Imagine Sharon June 14, 2018 Kick-Off Event
7:00 – 8:30 PM
Whitney Place, 675 South Main Street

Summary

The event was opened by Pasqualino Pannone, co-chair of the Sharon Master Plan Steering Committee (MPSC). He introduced the other MPSC members and explained the purpose of the Master Plan and the Committee's role.

Susan Silberberg from CivicMoxie, the planning consultant selected to assist the MSPC and Planning Board, expanded on the purpose of the Master Plan being the opportunity to bring together the existing studies and reports prepared for different aspects of the Town and to create a comprehensive vision for the Town's future. The Master Plan will include goals, recommendations, and strategies towards achieving the long range vision. There will be shorter term recommended actions, but this plan will not include detailed plans for areas of Town such as neighborhood-scale plans and streetscape design at specific locations. Implementation recommendations will include next steps analysis and study for more site- or neighborhood- specific recommended actions.

Susan provided a quick summary of results from the Kickoff Survey. She then briefly explained the format for the evening's event. Using the "World Café" model, participants sat at round tables with large paper sheets and markers with four questions and a set of general guidelines to help foster conversation.

Each table group was given ten minutes to discuss each question. People were encouraged to write, draw, and doodle their thoughts and ideas. After each question and the ten minute discussion period, participants were asked to move to different tables with different people to start the next conversation with a new group. There were four questions asked with the last set of responses posted onto boards in the front of the meeting room.

Below is an abbreviated list of the most common responses to the table questions asked during the Imagine Sharon Kick-off Event. The comments are organized by category and include the number of tables that appeared to have the same response (number of tables/out of total of 12 tables). These lists provide insight into the areas of focus for the group and possible priority areas as the planning process moves forward.

Question 1: You are talking to a visitor about Sharon and want to explain what makes Sharon a great place to live or work. What would you tell him/her?

Frequency that the topics/comments came up at the tables:

Historic + Culture – Diversity/religious/cultural (11/12); well-educated (2/12)

Economic Vitality – Affordable/land value (2/12); restaurants/stores (2/12)

Housing – Big lots for houses (2/12)

