

VISIONING *for the*

MIDDLETON MASTER PLAN



Acknowledgments

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Special thanks to the workshop and other participants who provided feedback.



Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	II
LETTER FROM MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE	3
MASTER PLAN VISIONING AND PLAN ELEMENTS.....	4
WHAT KIND OF MIDDLETON DO WE WANT BY 2028?	5
Middleton Vision Statement.....	5
KEY FINDINGS FROM SURVEY	5
WHO ARE WE?	8
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: VISIONING SURVEY.....	13
WHO TOOK THE SURVEY?	13
SURVEY RESPONSES	15
INFORMATION PROVIDED BY PARTICIPANTS TO HELP	
EVALUATE SURVEY RESULTS	35
ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES.....	38
PURPOSE OF ENGAGEMENT	38
DEFINING OUR STAKEHOLDERS	38
MIDDLETON'S GET FIT EVENT	39
VISION OPEN HOUSE	40
ASSETS, CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES/LEGACY.....	44
STAY IN TOUCH!.....	47

Letter from Master Plan Committee



A Letter from the Middleton Master Plan Committee

Spring, 2017

Middleton was first incorporated as a Town in 1728 and in the almost 300 years since then, has seen many changes. In 2028, Middleton will celebrate its 300th birthday. Where do we want to be, as a community, as we approach this milestone? What are the steps we should take to preserve the qualities that make us unique and to take advantage of opportunities available to help us improve our town?

This Visioning Report is the first step in updating our 1999 Master Plan. It was developed from feedback gathered from community workshops and other outreach efforts. 385 residents participated in the Visioning Survey, which contained both specific and open-ended questions. From the feedback received, a vision for the future was created for Middleton – a vision of how Middleton residents want our community to look as we celebrate our 300th birthday in 2028. This vision is what will help set the tone for the rest of the “Master Plan 300”. Using the vision, we are just beginning to embark on the second phase of the master plan, completing the master plan update report by May of 2018.

We are grateful for the opportunity to work on the first phase of Master Plan 300 and thank all the residents and town staff that contributed their time and opinions. We look forward to working with you as the town residents continue their work to update the master plan over the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,
The Master Plan Committee

Master plan visioning and plan elements

Purpose-Community visioning for a Town master plan like the one the Town of Middleton has undertaken is a process whereby a community evaluates its historic and present-day assets, and imagines how and where it should grow in order to leave a legacy for the next generation. Visioning helps residents and business owners identify overarching priorities for the preservation, enhancement, and growth of different areas, and sets the tone for a wider array of more specific master plan elements and goals.

Master Plan Elements-Typical comprehensive master plan elements include plan elements such as natural resources, open space and recreation, economic development, housing, public facilities and services, transportation, land use and zoning. More specific goals within these master plan elements can inform decision on policies, by-laws and zoning regulations, and provide mutual certainty and predictability for residents and businesses alike.

What's Required-Chapter 41, Section 81D of the General Laws of Massachusetts provides the legal basis for the creation of Master Plans. Though a community can add more elements, under this statute, the following nine elements of a Master Plan are identified:

- goals and policies
- land use
- housing
- economic development
- natural resources
- open space and recreation
- services and facilities
- transportation and circulation
- implementation

master plan elements



What kind of Middleton do we want by 2028?

A critical aspect of the Middleton visioning effort was hearing from town residents and understanding more about how they wanted their community to look and feel by 2028. What were the things that they valued most about Middleton and what was needed to change or progress in order to achieve an even better Middleton? The vision statement serves to guide the subsequent master planning process based on what Middleton residents told us about their town in the visioning online survey, outreach event and visioning open house.

Middleton Vision Statement

In 2028, Middleton is a flourishing community offering residents a **high quality of life** by taking full advantage of, and emphasizing, its many unique assets – **distinctive history, attractive residential neighborhoods, its central location and access to the North Shore and to Boston, a growing business mix, a network of beautiful open space, community supported agriculture, and community pride.** Middleton's rich **farming history** and its diverse open space, and trails network draw residents and visitors to it. Residential **neighborhoods** offer a welcoming, safe and enriching environment with a variety of housing options – market rate and affordable – for families, seniors and young adults. Redevelopment in the town center area has created a **series of small village centers** with shops and residences in a walkable environment attractive to young and old residents alike. Sidewalks, thru streets and bike trails link the residential neighborhoods to school and recreation areas and appropriately scaled mixed use retail, residential and office space attracts much needed business, jobs and increased consumer spending to town. Middleton's continued participation in state-of-the-art **local and regional public education** and up-to-date **town facilities** continue to attract families, but also provide excellent services and **recreational options** for residents of all ages. Effective Town management, improved transportation connections, and strategic partnerships with our **neighboring communities** have unlocked community and economic opportunities allowing all to share in the success of Middleton and the surrounding region. Finally, a **connected** system of well-maintained **parks, open spaces, and recreation areas** with strong pedestrian and bicycle amenities further contributes to Middleton's high quality of life by improving residents' overall health and making the community among the "greenest" on the North Shore.

Through this Master Plan process and other ongoing community endeavors, this vision of Middleton in 2028 is one of an informed, engaged and productive community, with a shared vision and commitment to achieving a **prosperous and sustainable future.**

Key findings from survey

The following is a brief summary of some of the key findings from the visioning phase of the Middleton Master Plan process. Some of the key ideas and findings are illustrated on the following vision summary map. It is anticipated that these visioning ideas will continue to inform the second phase of the Middleton Master

Plan and help with building more specific master plan recommendations. Results from community input indicated the following:

- Middleton generally has strong community facilities.
- Middleton needs to improve its recreational amenities, varied transportation options, and its community spirit and identity.
- Youth, families and seniors need more services and amenities.
- Respondents were willing to explore how to reduce residential tax burden.
- An openness to growth through the rezoning of targeted areas.
- Support for fees or taxes for permanent open space.
- Support for fees or taxes for permanent open space preservation.
- Many still wish to see municipal services enhanced.
- Sidewalks, traffic calming and congestion reduction are the most pressing transportation needs.
- Many desire retail uses and development design that are conducive to social interactions.
- The Town Center needs to have reduced traffic congestion, improved pedestrian safety, a greater mix of shops, and a streetscape that is designed to allow for walkability and recreation.
- Trails and open spaces should be required and designed as part of residential developments.
- Support for higher design standards for developments, to add character.
- Many anticipate needing non-single-family dwellings in the future.
- Many anticipate seniors needing non-luxury, market-rate housing as well as subsidized housing and assisted living facilities.

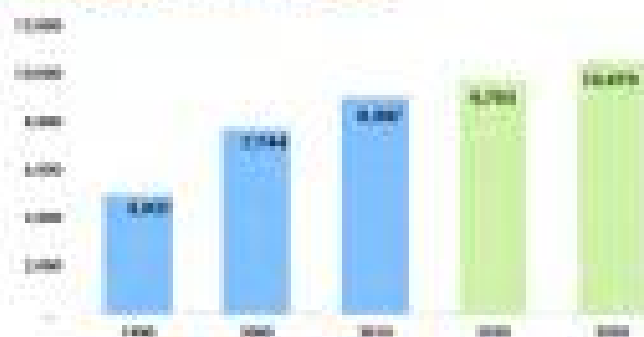
a vision for Middleton - at-a-glance summary map



Who Are We?

Middleton at a Glance

POPULATION TRENDS

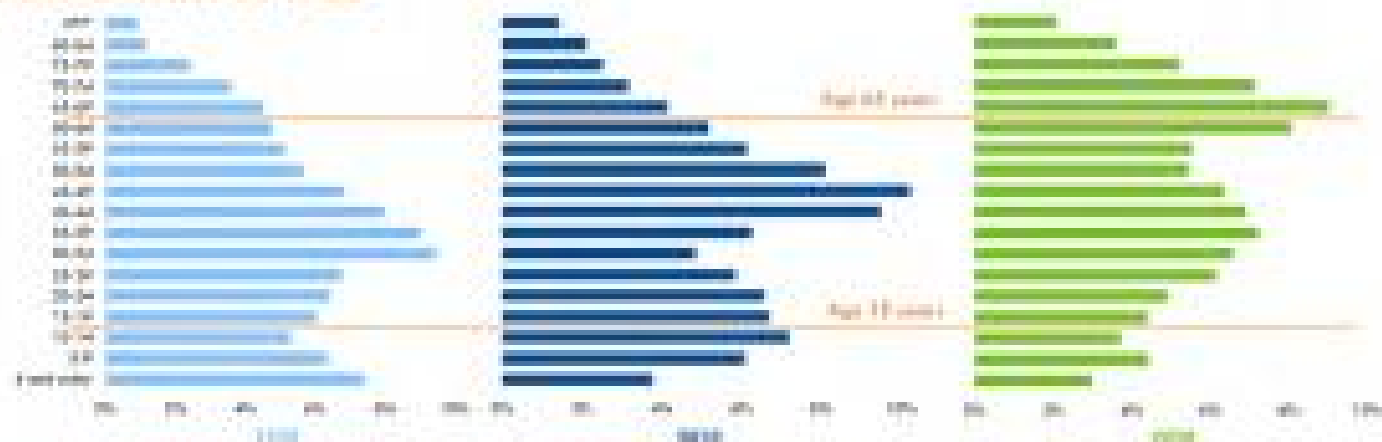


From 1990 to 2010, Middleton's population grew by nearly 83%. The town's population is projected to increase by an additional 17% from 2010 to 2030.

80% of residents have lived in Middleton for more than a year.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, 2010, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2010-2014), report; local resident population and housing demand projections; Strategic Region Research, 2014-2016

POPULATION BY AGE



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2010, local resident population and housing demand projections; Strategic Region Research, 2014-2016

Middleton's population is aging. In 1990, residents 65 and older made up 13% of the population. In 2030, this age group is projected to make up 27% of the town's population.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT



Source: Mid-Biasco Office of Economic Planning Research (2010-2012, 2014)
 American Community Survey 5 year estimates (2011-2013)

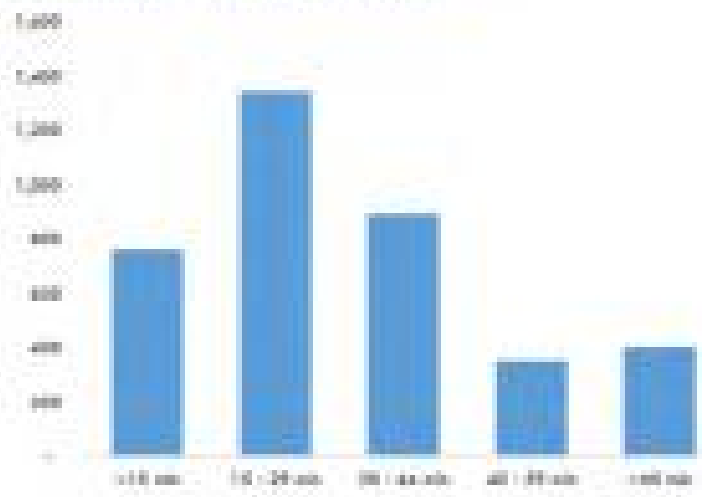
The primary sectors of employment are trade, education and health services, the professional sector, and leisure and hospitality.

