# SUSTAINABLE NORTHAMPTON

## Comprehensive Plan, January 2008

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# The Process

*Sustainable Northampton* is based upon information drawn from public forums, focus groups, surveys, and from previous community plans over a 28-month community planning process. In June 2005, Mayor Mary Clare Higgins initiated a comprehensive planning process with a sustainability focus. A Steering Committee was established to oversee and guide the plan consisting of representatives from City boards, City staff, and community groups. Public grants and private donations were received to launch the *Sustainable Northampton* planning process.

Research and Public Participation Process

The following organizations and documents helped form the plan:

- American Institute of Architects – Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) led a public input process and prepared a document including an assessment of current conditions, a vision for a sustainable future, and recommended strategies.
- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission researched and analyzed sustainable community indicators.
- Donahue Institute (University of Massachusetts) collected economic data.
- Vanesse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. prepared a briefing paper on form-based zoning.
- Edith M. Netter & Associates assisted in the preparation of a new transfer of development rights and inclusionary housing zoning ordinance.

In March and April of 2006, the City held nine focus groups and neighborhood meetings, with the assistance of Walter Cudnohofsky Associates, to obtain public input on the following questions:

- Characteristics and community values that should guide Northampton;
- Social, economic, and/or physical changes that have most affected the community;
- Areas of conflict among various goals and visions for a sustainable Northampton;
- Key areas of concern around sustainability; and,
- Key actions, policies, or infrastructure improvements needed to support a sustainable vision.

In January 2006, the City distributed a survey to every household via the annual census resulting in over 3,000 responses. Those responses have been collated and summarized in charts and tables and are included in the appendix of this document.

In the Fall of 2006, the City held two "did we get it right" workshops, with the assistance of Walter Cudnohofsky Associates, to ensure that the community had a chance to comment on the summary of the focus group meetings.

In mid-2007, the Steering Committee used the assistance of The Cecil Group to:

- Synthesize all of the community input, data, and previous plans into a comprehensive plan;
- Add the Vision, Guiding Principles, and Measurements of Progress/Metrics;
- Hold public workshops for presentation of the drafts to the community; and,
- Prepare the final plan for adoption by the Planning Board and City Council.

# The *Sustainable Northampton* Steering Committee

The following individuals have provided their time over the course of this planning effort as the *Sustainable Northampton* Steering Committee:

Mayor Clare Higgins

City Council

Michael R. Bardsley, *President*

Marilyn Richards, *Ward 3*

Marianne LaBarge, *Ward 6*

Arts Council

Elizabeth Stone

Board of Public Works

Robert Reckman, *Chair*

Board of Health

Xanthi Scrimgeour

Conservation Commission

John Body

Housing Partnership

Martha Acklesburg, *Chair*

Planning Board

Francis Johnson, *Chair*

Kenneth Jodrie

Paul Voss

School Committee

Katherine Foote-Newman

Transportation and Parking Commission

Leslie Stein

Tree Committee, Leeds Civic Association

Deb Jacobs

Youth Commission

Owen Hooks-Davis

Hannah McQuillan

Zoning Board of Appeals

Elizabeth Wroblicka

Bay State Village Association

Jan Sniffen

Smith College

Laurie Fenlason

Tom Litwin

Casa Latina

Eneida Garcia

Lillian Torres

Center for Ecological Technology

Peggy MacLeod

Cooley Dickinson Hospital

Richard Corder, *Vice President-Guest Services*

Northampton Center for the Arts

Ann Shanahan

Northampton Chamber of Commerce

Suzanne Beck, Director

Dennis Bidwell, *Economic Development Committee, Chair*

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

Catherine Miller, *Principal Planner*

Valley Community Development Corporation

Joanne Campbell, *Executive Director*

Western Massachusetts American Institute of Architects

Erica Gees

Building

Anthony Patillo, *Building Commissioner*

Mayor's Office of Economic Development

Teri Anderson, *Economic Development Coordinator*

Office of Planning and Development

Wayne Feiden, *Director*

Carolyn Misch, *Senior Land Use Planner*

Recreation Department

Ann-Marie Moggio, *Director*

# The Financial Contributors

The City of Northampton would like to thank the following organizations for their support of this plan:

- American Institute of Architects
- Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development
- Greater Northampton Area Chamber of Commerce
- Smith College
- Bay State Gas
- National Grid
- MassDevelopment
- City of Northampton

# The Approach

Northampton has developed—over many months and with input from a wide array of constituencies—a vision for its future as well the goals, principles and strategies required to support and implement that vision. This undertaking, called *Sustainable Northampton*, is a comprehensive plan that seeks to ensure the city can continue to meet its current and ongoing environmental, social and economic needs without compromising the future for succeeding generations.

The Sustainable Northampton Plan was designed, in part, to fulfill the requirements of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 41, Section 81 D, for the development of municipal comprehensive or master plans. The comprehensive plan is designed to provide a basis for decision-making regarding the long-term physical development of the municipality and requires Planning Board approval. Likewise, one purpose of the Zoning Act (Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40A) and zoning adopted by communities is to encourage the most appropriate use of land, including consideration of the recommendations in the comprehensive plan.

Finite resources, coupled with a significant desire to better support a diverse and sustainable community, require the city to make choices about how best to use its natural, social, economic, and human resources. City residents and elected officials recognize that these choices are local decisions that will impact the natural environment, the community, and quality of life. This vision is intended to guide Northampton's role locally, regionally, and globally.

*Sustainable Northampton* commits the city to becoming a model community for sustainable policies and practices.

The plan is intended in its most important form as a plan of action for the next ten years. However, there are several aspects that cut across that time frame:

- Sustainability is a concept for ensuring a high quality of life for future generations. Consequently, the plan projects that these actions will provide benefits far into the future.
- Some actions are continuations of recent programs and require ongoing diligence to maintain. Consequently, some of these actions 'flow through' the plan.
- The metrics or measurements of progress are intended to be part of a yearly report to inform the City how well this plan is achieving these goals. Consequently, the City will receive a report card each year and every five years can revisit the proposals in this plan and update them to ensure the plan maintains the course towards true sustainability.

The Sustainable Northampton Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis utilizing a methodology that will be developed in the next 9 – 12 months. The annual evaluation system will be designed to enable a review of the results for the metrics identified in the plan. The results of the annual review will be aligned with the operational and capital budget goals for the following fiscal year.

# The Vision

The Northampton that its residents and visitors love today is partly a product of confluences of geography, climate and larger New England settlement patterns. But equally important in shaping our community have been the choices made by its leaders and citizens in years past – conscious decisions about when to invest in industry and commerce, where to encourage housing, how to harness and protect natural resources, how to create jobs, how to develop an educated citizenry, how to welcome and support diversity, how to provide for artistic and cultural enrichment.

Now, in 2007, the residents of Northampton have an opportunity to provide shape and values to the way Northampton will grow and change in the years ahead. We have the option of letting momentum and inertia shape our future, resting on our laurels and our numerous "Best Of" rankings. We also have the option of critically examining what works about Northampton and what could be improved, consciously shaping a future that takes into account the reality of a world of resources – energy resources, environmental resources, financial resources – under growing strain.

This comprehensive plan, the Sustainable Northampton Plan, represents a decision by its citizens to choose the second option – to grow and change with a full understanding of this generation's responsibility to leave behind a community that will not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs. This means learning to be smarter about how we use our resources, creatively thinking about patterns of consumption and usage.

In crafting a vision that will impact the natural environment and quality of life at many levels, this plan is driven by concepts of social equity, economic and cultural vitality, and environmental security. Bringing these concepts alive will require a commitment by Northampton's citizens to:

- **Leadership** – locally and regionally - in the advancement of sustainable practices that manage land use for long-term benefits, reduce dependency on nonrenewable fuels, reduce consumption of resources without offsetting benefits, and improve our impact on the environment.
- **Inclusiveness, tolerance and civic-mindedness** by embracing diversity and encouraging full participation in community conversations. It is assumed that controversy and debate will only further the discussion and result in greater participation and ownership by the community.
- **Vibrancy** as a city that supports the arts, non-profit organizations, higher education and businesses in an atmosphere that allows growth and prosperity while at the same time conserving our heritage, natural resources, and history. We will build on and celebrate our uniqueness as a community and maintain the quality of life that is a strength and competitive advantage.

This vision of sustainability, and these commitments to ourselves and to future generations, will be achieved by following a set of Guiding Principles and enacting specific strategies and actions. Success in shaping the future envisioned by this plan can in many instances be measured by comparing actual performance with quantitative targets included in the plan.

# The Guiding Principles

- **Support a diverse and integrated community** where all residents have the opportunity to excel on a social, economic, and academic level and to lead healthy, independent and successful lives;
- **Act as a part of a broader region** through the resources connecting us beyond our municipal borders, such as watersheds, rivers, roads, economy, culture, or common goals;
- **Significantly improve energy efficiency** in city buildings and programs, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and encourage conservation and use of alternative and renewable energy sources throughout the community;
- **Support a wide variety of housing types** that increase rental and homeownership units to create and preserve a range of affordability and choice in housing options;
- **Support artists and the arts**, local culture, history, and education at all levels as vital to a successful, well-balanced community;
- **Connect municipal capital improvements directly to the goals** of *Sustainable Northampton*;
- **Adopt land use patterns** that maintain a mix of urban and rural areas; concentrate development in neighborhood, village, and commercial centers supported by adequate infrastructure, including public transit; promote energy efficiency; and protect environmental, open space, and agricultural resources.
- **Recognize and foster the unique history, character and function** of each residential, commercial, mixed use, and open space neighborhood.
- **Recognize that a diverse and vibrant economy is integral** to a successful community and support business and job development that contribute to the community and the city's long-term sustainability;
- **Make the city increasingly more walkable, bikeable, and transit-oriented**;
- **Improve citizens' lives** through continuous, high quality education; and,
- **Operate the city as a democratic enterprise** that is responsive and responsible to the fiscal, economic, social, and environmental interests of its citizens.

# Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map is proposed to provide the City with a basis for making consistent decisions on capital investments and land use into the future. The Future Land Use Map is adopted with this document. The Map may be amended over time to ensure consistency and to provide a measurement of success in the completion of Sustainable Northampton.

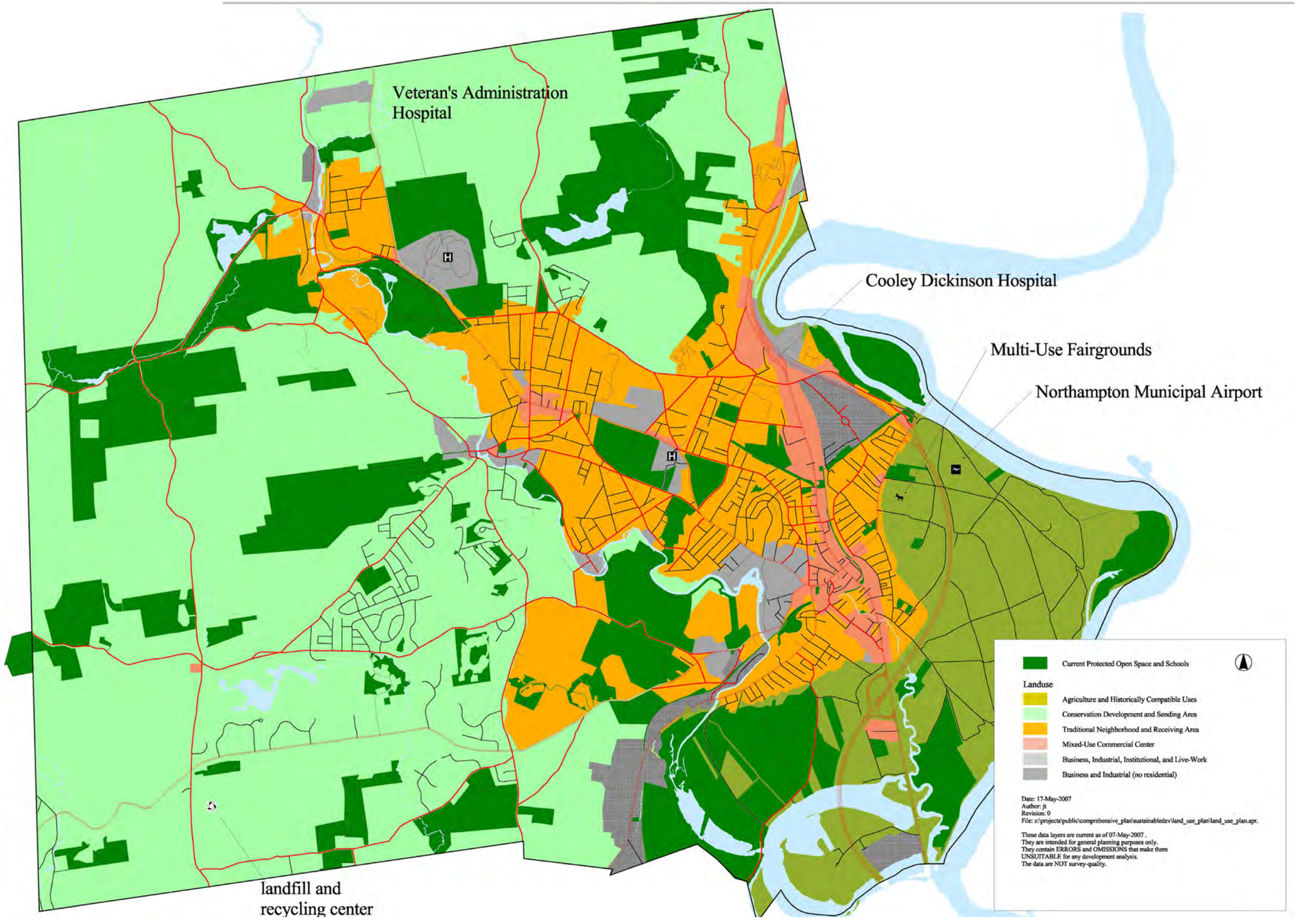
The Future Land Use Map is not a prescriptive regulatory document such as the Zoning Map, which requires conformance for land use and development. The Future Land Use Map provides broad guidance for making decisions on all city actions: programs, land use decisions, regulations, and capital expenditures. Zoning Map amendments may be anticipated as one method of implementing the Future Land Use Map and this Plan. The Future Land Use Map must be flexible, but with consistent use it will result in an accumulation of decisions that support the City goals.

The Future Land Use Map shows:

- Concentration of traditional development in the historically denser areas of Downtown, Florence and Leeds;
- Low-density development in the watersheds. This plan will allow transfer of development rights into the higher density areas;
- Expansion of land for commercial/economic development;
- Areas for continued preservation of agriculture and related uses.

Click here to see full-size plan online.

*From 2000-2007, 365 new residential units were constructed in the City: 51% were constructed within the orange "traditional neighborhood/receiving area" of the map; and 49% were constructed in the "Conservation Development" areas.*



# Future Land Use Areas

The following are descriptions of the areas shown on the **Future Land Use Map** (see previous page).

**Agriculture and Historically Compatible Uses** - This is primarily highly productive agriculture land within the floodplain of Connecticut River and includes rich wildlife and flora resources and historical commercial and residential uses. In this area, expansion of existing buildings and uses is encouraged, acquisition of land in floodplain forests and within the 10 year floodplain is prioritized, but generally new non-agricultural development is discouraged.

**Conservation Development and Sending Zone** - These are outlying areas that generally have moderate to severe environmental limitations, including water supply areas, large intact forest ecosystems, rich wildlife and flora resources, and critical scenic resources. In these areas, conservation of land is prioritized. Many areas are appropriate for context sensitive development and open space residential development designed to be compatible with conservation purposes. Mitigating traffic impacts and providing non-vehicular transportation options that are currently in Traditional Neighborhoods is critical. There are opportunities to transfer the right to develop parcels in this area to other areas in the city that are more appropriate for development.

**Traditional Neighborhood and Receiving Zone** - These are currently the most developed areas with planned expansion of developable area to accommodate expected demand for new growth. These areas can accommodate the vast majority of new smart growth residential development, but only with design standards to ensure that new development does not degrade the quality of existing neighborhoods and mitigates traffic. More focus on design details, encouraging designs compatible with historic neighborhoods, focus on pocket and linear parks and on the quality of life generally are key elements for encouraging a population density consistent with the highest quality neighborhoods present 50 years ago. There are opportunities to accept the development rights into these areas from Conservation Development areas.

**Mixed-Use Commercial Center** - These are the current and proposed commercial areas. In all of these areas housing is strongly encouraged, but only above the first floor. Mixed uses within the district and often within buildings, is strongly encouraged. Design details and pedestrian-friendly development are most important. Regulations should focus on design, mixed use, street orientation, and mitigating traffic impacts. Parking requirements, minimum setbacks and traditional dimensional requirements are far less important in these areas.

**Business, Industrial, Institutional, and Live-Work** - These are the areas that include traditional mill buildings along the Mill River and other business and industrial areas which are appropriate for mixed use. Residential use should be allowed only as part of live-work and artists space, where the primary use is business but business owners and workers may live on the premises. Design details, mitigating traffic impacts, and sensitivity to surrounding neighborhoods are the most important development standards.

**Business and Industrial (no residential)** - These are the traditional industrial/research/business park sites that should be preserved for business and industrial uses not compatible with residential uses. Traffic mitigation, transit, and site plan requirements are important in these areas.

# The Elements, Actions and Measures of Success

The following section includes the Goals, Objectives and Actions proposed to accomplish this Vision, followed by the Measurements of Progress that will determine how well the City succeeds in accomplishing the plan. The sections are separated into twelve elements identified in the public meetings:

- Land Use and Development
- Environment, Energy and Climate Protection
- Open Space and Recreation
- Economic Development
- Arts and Culture
- Heritage Resources
- Housing
- Infrastructure and Capital Resources
- Transportation
- Municipal Governance and Financial Stability
- Education
- Social Equity

Each element includes the following sections:

- Goals – The goals are based on the result of the public input process and form the foundation of the plan;
- Objectives – More specific ideals by which each goal will be achieved;
- Strategies and Actions – Steps that are to be taken, with the responsible party identified. The (P) before a listing indicates it as a priority. The lead municipal department will be further identified at the time of implementation;
- Measurements of Progress – These are the metrics to determine whether improvements are occurring, which can be made as the report card on the results of implementing the plan. The metrics include targets that may be short-term, or long-term but will be revisited every five years with updates of the plan;
- Potential Conflicts and Potential Responses – Identification of where the discussion may have to proceed to resolve the inevitable conflicts when using finite resources to act on multiple, community-wide programs.

# Land Use and Development

## Goal LU-1: Direct changes and improvements in accordance with the Future Land Use Map

Objectives:

1. Ask for creative designs and cluster developments that allow higher density to improve the yield of housing in the downtown and village centers. Use the downtown and more densely developed areas to build high and medium density housing (12 to 65 units/acre; see Density Study prepared by the Office of Planning and Development for illustrations).
2. Encourage mixed-use development in both residential and commercial areas such as Florence center, Village of Leeds, Bay State, Hospital Hill and satellite commercial areas with mixed uses that support both neighborhood residential and local commercial needs and services
3. Before developing rural areas, and after allowing for green space within densely developed areas, encourage infill development of vacant and underutilized land in and around downtown and in existing denser developed areas. This includes places such as village centers or areas that are currently zoned and targeted for development, such as the Business Park.
4. Match the pace of new housing development with the growth in capacities of public infrastructure, public safety, public health, and school services to support the new populations.
5. Locate housing within walking distances along safe paths, or with bicycle access, to and from neighborhood commercial areas, parks and recreation, schools, and public transportation.

Strategies and Actions:

(P) Create a Rezoning Committee comprised of officials and community representatives as selected by the Mayor, City Council, and Planning Board. Task the Committee with rezoning the City so that zoning is consistent with the *Sustainable Northampton* and Future Land Use Map. A listing of zoning changes to be considered by the rezoning committee is included in Appendix A of this Plan.

*Responsible Agency: Planning Board, City Council, Mayor*

Ask the Transportation Committee to review City land use policies and the land use plan against the City's transportation plan and consider the impacts of land use on the City's transportation system.

*Responsible Agency: Transportation Committee, Office of Planning and Development*

Compare the City land use policies against the Open Space and Recreation Plan recommendations to identify priority open space areas and resources that should be preserved.

*Responsible Agency: Conservation Commission, Recreation Commission, Community Preservation Committee, Planning Board, Office of Planning and Development*

Provide an option for mediation in site plan reviews to address neighborhood concerns.

*Responsible Agency: Planning Board, Office of Planning and Development, City Council, Economic Development*

Measurements of Progress:

***Land Use***

Metric: Amount of development, by number of projects/building permits and floor space, corresponding to the use designations of the Future Land Use Map

Reporting Agencies: Building Department, Office of Planning and Development, Economic Development

Target: Conformance with the Future Land Use Map

Responsibility for Target: City Council, Planning Board, Economic Development

***Open Space Conservation***

Metric: Amount of open space preserved and conserved, by number of sites and area, corresponding to the use designations of the Future Land Use Map

Reporting Agencies: Conservation Commission, Recreation Department, Office of Planning and Development

Target: Conformance with Future Land Use Map

Responsibility for Target: City Council, Conservation Commission, Planning Board

***Reform of Regulations***

Metric: Adoption of zoning corresponding to the Future Land Use Map

Reporting Agency: Office of Planning and Development

Target: Conformance with Future Land Use Map

Responsibility for Target: City Council, Planning Board, Economic Development in business zones, Rezoning Committee

Potential Conflicts:

- The need for infill and greater density of downtown development, including reuse of existing structures, could conflict with the desire of many people to live in single-family homes with yards and nearby green space and aversion to more development in their neighborhood.
- The desire for more businesses, jobs and diverse housing options at a range of affordability levels creates new development that can conflict with the desire to preserve open space, wildlife habitat, wildlife corridors, and agriculture.
- People choose many different ways of living, and many opt for large lots with private open space. This can work against the principals of smart growth and preservation of public open space.

Potential Responses:

- Because family life may be different now, establish guidelines and performance standards that allow new homes while maintaining the special features and qualities of different neighborhoods.
- Establish development agreements that connect new infrastructure and mitigation with new development.
- Encourage cluster development that provides quality open space and reduces the development footprint.

## Goal LU-2: Create and preserve high quality, built environments in the downtown and village centers

Objectives:

1. Add parks, greenspace and appropriate agriculture on city-owned land or on larger infill development parcels where possible, to keep urban and village centers attractive.
2. Identify the major gateways into downtown and outline necessary improvements.
3. Encourage the preservation of historically or architecturally significant buildings.
4. Encourage and create incentives to enable well-designed and desired development to occur in downtown and other more densely developed locations or in targeted growth zones. These incentives should also work to maintain the distinctions and historic precedents that define those areas.
5. Define and support a critical mass of retail, cultural, and office space.
6. Reinforce downtown as a regional city center with its continuation as a vibrant mix of commercial, civic and cultural uses.
7. Ensure the downtown and village centers are universally accessible.

Strategies and Actions:

(P) Add regular funding to the capital budget for more public benches, cigarette disposal

receptacles, trash cans, restrooms, and garden spaces downtown and in village centers, so long as they are consistent with adopted streetscape plans. Ask for the participation of the local merchants and neighborhood residents in maintaining these facilities.

*Responsible Agencies: Board of Public Works, City Council, Department of Public Works*

(P) Define an area standard and criteria for required green/open space within the highest density commercial and village centers.

*Responsible Agencies: Planning Board, Tree Committee, City Council, Office of Planning and Development*

(P) Draft and adopt design criteria for roads, signage and landscape that will enhance gateways to downtown and village centers and create a welcoming entry into each section of the City.

*Responsible Agencies: Planning Board, Board of Public Works, City Council, Tree Committee, Economic Development, Department of Public Works, Office of Planning and Development*

(P) Redesign Pulaski Park to be more aesthetically pleasing, provide recreation, and be user-friendly.

*Responsible Agencies: Tree Committee, Board of Public Works, City Council, Department of Public Works, Recreation Department, Economic Development*

Develop a public signage and wayfinding program that increases visibility of public road signs, and ensures that private signs conform to downtown and village aesthetics and design criteria.

*Responsible Agencies: Planning Board, Board of Public Works, City Council, Economic Development, Department of Public Works, Office of Planning and Development*

Continue to increase the amount of public open space for community gardens, (where the soils and microclimate are appropriate for gardening) to eliminate waiting list for community garden plots.

*Responsible Agencies: Planning Board, City Council, Recreation Department, Smith Vocational Board of Trustees, Conservation Commission, Community Preservation Committee*

Continue to improve streetscape design standards for street trees and streetscape.

*Responsible Agencies: Tree Committee, Planning Board, Board of Public Works, Tree Committee, Office of Planning and Development*

Review accessibility on all public streets and continue program to upgrade and convert to universally accessible public space.