Transportation + Mobility – Location/highway access (10/12); trains/MBTA (7/12)
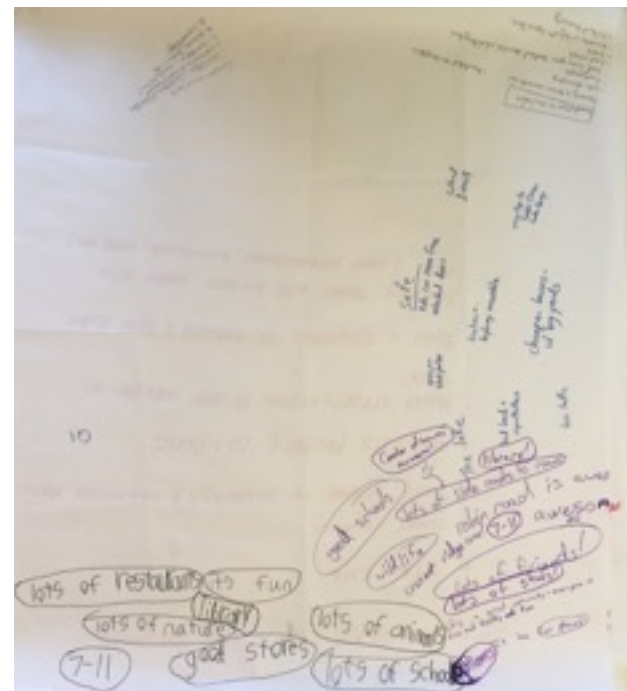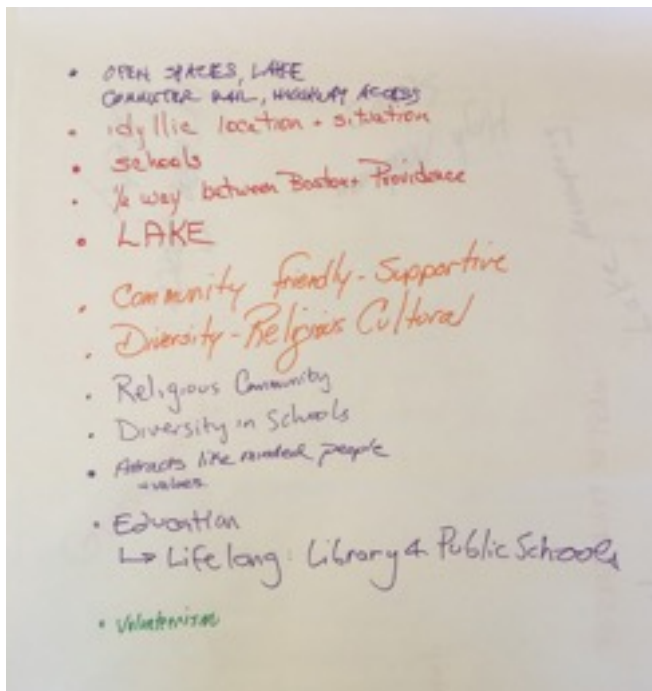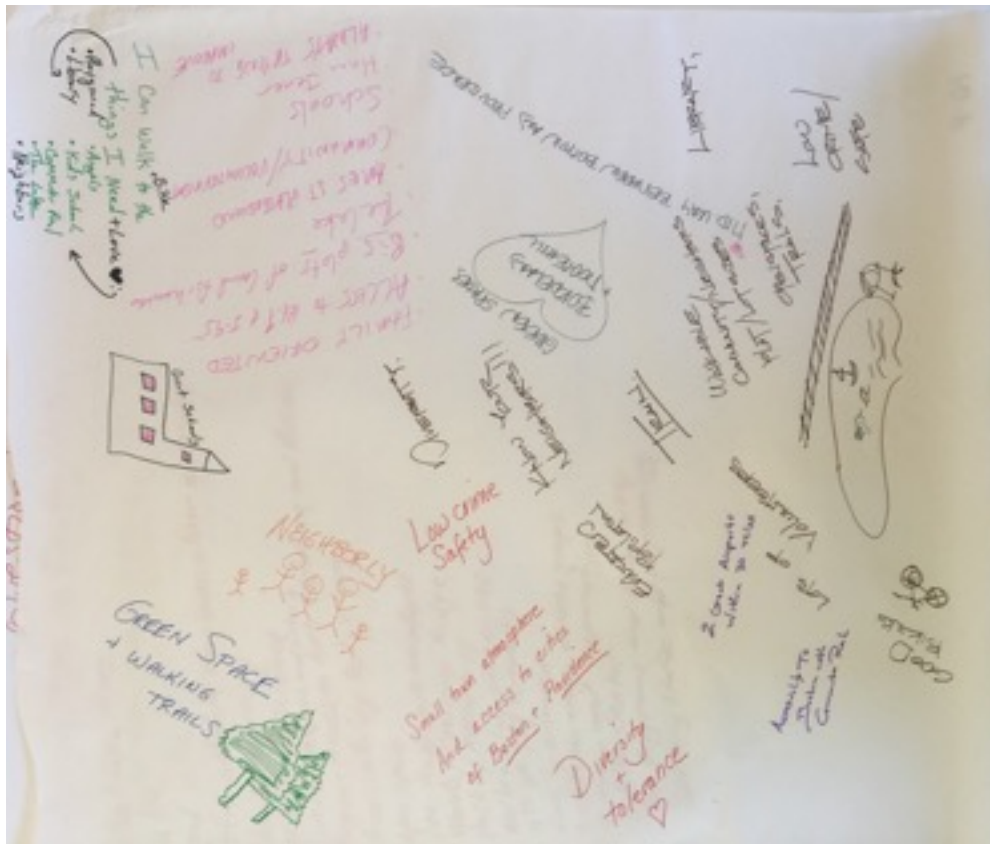
Open Space + Recreation – Open/green space (11/12); Lake (9/12)

Public Facilities, Infrastructure, & Schools – Schools (12/12); library (5/12)

Community Health – Safe (5/12); Supportive services (2/12)

