



COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

BUILDING

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Amy Mistrot, Chair, Board of Selectmen

FROM: Jamie Errickson, Director
Ted Fields, Senior Planner

CC: Athena Pandolf, Natick Center Associates

DATE: July 17, 2018

RE: **Natick Center Placemaking Strategy & Demonstration**

The Town of Natick, through its Community and Economic Development Department (CED), in partnership with Natick Center Associates (NCA), has engaged the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to provide technical assistance towards the development of a Natick Center Creative Placemaking Strategy. This project builds on a number of recently completed and ongoing planning projects including the Natick Cultural Asset Catalog Project (2015), the Natick Center Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Plan (2016), and the Natick 2030+ Master Plan currently under development. Funding for this project is provided through \$45,000 from MAPC's Technical Assistance Program and the Barr Foundation along with additional \$25,000 from the American Planning Association (APA), Americans for the Arts (AFTA), and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

The project started this past February, and is engaging Natick residents, business owners, and town staff in a public process around how spaces in Natick Center can be activated through arts, culture, and design in ways that enhance the Center's identity and usability. The planning team hosted two public workshops in the spring and has launched a series of ongoing outreach events to develop a Creative Placemaking Strategy recommending strategic locations where public art, in various forms, can be used to make the Center easier to navigate and more welcoming to all users. The Strategy is also examining new processes, tools and investments to foster creative placemaking in Natick. Preliminary findings from the spring workshops have been incorporated into the draft Natick 2030 Master Plan. The final Strategy will synthesize information about Natick Center's arts and cultural assets and use these to develop policy, programming and, most importantly, investment recommendations.

Over the next few months, MAPC will commission the installation of four to eight temporary public art installations at three key locations in Natick Center (Moran Park, Adams Street and the Natick Common) from artists across the Boston area. MAPC will also provide grants to two local non-profit organizations

to hold new public events and performances in Natick Center. The planning team will also appear at numerous events in Natick Center this summer to solicit more public input about how to make the area more welcoming and functional.

Artists will be selected via a two-stage jury process, involving first a Selection Committee* followed by NCA's Public Art Committee (the committee that handles the painting of utility boxes in Town). Selected artists will be granted up to \$1,500 from MAPC towards their work. All art installations will be temporary, with the option of being made permanent at the Town's discretion, and be placed on public property (after coordination with the BOS, DPW, Community & Economic Development, Police Departments and other boards/committees as necessary). These temporary art installations are meant to demonstrate the positive impacts public art can have on improving Natick Center's character and navigability, and will provide an impetus for funding the Placemaking Strategy's recommendations at Spring Annual Town Meeting 2019 or through other funding programs.

Included with this memo is a presentation that outlines and provides more detail on the next steps on this exciting Placemaking exercise.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

* Please see attached list of Selection Committee members.