*Responsible Agencies: Planning Board, Board of Public Works, Committee on Disabilities, Council on Aging, Tree Committee, Office of Planning and Development*

Measurements of Progress:

***Design Criteria and Performance Standards***

Metric: Improvements to the City's design guidelines and performance standards

Reporting Agencies: Department of Public Works, Office of Planning and Development

Target: Regular updates

Responsibility for Target: Board of Public Works, Planning Board, Economic Development

***Streetscape Improvements***

Metric: Number, value and length of streetscape improvements following the design guidelines

Reporting Agencies: Department of Public Works, Office of Planning and Development

Target: 2% of yearly maintenance and capital budget should go toward streetscape improvements

*Street Trees*

*Street trees should be planted at 20 feet, depending on the species. At $800-850 per installed street tree, a yearly budget of $20,000 to $21,250 will be needed for 25 trees.. Trees planted along travel ways can reduce vehicle emissions by removing sulphur dioxide and reducing particulates by up to 75% (Johnston and Newton, London Ecology Unit). A single full-grown (beech) tree can provide equivalent cooling as five room air conditioners and will supply enough oxygen for ten people (Johnston and Newton, and Trees for Cities).*

Responsibility for Target: City Council, Board of Public Works, Planning Board, Economic Development

***Street Trees***

Metric: (1) Percent of public streets shaded by trees or length of streets planted with shade trees; (2) a separation of no more than 20 feet depending on species unless modification approved by the Tree Committee for safety reasons, when space is limited or to achieve a certain design effect.

Reporting Agencies: Tree Committee, Department of Public Works

Target: A minimum of 25 trees per year planted or replaced, with a goal of one-to-one replacement

Responsibility for Target: Tree Committee, Department of Public Works, in cooperation with any Business Improvement District, neighborhood groups and civic associations.

***General***

Metric: Progress on Actions under Housing, Economic Development, and Arts and Culture

See also: Housing, Economic Development, and Arts and Culture

Potential Conflict:

- Real estate and business market forces may not match the desire for certain mixes of uses.
- Streetscape improvements could be costly.

Potential Response:

- Linking public improvements with private development can be successful through the use of incentives, exactions, or mitigations.
- Incentives such as grants or relief from regulations will encourage a mix of uses with other public benefits.

*New Development*

*All subdivisions in last ten years have been open space residential or planned village equivalents*

## Goal LU-3: Maintain a distinction between rural areas, residential neighborhoods, and urban areas

Objectives:

1. Housing projects that are built in rural areas should be cluster development types, leaving more open land, with designs that allow for a variety of housing options.
2. Preserve the character of rural areas through preservation of large undeveloped tracts, vistas, and farmland.
3. Ensure a wide variety of living options to allow market-based choices.
4. Implement ideas for maximizing density on small lots.
5. Preserve a diversity of housing types that define the historic development of the neighborhood. Encourage development in areas with proper existing and planned infrastructure
6. Create Northampton neighborhoods, , that provide pedestrian scales, connections to goods and services, and connections to multiple modes of travel.
7. Ensure that zoning and land use regulations encourage mixed-use, multi-family development projects that are in keeping with high quality design and a character that transitions into the surrounding neighborhood.
8. Ensure that expansion of commercial parcels into residential areas coincides with road infrastructure improvements that enhance the value of the abutting residential uses and improve neighborhood character.

Strategies and Actions:

Where cluster ordinance does not provide the optimum designs, adopt revised cluster regulations as proposed in the City's' 2003 Grow Smart process.

*Responsible Agencies: Planning Board, City Council, Office of Planning and Development, (future) Rezoning Committee*

When offered for redevelopment, evaluate appropriate reuse of large institutional properties and consider redevelopment for mixed-use centers

*Responsible Agencies: Planning Board, City Council, Office of Planning and Development*

Encourage development of neighborhood organizations and support their participation in the planning of their areas.

*Responsible Agencies: All City Departments*

Complete a survey to identify the types of housing people want and provide information on the potential value of variety in housing designs.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, Office of Planning and Development*

Establish public policies that prioritize maintaining public infrastructure in neighborhoods mixed with affordable housing.

*Responsible Agencies: DPW, Board of Public Works, Office of Planning & Development*

Determine and extend public infrastructure improvements; water, roads, and sewer, to encourage the appropriate types of housing.

*Responsible Agencies: DPW, Board of Public Works, Office of Planning & Development*

See also: Open Space, Strategies and Actions for Rural Areas

Measurements of Progress:

***Conformance of Regulations***

Metric: Adoption of regulations and revisions corresponding to the use designations of the Future Land Use Map

Reporting Agency: Office of Planning and Development

Target: Conformance with the Future Land Use Map

Responsibility for Target: City Council, Planning Board, Economic Development for business zones, Rezoning Committee

***Infill Development***

Metric: Number of infill housing units

Reporting Agencies: Building Department, Office of Planning and Development

Target: A minimum of 50% of all housing developed in Northampton

Responsibility for Target: City, Council, Planning Board, Office of Planning and Development, local housing developers

Potential Conflicts:

- The need for infill and greater density of downtown development, including reuse of existing structures, lies in contrast to the desire of many people to live in single-family homes with yards and nearby green space and an aversion to more development in their neighborhood.
- Accommodating the need for the City's major employers to expand, but with minimal negative impacts on neighborhoods and the environment.
- Increased property values are desirable but not the increased property tax and decreased affordability that comes with increased value.
- Neighborhoods, individuals, or businesses can be opposed to affordable housing.

Potential Responses:

- Do not establish policies that are restrictive of a wide range of housing choices.
- Educate people on the costs and benefits of stopping further development.
- Establish design guidelines and performance standards that ensure a compatible mix of land uses.
- Educate people on the income range definitions of eligibility for affordable housing and the need for a community of diverse economic levels.

## Goal LU-4: Preserve and encourage agricultural uses in designated areas, such as the Meadows

Objectives:

1. Maintain the primarily open and agricultural nature of the Meadows as it exists, with no new residential lots and no significant increase in residential density.
2. Continue to allow flooding of the Meadows for restoration of the soils for farming, and preserve the floodplain storage capacity of the Meadows as a means to prevent other areas and neighborhoods from flooding.
3. Support the economic viability of farming within the City, preserving scenic, ecolog-

ical, and environmental benefits for the City as whole. The City should support farming through allocation of resources and infrastructure investments.

4. Encourage improvements to existing businesses in these targeted areas to maintain their viability and thereby reduce the potential for sale or conversion to alternative uses.
5. Ease regulatory burden on landowners in these targeted areas that wish to maintain or expand their homes or businesses.

Strategies and Actions:

Monitor the trends of farmland utilization and production and be ready to act when there is the need for public policy support.

*Responsible Agencies: Agriculture Commission, Planning Board, City Council, Office of Planning and Development*

Work with Agriculture Commission to identify additional parcels of land for agriculture protection and agri-businesses.

*Responsible Agencies: Agriculture Commission, Planning Board, Economic Development, Office of Planning and Development*

Measurement of Progress:

Metric: Acres of land classified in agricultural production, and yearly farm revenues

Reporting Agencies: Agriculture Commission, Office of Planning and Development

Target: Maintain farmland area and increase yearly revenues by 2%

Responsibility for Target: Open Space Committee, Planning, Community Preservation Committee to maintain farmland; City Council and Planning to approve expansion of agribusiness; Economic Development and Chamber of Commerce to promote agri-tourism and provide business assistance

Potential Conflict:

- Agriculture is fading as a strong part of the regional economy and efforts to preserve it may be very difficult, especially in the face of new development pressures.

Potential Responses:

- Highlight farming as a quality of the area and thereby provide some marketing support.
- Allow diversification of farm activities to provide other business income.

# Energy, Environment and Climate Protection

## Goal EEC-1: Reduce community's and City's energy demand and natural resource consumption

Objectives:

***A. Energy Savings***

1. Emphasize the incorporation of current energy standards when restoring and preserving existing housing and building stock.
2. Facilitate the increased energy efficiency and use of renewable energy in public and private buildings
3. Increase utilization of energy from renewable sources and reduce utilization of energy provided from limited resources, such as oil.
4. Promote a "buy local" policy and a public campaign about the environmental impacts of local vs. non-local purchases.
5. Help inform all sectors (residential, commercial, municipal) in preparation for future cost increases and cost spikes of conventional energy sources.
6. Encourage large-scale development of "greenfield" sites to be "green" development with minimal impact on natural or energy resources.
7. Encourage development that maximizes building orientation and landscaping to increase energy savings.

***B. Waste Management***

1. Publicize the City's recycling and reuse efforts as a model for the private sector.
2. Increase recycling and reuse from multi-family homes.
3. Eliminate use of one-time bottles, bags and other items as appropriate.
4. Increase recycling in waste streams from city buildings and schools, including composting, and establish a high standard for the private sector to follow.
5. Encourage residential composting.
6. Improve the opportunity for residents to dispose of household hazardous waste materials.

***C. Green Buildings***

1. Facilitate the development and construction of "green" [e.g. LEED™ certified] new municipal buildings with the goal that all new significant municipal buildings include these criteria – such as the Senior Center.
2. Encourage reuse and rehabilitation of existing buildings.
3. Emphasize restoration and preservation of existing housing and building stock to incorporate up-to-date energy standards.
4. Incorporate green building standards for retrofits into the rehabilitation of municipal buildings.

Strategies and Actions:

***Energy Savings***

(P) Reconstitute and revitalize a new Energy Resources Commission modeled on the successful structure of the Transportation and

*Energy Resources Under Strain and "Peak Oil"*

*Peak oil in its simplest definition is a label for the problem of petroleum based energy resource depletion, or more specifically, the peak in global oil production. Whether the extraction of the world's oil resources will peak next year, in ten years, or farther into the future, or whether energy independence is essential for geopolitical or environmental and climate protection reasons, it is clear that aggressive efforts must be made now to move the City towards substantially reduced overall energy dependency and energy costs. Actions in this plan addressing land use, transportation and the local economy – among others -- are recommended with this reality in mind. The responsibilities of the Energy Resources Commission will include monitoring broader energy trends and events as they unfold, and helping the City and its citizens to understand the potential impacts and to respond accordingly.*

*Green Buildings*

*The U. S. General Services Administration reviewed the costs of LEED certification (LEED® Cost Study, October 2004) and determined that soft costs (design phase costs) increased from $0.35 to $0.59 per square foot, and that construction costs increased by 1.4% to 8.2% ($1.78 to $10.58) per square foot, with the higher end of the costs associated with a higher level of certification. A different cost analysis (G. Kats, Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, 2003) one year earlier found a similar range of additional unit costs ($3.00 to $5.00/square foot), and found that certification was possible for slightly less than 2% of the overall construction costs. When sixty LEED certified buildings were compared to conventional buildings, there was an 18% to 37% energy savings in the certified buildings (Kats). With recent improvements in green building systems, the U.S. Green Building Council now (2007) claims a 40% average energy saving over standard construction with a LEED-certified building.*

Parking Commission to include City staff, board members, and citizens. This Commission should have the ability to assist in implementing and keeping the community focus on the energy goals of this plan, including collecting data, proactively examining alternative, renewable, and sustainable energy options (i.e. solar power, vegetable oil and biodiesel options, methane digester power, landfill gas generation, and hydropower from the Connecticut and Mill rivers). The Commission should be coordinated with the Energy Officer, and responsible for organizing community education efforts.

*What are other communities doing?*

- *Chicago has adopted programs to require all municipal buildings to use sustainable design, accelerates permits for green buildings, provides educational programs, and provide awards for innovation.*
- *Seattle provides density bonuses and financial incentives for private green buildings and has a "SeaGreen" program to build sustainable, affordable housing.*
- *Cincinnati offers property tax abatements for green building projects.*
- *Boston requires all large projects to show how they conform to LEED certification standards.*
- *San Antonio, TX and Aspen, CO require all construction projects to submit plans for using building and demolition resources most efficiently.*

*Program details are available on each community's web site.*

*Responsible Agency: Mayor*

(P) Prepare and implement an energy conservation plan for the City as a means of providing a resource guide on cost-effective energy-saving measures. Ask the utility companies to assist.

*Responsible Agencies: Energy Resources Commission, Board of Public Works, School Committee, Energy Officer*

Investigate contracting with an Energy Service Company (ESCo) to provide the City with energy efficiency upgrades at no up-front cost to the City and in such a way as to use the money saved through increased efficiency to fund renewable energy projects.

*Responsible Agencies: Energy Resources Commission, Central Services Department, Energy Officer, Capital Improvement Committee, Department of Public Works, School Department*

Include line items in the capital program for replacement of old technologies with newer, cleaner, and more efficient ones.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, Board of Public Works, Capital Improvement Committee, City Council, Energy Resources Commission, Energy Officer*

Keep energy audits and operations audits of all public buildings, vehicle fleets, and public lighting (street, parking, and traffic), and keep current a list of all completed energy saving measures implemented and opportunities for future cost-effective energy upgrades.

*Responsible Agencies: Energy Resources Commission, Central Services Department, Energy Officer, Capital Improvement Committee, Department of Public Works, School Department, Police Department*

Create an awards program for improvements in energy efficiency for the built environment for both City agencies and private sector development.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, Energy Resources Commission, Energy Officer*

***Building Standards***

(P) Adopt a standard that all new significant City buildings will meet LEED™ certification standards and ideally be LEED-certified.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, Central Services Department, School Committee, Board of Public*

*Works, Capital Improvement Committee, City Council, Energy Resources Commission, Energy Officer*

Make new and substantial matching fund for the renovation of schools with high sustainability standards and seek grants that facilitate the incorporation of renewable energy and incorporation of greater sustainability, This is currently under the program entitled CHPS - Collaborative for High-Performance Schools

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, School Committee, Capital Improvement Committee, Central Services Department, City Council, Energy Resources Commission, Energy Officer*

Complete a structural review of the city's buildings to determine viability of retrofitting them with green roofs.

*Responsible Agencies: Central Services Department, Department of Public Works, School Department, Library Department*

Publicize the City's commitment to green standards and specific accomplishments as a model for private residential and commercial projects. Provide incentives and, to the extent allowed by law, require Energy Star, LEED™, or equivalent approaches to design in private development projects.

*Responsible Agencies: Planning Board, Planning Department, Energy Officer, Building Commissioner*

Research and consider the standards presented in the Architecture 2030 as a significant part of energy reduction plan.

*Responsible Agencies: Energy Resources Commission, Energy Officer*

Petition the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for state approval of Energy Star ratings as the minimum standards for local building code in cooperation with regional efforts.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, Central Services Department, School Committee, Board of Public Works, Capital Improvement Committee, City Council, Energy Resources Commission, Energy Officer*

***Waste Management***

Update audit reports of waste generation and disposal to allow review for improvements in reuse, recycling, and waste reduction.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, Central Services Department, School Committee, Board of Public Works*

*City Efforts Towards Sustainability:*

*John F. Kennedy Middle School:*

- *10 kilowatts of photovoltaics (solar cells with solar and non-solar sources of light) has been installed on roof*
- *Generate 10,000-kilowatt hours of power annually (equivalent to electricity needed to power 3-4 energy efficient homes)*
- *Data acquisition module to monitor electricity generated & intensity of the sun*

*City of Northampton Department of Public Works:*

- *Landfill producing methane gas for electricity generation (Oct. - Nov. 2007)*
- *Biodiesel fuel for large equipment (conversion of vehicles begins July 2006)*
- *Smaller department vehicles replaced by hybrids (Ford Escape)*

*The new Northampton Senior Center:*

- *Geothermal heat pumps (geoexchange system) to heat, cool, provide hot water (for more details regarding geoexchange systems, please refer to city website)*
- *Only 43,000 Btu/Sq-ft. energy used annually with the system vs. 106,000 Btu/Sq.-ft energy for traditional systems (60% reduction in site energy use)*
- *Photovoltaics on south end of center (lifespan of voltaics: 25 yrs)*
- *LEED certified, expected to receive a silver rating (http://www.leedbuilding.org/)*
- *LEED criteria met: sustainable site selection and development, water and energy use, indoor environmental quality, innovation in sustainable design and construction*

Continue working with Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection for responsible operation of landfill.

*Responsible Agencies: Central Services Department, Public Works*

Measurements of Progress:

***Green Buildings and Green Roofs***

Metrics:

- Number of buildings built and certified under green design standards,
- Number of buildings with green roofs, and number of buildings with solar collectors providing a portion of the building load.

Reporting Agencies: Energy Resources Commission, Capital Improvement Committee, Central Services Department, Energy Officer, Building Commissioner

Target: All new municipal building and renovation projects built to LEED™ criteria (minimum Silver), and all roofs that are appropriate for green roofs or photovoltaic installation be outfitted with one of these options. Renewable energy sources are to support 50% of the building load.

Responsibility for Target: Central Services Department, Energy Resources Commission, Mayor, City Council, Capital Improvement Committee, and any department sponsoring a new building.

For other building performance standards and incentives, see EEC-2

*City energy efficiency investments*

- *Senior Center—LEED Certified with geothermal heat*
- *New Police Station—commitment that the design will be LEED certifiable*
- *New DPW Headquarters—commitment that the design will be LEED certifiable*
- *JFK Middle School—photovoltaic panels*
- *High School Expansion and rehabilitation of other schools—new energy conservation and efficiency improvements*
- *Landfill gas to energy*
- *Biodiesel for DPW fleet*

***Recycling***

Metric: Amount in percent and tonnage of waste recycled

Reporting Agency: Department of Public Works

Target: 75% by 2017

Responsibility for Target: Board of Public Works

## Goal EEC-2: Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases [GHG]

Objectives:

1. Raise awareness among residents and businesses about global climate change and the sources of climate changing gases.
2. Encourage uses that generate substantial automobile traffic to undertake Transportation Demand Management [TDM] to reduce the impacts of that travel.
3. Develop practices that will reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and increase energy efficiency in municipal and school operations.
4. Cognizant of climate change, geopolitical pressures, and the increasing difficulty in obtaining petroleum-based energy, along with the associated environmental concerns; develop a plan to diversify how Northampton will meet its energy needs and become more energy independent.
5. Connect pertinent city policies to the GHG emission reduction goals of *Sustainable Northampton.*
6. Improve energy and transportation efficiency in City travel.
7. Encourage and work with the City's residential, business, and commercial sectors to help them reduce their GHG emissions through increased energy efficiency, energy source switching, and behavior changes.
8. Follow the Future Land Use Map to ensure efficient use of land and reduced vehicle traffic

Strategies and Actions:

***Audits and Inventories***

Prepare, as an addendum to *Sustainable Northampton*, a plan for climate protection for all sectors.

*Responsible Agencies: Energy Resources Commission, Energy Officer, All City Departments*

In 2011, update the City's ICLEI inventory for climate protection with 2010 data to determine the City's progress toward it's GHG reduction targets and modify the City's Climate Change Protection Action Plan as needed to ensure the City can meet it's GHG reduction targets.

*Responsible Agencies: Energy Resources Commission, Energy Officer, All City Departments*

Monitor The Climate Registry to determine statewide compliance.

*Responsible Agency: Energy Resources Commission, Energy Officer*

Publicize the City's successes in reducing greenhouse gas emissions in their buildings, transportation, and waste initiatives to serve as a model for the private sector

*Responsible Agency: Energy Resources Commission, Energy Officer*

***Operations***

Review maintenance and operation procedures covering vehicle and facility use against energy saving options in each department.

*Responsible Agencies: All City Departments*

Review energy source (e.g., electric, natural gas, or heating oil) and vehicle fuel choices on a regular basis to identify potential alternatives for each department to use to meet City greenhouse gas emission reduction targets.

*Responsible Agencies: All City Departments*

Consolidate use of public buildings, including schools, to save energy for evening meetings and programs.

*Responsible Agencies: Central Services, All other City Departments*

See also: Infrastructure and Capital Resources Goal, IC-2: Operations

Institute travel demand management (TDM). For example, provide employee cash outs for employees giving up city parking spaces if it reduces the number of single occupancy trips.

*Responsible Agencies: All City Departments*

Install integrated energy management systems for all public buildings.

*Responsible Agencies: Capital Improvement Committee, Central Services Department, Energy Officer, School Department, Library Department*

Include lease provisions for energy program compliance for private users of all public buildings.

*Responsible Agencies: Central Services, City Council, Board of Public Works, School Department*

Increase participation in composting programs through:

- A public education program;
- Improved 'user-friendly' management of compost facilities.

*Responsible Agency: Department of Public Works*

Evaluate ISO 14001 Certification for the City.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, Central Services Department, Energy Officer, Energy Resources Commission*

***Life Cycle Analysis and Monitoring***

Include a Life Cycle Analysis in all public building projects.

*Responsible Agencies: Capital Improvement Committee, Central Services Department, Department of Public Works, School Department, Library Department*

Develop a monitoring program for environmental performance in public facilities.

*Responsible Agencies: Energy Resources Commission, Capital Improvement Committee, Central Services Department, School Department, Library Department*

Develop a monitoring program for environmental performance in private facilities.

*Responsible Agencies: Energy Resources Commission*

Develop a monitoring program for waste generation and disposal from City operations.

*Responsible Agencies: Department of Public Works, School Department*

***Improvements***

Add standards in City's street tree and open s pace programs to help reduce fossil fuel use (e.g. provide summer shade to reduce use of air conditioning).

*Responsible Agencies: Tree Committee, Department of Public Works*

Create a program to maximize the use of public forests for reducing carbon.

*Responsible Agencies: Tree Committee, Department of Public Works*

Present a report for public review that identifies where, as allowed by state law, the City land use ordinances could further address greenhouse gas emissions, and identify the local costs in implementation.

*Responsible Agencies: Energy Resources Commission, Energy Officer, Office of Planning And Development*

***Incentives***

Prepare an incentive program that will motivate residents and businesses to implement increased energy efficiency measures and use of renewable energy system in existing buildings and present for public review. An example of one such program exists in Cambridge, MA,

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, Energy Resources Commission, Capital Improvement Committee*

Create an awards program for improvements in energy efficiency and the built environment for both City agencies and private sector development.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, Energy Resources Commission, Energy Officer*

Provide incentives [bonuses and waivers] in the land use regulations for new construction to achieve certification for high efficiency and green building standards.

*Responsible Agencies: Planning Board, City Council, Office of Planning and Development*

Measurements of Progress:

***Total Energy Demand***

Metric: Trend in total energy demand from City facilities

Reporting Agencies: City Treasurer, Energy Officer

Target: 2 to 3% reduction per year on payments for energy bills

Responsibility for Target: Central Services, Energy Resources Commission, School Department, Energy Officer

***Renewable Energy Use***

Metric: Percent of municipal energy supplied by renewable sources

Reporting Agency: City Treasurer

Target: Total of 25% energy demand supplied from renewable sources by 2017 based on payments on energy bills

Responsibility for Target: Mayor, City Council, Central Services, Energy Resources Commission, Energy Officer

***Monitoring***

Metric: Match comparative performance standards from ICLEI, The Climate Registry, and others

Reporting Agencies: Energy Officer, Office of Planning and Development

Target: Lead in local climate protection efforts

Responsibility for Target: All City Departments

***Total Greenhouse Gas Reduction***

Metric: Percent of FY2000 Equivalent CO2 Emissions from all City functions

Reporting Agency: Energy Officer

Target: 8% below 2000 levels by 2010, 25% below by 2017, and 30% below by 2020

Responsibility for Target: All City Departments, Energy Resources Commission, School Department, Energy Officer

Potential Conflicts:

- There is widespread support for energy conservation, but little in the way of tangible plans to make it happen.
- The conflict between lifestyles/current habits of property owners and the emerg-

ing cost and uncertainty of energy supply will need to be explored.

Potential Response:

- The recognition of growing scarcity costs associated with uncertain energy supplies will encourage modification of energy utilization.
- New technologies are being rapidly developed that will help address these conflicts.

## Goal EEC-3: Protect valuable and sensitive ecological resources (land, air, water, habitat, plants and animals)

Objectives:

1. Prioritize and preserve quality wetlands by encouraging development in densely populated areas and in clusters.
2. Protect and conserve water supplies (drinking, surface, groundwater, recharge areas, aquifers) and continue to enforce groundwater protection regulations.
3. Conserve wetlands with programs to ensure no net loss of total wetlands (existing area of approximately 3,000 acres).
4. Preserve floodplains for flood storage and, where appropriate, habitat values.
5. Preserve existing forests, floodplains, wetlands, and agricultural soils of high ecological value.
6. Protect rare and endangered plants and animals and important wildlife corridors.
7. Improve the quality and appearance of the public water supply.
8. Recognize that the protection of environmental resources will improve the quality of life and the value of property in the City.
9. Minimize the loss of tree canopy throughout the City and increase tree canopy in urbanized areas to maintain a higher quality environment in all areas.

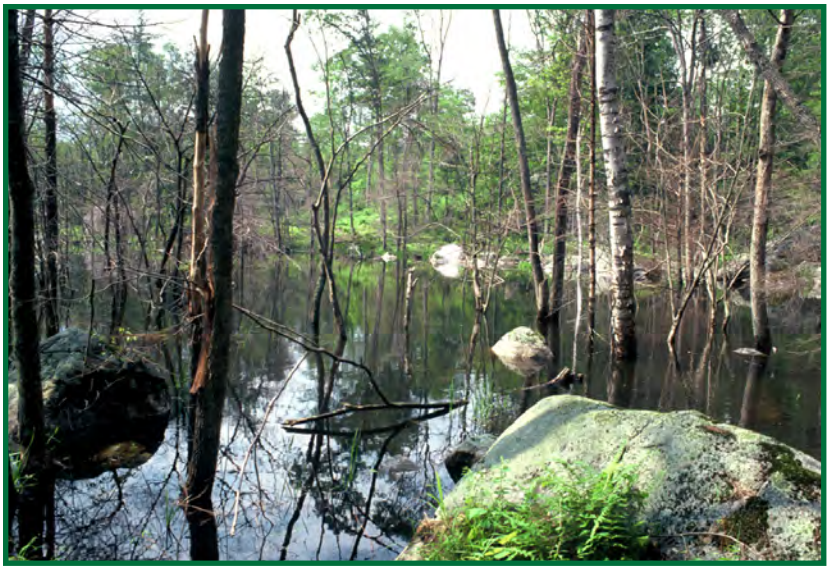
See also: Land Use Goals

Strategies and Actions:

Continue implementation of water conservation plans.

