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Watertown City Council Committee on Climate and Energy

March 27, 2023

Resilient Watertown Climate & Energy
Plan: 6-Month Implementation Update

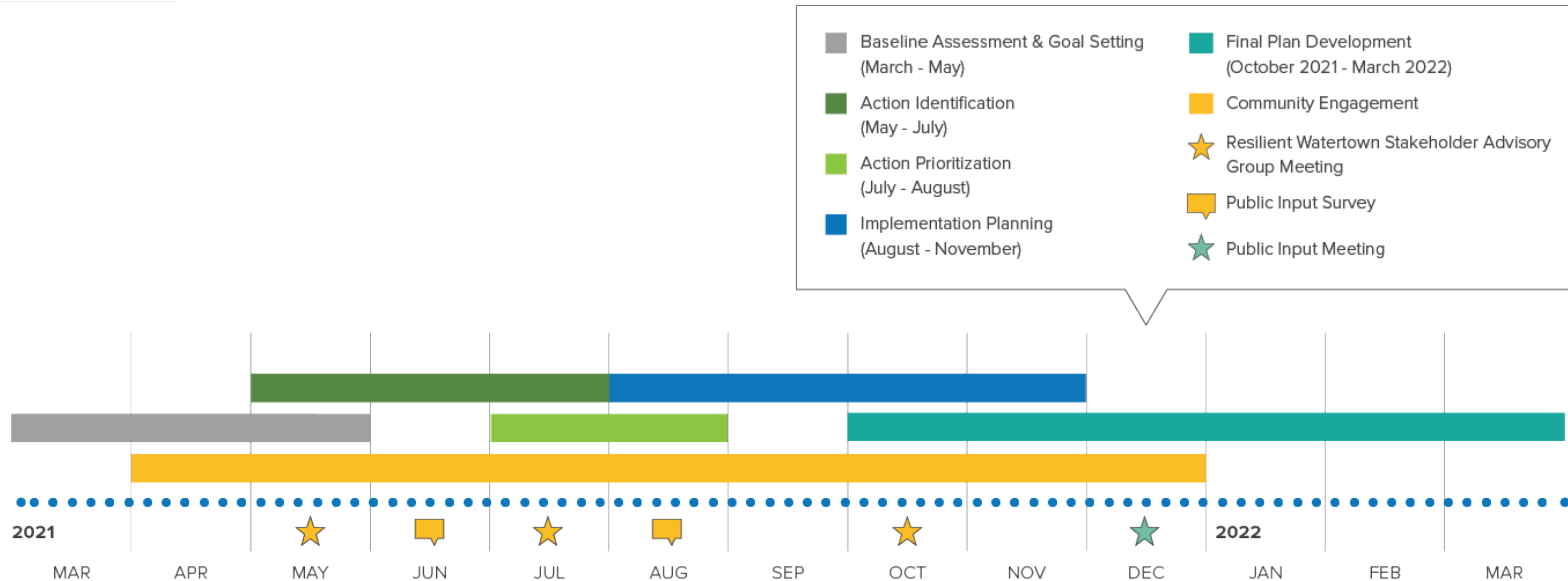


Agenda

1. Brief Background
2. Implementation Timeline
3. Synergies with Comprehensive Plan Update
4. Strategy and Action Updates as of March 2023
5. Next Steps



