Natick Bike/Pedal Advisory Board

Values:

- Natick Days and Town Government Open House...people love Natick Days
- We are not as special as we might think but the way we do it is very nice
- There are many venues to know what's going on

- We'd like to see the next generation of community involvement leaders, e.g. school committee elections.
- We want to preserve water resources, e.g. town beach... and open space.
- Creativity, support for artists...open studio weekend...exciting, expanding, diverse
- Average per pupil...\$7-8000/student
- 15 AP courses
- 3-4 languages
- Downtown architecture and history
- Value of history...Praying Indian
- Natick founded by first Indians converted by Puritans...driven out in 1675
- Town center...focal point to gather...would like to see more...library, TCAN, restaurants
- We like that people identify as Natickers
- Residents...life long with kids, etc.
- Economic diversity...income groups...not exclusive...a different vibe...this is not one of the W's
- New resident: affordable, comfortable, family feeling, 50s housing stock
- Willingness of town to invest in its schools, i.e. Wilson, Benham...not just the buildings but the teachers too and Value System
- Elementary school is great and gotten better! Still quite good...excellent! Middle School Challenge...High school great! Pretty good...crowded...used to be a magnet...Natick High School had a planetarium and public had access.
- We have and value alternative transportation...commuter rail between Boston and Wors.
- Walkability
- Interagency cooperation
 - Natick Center Association and Town Government
 - Planning board re: downtown...Hoop District...Smart growth, etc.
 - School and Natick Service Council
- Support for vulnerable populations
 - Elderly, social life, health screening, recreation, focus/support for widow (er)
- The Town Center: common open area, shops, open space, nearby housing, easy to walk
- Level of involvement...strong community feel
 - Boards, but also issues specific
 - Would like more involvement...many options.

Vision – 2nd Session – Red

- We have a school system that attracts and people are committed to the town through middle school and high school and beyond.
- We have stable finances...predictable revenue streams and cost projections...fewer state surprises.
- We have sufficient well planned downtown parking. We needed maybe 400 in 2006...remember?

- Alternative transportation...it is here, it works, it is used. More on time commuter experience,
- We have jitney bus service.
- A safe community with paramedical services...appropriate fire/police
- Home of Champs means more than athletics.
- We have kept our hospital!
- A place downtown where folks from Wellesley, etc. come and shop and spend money.
- How did you
 - 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?
 - Create such a complete/organic town? Mixed, green, diverse, live and work, self-sustaining.
- My hope this doesn't stop in 2011...maintain this...do it every two to three years...we can't drop.
- We take care of our senior population and all residents
- We have options for non drivers
- We don't have confiscatory tax rates...we have continued good planning
- We have diverse housing stock...smaller units and condos downtown and other affordable housing and bike trails. Affordable rental stock.
- Senior community center...mixed community center...right downtown
- We have a community system. First a new high school that incorporates/includes/integrates a senior center...more and more parents, seniors, non-parents committed to the entire school system.
- Natick Center has evolved to a retail and business center. Upstairs spaces are in use...offices and apartments. Separated and mixed.
- A night life. It is open past 5:30 PM
- We have more grocery stores and café downtown.
- Capture and remember: hey ...20-50 years ago, what did Natick's downtown look and feel like? What can we recapture from that? Movie, shopping, bowling alley?
- How are we including Historical Commission Society?
- We have taken advantage of air space above rail lines.
- There's a pool in our mixed community center which is downtown
- We still have small parks (neighborhoods) for kids and dogs
- Controlled growth...preservation of open space, water supply, and neighborhood parks for gathering old and young
- Connectivity among spaces in Natick
- Cochituate Rail Trail well maintained
- A place where today's socioec is maintained.

Values – 2nd Session – Orange

- More affordable
- Proximity and housing accessibility to outside
- Train station
- Level of community
 - Feel like belong
 - Sense of pride
 - Recognize and know people
 - Sense of belonging
- Sense of neighborhood
- Center of town as family destination
- Library, TCAN, karate, music, concerts on common, flea market, restaurants, art shows
- Diversity of town economically and religion
 - People are connected in a lot of ways
 - Working class
 - Community neighborhood family
- Access to shopping and movies
- People who work in town hall as employees or volunteers really care about the doing the right thing
- History...Indian burial ground
- Open space critical for recreation
- Keep density lower in neighborhoods
- Accessory apartments
- Sense of community
 - Organizations
 - ◆ PTO
 - ◆ Environment
 - ◆ Natick Cares
 - ◆ League of Women Voters
 - ◆ Talent Bank
 - Resources available
 - ◆ Psychologists
 - ◆ Library
 - ◆ My Natick Resource Book
 - ◆ Public Health
 - ◆ VNA
- Access to major roads: train goes through
- Preserve downtown vitality
 - More condos downtown
 - Encourage people downtown
 - Modern stores...funky
 - Keep art component...encourage it
 - Preserve ease...traffic concerns

- Character of town preserve
 - Neighborhoods
 - Kids stay in Natick
 - Open space
 - Community of communities

Vision– 2nd Session – Orange

- Downtown like Boulder
 - No cars in immediate downtown with trails reaching out
- More transportation especially for kids, e.g. neighborhood bus service at later hours
- Community center...multi generational and pool
- Update infrastructure while retaining current character: community of communities: place, clubs, etc.
- Generate additional income downtown include pubs, etc. (but responsible)
- Bring evening foot traffic to core
- Funkier stores
- Employers in the town: Boston Scientific, Mathworks, Cogney
- No 18 wheelers on Speen Street
- Some north south artery that bypasses neighborhoods
- Fill upper stories with residential and activities
- Downtown parking
- Schools in downtown
- More open space
- New high school
- More open space
- Quality of opportunity for children remains the same or better
- Improve reputation of educational values SATS and MCAS
- Viable 24 hour downtown...people living there...shopping, entertaining, worship...ability to walk around 55+ to 85+ older
- Strong neighborhoods
- Increased educational spending
- Better transportation for public and congestion
- Better family destination
- Bike trails
- Lower neighborhood destinies...larger lots, higher density downtown
- A hang out including senior center

