

Strategic Plan

of the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association (NESEA)
for the period January 2017 - December 2021

Approved by the NESEA Board of Directors on February 3, 2017



NESEA

NORTHEAST SUSTAINABLE ENERGY ASSOCIATION

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Executive Summary

This five year strategic plan reflects eight months of intensive work by the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association's (NESEA's) Board of Directors and Staff to identify strategic goals and actions toward fulfilling NESEA's mission. We are proud to report that this process involved an unprecedented degree of collaboration between the Board and Staff. It is the first time the organization has developed a strategic plan with such extensive feedback from Board, Staff, and Stakeholders. We are optimistic that the inclusive and transparent process will lead to greater success in implementing the plan.

NESEA's strategic planning process, facilitated by organizational development consultant Jeanette Millard, started at the annual Board retreat in May 2016, and culminated with Board approval of the plan in February 2017.

At the May 2016 retreat, after the Board articulated aspirations for NESEA and completed an environmental scan, they identified 10 stakeholder groups, with 72 individual stakeholders, from whom data about NESEA's strengths and needs could be garnered. The Board, guided by a steering committee and Ms. Millard, then identified seven strategic goals. Board members worked with Staff to outline actions necessary to achieve these goals, and plotted them along a 5-year timeline.

To better communicate our aspirations and purpose as an organization, the Board adopted a vision statement and updated the mission statement. Along with these statements, a list of core values, and a list of operating principles, NESEA Staff are well equipped to move forward with clear direction.

The NESEA Board of Directors approved this plan, by a vote of 9-0 at the February 3, 2017 meeting in New Haven, Connecticut. In the spirit of collaboration, this plan will be used to frame Staff reports to the Board prior to regularly scheduled meetings. The Executive Director will report back to Staff with clarifying questions or feedback from the Board. Updates, as needed, will be made during the annual Board retreat.

NESEA's Roadmap

Our Vision

We envision a built environment in the Northeast that is climate neutral, adaptive and resilient, energy independent, architecturally inspiring, and supportive of connection and community.

Our Mission

NESEA advances the adoption of sustainable energy practices in the built environment by cultivating a community where practitioners share, collaborate and learn.

Our Core Values

- We share our mistakes so that others can avoid them
- We welcome your passion and your action, and appreciate your diverse viewpoints
- We value real world performance, and approach models with healthy skepticism
- We believe our involvement with NESEA helps our businesses
- We have fun together
- We value our relationships with one another
- We create a safe space to nurture new technologies and approaches
- We innovate
- We challenge ourselves and each other to grow
- We combine ambitious aspirations with deep humility

Our Operating Principles

- Whole Systems Thinking
- Collaboration
- Cross Disciplinary
- Peer-to-Peer Learning and Teaching
- Nonpartisan
- Transparency
- Inclusiveness

For an account of NESEA's history and a list of current programs, please see Appendix A.

Overview of Goals and Strategies

The Board acknowledged the Staff's excellent work over the past two years to strengthen existing programs. The Board adopted the following seven strategic goals to build on that progress and to offer Staff guidance for growth without compromising organizational stability.

1. Review all existing and developing programs through the lens of a clear and transparent content curation process, giving priority to developing an online platform as a place to share and discuss generated content.
2. Continue to deepen NESEA's programmatic focus to include Commercial and Institutional.
3. With an initial focus on Emerging Professionals, broaden the demographic diversity of NESEA membership to better reflect the constituency NESEA serves.
4. Provide an outstanding volunteer program by developing onboarding, engagement and recognition processes to attract new members, and keep current members working toward NESEA's mission.
5. Identify ways to offer NESEA programming in underserved portions of the Northeast.

The Board decided to explore a sixth goal related to NESEA's role in the policy/advocacy arena, and determine the implications of adding it to the Strategic Plan. This goal reads:

6. Leverage the expertise of NESEA members to better inform the legislative process, the executive branch policy-making process, and the advocacy efforts of like-minded organizations.

Finally, the Board incorporated a strategic goal related to building its own capacity, focusing initially on the Board's role with respect to fundraising and NESEA's financial health.

7. Continue to develop the Board to effectively lead a growing and increasingly influential NESEA organization.

After these goals were identified, NESEA's Directors worked to contextualize the plan, by providing information on how these goals fit into what already exists, and which goals will require the biggest "leaps" in terms of staffing, money, and other resources. The Board recommended a timeline with respect to each goal, which the Staff "sanity checked" and adjusted after considering other current operational priorities and Staff bandwidth.

Goal # 1 - Review all existing and developing programs through the lens of a clear and transparent content curation process, giving priority to development of an online platform as a place to share and discuss generated content.