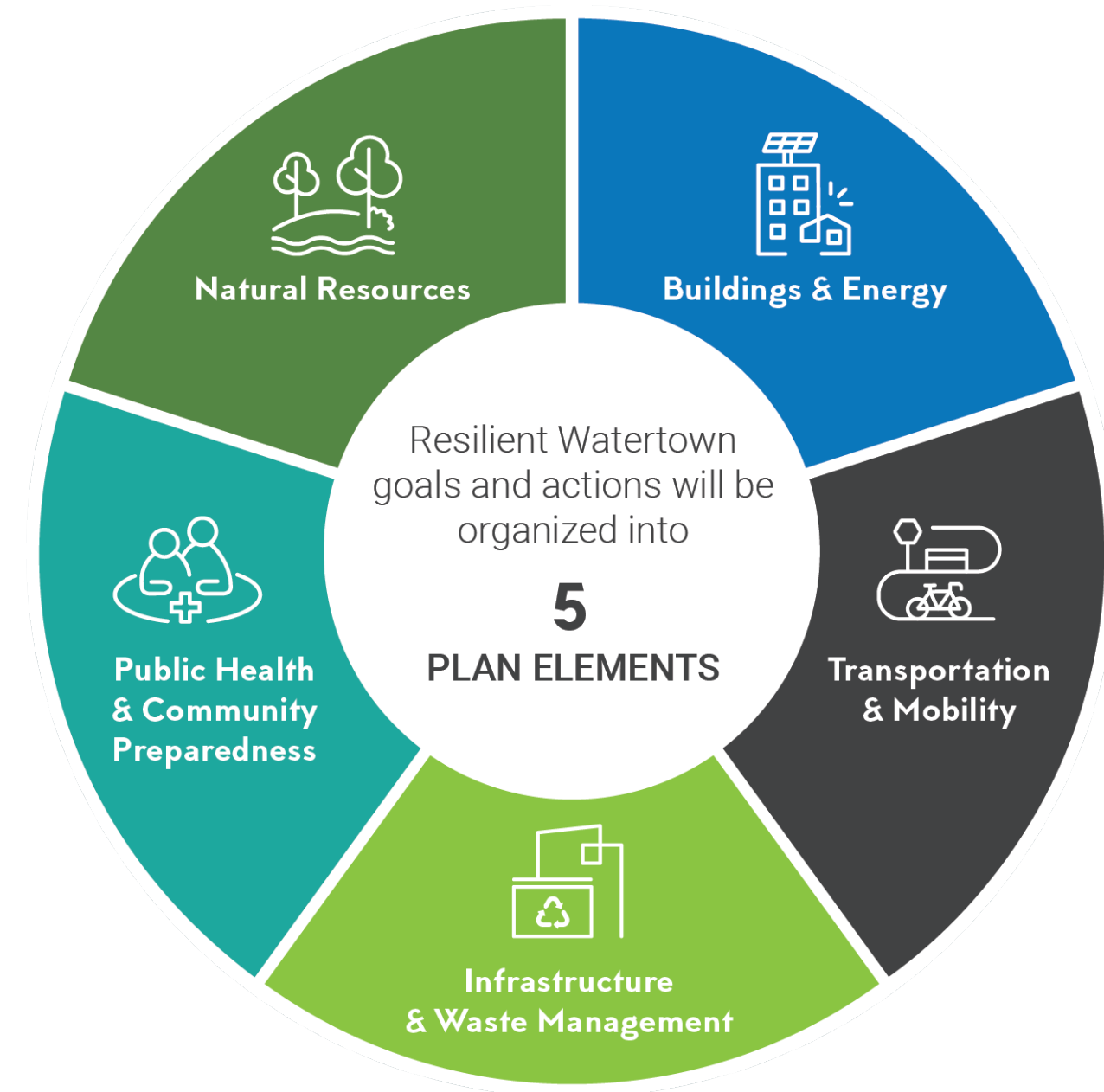
Plan Development Timeline



- April 2022: final plan complete
- Summer 2022: City Council committee review → request for a mid-year update
- **August 9, 2022:** Plan adopted unanimously by City Council



Climate and Energy Plan Elements



- Each Plan Element follows the structure:
 - Goal: what we want to accomplish; broad statement
 - Strategy: How we will accomplish it as a general approach
 - Action: *Specific activity that will be undertaken*
 - Action
 - Etc.
- Each Plan Element has quantifiable metrics for tracking our progress
- For every Action we identify a lead entity, cost magnitude, timeframe, and contribution to mitigation, resilience, or both



Year 1 Priorities

- Actions were split into two groups: those to be launched in Year 1 and those to be launched in Year 2 (roughly 30-35 in each group)
- Aspirational list, given fluctuating staff capacity during Year 1
- Criteria for Year 1: items already underway; “low hanging fruit;” larger-effort Actions that are community priorities; alignment with state and federal efforts/grants; at least one from each plan element
- Of the 33 Actions we are hoping to be launched in Year 1, 22 are underway as of March 2023 and two are complete (adopting the Specialized Stretch Code and creating an organics recycling program)

