



Meeting Minutes
November 10, 2020

Presenters & Moderators

Mayor James Donchess, Mayor
Sarah Marchant, Community Development Director
Julie Chizmas, Long Range/Transportation Planner
Matt Sullivan, Planning Manager
Amber Logue, Chair of Masterplan Committee
Will Cohen, Utile
Taskina Tareen, Utile
Elizabeth van der Els, Utile

Breakout Room Facilitators/Scribes

Elizabeth van der Els / Marjorie Hogan
Will Cohen / Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja
Taskina Tareen / Julie Chizmas
Tim Love / Scott LeClair
Matthew Sullivan / Linda McGhee
Jay Minkara / Kate Poirier
Mason Twombly / Scott McPhie
Cassie Mullen / Carter Falk
Adam Varley / Amber Logue
Justin Kates / Cecilia Ulibarri
Jennifer McCormack / Noah Telerski
Jon Spira-Savett / Kerry Miller

Imagine Nashua Citywide Master Plan
Visioning and Goals Workshop

Meeting Agenda

- Where are we in the Process?
 - Scope and Timeline
- What we've heard
 - Engagement Summary
- Where we're going
 - Vision and Goals Framework
- Public Survey #2
- Breakout Room Session
- Next Steps

Meeting Date, Time, and Location

- January 06, 2021
- Convened: 6:00 pm
- Adjourned: 7:45 pm
- Zoom web conference

Attendance

- 85-90 participants throughout session

Where are we in the Process?

Utile, the lead consultant gave an overview of where the Master Plan process is in the timeline:

- Reiterating the purpose and role of the master plan as an inclusive document that combines past and current planning initiatives and community engagement, and acts as a guide for long term planning in the city.
- Going over the overall framework of the master plan process including visioning and core values, plan elements or topic areas and goals and actions.
- Noting that the master plan is wrapping up its research and analytical phase and moving into defining vision, goals and recommendations for the City
- Reminding participants to continue to provide comments and share their feedback of the master plan on the website.

What we've heard

Next the team shared a summary of the community engagement results and public feedback received so far:

- A great engagement push from the city and Imagine Nashua in the last couple of months - reaching out to many groups across the city, including several small or focus groups with diverse communities in Nashua, ward meetings, social media outreach including a video and photo campaign outlining your vision for Nashua.
- Polis Survey:
 - Over 490 people filled the survey and over 215 statements submitted (235 as of now).
 - In general, there was mostly consensus on how the majority of respondents agreed or disagreed with statements.
 - Two opinion groups or groups that voted similarly to statements emerged from the process - Group A had 64 participants while Group B had 313
 - There was general consensus across groups and voters on topic areas such as increasing access to green space or leveraging arts and culture in the city
 - New development and development decisions around conservation areas, climate change impacting Nashua and parking were issues of debate or disagreement.
 - Utile noted that while this may not seem like a large number relative to the city, it is actually a good showing for a first stage of a public process.
 - Major themes that came across the six topic areas: land use and development, housing, mobility and transit, economic growth, open space and natural resources and arts and culture were shared

- Utile explained that the community feedback received so far can begin to directly translate into overarching goals for the City framed under the topic areas

Where we're going

Utile went into more detail about the master plan framework and how a vision and goals fit into the process:

- The vision is an aspirational statement expressing what we want to accomplish as a city and community. The vision reflects the ideal quality of life we aspire to achieve in Nashua
- Core values represent fundamental community principles that guide the Comprehensive Plan, link various plan topics together, and reinforcing plan decisions and actions
- Plan topic areas act as the building blocks of the comprehensive planning process, determined by statutory regulation and planning topics that are important to the community
- Goals represent broad, aspirational citizen-centered outcomes for each plan topic that the City aspires to realize over time
- Actions are specific approaches, policies, studies and tools that the City will use to advance and achieve outlined goals

A draft vision statement was shared and noted that the participants will have more time to discuss the statement in the breakout sessions after.

Utile shared highlights of key existing conditions and trends analysis in Nashua per plan topic area, explaining that the Imagine Nashua draft goals were informed by a combined understanding of: past and current city planning efforts, existing conditions and trends analysis, and comprehensive community engagement so far. To review the full existing conditions interim report please visit:

<https://imagine.nashuanh.gov/>

It was explained that while draft goals may seem very high-level right now, they will gradually translate to more specific actions as the planning process continues - however, the purpose of tonight's exercise is for the community to help define and prioritize main goals first.

Public Survey #2

The next Imagine Nashua survey was introduced - in the form of a digital mapping platform where the community can voice how and where in the city they would like to see improvement or change. Participants are asked to provide comments on a map of Nashua using three kinds of representing the ideas of maintain or protect, develop, and improve. Feedback from this survey will begin the conversation for more specific action and recommendations towards, growth, development and preservation in the city.

Breakout Room Sessions

The remainder of the meeting involved breaking out in smaller groups of 5-6 participants to have an open, collaborative, and robust discussion about crafting a collective vision for Nashua and defining and prioritizing topic area goals. After the small sessions, each group shared their overall takeaways with the larger group highlighted below.

Note: to view a consolidated list of all notes taken during the breakout sessions, please view the public meeting 2 section under the events page on <https://imagine.nashuanh.gov/>

Next Steps

Utile explained that the conversation and feedback received during the breakout sessions will help to carve a collective vision and goals for the city - while every detail cannot be incorporated, the Imagine Nashua team will do their best to reflect a wide array of voices.