Other – Community/ Values (10/12)

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experts in place

Example Table Sheets – Q1

Handwritten table sheet (top):

- NEIGHBORLY
- Low crime / Safety
- GREEN SPACE + WALKING TRAILS
- Small town atmosphere and access to cities of Boston + Providence
- Diversity + tolerance ♡
- LIBRARY
- Schools
- Good schools

Handwritten table sheet (bottom left):

- OPEN SPACES, LAKE
  COMMUTER RAIL, HIGHWAY ACCESS
- idyllic location + situation
- schools
- ½ way between Boston + Providence
- LAKE
- Community friendly - Supportive
- Diversity - Religious Cultural
- Religious Community
- Diversity in Schools
- Attracts like minded people + values
- Education
  ↳ Life long: Library & Public Schools
- Volunteerism

Handwritten table sheet (bottom right):

- lots of restaurants to fun
- lots of nature
- lots of animals
- lots of friends!
- lots of Schools
- 7-11
- good stores
- good schools

Question 2: In 10 years, I will be _____ years old. What do I hope Sharon will be for me, my family, friends, and neighbors?

Historic + Culture (HC), Economic Vitality (EV), Housing (H), Transportation + Mobility (TM), Open Space + Recreation (OSR), Public Facilities, Infrastructure, & Schools (PFIS), Environmental Sustainability (ES), Fiscal Sustainability (FS), Community Health (CH), Other (Oth)

Note the dates below are the ages of the meeting participants in ten years' time:

<28 yrs old	EV: Fun places	OSR: Nature, places to roam	Oth: Like it is today
29-34 yrs			

35-44 yrs
EV: More diverse businesses/restaurants   OSR: Retain green space
TM: Walkability, traffic   ES: Town-wide composting
CH: Safety, kid activities

45-54 yrs
EV: More businesses/activities   OSR: Maintain/better lake & green space
H: Affordable housing   TM: Traffic, bike/trail connection
PFIS: Schools, social spaces for all ages, public bathrooms
FS: Sustainable tax base, affordability   CH: Safe

55-64 yrs
EV: Mores businesses/ restaurants   OSR: Green space conservation, lake accessibility + recreation   H: Diversity of housing stock
TM: Public transportation, safer biking/walking
PFIS: Accessible buildings, new high school, new library, tech infrastructure
FS: Affordable   CH: Safe, integration of neighborhoods

65-74 yrs
EV: Commercially viable, vibrant Town center
OSR: Maintain open space, lake/beach
H: Strong housing value, affordable senior housing TM: Public transit/parking, traffic, walkability   PFIS: Water supply, good schools, better library
ES: Sustainable   FS: Affordable, taxes

75+ yrs
EV: More businesses OSR: Lake preserved   H: Diverse housing stock, strong home values   TM: More public transit, shuttles, walkability
PFIS: Senior/continuity of services, strong schools, public facilities, infrastructure
FS: Affordable, stabilized tax rate   CH: Welcoming, quality of life for all ages

Frequency that the topics/comments came up at the tables:

Economic Vitality (EV) – More and diverse businesses, restaurants, and activities (7/12)

Housing (H) – More housing options (including senior/cluster) (4/12); Affordable housing (2/9)

Transportation + Mobility (TM) – Improved public transit, options (6/12), Walkable/bikeable (5/12)

Open Space + Recreation (OSR) – Maintain/better green and open space, lake (7/12)

Public Facilities, Infrastructure, & Schools (PFIS) – Better/accessible facilities (7/12), Strong schools (4/12)

Environmental Sustainability (ES) – More environmentally sustainable (6/9)

Fiscal Sustainability (FS) – Affordable/ sustainable-lower taxes (10/12)

Community Health (CH) – Safe (2/12)

Other (Oth)– Welcoming community for all ages/diverse groups (5/9)

Example Table Sheets – Q2

IN 10 YEARS, I WILL BE...

<28

29-34

35-44

45-54
- Good Schools (School)
- Affordable
- Maintain open space
- Sustainable (environmentally)
  Bike lanes throughout town
  Bike lane around the lake
  Restaurants!