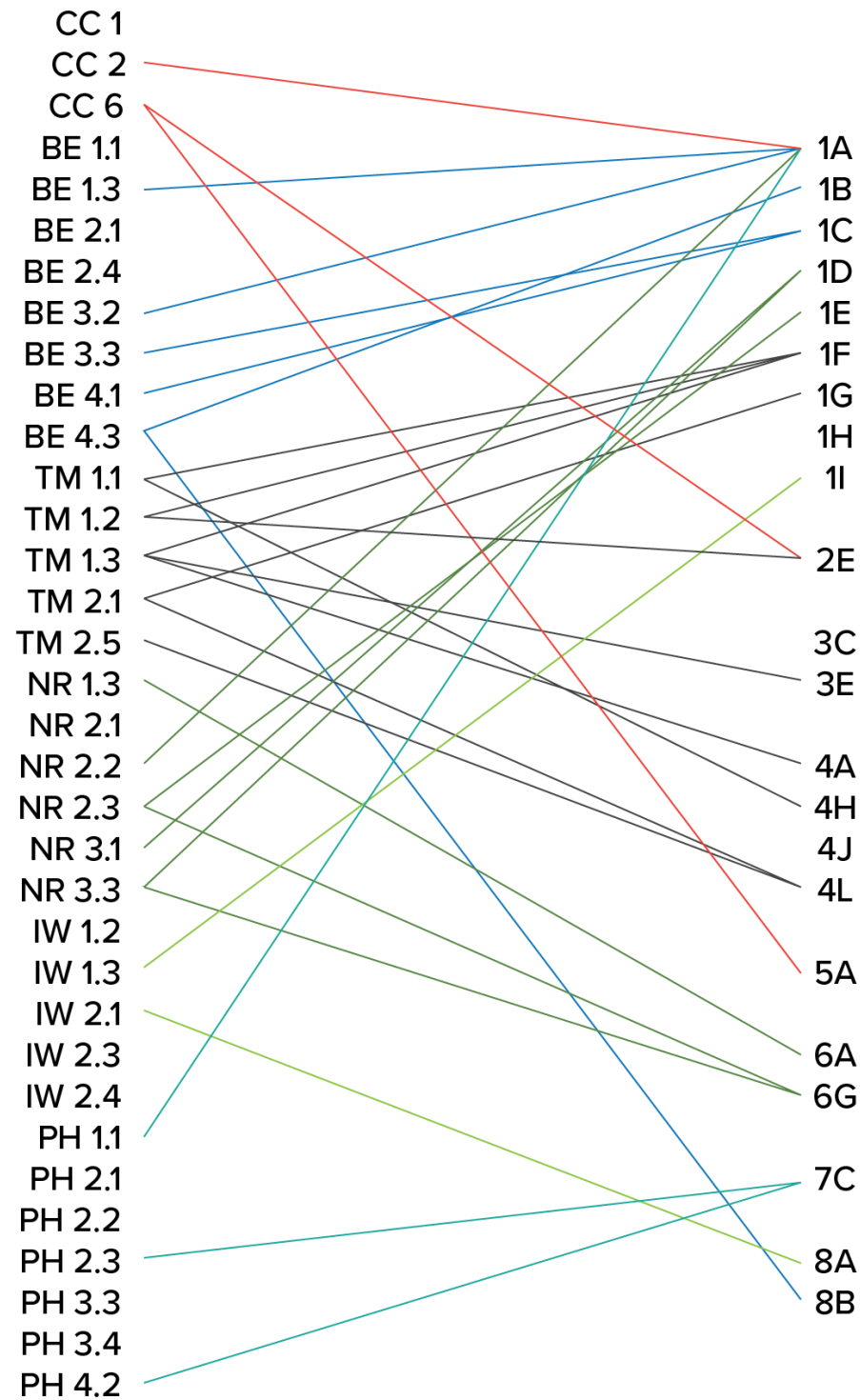


Implementation Timeline

- Every Action was given a timeframe for approximately how long it will take to complete once it is launched
 - Short: <1 year
 - Medium: 1-3 years
 - Long: 3-5 years
 - Ongoing
- The plan will be reviewed by City Staff and WE3C annually
- Substantial review and evaluation every 5 years to update and adjust Actions and targets to adapt to emerging trends, technologies, and unforeseen challenges or opportunities