Values– 2nd Session – Blue

Sense of community

- Extended family
- Everyone involved...al ages
- Accessible government

- Good communications,...if you tap in
- Small town feel
- Downtown
- Natick branding
- Strong common center

Open Space

- Countryside
- Town land around high school
- Coolidge Hill
- Town forest
- Historical sites: Indian heritage
- See they sky
- Trees and birds
- Walking trails
- Audubon

Housing Density

- Development
- Traffic concerns
- Safety for kids
- Pollution
- Gain control

Downtown

- Walkable
- Traffic problems
- Neighborhood retail
- Preserve common
- Parking for customers
- Neighborhood bus

Affordability issue

Schools

- Good...but variable...improving
- Neighborhood schools have pride
- Academic quality relative to neighbor towns
- High school to get up to par
- Fact vs. perceptions?
- Distribution of dollars...where do we want the dollars to go, i.e. attract high quality teachers

Diversity

- Cultural diversity...but need more
- Economic
- Age...seniors and youth
- Attract kids back

Good Economic Base

- Big employers
- Mall
- Segregate to preserve open space
- Trains...better service
- Downtown gentrifying...middle class...less class structure

Vision – 2nd Session – Blue

- First class schools: elementary, middle school, high school
- New high school...sense of community
- Swim team pool
- Teacher salaries...get the best...honor and respect kids and learning
- Teach kids how to think, want to think
- Natick pride
- Other districts perform in spite of MCAST
- Money has marginal effect on teachers

Strong community center

- Pool
- Seniors
- Other community

Development

- Zoning...understand and educate
- Control own destiny
- Controversy promotes ideas and discussion

Diversity

- Johnson school is diverse
- Care for diverse community
- Economic needs
- Need to improve cultural diversity
- Inclusive and welcoming

Transportation

- Downtown transit
- Access to downtown...bike, walk, rail trail

Natick 360 Process

- Reflect voices of all of Natick
- Do it regularly
- Accomplishment...early successes
- Vote!

Downtown

- Destination
- Special identity
- TCAN...build on this, e.g. Lowell
- Arts school
- Restaurants
- Attract outside visitors
- Walker friendly
- Divert traffic to sides
- Parking

How do we volunteer to help each other?

- Participation in new lifestyle
- Weave community together
- More events to get people to come together
- Johnson spirit
- Community events

Common Themes – 3rd Session

- High school and pool
- Downtown
- Transportation: bike walk in and out
- Diversity in housing and socio economical
- Affordability
- Open space...recreation
- Connections
- Whole community
- Recreation center, senior center, community center

Values – 3rd Session – Green

- Character of downtown
- Farms (NatickComm.), Winona
- Open space...town forest...balance between development and family ethic
- Lots of resources
- Sense of community
- Like to preserve affordability (don't want Natick to be another Wellesley)
- Good school system
- Safety
- Location, location, location!
- But concern about traffic
- Accessible town government
- Cultural activities
- Rail trail
- Recreational space (playing fields)
- What about our concerns?
- Preserve and improve downtown
- Small town feel
- Preserving some low density
- Sense of community
 - Activities for young children as well as seniors
 - Arts/TCAN
 - Restaurants...more outdoor seating
 - Diversity
 - Sense of neighborhood and helping neighbors
 - Amenities, i.e. library, Audobon, NCOF, Belkin
 - Housing affordability
 - Involvement and participation
 - Town meeting form of government
 - Strong schools
 - Open space and trails

- Open space
- Trails, woodlands
- Small town feel: friendliness and welcoming
- Natick Center for all ages, common is beautiful, family owned businesses, safe, remain vibrant, arts, TCAN, studios
- Reputation in education
- Neighborhood schools
- Diversity of housing options
- Strong faith community
- Sports programs for youth
- Diversity of age: older bring value, mixed generations
- Pride in town
- Town events in center
- Unique tax base
- Malls, business, US Army
- Collaboration including local businesses
- Natick recreation department
- Single family neighborhoods: owner occupied dwellings...perhaps a tax incentive to live there?
- Spirit of volunteerism
- Quality of education
- Positive reputation of town outside the community
- Farms for families rural nature

Vision – 3rd Session – Green

- Affordable town and a family oriented town with good schools and recreation
- Dual tax rate? Residents pay less, businesses pay for high school, etc.
- More public transportation...but with development, there will be more traffic
- Community bus, commuter rail, RAIL TRAIL
- New high school with pool
- New community center with pool and senior center
- Mixed use downtown: with townhouses with plenty of parking and increasing foot traffic, small stores, pedestrian friendlier
- Natick as a destination
- Group health insurance for Natick residents
- Preserve diversity...economic, age, religion, cultural: increase ethnic diversity
- Open forum for all ideas
- Improved roads and sidewalks
- Transportation: bike lanes, walkability, public transit (neighborhood buss, train), CRT (rail trail), mono-rail
- Control development process
- Parking for downtown

- Attract more businesses so that there are more Natick employers
- Strengthening and improving schools
- Preserve open space: maintain open space, trails, recreational facilities
- Preserve community values
 - Strong community center and senior center
 - Pool
 - Diversity and affordability
 - Affordable over 50 housing
 - Keep apartments
- Restaurants with outdoor seating
- More housing downtown
- Keep local business: diversity of businesses (hardware stores, etc.)
- Preserve historic areas of downtown: keep quaint northeast architecture
- 20 years from now: a 19 year old high school in really good condition
- Financially more responsible
- More services
- More single family owner occupied homes...perhaps through tax incentives
- Lower taxes
- Traffic: more sidewalks, pedestrian friendly
- Night life in downtown
- Parking garages
- Higher test scores in schools
- Maintain small town feel and population
- Housing affordable to all...middle to middle upper class
- Allow residents to retire here: don't price us out of our homes
- Continue recycling effort: look at town wide energy use, green buildings
- Smart growth: mixed downtown usage
- Conduct a study: do families with kids cost more than those families without kids?
- Attract those who provide revenue to town without utilizing all services
- Downsizing options
- Safe biking trail
- Full life fitness for all ages...walking trails, weight room facilities open to public, community will be a healthier place to live
- Faith community collaborations (like UPON)
- Less cars... better public transportation....bussing and carpooling
- Walk to schools
- Maintained infrastructure: historic buildings, streets, sidewalks, schools, municipal buildings