- More businesses that serve the community
- Restaurants!
- Social spaces for families

55-64

65-74
Affordable
Home values stay strong
Make new friends (opportunities to connect)
Share feelings with good ideas

75+ Affordable

IN 10 YEARS, I WILL BE...

<28

29-34

35-44 Protect green space/open land
       Town wide composting

45-54 Lower tax rate
       Excellent schools - not just good test scores

55-64 New beautiful state of the art high school
       Hope we still be able to afford to live in Sharon
       More businesses in town/destination shopping
       Reliable internet

65-74 Affordable housing for people who want to age in place
       Avoid overcrowding/too much traffic
       Concerns about home safety

75+ 1 & 2 easy living - adjacent/cluster housing
     More public transportation. local shuttles
     Town Pool

IN 10 YEARS, I WILL BE...

<28

29-34

35-44

45-54

55-64 safe

65-74

75+

Question 3: What are your top 3 issues or challenges that we need to address in Sharon?

Frequency that the topics/comments came up at the tables:

Historic + Culture – Overdevelopment/compromising Town character (1/12)

Economic Vitality – Support/expand commercial & businesses (8/12)

Housing – Affordable housing/housing choice (5/12); affordable senior housing (2/12)

Transportation + Mobility –Traffic (7/12); public transit/ station parking (7/12); accessibility/walk & bike (6/12)

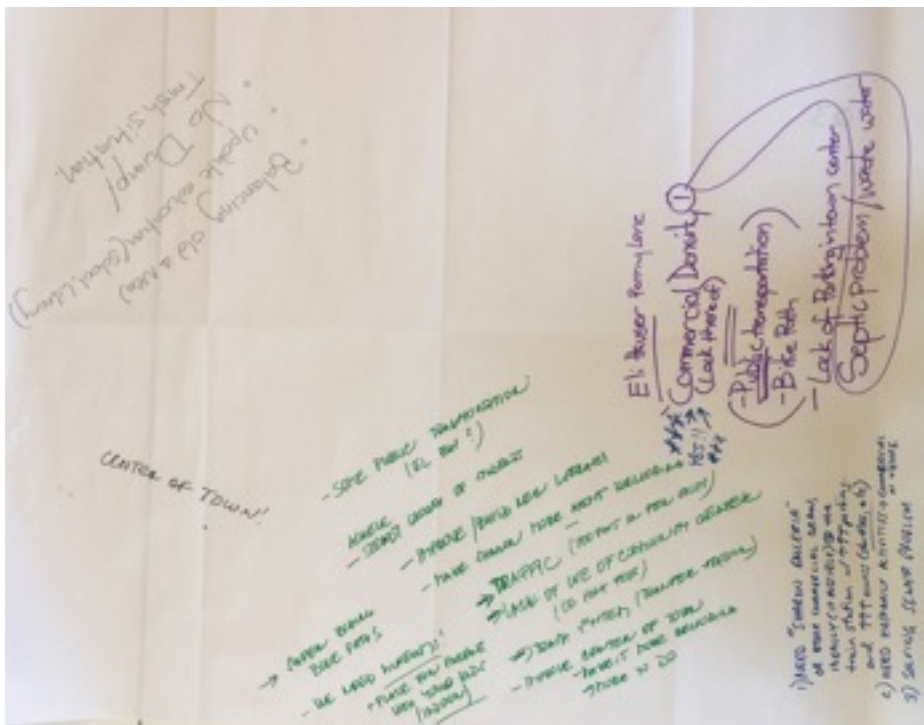Open Space + Recreation – Manage/expand green & parks (3/12); maintain/beautify Lake (2/12)