Comprehensive Plan Synergies

Climate and Energy Plan Year 1 Actions



Relevant Comprehensive Plan Strategies

- Vision Statement begins, “Watertown is an inclusive and sustainable city...”
- Goal 1: *Be a leader on municipal sustainability and managing climate change impacts*
- There are connections to all 8 Comprehensive Plan Goals, especially Goal 1, Goal 4 (Transportation) and Goal 6 (Parks, Open Space & Recreation)




Cross-Cutting Strategies Updates

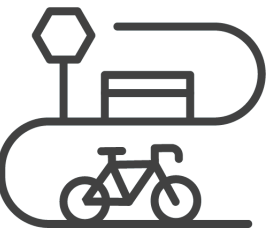
- CC1: Add capacity and resources to the Energy Manager's Office, the DPW Forestry Division, and DCDP in order to successfully implement the plan
 - Energy Manager position bumped up to full-time and filled (Silas Fyler)
 - New Environmental Planner position created and filled (Katie Swan)
 - New Recycling Coordinator position created and filled (Anya Pforzheimer)
 - New Part-time Energy Advocate position funded via grant (forthcoming)
- CC2: Create an overarching *Resilient Watertown* Outreach & Education Campaign
 - Branded social media posts; engagement at Farmers Market and Faire on the Square; coordination with WE3C, Stormwater, and Solid Waste Advisory Committees
- CC6: Encourage and require sustainable, climate-resilient development patterns
 - Sustainability and climate resilience highlighted throughout Comprehensive Plan update

Buildings & Energy Updates



- BE 1.3: Develop and implement a targeted outreach campaign focused on recruiting for Watertown Electricity Choice program and installing rooftop solar on homes and businesses
 - Multiple social media and paper communications on Watertown Electricity Choice (WEC) and programs that provide heating system repair, Mass Save rebate and weatherization information
 - WEC going out for bid March '23
- **BE 2.1: Adopt the state's net-zero energy standard as soon as permissible** 
 - Watertown was the first municipality in the state to adopt the net-zero code in Jan '23!
- BE 3.3: Incentivize the transition to heat pumps through HEAT Smart or other program
 - Actively discussing strategy and options/learning from other municipalities (Lexington)
- BE 4.1: Enact a Building Energy Use Disclosure Ordinance with a reporting requirement
 - WE3C and advocates working on draft BEUDO/BERDO document and consulting other communities
- BE 4.2: Provide technical assistance for clean energy, energy efficiency, and financing activities
 - Mass Save Community Grant awarded Feb '23 to fund a part-time Energy Advocate for two years
- BE 4.3: Upgrade major existing municipal facilities to achieve net zero energy performance
 - DPB investigating energy efficiency upgrades to WFPL as equipment nears end-of-life

Transportation & Mobility Updates



- TM 1.1: Install well-shaded bike/ped-only infrastructure, especially in densely developed areas and areas of high traffic volume
 - Finalized design of a connecting path through Arsenal Park between the Watertown-Cambridge Greenway and Charles River Greenway; construction is planned to start 2023
 - Taylor Street segment of Watertown Community Path to be constructed 2023
 - Charles River Path connection behind 580 Pleasant Street (Blue Heron Bridge-Cannalonga Park)
 - Mount Auburn Street “complete streets” redesign at 90% design stage
- TM 1.3: Increase use of transit, bike, and pedestrian travel through outreach, incentives, and policy changes
 - Changes to parking policies suggested in Comprehensive Plan update
 - Acquired easements along Arsenal Street for approx. 6 additional bus shelters
 - Expansion of bikeshare, TMA, and other TDM practices via new developments
- TM 2.1: Develop and implement an EV Roadmap for Watertown
 - Watertown Connector (Pleasant Street route) converted to EV buses
 - Collecting baseline data of EV registrations and existing/planned charging stations
- TM 2.5: Increase the availability of charging stations on municipal property
 - Hosmer & Cunniff School chargers online (7 heads); expanded capacity for DPW fleet; 2 new chargers installed for Pleasant Street electric shuttle bus route at old Police Station; Howard Street parking lot chargers in process
 - Several locations submitted for Eversource Make-Ready grants: Spring Street (Municipal lot), Nichols Ave, John Ryan skating rink, and the Parker Building