Values – 3rd Session – Red

- Town feeling: heart and passion
- Focal point...downtown gathering point

- Diversity of population: economic/age/religious
- Affordability
- Connectedness: interactions between people
- Acceptance: townies vs. newcomers
- Downtown: mixed use. Balances residential, commercial, retail, professional.
- Library status
- Broader perspective in planning initiatives.
- Meaning: how does it all fit together, moving forward?
- Economic breadth
- Proximity to Boston: close and far enough
- Broadmoor, Elm Bank, Community Farm, TCAN, Library
- People care a lot for and about the town
- We like how people can interact through recreational opportunities...like Wood Trail, Concerts, etc.
- We want to preserve an affordable range of housing choices. Not just one bedroom apartments by rail. Reflect diversity of population to preserve.
- Housing...ranges. Have we already moved beyond (too affordable?)
- Housing stock...ranch, \$1 mill plus, condos
- Preserve and improve our education system
- It could be much better
- Preserve how much people value the educational system
- We need to be willing to spend more on education
- We need to have, preserve strong academic environment for all levels of skills
- Good town rec department...drama, swimming, sports
- One generation looks after the next...we never lost our connectedness (schools)
- We have a lot of age diversity
- Remember, the challenges are connected and we need to draw on our diversity to address them

Vision – 3rd Session – Red

- Eclectic and diverse community: cosmopolitan, rural...Broadmoor, suburban
- Place with good paying jobs and housing that people can afford (concordance!) (employees, young families, seniors, Teachers, Town employees, etc.)
- Transportation system...serves regional and local needs...seniors and youths
- Reevaluation of educational and recreational opportunities for kids and seniors and all ages
- Academic system @ its pinnacle, meeting needs of town, noted for teachers and programs
- We can bike between North and South of Route 9 connected and there are plans now!
- Remember: reasonable costs...walking trails and bike trails

- How did you
 - Maintain your neighborhood feel?
 - Achieve the regional transportation that was affordable and realistic?
 - Get resources from the state...back?
 - Retain the economic diversity?
- Strong educational system but have forward thinking
- Greater diversity of cultural and racial vibrancy
- Downtown still a hub of the community maintain its character downtown
- Improve on affordability by having planning
- Improved open space issues
 - Walking trails and sidewalks
 - More of a planned community for access to open space
 - Parks: access to our assets, lake Broadmoor
 - Leads to improve recreation and healthfulness
 - Allow for healthful aging and wellness
- Network of public transportation with other towns
- Regional view of transportation and services: education and fire?
- Business friendly...it is now without a split rate...we are now the only town in MA with a major mall without a split rate
- Health insurance cooperatives
- Tax rates
- Good education system
- Transportation system
- Affordable housing, short commute
- Schools: place for all kids, vision for education, extracurricular (diverse)
- Development: proactive, town center and mini centers, pedestrian and bike
- Politics: more involvement and less complaining
- Fiscal: responsible, creative, positive and not negative
- Personal: care for all
- Mini town centers to bike and walk to
- Cultural diversity
- Mixed use downtown live/work/entertain
- Public transportation
- Keep the essence of community with more services and amenities
- Cooperation with surrounding communities for services

Values – 3rd Session – Blue

Relative affordability

- Better than some surrounding areas
- Preserve affordability
- Preserve single tax rate: residential and business
- Expand options; strength is economic diversity
- Create more affordable housing: don't isolate it...disperse it

Financial stability of town: how measure?

- Challenges ahead
- Discuss revenue options
- Health care costs
- Salaries and related → 80%

Experience town as a community

- Teen development opportunity at library
- People I know all over town crossover
- Kid friendly stuff...drama...
- Town Rec Dept: Natick Drama Workshop, basketball, football
- Unique history part of something different
- Neighbors
- Continuity...welcomed, included
- Parent involvement...takes a village

Schools

- Quality of teachers varies
- Elementary schools are strong
- Community involvement
- Community/neighborhood schools
- NHS Sports Dept.
- Good coaches involved
- Value M Sers as individuals
- Strong curriculum
- Variable experience academically
- Average kids left out:
- Equalize and balance MS's
- Electives limited
- Want kids to have fun
- Cooperation between school community and rest of town
- Leadership also variable...pockets

Participatory town meeting

- Style government
- Old boy network selectmen
- Expand participation
- I can!
- Downtown
- Museums
- Natick center
- Associations
- Pegasus TV Studio

- NSC
- Kids connect

Institutions

- Library
- Hospital
- Senior center...needs improvement
- Recreation center (Cole) needs improvement
- Facility...preserve programs
- Lots of churches
- Natick mall
- Police and fire

Viable downtown

- Walk in it
- Shops
- Programs...after school
- Make it viable
- Cluster development near, so people could walk
- Commuter rail downtown
- Insufficient park and ride

Transportation

- Neighborhood bus...support commuter rail?
- LIFT Bus...Framingham
- Congestion...construction...27 Bottleneck

Mall

- Pays taxes
- Fun to go to
- Congestion especially during holidays
- Low ages and benefits employer
- Brings visitors
- Higher prices coming
- Kid hangout no trouble
- Distraction
- Kid oriented stores
- Connect rail trail to Mom