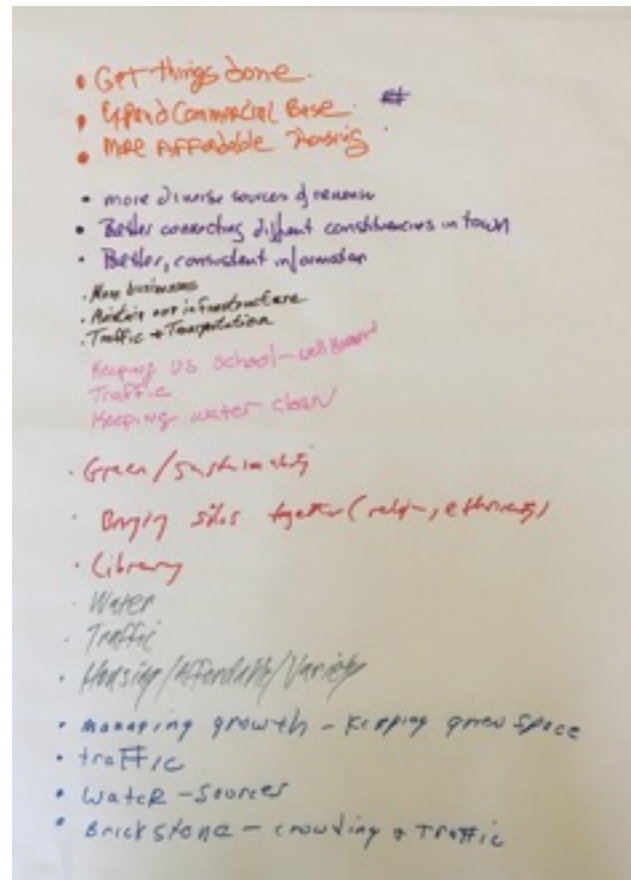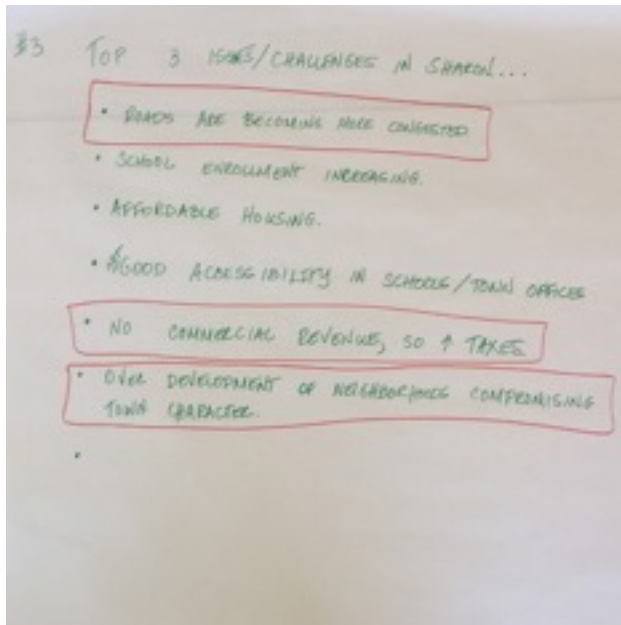Public Facilities, Infrastructure, & Schools – Infrastructure (6/12); schools (6/12)

Environmental Sustainability – Natural resources conservation/wildlife habitat (4/12)

Fiscal Sustainability – Taxes/sustainable budget (9/12)