Natural Resources Updates

- NR 1.3: Acquire more open space, where possible, and create more open space on private property
 - Walker Pond parcel acquired Jan. '23; plans forthcoming for passive and active recreation spaces
 - Public open spaces planned at 66 Galen/99 Water; 99 Coolidge St; Watertown Mall site
- NR 2.1: Establish an enforceable tree ordinance focused on preservation, diversification, and equitable distribution of tree canopy on public and private property
 - Draft tree ordinance under departmental review
- NR 2.3: increase tree plantings and prioritize plantings in areas at risk for urban heat impacts
 - 162 trees planted in 2022; goal for 2023 is 360 (180 each in Spring and Fall)
 - 65 “bare root” trees were also given to residents for free to plant on their properties
 - \$240,000 grant awarded for stormwater tree trenches in Jan '23
 - New and publicly accessible tree inventory created through Urban Forestry Grant, Fall '22
- NR 3.3: Update current development regulations to require the use of appropriate native plants for new- and re-development and de-emphasize non-native lawn spaces
 - DCDP staff reviewing all regs/policies that need to be updated or added to
- NR 4.1: Expand and accelerate existing Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) policies and management programs for public projects
 - Francis St reconstruction project incorporating new street trees and stormwater tree trenches

Infrastructure & Waste Updates



- IW 1.3: Create convenient and free organics recycling program 
 - Free curbside composting program in partnership with Black Earth launched Aug '22 and currently serves 2,100 households
 - Composting available in all school cafeterias (back of house); working on teaching 5th graders at Hosmer School with other grades to follow
 - Watertown has already diverted 230 tons of food waste from landfill
- IW 1.5: Investigate opportunities to pursue a circular economy in Watertown or within the Metro Boston region
 - Textile recycling program launched Nov '21; 1,900 pounds per month diverted from landfill
 - Recycling Advisory Committee restarted Fall '22 per order of City Council
- IW 2.3: Advocate with partners for the safe removal of the Watertown Dam
 - City Council submitted letter to DCR supporting removal of Dam Winter '22
- IW 2.4: Investigate local back-up power, microgrid, and battery options in coordination with utilities
 - Battery storage installed at new Hosmer Elementary School