Open Space and Parks

- Low population density
- Woods...need better accessibility
- Cochituate lakes and ponds swim, fish, boat

- Diversity close to downtown
- Dam in south Natick
- Farms
- Common
- Activity center

Vision – 3rd Session – Blue

Vibrant downtown

- With small town feel
- With accessible transportation
- With more parking
- With more housing...empty nesters...above storefronts?
- Bike friendly
- Food store
- Arts community

Community Senior/Rec/Teen/Arts/Center

- Expand on artistic cluster that is currently downtown

Open Big Park

- Throughout town
- Place to fly a kite
- Sports field
- Hiking woods

Accessible transportation system across town

New high school...also face lifts at other schools

Small town feel: with viable downtown

- Not excessive population jump
- Not high rise “beautification”
- Largely bedroom community...place to live, not industry, but large businesses
- Small biz, people live and work here
- Keep major commercial activity on route 9

More affordable housing

- Condos are expensive

More ethnic diversity and cultural

Common Themes – 4th Session

- Comprehensive master plan
 - Overall plan
 - Understand funding
 - Understand process
- Eliminate traffic issues
- Plan for growth and development
- Schools: educational standards and facilities, infrastructure, quality of education, superior teachers, costs dollars
- Accessible government: maintain what we have got...fewer studies, more action
- Community center and senior center: multigenerational with swim pool
- Vibrant downtown: live/work, arts, amenities...groceries, housing, transportation hub, rail and bike trails

Affordability

- Public employees able to live here
- Diversify housing stock
- Redevelop existing properties...keep open spaces

Values – 4th Session – Green

- Small town with community spirit
- Safety
- Train station
- Organic farm
- Independent businesses and stores
- Self sustaining community
- Distinctive town center
- Library, theater, TCAN
- “Old fashioned” feel
- Open space, lakes, forest
- Geographic location
- Good elementary school program
- Relatively affordable
- Recreation programs
- Town services
- Balance of residential and commercial
- Maintain current housing density (apartments vs., single family homes)
- Focus on family
- Youth sports access
- Library...children’s room
- Affordability

- Proximity to Boston
- Small town feel: open space, downtown center
- Volunteerism
- Need to change family programs
- Need to have more public forums
- Need to have interaction between schools
- Need downtown parking
- Need commuter rail for West Natick
- Need expanded TCAN
- Small town feel (neighborhood)
- Lots of cultural activities
- Family oriented
- Location...proximity to Boston
- Walking distance to shops
- Diversity of population
- Lots of independently owned businesses
- Historical aspect of town
- Open space, e.g. town forests
- Revitalization of downtown Natick
- Library
- Feeling of safety
- South Natick and Elm Bank, i.e. farm

Vision – 4th Session – Green

- Financially stable \$?
- Good schools: inviting, technology, smaller classes, energy efficient, quality teachers
- New high school – “green”
- Sidewalks on through streets...walk ability...rail and bike trails
- No crime
- Affordability
- Senior center and community center
- Swimming pool and gym
- Health care...consistent health care for children...some can't afford it
- Traffic control...no traffic jams
- Longer library hours and funding
- TCAN...outreach to all ages for classes
- Multimodal transportation
- Drivers' ed part of high school curriculum
- Civil discourse when there are disagreements
- Even more volunteer involvement
- More electives in high school; music programs

- More connected open space
- Housing based on good urban planning
- Youth center
- Better roads
- Balanced vs. split tax rate?
- Affordability of housing
- Equal focus on pedestrians; pedestrian friendly downtown – bikers *vis-a-vis* downtown
- Planning for infrastructure so that it keeps pace with development and new housing
- More programs for middle school kids
- Expansion of neighborhood bus
- Bike trail; emphasis on walking rather than driving
- Continue to raise educational standards in Natick: keep class sizes manageable, etc.
- Controlled planning and development and keep citizens involved
- Maintain and preserve open spaces
- Dog park
- Allow college students/senior to be able to stay in Natick
- Preserve what we have now
- Accessible public transport
- Alternative transportation access, example: bike paths
- Comprehensive master plan: schools (new high school), traffic (calming), zoning, open space, bike lanes, housing affordability
- Smart growth based on community input
- Inclusive government
- Open town meeting
- Elected vs. appointed town positions
- Governmental accountability
- Government transparency: hard to know what's going on unless you work real hard to find out
- Foster vibrant downtown...smaller businesses, liquor licenses
- Maintain safe environment

Values – 4th Session – Blue

History

- Distinct—early 1600's
- More than a mall
- Sense of place

Downtown

- Inviting
- Library
- Arts presence
- Train...easy to Boston

- True common...gathering place
- Big enough
- Events
- Mix of uses
- Traffic not good
- Parking not good

Natural Beauty

- River
- Lake
- Forest
- Audubon
- Parks
- Open space
- Trees...plant new now for future
- There is a fear of development

Accessibility to Mass Pike

Transportation:

- Speeding Lime to Oak bad and Speen too
- Need sidewalks, curbs, walking is a dangerous problem
- Little public transportation: neighborhood bus and train to Boston

People Involved

- Care
- Active
- Give of themselves
- Lot of events and volunteers

Recreation and Parks Department

- Top notch
- Always something going on
- Outstanding programs
- Kids programs
- Oversubscribed...near capacity
- But the down side is that it is fee based...some kids are closed out by fees

Negative Values

- Split—Old Timers *vs.* newcomers: town should do outreach for conversation
- Not as diverse...racially and ethnically
- One-million-dollar homes attract different type of people...freeze out non-affluent
- We don't want to become another Wellesley (homogeneous) rather than the socio-econ diversity which is good and the openness to diverse opinion

Affordability

- Town service employees can't live here...teachers, police, fire, etc.
- Town zone land use for more housing opportunities
- Elder living...assisted living not available
- Density/affordability/good design
- Enhance value of downtown
- Need support infrastructure...grocery
- Redevelop places to preserve open space
- Accessibility for disabled