*Responsible Agency: Department of Public Works*

Investigate the creation of a land banking system for wildlife habitat and wetlands protection.



*Responsible Agency: Office of Planning and Development*

Expand the street tree program by obtaining private funds and services as grants, mitigation, and exactions and using them to implement the public sector programs through design, construction, and maintenance.

*Responsible Agencies: Tree Committee, Department of Public Works,*

Create an awards program for protection of ecological resources for both City agencies and private sector development.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, Energy Resources Commission, Energy Officer*

Measurement of Progress:

***Conservation***

Metric: Acreage and numbers of sites of land and natural resource conservation

Reporting Agencies: Conservation Commission, Office of Planning and Development

Target: 2% increase in area or number per year.

Responsibility for Target: Conservation Commission, City Council, Planning Board

*Low Impact Development*

*LID is a site planning process that considers ways to reduce the total impact of a project on the land, especially with regard to stormwater runoff. The EOEA has a site that presents the LID concept:*

*http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth_toolkit/pages/mod-lid.html*

## Goal EEC-4: Minimize the impacts of infrastructure systems on environmental resources

Objectives:

1. Implement regulations that include measures for soil erosion and sediment control.
2. Encourage and enforce low impact development designs.
3. Develop an inventory of roadways and facilities in environmentally sensitive areas and reduce the use of sand, salts or other de-icing chemicals for their maintenance.
4. When in use, store road salt and de-icing chemicals in safe and environmentally sound locations and structures to prevent accidental pollution/contamination.
5. Include 'low impact' and National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) drainage improvements concurrently with any pavement management program or project.
6. Reuse brownfield sites.
7. Continue to provide a means of conserving the supply of potable water for actual or anticipated shortages and when deemed necessary for health, welfare or safety.
8. Ensure City programs for improvement are equally distributed throughout all neighborhoods, consistent with need and cost.
9. Reduce use of toxic substances being released in the environment, including pesticides, herbicides, high VOC paints, and other listed toxic materials.

Strategies and Actions:

Convene a working group of the Conservation Commission, Tree Committee, Board of Public Works, and Planning Board, supported by the Public Works Department and Office of Planning and Development and task it with researching and determining improvements to infrastructure for environmental benefits and related public and private costs for construction, including permeable pavement where appropriate, and other low impact infrastructure improvements.

*Responsible Agency: Mayor*

Explore alternatives to sand and salt to utilize the most environmentally friendly alternatives for road maintenance.

*Responsible Agency: Department of Public Works*

Measurement of Progress:

***Public Projects***

Metric: Number of public infrastructure projects designed or to retrofit for low impact standards

***Reporting Agency: Capital Improvements***

Target: All public infrastructure projects to reduce impervious coverage and stormwater runoff volumes, and increase stormwater quality

Responsibility for Target: Capital Improvements, Board of Public Works, Planning Board, City Council

***Private Development***

Metrics:

- Number of subdivisions meeting low impact standards
- Number of green roofs in urbanized areas
- Number of Low Impact Development projects in the outlying and low-density areas

Reporting Agencies: Department of Public Works from stormwater management permitting approvals, Conservation Commission and Planning Board from permit applications and approvals for private development

Target: Increase number of private developments encouraged to build green design projects.

Responsibility for Target: Department of Public Works, Planning Board, Conservation Commission

## Goal EEC-5: Safeguard and improve the quality of the City's surface waters to ensure use for safe public swimming, recreational fishing activities, boating, and drinking

Objectives:

1. Ensure landside land alterations do not adversely impact surface waters.
2. Ensure waterfront property owners comply with regulations and upgrade environmental control equipment.
3. Ensure safe, high quality, recreational waters are available to all residents.
4. Protect quality of backup drinking water supply located in City reservoir.

Strategies and Actions:

Create a volunteer water-quality monitoring group under the auspices of the Conservation Commission to monitor long-term trends of water quality changes in areas not monitored by the Department of Public Works

*Responsible Agency: Conservation Commission*

Pursue a long-term plan to improve the health of Northampton's rivers, streams, brooks, wetlands and open water bodies by taking actions that address water quality.

*Responsible Agency: Conservation Commission, Department of Public Works*

Measurement of Progress:

Metric: Improvement of water quality

Reporting Agencies: Conservation Commission, Health Department, Department of Public Works

Target: Continuous improvement towards swimming, fishing, and where necessary, drinking water standards

Responsibility for Target: Conservation Commission, Health Department, Board of Public Works, Planning Board

## Goal EEC-6: Reduce light pollution

Objectives:

1. Control the impact of light pollution in all new development projects.
2. Provide adequate but low impact lighting in business zones, the downtown and village centers.

Strategies and Actions:

Enforce the Dark Sky Ordinance

*Responsible Agency: Building Commissioner*

Collaborate with local electric utility on financial and design incentives and promotion of energy conservation measures related to lighting.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, Energy Officer, Office of Planning and Development, Economic Development, Building Commissioner*

Provide list of lighting options for public and private projects

*Responsible Agencies: Building Commissioner, Energy Officer, Central Services Department*

Measurement of Progress:

Metric: Number of lighting systems built to reduce light trespass

Reporting Agencies: Building Commissioner, Office of Planning and Development

Target: All new projects to include lighting control design

Responsibility for Target: Building Commissioner, Office of Planning and Development, Planning Board

Potential Conflict:

- The conflict between lifestyles/current habits of property owners and the emerging cost and uncertainty of energy supply will need to be explored.

Potential Response:

- New technologies are being rapidly developed that will help address these conflicts.

## Goal EEC-7: Develop strategies to protect the City from the impacts of natural hazards.

Objectives:

1. Site new development outside of high hazard natural areas, such as floodways.
2. Reduce the public costs of infrastructure maintenance in high hazard areas.
3. Consistently apply strategies to all neighborhoods and areas.
4. Encourage passive survivability standards of new structures to increase survival of natural disasters for all public and private buildings.
5. Consider potential impacts caused by climate change to the severity of weather.

Strategies and Actions:

Expand the City's Emergency Response Plan to include review of high hazard areas and recommendations to reduce exposure with alterations in land use patterns and infrastructure projects.

*Responsible Agencies: All City Departments*

Publicize the City's Emergency Response Plan and apply for funds to implement it.

*Responsible Agencies: All City Departments, and Emergency Management*

Work in conjunction with the private and non-profit sector to develop integrated emergency management plan.

*Responsible Agencies: Emergency Management, Local Institutions*

Create interoperability of public and private emergency communication systems.

*Responsible Agencies: Emergency Management, Local Institutions*

Work collaboratively with public and private partners on public notification systems.

*Responsible Agencies: Emergency Management, Local Institutions*

Measurement of Progress:

Metric: Interconnectedness, effectiveness, and level of public awareness of Emergency Response Plan

Reporting Agency: Emergency Preparedness

Target: All institutions, businesses, and households

Responsibility for Target: Emergency Preparedness

# Open Space and Recreation

## Goal OS-1: Maximize use of the City's open space and recreation areas

Objectives:

1. Determine carrying capacity of facilities and match it with population growth and demographics.
2. Maximize use of recreational space with affordable and quality programs for youth.
3. Make capital improvements and enhance maintenance of recreation facilities.
4. Provide open space and recreation opportunities for individuals of all ages, socioeconomic levels, and physical abilities now and for future generations.

Strategies and Actions:

Using the inventory included in the Open Space and Recreation Plan, define the current usage and estimate carrying capacity based on resource quality and impacts. Maximize the potential use by advertising availability.

*Responsible Agencies: Recreation Commission, Recreation Department, School Committee, School Department*

Seek input from various user groups/community populations on recreation needs and registration outreach to target programming and increase participation in both youth and adult recreation programs.

*Responsibility: Recreation Commission/Department, community groups/neighborhood associations, Casa Latina, Center for New Americans, residents.*

*Protected Open Space*

*Currently 16% of City, growing at 1/2% of City per year*

Measurement of Progress:

Metric: Number of visitors to City open space and recreation areas

Reporting Agency: Recreation Department

Target: Match carrying capacity with use

Responsibility for Target: Mayor, Recreation Commission, City Council, Board of Public Works

## Goal OS-2: Expand open space and recreation areas

Objectives:

1. Acquire land for recreation, conservation and open space needs, preservation of plant and animal habitat, protection of scenic vistas, public enjoyment, and to enhance the character and sustainability of the community.
2. Preserve and expand City holdings of open space and wild lands, and open land in developed areas, including densely developed areas.
3. Use open space and recreation to ensure that the urban and village centers are attractive places to live, work, and visit.
4. Make more natural areas available for public use as long as watershed land access does not threaten water supplies.
5. Acquire land and build facilities to meet the needs for adult and youth athletic and recreation and school teams.

Strategies and Actions:

Implement the Open Space and Recreation Plan recommendations for expansion of spaces and facilities.

*Responsible Agencies: Community Preservation Committee, Recreation Commission*

Identify appropriate parcels and create additional playing fields.

*Responsible Agencies: Recreation Commission, Community Preservation Committee*

Measurement of Progress:

Metric: Amount of land/facilities available for open space and recreation

Reporting Agencies: Recreation Department, Office of Planning and Development

Target: 5% increase per year in area and number of facilities

Responsibility for Target: Mayor, Community Preservation Committee, Recreation Commission, City Council

## Goal OS-3: Preserve natural and cultural resources and the environment

Objectives:

1. Preserve the character of rural areas, farms, forests, and rivers.
2. Manage conservation properties to restore plant and animal habitats.
3. Preserve the environment and cultural and natural resources through land and easements and regulation changes.
4. Protect important ecological resources, including surface and groundwater resources, plant communities, and wildlife habitat.
5. Preserve ecological linkages and wildlife corridors, especially water-based linkages.
6. Have the City take a lead in protecting architectural and cultural history.
7. Consistently apply the criteria for preservation of the environment and resources across all neighborhoods and areas.

Strategies and Actions:

Continue to use acquisition, less-than-fee-simple ownership, and easements to preserve resources.

*Responsible Agencies: Community Preservation Committee, Conservation Commission, Office of Planning and Development*

Measurement of Progress:

Metric: Number of natural and cultural resource areas preserved

Reporting Agencies: Open Space Committee, Conservation Commission, Office of Planning and Development

Target: Two areas each year

Responsibility for Target: Community Preservation Committee, Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission, Planning Board

## Goal OS-4: Provide open space connections between public spaces

Objectives:

1. Identify 'greenway' and 'blueway' connections that could provide pedestrian, bicycle, and boat access between open space areas.
2. Use the connections to also link business areas where they can support the pedestrian/biking connections.
3. Improve connections to open spaces for all individuals so they are universally accessible.

Strategies and Actions:

Create a Greenway plan - Map out potential connections between open space areas and other public properties. Set priorities for incremental improvement of the connections.

*Responsible Agency: Mayor, City Council, Board of Public Works, Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Office of Planning and Development*

Measurement of Progress:

Metric: New walking and biking links between open spaces and public properties, between neighborhoods and schools and village centers

Reporting Agencies: Department of Public Works, Recreation Department, Office of Planning and Development

Target: One thousand feet of new links identified or built each year

Responsibility for Target: Capital Improvement Committee, Board of Public Works, Planning Board

# Economic Development

## Goal ED-1: Ensure vibrant and distinctive downtown, commercial, and village centers

Objectives:

1. Encourage business and job growth in urban and commercial/industrial centers (e.g., downtown, village centers, and targeted commercial and industrial zones).
2. Improve physical access to commercial centers.
3. Provide adequate transportation and parking options to enable successful visits to these centers.
4. Preserve/enhance the public services and amenities that draw people downtown and ensure that they are safe, pedestrian friendly, and welcoming to the diversity of Northampton residents.

*Business Improvement District*

*A Downtown Steering Committee, led by a group of downtown businesses and property owners, is working to develop a Downtown Northampton Business Improvement District (BID). Through self-imposed fees, property owners in a BID collectively invest in a broad range of programs and services to give the downtown a competitive edge in the marketplace. BIDS provide services that supplement the services provided by the City. The BID will be a partnership between private property owners, institutions and non-profits, and the City with the goal of generating greater profitability through cooperation than any individual property owner can accomplish alone. The proposed BID will provide a comprehensive package of supplemental programs and services that will allow Northampton to expand its prominence as the region's preeminent college town and cultural/ dining destination.*

- *Maintenance, landscaping, and beautification*
- *Marketing, events, and public relations*
- *Public safety and addressing social needs*
- *Parking and transportation*

Strategies and Actions:

(P) Support infill development in downtown and commercial/industrial zones:

- Provide regulations and financial incentives that would encourage conversion of public and private surface parking lots to mixed development with parking structures,
- Allow taller structures [>five stories];
- Encourage or require shared parking to meet zoning requirements.

*Responsible Agencies: Planning Board, Office of Planning and Development, Economic Development*

(P) Monitor and seek solutions to social problems affecting business environment in downtown, particularly panhandling and drug use.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, City Council, Police Department, Social Services Agencies*

(P) Provide road and transit improvements to support business development in areas identified for commercial and mixed- use growth. See Transportation Section for details.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, Economic Development, City Council, Public Works, Transportation and Parking, Office of Planning and Development*

(P) Develop a mechanism to support downtown management, marketing, and maintenance such as a Business Improvement District and develop revenue sources for marketing.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, Economic Development, Local businesses, property owners*

Reinvigorate the retail sector:

- Monitor retail sales trends, occupancy, and turnover rates
- Investigate and implement options to create and monitor affordable commercial space
- Develop a marketing strategy to reposition downtown as a retail hub and grow market share

*Responsible Agencies: Economic Development, Planning Department, Chamber of Commerce*

Encourage placement of State regional facilities, such as courts and State offices, in the City especially downtown.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, Economic Development, Planning Department*

Investigate the feasibility and pursue the development of a year-round public market for agricultural, arts, crafts, and locally made products.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, artists, farmers, local producers.*

Measurements of Progress:

***Jobs***

Metric: Number of jobs with living wages associated with commercial development city/village centers, and existing employers

Reporting Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Office of Planning and Development

Target: Increase in jobs with wages matching local living standards

Responsibility for Target: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, Local businesses

***Commercial Activity***

Metric: Building permits issued for new commercial development consistent with the Future Land Use Map

Reporting Agencies: Building Department, Office of Planning and Development

Target: Increase in commercial activity commensurate with regional economic growth

Responsibility for Target: Planning Board, Mayor's Office of Economic Development

## Goal ED-2: Provide long-term economic sustainability, security, and opportunity

Objectives:

1. Preserve and expand the commercial and industrial land inventory and the commercial/industrial tax base.
2. Encourage and support sustainable business development and practices.
3. Encourage a versatile, diverse, and sustainable business and employment base.
4. Encourage business development for job creation and retention, and living wages that support the cost of living in the City.

Strategies and Actions:

***Sector support***

(P) Reinvigorate the manufacturing base – both traditional (plastics, machining) and higher technology. Determine what regional and statewide resources can be used to support manufacturing and provide information to manufacturers. Actively seek state funds for workplace, language, and skills training in the workplace.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, regional employment board workforce training and skills development organizations*

(P) Develop key existing and emerging industry sectors with growth potential that build on Northampton's strengths including: publishing, software, medical/science/bio technology, higher education, advanced technology manufacturing, creative economy, green businesses, and tourism/retail.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, City Council, Planning Board*

(P) Use the Capital Improvement program to specify the plan for building public infrastructure needed to support business development in areas targeted for business growth (broadband, sewer, water, drainage, transit, roadway, and parking).

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Mayor, Capital Improvement Committee, Board of Public Works*

Re-establish the Business Outreach and Retention Program to visit businesses in each sector on a regular basis.

*Local Institutions*

*The following are considered the key local educational and health-related institutions: Cooley-Dickinson Hospital, Smith College, Smith Agricultural School, and the V.A. Hospital.*

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, City Council Economic Development & Housing Committee, Western MA Economic Development Council.*

Promote greater participation by local businesses in the Regional Employment Board and Career Center leadership roles, programs, and activities.

*Responsibility: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, Regional Employment Board, Career Center, businesses*

***Institutions and non-profits***

(P) Support institutional and non-profit businesses that are major employers, provide livable wages, provide important public benefit, and act as a catalyst for secondary economic activity (e.g., education, health care, Fairgrounds, and cultural organizations).

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Schools, Institutions, Chamber of Commerce, Office of Planning and Development*

Create business and educational collaborations and support innovation and technology transfer and commercialization to grow local businesses and to retain creativity, entrepreneurship, and educated workforce from colleges and vocational schools in the region.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Schools, Local Institutions, Chamber of Commerce*

Create collaborations with colleges to market Northampton as an attractive place to locate alumni businesses and to develop long-term strategies for shared economic benefits.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Schools, Local Institutions, Chamber of Commerce*

***Sustainable business development***

(P) Support business development and business practices that enhance the environmental and long-term sustainability of the community including, but not limited to, agriculture and other land-based business, green business, energy efficiency, and climate protection.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, Planning Board, Energy Officer*

(P) Balance local and regional trade with export trade to generate and equitably circulate new wealth coming into the community.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, Local businesses*

(P) Focus on business development that supports job creation, job opportunities, and higher than average wages for all Northampton residents.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, City Council, Planning Board, Office of Planning and Development*

(P) Focus on retaining and growing existing businesses and jobs. Develop a marketing campaign to attract compatible and desirable businesses and increase visibility for Northampton in regional and national markets, highlight quality of life assets as a competitive advantage.

*CISA selected Cooley-Dickinson Hospital to receive its prestigious Local Hero Award for 2007 for their efforts over the past two years to provide healthy, freshly prepared food in its café as well as to in-patients using local farm products. Cooley-Dickinson performed a cost-benefit analysis and reports that buying locally grown food directly from farmers can be cost-effective for large institutions.*

*Responsible Agencies: Chamber of Commerce, Mayor's Office of Economic Development*

(P) Seek opportunities to ensure that commercial and industrial property in the City remains affordable to a diverse range of businesses.

*Responsible Agencies: Economic Development, Planning Department*

Research and provide model sustainable business practices as a resource for the business community.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, Energy Officer, Office of Planning & Development, Department of Public Works*

Support entrepreneurship with business and financial assistance and targeted financial incentives where appropriate.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Mayor, City Council*

Encourage and support locally owned and operated businesses and "buy local" campaigns.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, Local businesses*

***Training***

(P) Provide entrepreneurial training and start-up business assistance, especially for low-income and limited English speaking residents.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, School Department, Adult Basic Education (ABE) Programs, Regional Employment Board, Valley Community Development Corporation*

(P) Address ESL, literacy, adult basic education, and social equity needs of the workforce, especially immigrant workers, and provide programs in community and workplace locations.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, School Department, Institutions, ABE Programs, Regional Employment Board*

Support workforce development and training that is responsive to industry and worker trends and needs to ensure competitiveness in the regional and global economy, economic security/adaptability under changing economic conditions, career advancement, and secure standard of living/living wages.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, School Department, Institutions, Regional Employment Board*

Support job creation, job training and career ladder opportunities for youth, unemployed, under-employed, under-educated and limited English speakers.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, School Department, Smith Vocational, Institutions, Regional Employment Board, Casa Latina, Center for New Americans, ESOL and adult literacy programs*

***Land Inventory and Tax Base***

(P) Develop key parcels to create a range of available sites and projects (e.g., Northampton State Hospital, Rt. 10 Business Park, King Street).

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Planning Board, Office of Planning and Development*

(P) Support cleanup and redevelopment of brownfield sites and underutilized commercial/ industrial buildings including, Wire Works, Magnat, Cutlery, Pro Corp., Hill & Dale Mall, and Three County Fairground.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Planning Board, property owners, Office of Planning and Development*

(P) Prevent loss of commercial/industrial land from rezoning to residential use. Exclude residential uses, in industrial districts to prevent conflicting land uses and to maximize industrial inventory, but task the Rezoning Committee to consider exclusions and special circumstances.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Office of Planning & Development, Planning Board, City Council.*

Update and expand the Urban Renewal Plan to authorize the Northampton Redevelopment Authority or other public development entity to undertake development projects in targeted industrial and commercial areas including but not limited to King Street, the Rt. 10 Business Park, and downtown

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, City Council, Office of Planning and Development*

Measurements of Progress:

***Tax Base***

Metric: Increase in the tax base

Reporting Agencies: Finance Director, Mayor, Mayor's Office of Economic Development

Target: Yearly increases up to 2.5% plus new growth, as permitted by State law.

Responsibility for Target: Mayor, City Council, Finance Director, Mayor's Office of Economic Development

***Business Activity***

Metric: Number of businesses; Number of jobs and wages; Turnover rate for local businesses

Reporting Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, State and Federal databases

Target: Increase value of businesses by number of jobs, wages and property valuation

Responsibility for Target: Local businesses, Mayor's Office of Economic Development

***Training Activity***

Metric: Number of individuals enrolled and graduating in business and job training programs courses or assistance programs

Reporting Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, School Department, Local Institutions, Job Training Programs

Target: Increase commensurate with regional economic growth

Responsibility for Target: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, School Committee, Institutions, Regional Employment Board

## Goal ED-3: Support a thriving cultural and creative economy

Objectives:

1. Increase the availability of affordable studio, live-work, performance, and rehearsal space to retain artists, cultural organizations, and businesses in Northampton.
2. Develop cross connections between various sectors within the creative economy, such as artists, designers, museums, and new technologies, to strengthen the overall vitality.
3. Facilitate greater communication and collaboration among cultural organizations, artists, the business community, non-profit organizations and City government.

Strategies and Actions:

(P) Preserve and develop affordable arts and performance venues in the City by:

- Creating an inventory of present spaces, evaluating their long-term viability.
- Surveying local artists to determine demand and ability to pay for spaces.
- Identifying possible venues, promote as part of downtown redevelopment projects, and seek possible funding sources.

*Responsible Agencies: Chamber of Commerce, Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Arts Council, Arts Community, property owners*

(P) Support and provide incentives to create affordable live/work and studio space.

*Responsible Agencies: Chamber of Commerce, Office of Planning and Development*

Link creative businesses to business and financial assistance programs.

*Responsible Agencies: Chamber of Commerce, Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Valley Community Development Corporation*

*What Others Say About Us*

*Highest Commonwealth Capital Score for Smart Growth in the state*

*"Number One Small Arts Community" – John Villani, 2000*

*Number One Best Place to Retire – "Cities Ranked & Rated: More Than 400 Metropolitan Areas Evaluated in the U.S. & Canada" Sperling, B. and Sander, P. Wiley Publishing 2007.*

*"A Dozen Distinctive Destinations" by National Trust for Historic Preservation, April 2001, www.nationaltrust.org/dozen_distinctive_destinations/2001/*

*"100 Best School Districts in the U.S." by Offspring: The Magazine of Smart Parenting, September/October 2000*

*"Great Places in America" for Main Street and "Putting Pedestrians First" - American Planning Association, October 2007*

Support joint marketing campaigns between cultural, retail, and hospitality sectors.

*Responsible Agencies: Chamber of Commerce, Mayor's Office of Economic Development*

(P) Create a comprehensive database of businesses and organizations in the Northampton creative economy to determine the local asset base and monitor status. Develop linkages between related enterprises. Create production and distribution mechanisms for creative works and products to increase value and income generation.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, Arts Council, creative organizations and businesses.*

Measurement of Progress:

Metric: Trends in number of cultural businesses, organizations, venues, revenue and income generation.

Reporting Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, Local Institutions

Target: Increase commensurate with regional economic growth

Responsibility for Target: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, Local Institutions

See also: Arts and Culture

## Goal ED-4: Provide a positive business environment

Objectives:

1. Invest in infrastructure to support desired business development in areas targeted for business growth (e.g., broadband technology, sewer, water, drainage, roadway, parking, and transit).
2. Maintain an appropriate level of environmental and community protection while balancing the impacts of regulation on businesses and major employers and the economic health of the community.
3. Provide a streamlined and transparent permitting process.
4. Support a strong partnership with the Northampton Chamber of Commerce, Village business associations and other regional groups to brand Northampton as a positive business environment.
5. Create a competitive business environment in the City to enable business investment to occur for all levels of businesses, from start-up to corporation.
6. Foster communication and understanding between businesses, government, and residential uses; and recognize business as an integral part of a sustainable community.
7. Provide leadership for local and regional economic development collaborations.