28% of Middleton jobs are in trade, transportation and utilities, 16% are in education and health services, 15% are in professional and business services, and 15% are in leisure and hospitality.

37% of Middleton residents has a Bachelor's degree or higher.

TRANSPORTATION

Commute Time To Work

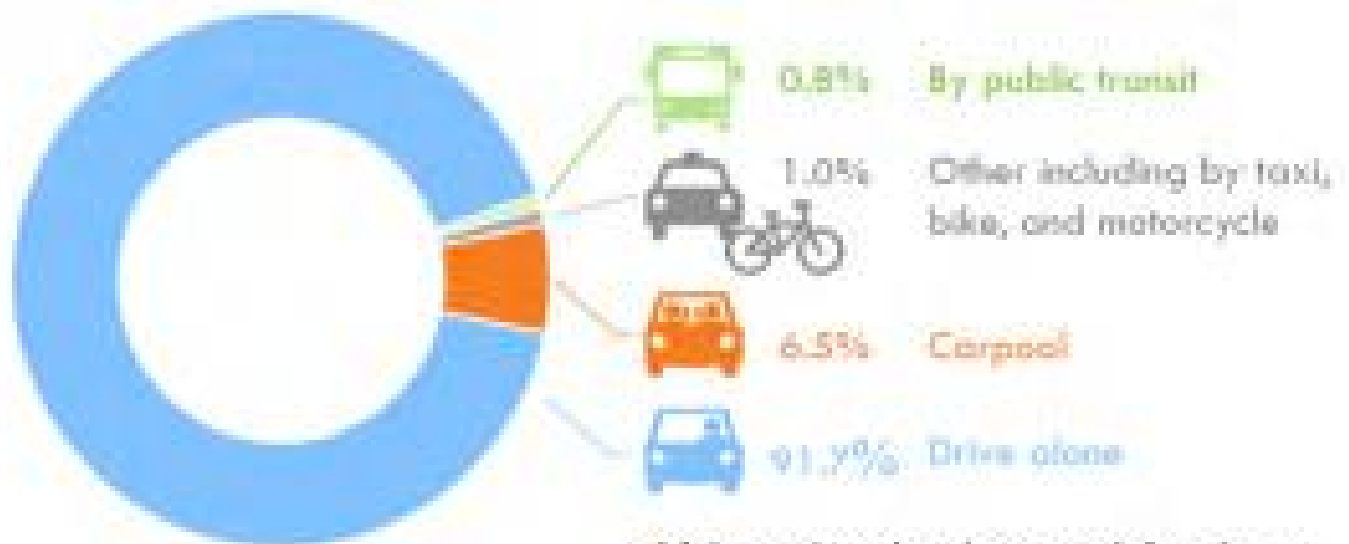


Source: American Community Survey 5 year estimates (2011-2013)

44% of Middleton residents spend more than 30 minutes (each way) commuting to work every day.

More than 10% of residents have commutes longer than 60 minutes each way.

How Do You Get To Work?



Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2013-2017)

Of the workers that do not work from home, most get to work by car (98%). Nearly 92% of people drive alone, while over 6% carpool.

Vehicles per Household



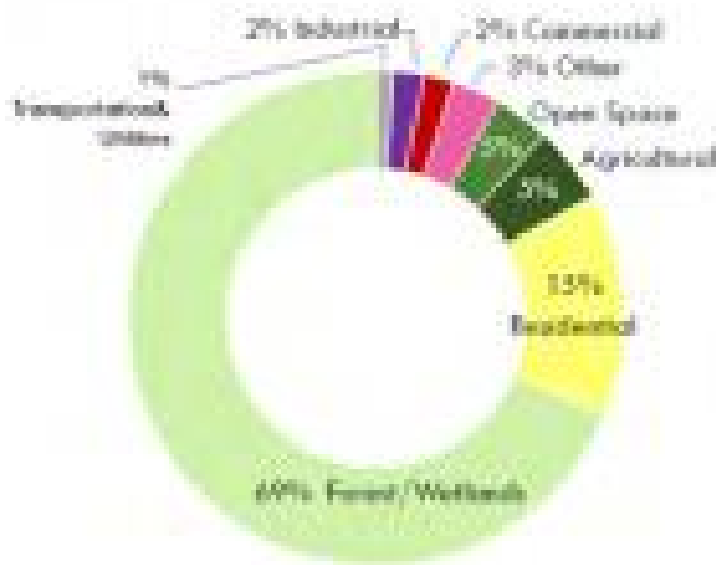
2.14 vehicles per household

Households in Middleton own on average 2.14 cars.

Each household travels about 62 miles by car on a typical day.

Source: BPS, 2010 Transportation Planning Survey, 2010-2011

LAND USE



Most of Middleton's land is forest and wetlands (69%).

Residential uses make up almost 15% of all land use, while commercial development represents 2% of all land use.

Source: Planning, 2010

HOUSING NEEDS



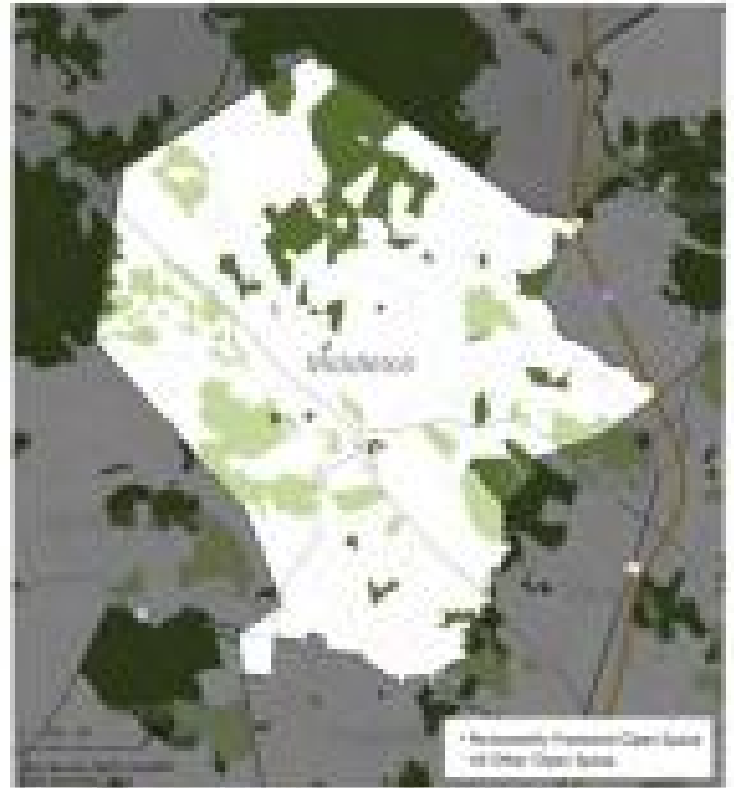
In 2010, there were 3,045 housing units in Middleton. By 2030, Middleton will need an additional 1,200 units to accommodate population growth.

Source: 2010 Census (2010), Metropolitan Population and Housing Demand Projections, Strategic Region Research (2010), 2014

OPEN SPACE

Over half of all open space in Middleton is permanently protected. Protected open space is undeveloped land where most types of development are not allowed.

Source: Middlesex, 2012



Community engagement: Visioning Survey

Who took the survey?

385 people responded to the online visioning survey.

764 comments were collected from the survey.

The online survey was vital to community engagement process. It was launched on November 10, 2016 and closed January 10, 2017. Designed with input from the Master Planning Committee and the Town Planner, the survey was designed to capture critical data from respondents such as input on community facilities, town services, taxes, transportation, and preferred areas for growth and transportation needs.

Almost all are homeowners

Survey participants were asked their relationship to the Town. For this survey question, participants were allowed multiple responses and the percentages add up to 108%. **Almost every survey participant owns a home in the Town of Middleton, and 7% own a business.**



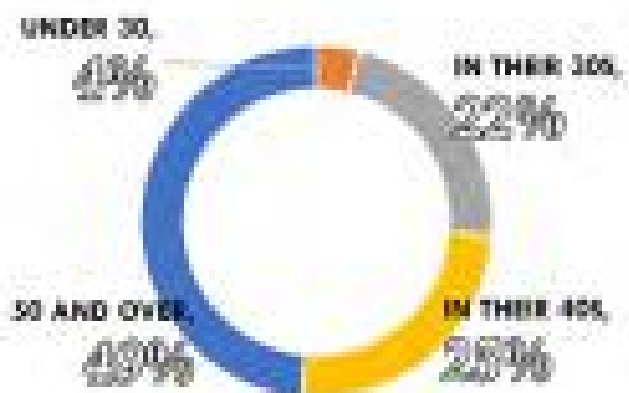
Many long term residents

Almost all survey participants (99%) were Town residents. Of them, 20% were new residents having lived in Town for five years or less. Another 16% were fairly new residents having lived in Town for six to ten years. Almost a quarter (24%) are well established residents who have lived in Town for one or two decades. **Over a third have lived in Town for three or more decades.**



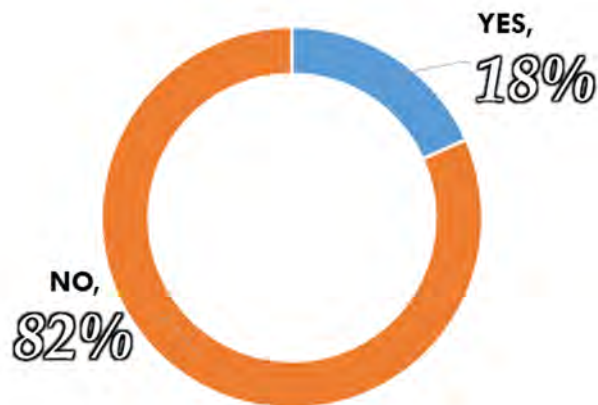
Very few young people

Only 4% were 30 years old or younger, 22% were young adults between 30 and 39 years of age, and 25% were in their forties. Almost half (49%) are ages 50 and over.



Most are still in the workforce

Survey participants were asked their retirement status in order to understand and contextualize their survey responses. Less than a fifth of the participants are retired. Based on the prior age question, we can assume most participants are mature adults who are still in the workforce.



Survey Responses

MANY COMMUNITY FACILITIES DON'T NEED IMPROVEMENT.THERE IS SUPPORT FOR BETTER RECREATION, BIKE/PED OPTIONS AND SENIOR CENTER.