Schools

- Facility = good enthusiasm
- Coaches as teachers
- High school is about teaching more than the building
- Fee for bus for close parents
- Better than other places and worse than other places
- Improving but need to improve more
- Issues at middle school and high school...more scrutiny
- Taxes a double edge for seniors
- Neighbors move to Sherbourne and Newton and Wellesley—performance?
- Real estate objection to schools
- Kids are our future...put our dollars there
- High school is falling down...no proposal to correct
- Discussion, not action

Vision – 4th Session – Blue

Schools

- Infrastructure
- New high school
- Curriculum: home of scholars
- Overemphasis on sports
- Hire history teachers to teach history
- Teacher recruitment
- Additional funding with accountability

Traffic

- Interchanges
- Access to Route 9 at Speen and at Oak
- Coordinate what happens all at once
- More public transportation...buses
- Rail trail and more bike trails...fewer parent car trips
- Sidewalks for safety

- Pedestrian bridge across Route 9
- Coordinated traffic lights

Senior City and Community Center

- Swimming pool: maintenance and operation dollars
- Downtown
- Take action

Trees and Open Space

- Along sidewalks
- Tree City
- Underground utilities
- Keep, enhance, more, maintain without chemicals...healthy development and native plants

Development

- Sensibly...where there is already transportation
- Good design
- Pedestrian downtown
- Town forest can be scary
- Add meeting places...limited

Affordability and Diversity

- Develop some areas
- Keep others open and accessible
- Reach out to minority communities...welcome, housing, jobs, etc.

Process

- Endless studies...little action (high school, community center)
- Form of government appropriate
- Natick is inward focused...benchmark other communities other perspectives
- Don't trust government...what's the agenda?
- Recognize committee work
- Trust but verify

Vibrant Downtown

- Local independent businesses
- Arts a magnet for activity
- Restaurants and bookstore
- New housing downtown
- Infrastructure...grocery
- Links to senior center/community center
- Parking outside...walking within

Common Themes – 5th Session

Balance

- Better walking & fewer cars
- Less traffic
- Develop existing features
- Pro-active planning
- Balance 40B/Open space

Downtown

- Preserve character, feel; this attracts people
- Fully utilizing what's there
- More part of livability
- Local businesses
- Destination, not drive-thru
- Parking
- TCAN!
 - Restaurants?
- Impact of Mall

Preserve the Character

- Small town flavor
- How people treat each other

Housing

- Affordable, but not overwhelming

Community Center

- Teens, young adults, seniors
- Pool, gym
- Serve everyone – all day/night

Schools

- Change from good to great
- Keep staff; less turnover
- Better instruction
 - Languages
 - Technology
 - METCO
- Programs
- New High School

Values – 5th Session – Green

- Community is inspiring, comes together at Town Center to get things done, Natick has an identity
 - Don't think I have ever seen a process like we are doing here in Natick
 - We are forward thinking
- Family friendly
- Caring community
- Neighborly
- Open space preservation
- Maintain historical integrity: town hall, fire and police station look historical...we have been sensitive to retain the historical look
- Excellent school system
- Renewal energy like this session
- Commitment to long term improvement
- Open government approach
- Welcoming
- Physical location ...transportation and shopping
- Growing and vibrant
- Arts scene
- Community
- Preserve sense of history...2 historic districts...righteous causes...missionary and abolitionists.
- Unpretentious
- Community has a heart and spirit.
- Everything is centered around downtown
- Open spaces and far community in South Natick
- Good mall going on...in the right place
- Arts, farm, arts center make good town
- Economic diversity
- Not so PC that we have to stop doing things
- Value...not out priced, many traditions: parades, civic organizations, elderly events
- Natick pride...example Doug Flutie attends all
- Community friendly people to get to know
- Good neighborhood feeling.
- Tilly and Sally's...get to know neighbors...support town with money...promote
- Other local businesses too
- Good sports program
- METCO: wish it would extend to elementary and get buses for sports/activities after school.
- Affordability but is this still true today?
- Community feeling
- Excellence in schools

- Relationship with businesses
- Commitment to families and kids
- Economic diversity
- Tolerance, i. e. being welcomed and not having had to live here your whole life to be welcomed
- Parents are involved...they start things and get them done
- Town athletics
- Commuter rail
- Safety
- Cultural resources: library, center focus, allegro music school
- Stable tax base much better than any town council...no big jumps or surprises

Vision – 5th Session – Green

- Sufficient financial resources that are planned without huge jumps in taxes
- Smart growth: traffic, housing, business, flexibility (can we respond to cases individually re: affordability and their ability to pay taxes)
- Accommodate more downtown shoppers with more diverse stores
- Maintain community feel: welcoming, caring...support/networking
- Auto calls during emergencies...also, if there is a need in the neighborhood it goes out to the neighborhood for help
- We feel safe
- Small town feel
- We have lessened out dependence on autos with bike trails and more to offer downtown
- More night life options are downtown for after TCAN events
- Improve schools
- Infrastructure improvement, i.e. roadways, sidewalks,etc.
- Effective dissemination of information
 - Coordinated
 - Consistent
 - Activity programs could have an add on to let people know about town resources
- Improvement grants: needs based
- Maintain affordability for those who live here now and want to continue to do so
- Have co housing so you don't feel like you are separated from the community
- 15 years from now there is a new school for Natick High School and more options for electives...too many studies, i.e. study halls because we can't fund more in arts, shop, technology, skill building, non-college track
- No more development...want small (status quo) and less traffic...already can't handle traffic
- Stay the way it is with conveniences
- Planned town where you can work and live close by...more green...self sustaining
- Small town feel
- "Townie" double edged sword...need to expose students to options away...to learn different and new opportunities but most are told to "stay near by"