Strategies and Actions:

(P) Convene a group of business owners, institutional leaders, developers and city officials, and stakeholders to facilitate problem solving, and make recommendations for permit streamlining, regulatory simplification, and a customer service approach.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Planning Board, Office of Planning and Development*

(P) Participate in the Northeastern University economic development self-assessment tool process and study.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Office of Planning and Development, Chamber of Commerce, other departments as necessary.*

Complete an analysis that assesses consistency and balance between City policies in relation to economic development, other City goals, and financial health of the City including regulations, taxes, and fees.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, Finance Director, Mayor's Office of Economic Development, All City Departments*

Prepare an evaluation on the impact of permits and other fees in retaining and attracting businesses as compared to other communities and in relationship to development achieved.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, Finance Director, Economic Development Office, Office of Planning and Development*

Continue and expand regional economic development collaborations to leverage strengths and effectiveness locally and regionally; i.e. Pioneer Valley Connect, Plan for Progress, Economic Development Partners, Chamber of Commerce, surrounding communities.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, Mayor's Office of Economic Development*

Measurements of Progress:

***Customer Satisfaction***

Metric: Business/client satisfaction in dealing with City

Reporting Agencies: All City Departments, Chamber of Commerce

Target: Improved relationships as determined by 'customer' satisfaction

Responsibility for Target: All City Departments, Chamber of Commerce

***Regional Impact***

Metric: Number of decisions including regional impact assessment

Reporting Agencies: Capital program report by City Council; Land use report by Planning

Target: All decisions consider regional impact

Responsibility for Target: Mayor, City Council

***Regional Agreements***

Metric: Number of agreements being upheld and enforced

Reporting Agencies: Mayor's office

Target: One new agreement every five years

Responsibility for Target: Mayor's office

***Technology Access***

Metric: Access to broadband technology and to wireless hot spots.

Reporting Agencies: MIS, Mayor's Office of Economic Development

Target: Competitively priced high speed broadband access to 100% of households and businesses. Wireless access hot spots available in downtown and Florence.

Responsibility for Target: MIS, Mayor's Office of Economic Development

***Potential Conflicts:***

- Commercial rents continue to rise which attracts investment, but many spaces are no longer affordable to local businesses.
- The need to attract and retain a diversity of employers, especially industrial employers, can be in conflict with the high price of industrial space combined with prohibitive regulations.
- The need for the City to support the expansion of major employers to bring in additional employees, business and visitors to the City consistent with the goals of the *Sustainable Northampton* Plan.
- There is a strong desire for a vibrant downtown but this also raises concerns about problems such as traffic, parking, and panhandling, as well as broader issues of homelessness and drug use.
- There is desire for more commercial development on King Street but differing opinions on how development should take place, such as pedestrian or auto oriented design and uses, mixed residential with commercial or strictly commercial development, and so on.
- The consumer's desire for a broad range of products, services, and pricing can supersede the desire to have primarily local businesses.
- Northampton is perceived as having a vibrant economy, yet the dearth of well-paying jobs causes people to live or work elsewhere. The need for adequate parking for a destination downtown area may conflict with emissions reductions goals.

***Potential Responses:***

- Providing a positive business environment [ED-4] is an important step towards promoting the presence of healthy local businesses
- Providing the regional leadership [ED-4].
- Maintaining the public properties and policies that support businesses [ED-1, 4] will demonstrate Northampton's commitment to helping businesses thrive. This also becomes a strong marketing point for new businesses looking to locate in Northampton.
- By creating a vibrant, thriving downtown, [ED-1] many of the issues concerning safety, drug use, and panhandling are resolved by the presence of large amounts of people, which make the area undesirable for illegal activity.
- Environmental protection and climate change goals seek a reduction in vehicle use and travel which may be encouraged with better parking options that support economic development [ED-1, 4].

# Arts and Culture

## Goal AC-1: Provide quality arts and cultural resources as a vital part of the community

Objectives:

1. Develop greater coordination between municipal, business, and cultural entities on all matters related to arts, culture, and the creative economy to strengthen the overall vitality of the community.
2. Maintain and increase public and private support for the arts, and cultural organizations and facilities including the Arts Council, the Academy of Music and the Center for the Arts.
3. Build on partnerships with Smith College, and other non-profit organizations, to increase arts and cultural opportunities, resources and collaboration.
4. Expand the presence of public art in desired locations.
5. Maintain and increase arts instruction/enrichment to be valued as an integral part of every child's education in the public school system.
6. Assist city arts organizations in an effort to establish a collaborative system for addressing issues related to the expansion of local cultural venues and activities.

Strategies and Actions:

(P) Develop greater cultural coordination in the City such as an expanded municipal cultural department, for example, or an umbrella arts and cultural coordinating organization.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, Arts Council, Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Arts Community, Chamber of Commerce, City Council Cultural Committee.*

(P) Preserve and enhance arts education programming in public schools.

*Responsible Agencies: School Committee, School Department, Arts Council, Arts Community.*

Expand existing community arts calendar and create a comprehensive website and box office in coordination with arts, municipal, and tourism entities.

*Responsible Agencies: Arts Community, Arts Council, Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce*

Create a comprehensive inventory of arts organizations, businesses, and venues.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, Arts Council, Arts Community*

Measurement of Progress:

Metric: Number of performance and rehearsal spaces and galleries, number of performances/showings, number of arts based entities in the City

*Reporting Agencies: Economic Development, Arts Council, Chamber of Commerce, Northampton Center for the Arts or other collaboration of arts organizations*

Target: Maintain or increase the number of venues; Increase the number of performances/showings; Retain or increase the number of arts related entities.

*Responsibility for Target: Economic Development, Arts Council, Chamber of Commerce, Arts Organizations, Arts Community*

## Goal AC-2: Support artists in the community

Objectives:

1. Provide affordable living, office, presentation, performance, and rehearsal space for artists and cultural organizations in the City.
2. Create an expanded base of business and other community financial support for artists, cultural organizations, and cultural resources.
3. Support artists and/or arts organizations that advocate for the arts community and/or provide information and services to the arts community.

4. Encourage the involvement of the cultural community in City planning and decision-making related to quality design, public art, and policies affecting the cultural community.

Strategies and Actions:

(P) Support and provide incentives for the private development of affordable live-work and studio space.

*Responsible Agencies: Planning Board, Office of Planning and Development, Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Arts Council, Arts Community, developers, property owners*

(P) Identify possible arts venues and seek to provide incentives for private development of venues as part of downtown redevelopment projects.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Office of Planning and Development, Arts Council, Arts Community, property owners*

(P) Seek revenue sources for facilities, operating, and marketing to promote long-term sustainability of cultural organizations.

*Responsible Agencies: Arts organizations, Arts Council, Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce.*

Improve zoning to support artist live/work space as an allowable home occupation.

*Responsible Agencies: Office of Planning & Development, Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Arts Community.*

Improve communication between non-profit cultural organizations and the business community related to fund-raising efforts.

*Responsible Agencies: Non-profits, Chamber of Commerce, Mayor's Office of Economic Development.*

Investigate and pursue options for coordinating, funding and maintaining public and performance art.

*Responsible Agencies: Arts Council, Department of Public Works, Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Arts community, Chamber of Commerce, City Council Cultural Committee.*

Measurement of Progress:

Metric: Number of artists living and working within the city

Reporting Agencies: Arts Council, Economic Development, Office of Planning and Development

Target: Maintenance and growth

Responsibility for Target: Economic Development, Arts Council, Arts Community, developers, property owners, Housing entities

Potential Conflicts:

- The arts are critical to the vitality of Northampton, but artists are being priced out of living, work and exhibition/performance space.

Potential Responses:

- Consider public facilities for work, exhibition and performance spaces.
- Consider the options for affordable housing that allow choices for local artists.

See also: Economic Development Goal ED-3, and Housing

# Heritage Resources

## Goal HR-1: Protect and preserve the City's heritage resources

Objectives:

1. Identify, document and evaluate the heritage resources.
2. Educate and inform decision makers and the community about heritage resources.
3. Protect the heritage resources from degradation or destruction by public or private actions or inactions.
4. Adopt and act on preservation programs that:
   - Employ a sound basis in field survey and archival research,
   - Provide economic and technical assistance to the extent feasible,
   - Are coordinated with other community policies and ordinances, and
   - Operate with sound and explicit standards, guidelines, criteria, and administrative procedures.

Strategies and Actions:

Conduct field and archival surveys to locate, document, and evaluate unrecorded heritage resources, as well as to update information on resources identified in past studies or surveys.

*Responsible Agencies: Northampton Historical Commission, Office of Planning and Development, Pioneer Valley Regional Planning Commission, Historic Northampton, Library System*

Increase the level of public participation in heritage resource identification and preservation, including involvement with local schools and colleges.

*Responsible Agencies: Northampton Historical Commission, Office of Planning and Development, Northampton School System, 5 Colleges Network, Historic Northampton*

Inform the community about heritage resources with displays, markers, publications, and public presentations undertaken cooperatively with concerned community organizations and the media.

*Responsible Agencies: Northampton Historical Commission, Historic Northampton, Office of Planning and Development, Greater Northampton Chamber of Commerce*

Provide training opportunities for City officials, boards, and staff to increase awareness of heritage resources and preservation programs.

*Responsible Agencies: Massachusetts Historical Commission, Northampton Historical Commission, Office of Planning and Development, Historic Northampton, Pioneer Valley Regional Planning Commission*

Recognize with an award program the research, publication, communication, restoration, or rehabilitation projects or activities that contribute to the awareness and preservation of heritage resources in the City.

*Responsible Agencies: Northampton Historical Commission, Office of Planning and Development*

Promote and encourage the protection and preservation of significant heritage resources by listing eligible properties on the National Register of Historic Places.

*Responsible Agencies: Northampton Historical Commission, Pioneer Valley Regional Planning Commission, Office of Planning and Development, Historic Northampton*

Encourage private landowners to establish historic preservation restrictions and open space/conservation easements by working with the city, local non-profit land trusts, or state/national entities authorized to hold easements for the purpose of heritage resource preservation.

*Responsible Agencies: Community Preservation Committee, Northampton Historical Commission, Office of Planning and Development*

Provide information to decision makers and the community on loans, grants, tax advantages, and other financial incentives that may be available from federal, state, non-profit, and private sources to property owners for the restoration or rehabilitation of heritage resources in private or public ownership.

*Responsible Agencies: Northampton Historical Commission, Office of Planning and Development, Pioneer Valley Regional Planning Commission*

Acquire significant heritage resources, when feasible, to be incorporated into the City's public areas or park system for purposes of resource protection as well as public education and enjoyment.

*Responsible Agencies: Community Preservation Committee, Northampton Historical Commission, Office of Planning and Development, Recreation Commission*

Protect the City's historic and architecturally significant neighborhoods and areas by maintaining current local historic and design review districts, design guidelines, and administrative procedures, as well as establishing additional such districts as appropriate.

*Responsible Agencies: Northampton Historical Commission, Central Business Architecture Committee, Elm Street Historic District Commission, Planning Board, Office of Planning and Development*

Protect the City's heritage resources from degradation or destruction by public or private actions or inactions by maintaining the City's demolition delay ordinance and by working with affected property owners to identify, within the mandated timeframe, feasible and appropriate alternatives to demolition.

*Responsible Agencies: Northampton Historical Commission, Elm Street Historic District Commission, Central Business Architecture Committee, City Council, Planning Board, Office of Planning and Development*

Measurement of Progress:

Metric: Number of heritage resources identified, documented, and protected

Reporting Agencies: Northampton Historical Commission, Office of Planning and Development

Target: Implement a comprehensive heritage resource inventory process by increasing the number of resources identified, documented, and protected each year

Responsibility for Target: Northampton Historical Commission, Office of Planning and Development

# Housing

## Goal H-1: Create new housing

Objectives:

1. Provide developers with options that allow them to build at higher densities in return for creating more affordable housing units.
2. Adopt regulations to increase the number of projects involving mixed-income housing that result in housing affordable to all ranges of income, especially in the downtown area.
3. Look beyond traditional marketplace models to create affordable housing options.
4. Utilize green and sustainable design funding opportunities for affordable housing.
5. Create incentives for private housing developers to act on housing program goals.
6. Create new home ownership opportunities and development resources for households with incomes between 80% and 120% of the area median income Area Median Income [AMI].
7. Create home ownership opportunities for households earning at or below 80% of AMI.
8. Create rental housing options especially for households with income at or below 60% of AMI.
9. Expand the range of options for detached housing, such as cottage housing development to increase density in designated locations.
10. Assess the demand for, and availability of, housing for all sectors of the City's population and respond with appropriate strategies, including:
    - Housing that meets the needs of special populations, particularly the disabled
    - Housing that meets of the needs of elderly residents who are not eligible for public housing

Strategies and Actions:

Identify market pressures and conditions that restrict affordable housing.

*Responsible Agencies: Housing Partnership, Housing Authority, Community Preservation Committee, Office of Planning and Development, Planning Board*

Advance options to increase production of affordable housing, including zoning incentives (e.g. TDR, inclusionary zoning) and gap funding.

*Responsible Agencies: Housing Partnership, Housing Authority, Community Preservation Committee, Office of Planning and Development, Planning Board, Zoning Board, (future) Rezoning Committee*

Develop a list of innovative funding mechanisms to keep the costs of housing affordable, and provide it to all housing developers.

*Responsible Agencies: Affordable Housing Trust, Housing Partnership, Housing Authority, Community Preservation Committee, Office of Planning and Development*

*The Housing Wage*

*The amount a person working full-time has to earn to afford the fair market rent on a two-bedroom unit while paying no more than 30 percent of income in rent [Massachusetts Housing Partnership] National Low Income Housing Coalition estimated this at $22.65 per hour for Massachusetts in 2006.*

*Area Median Income*

| | Northampton 1999 Census 1. | Springfield MSA 2000 Census 2. | Springfield MSA 2007 est. 3. |
|---|---|---|---|
| AMI | $41,808 | $50,930 | $61,800 |
| 60% of AMI | 25,085 | 30,558 | 43,020 |
| 80% of AMI | 33,446 | 40,744 | 57,350 |
| 120% of AMI | 50,170 | 61,116 | 74,160 |

*Sources: 1. MISER, 2. Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council, 3. HUD*

Create rental units affordable especially to households with incomes at or below 60% of AMI.

*Responsible Agencies: Housing Partnership, Housing Authority, Community Preservation Committee, Planning Department, Planning Board*

Create ownership units affordable to households with incomes between 80% and 120% of AMI.

*Responsible Agencies: Housing Partnership, Community Preservation Committee, Planning Department, Planning Board*

Create ownership units affordable to households with incomes at or below 80% of AMI.

*Responsible Agencies: Housing Partnership, Housing Authority, Community Preservation Committee, Planning Department, Planning Board*

Research existing zoning and identify suitable locations for development of new Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units.

*Responsible Agencies: Planning and Development, Planning Board, Housing Partnership*

Increase numbers of SRO units, especially enhanced SROs.

*Responsible Agencies: Housing Partnership, Housing Authority, Community Preservation Committee, Office of Planning and Development, Planning Board*

Make city funding available for the "local match" funding needed by affordable housing developers.

*Responsible Agencies: Community Preservation Committee, Housing Partnership, Mayor, Office of Planning and Development, Affordable Housing Trust*

Lobby at state level to increase funding for green development in housing production programs.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, Office of Planning and Development, City Council, Housing Partnership*

Develop a community education program to promote these goals.

*Responsible Agencies: Housing Partnership, Community Preservation Committee*

Work with financial institutions to offer financing incentives to enable an increased use of sustainable technology by city residents and businesses, such as green mortgages.

*Responsible agencies: Mayor, City Council, Housing Partnership*

Lobby to continue the Federal energy tax credit programs.

*Responsible agencies: Mayor, City Council, Housing Partnership*

Work with Valley CDC to continue to support first-time homebuyer programs and post-purchase education.

*Responsible Agencies: Housing Partnership, Office of Planning and Development*

Determine if there are any regulatory changes that would facilitate the development of affordable live-work space to attract and retain artists (and start-up businesses) in the City.

*Responsible Agencies: Planning Board, Mayor's Office, Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, Arts Council*

<u>Measurement of Progress:</u>

Metrics:

- Number of affordable housing units created
- Number of units created, and/or number of projects supported, by Community Development Block Grant or Community Preservation Act funds
- Number of enhanced SRO created
- Increase in number of 40B subsidized housing inventory units
- Number of community housing education programs
- Adoption of zoning ordinances that increases production of affordable housing.

Reporting Agencies: Housing Partnership, Office of Planning and Development, Community Preservation Committee

Target: Range of unit costs corresponding to income levels in Northampton

Responsibility for Target: Mayor, City Council, Housing Partnership, Planning Board, Community Preservation Committee, Office of Planning and Development

Potential Conflicts:

- The diverse community is hampered by Northampton's success as a desirable place to live thereby contributing to decreased affordability and diversity. There is a desire to be welcoming to outsiders, but without pushing out working families and long-term Northampton residents.
- There is a desire for more businesses, jobs and diverse housing options at a range of affordability levels, but new development can conflict with a desire to preserve open space, wildlife habitat and corridors, and agriculture.

Potential Responses:

- Enforce inclusive development policies that require mixing affordable housing with market rate units at a set standard to be developed by the City. For example, all new developments might include 20% of the units to be affordable (as defined as for individuals with at or below 80% of the area median income).
- Increase residential densities in the village centers and downtown areas to provide density where infrastructure will support it and where it meets smart growth goals.

See also: Land Use, Economic Development, Arts and Culture Goals

## Goal H-2: Preserve and sustain existing affordable housing

Objectives:

1. Preserve existing rental housing stock to facilitate availability and price stability.
2. Create a climate of support, within all departments of City government, for landlords who are participating, or who could participate, in a partnership to preserve "market-rate affordable" units as rental units.
3. Identify the present affordable housing at risk (e.g. "expiring use" and rentals that might be converted to condominiums) and work with property owners and others to identify and secure funding sources to preserve the units as affordable.
4. Sustain and improve existing SRO units.
5. Develop ways to sustain and build the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.
6. Sustain and expand housing rehabilitation programs.

Strategies and Actions:

Define a city policy, and appropriate actions, and identify a representative to work with owners/managers of existing units to preserve affordability

*Responsible Agencies: Office of Planning and Development, Mayor's Office, Housing Partnership*

Target housing rehabilitation programs to coincide with neighborhood revitalization efforts

*Responsible Agencies: Office of Planning and Development, Planning Board*

Research and identify a new administrator for housing rehabilitation programs

*Responsible Agencies: Office of Planning and Development Office, Housing Partnership*

Measurement of Progress:

Metrics:

- Number of affordable housing units preserved
- Decreased number of rental housing units lost
- Number of affordable units rehabilitated
- Decrease number of conversions from affordable
- Number of units, and number of projects, preserved via CDBG and/or Committee Preservation Act funds

Reporting Agencies: Affordable Housing Trust, Housing Partnership, Office of Planning and Development, Council on Aging

Target: Range of unit costs corresponding to income levels in Northampton, decrease in conversions from affordable to market-rate condominiums

Responsibility for Target: Mayor, City Council, Housing Partnership, Planning Board, Community Preservation Committee

## Goal H-3: Work to end homelessness

Objectives:

1. Increase focus on prevention to decrease the numbers of those becoming homeless

2. Increase the supply of affordable, supportive housing to quickly re-house those who do become homeless
3. Broaden the community dialogue, beyond the social services community, regarding root causes of homelessness and possible solutions
4. Articulate services currently available for food and shelter, identify service gaps, fill those gaps

Strategies and Actions:

Continue to support participation and facilitation of the Three County Continuum of Care, the regional homeless services planning effort. (City of Northampton serves as the lead agency/ since 1997)

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, City Council, Housing Partnership, Office of Planning and Development, Next Step Collaborative*

Participate in "Pioneer Valley 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness," Co-chaired by Mayor Higgins and Holyoke Mayor Sullivan (launched April 27, 2007 to be completed for 2008) with participation of providers and residents on workgroups on Affordable Housing, Stabilization and Prevention, Mainstream Resources, Data and Research, Chronic Homelessness, and Building Leadership to End Homelessness

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, Housing Partnership, Office of Planning and Development, Next Step Collaborative*

Support the Tenancy Preservation Program to maintain housing for those households at risk for homelessness.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, Housing Partnership, Office of Planning and Development, Next Step Collaborative*

Create 4 to 6 units of "safe-haven" housing in Northampton to house the chronically homeless, create new SRO units, and rehabilitate the Grove Street Inn.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, Housing Partnership, Office of Planning and Development, Next Step Collaborative*

Work with the Greater Northampton Chamber of Commerce, and the Regional Employment Boards to address economic development and poverty issues.

*City Social Services for Housing*

*The City currently has:*

- *Five homeless shelters*
- *Transitional housing*
- *Housing for mentally ill adults*
- *Other support services*

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, Housing Partnership, Office of Planning and Development, Next Step Collaborative*

Measurement of Progress:

Metric: Shorter stays in the homeless shelters and increased numbers of people moving into permanent housing

Reporting Agencies: Three County Continuum of Care, Housing Partnership, Office of Planning and Development

Target: Creation and maintenance of service delivery system that provides food and shelter to those in need; increased food resources and supported housing programs for the chronically homeless

Responsibility for Target: Mayor, Housing Partnership, Office of Planning and Development, Housing Authority, Next Step Collaborative.

Potential Conflicts:

- Until there is a sufficient inventory of affordable housing, jobs that pay a living wage, affordable health care and access to mainstream resources, homelessness cannot be ended.

Potential Response:

- All sectors of the national, regional, and local communities need to accept this realization and adopt this approach, rather than looking to the human service providers, in isolation, to end homelessness.

# Infrastructure and Capital Resources

## Goal IC-1: Ensure the capital improvement program is coordinated with *Sustainable Northampton* plan goals and objectives

Objectives:

1. Continue the five-year strategic plan for capital improvements.
2. Align the yearly review process for the capital program with other City plans.
3. Establish capital and infrastructure improvement programs that match with planned development areas.
4. Extend or provide infrastructure improvement projects to support development projects that meet City goals.
5. Coordinate the annual review with an analysis of cost effectiveness.
6. Ensure that the capital improvement plan is developed and implemented in a consistent and transparent fashion to meet the most pressing needs across the City.
7. Maintain and increase general fund allocation to support planned future capital projects from 2.1% yearly to 5% yearly.

Strategies and Actions:

Develop capital improvements requests to identify and prioritize transportation improvements that support this plan and economic development.

*Responsible Agencies: Capital Improvement Committee*

Monitor the status of infrastructure and be sure to schedule upgrades and replacements with service levels matching the Future Land Use Map and according to desired development patterns and density.

*Responsible Agencies: Capital Improvement Committee, Department of Public Works*

Assess municipal and school facility needs and establish a capital program for action.

*Responsible Agencies: Capital Improvement Committee, School Department*

See also: Energy and Environment Goal EEC-1

Measurements of Progress:

***Budget Review***

Metric: Conformance with *Sustainable Northampton*

Reporting Agencies: Mayor, All City Departments

Target: One hundred percent conformance

Responsibility for Target: All City Departments

***Capital Allocations***

Metric: Amount allocated for planned, future capital projects

Reporting Agency: Finance Director

Target: Raise from 2.1% to 5% of yearly budget

Responsibility for Target: Mayor, City Council

See also: Municipal Governance and Financial Stability Goals

## Goal IC-2: Program and utilize public buildings for maximum efficiency and availability

Objectives:

1. Establish a collaborative administration of city buildings and facilities to maximize

*Jobs-Housing Balance*

*Choices for job and housing locations are closely linked to the resulting impact on the transportation system for journeys to work. Ideally, if the right housing and jobs choices are available, and people can choose to both live and work in one area, congestion could be relieved and the community would achieve a jobs-housing balance. Other benefits would accrue to household budgets from reduced travel costs.*

utilization of space, improve operational efficiencies, and ensure a transparent process for public use of public facilities.

Strategies and Actions:

Prepare a list of all public buildings with their public meeting spaces and facilities, and create a public schedule that is managed through City Hall with the School Department to allow more complete utilization of the facilities.

*Responsible Agencies: Central Services, Libraries, Department of Public Works, School Department, Smith Vocational and Agricultural School*

Measurement of Progress:

Metric: Efficiency of space utilization

Reporting Agency: Facilities managers

Target: Full utilization in accordance with accommodations

Responsibility for Target: Facilities managers, Central Services, All City Departments

See also: Energy and Environment Goal EEC-2

## Goal IC-3: Upgrade the City's aging stormwater management system

Objectives:

1. Develop and implement a plan to repair and replace aging infrastructure throughout the City.
2. Include 'low impact' and National Pollution Discharge Elimination System drainage improvements concurrently with any pavement management program or project.
3. Invest in stormwater management improvements.
4. Ensure investments in stormwater are distributed by comparable infrastructure needs.

Strategies and Actions:

Complete an engineering assessment on the ability to meet present and future storm water management requirements. Include low impact and green design considerations in the assessment. Create a long-term priority improvement plan.

*Responsible Agencies: Board of Public Works, Department of Public Works*

Establish a yearly budget with priorities and schedule for upgrading the systems.

*Responsible Agencies: Board of Public Works, Department of Public Works*

Explore model programs for funding maintenance and improvement of storm water systems.

*Responsible Agencies: Department of Public Works, Board of Public Works*

Continue funding for stormwater management and oversight.