Survey participants were asked to rate how much improvement was need on a variety of community facilities and quality of life issues in their community.

There was a high level of consensus on four community facilities that according to participants needed minimal to no improvement.

The Flint Library (91%), the Howe-Manning School (94%), the Fuller Meadow School (62%), and the Public Works Building (66%) need either minimal or no improvement. (Image below)

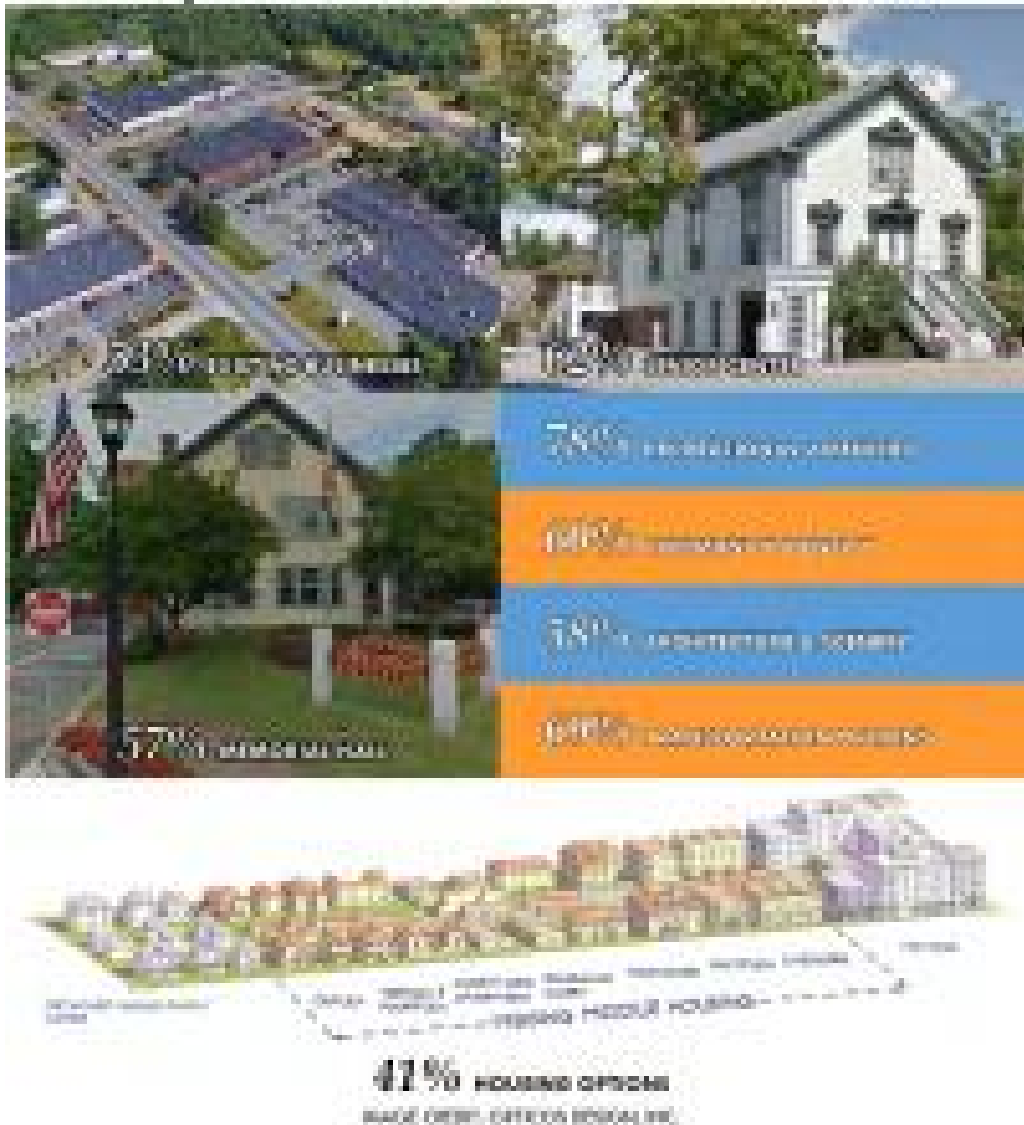
assets MINIMAL TO NO IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED



Participants also revealed which facilities and issues need some or a great deal of improvement. The Town should focus on improving the following list of facilities in order to better serve the needs of the community:

- recreational amenities (78%) like parks, trails and fields,
- varied transportation options (69%) like automobiles, bicycle, and walking,
- the Senior Center building (62%),
- community spirit and identity (60%),
- physical character (58%) like architecture and scenery,
- the Fire Station building (57%),
- Memorial Hall (57%),
- existing business inventory (53%) regarding type and quality, and
- housing options (41%).

improvement needed SOME TO A GREAT DEAL



Lastly, there were there two issues that participants did not have as strong of an opinion on. The Police Station building received a 47% rating of needing some or a great deal of improvement, and a 53% rating of needing minimal or no improvement. Safety received a 46% rating of needing some or a great deal of improvement, and a 54% rating for minimal to no improvement needed.

Samples of what you said:

“More bike, safe sidewalks, and walking trails. This town needs a new multi-use town building town hall, senior center, fire station, rec center.”

“The biggest issue is traffic control through the center of town. It's unsafe and doesn't allow for the town to be anything more than a strip mall.”

“STOP SPENDING MONEY AND LOWER TAXES.”

“Town's infrastructure needs to keep up with growing housing stock. Water supply is a huge issue. Town needs to develop a comprehensive sidewalk system. Police and fire stations will be under stress. Lastly many in town want to see improved fields. The town should stop purchasing land and leaving it idle.

YOUTH, FAMILIES & SENIORS NEED MORE SERVICES & AMENITIES

Survey participants were asked whether the Town should offer more services and amenities to the following demographic cohorts: singles, couples, children, teenagers, families, and seniors.

Such a question was intended to help inform the Town on the types of resources it could potentially allocate to issues such as open space, community and recreational facilities, and programming.

A high number of participants were neutral on whether singles and couples needed more services and amenities from the Town. Fifty-six percent were neutral regarding singles, and 51% were neutral on the matter regarding couples.

There was a high level of consensus on the children, teenagers, families and seniors needing more services and amenities. The percentage ranges capture those who agreed or somewhat agreed that the following groups need more services and amenities.



Samples of what you said:

“Senior community needs a new place to congregate; they are a growing number and the present senior facility does not meet their needs. A new community center with various options for all age groups and

seniors is needed. Small town feeling and attitude. Less business, less traffic, and attractive town center with trees, brick buildings such as the library and Richardson block. Charming family oriented.”

“Middleton needs a recreational field, which I believe is being worked on. The town does a great job getting everyone together at events: Haunted Hayride, pumpkin carving, tree lighting, baseball parade/opening day----fun times, thank you!”

“I feel there are ample opportunities for groups via VFW, Flint Library, MST, COA. Population just needs to take advantage of offerings. It would be useful if more information could be disseminated to community--love scrolling sign at library and electronic road signs for special events.”

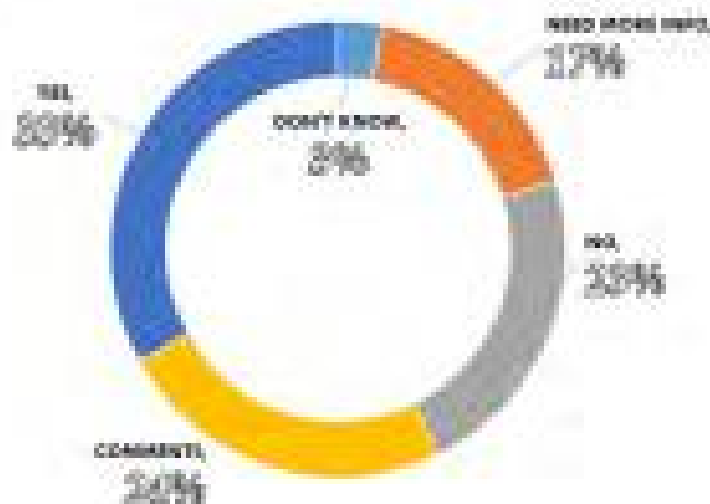
“Services and amenities that would appeal to all ages such as a community swimming pool and community tennis and indoor basketball courts should be prioritized.”

FURTHER INVESTIGATE WHETHER REZONING IS THE WAY TO REDUCE THE RESIDENTIAL TAX BURDEN

Survey participants were asked whether the Town should help reduce the property taxes on residential property owners by increasing the amount of commercial and/or light industrial zoned property.

Participants expressed very limited unqualified support for such rezoning with 33% responding in favor. Almost a quarter (23%) were in opposition to the matter. Three-to-twenty percent didn't know the answer or needed more information before making a decision. Lastly, 24% responded with individual comments instead of one of the other responses. **Given that only 23% responded with an absolute no, and 33% responded with an absolute yes, it is fair to say that the matter deserves further exploration before making a final determination.**

rezone some land to reduce residential property taxes?



Samples of what you said:

“Yes, but we have several areas that are vacant that need to be utilized/renovated before we expand the commercial footprint.”

“All 114 should be commercial zoning.”

“No more building in the name of "Progress"”

“Yes, but one of the larger problems is that the commercial tax rate is same as the residential tax rate, normally the commercial tax rate is higher, also there a lot of land that is not taxed at it's proportionate value eg Richardson's because zoned farm.”

“Middleton is adequately zoned for business, commercial and light industry. It just needs to be developed.”

“YES! We need to invest in high-end boutique stores and family-friendly commercial offerings. We need to offer tax incentives for good quality restaurants and light commercial businesses to remain attractive for families. We should NOT however turn 114 into Rt 1 Saugus with Target and Home Depot.”

“It seems like we have enough commercial industrial property in Middleton. We should fill what is already built and not take away from our rural / farming heritage to develop more businesses or parking lots.”

MOST AREAS IN TOWN RECEIVED COMPARABLE CONSIDERATION FOR POTENTIAL REZONING

Survey participants that had responded positively to whether the Town should pursue rezoning as a way of reducing residential property taxes were asked a follow-up question regarding which areas the Town should rezone.

The Town's zoning map was presented with nine circled areas, and participants were asked a multi-part question regarding each area. Most areas received a comparable amount of interest for potential rezoning.