NESEA is a member-driven organization. The content of NESEA's programs is curated by volunteer committees of NESEA members, who collectively log hundreds of hours throughout the year to ensure that content is data-driven, diverse and genuinely useful to the community. Working closely with goal number four, (Provide an outstanding volunteer program by developing onboarding, engagement and recognition processes to attract new members, and keep current members working toward the organization's mission), Staff will clarify the content curation process, apply it more consistently and transparently across programs, and explore viable online platforms to make content and engagement opportunities available virtually.

Timeline

2017 Q2	Form curation committee (Members and Staff, include Board representation). Inventory current assets.
2017 Q3	Develop 1st draft of content curation guidelines. Pilot online platform initiative. Identify funding sources for online platform initiative.
2017 Q4	Finalize content curation guidelines. Continue online platform initiative.
2018 Q1	Begin implementation of content curation guidelines. Continue online platform initiative. Incorporate content curation guidelines into NESEA work flow.
2018 Q2	Complete implementation of content curation guidelines.

Synergies and Implications

NESEA has a legacy of member-driven leadership in conference planning. Applying that process to other NESEA programs will address the need for greater transparency with respect to content that is crucial to further our mission. To engage new community members in the 21st century, NESEA will step up its virtual communication. NESEA will also investigate, evaluate, and choose the best online platforms for sharing curated content. Additional funds will be needed for staffing and online technology to accommodate this goal. The NESEA Board and Staff will work through the budget process to move forward.

Goal # 2 - Continue to deepen NESEA's programmatic focus to include Commercial and Institutional.

To accelerate the adoption of energy efficiency, renewables, and resiliency in the sector that accounts for the largest energy footprint in the Northeast, NESEA will include more Commercial and Institutional-related content into our program offerings. By definition, since our content is member driven, this will mean engaging more practitioners, planners, and facility managers from the Commercial and Institutional arena.

We will focus further on the Institutional sector, specifically higher education, because:

- NESEA is already building a network in that arena, and has a lot of college and university contacts through other NESEA programs.
- There will be residual benefits from doing so, such as engaging students and Emerging Professionals on college campuses. (See Strategic Goal #3, below)
- State laws mandate higher energy efficiency levels for public buildings, and various stakeholders (students, faculty, staff) demand higher performance buildings than what the energy codes might require.

Timeline

2017 Q1	Develop concise statement of goals and objectives. Develop a list of target institutions.
2017 Q2	Engage with conference planning processes to guide content to include more Commercial and Institutional content. Seek additional Pro Tour opportunities of Commercial and Institutional buildings.
2017 Q3	Develop a list of target institutions.
2017 Q4	Develop a list of what NESEA can offer institutions and relevant constituencies. Articulate issues that might be of particular interest to institutions, and share with relevant NESEA planning committees. Meet with target institutions to explore their needs and what NESEA can offer.
2018 Q1	Summarize findings from institutional focus groups.
2018 Q2-4	Incorporate focus group findings into our plan.

Synergies and Implications

Conference planners have already started to include more Commercial and Institutional content, and Staff has solicited Institutional projects in our Pro Tour line-ups. Embracing this strategic goal is a natural progression for NESEA. We do not anticipate that significant additional financial resources will be needed to meet this goal.

Goal #3 - With an initial focus on Emerging Professionals, broaden the demographic diversity of NESEA membership to better reflect the constituency NESEA serves.

NESEA must grow its membership in order to increase its impact. The initial focus will be on attracting Emerging Professionals (EPs), who we define as individuals who have been working in renewable energy, high-performance building, or a related industry for less than five years, for the following reasons:

- NESEA Staff has already initiated outreach to EPs.
- EPs are inherently a more diverse group (racially, socio-economically, ethnically) than other groups.
- It is important to NESEA's long-term sustainability that we cultivate the next generation of practitioners and leaders.

After improving, refining, and documenting current campaigns to attract EPs, Staff will replicate those efforts to target other groups.

Timeline

2017 Q1	NESEA Staff share information with Board on what's currently being done with respect to EPs and students. Staff and Board explore potential funding availability and partners. Staff share with Board mechanism to track our EP and student efforts and report on them over time.
2017 Q2	Apply for funding (ongoing activity) based on learnings from Q1
2017 Q3	Board will establish priority areas and benchmarks for membership growth and/or EP engagement.
2017 Q4 - 2018 Q1	Hold in-person EP and/or student focus groups to learn how NESEA can best serve them.
2018 Q2	Incorporate the results from focus groups feedback into the operational plan.
2018 Q3	Weave larger themes like audience definition, volunteer cultivation and recognition, and leadership development into the organization's timeline.
2018 Q4 - 2019	Implement ideas from focus groups into relevant programs. Identify one or more new target groups for membership growth.
2020	Repeat process started in 2017 for the newly identified target group
2021	Measure success and adjust program accordingly.

