

MEMORANDUM

To: Mill Site Study Committee
From: Jay J. Donovan, Assistant Director, NMCOG
Subject: Visioning Session Results
Date: November 12, 2008

The Visioning Session held on October 25, 2008 at the Pepperell Senior Center provided an opportunity for the public to learn more about the activities of the Mill Site Study Committee, as well as to provide input into the redevelopment process associated with the former Pepperell Paper Mill site. The Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) was pleased to lead the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis portion of the program. The SWOT Analysis provided an opportunity for the thirty-five (35) attendees to voice their opinions on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with the Town of Pepperell, the mill site, Railroad Square and the Nashua and Nissitissit Rivers.

The opinions expressed by the participants at the Visioning Session have been summarized in the two attached documents. The first document identifies all the ideas submitted by specific category and includes the number and color of the stickers attached to each idea. As outlined during the session, participants were asked to prioritize the ideas as follows: red (first), green (second), blue (third) and yellow (fourth). The second document assigns points to each color – red (4), green (3), blue (2) and yellow (1) – and then prioritizes the ideas by category. Based upon the point totals for each idea, the top five priorities for each category were as follows:

Strengths: Location

- Tremendous potential
- Nashua & Nissitissit Rivers
- Mecca for recreation
- Large parcel

Weaknesses: Unknown unknowns (environmental issues, subsurface conditions)

- Lack of “walkability”/no pedestrian accommodations
- Small commercial/industrial tax base
- Flooding at the Mill site
- Residents spend money in other towns, lack of critical mass

Opportunities: Park at Mill site, open up riverfront

- Economic vitality
- Brewpub/restaurant at the Mill site
- Connect open space, park & covered bridge
- Maintain rural character

Threats: Overdevelopment

- “Do nothing”, a threat

Threats (cont.): Traffic generation
Tax revenue/generating threat of residential development
Unfriendly developer

More extensive information is contained in the two attached documents. This information will form the basis for the development of the Site Master Plan and will provide information to the property owners regarding the hopes and concerns regarding the redevelopment of the site by the public. While these results do not represent a scientific sampling of local opinion, they represent the views of the participants who attended the Visioning Session.

Please feel free to contact me directly at (978) 454-8021 x 16 or jdonovan@nmcog.org if you have any questions or require additional information.