The next part of the master planning process will involve delving deeper into spatial planning and scenario analysis in the City, and translating goals into more specific action and recommendations for the future.

Participants were reminded and encouraged to take part and complete the the digital mapping survey #2 on the website.

Breakout Session Highlights and Takeaways

Room 1

Facilitator/Scribe: Elizabeth van der Els/Marjorie Hogan

- Transportation - non-car users should feel more comfortable around Nashua, especially bicyclists. Safety around transportation
- Diversifying job opportunities and options
- Revisiting land use and zoning codes; make process more equitable and exploring options for density
- Vision statement should promote Nashua as a great place to be

Room 2

Facilitator/Scribe: Will Cohen/Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja

- Education needs to be reflected in the Vision statement
- Education is tied to Housing, Open Space and Economic Development
- Keeping kids in the City.
- This became an overarching theme as the group discussed other goals – the need to provide an environment that would encourage kids who are raised in Nashua to stay in the community.
- The vision should be less about reducing cars but promoting alternative options

Room 3

Facilitator/Scribe: Taskina Tareen/Julie Chizmas

- Housing affordability - new housing development should match job creation
- Planning around the pandemic in terms of social gathering, working and living
- “Access” and how it should be a big part of the vision statement.
- Nashua as a connected community; our neighborhoods and overall sense of belonging and ownership should be part of the vision statement and goals
- Celebrate neighborhoods/local business owners for fairs and festivals
- Senior programming/outdoor spaces for seniors as well as accessibility in terms of housing and mobility

Room 4

Facilitator/Scribe: Tim Love/Scott LeClair

- Revitalizing the downtown; making it more mixed-use and multimodal, increasing density and not so much as you get to the perimeter of the city
- Paying attention to accessibility of the city - not just cars but multiple modes of transportation
- Land Use balance - how to increase/make standard lot sizes
- Replace reduce dependence on automobile with encourage multimodality in vision statement

Room 5

Facilitator/Scribe: Matthew Sullivan Linda McGhee

- Frame vision statement more as opportunity and with more emotional/ideological comment
- Equitable, resilient and climate protection may not be accessible terms for everyone
- How is access to home data determined?; Housing equity and access major aspect
- Including elements of endorsing mental health awareness/well being
- Make master plan more engaging rather than just educational to encourage people to invest in our communities

Room 6

Facilitator/Scribe: Jay Minkara/Kate Poirier

- Questions about if population density is a goal of the plan?
- Adding livability to goals - Community access, access to jobs, the trades
- Attracting younger residents - Enhancing education and building skills
- Addressing root causes of poverty, enhancing access to healthy food, addressing lead in homes, increasing opportunities for housing for all income, multi-modal options
- Linking open spaces and natural resources to pedestrian connections
- More emphasis on downtown entertainment and attracting young people.
- More mobility and connectivity, bringing back bike shares.

Room 7

Facilitator/Scribe: Mason Twombly/Scott McPhie

- Education should be highlighted more in the goals such as job training

- Words in vision statement not accessible and exciting
- Focus on what Nashua has rather than what its missing
- Housing affordability/accessible to seniors
- Nashua should be a place people are proud of, and want to come back to

Room 8

Facilitator/Scribe: Cassie Mullen/Carter Falk

- Housing - promoting diversity and affordability
- Density - different situations in different parts of the city
- Encouraging diversity in the city and welcoming that
- Nashua is a city but still feels like a community, this should be reflected in the vision statement
- Sustainability - maintaining mix of businesses, housing and opportunities that works both for younger and older generations

Room 9

Facilitator/Scribe: Adam Varley/Amber Logue

- Increasing resources and opportunities in other areas of the city
- More indoor and outdoor spaces for cultural and recreational activities
- A larger number of spaces for cultural opportunities - desire to see more mixed-use spaces in the city that would allow for public events that may not be consistent with zoning right now
- More theatre space especially smaller spaces
- Goals are too focused on Downtown, should be desire to see other parts of the city promoted in the master plan as well
- Trying to implement policies to encourage businesses to make themselves more accessible to residents with limited means
- Use community members instead of residents in vision statement

Room 10

Facilitator/Scribe: Justin Kates/Cecilia Ulibarri

- Mobility and transit - emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle networks, increasing safety and promoting improvement
- Open space and natural resources - improve access to Merrimack river,
- How do incentivize privately owned open space to remain accessible
- Arts and Culture - consensus around cultural diversity and nurture
- Adding education to the vision statement

Room 11

Facilitator/Scribe: Jennifer McCormack/Noah Telerski

- We need diversity of employers in the city
- Need for housing diversity, more affordable housing
- Housing and economic development is connected to transit, multimodal transit centers - may be different with pandemic
- Public safety should be included in the goals
- Arts and culture - while important, that priority should be in other areas like housing and employment diversity

Room 12

Facilitator/Scribe: Jon Spira-Savett/Kerry Miller

- Connecting communities
- What does equity mean - should this be "socially responsible"/encompassing everyone
- How would reduction of automobiles in Nashua be achieved? consensus was not going to happen any time soon
- Lack of affordable housing
- South end neighborhoods that feel like people who just go to Boston, how to make people enjoy and stay in their neighborhoods?

This memorandum represents our understanding of the events which transpired and the actions which were taken. If they do not conform to a recipient's understanding, prompt written notice must be communicated to the writer. If no corrections or objections are made, this memorandum will be relied upon as a factual interpretation of this meeting.