Synergies and Implications

Developing a leadership pipeline, and prioritizing diversity within our community, have been unwritten strategic goals for NESEA for a very long time. This Strategic Plan makes these goals explicit, so that the Staff and Board can sharpen our focus. Additional funds will be needed for staffing to accommodate this goal. The NESEA Board and Staff will work through the budget process to move forward.

Goal #4 - Provide an outstanding volunteer program by developing onboarding, engagement and recognition processes to attract new members, and keep current members working toward NESEA’s mission.

Among our most valuable volunteers are the “subject matter experts” who ensure the integrity of the content we offer. NESEA relies heavily on work performed by its volunteers. Volunteers are engaged in many ways including:

- Chairing conference and trade show planning.
- Curating the content and speakers for our conferences.
- Staffing all portions of conferences and trade shows.
- Selecting content, authors, and peer reviewers for magazine articles.
- Serving on advisory committees for award selection, scholarship selection, Pro Tour location selection, and Bottom Lines development.

By clarifying our processes for volunteer recruitment, selection, and engagement, and making them more transparent, NESEA Staff can better leverage our members’ knowledge to continue to improve our programs.

Timeline

2017 Q1	Develop clear scopes of responsibility for NESEA committees. Create and distribute job descriptions, meeting schedules and membership composition targets.
2017 Q2	Survey members to identify who is interested in future NESEA leadership opportunities. Ask current leaders, Board members and conference chairs, in particular, to identify rising stars with high potential
2017 Q3	Increase transparency in volunteer eligibility, selection, and roles. Provide a mechanism for all members who wish to serve to do so.
2018 Q3	Develop a system for logging volunteer hours - not just for on-site conference volunteers, but also for conference planning committees, Pro Tour committee, editorial committee, Board committees, etc. Provide incentives for members to log their hours.

Synergies and Implications

NESEA has developed and implemented onboarding and off-boarding strategies to improve Staff retention. We will adapt these processes and implement them with our volunteers. Adopting this clear and transparent approach is likely to save staff time and increase goodwill among NESEA members. We do not anticipate that significant additional financial resources will be needed to meet this goal.

Goal #5 - Identify ways to offer NESEA programming in underserved portions of the Northeast.

NESEA's service territory includes Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware, but we have never been able to serve the entire region fully. To mirror the vigorous growth of the sustainable energy and high-performance building industry in the Northeast, NESEA will plan strategically to better serve specific, underserved parts of the region. Having demonstrated that programs such as our BuildingEnergy Conferences, Pro Tours, and Bottom Lines networks are replicable, ultimately we'd like to expand these programs into other, densely populated areas in the Northeast to better meet our mission.

Timeline

2017 Q2	Board and Executive Director (ED) establish initial outreach areas such as 2-3 municipalities in upstate NY, PA, and/or NJ. Board and ED to canvas for potential "champions" in these municipalities, and identify conferences/events to attend in these areas.
2017 Q3	Find at least one Pro Tour host in one of the target areas.
2018 Q1	Find a potential champion in each of the target areas.
2018 Q2	Write letter of introduction from associated Board member and ED to potential champion.
2018 Q3	Set a meeting with champion, ED and Board member to discuss potential collaboration.
2018 Q4	Set a meeting with champion, ED and Board member to discuss potential collaboration. Follow up with champion, Executive Director, and Director of Program Development to discuss possible program opportunities.
2019	Launch 1st program in PA, upstate NY or NJ based on outcome of earlier meetings and findings.
2020	Evaluate 1st program, continue if warranted, otherwise pursue opportunity in second priority geographic area.
2021	Evaluate, continue or identify new area.

Synergies and Implications

NESEA has expanded its programming and presence in New York City by launching the BuildingEnergy NYC Conference + Trade Show and by intentionally cultivating and recruiting Board members from New York City. This expansion was heavily dependent upon having a NESEA member to serve as a champion to help us build our network, recruit volunteers, identify appropriate conference venues, and more. Initially, the Board will take the lead with respect to this strategic goal, and will work with the Executive Director to pursue a strategy similar to the template we developed in New York City. We do not anticipate that significant additional financial resources will be needed to meet this goal.

Goal #6 - Leverage the expertise of NESEA members to better inform the legislative process, the executive branch policy-making process, and the advocacy efforts of like-minded organizations.

NESEA's mission is to advance the adoption of sustainable energy practices in the built environment by cultivating a community where practitioners share, collaborate and learn. A natural next step would be to include education regarding policy issues to help members advocate for themselves. If and when this strategic goal is fully embraced by the Board, NESEA will supplement efforts already underway by like-minded organizations, as well as municipal and government agencies in our region.

Such a substantial addition to NESEA's operational plan requires more deliberation by the Board. Therefore the following timeline addresses the need further exploration.