*Responsible Agencies: Department of Public Works, Board of Public Works*

Continue compliance with federal storm water standards and management.

*Responsible Agencies: Department of Public Works, Board of Public Works*

Measurement of Progress:

Metric: Number of projects completed on the priority improvement plan

Reporting Agencies: Department of Public Works, Health Department, Office of Planning and Development

Target: Continued investment in stormwater upgrades

Responsibility for Target: Board of Public Works, Board of Health, Planning Board

# Transportation

## Goal T-1: Ensure the safe and efficient transportation of goods and people by motor vehicles, bicycle, foot, and any other means

Objectives:

1. Maintain an efficient transportation system.
2. Maintain a transportation system that reduces air pollution and minimizes congestion.
3. Ensure that environmental impacts are considered and adverse effects are minimized on all transportation projects.
4. Reduce use of single occupancy vehicles.
5. Ensure that safety is a primary goal in transportation improvements, systems, and operations, both to reduce crashes and to ensure that both vehicular and non-vehicular modes of traffic are safe and attractive to all users on all roads.
6. Participate in regional efforts to improve utilization of intelligent transportation systems.
7. Develop a public transit plan in coordination with Pioneer Valley Transit Authority and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.
8. Ensure that the needs of transit services, bicycle, pedestrian, and wheelchairs are considered and addressed in the design, construction, and management of every project affecting the transportation system. See also OS-4

See also: Energy and Environment Goals EEC-2, EEC-3, and EEC-4

Strategies and Actions:

***Inventories and data***

The Police Department's Safety Officer shall prepare an annual report on motor vehicle collisions, their location, and whether personal injury is involved. Share relevant crash data with other city boards and departments whenever requested.

*Responsible Agency: Police Department*

Maintain an in-house pavement management system to inform pavement management decisions and ensure an objective decision making process.

*Responsible Agency: Department of Public Works*

Department of Public Works should provide the Transportation and Parking Commission, Board of Public Works, Mayor, and City Council with annual lists of street and intersections, which are planned for design or construction to aid in multi-board/department communications.

*Responsible Agency: Department of Public Works*

***(P) Intersection design***

The following considerations enhance pedestrian safety to encourage walkability, and should be included in all intersection studies and designs:

- Intersection improvements designed to increase traffic, speed, and volume (decrease queuing times) should ensure the safety of pedestrians and cyclists and should be carefully weighed against any loss of green space and tree canopy, any increase in stormwater runoff, and any detrimental impacts on neighborhoods, adjoining streets, and private property.
- When designing for truck movements (such as specified by MassHighway), avoid excessively wide intersections through the use of appropriate mitigation such as mountable curbs, mountable pedestrian islands, raised pedestrian crossings, and/or alternate truck routes when possible.
- Include an analysis of the suitability of roundabouts and mini-roundabouts during the preliminary engineering analysis for all intersections being considered for significant reconstruction, realignment, signalization, and four-way stops. Roundabouts are the favored intersection treatment for safety, efficiency, and environmental reasons, when appropriate. The Board of Public Works and the Transportation and Parking Commission shall be consulted before making any determination not to add a roundabout or mini-roundabout.
- Ensure that all new and existing traffic signals incorporate audible pedestrian signals (dedicated pedestrian-only phase,

pedestrian activated pedestrian-only phase, or a shared phase). Create a prioritized list of existing traffic signals where pedestrian signals are desired. Installation of pedestrian signals shall be made as funding becomes available. Where no pedestrian infrastructure (sidewalks) currently exists, traffic signal equipment shall be installed that will allow for future pedestrian signalization. In deciding what kind of traffic signal to use, consider shared pedestrian phases (where pedestrians cross with parallel vehicle traffic) as well as full stop phases in order to minimize delays for both drivers and pedestrians.

*Responsible Agencies: Board of Public Works, Transportation and Parking Commission, Planning Board*

***(P) Traffic calming***

Examine all unsafe intersections, areas of excessive speeds, and areas where neighborhoods perceive a loss of quality of life to consider possible traffic calming efforts. Draft a policy for identifying areas that need traffic calming (see Transportation Plan).

*Responsible Agencies: Board of Public Works, Planning Board Office of Planning and Development*

Draft and implement traffic calming measures that will apply to subdivision and zoning standards for major site plan approval regulations.

*Responsible Agencies: Board of Public Works, Planning Board, Committee on Disabilities, Office of Planning and Development*

Ensure that the design of all new, reconstructed, and reclaimed streets considers incorporating appropriate traffic calming measures, in consultation with the Board of Public Works and the Transportation and Parking Commission.

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Board of Public Works, Planning Board*

Develop a complete list of locations where traffic calming measures might be needed within the city. Use the first several projects to develop traffic calming model (both methods and community outreach and involvement) that can be used elsewhere in the city. Use this to help implement traffic calming measures elsewhere in the City.

*Sidewalks and Bikeways*

*For planning, cost for sidewalk construction is about $30 per foot (8-foot wide concrete sidewalk) and for bikeways it is about $20 per foot (10-foot wide asphalt). So, at 1500 feet for each per year, the cost would be $45,000 and $30,000 per year.*

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Department of Public Works, Office of Planning and Development*

***(P) Sidewalks***

Create a sidewalk management program modeled on the successful pavement management program to inventory sidewalks, sidewalk conditions, sidewalk usage, and to identify priorities for new or restored sidewalks.

*Responsible Agencies: Department of Public Works, Office of Planning and Development*

Determine whether Chapter 90 monies should be used for sidewalks or remain committed only for street improvements. Determine whether any other funds are available and if they are sufficient for the sidewalk program; then act accordingly.

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking Commission, Department of Public Works, Office of Planning and Development*

Provide sidewalks on all roads within one mile of all schools. For possible funding look into applying for the FHWA's Safe Routes to Schools program.

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking Commission, Board of Public Works, Planning Board*

Ensure that all developers provide sidewalks when necessary to serve their projects.

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Board of Public Works, Planning Board*

Ensure that all new and reconstructed streets include sidewalks, unless there are right-of-way or engineering issues, or the rural nature of a street makes it not feasible. (The rural or urban nature of a street is based on projected traffic and development density when the street is built-out) When sidewalks are installed no consultation with the Board of Public Works or Transportation and Park-

ing Commission is necessary. Otherwise, the Board of Public Works and the Transportation and Parking Commission shall be consulted before any determination is made not to add such a sidewalk.

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Board of Public Works, Planning Board*

Add wheelchair ramps and pavement markings necessary to make all sidewalks accessible for people with mobility disabilities.

*Responsible Agencies: Committee on Disabilities, Department of Public Works, Office of Planning and Development*

See also: Open Space goal OS-4

Create and update a prioritized list of routes where sidewalks, curb extensions, raised intersections and other sidewalk improvements are desired and are ready to take advantage of funding and construction opportunities. Install such improvements as funding allows.

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Department of Public Works, Office of Planning and Development*

Educate the public and enforce requirements to ensure the safety of sidewalks, including existing requirements that affect property owners abutting sidewalks. Some of these requirements include: clearing snow from sidewalks after a storm, with a priority on sidewalks in commercial areas and along arterial and collector streets (Section 19-19, Northampton Code of Ordinances); and controlling brush from growing over sidewalks or blocking visibility at intersections.

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Committee on Disabilities, Department of Public Works, Office of Planning and Development*

Enforce existing traffic and sidewalk regulations, ordinances, and statutes in order to promote safety.

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Board of Public Works, Planning Board, Police Department*

***Signage***

When funds become available, prepare a sign inventory and implement a plan to bring signage and crosswalks into conformance with the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Signage related to marked crosswalks is the first priority.

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Board of Public Works, Planning Board*

***Snow clearing***

Clear snow to provide reasonably safe driving and biking conditions and access to public transit stops. The level of service achievable will be based on the resources the City is able and willing to allocate.

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Department of Public Works*

Measurement of Progress:

Metric: Percent of streets considered safe for pedestrians, Number of crosswalks painted, Number of intersection safety improvements

Reporting Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Public Works, Police, Department of Public Works, Office of Planning and Development

Target: One hundred percent considered safe for pedestrians

Responsibility for Target: Board of Public Works, Planning Board

Potential Conflicts:

- Certain forms of travel, such as skateboards and motorized scooters, have become controversial because of perceived incompatibility with more dominant modes.

Potential Responses:

- Bring the user groups into public dialog, either in community meetings or in the schools, to obtain trust, cooperation, and understanding.

## Goal T-2: Improve circulation system to accommodate development and encourage bicycle and pedestrian transit

Objectives:

1. Ensure that all new privately built streets include sidewalks, consistent with the

Northampton Subdivision Regulations. When feasible and practical, concrete sidewalks on two sides of a street are most desirable.

2. Calm traffic to preserve pedestrian safety and encourage pedestrian activity in neighborhoods and villages. See Also: Transportation Goal T-1 Traffic Calming
3. Transform the Northampton Bike Path and Norwottuck Bike paths/multi-use trail into a complete rail-trail network.
4. Ensure that economic development goals are considered and balanced with other City goals in all transportation objectives, decisions, and improvements
5. Upgrade transportation and public utilities to facilitate expansion of the commercial/industrial site inventory in identified growth areas
6. Ensure pedestrian, bicycle, non-motorized travel, and transit are addressed in every development project.
7. Ensure that public transit stops are located at industrial parks and commercial centers.

Strategies and Actions:

***Incentives and Fees***

Clarify the basis for calculating in-lieu of traffic improvement fees and include incentives for projects that are within 500m (walking distance) to basic services, Florence, Downtown, and public transit.

*Responsible Agencies: Planning Board, Transportation and Parking, Office of Planning and Development*

***Design for bicycles***

Design roadway improvements with consideration that "a bicyclist should be expected to be riding on any roadway [and a pedestrian walking along the roadway], and therefore should be accommodated" (Building Better Bicycling, MassHighway, 1999).

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Department of Public Works, Office of Planning and Development*

Complete a survey and replacement program to ensure catch basin covers are in a "bicycle-safe" format.

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Department of Public Works*

Develop a comprehensive citywide bicycle system including existing and planned off-road bicycle paths, on-road bicycle lanes, and safe on-road bicycle routes. On-road bicycle routes and lanes that provide direct access to the growing rail-trail network and to urban core areas should receive a high priority. The system should include supporting services, such as signage, bicycle storage, and bicycle system maps and information.

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Board of Public Works, Department of Public Works, Planning Board, Office of Planning and Development*

Add marked bicycle lanes to all surface arterial, collector, and federal aid roads whenever feasible; i.e., all surface roads except local roads.

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Board of Public Works*

Transform the Northampton Bike Path and Norwottuck Bike paths/multi-use trail into a complete bike paths/multi-use trail network with construction funding from federal, state and local sources. Design, permitting, and land acquisition will be completed locally. See also: Bike paths/multi-use trail Network map

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Board of Public Works, Department of Public Works, Office of Planning and Development*

Educate the public about the rights and responsibilities of bicyclists, to the extent that financial resources allow. Consider a bicycle safety curriculum at all school levels. Maintain web-based information on transportation facilities and transportation users' rights and responsibilities. Consider use of community television channel and newspapers to carry relevant stories and public service announcements.

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Department of Public Works, Office of Planning and Development*

Increase the number of official walking routes throughout the city.

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Board of Public Works, Planning Board*

***Improve traffic congestion***

Traffic congestion problems should generally be addressed by providing and enhancing alter-

natives to single-occupancy vehicles, rather than by adding roads or road lanes. The long-term effect on "induced traffic" (individuals' decision to drive on a particular road or route encouraged by perceived low congestion) should be carefully considered whenever roadways are reconfigured or widened in an attempt to relieve congestion. When enhancing intersections, as opposed to roadways, the City's goal is to avoid inducing additional traffic while reducing intersection queuing times, avoid polluting idling and to allow smooth flow of traffic.

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Board of Public Works, Planning Board*

Roadways should be designed to be environmentally sensitive, to the extent feasible, with elements such as tree belts and curbs designed to improve the human environment and reduce impact on the natural environment.

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Board of Public Works, Planning Board, Department of Public Works, Office of Planning and Development*

Avoid creating cul-de-sacs and dead ends when possible and instead create a network of streets. Dead end streets, while desirable to some residents, add significantly to the delivery of city services and increases traffic flows to other local streets. Design streets to avoid creating new high-speed short cuts through residential neighborhoods.

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Board of Public Works, Planning Board, Department of Public Works, Office of Planning and Development*

***TDM***

Incorporate reasonable steps to reduce peak-hour single-occupancy vehicle trips for new projects. Transportation demand management (TDM) techniques will be tailored to suit individual project needs, user needs, and the overall feasibility of the project while addressing City TDM goals. This may include:

- Capital improvements (e.g., sidewalks, bicycle lanes, non-motorized trails and connections, bus stops, car pool parking);
- Incentives for low-impact transportation (e.g., transit, car pooling, cycling, and walking) along with reduced incentives for single-occupancy vehicles (e.g., below-cost employee parking);
- Policies to redistribute traffic impacts (e.g., set employee hours to avoid peak hour commutes);
- Support for private, shared vehicle services.

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Board of Public Works, Planning Board, Department of Public Works, Office of Planning and Development*

<u>Measurements of Progress:</u>

***Bicycles and Pedestrians***

Metric:

- Length and locations of bikeways and sidewalks,
- Bike paths/multi-use trails within ½ mile of 70% of households,
- Bicycle lanes within ½ mile of 85% of households
- Percent of streets with sidewalks/sidewalks safe to walk on/within a mile of schools,
- Percent of children able to walk to school,
- Percent of population able to get basic services without driving.

Reporting Agencies: Department of Public Works, Office of Planning and Development

Target: Increase bike lanes connecting to schools, commercial areas and neighborhoods by 4% per year; Improve or add 1500 feet of sidewalk per year

Responsibility for Target: Board of Public Works, Department of Public Works, Planning Board, Transportation and Parking Commission, Parking Manager, Office of Planning and Development

*<u>Bicycle improvements</u>*

*The City has:*

- *Three bike lanes (formal on Elm and South Street, informal on King Street)*
- *Bike Paths (Northampton Bike Path, Norwottuck in Northampton, Ice Pond/ Rocky Hill spur)*
- *Bike Paths under design (6 miles)*
- *Bike racks downtown*
- *Bike lockers at Sheldon Field*

***Congestion***

Metric: Average commute time, Number of workforce commuter miles, Number of SOV commuters/# carpooling

Reporting Agencies: Transportation and Parking Commission, Office of Planning and Development

Target: Reduced commuting time and miles, increased number of carpoolers

Responsibility for Target: Commuters

***Transportation Demand Management (TDM)***

Metric: Number of new TDM measures implemented

Reporting Agencies: Transportation and Parking Commission, Office of Planning and Development

Target: Where the businesses generate more than 500 trips per day, new TDM measures applied to existing businesses each year, and all new businesses to institute TDM

Responsibility for Target: Transportation and Parking Commission, PVTA, PVPC, and the Planning Board, Office of Planning and Development

## Goal T-3: Improve and expand public transit

Objectives:

1. Leverage regional collaborations to increase funding for provision of public transit services, including shuttles where appropriate.
2. Consider transportation associations that include memberships of local businesses and government to support public transit.
3. Develop Transit Oriented Development guidelines with incentives.
4. Encourage increased use of transit options.
5. Provide reasonable options for public transit based on need, cost, and funding.
6. Develop a public transit plan in cooperation with the PVTA and PVPC to expand and enhance the transit system to the level that it is economically viable and supported by ridership.
7. Participate in regional efforts to consider the expansion of passenger rail service along the North-South rail links with service to Northampton.

Strategies and Actions:

(P) Develop minimum requirements for all bus stop signs, including safety and size, ADA accessibility and posting. Streamline ordinance process for bus stops. Locate bus stops on major transit routes and adjacent to commercial centers.

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Department of Public Works*

(P) Expand the number of park-and-ride lots to minimize traffic congestion

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Office of Planning and Development*

(P) Provide land use and financial program incentives for Transit Oriented Development

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, City Council, Planning Board, Subcommittee for Economic Development, Land Use, and Housing*

(P) Develop plan for snow and ice removal at major bus stops in the city.

*Responsible Agencies: Parking and Transportation, Department of Public Works*

Ensure higher visibility and better information about public transit routes and stops thru the use of bus stop signs, transfer signs and transit maps. Ensure that bus schedules and maps posted at bus stops are accessible to disabled riders.

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Department of Public Works*

Continue to work with Pioneer Valley Transit Authority and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission to consider a centralized public transit or multi-modal facility in Northampton.

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Capital Improvement Committee, Central Services, Planning Board, Office of Planning and Development*

Promote the use of special event shuttles to connect parking on the edge of downtown with downtown special events when appropriate.

*Responsible Agency: Transportation and Parking*

Advocate with federal and state government to ensure appropriate funding and levels of service for public transit.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, City Council, Planning Board*

Measurement of Progress:

***Transit Ridership***

Metric: Increase in transit use ridership and number and location of routes for public transit

Reporting Agencies: Public Works, Transportation and Parking Commission

Target: Increased miles served by public transit

Responsibility for Target: Public Works, Transportation and Parking Commission, PVTA, PVPC, and the Planning Board

***Transit Use***

Metric: Increase in transit use and transit oriented development

Reporting Agency: Office of Planning and Development

Target: Increases in use exceeding growth in population but commensurate with transportation demands

Responsibility for Target: Transportation and Parking Commission, Office of Planning and Development

## Goal T-4: Support federal and State investments in transportation improvements

Objectives:

1. Compare the State Transportation Improvement Plan and regional Transportation Improvement Program with the goals and objectives of *Sustainable Northampton* to ensure compatibility.
2. Review the State Transportation Improvement Plan and regional Transportation Improvement Program to ensure investments are programmed for the City.
3. Ensure the plans can provide support to all sectors and areas of the City.

Strategies and Actions:

Participation in the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) process should be coupled with the local administration's support of federal and state projects that invest transportation funds in projects that meet the goals and objectives of this plan.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, City Council, Transportation and Parking, Board of Public Works, Planning Board*

Support forward funding of regional transportation authorities

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, City Council, Transportation Committee, users*

Measurement of Progress:

Metric: Federal and State money promised for local transportation improvements

Reporting Agencies: Capital Improvement Committee, Board of Public Works

Target: Increases commensurate with projected growth in transportation demands

Responsibility for Target: Capital Improvement Committee, Board of Public Works, Transportation and Parking, Department of Public Works, Finance Director.

Potential Conflicts:

- A desire to promote bikes, walking, reduced automobile use, and providing public transportation can compete with the reality of automobile dependency that will not change easily.
- Funding for more parking downtown and funding for public transportation serving commercial and employment centers compete for increasingly limited financial resources.

Potential Responses:

- Provide high quality and useable pedestrian and bike facilities to encourage use.
- Educate people on the health benefits of walking and biking.

- Find a balance between business and public financial support for parking options.

## Goal T-5: Provide appropriate bicycle and vehicle parking to support local businesses

Objectives:

1. Create additional spaces to meet current and future anticipated parking demands for vehicles and bicycles while also applying demand management solutions for better utilization.
2. Utilize strategies to minimize parking demand and maximize alternative transportation.
3. Develop parking structures or decks north of Main St. to meet parking needs.
4. Improve the operation of parking in the downtown and village centers.
5. Ensure reasonable access to businesses and services is available to all residents and visitors.

Strategies and Actions:

***Bicycle Parking***

Install bicycle racks to provide all needed bicycle parking in public high bicycle traffic areas, including schools, downtown Florence, downtown Northampton, and the Village at Hospital Hill, to the extent grant-funded racks are available. Bicycle parking should be located close to building entrances and final destinations.

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Department of Public Works, Planning Board*

Require that private developers provide bicycle parking at entrances and destinations to encourage bicycle travel.

*Responsible Agency: Planning Board*

Develop a policy of when all-weather bicycle storage is appropriate and for public sites in the downtown and transit stops, include all-weather and theft resistant bicycle storage where appropriate.

*Bicycle Parking Facilities*

*Citywide - 140 spaces plus 12 lockers*

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Board of Public Works, Planning Board*

Obtain funds and install bicycle lockers and improve utilization of existing bicycle lockers.

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Board of Public Works, Planning Board, Office of Planning and Development*

***Vehicle Parking***

Implement the recommendations of the Central Business District Parking Needs Study for parking demand mitigation, parking supply optimization, and parking supply shortfall.

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Parking Manager, Board of Public Works, Planning Board*

Maximize the utilization of existing parking facilities, such as providing real-time signage, and identify measures to reduce the need for new parking facilities, such as shared parking and alternative access, while still encouraging the public to come downtown by increasing the ease of accessibility.

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Parking Manager, Board of Public Works, Planning Board*

Explore the development of a additional structured parking facilities downtown (deck or garage) to address parking shortfalls and allow visitors and residents to park in a centralized facility as a smart growth alternative to commercial and residential sprawl and to minimize traffic congestion and CO2 emissions from circulating vehicles seeking parking spaces. Consider the structure as part of a multi-modal transportation facility.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, City Council, Chamber of Commerce, Transportation and Parking, Parking Manager, Economic Development, Board of Public Works, Planning Board*

Ensure that on-street parking spaces in commercial areas are not eliminated to meet street improvements without a detailed alternatives assessment and a full community discussion.

*Responsible Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Parking Manager, Board of Public Works, Planning Board*

Measurements of Progress:

***Bicycle Parking***

Metric: Number of bike facilities/per capita

Reporting Agencies: Department of Public Works, Office of Planning and Development

Target: Maximization of bicycle parking

Responsibility for Target: Board of Public Works, Planning Board

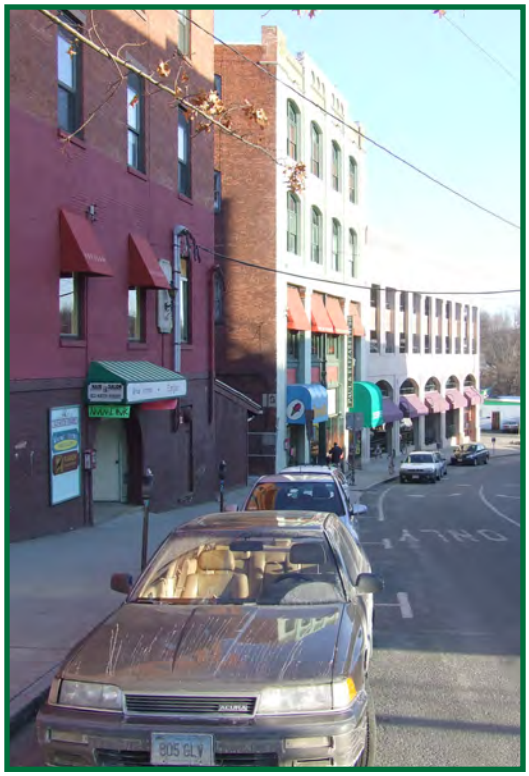
***Vehicle Parking***

Metric: Parking revenues by hourly and daily use and parking demand

Reporting Agencies: Transportation and Parking, Parking Manager

Target: Maximization of vehicle parking, Increase parking spaces when parking hits 95% utilization during peak hours

Responsibility for Target: Transportation and Parking, Parking Manager



# Municipal Governance and Financial Stability

## Goal MG-1: Diversify revenue streams to support municipal operations

Objectives:

1. Match land use changes and improvements with diversified revenue potential.
2. Lead regional and statewide effort to increase authority for municipalities to develop and implement non-property tax local revenue sources.
3. Develop revenue streams in an equitable and consistent manner for all populations in the City.
4. Encourage Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) from tax-exempt uses.

Strategies and Actions:

Identify properties and blocks that are appropriate for redevelopment to improve the tax base.

*Responsible Agencies: Economic Development, Planning Board, City Council, Office of Planning and Development*

Ask all city departments for suggestions to increase revenues.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, Finance Director, All City Departments*

Measurement of Progress:

Metric: New revenue sources added

Reporting Agencies: Mayor, City Council

Target: Three percent increase per year in non-property tax revenues

Responsibility for Target: Mayor, City Council

## Goal MG-2: Minimize the adverse municipal fiscal impacts of development

Objectives:

1. Include considerations for the overall environmental impact of the project in determining whether it is "paying its fair share towards public infrastructure."
2. Recognize and provide incentives for the benefits of development projects that support social and economic goals.

Strategies and Actions:

Prepare a fiscal impact assessment to determine current costs and develop an impact assessment and fee program to address shortfalls if other goals social and economic goals are not met.

*Responsible Agencies: Finance Director, All City departments collecting fees*

Measurement of Progress:

Metric: Municipal services fiscal impacts

Reporting Agency: Finance Director

Target: Conformance with municipal services fiscal impact standards

Responsibility for Target: All City Departments

## Goal MG-3: Maximize use and return on targeted tax incentives and other state programs to support the City's economic goals

Objectives:

1. Consider state programs for District Increment Financing (DIF), Tax Increment Financing (TIF), 40R/40S, and Expedited Permitting, as a means to encourage appropriate development through tax incentives and reimbursement programs.