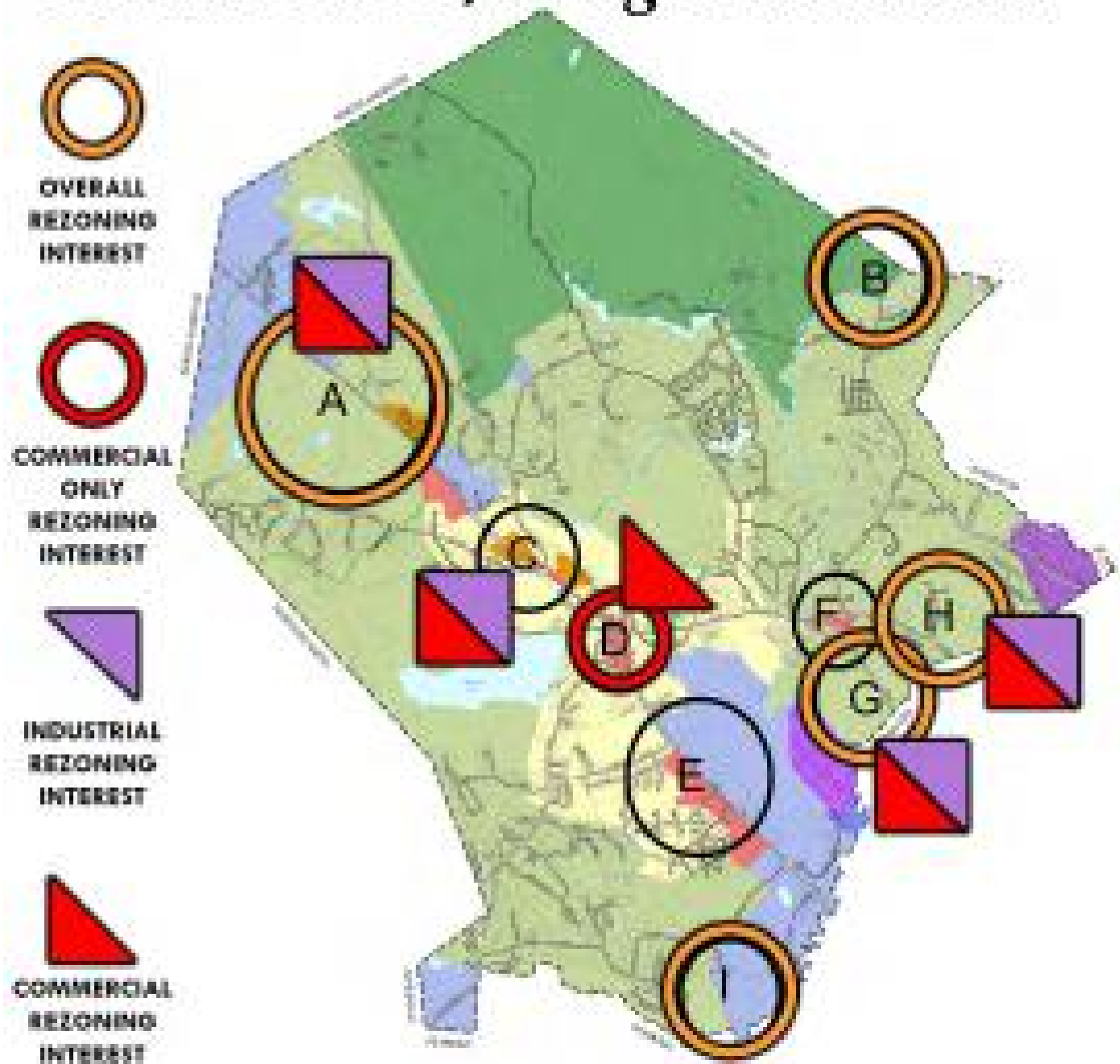
Overall, of the nine areas on the map below, the following five areas (circled in orange on the map) received slightly more interest for a potential rezoning:

- Area A along North Main Street,
- Area B along East Street near the Boxford town line,
- Area G along Gregory Street,
- Area H near the correctional facility on Maple Street, and
- Area I near the transfer station on River Street.

Participants were then asked if there was a preference for the type of zoning; only commercial zoning (marked with a red triangle on the map), only light industrial zoning (marked with a purple triangle on the map), and or both within the nine areas. The areas received the following results:

- Commercial only rezoning (56%) for Area D covering the Town Center,
- Both commercial and light industrial rezoning (52%) for Area A along North Main Street,
- Both commercial and light industrial rezoning (52%) for Area G along Gregory Street,
- Both commercial and light industrial rezoning (51%) for Area H near the correctional facility on Maple Street,
- Both commercial and light industrial rezoning (36%) for Area C along the junction of North Main, Forrest, and Essex streets.
- Both commercial and light industrial rezoning (35%) for Area B, along East Street near Boxford, and
- Both commercial and light industrial rezoning (43%) for Area I near the Transfer Station on River Street.

potential areas for rezoning to commercial &/or light industrial



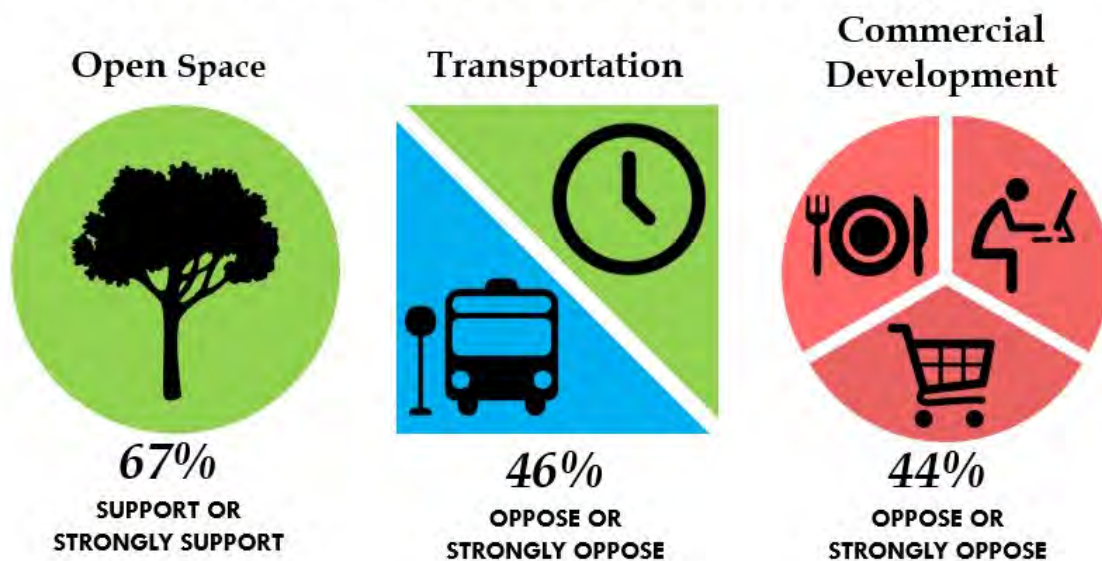
INCREASE TAXES OR FEES FOR PERMANENT OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION

Survey participants were asked whether they would consider supporting tax or fee increases in order to support three Town goals.

The first goal was to keep commercial development to a minimum. The second goal was to provide public transit options. The third goal was to permanently preserve open space. Overall, approximately a fifth of participants were neutral on all three matters.

On the matter of permanent open space protection, 67% were supported or strongly supported tax or fee increases in order to achieve this. Only 13% opposed or strongly opposed this idea. On the other two public transit and limiting commercial development ideas, there was far less support. **Approximately 46% opposed or strongly opposed increasing fees or taxes in order to provide public transit options¹.** Only 31% supported or strongly supported this idea. Lastly, regarding limiting the amount of commercial development, 44% opposed or strongly opposed increasing taxes or fees in order to achieve this objective. Only 34% of participants supported or strongly supported this idea.

tax or fee increases for these goals?



¹ It is worth noting that this does not necessarily entail opposition to public transit since the question focused on how to fund such options.

Samples of what you said:

"There needs to be a more conscious effort to preserve open space. Development can occur as long as there is the appropriate preservation measures to counteract the development. Presently, Middleton has been dominated by development. There needs to be more measures for preserving open space.

"A local tax increase should not be necessary for public transportation. Local Taxes do not support the T in underserved areas so why should they here?"

"I would also support tax increases to improve the municipal offices (DPW/Health, MPD & MFD). I would strongly support any land acquisitions that would allow MPD and/or MFD to be combined into one building and redevelop the existing parcels."

"The town has enough in tax revenue, make do with what it has."

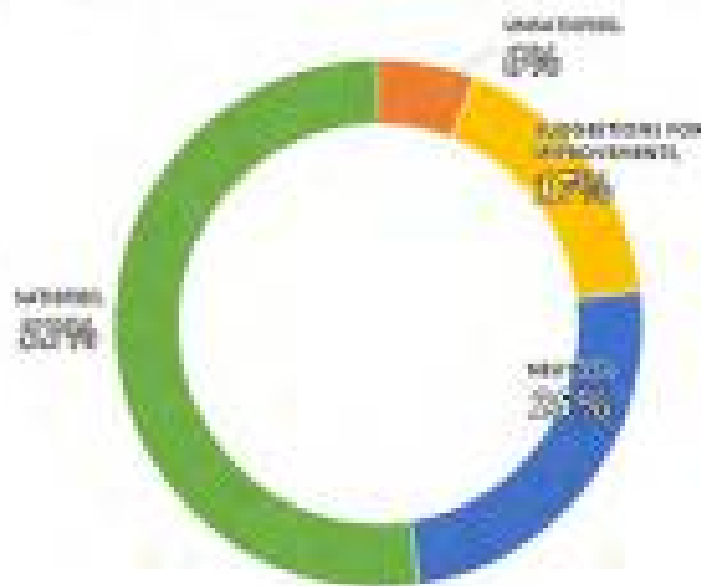
"It's not that I don't want to invest in the community. It's that i think there are other options to raising funds and balancing the budget other than raising taxes. We need to be shifting our thinking to smart growth initiatives."

MAJORITY ARE SATISFIED WITH MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Survey participants were asked whether they were satisfied with municipal services.

A simple majority of 53% of participants were either satisfied or very satisfied. Approximately 25% of participants were neutral on the matter. And only 6% were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied.

satisfied with municipal services?



Comments and suggestions for improvements included the following samples:

“We have by far the best Fire dept. and EMT services available, great library, schools. Improve services available to our youths and seniors. “

“Town needs to look at extending water mains and re paving existing roads, even private ones; Gates Road is a private road, but the end of it is accepted by the town (but not the beginning some how). The town should take over and improve over time all private roads, residents pay the same in taxes if the road is private or public (accepted by the town), why should we receive less services? They also need to look into extending the water mains, many area of the town are not protected by fire hydrants or have access to public drinking water.”

“You should strongly consider a trash service fee and eliminate the transfer station.”

“I love that we do not have trash pickup. The swap shop is actually a great place to run into other townies and provides a way of getting rid of items besides throwing them out.”

“Transparency in town government.”