Timeline

2017 Q1	Get Board approval to start advocacy working group. Start legal research.
2017 Q2	Board committee continues research on whether/how to involve NESEA in policy arena. Research might include interviews with members, potential partner organizations, focus groups. Create full inventory of what other organizations are doing.
2017 Q3	Committee continues research, identifies gaps and funding needs.
2017 Q4	Committee continues to develop plan and identifies possible funding sources.
2018 Q1	Finalize plan and present to the Board.

Synergies and Implications

There are few clear synergies between policy/advocacy work and the Staff's current focus, although we have built good relationships with some potential partners, including USGBC MA, Urban Green Council, Mass DOER, and NE Passive House. The Board has committed to pursue this strategic goal without involving staff until the plan, including funding options, is more fully formed. Additional funds will be needed for staffing if and when this goal is formally incorporated into the Strategic Plan. The NESEA Board and Staff will work through the budget process to move forward. We do not anticipate that significant additional financial resources will be needed to meet this goal.

Goal #7 - Continue to develop the Board to effectively lead a growing and increasingly influential NESEA organization.

Developing the Board's capacity will be critical to the success of this Strategic Plan. The proposed activities and timing for such board development are:

Timeline

2017 Q1	Review and agree to this Board development plan. Read article on The Role of the Board. Establish process for regular review of the strategic plan. Establish/revise Board sub-committee structure with clear roles and expectations.
2017 Q2	Conduct a self assessment based on "The Role of the Board" article. Establish goals for the coming year re: Board learning and development
2017 Q3	Focus on financial/fiduciary/funding role of the Board. Host learning event at Board meeting, then recommit to shared goals re: fundraising or other.
2017 Q4	Review Board accomplishments for the year. Goals for 2018: what worked well and what are our goals for the coming year? Begin strategic plan review process.

Synergies and Implications

Several of the strategic goals articulated above will require additional financial resources so that NESEA can hire staff, fund outreach efforts, and invest in necessary technology. To the extent that the Board is directing Staff to launch new initiatives that require such investments, the Board recognizes it bears a responsibility to help secure the necessary financial resources. Therefore, the Board's focus for the first year of the plan will be on building its own fundraising and resource development acumen.

Conclusion

This plan represents a milestone in NESEA's history, based on the unprecedented level of collaboration and goodwill between the Board and Staff in developing it. But in many ways, adopting the plan is just the first step.

We recognize that:

- The plan needs to be dynamic – not sit on a shelf – it will change over time.
- The plan should inform the agenda for every Board meeting.
- We will need to identify responsible parties, target dates, and timeframes for each activity. The plan will be operationalized primarily by the Staff, with assistance from the Board.
- These parties will work with Staff to develop SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound).
- Staff will then develop more detailed implementation timelines to address the “How,” and will budget for the resources needed to meet each strategic goal.

Appendix G details our process for monitoring implementation of the plan.

We are grateful to the 72 stakeholders who provided valuable feedback to inform this plan, and look forward to working with them to make these strategic goals a reality. We believe that the collaborative process used to develop the plan, and the striking alignment among Board, Staff, and Members with respect to our strategic priorities all bode well for our success. We look forward to sharing our progress along the way.

Appendix A: NESEA's History and Current Programs

In 1974, the United States was in the midst of an energy crisis. Oil was in short supply, and fuel prices skyrocketed. A group of builders, architects, engineers, and homeowners banded together to design and construct solar buildings that needed little or no oil. They called themselves the New England Solar Energy Association, or NESEA for short. These NESEA pioneers met once a month at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). They also held workshops for builders and homeowners on such topics as solar water heaters, passive design, and energy efficiency. In addition to organizing major regional conferences, NESEA published a newsletter serving as a networking medium for people interested in technological developments, market trends, and government policies related to energy consumption. Early members also recognized that the community they had developed was valuable in itself.

In 1985, the group joined with similar groups in metropolitan New York and elsewhere in the Mid-Atlantic. The new organization became the Northeast Solar Energy Association—conveniently, still NESEA—and embraced the entire region from Maine to Delaware. To raise public awareness, in 1989, the first annual American Tour de Sol, a solar car demonstration and championship, traveled from Montpelier, VT to Boston, MA. This popular event was offered annually until 2007.

In response to the evolving climate, NESEA's agenda soon expanded beyond solar to include transportation issues and energy-efficient building construction. To reflect this, NESEA changed names again, to the current Northeast Sustainable Energy Association. Brilliantly still NESEA.

In 1994, NESEA's current HQ landed in a former railroad administration building in the center of Greenfield, MA, (a small town located between the Connecticut River and the Berkshires). In 1999, Staff committed to creating a community park and educational green space on the adjacent land, resulting in the Greenfield Energy Park. In 2008, NESEA transferred full operation of the park to the City of Greenfield.