- Need to encourage students to take risks...learn new things through broad range of programs, electives, academic support
- Malls will encourage “fast” living...need Mom and Pop stores...especially downtown
- Not a lot to go downtown for in relationship to shopping...alcohol permits prevent more restaurants downtown...need more traffic to TCAN
- Movies at TCAN or on common away from malls
- Mo more Redmen, tomahawk chop or painting on post office wall. Use the name of the Indians that were here. It is not politically correct.
- Emphasis on foreign languages in schools...need more especially at lower levels
- State needs to commit to invest in town
- Accountability of officials in town needs improvement
- Place for children to live when they grow up
- They may not want to live here unless there is still farmland.
- Want hospital to be here still.
- Kids won't live here because they value open land and public spaces
- Technology in schools is not state of the art...Wilson's computer has been down since the beginning of the year
- Not enough available online especially in school systems
- Transportation within town, expand neighborhood bus, use special ed vans for public transportation for elders
- Control residential growth through less dense housing
- Maintain our identity as family and friends and tolerant
- Affordable and healthy grocery store in downtown near commuter rail
- 20 years from now
 - New high school
 - Renovated elementary schools
 - Top 3% in schools nationwide
 - Attract employment...but there are some limits on space
 - Teachers could afford to live here
 - Walking friendly
 - Biking
 - Renovate Johnson School with town dollars only
 - Senior Center is completed

Values – 5th Session – Red

- Strong sense of community
- People know each other
- It's a cultural Mecca
- Such a variety of sports: HS sports, youth, life recreation, night volleyball
- Library
- Natick Commons!
- A vibrant Town Center – historic buildings preserved – we cross paths
- Parks & natural resources; Town Forest\

- Sense of community
- Good place for kids – low crime
 - Activities, Parks & Recreation
 - Community Farm
 - Natick Coop Play Group
 - TCAN
- Neighborhoods – parks for the neighborhood
- Affordability – want to preserve and increase/enhance. More affordable than local communities, but diverse economically; we need to maintain this.
- Safe. Pedestrian, and I live near commuter rail; I feel safe here
- Sidewalks, Police, fire
- There is some open space (natural, undeveloped space.) Town Forest, etc.
- Winona Farms “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.”
- Like: Natick Community Farm
- Lookout Farm – nice. Keep an eye on it.
- Rail Trail – establish it!
- “Natick is real.” Endless opportunities to be involved. It’s not hoity-toity. People are down-to-Earth. Regular folk.
- We value both libraries
- I like KidsConnect – after-school support
- Economic diversity – “It’s not just rich people”
- Cultural diversity
- Affordability – well, houses used to be; Apts., sure. Condos
- Age groups – wide group
- Downtown, compared to, for example, Framingham, “Green, lush.”
- Bike paths
- Casey’s Hot Dogs, etc. – quite a lot of pride re: Casey’s!!
- Open to citizen participation; lots of volunteers; open to newcomers!!

Vision – 5th Session – Red

- Recollection of an Ohio development where elder housing is integrated with college & younger housing.
- The graffiti I see exploding in Natick is very disturbing. Would love to see encouragement of multi-generational activities/projects – Gangs? Alienation? Anger?
- Kids – What do they have to do other than party? In past, we went to movies/mall, but no longer does that happen.
- Need a community ctr.
- Should the Sr./Community Center be a... Community Center – vulnerable populations – teens, elderly, etc.
- A place where teachers/firefighters can afford to live
- HOOP coming in – hope they just hop on the train!
- Traffic no worse... OK, better!

- More pedestrian friendly, so all (& HOOP residents) can walk
- Strengthen in-town public transportation
- It will be safe for an 8-yr old soccer player to get to practice, walking or biking.
- Hey – no cars downtown!!
- There’s a perception that education deteriorates once you hit middle school – many have left! If that continues, what does it mean for a strategic plan exercise? For the town?
- International Baccalaureate program in High School
- Would like to see 55+ /Assisted living development
- Use Town Forest more!
- Preserve natural resources – include passive uses such as ice skating
- Speen St. Armory ... boat ramp? Open space, tie to Pegan Cove – train station ... Community ctr. – tie w/in Natick to downtown
- Strengthened identities of the many neighborhoods. Scale the town facilities, etc. to a neighborhood size.
- Parking for downtown – outside of downtown, to allow it to be walkable
- Bring back the streetcars – better in-town public transportation (hey, what a draw!)
- Use the space above the rail lines!! Like over the Pike. Like Millennium Park in Chicago!
- Bypass the downtown... somehow.
- Physical continuity – able to get around the town, walk, commuter rail
- An easy way to get across Rte. 9 – footbridge!
- The sunken rail tracks now are great!
- Walkability – bikeability – be conscious of connecting the big parcels, sort of “emerald necklace” idea
- Keep diversity – economic/class/age/culturally
- Available space downtown, visible, shoppable. Someplace to eat after TCAN
- Health/hospital issues – keep/expand Leonard Morse Hospital – add clinics in different parts of Natick
- Neighborhoods – parks for the neighborhood
- Someday, I’ll need to move from my biggish single family house – where do I move? West Natick condo? What can I afford near downtown?
- The open areas (buildings) downtown – 3rd floors downtown –
 - Tennis court in Clark Block? Underutilized 3rd floors!
 - Store
 - Restaurant
 - Artist studio
 - Professional offices
 - Residences
 - TCAN has a 3rd floor not yet developed!
- Adequate parking; proximate to downtown – quick access
- Fresh produce, downtown, year ‘round
- A movie theater downtown

Values – 5th Session – Blue

Small Town feel

- Sense of community
- Knowing your neighbors
- Town events
- Senior Center
- School Programs
- Parks & Recreation Dep't.
- TCAN
- Activities: arts, drama, music
- Accessibility – able to get around
- Thriving Town Center
- Multigenerational families
- Mom & Pop businesses
- People help each other
- Volunteerism
- Football / Sports Teams – Pride
- Pride

