



# Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

## MEMORANDUM

To: Dunstable Master Plan Committee  
From: Jay Donovan, Assistant Director  
Subject: Master Plan Visioning Session Results  
Date: July 19, 2016

A Multi-Disciplinary  
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Beverly A. Woods  
Executive Director

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40 Church Street  
Suite 200  
Lowell, MA  
01852-2686

TEL: (978) 454-8021

FAX: (978) 454-8023

[www.nmcog.org](http://www.nmcog.org)

As part of the work plan for the Dunstable Master Plan, the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) worked with the Dunstable Master Plan Committee to host the Dunstable Master Plan Visioning Session at Dunstable Town Hall on June 23, 2016. The purpose of the Visioning Session was to outline how the Master Plan process will benefit the community, identify the state requirements related to the Master Plan, review the contents, timeline and process for preparing the Master Plan and receive public input through the use of a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis exercise. The results of the SWOT exercise and the survey being made available this evening will be used to provide "grassroots" input into the development of the Dunstable Master Plan, so that it reflects the needs and aspirations of Dunstable residents.

The Master Plan Visioning Session attracted more than sixty (60) participants. NMCOG staff led the SWOT Analysis exercise, which provided an opportunity for the participants to voice their opinions on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with the Town of Dunstable. NMCOG staff recorded the thoughts, opinions, and ideas of the participants on large sheets of paper, and after the discussion, participants were given an opportunity to indicate their priorities by placing colored dots next to each idea on the sheets of paper. For this SWOT exercise, red dots (4 points) indicated their first priority, green dots (3 points) reflected their second priority, blue dots (2 points) registered their third priority and yellow dots (1 point) represented their fourth priority. Based upon the point totals for each idea, the top five priorities for the Master Plan Visioning Session were as follows:

### Strengths

Rural Character (83)  
Strong Schools (79)  
Working Farms (55)  
Small Town Feel (49)  
Walking Trails (47)

### Weaknesses

Lack of Diversified Revenue Base (85)  
Traffic on Route 113 (69)  
Lack of Community Gathering Places-coffee shop (63)  
Lack of Large Tax Base (59)  
Water Infrastructure – needs upgrade (58)

### Opportunities

Strengthen Schools (91)  
Attract Businesses (78)  
Renewable Energy (70)  
Age 55+ Housing (66)  
Plan for Traffic Control (53)

### Threats

Insufficient Income to Support Town Needs (133)  
Crime/Drugs (44)  
Failure to Preserve Town Character (43)  
Loss of Farms (38)  
Failing Schools (38)

The complete results are summarized by category and the ideas are listed by total dots and points, based upon the values assigned to each dot, and are attached to this memo. This memo, the attached results, the agenda and the sign-in sheet will be included within the Master Plan document.



## Dunstable Master Plan SWOT Results

June 23, 2016

Strengths	Participant Priorities				Totals	
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Dots	Points
Rural Character	17	5	0	0	22	83
Strong Schools	16	4	1	1	22	79
Working Farms	12	2	0	1	15	55
Small Town Feel	10	2	1	1	14	49
Walking Trails	4	4	8	3	19	47
Quiet Community	5	6	3	2	16	46
Open Space	8	2	1	1	12	40
Safety	3	3	3	1	10	28
Agricultural Lands	7	0	0	0	7	28
Strong Emergency Services	2	6	0	0	8	26
Pristine Water Quality	5	1	1	1	8	26
Wildlife	2	4	1	3	10	25
Library	2	2	2	3	9	21
Small Population	1	4	1	2	8	20
Historic Barns and Homes	4	0	1	0	5	18
Historic Roadways	3	0	1	0	4	14
Water Infrastructure	0	3	1	2	6	13
Local Commerce/Business	2	0	2	0	4	12
Recreation	1	2	0	1	4	11
Low Taxes	0	1	4	0	5	11
ATV Trails	0	3	0	1	4	10
Sense of Community	1	2	0	0	3	10
Good People/Strong Community	0	2	0	1	3	7
Lovely Town Center	1	0	0	3	4	7
Cultural Activities/Sports	1	1	0	0	2	7
Volunteers	0	2	0	0	2	6
Location	0	0	1	0	1	2
No Leash Law	0	0	1	0	1	2