In 2004 and 2005, the Board of Directors decided to narrow the organizational focus to supporting practitioners in the field of energy sustainability or teaching about sustainability. This meant eliminating programs designed to educate consumers.

In 2011, we narrowed our mission further, eliminating our K-12 education programs, and disbanding the chapters, freeing up resources to support our member-practitioners. In 2013, the Board directed Staff to rebrand our programs under the BuildingEnergy moniker. NESEA has since launched several programs, including the BuildingEnergy NYC Conference + Trade Show, BuildingEnergy Masters Series, BuildingEnergy Pro Tours, and BuildingEnergy Bottom Lines, to better serve energy efficiency and high-performance building practitioners, and to diversify our revenue streams.

NESEA's Current Programs

Membership: NESEA membership has helped thousands of high-performance building and renewable energy professionals and businesses improve their practices by learning from and networking with each other. Our individual and business members, almost 2,000 strong, are architects, engineers, educators, builders, energy consultants, policy makers, manufacturers, installers, facilities managers, planners, students, and others dedicated to creating a more sustainable built environment.

Membership benefits include:

- Subscription to *BuildingEnergy* Magazine, and the opportunity to contribute to/curate content for the magazine
- Member pricing on NESEA events, exhibit space, and advertising
- Access to NESEA's members-only directory
- Invitation to volunteer at NESEA's conferences and events
- Listing in NESEA's BuildingEnergy Green Pages (for business members)
- Invitation to participate in BuildingEnergy conference planning committees
- Invitation to participate in BuildingEnergy Bottom Lines
- Ability to advertise vacancies on our online jobs board
- Invitation to host a BuildingEnergy Pro Tour
- Access to a community of building science experts

BuildingEnergy Boston Conference + Trade Show: The BuildingEnergy Boston Conference + Trade Show is the region's leading event for professionals and practitioners working to build a more sustainable region. It brings over 2,500 industry leaders and emerging professionals together for three days to learn from and share ideas with each other. BuildingEnergy Boston sets itself apart from other green building conferences through its interdisciplinary content and audience. Attendees represent dozens of professions and industries including architecture, engineering, building, design, consulting, policy, finance, auditing, installation, construction, and education, among others. This diversity encourages broader conversations and a whole-systems approach while addressing the challenges facing our built environment.

BuildingEnergy NYC Conference + Trade Show: The BuildingEnergy NYC Conference + Trade Show is NYC's fastest-growing event for professionals and practitioners working on energy efficiency initiatives and high performance buildings. It attracts all the key players from the building, sustainability, and resilience sectors for a full day of advanced-level sessions on best practices and lessons learned. BuildingEnergy NYC has grown exponentially each year since it launched it in 2012. In 2016, 600 professionals -- a multidisciplinary group representing the building trades, government organizations, non-profit organizations, real estate experts and developers, utilities, renewable energy providers and installers, product manufacturers, and others -- attended the conference. Fifty exhibiting companies displayed a wide range of goods and services.

BuildingEnergy Bottom Lines: BuildingEnergy Bottom Lines was launched in 2014 to help NESEA business members realize their triple bottom line potential. Bottom Lines is intended for those who have great aspirations for their business, but become overwhelmed by mundane daily realities. BuildingEnergy Bottom Lines consists of a group of regional peer group networks of architecture, engineering, building, design/build, energy efficiency, and renewable energy businesses dedicated to high performance building. But the focus is not on building. The networks meet several times a year for two-day facilitated sessions at individual members' places of business, and communicate online year-round. They share the inner workings of their businesses – open them wide to scrutiny from peers, who help them to expand their capabilities and sharpen their skills -- all in service of improving their triple bottom lines (people, profit, planet).

BuildingEnergy Pro Tours: BuildingEnergy Pro Tours are half-day tours of high performance buildings all over the Northeast led by members of the project teams behind them, concluding with a reception and workshop or Q&A session. Pro Tours are an opportunity for sustainable building professionals to see projects in progress, share their knowledge and learn from their colleagues. NESEA hosts 14 Pro Tours a year, with the series starting in March and ending in December.

BuildingEnergy Masters Series: NESEA's BuildingEnergy Masters Series courses are online courses that give access to the masters of building science, on your own time, from your own location. Through homework, instructional videos, and practical tools, you'll gain the knowledge you need to take your skills to the next level, while gaining continuing education credits and building your professional network. Unlike other online courses, the Masters Series gives you direct access to your cohort as well as the instructor through virtual office hours.

Appendix B: Description of this Strategic Planning Process

The Strategic Planning process was launched in May, at the Board's day-long meeting. Michael Bruss was the Board sponsor/steward for the process, in partnership with the Executive Director, Jennifer Marrapese, and Jeanette Millard, an external organization development consultant familiar with NESEA.