Strategies and Actions:

Review and consider new or additional application of DIF, c. 40R/40S. TIF and similar

programs aimed at improving local projects and City tax roles.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, City Council, Planning Board, Economic Development, Finance Director, Office of Planning and Development, Subcommittee for Economic Development, Land Use and Housing*

Measurement of Progress:

Metric: Amount of revenues from non-traditional sources

Reporting Agency: Finance Director

Target: Increased city revenues without diminishing existing revenue streams

Responsibility for Target: Mayor, City Council, Economic Development, Office of Planning and Development

## Goal MG-4: Align school district and all department budgets and policies with *Sustainable Northampton* goals and objectives

Objectives:

1. Add consideration of the goals and policies of this plan to the yearly budget review process.
2. Coordinate the review with an analysis of cost effectiveness.
3. Ensure the budget is developed and implemented in a consistent and transparent fashion to meet the most pressing needs across the City.
4. Enable departments to spend more when necessary to achieve sustainability goals.

Strategies and Actions:

Review the yearly City budget against the *Sustainable Northampton* goals and objectives. Charge the Mayor or designee with incorporating this annual review as part of the operating and capital budget analysis.

*Responsible Agency: Mayor or designee*

Measurement of Progress:

Metric: Percent of programs conforming to this comprehensive plan

Reporting Agency: Mayor or designee

Target: One hundred percent conformance

Responsibility for Target: All City Departments

See also: Infrastructure and Capital Resources Goals

Potential Conflicts:

- The conflict between residents' desire for services, and their willingness/ability to pay for them.
- There is a desire for improved public services, but with limited resources, it's hard to rally support for investing in, and maintaining, infrastructure and physical improvements.

Potential Responses:

- Set down priorities for review of the capital budget and review those priorities each year during the budget process.

# Education

## Goal E-1: Promote and support high achievement by each student in a safe, healthy secure environment and enable each student to become a critical thinker and socially responsible citizen in a global society

Objectives:

1. Provide safe, secure, clean and accessible school facilities.
2. Improve student assessment scores for all students.
3. Ensure high quality staff, and continuance of curriculum revision and review for Pre-K through 12th grade.
4. Ensure equal access to education to all Northampton Public School (NPS) students and levels of excellence within each school in the NPS.
5. Create a school system that is respectful and welcoming of the diverse members of the community and integrating them into the school culture.

Strategies and Actions:

The Northampton Public School community will create a strategic plan, which includes the implementation of these objectives, and provides an annual update of progress. Regularly updated implementation plan for the educational goals.

*Responsible Agencies: School Department, Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School.*

Provide professional development opportunities to all staff working with students.

*Responsible Agencies: School Department, Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School.*

Continue to work in partnership with businesses and community organizations, such as the Northampton Educational Fund, the Northampton Chamber of Commerce, and the Volunteers in Northampton Schools to meet the diverse educational needs of children.

*Responsible Agencies: Citywide*

Support and expand collaborative academic outreach opportunities with Smith College and the 5-College system to raise academic achievement and opportunity for all children.

*Responsible Agencies: Northampton Public Schools, Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School, colleges.*

Measurement of Progress:

Metrics:

- Number of regional educational choices
- Number of library volumes / capita
- Teacher retention rates and longevity
- Average educational level obtained
- Drop-out rate
- Number of after school programs and summer programs
- Local and State student assessment results
- Percentage of staff (professional and paraprofessional) that meet State requirements of Highly Qualified.

Reporting Agencies: School Department, Library Department, MDOE

Target: Maintenance of regional choices, Increase in library volumes, More teachers / smaller classrooms, Increase in average education, decrease in drop-out rate, Increase in programs, improved local and state student assessment, decreased student achievement gap between subgroups and aggregate, increasing levels of parent and community involvement.

Responsibility for Target: School Department, Library Department, School Committee, Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School.

## Goal E-2: Educate students in an integrated program in the art and science of agriculture and other technical careers, and provide experiential learning opportunities that will enable students to function proficiently within the parameters of the workplace and post-secondary education

Objectives:

1. Use the programs to educate students on the environmental and land use implications of the particular career field.
2. Model an attitude of personal, professional, and institutional excellence.
3. Continually develop curricula that nurture students' self-esteem and inspire them to strive to reach their full potential.
4. Foster an understanding of the value of education so that students become lifelong learners.
5. Respect the diversity of our multi-cultural society by recognizing and affirming the inherent worth and dignity of all people.
6. Encourage non-traditional career path choices by actively working to eliminate racial, cultural, and gender biases.

Strategies and Actions:

Incorporate strategic plans and implementation plans into school system.

*Responsible Agencies: School Department, Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School*

Measurement of Progress:

Metric: Number of student successes

Reporting Agencies: Success stories from School Department and Families, MDOE, Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School, Business partners, Chamber.

Target: Increasing number of success stories, improved graduation rates, increased rates of post secondary attendance, increased school to work transitions

Responsibility for Target: Citywide, School Department, School Committee, Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School.

## Goal E-3: Ensure quality education and academic achievement for all segments of the community

Objectives:

1. Provide public education in local and community issues.
2. Support public education, from Pre-K through 12th grade.
3. Encourage continuum of education and adult education as integral to the community education system and support life long learning opportunities; e.g., GED, Adult Basic Education, ESOL, and other advancement programs.
4. Encourage educational programs that generate a sense of citizenship.
5. Work on local, state, and federal level to advocate for early education for all.

Strategies and Actions:

Provide programs in the schools for dual language learners.

*Responsible Agencies: School Committee, School Department, Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School*

Reduce the achievement gap - ensure non-English speaking students, at risk students, and students with disabilities are succeeding with tutoring and support programs.

*Responsible Agencies: School Committee, School Department, Smith Vocational and Agricultural Trustees*

Support School Committee guidelines for smaller class sizes.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, City Council*

Improve sex, drug, and alcohol awareness education in the schools.

*Responsible Agencies: School Committee, School Department, Smith Vocational and Agricultural Trustees*

Increase parent involvement with volunteer programs and recognition of participation.

*Responsible Agencies: School Committee, School Department, Smith Vocational and Agricultural Trustees*

Provide support for parents of special education students – advocacy, bilingual/bicultural special education providers, and individualized and specialized equipment.

*Responsible Agencies: School Committee, School Department, Smith Vocational and Agricultural Trustees*

Increase funding support for dropout prevention programs.

*Responsible Agencies: School Committee, Smith Vocational and Agricultural Trustees*

Support vocational education with funding and collaborations with private schools.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, City Council, Smith Vocational and Agricultural Trustees, School committee*

Seek collaborations and partnerships to increase educational access to higher education and career/education ladders targeting workers, prospective workers, and at-risk youth.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, City Council, School Committee, Smith Vocational and Agricultural Trustees, colleges, community organizations.*

Measurement of Progress:

Metrics:

- Improve graduate rates from K-12 programs
- Number of graduates from K-12 programs that enroll in post-secondary education or enter the job market in their field of vocational or agricultural training
- Number/percentage of Pre-K children in stimulus programs
- Number/percentage of adults in education programs
- Number of programs focused on local job training

Reporting Agencies: School Department, Smith Vocational and Agricultural School, and other education providers

Target: Increased average educational level; Increased number of teachers; Increased educational choices from birth to adult education

Responsibility for Target: School Committee, School Department (except regional educational choices), Smith Vocational and Agricultural School

## Goal E-3: In partnership with parents, guardians and the Northampton community promote and support high achievement by each student in a safe, healthy secure environment.

Objectives:

1. Provide global, regional, and local perspectives.
2. Maintain excellence in all schools.
3. Continue to work in partnership with businesses and community organizations, such as the Northampton Educational Fund, the Northampton Chamber of Commerce, and the Volunteers in Northampton Schools to meet the diverse educational needs of children.

See also Goal E-1

Strategies and Actions:

The School Department will provide a regularly updated implementation plan for the educational goals

*Responsible Agency: School Department*

Measurement of Progress:

Metric: Parent involvement in school affairs

Reporting Agency: School Department

Target: Increasing involvement

Responsibility for Target: School Committee

Potential Conflicts:

- Desire for a quality educational system, but insufficient resources and inability to pay for it.

Potential Responses:

- Seek partnerships and sponsorships with private institutions.

## Goal E-4: Promote the local library system

Objectives:

1. Create a welcoming, responsive, and satisfying experience for library users.
2. The needs and interests of the community will guide the development and improvement of library services.
3. The community's awareness of library services and resources will be strengthened.
4. The Board of Trustees of the Forbes Library will ensure the long term financial security and address immediate financial needs of the library
5. The Board of Trustees of Forbes Library will update its governance structure to more effectively fulfill the mission of the Library.

Strategies and Actions:

Strategies and actions to follow for the Forbes and Lilly libraries are listed in the Trustees' long-range plans.

*Responsible Agencies: Forbes and Lilly Library Boards of Trustees*

Measurement of Progress:

Metric: Library use and satisfaction

Reporting Agencies: Forbes and Lilly Library Board of Trustees

Target: Expansion of use and user satisfaction

Responsibility for Target: Forbes and Lilly Library Board of Trustees

# Social Equity

## Goal SE-1: Invest in all segments of the community to retain a population with a diverse demographic and income levels

Objectives:

1. Ensure a safe and secure environment for all.
2. Improve housing affordability to retain a diversity of residents.
3. Reach out to marginalized populations to ensure all feel welcome in the City.
4. Ensure civic and physical accessibility for all.
5. Ensure safe and equitable workplaces and housing for all workers, including undocumented residents.
6. Promote an environment of tolerance, diversity, and fairness in public schools so all children and families feel valued.

Strategies and Actions:

(P) Increase active involvement of community policing and resources at densely developed housing complexes, downtown, and Florence and encourage collaboration between community police and community/tenant organizations to increase empowerment and reduce crime including drug dealing.

*Responsible Agencies: Police Department, community organizations, tenant groups*

(P) Create an environment of tolerance, diversity, and fairness in public schools so all children and families feel welcome, and continue to provide anti-racism/anti-discrimination education and anti-violence prevention training for school staff and students, in partnership with community groups.

*Responsible Agencies: School Committee, School Department, Smith Vocational & Agricultural High School, Center for New Americans, Casa Latina.*

(P) Assist property maintenance at public and private low-income housing properties.

*Responsible Agencies: Housing Authority, Housing Partnership, Board of Health*

Develop and include leadership from groups supporting social/cultural diversity.

*Responsible Agency: Community-wide*

Develop an on-going relationship between municipal government/leadership and the immigrant community, e.g. visits by Mayor and other municipal leaders and staff to classrooms and informal community outreach sessions.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, elected officials, department heads, Center for New Americans, Literacy Project, Casa Latina, tenant groups, and other community organizations.*

Partner with community groups to assist with voter outreach and community participation to encourage greater involvement in the public conversation and the formal public hearing and decision-making process.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, City department heads, neighborhood associations, community groups, Center for New Americans, Casa Latina.*

Encourage community police involvement with community organizing or tenant groups to develop increased collaboration and empowerment.

*Responsible Agencies: Police Department*

Provide strict enforcement of laws related to drug dealing.

*Responsible Agencies: Police Department*

Increase understanding and foster a stronger relationship between the Police Department and the immigrant community by providing a clear policy statement from the Police Department on their role and responsibility for immigration enforcement in the local community and creating opportunities for informal Police Department educational interaction with the immigrant community.

*Responsible Agencies: Human Rights Commission, Police Department, Casa Latina, Center for New Americans*

Implement focused school and public anti-violence programs especially around domestic/family violence.

*Responsible Agencies: School Department, Police Department*

Implement and fund the capital program for universal accessibility for public sidewalks, public transit, and public buildings

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, Capital Improvement Committee, City Council, Planning Board, Board of Public Works, Disability Committee*

Measurements of Progress:

***Public Safety***

Metric: Crime rate reduction and increase number of tenant associations

Reporting Agencies: Police Department, Housing Authority, Housing Partnership

Target: Continuous reduction in crime rate

Responsibility for Target: Citywide, Housing Authority, Housing Partnership

***Public Involvement***

Metric: Number of people involved in city functions and voting in elections, number of volunteer hours/capita, number of minorities in civic affairs, number of people with access to media with local coverage and internet

Reporting Agencies: All departments, Registrar of Voters

Target: Increase in citizen participation

Responsibility for Target: All City departments

## Goal SE-2: Ensure high quality and affordable health care for all children

Objectives:

1. Work with School department and providers to raise the excellence of all care provided to children, infants and toddlers.
2. Work on local, state, and federal level to advocate for health care for all.

Strategies and Actions:

Support Cooley Dickinson Hospital as a critical institution for access to health care in Northampton and Hampshire County.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, City Council, School Department (Health Director)*

Work with Cooley Dickinson Hospital to deliver services to low and moderate income residents in the most clinically appropriate manner.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, City Council, Health Department, Office of Planning and Development community health care and social service agencies*

Implement a shuttle service to improve access to health care facilities.

*Responsible Agencies: Mayor, Health Department, Pioneer Valley Transit Authority*

Measurement of Progress:

***Children's Health***

Metric: Obesity, visits to hospital, birth weights, vaccinations, dental care

Reporting Agency: Department of Health

Target: Healthier community

Responsibility for Target: Citywide

## Goal SE-3: Ensure high quality and affordable housing and care for the elderly

Objectives:

1. Site elderly housing in mixed use projects that match this plan's land use goals.
2. Encourage participation in health maintenance programs that may reduce the costs of health care for the participating individuals.
3. Work with Commonwealth and providers to raise the excellence of all care provided to elders.

Strategies and Actions:

See Also: Goal SE-3 Strategies and Actions

Measurements of Progress:

***Elder Health***

Metric: Obesity, Visits to hospital, Cancer rates, health care statistics (number of people living at home vs. nursing facilities)

Reporting Agency: Department of Health

Target: Healthier community

Responsibility for Target: Citywide

***Health Care Facilities***

Metric: Number of hospital beds/capita, number of people with access to health care, number of beds in regional shelters, transit links to hospitals

Reporting Agency: Department of Health

Target: Healthier community

Responsibility for Target: Health care institutions

See also: Land Use and Housing Goals

## Goal SE-4: Ensure environmental justice in all Northampton neighborhoods

Objectives:

1. Ensure equal and adequate protection from environmental and health hazards.
2. Provide prompt and appropriate mitigation of environmental hazards to improve land values.
3. Ensure equal access to the public decision-making process.

Strategies and Actions:

Identify polluted and high quality environmental sites in each neighborhood and proceed to create a balance where public funding and programs can be implemented.

*Responsible Agencies: Department of Public Works, Planning Board, Office of Planning and Development*

Measurement of Progress:

Metric: Number of polluted/brownfield sites remediated, by location

Reporting Agency: Office of Planning and Development

Target: Ten sites (out of approximately 150 total listed), identified with hazardous waste conditions in the State files, to remediate each year

Responsibility for Target: Board of Health, Planning Board, Board of Public Works, State

Potential Conflicts:

- There is a desire for a diverse community, yet Northampton's success as a desirable place to live is contributing to decreased affordability and diversity. There is a desire to be welcoming to outsiders, and their wealth, without pushing out working families and Northampton natives.
- We like to think of Northampton as being progressive and welcoming, yet there are class conflicts, racial tensions, and concerns about educational equity in our community.

Potential Responses:

- Provide opportunities for 'community conversations' where dialog will be commonplace.

# Appendix A: Potential Regulatory Actions

The Sustainable Northampton Plan was designed, in part, to fulfill the requirements of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 41, Section 81 D, for the development of municipal comprehensive or master plans. The comprehensive plan is designed to provide a basis for decision-making regarding the long-term physical development of the municipality and requires Planning Board approval. Likewise, one purpose of the Zoning Act (Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40A) and zoning adopted by communities is to encourage the most appropriate use of land, including consideration of the recommendations in the comprehensive plan.

During the development of the Sustainable Northampton Plan, the Planning Board developed the following list of potential zoning changes for consideration and discussion in the implementation phase of the plan. The Plan recommends the creation of a Rezoning Committee tasked with proposing rezoning consistent with the Plan (See Land Use Goal #1, Strategy #1). The potential zoning changes will be presented to the Rezoning Committee for further consideration, discussion, public review, and potential action during the implementation phase of the Plan. It should be noted, all zoning changes must undergo an official public hearing process in front of the City Council Ordinance Committee and the Planning Board before moving forward to a vote by the full City Council.

Upon adoption of the Plan, other potential zoning provisions may be proposed and other City of Northampton committees and boards may also generate potential regulatory actions for consideration in their respective areas of authority.

There is no particular order or priority to the list.

A. Consider form-based codes, point based smart growth project evaluation system, and new and revised design guidelines and performance standards to improve development reviews and the quality of projects.

B. Revise Transfer of Development Rights zoning to add incentives and design standards:
   - Consistency with *Sustainable Northampton* Land Use Plan;
   - Include incentives for LEED construction and modest/affordable housing;
   - Mandate design standards for any increased density under this provision;
   - Include dimensional changes to frontage, lot size, open space;
   - Allow for residential and commercial development transfers with land bank options and to identify sending and receiving zones.

C. Dimensional changes to zoning:
   - Consider increased height downtown to 65';
   - Alter maximum lot coverage for detached accessory structures- based on lot size;
   - Consider amending zero lot line single family home to eliminate 30' side yard setback;
   - Modify payment-in-lieu of second story construction for projects that are within 10' of front lot line for 80% of frontage in Highway Business.

D. Use changes:
   - No residential on ground floor in NB district;
   - Reduce number of Special Permits required in business and industrial areas (see worksheet PB worked on).

E. Signage—change General Business standards to match Central Business standards

F. Adopt impact regulations and performance standards to limit housing development in the City's rural and low development areas (less than one unit per half acre), where development will strain municipal services and alter the character of the neighborhood.

G. Allow dimensional requirements for single family homes in URA to match that in URB, as part of a transfer of development rights or LEED buildings incentive program.

H. Expand commercially zoned areas to be consistent with the Future Land Use Map.

I. Revise residential and other zoning to be consistent with the Future Land Use Map.

Consider downzonings in the Land Use Plan Conservation Development area, only after more discussion (post-comprehensive plan public forums needed before moving forward on this item)

J. 40R Smart Growth zoning in select areas within Land Use Plan Traditional Neighborhood and areas and with mandated design standards for increased density

K. Employ transfer of development rights to allow the transfer of the right to build residential units in the Conservation Development area into the right to build residential and commercial development in the Traditional Neighborhood, Mixed Use Commercial Center, and Business and Industrial areas. Development in these areas should occur at greater densities and with less restrictive dimensional and density standards.

L. Create inclusionary housing for housing projects that are not otherwise providing major public benefits:

- Require in Land Use Plan Conservation Development areas;
- In Land Use Plan Traditional Neighborhood, use incentives, not mandates;
- Include design standards as a requirement of dense development;
- Repeal residential incentive zoning (replaced by the above inclusionary housing requirements).

M. Encourage the development of affordable housing, workforce housing, and LEED certified building through dimensional, density, and other incentives.

N. Focus on King Street keeping buildings close to the street north of the planned rail trail crossing on King Street, and allow green buildings and other clear public benefits in-lieu of the fee for not building second stories.

- Rezone King Street to Central Business District from Main Street to bicycle path crossing/Acme Auto;
- For Highway Business from bicycle path to Damon Road, change zoning to allow one story buildings without payment in lieu of parking, if and only if those buildings are build so that 80% of the frontage along the road, excluding one driveway entrance, is built within 5' of front lot line and there is at least one working and attractive entrance facing the public sidewalk for ever 200' (or fraction thereof) of frontage;
- North of Damon Road, allow one story buildings without payment in-lieu with no changes to maximum setbacks.

O. Modify zoning to better encourage mixed-use development and include incentives to encourage businesses of similar types to group into "character districts" along King Street. Change design and dimensional criteria in the zoning regulations to encourage conversion of commercial strips at the eastern edge of downtown to look more like the central business district and place a highway/auto-oriented commercial overlay and a separate traditional design overlay, as appropriate, on sections of King Street.

P. Consider the opportunity for more density at the Northampton State Hospital (Village Hill) development. This should include examining the opportunity for more housing, probably as a 40R district, at the Northampton State Hospital Village Hill (north campus) without compromising the commercial development at the south campus and along Route 66.

Q. Identify areas to expand or apply State regulations 43D, 40R/40S Smart Growth Zoning and Transfer of Development Rights close to downtown in conformance with the Future Land Use Map, and present for public review.

R. Develop a lot size policy based on population density, infrastructure, and desired development patterns.

S. Develop housing alternatives such as cottage housing development that recognizes that a one- or two-bedroom home with less than 975 square feet (SF) of living area should not be treated the same as the typical 2,000 to 3,000 SF home.

T. Rewrite the Open Space Residential zoning and Planned Unit Development using the model in the Northampton Community Development Plan.

U. Rewrite the Business Park zoning to remove housing requirements and no longer allow housing. Reduce the footprint of the park to a size that is consistent with the Future Land Use Map and correspondingly reduce the open space requirements in the Plan.

V. Create incentives in the site plan approval process for negotiations between neighbors and developers for projects in residential neighborhoods, especially for projects that only effect immediate neighborhood.

W. Implement form-based code for dense residential uses, at least in urban core areas, with the potential to later expand to other uses and areas:
   - Use as minimum design standards/ form-based coding for any increased density or decrease frontage;
   - Encourage single family homes in Urban Residential zoning districts by significantly reducing minimum frontage/lot width, for projects meeting form-based coding;
   - Require same standards for townhouses and multifamily housing above single-family home density.

X. Simplify Site Plan and Special Permit criteria as appropriate, using smart growth point based system to approve appropriate special permits and site plan approvals, making permitting more predicable, reducing permit review time, and allowing some reviews to be moved to staff level reviews. Create design standards and change criteria from fitting in with neighborhood to more concrete compliance with design standards.

Y. Streamline permits by moving Special Permits to Site Plan requirements when appropriate, including any allowed housing in Neighborhood Business, Open Space Residential and PUD projects (see discussion about revising this ordinance), Bed and Breakfasts above the first floor in commercial districts, all allowed retail and personal services in business districts, automobile service stations and business service establishments in Highway Business, hotels and motels in business districts, offices in Highway business, small scale hydroelectric generation in any zoning district, and research and development facilities in any business district.

Z. Streamline permits by moving limited Site Plan permits to planning office administrative reviews for permits where the rules can be clearly spelled out, including common driveway permits, side lot access, and expanded parking for lots that meet all zoning requirements, and other areas as appropriate.

AA. Create a clearer formula for transportation payment in-lieu of fees with incentives for downtown and village center development.

BB. Consider ending parking requirements in Highway Business, Central Business, and General Business areas, but only after public hearings have been held in each area to test this approach. If parking retained, end parking requirements for second story in all Business districts to encourage two story buildings (instead of one story).

CC. Integrate energy efficiency and conservation into local land use planning.

DD. Zoning code provision should be explored that permit 4 to 12 small, detached cottages on a site that would normally be developed with half that number of large homes. The code provision could permit this type of innovative change as a conditional use in designated single-family zones. Suggested provisions may include:
   - Half the cottages can be no more than 800 SF, and the other half can be no more than 700 SF on the first floor and no more than 975 square feet including a second floor;
   - Each cottage must be adjacent to a common area;
   - A minimum parking ratio of 1.25 spaces per cottage in locations screened from the public way.

EE. Consider options for live/work space in industrial buildings and, for preserving large complexes and multistory buildings, allowing a percentage of floor areas for residential uses,

FF. Investigate adoption of the State's Expedited Local Permitting Law, MGL chapter 43D.

GG. Consider design guidelines or other land use standards to maximize solar access (availability of sunlight to provide solar space heating, electricity and hot water).

# Appendix B: Survey Results

A city-wide opinion survey was mailed to every known residential address in Northampton, as part of the annual local census. The return rate over February and March of 2006 was more than 35% (almost 4,000 counted responses), which is exceptionally high for this type of survey.

The survey included 34 questions on environment, land use, economic development, housing, equity, and residence. The questions allowed four choices on the level of agreement with, or, importance of, the issue.

A key finding in review of the results is that there was a high level of agreement on many issues. The issues that received greater than 75% positive agreement or importance were:

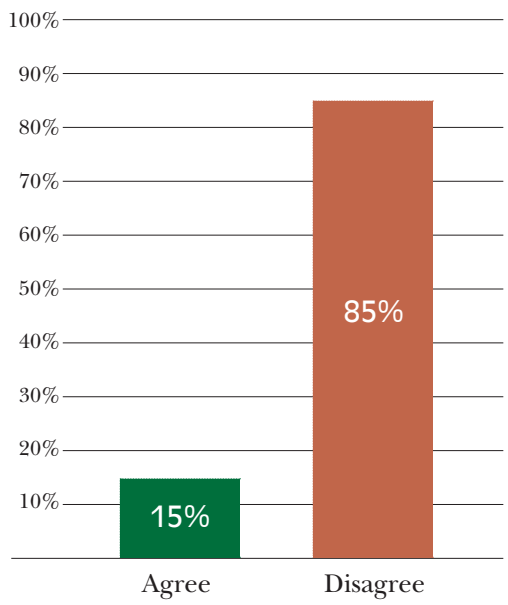
- **Land Use and Environment** – more transit-oriented development, focus on existing commercial centers, investments in energy efficiency, more open space corridors, limits on where building may occur;
- **Economic Development** – not enough jobs, lack of livable wages and need for more job training;
- **Housing** – Lack of affordable housing in general and specifically for the middle income;
- **Equity** – public safety, child care, health care and the gap in student achievements.