Weaknesses	Participant Priorities				Totals	
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Dots	Points
Lack of Diversified Revenue Base	18	2	3	1	24	85
Traffic on Route 113	6	9	7	4	26	69
Lack of Community Gathering Places - (Coffeeshop)	2	10	7	11	30	63
Lack of Large Tax Base	12	2	1	3	18	59
Water Infrastructure (needs upgrade)	9	5	3	1	18	58
Lack of Senior Housing	7	6	3	0	16	52
Lack of Thriving Downtown	5	3	1	7	16	38
Truck traffic on Route 113	3	4	4	1	12	33
Lack of Retail/Commercial	3	3	3	5	14	32
No Community Center	2	4	4	1	11	29
Condition of Main Roads	0	5	5	4	14	29
Limited Cell Phone Coverage	3	3	1	4	11	27
Condition of Fire Station	0	6	3	1	10	25
Lack of a Diverse Community	3	2	2	3	10	25
Lack of Protection for Historic Buildings	1	3	5	1	10	24
Lack of Affordable Housing	2	3	2	1	8	22
Lack of Sidewalks/Streetlights	3	1	2	2	8	21
Lack of Transfer Station	2	2	3	1	8	21
Being a Dry Community	2	2	1	5	10	21
Too Many Streetlights	3	1	1	0	5	17
Lack of Support for Schools	2	0	2	0	4	12
Trail Designation	0	0	5	1	6	11
Upgrade Fire Hydrants	0	2	1	3	6	11
Lack of State Support/Unfunded Mandates	1	1	1	0	3	9
Speed on Route 113/Main Street	0	1	2	1	4	8
No Sprinklers at Elementary School	1	1	0	1	3	8
Community Participation	0	0	2	2	4	6
Cars pass buses	0	1	0	1	2	4
Town Website needs update	0	0	1	1	2	3
Lack of Public Transit	0	0	0	1	1	1
Limited Library/Landfill Hours	0	0	0	0	0	0
Throughway to Other Communities	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lack of Professional Planners	0	0	0	0	0	0



Opportunities	Participant Priorities				Totals	
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Dots	Points
Strengthen Schools	14	11	1	0	26	91
Attract Businesses	17	0	4	2	23	78
Renewable Energy	6	9	5	9	29	70
Age 55+ Housing	8	7	6	1	22	66
Plan for Traffic Control	7	4	5	3	19	53
Revisit Town Center Plan	5	6	4	2	17	48
More Planning	6	6	1	1	14	45
Farm to Table Restaurant	3	7	5	1	16	44
Recreation for Children	0	11	3	3	17	42
Liquor Licenses for Bed & Breakfasts	1	6	5	2	14	34
Agricultural Tourism	4	2	5	0	11	32
Better Communication for Consensus	4	3	2	2	11	31
Use/Develop the Lake	2	5	3	0	10	29
Bottle/Sell Water Resources	3	3	0	6	12	27
Overlay District for Town Center	2	5	1	1	9	26
Open Space/Lake	3	2	2	1	8	23
Alternative Modes of Transportation	2	2	3	0	7	20
More Farms	3	1	1	1	6	18
Link Open Spaces	1	1	3	2	7	15
Use Rt. 113 for Economic Development	1	3	0	1	5	14
Farmers Market	2	0	1	1	4	11
CSA Projects	0	0	1	1	2	3
Urgent Care Facility	0	0	1	0	1	2



Threats	Participant Priorities				Totals	
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Dots	Points
Insufficient Income to Support Town Needs	21	14	2	3	40	133
Crime/Drugs	3	9	1	3	11	44
Failure to Preserve Town Character	7	4	1	1	13	43
Loss of Farms	5	6	0	0	11	38
Failing Schools	4	4	3	4	15	38
Emergency Services Funding	1	7	3	4	15	35
Lack of Revenue	3	4	3	2	12	32
Unplanned Growth	7	0	1	1	9	31
Overdevelopment	1	6	4	1	12	31
Water Infrastructure Failure	3	3	0	4	10	25
Lack of Support for School System	0	3	7	1	11	24
Lack of Infrastructure Funding	2	4	1	1	8	23
Increased Traffic	4	1	2	0	7	23
Ignorance - Small Town Values	0	5	2	2	9	21
Poor Maintenance of Properties	1	1	5	3	10	20
Uncontrolled 40B Development	2	2	1	3	8	19
Lack of Involvement in Town Politics	3	1	1	1	6	18
Viability of Town Center	0	2	6	0	7	18
Overuse/Improper Use of Town Trails	1	1	3	1	6	14
Demolition of Historic Buildings	1	1	3	0	5	13
Divide in Town	0	2	1	4	7	12
Drugs Transported in Town	0	2	1	3	6	11
Bedroom Community/Commuter Town	0	3	0	1	4	10
Staunch Arrogance	0	2	1	1	4	9
Increased Impact on Trails	0	1	0	2	3	5
Expansion of Route 113	0	1	1	0	2	5
Fire	0	1	0	2	3	5
Lack of Community Feel	0	0	2	1	3	5
Lack of Volunteers	1	0	0	0	1	4
Communism	0	0	1	0	1	2
Weakening Economy in Neighboring Towns	0	0	0	1	1	1