At that first meeting, we first agreed to the purpose of a strategic plan, and what a good SP process would involve:

Purpose:

- A strategic plan states an organization's major mission and vision, strategies, goals and plans for the coming 3-5 years (we chose 5).
- A strategic plan is the responsibility of the Board to articulate, and then steer towards/ the Staff implements the plan in regular consultation with the Board and sub-committees.

A good Strategic Planning process:

- Involves the Board and Staff in significant ways;
- Touches all stakeholders (or members of stakeholder groups) in some way
- Is based on research and thoughtful discussion;
- Results in a shared picture of where you are, where you want to go, and how you will get there (at the overview level).

Meeting #1: May 2016

The following steps were done in a participatory process that involved the entire Board. Headlines from the discussion were noted on flip charts and used later in the process. Prior to the meeting, Board members reviewed materials from previous NESEA strategic plans, particularly the 2013 plan that Jennifer had authored.

- Where do you want NESEA to be in 3-5 years? What do you want to see NESEA do? What are your hopes and aspirations for NESEA?
- The Board then did an initial environmental scan, looking at what was emerging in the areas listed below in the Strategic Analysis data.
- From this discussion emerged the larger themes and areas for development that were built on throughout the rest of the planning process.
- Geographic area: how to best serve the Northeast?
- How to diversify and broaden NESEA's membership?
- Do the current programmatic offerings need to be broadened? Should we move beyond our traditional focus on residential homes?
- How can membership leaders be identified and developed?
- Is there a role for NESEA in the policy and/or advocacy arena?

1. Mission and vision: The current NESEA mission statement was reviewed, to check its accuracy and relevance. Although it was found to be mostly right on target, some additions were suggested. In addition, it was established that there was not a formal vision statement for NESEA as far as anyone could remember.

Thus, a process was set out in which suggestions for mission statement revisions would be submitted, as well as thoughts regarding a NESEA vision statement. These were to be reviewed towards the end of the SP process, to ensure alignment with the eventual decisions and plan.

2. Stakeholder interviews planned: A process was developed for Board and Staff members to identify and then interview key stakeholders in the NESEA world, including sponsors, membership, partner and collaborating organizations, and a range of industry segments.

These interviews represented a way to involve the broader organization, which gathered data about NESEA from a wide range of perspectives. In addition to getting data to inform the planning process, this also served to increase contact among Board, Staff, members, and other stakeholders.

These interviews were conducted over a 2.5 month period, with interview results collated into a large compilation document (See Appendix : D).

Meeting #2: Strategic Planning Steering Committee. July 2016

The Board appointed a small group to manage the SP process, do between-meeting work, and make some decisions to move the process along. This committee included the current and future Board chairs; the Executive Director; NESEA's conference and operations director; two additional Board members, and the consultant.

In July this group met to do an initial analysis of the interview data, and to plan the upcoming September meeting, which would include the full Board and Staff.

The data was reviewed, headlines identified, and the previous meeting's themes were honed based on the data gathered. In addition, the process and agenda for the September meeting was set, roles for that meeting determined, and pre-work established.

Meeting #3: Full NESEA Board & Staff, September 2016

This meeting was important in translating the "what we'd like to see" into something concrete and achievable. The meeting included the full staff and Board, which was a unique opportunity to hear a wide range of perspectives, and to bring these key groups together to form a shared vision and plan.

A baseline history of NESEA was provided by Board member Paul Eldrenkamp and Jennifer Marrapese. This brought everyone up to speed and into the present day. Then, each work group presented the results of the stakeholder interviews they had conducted (see Appendix: D).

The hard work on this hot and humid day was to take the key themes and do a "deep dive." The working groups were asked to identify the most important areas for each theme, to distill out what

actions they would recommend NESEA focus on, and to create a draft plan for the next 5 years for their theme.

The results of the work groups contained some solid, specific suggestions and ideas - and as the heat melted the group, all agreed to dig into each theme more before the next meeting.

Interim work

An interim assignment was for each group, led by the Board member, to articulate a strategic goal for each topic area, and then come up with a plan for the next 5 years. Groups worked online and by phone. The results were collated in the overall Strategic Plan, and served as the basis for the November Board meeting.

Meeting #4: NESEA Board, November 2016

The November meeting was a final and thorough review of the larger strategic goals; the specific actions recommended by each planning sub-group; an exploration of any key decisions that need to be made; and a final overview of the entire plan (on a very large hard-copy with each theme/goal/associated actions written up). The mission was slightly revised, and a new vision statement was approved. These two statements are found elsewhere in this document.