Housing

- Balanced, Affordable
 - Proximity to train
- Not just mansions
 - 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
- Aging population – stay in home
- More density leads to renting or short-term buying; still expensive
- Zoning – one rule
- Affordable / dense areas for affordability

Environment

- Wetlands & vernal pools
- Open space
- Playing fields

- Wildlife sanctuary
- Foxes become lost, due to development
- Organic farms
- New development affect drainage of old homes
- Trees are valued
- Integrate open space with housing
- Rail Trail – needs support

Development

- Building on open spaces
- Redevelopment
 - Historic houses out
 - McMansions in
 - Zoning?
- Community learn about zoning & Planning Board
- Control development in a responsible way

Recreation Center / Senior Center / Community Center

- In 15 years, ¼ of population will be 65+
- Integrate older, younger
 - Not to polarize politics
 - One Community
- Integrated programming
- Multi-use – with schools?
- For kids not on sports teams
- Robotics, arts classes, etc., for non-sports kids
- Consider donations – big businesses – Mall

Schools

- Solid, but some holes
- NHS
- Middle school
- Meet all these needs
- Small class sizes – as density increases, capacity concerns

Taxes

- To invest in community
- Some have already paid for years
- Educate seniors: someone had done it before us

Single tax rate

Transportation

- Lack of transportation
- Seniors can't drive – more frequent neighborhood bus
- Town fixes all roads at the same time
- Town has outgrown roads
- Traffic cutting through – Regional planning absent; regional money absent
- Enforce speed limits
- After school activity traffic
- Parking downtown

Education

- Good elementary – exodus to Framingham Charter School – takes \$
- Concerns about MS & HS
- Potential to be great, not there yet
- Strong special ed, but not strong in gifted
- Lack diversity in electives at MS, HS
- Like elected School Committee – representation
- 5th-8th grade M.S. is problematic, mixing 5th & 8th grades
- Inequality between two M.S.'s – look at other towns, with grades separated in buildings
- Contain class size – now 18-25 – too much gap
- NHS & Kennedy M.S. buildings
- Half of teachers 5 years or less
 - Recruitment
 - Teacher salaries
 - Burnout?
- Enrichment programs lacking for advanced kids
- Good pre-school program & all day Kindergarten
- Library programs

Vision – 5th Session – Blue

- Balance: Diverse population, age, financial condition
- Balance open space/development
- Nothing really missing (no big holes). Maintain and improve:
 - Schools
 - Recreation programs
 - Traffic
- Community Center
- More active Natick American Legion
- Education programs – look to grant funding from foundations and think-tanks; also ask for their expertise
- Look to other Towns for outside-the-box solutions to issues
 - Regionalization for shared resources, such as schools administration

- Take control of development
 - Density
 - Affordability
- Too reactive – conduct pro-active years-out planning with community involvement
- Need for social services:
 - Natick Service Center funded by private donations only
 - Get a social services agency in place
- Network with other institutions
- Downtown
 - Continue to grow as a cultural center and meeting place
 - Live downtown
 - Not a pass-through – make it a destination
 - ◆ More retail
 - ◆ Deal with Parking
 - ◆ More restaurants
 - ◆ Small restaurants
 - ◆ See Needham Center as an example
- New High School – new ways to design high schools
- Hospital: keep it
 - Community health
 - Partner with others nearby

More Natick 360 processes – ongoing, not every 20 years

Common Themes – 6th Session

Pride in Town

- Be part of Natick
- Sense of connectedness within Town
- Vital energized engaged community

Diversity of Town

- Economic
- Social
- Related to development options

Excellent Schools

- Improve system
- Retain teachers and recruit
- New High School
- Become first-rate
- MCAST
- Curriculum
 - Art
 - Vocational

Opportunities

- Seniors programs
- After School
- Town Government
- Recreation

Vibrant downtown

- Later evenings
- Common
- Walk
- Restaurants, pub
- Parking
- Development downtown

Open space

- Assets
- Development pressures

Transportation

- Pedestrian / bike to downtown
- Bike / walking trails

Traffic remediation

- New condos
- Rte. 27 and Rte. 135:
 - Link neighborhoods
 - Cross Rte. 9
- Neighborhood bus
- Regional solutions

Manage growth

- Density
- Diverse options
- Lifespan use
- Friendly 40B

Community Center

- Senior
- Adolescents
- Others

Values – 6th Session – Red

- The Common – A place to get together
- Downtown – economic base
- A very strong Arts & Cultural presence lends a whole new dimension – valuable
- Small business downtown, not chains
- The right mix of the right selection of businesses ... downtown ... would be good
 - Women's or men's clothing stores (Lebow, for example)
- Certainly, more diversity of business downtown
 - But not Harvard Square
 - Perhaps more akin to Downtown Wellesley
 - Starbucks?
- 300 people will show up for this!
- Recreation department – a wealth of services
- Support of Town's seniors (for example, Sr. Ctr.)
- Diverse community – multiple faiths, for example – specifically, tolerance of differences
- Affordable housing
 - By State 40B definition, low
 - By comparing to surrounding communities, we're more affordable
- Want to preserve a welcoming atmosphere for newcomers
- We value that there are multiple generations her in Town; unique in this area!
- The value placed on the schools (by the way, are there getting to be fewer kids?)
- Safe – Some folks feel OK not locking doors!
- Open space
- Involvement of parents in schools

- Sense of community – live, work, play, pray in Natick
- Good commuter location
- An eagerness to do things well
 - Government
 - Youth programs
 - Volunteerism
 - Downtown revitalization
- Neighborliness & “tree-lined street’-ness
- A sense of mobility – it should be easy to get around
- Economic & cultural diversity
- Our size – manageable now – population
- What we have left of open space
- Wealth of services – firefighting, trash, schools, etc.
- Downtown areas
- History of the town – feel, buildings, etc.
- Income diversity – control the McMansionization
- Open space
- The Town feel – The Town of Natick – Identity, pride

