

## 2020 Annual Report – Sustainability Chapter

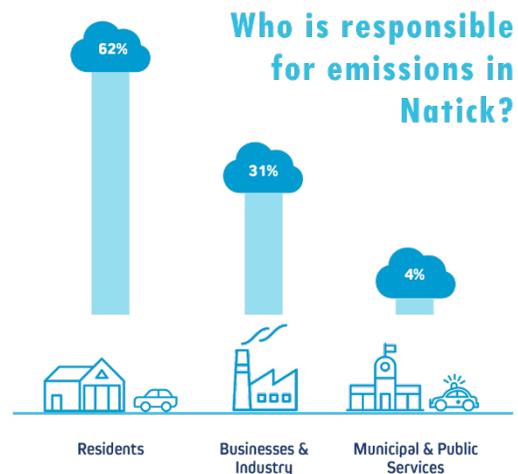
Natick’s Office of Sustainability is responsible for coordinating and implementing climate mitigation, climate adaptation, and waste reduction programs across municipal, residential and commercial sectors. Initiatives are led by Jillian Wilson Martin, the Town’s sustainability coordinator, with support from state and federal agencies, utilities, municipal departments, local Boards and Committees and other community volunteers.

The majority of Natick’s sustainability projects are funded via competitive grants and utility incentives, which totaled more than \$400,000 in 2020. Many projects have the added benefit of reducing operating costs or supporting new revenue streams. Since 2014, projects led by the Office of Sustainability have delivered more than \$3 million in grants, cost savings, and new revenue to the Town.

In 2020, the focus of Natick’s sustainability efforts centered on the following:

### Advancing Natick’s 2050 Net Zero Goal

In 2018, Natick Town Meeting adopted a non-binding resolution to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. In support of this goal, in 2020, Natick worked with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and the communities of Arlington and Melrose to develop a tool any Massachusetts community could use to measure its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Using the tool, Natick completed its first community-wide GHG emissions inventory and worked to develop a five-year action plan to reduce emissions. The inventory used 2017 as a benchmark and found that Natick was responsible for emitting 326,297 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents. Buildings were the largest source of emissions (65%), followed by on-road transportation (35%). Natick’s solid waste and wastewater accounted for less than 1% of the community’s total emissions.



The Town also supported the development of Natick’s first Net Zero Action Plan in 2020. To learn more, visit: [natickma.gov/netzero](http://natickma.gov/netzero)

### Reducing Energy Costs via Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency Projects

In 2020, the Town completed a variety of energy efficiency projects and explored new models for reducing energy costs. Using a combination of Green Communities and capital funds, the Town completed LED lighting retrofits at Town Hall, the Gravel Pit, and the second floor of the Police Station. Nine retro-commissioning projects were also completed at Wilson Middle School; these ranged from repairing leaky hot water valves to installing variable frequency drives on supply and return fans. Combined these projects are expected to save \$36,000 in energy costs annually.

Other energy saving programs focused on community solar, demand response, and on-site solar photovoltaic panels. Natick contracted with Ameresco on the Town’s first solar plus storage project at the new Kennedy Middle School, which will include 403 kW in solar rooftop and parking canopies and a 223 kW Tesla battery. Combined, these systems are expected to save Natick Public Schools \$1.7 million over 20 years. The new West Natick Fire Station will have a 43 kW rooftop solar array (expected savings of \$140,000 over 20 years).

Natick signed a large-scale community solar agreement with Clearway Solar in 2020, which will result in more than \$50,000 in savings each year, for twenty years beginning in 2021. It also began participating in a demand response program. As part of this program, the Town reduces or shifts the electricity usage of public buildings during periods of peak grid demand. In return, the Town receives payments from the utility.

### Cleaning our Electricity

Natick’s electricity aggregation program offers customers choices that provide greater control over the environmental characteristics and price of their electricity supply. In 2020, the Select Board procured a new contract

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and voted to increase the amount of renewable energy provided in the program's default offering from 10% to 13% more than the state requires beginning in 2021 – and increasing to 16% in 2022. The Office of Sustainability also presented the Board with a plan to achieve a 100% renewable electricity supply by 2030.

### Adapting to Climate Change

In 2020, Natick, in partnership with more than 10 communities, was awarded a regional Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Action Grant to model and map the impacts of climate change on local flooding. The Town also worked with the NASA Develop program to research the relationship between impervious surfaces and water quality, as well as flood vulnerabilities, across the Charles River Watershed.

In addition, Natick was fortunate to receive a \$140,000 Accelerating Climate Resiliency grant from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council. This grant will be used to construct a new community garden in Natick Center (slated to open in 2022) and provide low-income residents with subsidized, organic produce in partnership with the Natick Housing Authority, Natick Community Organic Farm, Natick Service Council, Natick Council on Aging and Keefe Technical School.

### Ongoing Waste Diversion

Natick's School Recycling Coordinator, Jane Ellen Newman, led outreach programs to schools and worked with principals to plan cafeteria-based, waste reduction pilot programs. While these programs were delayed due to Covid-19, the Office of Sustainability looks forward to working with Natick Public Schools in 2021.

The Town's curbside textile recycling program, run by Simple Recycling, was suspended briefly due to Covid-19, but re-launched in summer 2020 and recovers more than 20,000 lbs of textiles from residents each month.



*In 2020, Natick resident, Fiona Ripp, worked with the Housing Authority to restore two large community garden plots. In 2021, Natick will add 55 more plots to this site, in collaboration with MAPC's Accelerating Climate Resiliency grant program. Photo courtesy of Mary Estella*