Interim work

The Staff received the plan and worked to

- Establish a realistic timeline, looking at the planned work as well as the full NESEA scope of activities and Staff workload
- Identify areas in which the Staff has already made headway in the direction of the strategic goals
- Identify any areas that need further clarification
- Evaluate the costs associated with implementing the SP
- Provide the Board (prior to its January meeting) with feedback based on these 4 areas

Meeting #5: Board meeting, February 2017

The Board will receive the feedback and assessment of the plan from the Staff, and will discuss any additions, deletions, or changes to be made. Plans for cutting costs, raising funds, or other adjustments will also be discussed. The Board will determine which committees will work on various parts of the plan, and how it will measure progress on the plan at each future Board meeting. Ideally, the Board will approve the plan.

Appendix C: Environmental Scan

During the May 2016 Board retreat, the Board identified a number of collaborators, competitors, industry and regulatory trends, and other environmental factors that will affect NESEA's growth and strategic direction over the next five years.

The results of this scan appear below:

Collaborators

Associations

- Passive Haus
- NHSEA
- IAQC
- USGBC chapters
- Associations of sustainability officers, facilities managers
- NZEC
- BSA

Schools

- Vocational schools
- Architecture schools in NE, the BAC
- Sustainability officers at colleges and universities

Government

- BE Exchange
- State and muni governments
- DOE

Competitors

Conferences

- SEIA
- JLC
- ACI/Home Perf Inst
- Passive House
- BBBB
- Global Con
- NAHB
- Business as Usual -- "easier and safer"
- Better Codes

Web

- GBA
- BuildingGreen/EBN
- HeatSpring

Industry Trends

Supply

- Energy Costs
- Facilities managers retiring/workforce issues
- Conferences - still relevant?
- More competition for good crew members
- B-Corp/BSR

Demand

- Planning for resiliency
- Growing High Rise MF Sector
- Environmental impact disclosures for building products
- Cheaper and simple monitoring devices (IAQ, energy usage)
- Storm hardening
- Better ways to fix existing building stock

Grid

- Storage
- EVs
- NZE Regs
- District scale solutions
- MicroGrid
- Smart grid technologies
- Cost of Solar
- Renewable energy is growing

Funding/Financial

- Members
- Grants
- Sponsors
- Munis are broke
- Better marketing by practitioners of financial advantage of HPBs
- Strategic alliances and revenue share
- Programs
- SWAG for sale
- Endowment
- Estate/legacy gifts

Communication technology

- Twitter/instagram - what's next
- Smart meters and appliances
- Live energy reporting/notifications
- Aps vs. the web
- Web-based learning and teaching
- Match.com for energy professionals
- Social media
- Live video and streaming

Regulation, Regulatory/Policy

- Building Code
- Net metering
- Will utility incentive programs continue
- IIID
- Energy Star
- Carbon tax
- Community net metering
- PACE funding and adoption
- Mandates 50 x 30
- Utility sees renewables as solution
- Myth of natural gas as transition
- ZNE ready certification - DOE driven
- Need for/interest in resilience
- How to advise clients on space heating

Appendix D: Stakeholder Interviews

As part of the planning process, NESEA Board and Staff members interviewed a total of 72 stakeholders, each of whom represented at least one of these groups:

Collaborators	Energy Consultants
Architects	Renewables Companies
Engineers	Property Developers
Design Professionals	Sponsors and Exhibitors
Contractors/Builders	Utilities
Facilities/Sustainability Managers	State Agencies

Each stakeholder was asked these questions:

1. What do you see as NESEA's key strengths?
2. Have NESEA's key strengths changed over time? If you answered "yes," describe how.
3. How could we improve NESEA to better meet your needs? (i.e., What would you like to see? What could we do?)
4. Any advice for us?

We ensured each interviewee that their feedback would be confidential and anonymous. A summary of the key themes that surfaced from each of these groups appears below.

Headlines: NESEA Engages the Young Folks Really Well

Themes: Networking

Quotes: "and, I would have to say networking. NESEA is good at that."

Additional: The planning committee and RFP process for both conferences were described as murky, non-transparent, and a little cliquey. Just FYI.

Headlines: Boston Conference is A Keeper

Themes: Good conference session selection

Quotes: "When I buy an orange. I want an orange. I don't want a pineapple." "BE is a big family reunion. You can feel the "energy" even if you are not in that family."

Additional: Is it a conference or a trade show? Considerations to move to a more attuned venue (hotel/cool venue) that align with the community and mission, with higher focus on sponsorships other than exhibit floor.

Headlines: Engaged Membership is a Real Asset

Learnings: Interviewee seem to know NESEA's membership

Themes: Knowledgeable community and membership. Try to transition from the "talking to yourself" approach, engage with the other organization and their members, specifically commercial / institutional

Quotes: "Network is stellar" "Outsiders and young members view NESEA's "family"/membership as aging. "

"When one is not connected, it's difficult to connect to the NESEA community" "Passionate and engaged members is a big achievement! Speaks a lot for your Staff"

Additional: Fairly introverted community with a deep sense of curiosity on how to make energy efficiency/Renewable energy work, with high/deep technical knowledge. "Younger community sometimes react to the "maverick green building ninja" who tend to express an inclusive sometimes "politically oriented" culture/attitude. Expansion and outreach may

mean to “soften up a little”. "Building Energy Bottom Lines is a great way to create close circles within NESEA

Headlines: Expansion into the Commercial/Institutional would benefit NESEA

Learnings: all 4 interviewees voiced the benefits of NESEA's expansion to the commercial/institutional market

Themes: Outreach and value proposition

Quotes: "What does NESEA offer them that others (AIA, IFMA, USGBC) don't?"

