



The following summary came directly from notes taken during the individual breakout groups and is not a detailed summary of all discussions.

Natick 2030+: November 29, 2016 Community Meeting

Yellow Group – Skip/Rachel Facilitators

Transportation

- Bus to T/ Increase covered bike parking
- Safer bike lanes
- BRIDJ
- T station improvements - State parking @ W. Natick
- What are traffic generators - lights? Lane configuration?
- Bike Parking - covered
- More walkability – Rt 9, 27, to school
- Traffic
 - 27/9
 - Speen St (E. Pond)
- Parking Downtown – density, proximity, signage
- Sustaining roads – basic funding
- Sidewalks | Bike paths @ Oak St. – part of roadway improvement – safe areas/trails
- Shared Parking Policies

Education and Public Services

- Invested a lot in schools, should maintain our success, capital improvements
 - How do we manage growth/overcrowding?
 - Need to balance with zoning
 - Overcrowding?
 - Class size?
 - Part of the value of Town
- Among the lowest taxes in MetroWest
- Online, evening - how to address growth w/o physical infrastructure
- Town Program Information

Land Use

- Downtown – more restaurants, social space, lighting, seating, environment
- What can Town do to influence mix? Hardware Store
- MJ Should we opt out? Do we want storefronts?
- Planned deterioration of Natick Mall

Summary

- Traffic Management + Transit Access
 - Lots of different solution preferences.

Red Group - Cullen Facilitator

Transportation

- Walking/Bike bridges across Rt 9 –e.g. mall area, Mathworks
- More accessible, attractive train stations
- More auto + bike parking at stations (covered!)
 - Garage
 - Also accommodate flexible day use
- Less auto congestion in Town Center Rt 27 all the way down - incl. accessibility from side streets
- Dedicated bike paths along major roads – Rt 16, 9, 27, etc. (Also multi-modal generally)
- Resynchronized lights – e.g. Oak & Overlook
- Check/renovate all old bridges
- Transportation plan that stays synchronized w/ changes over town – e.g. growth, development, new transport trends, infrastructure
- Review of traffic related to development – including comprehensive traffic study – including surrounding communities
- More sidewalks/safer walking
- Light rail – more options
 - Streetcars/shuttle
- Open trails planned but not completed
- Better street cleaning

Barriers

- \$\$
- Ownership/control
- NE roads – e.g. To allow widening or true complete streets
- Utility companies – follow through, clean up
- Resistance to change – no easy incentives for people not to drive selves

Facilities, Services + Education

- Master plan that is holistic in its considerations
- Maintenance – staying proactive/keeping up
 - Reduced long term costs
- Revenue stream – eg split tax rate, CCA
- Sufficient field space to relieve congestion + allow rest cycle
- What services + facilities will be needed? Forward looking
- Larger school capacity – formula to accommodate actual growth rates
 - modular approach to building?
- Way to balance financial demands w/ rapid growth – needs of residents + pressure on resources
 - Better models? Iterative Design
- Remove mitigation
- More transparency of taxes toward operations of town
- Coordination w/ pressure on utilities to do road maintenance after projects
- More street lights, more crosswalks w/ flashing lights
- Full town coverage by public services – assess where growth away from Center

Barriers

- \$\$
- Space
- Timing – ability to forecast well
- Prioritization

Strengths

- Public Works – Trash + Recycling collection + recycling center
- Public safety
- Good public facilities – library, schools

Land Use, Housing, Economic Development

- Lack of 55+ Housing (consensus)
- Encourage adaptive reuse of existing buildings + parking space
 - E.g. very expensive to renovate historic bldgs.
 - Grants etc. to help?
 - Also lack of parking
- Comprehensive plan of land use + physical building. locations
- Active review of available land/property. Advance planning for acquisition so can act more quickly + more streamlined process so competitive.
 - More vertical parking-+ coverage (like roof use)

Strengths

- Open Space

Barriers

- Need better access

Common Themes

- Holistic, Forward looking master plan w/ integrated strategies + implementation plans
 - Must include funding + maintenance
- Diversity – The How

Green Group

Land Use/ Economic Development/Housing

- Balance density + ratio developed v. open
- Range of housing options
- Sustainable smart development
- Long term vs. transitory residents
- Walkable, sidewalks
- Truly balance community
- Smart economic development that complements + creates jobs
- Traffic Control
 - Parking
- Encourage small biz development
- Continue revitalization of Natick Center
- Encourage Job Creator employers
- Continued strong regional collaboration
- Housing for all ages/incomes
- Active lifestyle for older residents
- Improve variety + quantity of restaurants
- More housing options Downton for ALL ages