While the responses are very beneficial because of the broad range and number of responses from all the wards, no decisions have been made solely based on this survey. This is because of the nature of this type of survey; an unrestricted response option without randomized selection of responders. In addition, those survey questions with a large number of blank answers, which could indicate confusion, are considered far less valuable for determining consensus. However, the survey results were one of the pieces of information that the Steering Committee and Planning Board were able to weigh in drafting this plan.

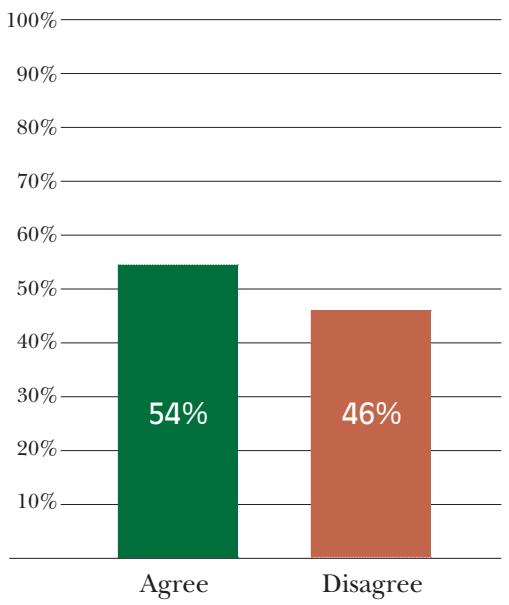
The following graphs summarize the results for the survey questions so that each reader can draw their own conclusions. The graphs show the split between those choosing agreement or importance, and those choosing disagreement or low importance. The raw data is available in the Office of Planning and Development.

## Environment and Land Use

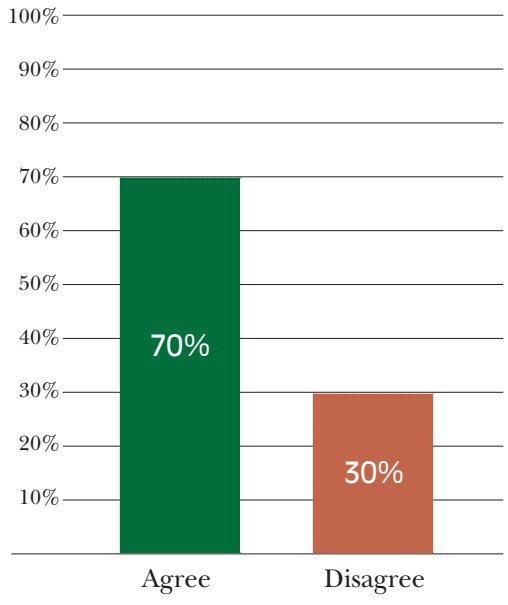
### People Should Build Wherever They Want



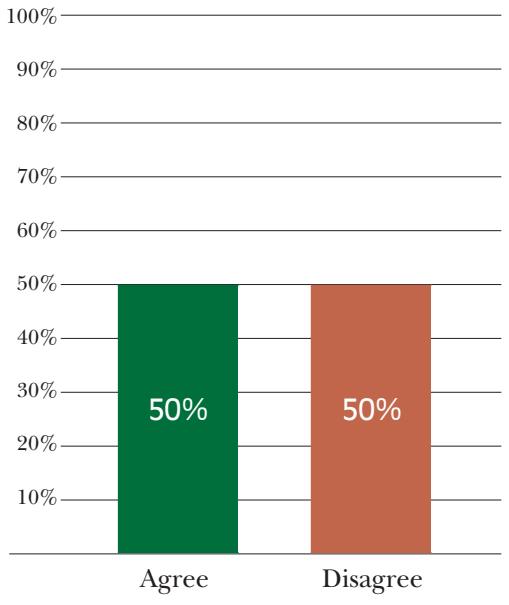

### New Homes Should Be Built in Walking Distance of Commercial Areas



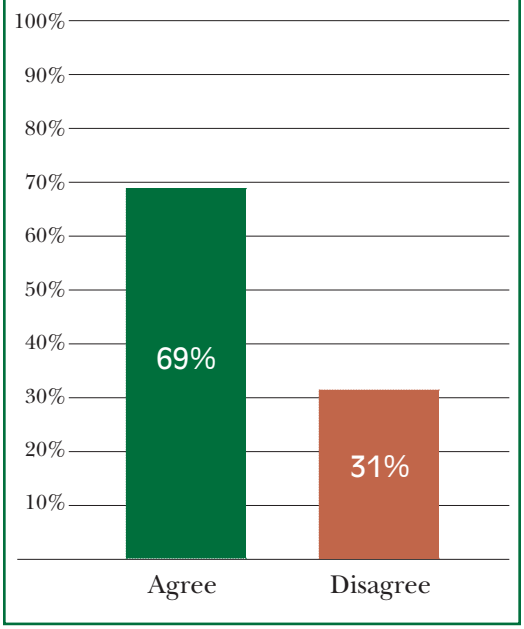

### New Homes Should Be Built at the State Hospital



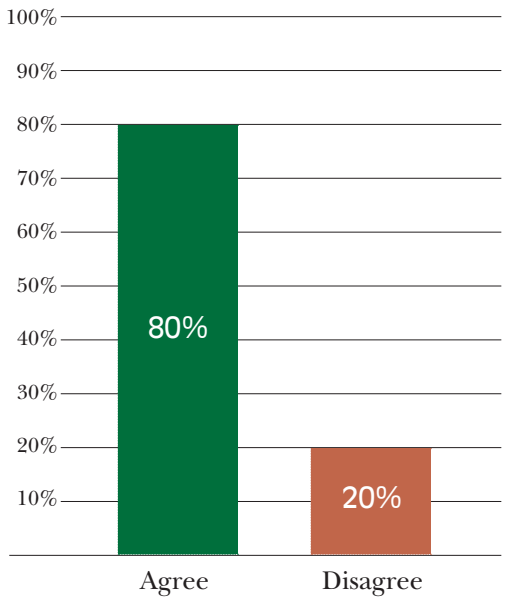

### New Homes Should Be Built Only Where There is Public Water and Sewer



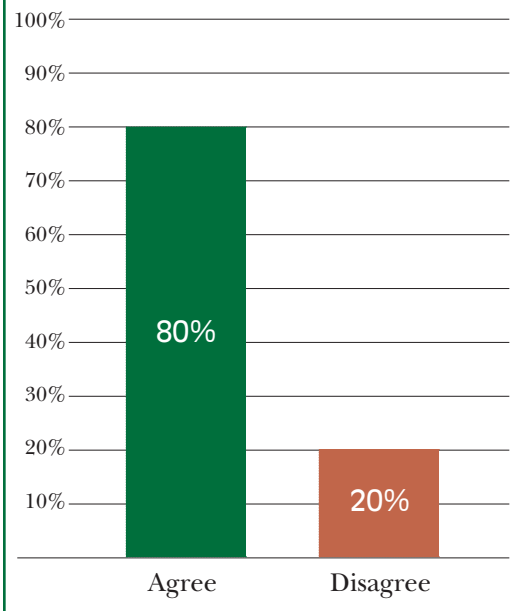
## We Are Losing Good Parts of Our Small-Town Character



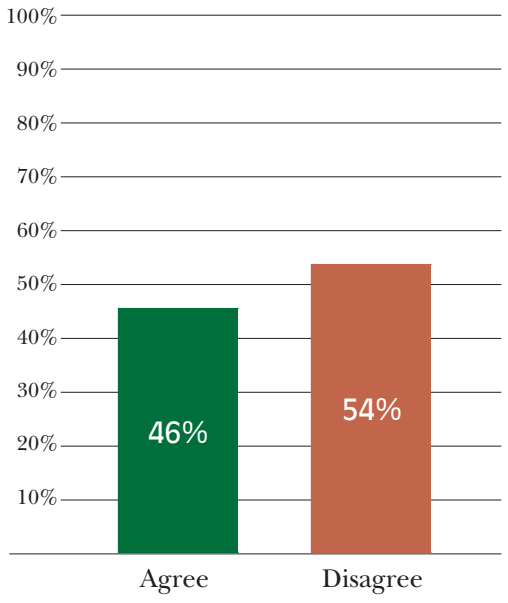

## Commercial Uses Should Go In Other Business- Zoned Areas, Like Downtown, Florence, and King Street



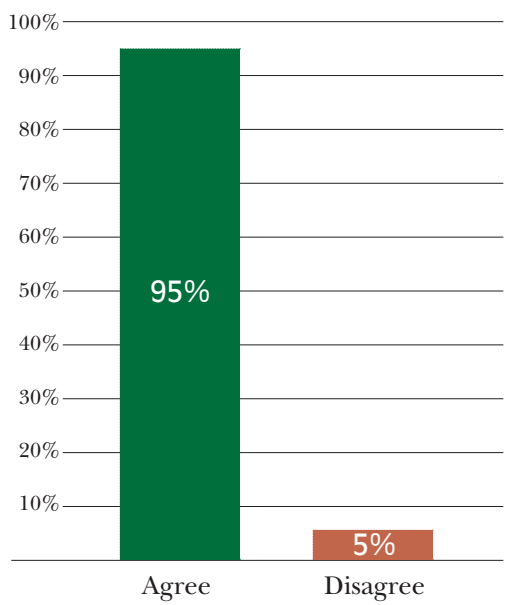

## Commercial Uses Should Go In Other Business Zoned Areas Like The Rte. 10 Business Park



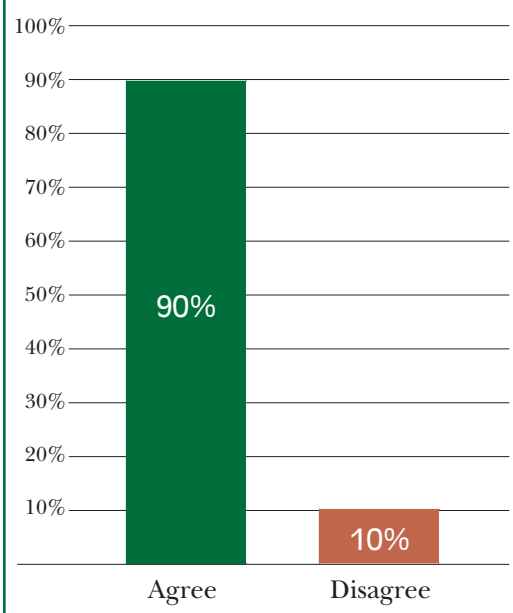

## Commercial Uses Should Go On New Sites On Major Roads



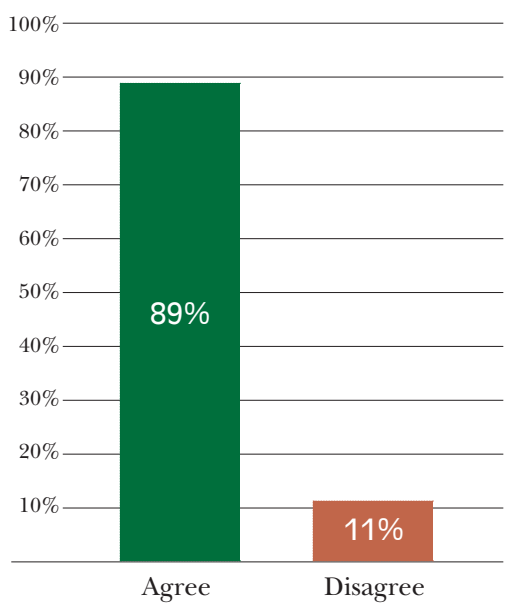
## The City Should Invest In Energy Efficiency for City Operations



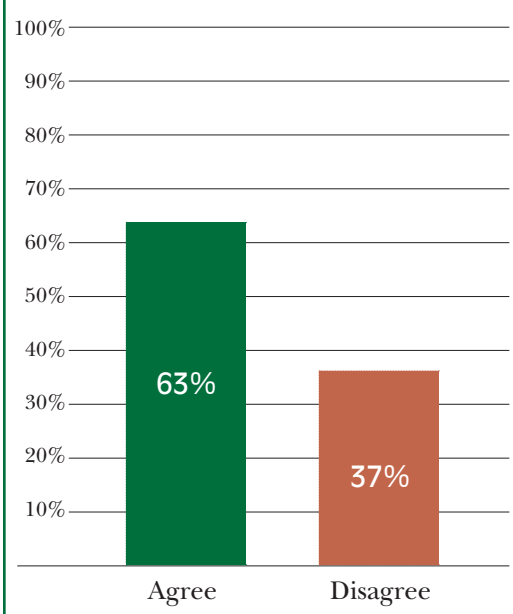

## We Should Protect More Open Space and Wildlife Corridors




## Development Should Be Encouraged At Densities And Locations That Can Support Transit

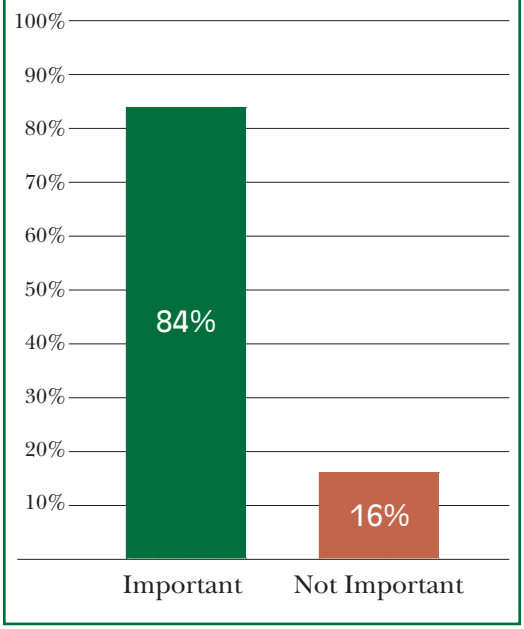



## To Avoid Regional Sprawl, Northampton Should Be An Area Of Growth

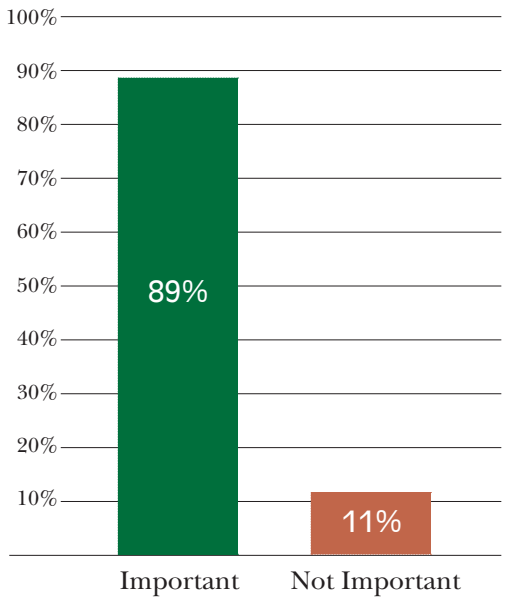


## Economic Development

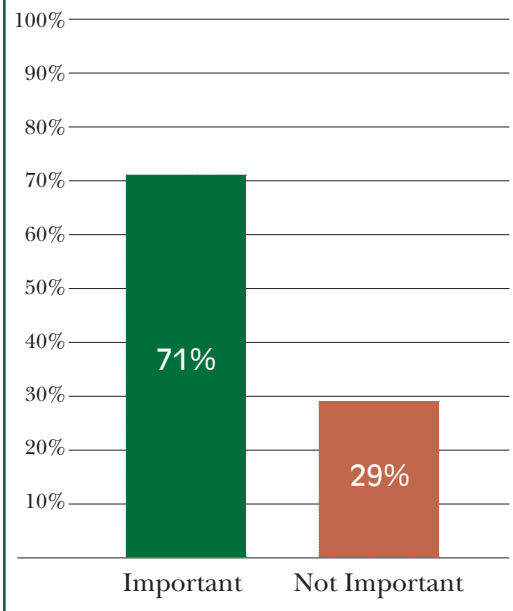
### Not Enough Jobs



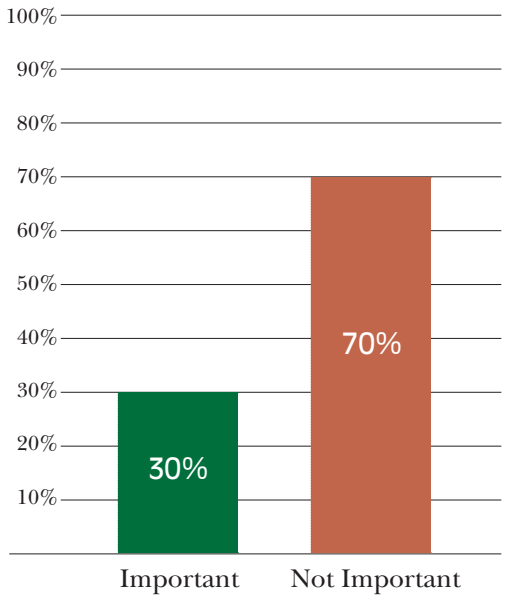

### Lack Of Livable Wages



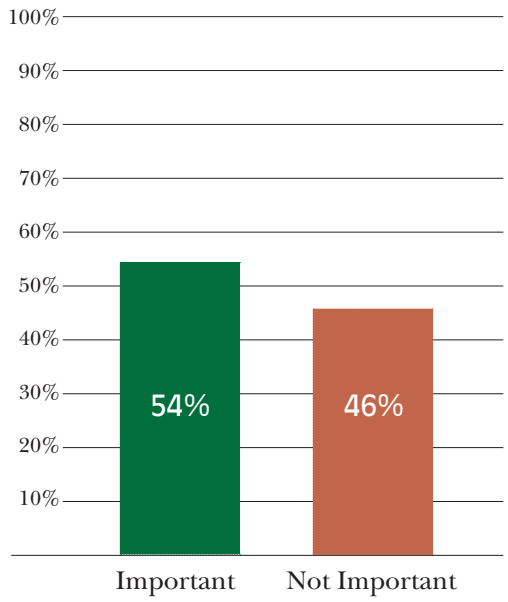

### Need For Job Training



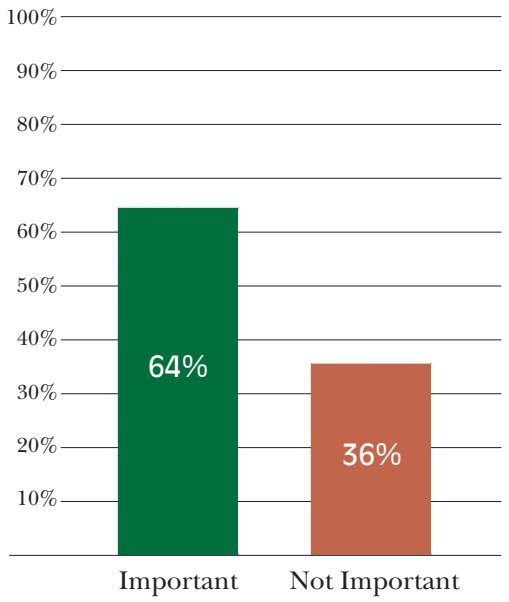

### Not Enough Shopping Options



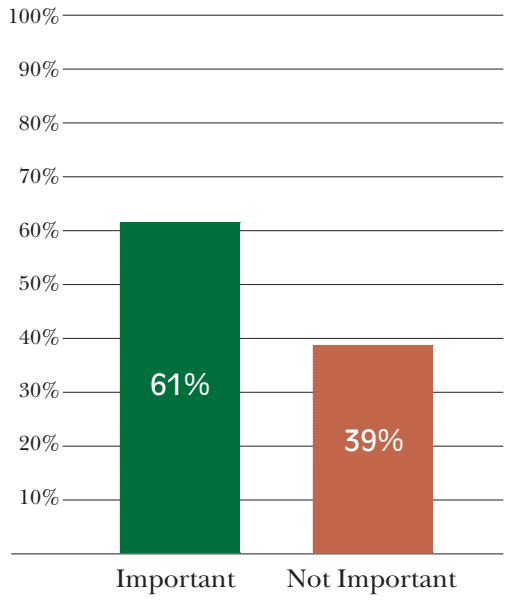
## Need More Business



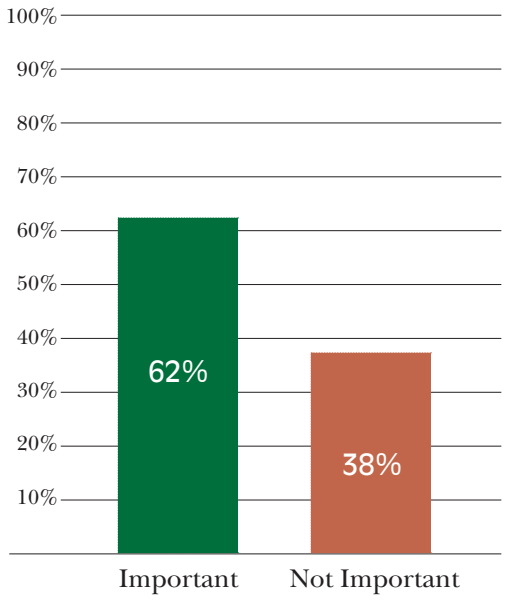

## Loss Of Artists and Arts Organizations



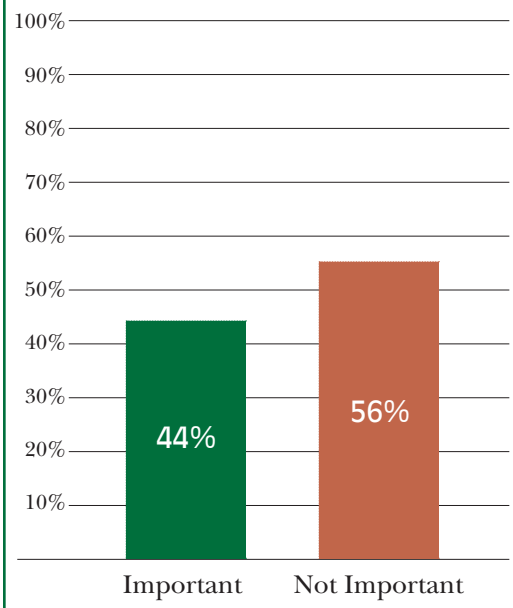

## Not Enough Affordable Spaces For The Arts



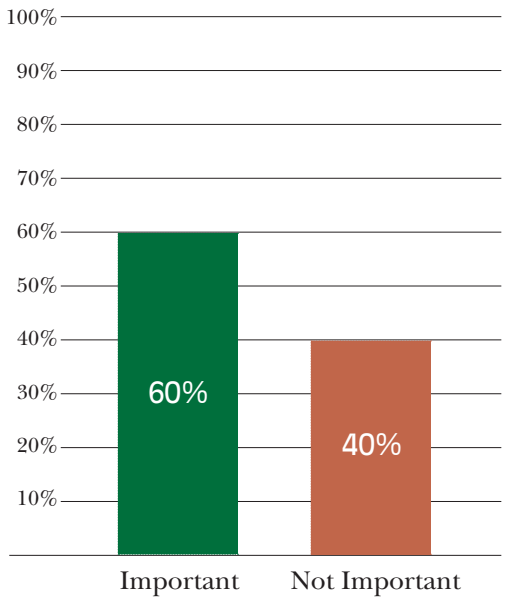

## High Cost of Commercial And Industrial Space



### Lack Of Commercial And Industrial Space

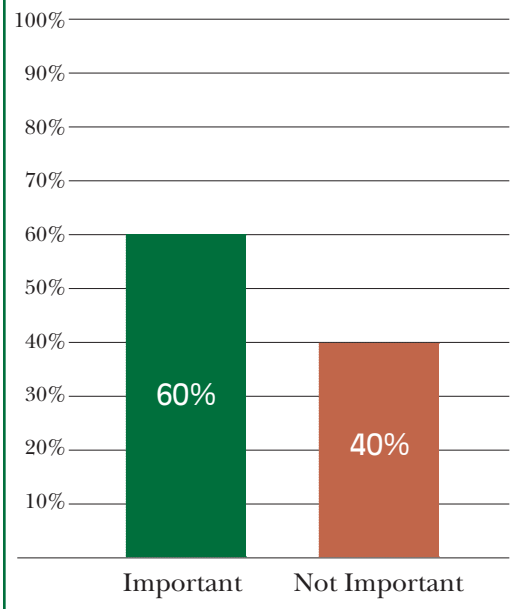



### Confusing Regulations And Regulatory Process

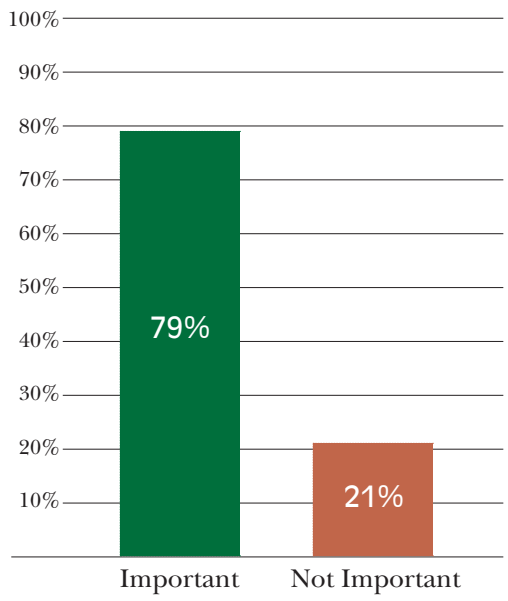



## Housing

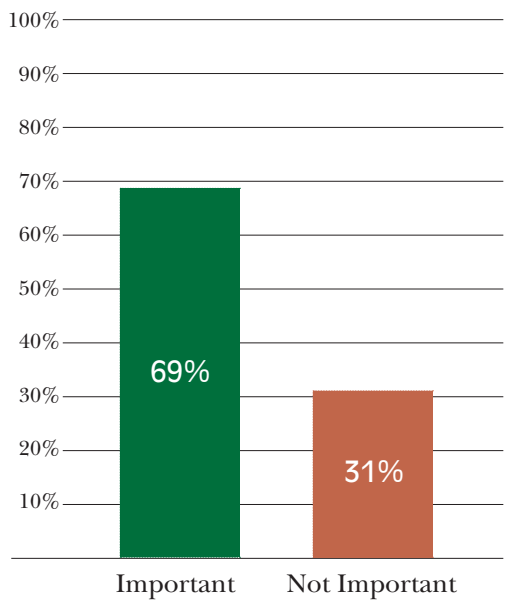
### Cost of Regulations Exceeds Benefits