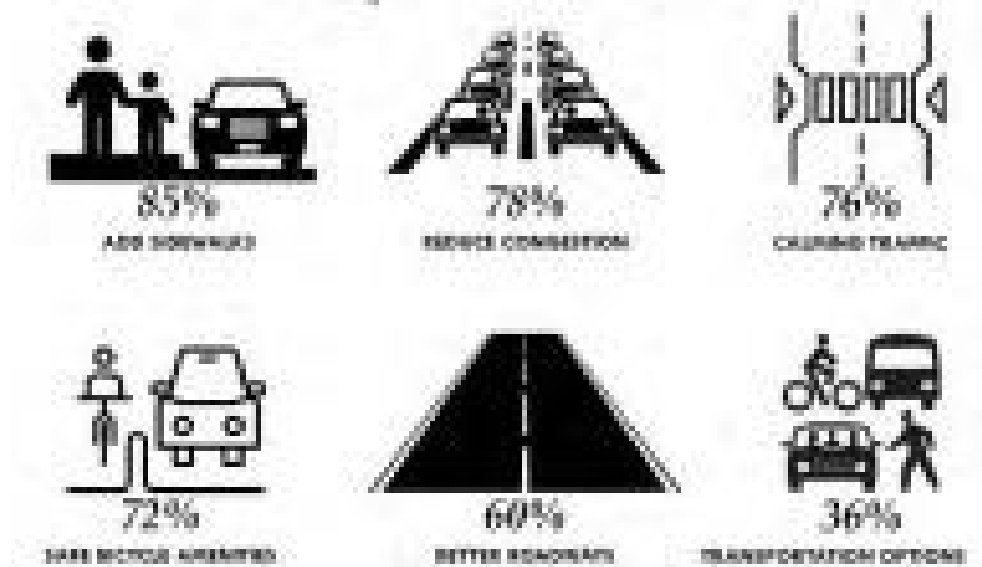
SIDEWALKS, TRAFFIC CALMING, & CONGESTION ARE MOST PRESSING TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

Survey participants were asked what were the Town’s most pressing transportation needs. There was a high level of consensus on the following:

- providing sidewalks and safe places for people to walk with 85% agreeing or somewhat agreeing on the matter,
- reducing traffic congestion with 78% agreeing or somewhat agreeing,
- calming traffic through streetscape improvements with 76% in agreement, and
- safe bicycle amenities with 72% in agreement.

There was somewhat less consensus on the condition of roadways need improvement with 60% agreeing or somewhat agreeing on the matter. Lastly, a notable minority of participants thought that public transportation options deserved attention with 36% agreeing or somewhat agreeing it is a pressing matter.

transportation needs



Samples of what you said:

“Sidewalks would be helpful along East St., Peabody, School, Library, Forest, and Main Streets, making it so kids could ride a bike or walk without being in traffic. There needs to be a cut through from Maple St over to 114 without sitting in traffic on 62.”

“Add right turn lanes at RT. 62 and 114 in the square going west and RT 62 and 114 going east at lights in front of town hall.”

“Complete the rail trail that was funded at Town Meeting.”

“Condition of the roads is good compared to other towns. Would like to see bike lanes leading into commercial areas for shopping instead of driving car all over Middleton. Public transportation would be expensive for so few riders. The intersection of Hwy 62 and 114 is a MAJOR problem and needs to be updated.”

“A town shuttle would be great.”

Overall, the Town does not spend enough on its roadway and sidewalk infrastructure. We really need to supplement the CH90 Apportionment with some type of capital funding or annual borrowing authorization to allow the roads to be maintained prior to the end of its useful life. Specially ADA improvements are needed in many areas. I think the Town should be more proactive with the ADA upgrades, so we are not mandated to spend major portions of our Town Budget like our neighbors (Beverly) for the next 10 years because of a rogue complaint.

“Our congestion is only focused around the peak AM and PM commutes. We are a cut-through town and will remain one. There is no magic fix for this issue and would not recommend spending a dime of Town dollars

to make major transportation improvement. Leverage developer off-site improvements to make the repairs as needed.”

DESIRE MORE RETAIL CONDUCTIVE TO SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

Survey participants were asked what types of business they would like to see more of, and which types they would like to see less of.

- Restaurants were desired the most with 74% indicating that they would like to see more or somewhat more of these businesses.
- Places to hang out such as cafés, coffee shops, and ice cream shops were desired highly with 61% in favor.
- Speciality retail and local retail shops were highly desired as well and respectively received 52% and 42% support.

Participants were neutral on mixed-use developments with ground-floor retail and upper-story residential components. This business type received an aggregated 29% rating in support, 37% rating for a neutral position, and an aggregated 34% rating in opposition.

Lastly, participants expressed that they would like to see less of the following business types:

- Less retail strip plazas with 64% in opposition.
- Less big box retail with 60% in opposition.
- Less automotive uses with 53% in opposition.
- Less industrial uses with 46% in opposition.

Samples of what you said:

“Better center with coffee shop/teen activity center/ boutiques/ walk around.... Starbucks/ bakery/ more of a "center"

“Mixed use properties will change the rural character of Middleton.”

“Panera, Starbucks, Paperstore, Clothing boutiques, Ethnic (not pizza) Restaurants, Antique Stores. CLASSY businesses, not nail salons and vape stores. You are building multi-million dollar homes but 114 looks like a dump with the exception of Richardson's green and the funeral home. It SHOULD look and feel like Market St in Lynnfield.”

“The town would benefit if it could somehow create a real downtown area where people could walk around, shop, eat, etc.”

“Don't bring in more businesses or industry. Preserve Middleton the way it is.”

“We need more tax revenue from restaurants and independent stores, keep chains out.”

desired & less desired businesses



DESIRE MIXED-USE



DESIRE LOCAL RETAIL



DESIRE SPECIALTY RETAIL



DESIRE RESTAURANTS



DESIRE PLACES TO HANG OUT



DESIRE LESS BIG BOX RETAIL



DESIRE LESS STRIP PLAZAS



DESIRE LESS INDUSTRIAL



DESIRE LESS AUTO USES



DESIRE LESS GAS STATIONS

ADDRESS CONGESTION, PEDESTRIAN SAFETY, GREATER MIX OF SHOPS, & A SOCIAL STREET DESIGN IN THE TOWN CENTER

Survey participants were asked what types of changes (if any) should be made to the Town Center.

As part of the question, participants were asked whether there should be no change to the Town Center. A large number of respondents indicated they disagreed with the notion that the Town Center should not change, with 51% disagreeing or somewhat disagreeing. Only 30% agreed that the Town Center should not change.

The remaining five options shown in the proceeding chart conveyed varying degrees of support (agree or somewhat agree) for different types of changes. These are the following:

- reduce traffic congestion with 88% agreeing or somewhat agreeing,
- pedestrian improvements for safety with 83% support,
- greater mix of shops and businesses with 73% support,
- streetscape and design improvements to increase public gathering and social interaction with 73% support, and
- provision of public off-street parking in the form of a municipal lot or parking garage with 59% in support.

Samples of what you said:

“Traffic is bad on Rt 62, need other street outlets for long lines and side walks.”

“We need a walkable downtown plan over 10 years since we can't get an ocean or commuter rail.”

“Town center is a real problem: Got to keep traffic moving through an active town center. How do you slow traffic down but keep it moving????”

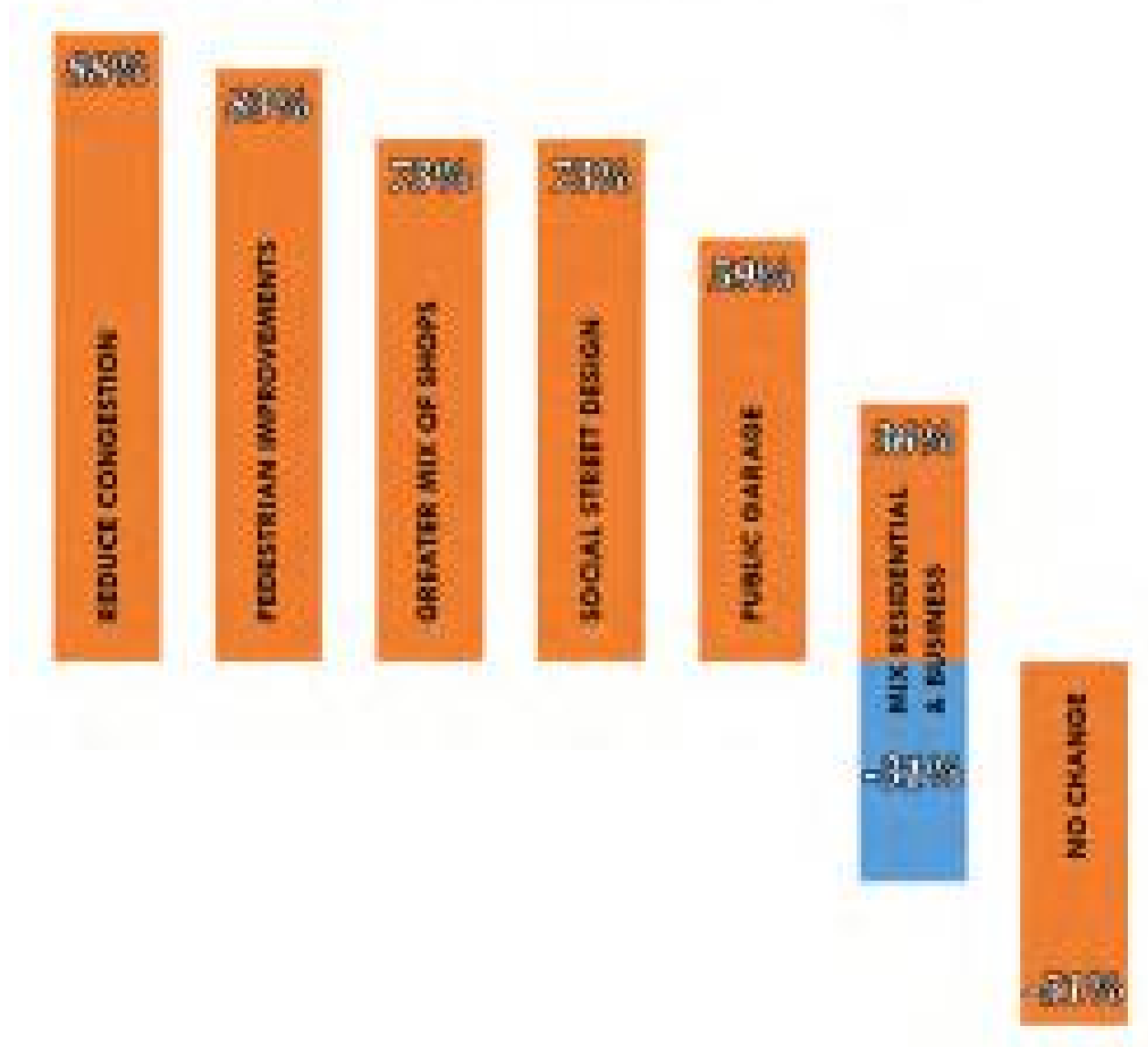
“Places to hang out, bike/walking paths. a better park, pretty flowers and trees”

“There is no full scale gathering area. Downtown should be just that; a downtown stretching from Police station to Richardson's Dairy where people can feel comfortable walking. Know it is a state highway, but would like the speed reduced to attract walking along Rte 114 safely. Would love to see a larger gathering area near Memorial Hall.”