Open Space/ Cultural Resources/Historical

- Events – Natick Open Studios
- Cultural Services – TCAN
- Audubon, Pegan Hill, Trail Systems
- “Walker-safe” + bicycle safe communities
- Prioritize sidewalk improvements

- 4-season walking
- Natick/Wellesley Rt 16 No sidewalk
- Accelerate sidewalk creation on main routes
- 1 sidewalk per road
- Good job on recreation open space, but must maintain
- Balance open space + new construction

Transportation/Infrastructure

- Make town more walker bike friendly. Bike trail
- Last minute transports - MWRTA
- MBTA re-build + connect to trail
- Water infrastructure
- MBTA parking (garage)
- More parking as enabler for Natick Center businesses
- Transit oriented development
- Town-wide conservation
- Social communication + outreach
- Encourage next generation to own the 2030 plan
- Under 30's want to walk/bike amenities

Yellow Group – Carole/Jeff Facilitators

Land Use, Housing & Economic Develop

- More smaller housing type choices
- Reduction of minimum lot sizes
- Control of tear downs
- More planning re: consistency of housing types & parking
- Vibrant center w/ grocery – shop, eat, TCAN
- Playground for toddlers in Center
- Water feature somewhere
- Landowners/building owners working together
- Grocery in Center & other locally owned stores
- Interview additional property owners
- Making sure all areas in Town addressed
- Coordinate w/ neighbor towns
- Affordable housing!
- Max building height limits in Natick

- Cohesive transitions

Transportation

- How will town handle growth, MBTA involvement?
- Concern w/ parking
- All N/S route to 27
- Sidewalks – EVERYWHERE – bumpouts
- MBTA
- Public utilities holding up projects
- Close Natick Station; move all service to West Natick
- Close Middlesex Ave & use for parking
- Unaccepted streets are a major issue
- Bicycle access improvements

Open Space & Cultural/Historic

- Promote open spaces – better online info
- Water access at Lilja School/Mathworks & JJ Lane
- Rt 27/9 Intersection looks awful

Summary: Consensus on desire for active Town Center with stores, services, restaurants and open spaces that attract a variety of users and that transitions smoothly to adjacent neighborhoods that work together as a cohesive whole town.

Red – Group 1

Public Services/ Education Facilities

- Majority
 - Better public transportation
 - School Budget
 - Public Works
 - Safety
 - Short term – library + WiFi
- Like: Library (sit)
- Opportunity:
 - Wireless Services / WiFi
 - Towns around the country are doing this (consensus)
 - Will invite companies as tech moves out from Boston
 - Better Transportation | Better Access – yes we feel strongly

- Rail station/stops/accessibility/not safe
 - Need to be modernized
- Parking @ Train Station – near
- Opportunity: bus/public transportation

Schools

- School budget process change
 - School budget gets developed
 - Reactive
 - catch up
 - not visionary
 - not tied to taxes
 - a lot to be done
 - schools old
- New Way of thinking
- Curriculum?/How to build budget
- General Government / School Buildings
- Plan for both government / School domains
- Opportunity to use technology and labs available @ schools

Public Works

- Vision
 - (Positive) we are lucky to have services
 - Maintain high quality of services
- Like
 - compost program
- Safety
 - not many issues
 - Lights when commuters come off train (Rail station)
- Better public Transit – strong/agree

Land Use and Housing

- Longer Term
 - More options for Housing I
 - Age appropriate housing
 - Affordability + town-wide development
- Care facilities, elderly housing (NEED)

- Consider people who have lived here & are aging
- Housing alternative/affordable/walkability
- Age w/ other people (lacking today)
- Downsizing, moving out of Natick
- Tiny houses is a good opportunity (all ages)
- Millenials (bikes)/starter homes is a problem
- Center already dense, multi-family provides opportunity
- Housing (multi-family) helps business
- A lot of development / overdevelopment / keep trees
- Natick losing character
- Development needs to happen in more thought out way
- Economic development opportunity: Zoning/industrial/tax generating
- Traffic/parking
- New development very exclusive
- Not all development in downtown Natick
- Consider pressure put on budgets

Green Space

- Preserve agricultural businesses
- Lookout Farm – treasure for town

Open Space/ Historical/Preservation

- What do we want to preserve?
 - Charles River – pedestrian bridge over dam
- Family oriented destinations
- Preserve/Create + Connect
- Walkable open space/not get run over by cars
- Biking/walking
 - Ex. Wellesley behind whole foods
- Kids biking to school
- Dog Park
- Linking to other aspects – History/Cemetery
- Perimeter of lake walkable
- Nightlife
- Town forest preserved
- We have places to walk/share info
- Army Labs – leverage for community

