

Vision for the Future Weekend

Executive Summary



More than 500 people contribute toward Natick's future vision

More than 325 people attended the Vision for the Future Weekend at Wilson Middle School October 27-29. With more than 200 surveys received as well, a total of more than 500 people have provided input toward Natick's future vision.

The weekend opened Friday evening with a keynote address by Anthony Flint of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, who sparked a range of questions with his remarks on "smart growth" design concepts for communities. Among his points, Mr Flint advocated for transit-oriented development, which concentrates housing, employment, and services near public transit stations. He pointed out how such designs are energy efficient, environmentally sound, and help preserve what little open space remains in the densely developed metropolitan Boston area.

Joel Barrera gave a brief synopsis about Natick: Our Community Yesterday and Today, prepared for Natick 360 by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). Among the surprising details revealed about Natick were its economic diversity (with roughly equal numbers of high, middle, and moderate/low income households) and its aging population (in 20 years one in four residents will be a senior citizen). Perhaps most surprising is the fact that Natick's large employer base means that more people commute into Natick than commute out of the town.

On Saturday and Sunday, 327 residents invested two hours working together with professional facilitators in one of a series of six workshops discussing what they value about Natick and their aspirations for the community's future.

Residents may access DVDs of the Friday Opening Session and Keynote Speech through the Reference Desk of the Morse Institute Library.

Feedback from event very positive

Phillip Blackerby Associates, project manager and lead consultants for Natick 360 have collected 199 feedback forms (36 Friday night, 163 over the weekend) from people attending the weekend sessions. Overall the feedback was very positive with 74% of respondents rating the Friday night session as "Highly Effective" and 67% of respondents rating the workshop sessions as "Highly Effective."

Phillip Blackerby Associates has compiled all of the comments from the evaluation forms and they are available in the report "Vision for the Future Weekend: Summary of Participant Evaluation." The SPOC is reviewing comments to find areas for improvement.

Participation Breakdown General Public Dominates Participation

- 327 people attend Vision for the Future weekend
- General public are 63% of attendance
- Town Leaders including town meeting members are 28% of attendance
- Community Group leaders are 8% of attendance
- 208 surveys received
- 160 surveys from the public
- 20 surveys from local businesses
- 28 surveys from community groups
- 506 total participants
- 424 participants identified by name



Next Steps: Analyzing the Voice of the People

Blackerby Associates will lead working sessions with subcommittees of each of the Sponsoring Boards (Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Planning Board, Finance Committee, and Conservation Commission) during the week of November 13.

Each subcommittee will analyze, group, and organize information collected during the Vision for the Future Weekend to develop a series of vision and value statements. The Sponsoring Boards will also organize information into themes that will become “Strategic Focus Areas” for subsequent phases.

After each Sponsoring Board conducts their analysis session, Blackerby Associates will consolidate feedback from all of the Boards and generate a set up of vision and value statements and strategic focus area themes. The information will be drafted into a report *Natick: Our Shared Vision for the Future*.

Sponsoring Boards will then be asked to vote to approve the draft report in December.

The Public is Invited to Participate

Natick 360 will hold a working session for the public on Monday 11/13 at 5:30PM in the School Committee Training Room on the 3rd Floor back of Town Hall

During this session, members of the public are invited to review data collected during the Visioning Weekend and work through the process of creating vision and value statements.

Interested members of the public should contact Craig Ross at craig@vmr.com or by phone at 508-655-2545. Space will be limited to no more than 30 participants at the Monday night event. If there is demand for more than 30 people to attend, we will schedule additional sessions during the week of November 13.

Vision and Value Statements

The next step in the Natick 360 planning process is creating value statements, vision statements, and strategic focus areas.

Value statements are short sentences that describe what members of the community value about living in Natick.

Vision statements are short sentences that describe the community’s aspirations for the future of the town.

Strategic Focus Areas are themes or categories under which Natick will develop policies, programs, and projects to move toward the future vision.