Community Health – More civic involvement (3/12); Better connections between different constituencies (2/12)
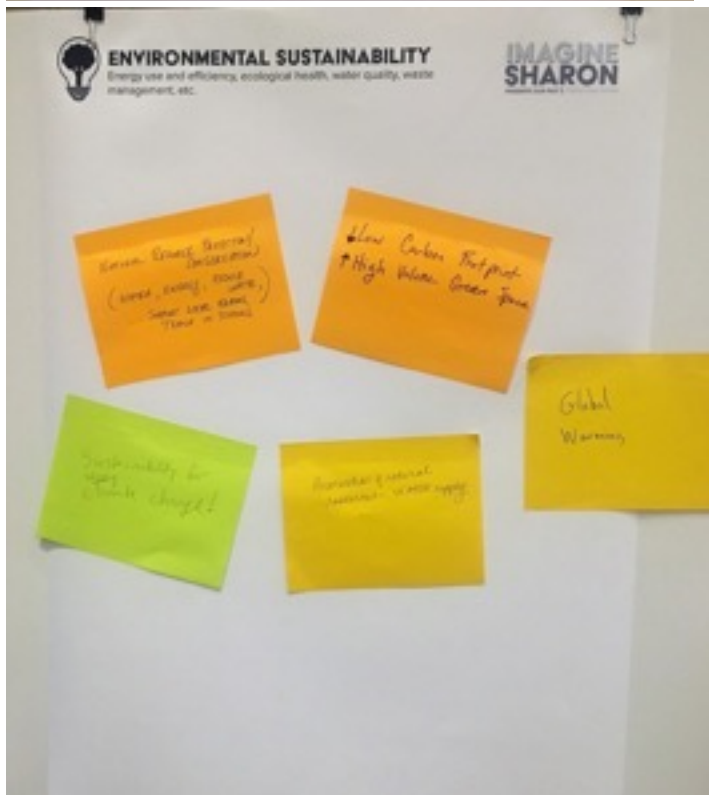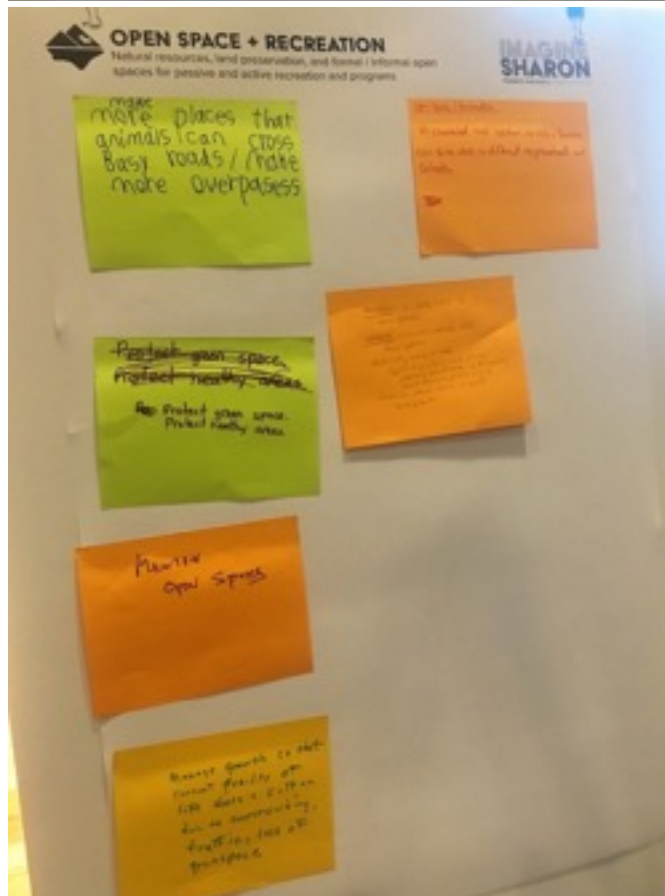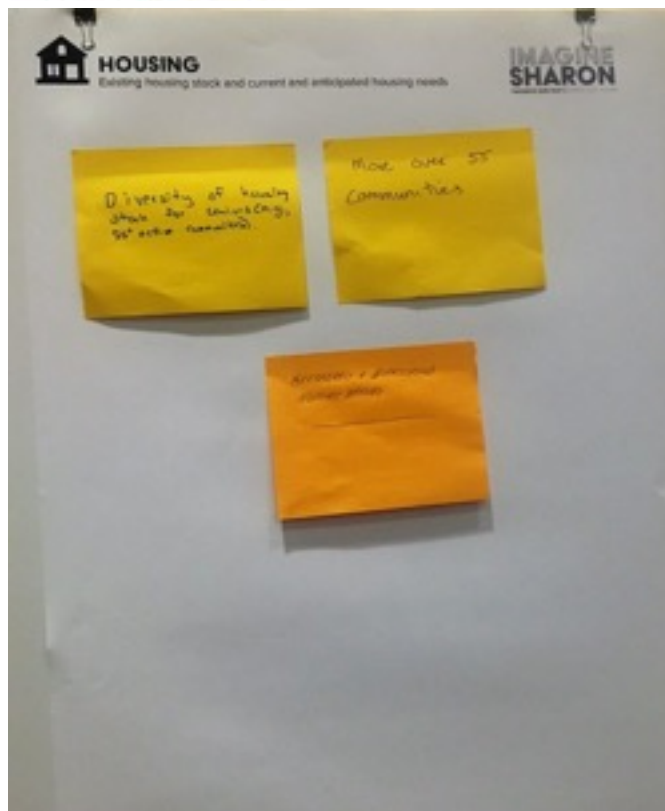
Example Table Sheets – Q3