“The town center should be the ONLY area to add coffee shops or a gathering eatery. Currently it has NO appeal.”

“Complete the Town Common project that has been promised for years.”

changes to Town Center?



STRONG SUPPORT FOR TRAILS, DESIGN STANDARDS, & OPEN SPACE AS PART OF RESIDENTIAL GROWTH

Survey participants were asked their level of support for several potential strategies for residential growth in the Town.

There was strong opposition to allowing higher density types in select locations[which “select locations?”] with 61% opposing or strongly opposing that idea.

There was fairly neutral and divided feedback on whether to concentrate residential development in the Town Center in order to preserve land in outlying areas, with 30% in opposition, 38% expressing neutrality, and 32% expressing support.

A high percentage expressed support for a range of strategies that included the following:

- aggressively pursuing acquisition of conservation easements for the development of a trail and path network with 72% support,
- establish design standards for developments in an expanded town center to create a traditional village with a walkable, mixed-use (residential and commercial) district with 72% support,
- revise the current Flexible Development By-Law to promote its use in order to protect open space as development occurs with 66% support,
- purchase as much land as possible to protect from development with 63% support,
- rezone some areas for agricultural and very low density uses only (e.g. 5 or more acres minimum lot sizes) with 62% support,
- require larger minimum lot sizes to preserve rural character with 60% support, and
- allow accessory apartments (also known as in-law apartments), which are currently prohibited, received 55% support.

Lastly, 51% expressed that the status quo should remain in order to continue current policies that allow growth of single family homes on ½ to 2 acre lots on Middleton’s undeveloped areas.

residential growth strategies?



MANY ANTICIPATE NEEDING NON-SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLINGS IN THE FUTURE

Survey participants were asked what type of housing they would anticipate needing in the future within Town limits, either for themselves or their family members.

For this survey question, participants were allowed multiple responses and the percentages add up to 140%. Over one-third (37%) anticipate remaining in their existing homes in Middleton, and 9% foresaw moving out of Town.

Close to a third (28%) anticipate that they or a family member will need to buy a house in the future within the Town. Almost half (49%) anticipate the need for some form of non-single-family housing. Of this 49%, 20% anticipated purchasing a condominium dwelling unit, 19% anticipated renting or buying a full-level dwelling in a building, and 10% foresaw renting or purchasing a townhouse or duplex. Few participants foresaw renting a house or an apartment building (2-6%) or living in an assisted living facility (12%).

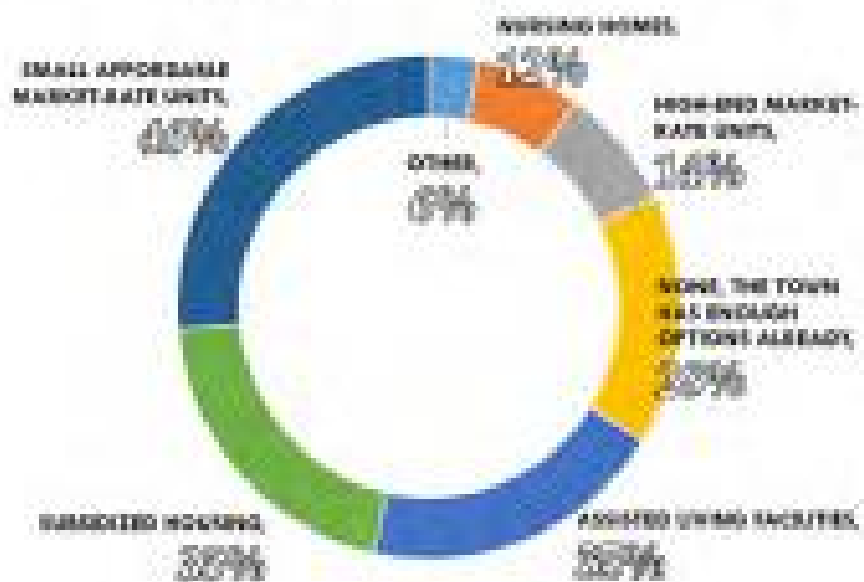


MANY ANTICIPATE SENIORS NEEDING AFFORDABLE MARKET-RATE UNITS AS WELL AS SUBSIDIZED HOUSING & ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES

Survey participants were asked what types of housing should the Town promote to provide senior citizens with housing options.

For this survey question, participants were allowed multiple responses and the percentages add up to 176%. Approximately 28% indicated that the Town does not need to promote more housing options for seniors because they believed the Town has sufficient options already. A large contingent (46%) saw the need for small, affordable market-rate units (i.e., non-luxury dwellings) for senior citizens. Around 35% saw the need for subsidized housing affordable units for seniors, and 35% anticipated the need for assisted living facilities. Twelve percent thought the Town should promote nursing homes, and 14% regarded having high-end market-rate dwelling units for seniors as a necessary option.

housing options for seniors?



Samples of what you said about other options for seniors:

"Housing options for our Veteran population. A Community Center for seniors and services for veterans. Affordable apartments for homeless veterans."

"In-law apartments! It would be great to be able to house senior citizens with extended family. There are many benefits from multigenerational living!"

"More developments similar to Peaslee Circle."

"Independent living facilities."

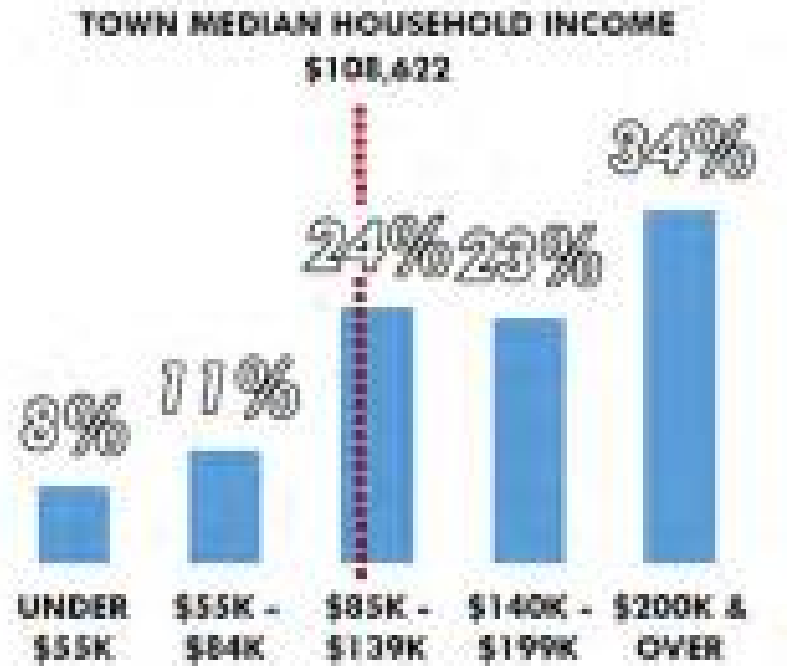
Information provided by participants to help evaluate survey results

LARGE MAJORITY EARN MORE THAN TOWN MEDIAN

Survey participants were asked what their household income was. This question was asked in order to contextualize other survey responses and to compare them to the composition of the Town as a whole.

For the purposes of comparing survey participants to the rest of the Town, the median household income is \$108,622 according to US Census Bureau 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

A very high percentage of survey respondents (approximately 75%) reported having higher household incomes than that of the Town median household income of \$108,622. Approximately 25% reported earning less the Town's median household income. Further outreach may needed to obtain input from the underrepresented socioeconomic cohort.



LARGE MAJORITY WORK OUTSIDE OF TOWN

A very large majority of survey participants work outside of Town (77%), and therefore have to commute by car since Middleton does not have a commuter rail station. For the purposes of comparison of survey participants to the rest of the Town, U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates indicate that:

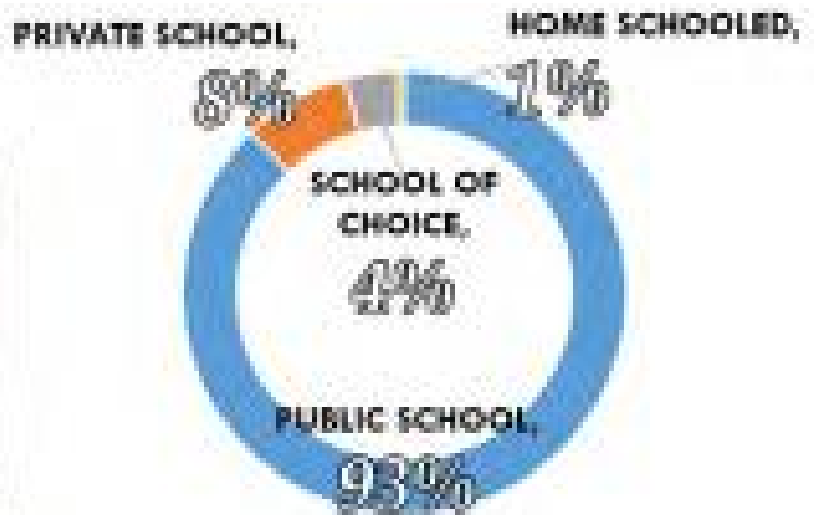
- 33% work outside of Essex County (and therefore outside of Town), and an additional
- 5% work outside of the State of Massachusetts.

work in Town?



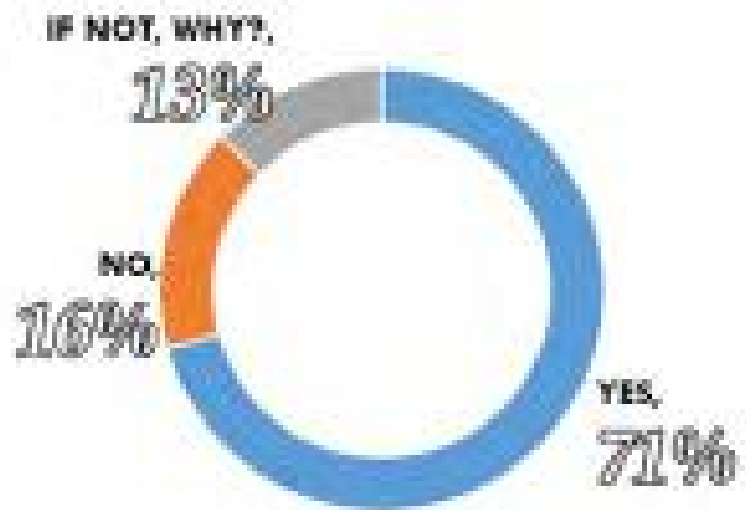
LARGE MAJORITY OF CHILDREN IN PUBLIC SCHOOL

Survey participants were asked where their children attended school. **A large majority (93%) responded that their children attend public school.**



MAJORITY PARTICIPATE AT TOWN MEETING

Survey participants were asked if they participated and voted at Town Meeting. The majority (71%) responded that they did participate. Approximately a third (29%) indicated that they did not.