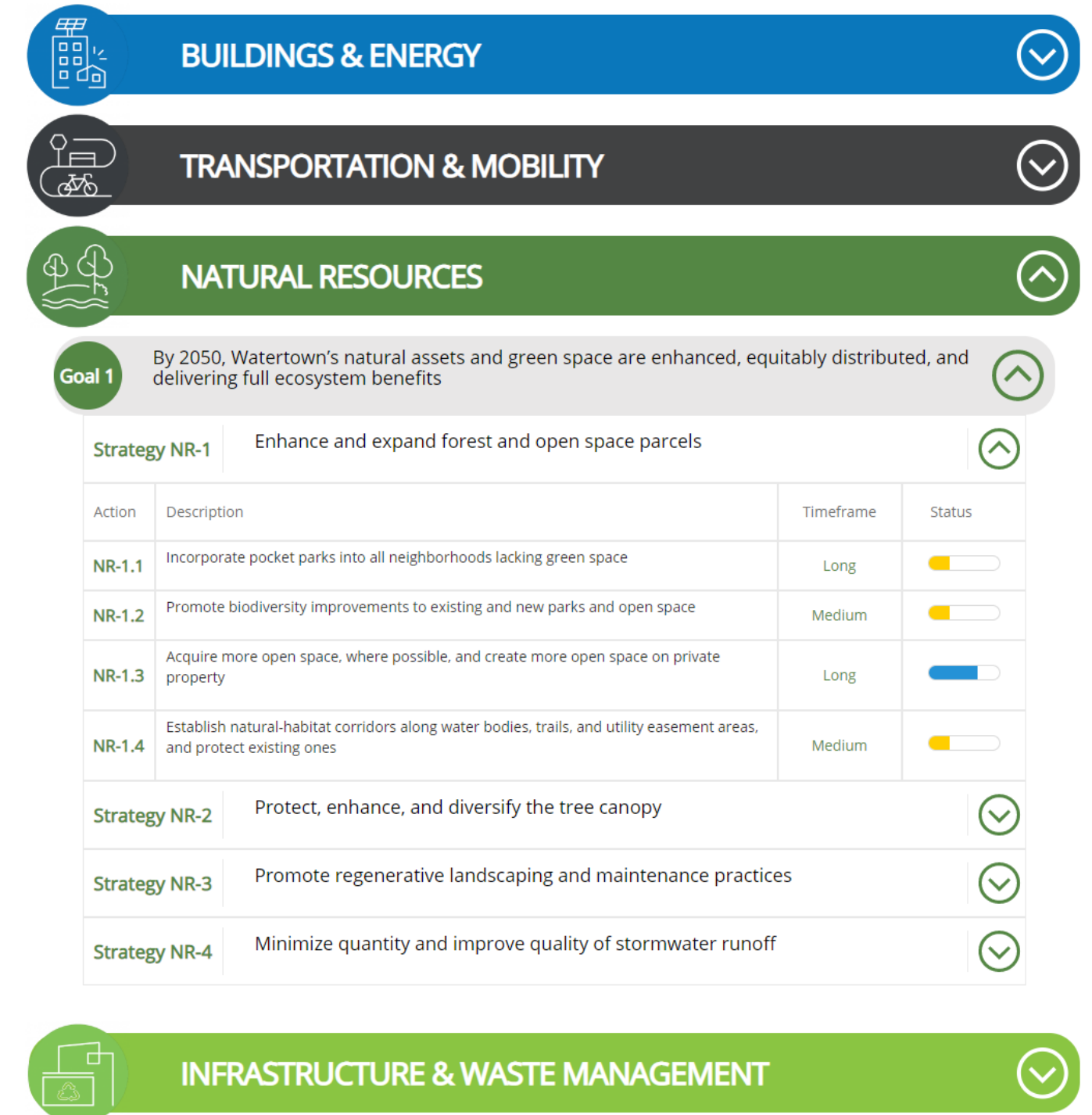

Public Health & Community Preparedness Updates

- PH 2.2: Mitigate existing and prevent new urban heat islands in Watertown
 - Forestry and DCDP working to focus new tree plantings in hotter neighborhoods in 2023
- PH 3.4: Enhance emergency preparedness information on City website
 - IT Department making website upgrades and changes to citizen notification system
- PH 4.2: Enhance the existing Live Well Watertown coalition and its programs to incorporate neighborhood connections to nature and to each other
 - Working with Riverside Neighborhood Group to pilot nature walk programming
 - Enhanced sustainability presence at Farmers Market for the 2023 season



Resilient Watertown Website

- resilient.watertown-ma.gov
- Interactive way to explore the plan
- Status of each Action is routinely updated to record progress and provide context/links if applicable
- Resilient Housing Resource Center
- “What You Can Do” page
- Blog posts and City social media tie-ins



BUILDINGS & ENERGY

TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

NATURAL RESOURCES

Goal 1 By 2050, Watertown's natural assets and green space are enhanced, equitably distributed, and delivering full ecosystem benefits

Strategy NR-1 Enhance and expand forest and open space parcels

Action	Description	Timeframe	Status
NR-1.1	Incorporate pocket parks into all neighborhoods lacking green space	Long	<input type="checkbox"/>
NR-1.2	Promote biodiversity improvements to existing and new parks and open space	Medium	<input type="checkbox"/>
NR-1.3	Acquire more open space, where possible, and create more open space on private property	Long	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
NR-1.4	Establish natural-habitat corridors along water bodies, trails, and utility easement areas, and protect existing ones	Medium	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strategy NR-2	Protect, enhance, and diversify the tree canopy		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Strategy NR-3	Promote regenerative landscaping and maintenance practices		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Strategy NR-4	Minimize quantity and improve quality of stormwater runoff		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

INFRASTRUCTURE & WASTE MANAGEMENT



Next Steps

- Identify Actions that should be prioritized for FY24 budget
- ARPA funding requests (and other funding sources)
 - Public building and infrastructure upgrades
 - Transportation network improvements
- Expand comprehensive education and outreach efforts (with help of Energy Advocate)
 - Consistent “sustainability” table at Farmers Market
 - Enhanced “What You Can Do” section of Resilient Watertown website
 - Launch comprehensive outreach campaign through in-person and online methods



Thank you!