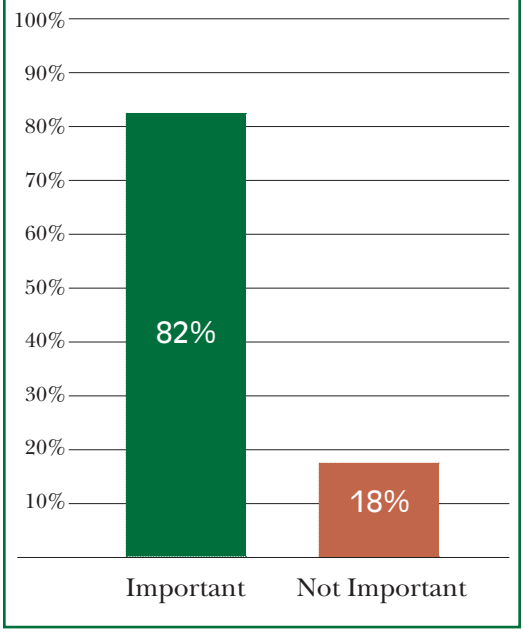

### Not Enough Housing Affordable To All Residents, Including Low-Income Residents



### Not Enough Small-Sized Housing Units And Apartments

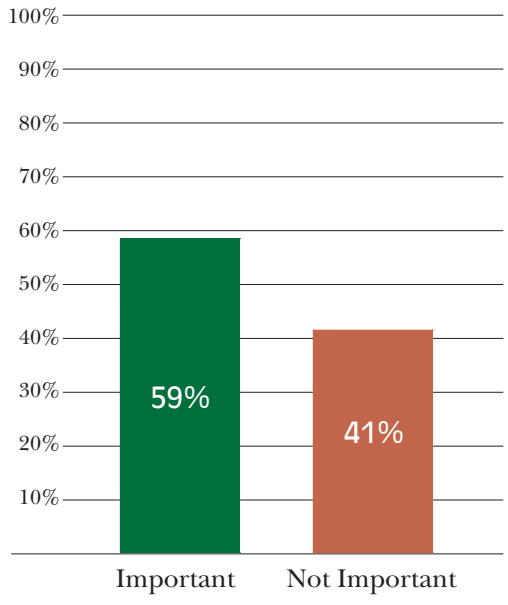



### Lack Of Middle-Income Housing
($150k to $250k Per Unit)

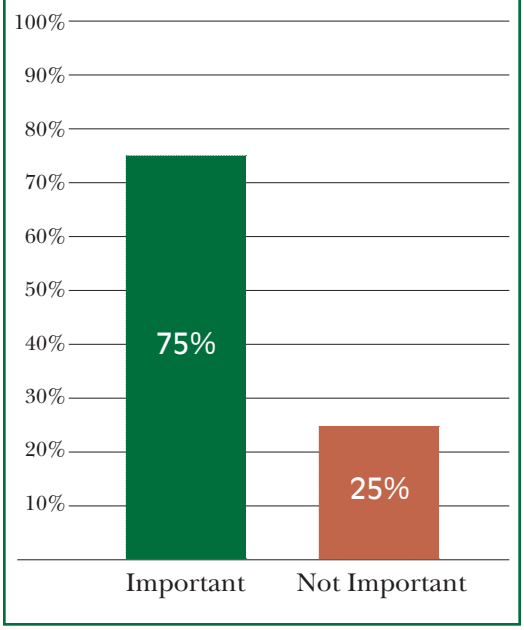



## Equity Issues

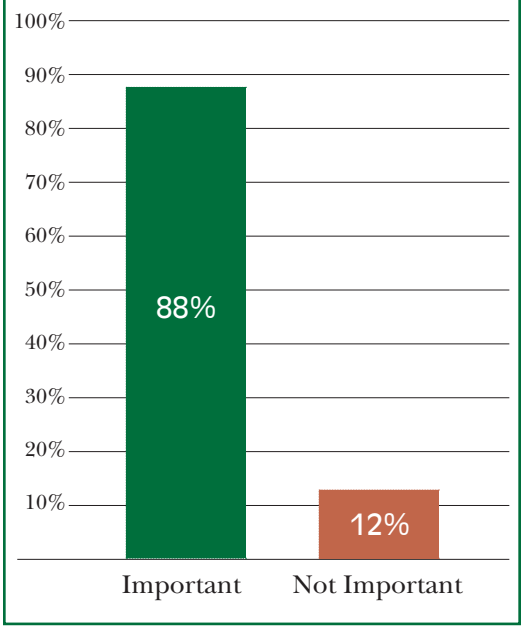
### Regulations That Restrict Housing Development



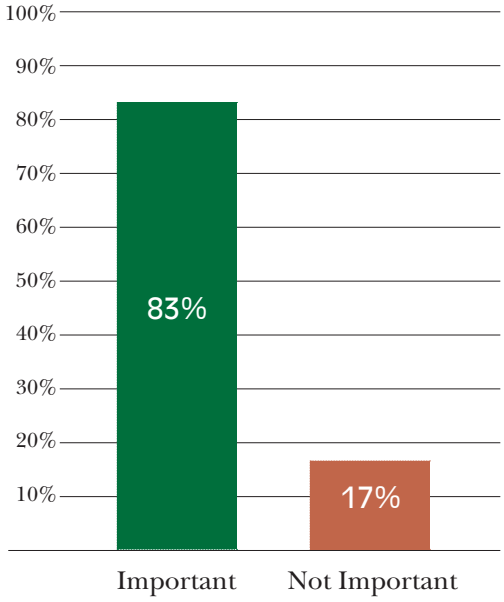

### An Achievement Gap Between Minority And White Students In The Public Schools



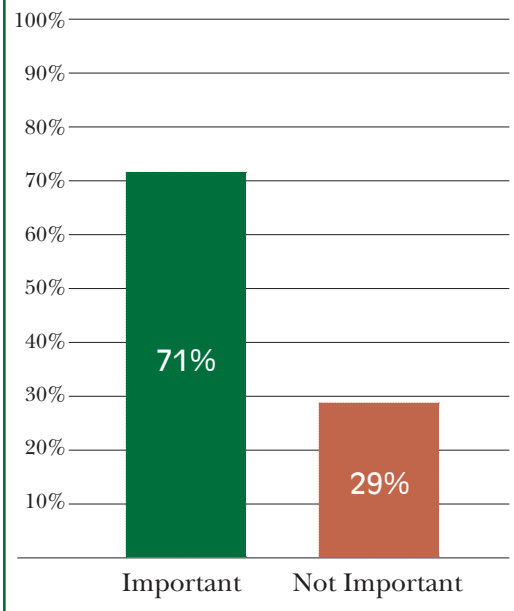
## Lack Of Health Care



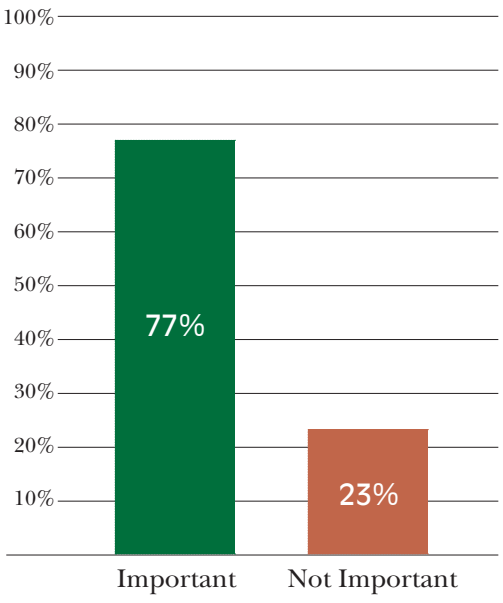

## Public Safety (e.g. Drug Prevention and Domestic Violence)



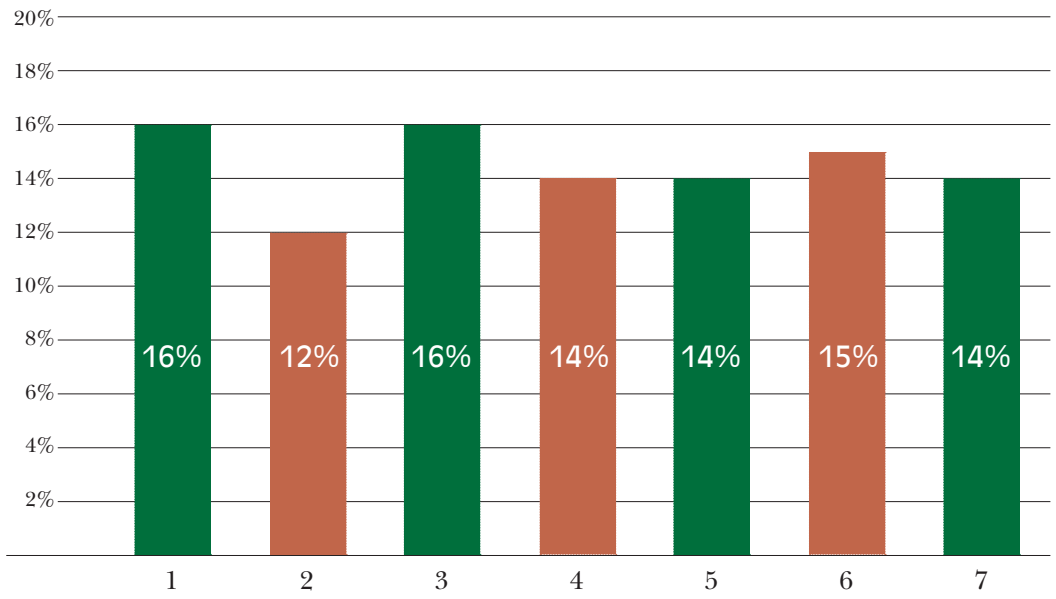

## Cultural And/Or Economic Diversity



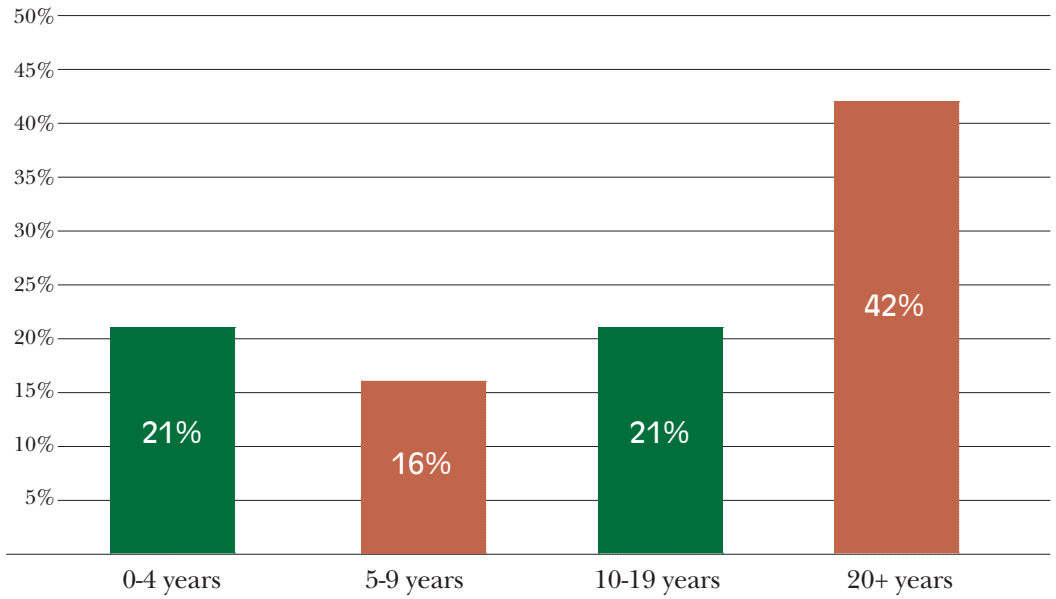

## Lack of Affordable Childcare



## In which ward do you live?




## How long have you lived in the City?



# Glossary of Terms

**40R/40S:** State legislation that provides cash incentives to municipalities that adopt denser zoning districts that increase housing production. The payments are tied to the number of units and the time they are built.

**Alternative Modes of Transportation:** All modes of transportation serving the general public that are appropriate for the transport of people, commodities, or freight by rail, air, water, or other conveyance, exclusive of highways, wires, and pipelines.

**Bikepaths and lanes** – Bike access can be provided as a bike lane within rights-of-way as a shared or separate portion of the paved roadway. Separate paths, not shared with vehicles, but shared with pedestrians, are bike ways.

**Blueway:** A path or accessway following a river or waterbody. See also, Greenway.

**Cluster:** A site planning technique that concentrates buildings in specific areas on the site to allow the remaining land to be used for recreation, common open space, and/or preservation of environmentally, historically, culturally or otherwise sensitive features and/or structures. The techniques used to concentrate buildings shall be specified in the ordinance and may include, but are not limited to, reduction in lot areas, setback requirements, and/or bulk requirements, with the resulting open land being devoted by deed restrictions for one or more uses. Under cluster development there is no increase in the number of lots that would be permitted under conventional development except where ordinance provisions include incentive bonuses for certain types or conditions of development.

**Conservation Development**: A typical land development project, which conserves open land, protects site features and provides flexibility in the siting of structures, services and infrastructures.

**Context Sensitive Design:** A collaborative, interdisciplinary approach to develop facilities that fit the physical setting and preserve scenic, aesthetic, historic and environmental resources, while maintaining safety and mobility for all users. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has identified several characteristics of context sensitive design for transportation facilities that could also apply to other project types:

- The project satisfies its purpose and needs;
- The project design is built from consensus;
- The project is safe facility for users of all ages and abilities;
- The project meets minimum design standards for accessibility for people with disabilities and gives attention to universal design principles;
- The project is in harmony with the community and preserves environmental, scenic, aesthetic, historic, and built and natural resources of the area;
- The project is designed and built with the least possible disruption to the community;
- The project is seen as having added lasting value to the community.

**DIF/TIF; District Improvement Financing / Tax Increment Financing:** These programs allow the City to provide a tax incentive for development that provides a public benefit or to earmark tax revenues from projects in a redevelopment area for public infrastructure such as roads and utilities.

**Design Guidelines:** A set of discretionary standards structured by public policy and specific location goals, which include design and performance criteria that guide planning and land development to achieve a desired level of quality for the physical environment.

**Easements:** The right to use property for specific purposes (including but not limited to conservation, maintenance, utilities, or habitat protection) or to gain access (pedestrian or vehicular) to another property. May be considered as less-than-fee-simple interest in the property.

**Energy Star:** A voluntary labeling program of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the US Department of Energy that identifies energy efficient products. Qualified products exceed minimum federal standards for energy consumption by a certain amount, or where no federal standards exist, have certain energy saving features. Such products may display the Energy Star label.

**Enhanced Single Room Occupancy:** Enhanced single room occupancy unit is a single person occupancy room (see SRO below) but

with private bath and/or kitchenette rather than sharing both facilities.

**Environmental Criteria/Constraints:** Natural features, resources, or land characteristics that are sensitive to change and may require conservation measures, the application of special development techniques to prevent degradation of the site, limited development, or, in certain instances, may preclude development.

**Environmental Justice:** The fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws.

**Expedited Permitting:** This state program (Chap 43D) allows a community to gain state incentives for projects meeting certain criteria and permitted within a 180-day permit process.

**Form-based Zoning:** Form-based zoning regulations define desired building and site character but do not strictly regulate the options for uses of those buildings and land. The regulations are typically defined along a 'transect' of high- to low-density development, thereby defining the character of the blocks and neighborhoods as well as the individual buildings and sites.

**Green Buildings, Green Roofs:** Common terms used to describe buildings and roofs that have been designed or retrofitted to reduce energy consumption. Buildings account for a majority of the energy consumption in the country. Adding green building and roof design can mean a 40% reduction in energy consumption over the standard building code (U.S. Green Building Council). The 'green' design requires an integrated analysis of all building systems; the shell, windows, heating, etc. Green roofs are intended to reduce heat exchange, and when vegetated they provide control on stormwater runoff.

**Greenway:** An upland path or accessway in a natural setting used for pedestrian and bicycle travel. See also, Blueway.

**Hazard Mitigation Plan:** A set of actions and policies designed to reduce the impacts on people and property of naturally occurring disasters, which provide the following benefits:

- A Hazard Mitigation Plan can expedite the approval process for receiving money after a federally declared disaster through the FEMA Post-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP).
- Disaster preparation can have enormous benefits in lessened loss of life, economic and social impacts, and post-disaster recovery time.
- A Mitigation Plan can be counted towards credit points in FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS). Points are awarded for having the plan, as well as for going through the various steps involved in creating the plan, including community involvement and coordinating with other agencies. The higher a community's CRS score, the greater the discounts provided on individual property owner's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) premiums.
- FEMA's Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) grant program and Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) program provide grants for activities designed to mitigate the effects of floods and other disasters in a community. Funds from these grants can go to acquisition, relocation, and retrofitting of structures.

**Heritage Resources:** are those sites or structures—including roads, ways, and landscape settings—that exemplify the heritage of the city and its neighborhoods. Such resources may include structures or sites:

- Listed on, or determined eligible for listing on, the National Register of Historic Places;
- Determined to be a contributing structure within a district so listed or eligible for such listing;
- Located within and considered as a contributing structure within a designated Northampton Historic District; or
- Listed on, or meeting the criteria for listing on, the Northampton Historical Commission's inventories of historic, architectural, or archaeological structures or sites.

**Infill Development:** The development of vacant, usually single, parcels of land in an otherwise built-up area. Infill development provides an attractive alternative to new development by reducing loss of critical and resource lands to new development, and by focusing on strengthening older neighborhoods while reducing the cost of extending infrastructure into newly developing areas.

**Jobs/Housing Balance:** A measure of the harmony between employment and dwelling units in a specific area. The commonly used

metric of this balance is the jobs/housing ratio, which is simply the number of jobs in a community divided by the number of housing units in that community. A low jobs/housing ratio indicates a housing-rich "bedroom community", while a high jobs/housing ratio indicates an employment center. Although there is no one perfect balance, each city should define what their ideal ratio is to indicate they are "in balance".

**LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design):** A voluntary, consensus-based national standard for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings.

**Living Wage:** Wages sufficient to cover the basic costs of living, working, raising a family, and paying taxes without public subsidies in Northampton measured using geographically specific data. One potential data source is The Women's Union Self-Sufficiency Standard.

**Natural Carrying Capacity:** A measure of the ability of an area to accommodate growth and development within the limits defined by existing infrastructure and natural resource capabilities to accept inputs and impacts.

**New Urbanism:** As promoted in the Charter of the Congress for New Urbanism, New Urbanism supports the following principles: neighborhoods should be diverse in use and population; communities should be designed for pedestrians and transit as well as automobiles; cities and towns should be shaped by physically defined and universally accessible public spaces and community institutions; and urban places should be framed by architecture and landscape design that celebrate local history, climate, ecology, and building practice. Many of the historic and planned neighborhoods in New England built before WWII, including areas of Northampton, is the original urbanism that New Urbanism is trying to emulate. See also, Traditional Neighborhood Development.

**Non-Governmental Organization [NGO]:** Organizations such as community development corporations, land trusts, and chambers of commerce that fulfill a public need but are not a public agency.

Pedestrian Radius: A 1/4 to 1/2 mile radius maintained around a location within which walking is expected..

**Performance Standards:** A verifiable, measurable set of criteria relating to meeting standards for design and operation that a particular use or process must either meet or may not exceed. Performance standards may apply to architectural and site design, use, management, environmental conditions, impact assessment, financial and job performance. Properly constructed, performance standard documents contain:

- Goals specific to the area of performance;
- Determinants of Compliance;
- Assessment Options
  - Measurements
  - Condition Indicators; and,
- Procedures.

**Planned Developments:** A district or project designed to provide an alternative to suburban development standards and which is intended to:

- Encourage the development of traditional village centers that provide for a creative mixture of uses, including residential and business, that enhance the quality of community life through careful planning and development without compromising the protection of resources such as ground water and open space;
- Reduce initial development costs and preserve areas for common use by reducing standard minimum lot size and setback requirements;
- Preserve the character of surrounding neighborhoods and enhance the physical appearance of the area by preserving natural features and existing vegetation;
- Provide for recreation and open areas;
- Promote economical and efficient land use, which can result in smaller demands for public facilities, utilities and streets;
- Allow for the creative development of businesses that serve the planned unit development and surrounding areas and reduce the demand upon the automobile for access to businesses;
- Provide an appropriate and harmonious variety of housing and creative site design alternatives that encourage innovative development;
- Promote energy conservation by optimizing the orientation, layout and design of structures to take maximum advantage of solar heating/cooling schemes and energy-conserving landscaping;
- Provide a procedure which can relate the type, design and layout of development to a particular site and the particular demand for housing and other facilities in a

manner consistent with the preservation of property values within established residential areas;

- Ensure that a large development will have adequate public services and facilities by coordinating and sharing costs with the developer; and
- Comply with the Northampton Comprehensive Plan.

**Single Room Occupancy (SRO):** Single person occupancy room in a building that must meet local code standards for SROs. There must be a private full bath for use by six rooms or fewer, and such baths must be located not more than one floor above or below the room. The room must measure at least 110 sq. feet and have a closet space of at least four sq. feet with an unobstructed height of at least five feet. If there is less closet space, there must be enough habitable space above the 110 sq. feet to meet the deficiency. Additionally, it is required that the building must have two means of egress and a sprinkler system that protects all major spaces.

**Sustainability:** "Meet[ing] the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" - former Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland. A sustainable community manages with a balanced set of integrated principles: Social Equity, Environmental Respect, and Economic Strength, that preserve a high quality of life for future generations.

**Traditional Neighborhood Development [TND]:** A village-style concept promoting vibrant mixed-use neighborhoods with higher densities and a range of complementary uses. TND is characterized by compact pedestrian-oriented developments that provide a variety of uses, diverse housing types, and are anchored by a central public space and civic activity. TND is based on the principle that neighborhoods should be walkable, affordable, accessible, distinctive, and true to the significant historic context of each community. The following are commonly found in TND:

- Parks, schools, civic buildings, and commercial establishments located within walking distance of homes;
- Residences with narrow front setbacks, front porches, and detached rear garages or alley-loaded parking;
- Network of streets and paths suitable for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles
- Narrower streets with crosswalks, streetscaping, and other traffic-calming measures;
- In-scale development that fits the local context; and,
- Buildings oriented to the street with parking behind.

**Transfer of Development Rights [TDR]:** A program that can relocate development from areas where proposed land use or environmental impacts are considered undesirable (the "donor" site) to another ("receiver") site chosen on the basis of its ability to accommodate additional units of development beyond what it was zoned for with minimal environmental, social, and aesthetic impacts.

**Transit Oriented Development [TOD]:** A TOD project locates development within walking distance of public transit, usually bus or train transit, to reduce vehicle traffic and take advantage of adjacencies, and is typically designed according to the following criteria:

- Mixed Use;
- Moderate to High Density, 12 to 65 units/acre;
- Mobility choice;
- Pedestrian connectivity;
- Reduced parking ratios;
- High quality design; and,
- Usable public open space.

**Transportation/Travel Demand Management [TDM]:** is used to influence traveler behavior for the purpose of reducing or redistributing travel demand. The purpose of TDM is to reduce the number of vehicles on the roads by providing other choices for travel often in terms of mode and schedule.

**Village:** A clustered settlement that is predominantly residential in nature, with community related services such as post office or church, and often has the following characteristics:

- Location at a crossroads;
- Built at a human scale;
- Small, compact development pattern;
- Contains small or narrow lots;
- Pre-twentieth century in origin; and,
- Originated around a mill, general store, tavern, family farmstead or other central feature.