



Memorandum

To: Natick School Committee

CC: Leo Ryan, Chair, Natick Sustainability Committee
James Errickson, Deputy Town Administrator, Operations

From: Jillian Wilson Martin, Sustainability Coordinator

Date: February 18, 2021

Subject: Net Zero Plan

In 2018, Natick Town Meeting voted to adopt a goal to reduce community-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to net zero by 2050 as part of a non-binding resolution. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, under the Baker Administration, has also adopted this goal, which is defined as reducing GHG emissions as much as possible and removing or offsetting remaining emissions by 2050 or sooner.

In pursuit of this shared goal, the non-binding resolution directed the Town of Natick to:

- Establish a baseline estimate of community-wide emissions
- Develop a Net Zero Action Plan that outlines specific strategies and sets measurable, attainable and realistic interim targets for achieving the 2050 net zero goal, and to
- Provide an annual progress report to Natick Town Meeting

The Natick Sustainability Committee, with support from the Town's Sustainability Coordinator, has led this charge. To support this work, in 2019, the Town received a grant and formed a collaboration with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), the Town of Arlington and the City of Melrose. Over the past two years, the partners completed and published a baseline estimate of community-wide emissions, using 2017 as a benchmark; researched and evaluated emission reduction strategies in use by local governments; and conducted public outreach. This work informed the draft Net Zero Action Plan the Committee is pleased to present to you today.

Summary of Draft Net Zero Action Plan

The 2017 community-wide GHG inventory found that buildings are the largest source of emissions in Natick (65%), followed by on-road transportation (35%) and solid waste and wastewater (less than 1%). Of Natick's total emissions, 62% come from residents' homes and vehicles, 31% come from businesses and industry, and 4% from school and municipal services.

Significantly reducing these emissions will require a major shift in where Natick's energy comes from, the way we heat and cool our homes and businesses, and how we get around. The draft Net Zero Action Plan proposes addressing these challenges by focusing on six core strategies:

- Greening the grid with renewable energy sources,
- Producing more renewable energy locally,
- Making our homes and buildings super-efficient,
- Electrifying heating and cooking equipment,
- Making walking, biking, and public transit the best way to get around, and
- Electrifying cars, trucks, buses, trains, and other ways we get around.

These strategies are consistent with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts's [2050 Decarbonization Roadmap](#) and align closely with the [Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2030](#) and current climate legislation, [Bill S.9](#).

In support of these strategies, the draft Net Zero Action Plan identifies 21 priorities Natick should pursue in the next five years (2021-2025), with the understanding that much will change in the next 30 years. The proposed actions are meant to lay the foundation for success long term, and the intent is for the community to revisit its net zero plan every five years and adjust course over time.

Relevance to Natick Public Schools

Natick Public Schools (NPS) has a critical role to play in reducing community-wide emissions.

As a building owner, NPS is responsible for 1.6% of community-wide emissions (40% of emissions from public services, not including emissions from its school bus fleet). Over the years, Natick's school and municipal governments have worked together on energy efficiency by completing a variety of capital improvement projects and on renewable energy by installing solar panels on public buildings. The draft Net Zero Action Plan calls on the Town and NPS to continue to lead by example by:

- Transitioning electricity supply to 100% carbon-free electricity by 2030,
- Maximizing clean energy technology on municipal and school properties,
- Adopting net zero standards for new public buildings and major renovations, and
- Adopting zero emission standards for the municipal fleet.

Each of these actions will require close collaboration with NPS to develop a plan for implementation, including the identification of staff partners and funding sources, as needed.

As a leader and an educator, NPS also has the ability to reduce community-wide emissions by championing net zero projects with NPS students and families. Natick's schools and school buses can serve as a living lab for clean energy technologies, and NPS can play an active role in engaging students in environmental leadership.

Next Steps

In pursuing the plan's implementation, key Town boards/committees and departments, including the Natick School Committee and Natick Public Schools, will be invited to participate in a Net Zero Action Task Force. The Task Force will be charged with aligning school and municipal department responsibilities with the goals of the Net Zero Action Plan.

The Sustainability Committee is eager to partner with Natick Public Schools in pursuing net zero, and seeks the School Committee's feedback and endorsement on the draft Plan as we work to fulfill the intent of Town Meeting.