Sample comments on why people don't attend and participate at Town Meeting:

"Times are inconvenient for working parents."

"I don't drive at night."

"Occasionally. Every request is always approved regardless of people there. Better to vote down at the polls. "

"It is hard to find seating as I cannot climb stairs."

"Don't know how to do it."

Additional community engagement strategies

Purpose of engagement

In addition to the master plan survey process, the Middleton Master Planning Committee (MPC) engaged the public in various ways in order to highlight the most pressing needs for the town. Throughout the visioning project, the MPC asked residents, business owners, land owners and visitors to be a part of the conversation in drafting the future of Middleton, knowing that in order to provide a comprehensive and inclusive plan, public communication and engagement is key.

Defining our stakeholders

During our initial planning stages for the community engagement plan, the Master Planning Committee worked together to define stakeholders and develop approaches for engagement. Stakeholders of this plan include those who live, work or play in Middleton. Below is a list of entities that participated in our engagement activities throughout the process.

COMMITTEES

School Committee
Selectman
Zoning Board of Appeals
Conservation Commission
Council on Aging
Board of Trade

ORGANIZATIONS

Boy Scouts
St. Agnes Church
Flint Library

THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT APPROACHES

In order to reach the most amount of people from a wide array of constituent groups, the Middleton Town Planner and the Master Planning Committee collaborated to reach out to and engage a total of 385 stakeholders to fill out the master plan survey, both online and in hard copy format. Engagement varied from web, social media, phone calling, personal emails, and hand delivered surveys, and handing out survey information at the annual Winter Festival and at the local grocery store. In addition to the online survey, MAPC worked with the Town to conduct visioning outreach at the annual Middleton Get Fit event and through a Vision Open House.

Throughout all of our engagement tactics, we were able to reach approximately 1,000 stakeholders.

TRADITIONAL MEDIA

Tri-Town Transcript
Advertisement on Middleton Cable Access
Globe North

WEB/ OTHER

Town website
School websites
Town electronic message board
Market Basket

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook paid ads

Middleton's Get Fit event

The town of Middleton partnered with MAPC for the Get Fit Middleton Event on November 18, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Howe-Manning School. MAPC engaged residents and raised awareness about the upcoming public meeting for the Master Plan Visioning Open House on January 9. Participants described what they loved about Middleton as well as what they would like to change about the town. Kids and parents alike spun our fitness wheel, engaged in physical activity and won fun and healthy prizes at our visioning table. Middleton Town Planner Katrina O'Leary showcased important town demographic information that spurred thoughtful conversation with residents in town. Over 400 people attended the event.



Vision Open House

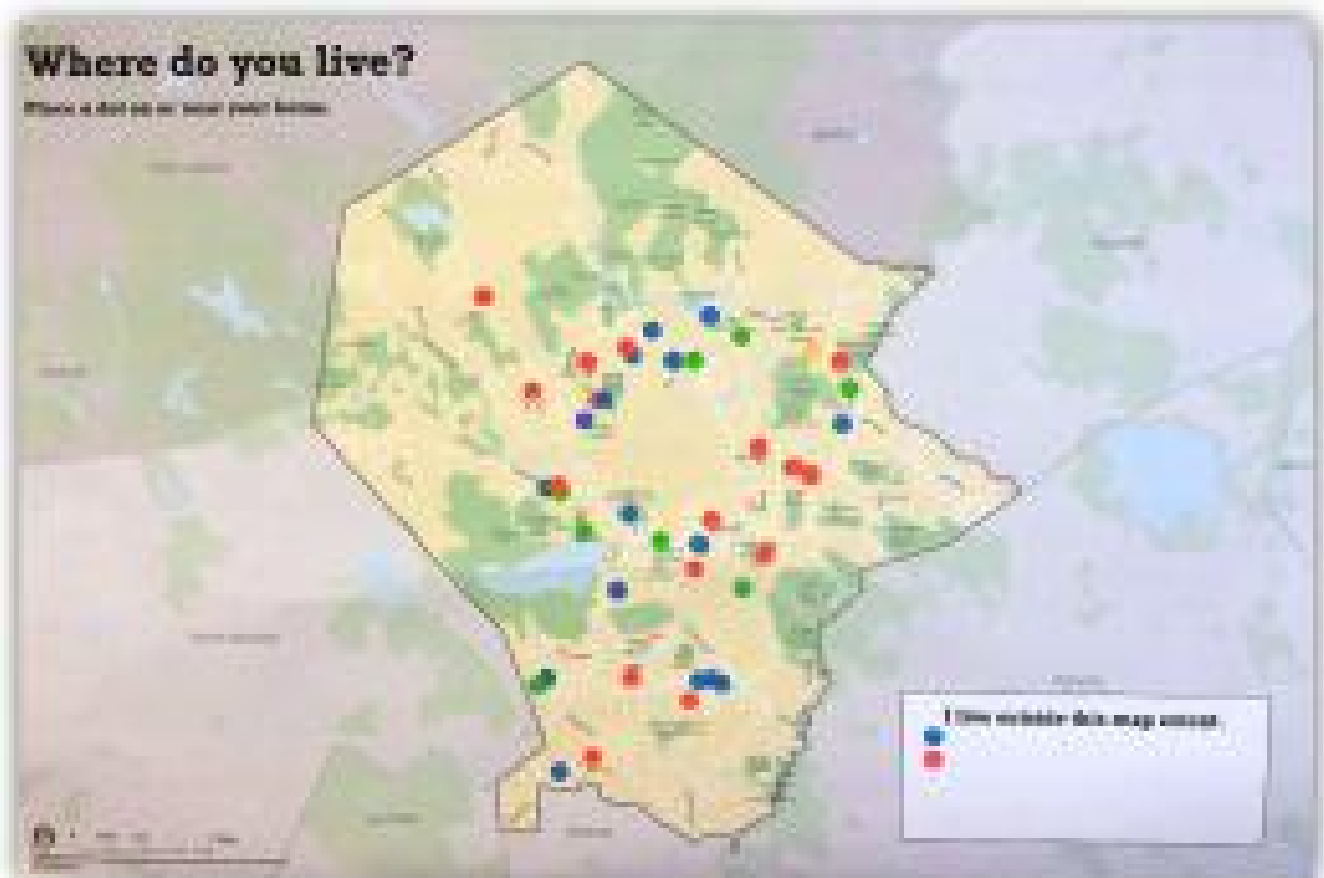
On January 9, MAPC and the committee hosted a Visioning Open House from 6-9 pm at the Flint Library 1 South Main St. Approximately **60 people gathered** to hear about the town's history, the master planning process and provide their own vision for the future of Middleton. The event consisted of **interactive stations** where residents identified cultural assets, community challenges and also had an opportunity to fill out the master plan survey.

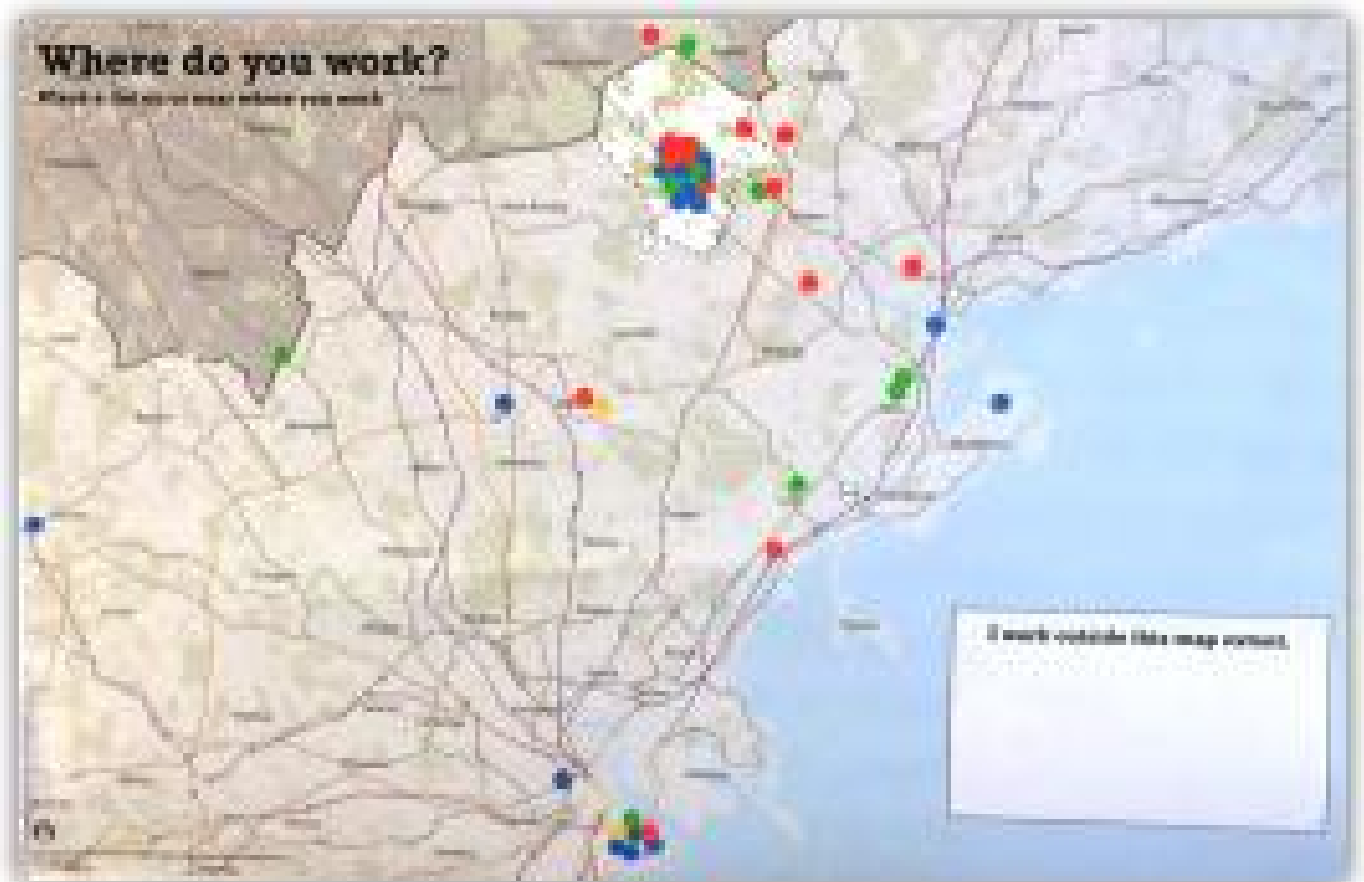


Dot Exercises

Participants were asked to visually represent where they live, where they work and how they usually commute to work.