- WWII museum

Green Group – Jahangir Facilitator

Public Services/ Education Facilities

- School Capacity
 - Memorial School Expansion?
 - Trailers at Kennedy?
 - Control of Development?
 - Senior vs. Family w/ kids
 - Turnover of senior residents to families w/ kids
- Special-Ed - keep local
- Public fire & medical Facilities
- Technical education
- Traffic management
 - Oak + South Natick
 - Pedestrian – Kids
- Young people’s recreation + activities – weekends
- Better dump

Land-Use/Housing/Economic Development

- Senior Housing – first floor master bedroom
- Zoning? Higher density
- Diversity of housing stock
- Development of open space / control
- Public vs. developer land acquisition for cluster development
- Public transportation vs. multiple cars/family
- Housing cost/affordable housing
- Single tax rate is advantage
- Relocate businesses + use space

Open Space and Cultural Resources

- Historic society dependent on donations
- Trail use
- Open space – access may be a problem
 - Sidewalks
 - Crosswalks
 - Police Reserve

- Historical Preservation – neglected
- Community Preservation Act
- Traffic Prevents ready access
- Street repair
- Preserve town qualities

Eric Facilitator

Services

- Maintain current level
- Avoid Overdevelopment
 - Schools (example) – create adequate capacity in efficient manner
- Services meet full level of population
 - Children to elderly
 - Disabled
- Culture of innovative service capability
- Integrate vocational training in schools
- Public + private health services
- Life-long learning
- “True” recreation/community center
- Adult + Youth Recreation
- Improved energy efficiency – self sufficient
- Composting / landfill

Land Use/Housing/Economic Development

- Assisted living options –increase
- Diverse income housing options
- Maintain the “Natick” feel
- Maintain balanced res/commercial/industrial base
 - Live/work balance
- Review zoning laws to limit growth
- Prioritization of open space
- Improved parking for Town Center
- Maintain character during development
- Review traffic plans during development
- Multi-use tenant development impact on town services
- “Walkability” - neighborhood mixed-use development

- Siting of large scale renewable energy
- Community gardens
- Quiet – feel of downtown
- Balanced residential tax base

Services

- Maintain/Exceed service ratios

Open Space, Cultural + Historic Resource

- Maintain\increase open space
- Cultivate Natick’s historical heritage
- Leader in state for open space
- Increase public open space
 - Strategic opportunities for older space
- Protect, restore + maintain historic spaces
- Strategy around Veteran’s Memorial - continue to honor Natick’s history
- Stronger ties w/ Natick Labs
- Include historical heritage to tell Natick’s story
- Cultivate Natick’s historical heritage
- Integrate historic landmarks into physical plans
- Display Natick historical society items
- Maintain + LEAD openness to cultural differences
- Utilize cultural talent

Consensus

Services

- Maintain/Exceed service ratios

Housing / Land Use / Economic Development

- Balanced residential Tax Base

Open Space, Cultural + Historic Resource

- Maintain\increase open space
- Cultivate Natick’s historical heritage

Blue Group – Judi/Terri Facilitators

Open Space & Cultural Resources

- Maintain the space we have
- Offset that w/ open space
- Make Natick more walkable
- A Tilly's in every Neighborhood?
- Huge growth (410%) in open space, but only 15% of it is accessible!
- When we acquire new open spaces, what uses will they be put to?
- Chapter 61A (reduced tax rates for land in Agricultural Use)
- Will there be a limit to housing growth?
- Not just acquisition of open space but also the maintenance and improvement of existing open space
- WALKABLE
- Dog Park!
- Trees (active planting program)
- Elevate historic landmarks of Natick
- Stronger partnership with the schools?
- Is budget for open space a priority?

Transportation & Infrastructure

- Expanded network of public transit (MetroWest transit bus)
- Ensure that residents understand that transportation/infrastructure demands are taken into account as public planning is occurring
- Make train station accessible
- More public transportation services (frequent train stops)
- Providing means (parking etc) to get to use public transit
- Autonomous vehicles to alleviate parking issues.
- Bike lanes & bike parking
- To restore & repair our existing bridges & roads
- Improve congested intersections (Speen & 135)
- 30 mph speed limit this neighborhood is TOO FAST
- Implement traffic calming measures

Public Facilities/Public Services/Education

- The slippery slope of desirability vs. explosive growth
- Rebuild senior housing

- Sports / recreational facility improvements
- Public pool
- Teen center
- Maker Space (general space for any professional to use - artists, tech, consultants, writers)
- If we offer great facilities w/ broad appeal we could get a revenue stream from charging non-resident fees
- Build upon our natural resources (lakes, ponds, forests) and make them more usable: boathouse, boat/kayak racks, pond/skating huts