For the last question, each person was asked to write his/her own comments onto a self-sticky note that (s)he then had to place onto a poster board by category.
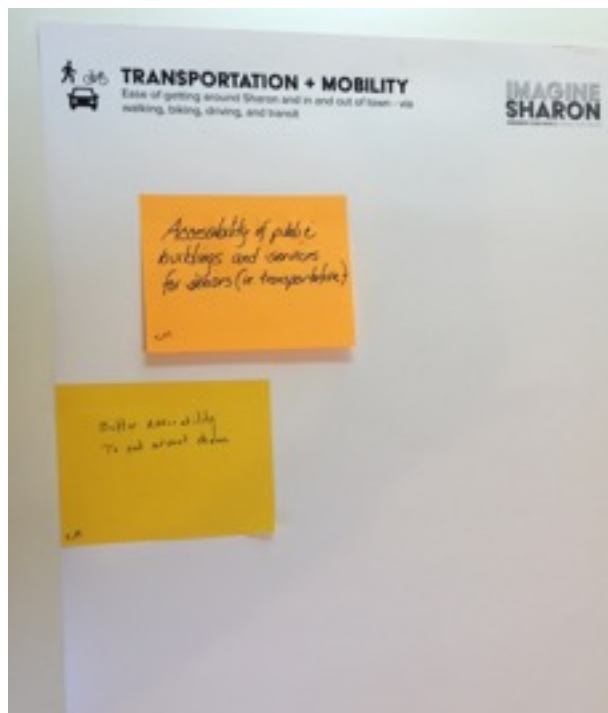
Question 4: If this planning process highlights one thing guaranteed to be improved, what would you recommend?

Top Recommendations/ Comments:

1. Fiscal sustainability/responsibility of the Town, also related to non-residential tax base support and growth (22)

2. Support commercial/economic diversity and growth (also related to tax base) (9)

3. New and/or improved public facilities: new library (6), school quality/safety (6), and public buildings/infrastructure (7)

4. Infrastructure and services for seniors, including housing, accessibility, transportation, health, etc. (6)

5. Open space needs maintenance and effective management (5)

CivicMoxie
experts in place

IMAGINE SHARON
PRESERVE OUR PAST | FORGE OUR FUTURE

TRANSPORTATION + MOBILITY
Ease of getting around Sharon and in and out of town - via walking, biking, driving, and transit

IMAGINE SHARON

- Accessibility of public buildings and services for seniors (or transportation)
- Better accessibility to get around Sharon

COMMUNITY HEALTH
Comprehensive well-being of community members of all ages; identifying positive and negative health trends and their causes

IMAGINE SHARON

- Inclusivity — Includes finding ways to keep old folks in the town
- Everyone be safe!: [illegible list]
- accessibility across the life cycle
- LIFECOURSE PERSPECTIVE — Support/Quality of Life for ALL AGES

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PUBLIC FACILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE, & SCHOOLS
Places and spaces maintained by the Town, including buildings, sidewalks/ streets, recreation centers, etc.

TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE
(Cell towers, alternative internet providers - Fios!)

School - system - Good high quality

Accessibility

New Library.

accessibility of all public buildings (including schools)

New Library

School Safety

improve infrastructure
- water
- streets
- public transportation

Top Priority
Build new Sharon Public Library

Infrastructure

BETTER USE OF BOND/KEEP WHEN BUILDING.
COMBINE 2 PROJECT IN 1
(LIBRARY & HIGH SCHOOL)
+ BETTER FOR ENVIRONMENT

School Quality

Keep schools strong to be welcoming to a younger growing population.

New library that can better serve all of Sharon

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experts in place