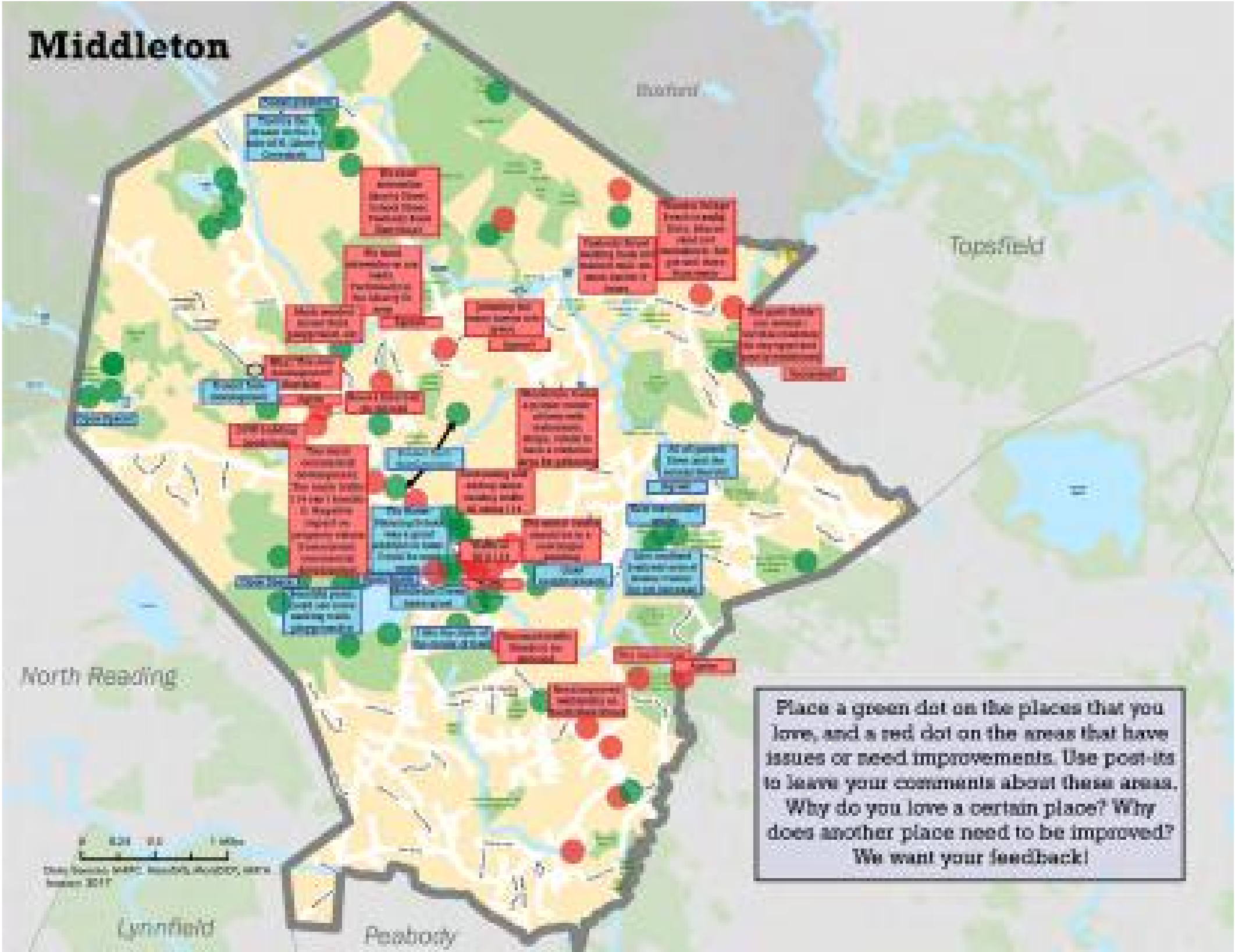
Event participants live all over Middleton and many indicated they work in town. Most people commute by car to work though many work from home.





Mark the Map

On a large map, attendees used green dots to indicate places they love and red dots to indicate areas that have issues or need improvements. They could also leave comments on post-its about these areas.



Assets, Challenges, Opportunities/Legacy

This station provided the opportunity for attendees to voice what they like best about Middleton (greatest assets), what they think is missing in the community (greatest challenges), and what they think would most improve quality of life (opportunities/legacy)

Greatest Opportunity Legacy	Greatest Asset	Greatest Challenge
<i>Rail Trail</i>	<i>More rural, less-developed feel/style</i>	<i>Large multi-use recreation area</i>
<i>More of a "downtown" or town center area for shopping/services. Mixed with housing</i>	<i>Lots of restaurants, Pumpkin Festival, Library</i>	<i>I would like to see more small businesses for shopping in the town center where people can meet. I would also like to see more senior housing and town recreation activities.</i>
<i>Make it an active/ walkable/ bike able town and make a proper town center with cafes, shops, and retail. We need a ballpark!</i>	<i>Woods, Westlands and the engaged community</i>	<i>Public transportation</i>
<i>Basketball courts available for families and/ or Middleton teams</i>	<i>Proximity and location to RT 1, 114 495, 95; small town activities: Chief Wills, Pumpkin Festival and Christmas Tree Lighting</i>	<i>Need for a new community center including a senior center</i>
<i>I would like to see the old town hall preserved</i>	<i>Rural Spaces; Forrest areas</i>	<i>Sidewalks! Houses and subdivisions are going up on rural roads. Congestions is increasing. Buses stop at every house on Liberty, Peabody, East, and School Street. Would like a solution to this. It is becoming dangerous on these roads for walkers and bikers</i>
<i>Trail maintenance Committee</i>	<i>*Too much emphasis on commercialization's without requisite forethought on impact to community, ex. Traffic and decrease in property values</i>	<i>Would love to see more marked trails and things to do outdoors. A dog park would be wonderful! A fenced area for off leash play.</i>
<i>My son is a 4th generation Middleton resident. Our legacy is loyalty and commitment to this town. Greatest opportunity would be to return to small town roots; respect and protect the land and investment back into the community that is already here. I would participate and pay higher conservation taxes to preserve the land in this town.</i>	<i>Great Schools. Except for 114, still has a rural feel</i>	<i>YMCA</i>

Greatest Opportunity Legacy	Greatest Asset	Greatest Challenge
<i>Sidewalks for walkers, bikers</i>	<i>Feel like you belong to a family. The Middleton Family</i>	<i>Would like trails (hiking) better maintained, including shoulder (?) season./ Twice I've had to turn around due to flooding</i>
<i>Town purchase of more open space</i>	<i>Small town, but lots to offer. I don't have to leave the town for anything. Love Richardson's Farm and Ice Cream. Love Farmer Browns. Love Family owned shops.</i>	<i>Drive through community. Need more community events to draw people to Middleton</i>
<i>Anything that would keep the integrity and history of the town intact. Events for both children and adults.</i>	<i>Fiscal responsive management</i>	<i>We're considering moving due to the lack of sidewalks (Liberty St.). Town is not really walkable</i>
<i>1) Municipal Center: Fire, Police, Town Offices, Senior Center. 2) Improve the center of the Town. 3) Hayden property: development of small park, pond. 4) Walkway to Middleton Pond. Middleton is a rich historical area. I would like to see that history displayed in Middleton Village</i>	<i>Country atmosphere</i>	<i>Not kid friendly. One little playground, nowhere to walk with strollers. Trails not well-markers and/or in disrepair</i>
	<i>Lots of restaurants, Pumpkin Festival, Library</i>	<i>A real town square for gathering and events</i>
	<i>I grew up here. My Parents Live here. My mom and grandmother grew up here. Our greatest asset is out town, community and land. Please stop developing our town. Protect our land and forest and open fields and preserve it for the children who are growing up here.</i>	<i>Missing a town square, and a usable town common, that can host town wide recreations events</i>
	<i>Opportunity for the community involvement</i>	<i>More outside places for families, a place for all ages. Basketball courts with tennis courts and a park</i>
	<i>Schools</i>	<i>There is nothing "vibrant" about Middleton. No draw for outsiders, other than ice cream.</i>
	<i>It still has the feel of a small town</i>	<i>Bike routes and family recreation area</i>
	<i>There seem to be a lot of residents who support nature preservation. That's great!</i>	<i>Greatest challenge is cost and getting financial support for the vision.</i>
	<i>Library is great. Beautiful natural setting.</i>	<i>Greatest concerns: keeping current identity and values while growing and improving. Missing: More local stores and restaurants</i>

<i>Greatest Opportunity Legacy</i>	<i>Greatest Asset</i>	<i>Greatest Challenge</i>
	<i>The people, I have been living in the Town for 6 months, and everyone I have met from the Town has been so polite.</i>	<i>Stop constant development!. More land protection, More conservation and protections of the land and nature in our town!</i>
		<i>More sidewalks, especially along 62 toward Farmer Browns. Walkable downtown.</i>
		<i>"Meet your neighbor event"- Ways to easily meet people in the town. Also a map for residents that show what Middleton has to offer (i.e. Nice scenic places to sit and relax)</i>
		<i>Sidewalks- Developers should be responsible for adding/connect sidewalks to main streets. We need them on Liberty, Peabody, and School Street. Ball Fields</i>
		<i>Real youth/ teen recreation, such as a Y</i>
		<i>Developments without infrastructure. (e.g. sidewalks, local shopping)</i>
		<i>How and where to accommodate 30% population growth. Almost all non-swamp land is developed already with little supporting infrastructure (sewage, gas, water, sidewalks)</i>
		<i>Too much emphasis on commercialization's without requisite forethought on impact to community, ex. Traffic and decrease in property values</i>

Stay in touch!



This is only the first phase of an extensive planning process with many opportunities for engagement from the community. We hope you will continue to be part of this important process that will help decide the future of Middleton. We sincerely believe that strong roadmap for the future of Middleton starts with you!

For more information, to be added to the Master Plan mailing list, or to share additional ideas, please contact:

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Town Planner

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Please also visit the Master Plan website at
http://www.townofmiddleton.org/Pages/MiddletonMA_Admin/masterplan



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