Vision – 6th Session – Red

- We have a wide variety / diverse spectrum of housing choices:
 - Senior housing
 - Small/young family
 - Retirement
 - Rental
- Downtown
 - Parking
 - More restaurants
 - More transportation to/from downtown
 - A grocery store downtown
 - Housing downtown
 - Business center that attracts “outsiders’ to shop/spend
 - Leave TCAN at location & see light and someplace to go (and a policeman visible & walking around)
- An expanded Natick after school program
- Open spaces – connectedness
- Community Center – akin to Lexington Hayden Center (all ages)
- Excellence in schools – should be no doubt; people aren’t moving out because of schools.
- Public transportation – build a Rte.9 tunnel! A monorail
- Parking downtown – for commuters (would have liked a depot on E. Bank site)
- Commuter-friendly transport & parking

- A new building for High School
 - Excellent schools
 - School alternatives, like Stuyvesant, etc. – high achievement
 - Like Keefe Tech
- More middle & HS programs – dries up post-elementary
- Bike path network – bike trails, too, on CSX tracks
- Sidewalks – For safe walks to school!
- A rainy-day fund to be kept for years when state payments dip.
- Growth is managed to avoid over-development; even with high-density, some space must be retained as open.
- Manage/rebuild Rte. 9. A bypass... yes! – Oak St., 27/9 – so bad!
- Given current homogeneity, encourage greater diversity
- School system – commit to excellence by attracting & retaining talented staff & teachers – it's the people
- Increase diversity of businesses
- Quality of affordable housing
- Loads of public transportation – able to get around
- Areas for kids to socialize, etc. – skateboard park!
- A downtown that's alive at night, partially pedestrian
- Minimize potential for kids to ... stray... and funded after-school activities
- Transportation to/from activities – bike trails, shuttles, sidewalks
- A public pool.
- Schools – easier for special education students to get appropriate services – also, brighter kids able to be served/stimulated.
- Bike trails, like Minuteman
- With 1,200 condos in three years (potentially), that's a major concern.
 - “Brodnitzki Greenway” should help
 - Sidewalks, connectedness
 - Horror stories, re: traffic
- Retail / Mall jobs / high end Mall condos
 - Would be good to flip flop this
 - Housing near jobs
- School system is able to accommodate growth in population
- Managed growth, with an eye to impact for services, schools, infrastructure

Values – 6th Session – Blue

Open space – not just marshes

- Walkable / bikeable
 - Including downtown
 - Including schools

- Link to:
 - Friendly, welcoming
 - Downtown focus, Common
 - Sense of identity / place

Community Character

- Small town, small town values
- Old fashioned – idealized
- Pride in Town, neighborhood
- Walkable / bikeable
- Meet neighbors
- Civic-mindedness: organized; professional, not aggressive; e.g.: override; Natick 360
- Friendly – easy to live here

Diversity

- Economic – different means
 - As values increase, then less affordable
 - Reverse this trend
 - Economic diversity – different jobs & backgrounds are good
- Lots of long-termers – born here or came back
- Relates back to community character
- Religion, ethnicity all OK
- Bit less white-bread than the W's
- Age diversity
 - Concerns about affordability for seniors
 - Housing, taxes, overall cost of living
 - Information gap

Hospitals / Health Care

- In town
- Region – top quality
- Natick Service Council – food pantry, etc.

Transportation

- Train
- Neighborhood bus
 - [but need neighborhood bus on Rte. 9]
 - Not connected to other towns [no regional—MetroWest—approach]
- Traffic
 - Lot worse than 20 years ago
 - Construction
 - Access for bikers – paths / trails
- Pedestrian
 - Need sidewalks
 - No strollers can use routes

Arts

- TCAN
- Resources for young/old
- Kids programs downtown – arts, dance
- Recreation Department
- Library
- Artists studios

Downtown

- Common – activities
- Parking is a negative
- Stores – bakery, etc.
- Need a grocery

Open space & recreational resources

- Dug pond
 - Good swimming, recreation
- Town Forest
- Elm Bank – walk/bike
- Organic farm
- Walking trails
- South Natick Square – museum, etc.

Preserve older homes

- Redevelopment pressures – condos
- Historic community controls apply if registered
- McMansions reduce green space
 - Knockdowns
- Should conform to neighborhood – original footprint

Sports programs for kids

- Schools and...
- Recreation Dep't

Safe environment / activities for kids, evenings, weekends

Investments in schools made so far

- Sacrifices of people in the past
- Downtown buildings

Natick High School Pride

- Home of Champions

Vision – 6th Session – Blue

Thriving Downtown

- Pub
- Grocery
- Shops
- Nucleus for Town

Finest schools system around

- 2nd to none
- More than a building
- Teachers – good, qualified
- Curriculum
- De-emphasize MCAST
- Computers
- Libraries
- Smaller schools – no 5th grade in M.S.
- Maintain buildings
 - Last 20-30 years longer
 - Yearly costs – life cycle
- Green buildings – retrofit
- Ventilated, lighting, healthy – like library
- Build new High School, but not an empty shell
 - Apex of system about great learning
- No one should have less than I had
- Electives: don't shut down
 - No auto mechanics; kids have to go to Keefe Tech regional school
 - No home economics
 - Too narrow to current status quo
- Look carefully at design – oversee construction

Traffic

- Connectivity to Center from neighborhoods
- North-South connections across Rte. 9
- Incentives to businesses
 - Shuttle from train to major employers
- Bike trail – even to Mall – place to lock bike
- Get experienced folks – overall plan, less random fixes
- Enhance, promote neighborhood bus

Development

- Dense development downtown – near services
- Carriage homes
- Town more involved in where new developments occur; for example, paperboard site on Rte. 27
- Zoning to cap development
- Density leads to loss of sense of community
- Development should add to Town, not just to traffic
- Work with developers – don't litigate