Additional: Take the conversation of this passionate and dedicated community to the outside may be challenging, Must define the value proposition. Embracing commercial and institutional market may demand a more open minded approach, embracing the spectrum of energy efficiency project levels (vs. small residential ZNE) Expansion/opening may contribute to losing some identity, must work with a more fluid boundary.

Headlines: NESEA Brand/Identity

Learnings: All 4 interviewees value their partnership with NESEA

Quotes: "Part of being introverted is a strong sense of identity"

Additional: Pronounceable name, Feels like a family; Sense of long term commitment. Positive brand identity with a momentum in the “practitioner”. Field Managed to keep that alive over the change of the movement

Headlines: NESEA and ZNE

Themes: Could NESEA become a "go to" for the commercial/residential ZNE market

Quotes: "ILFI and USGBC are volunteer based, NESEA is Staff based - this presents a challenge"

Headlines: NESEA's Data Focus Makes it A Stand-out

Themes: Data bolsters reputation

Quotes: NESEA's data focus, rather than the design-only focus, sets itself apart entities such as GreenBuild

Headlines: BE NYC Should Be More Targeted To NYC Market

Themes: Marketing

Quotes: "A conference in NYC should not be advertising converted barns in Vermont"

Headlines: Branding is "spot on"

Themes: Marketing and programing have been maturing and growing in tandem

Quotes: "NESEA's branding is as close to perfect as it could be"

Headlines: Who is the conference really for?

Themes: Even more technical is ok. Serving more people dilutes the "meatiness"

Quotes: Trying to be everything to everyone is an issue.

Additional: We've shifted before with success. Is now time for another shift? Or do we tighten the content? Big question!

Headlines: BEBL is awesome, and represents a new depth we seekers seek

Themes: Not learning as much anymore, wants a digging deeper, not sure it's still a good use of time. BEBL is.

Quotes: BEBL topics could be expanded into Masters Series. Sustainable businesses, being a good manager, etc. Bridging technical depths and business expertise.

Additional: Single-family-centric seems unsustainable. What is the kind of work we want to be doing? What's the best thing for the world and my employees?

Headlines: Great but expensive for newbies

Themes: Tough to pay for it and spare the time as a new business.

Quotes: Is there a reduced rate for new businesses? Maybe first two years?

Additional: BEBL group specifically for non-profits?

Headlines: Still feels like a private club

Themes: Tribe mentality directly contradicts the idea of broad outreach.

Quotes: Coming across as being exclusive is counterproductive. In some circumstances, community should be deemphasized.

Additional: None of our info should be proprietary in any way.

Headlines: Drift towards residential & shell niche focus undermining the organizations reach and usefulness to those with deep pockets

Themes: Shift away from C&I focus. Concern that this affects organizations bottom lines.

Quotes: I like what we cover, but don't like the breadth of what we cover. I am concerned that we don't have the firepower on the committee that we did in the past either. We are missing the people from C&I and the bigger players in the game.

Additional: I've been getting people into NESEA for years and I'd like to still say that they're the go-to place if you want to be in a sustainable energy related field, but now I have to qualify it with "they're more into residential right now."

Headlines: Make NESEA stand out more from other organizations in this field

Themes: Not much experience with NESEA so far, but unclear on the goals and focus of the organization from limited exposure.

Quotes: Differentiate yourselves from Urban Green and others similar to them.

Additional: Make it clear between policy advocate or organization to that brings together like minded people. Become more clear what we want to accomplish.

Headlines: Making connections

Learnings: Grants and subsidies for certain sectors of our market is the best way to engage them, get them to attend our events; esp. for municipal/other government employees

Themes: We are the place to get info on emerging topics and technology

Quotes: #1 thing, connecting me with other people

Headlines: Keep giving opportunities to build relationships

Learnings: Some geographics/demographics aren't aware of NESEA (Maine, emerging professionals)

Themes: People only know NESEA because of the conference in Boston

Quotes: NESEA as the place to be for all things sustainable

Headlines: People want more opportunities to gather locally, and meet people in their region

Learnings: NESEA has changed, become more mainstream although still pushing boundaries - an indicator that NESEA affected the industry as a whole

Themes: Want NESEA to be a content curator, content vetter

Themes: NESEA has become more professionally focused over the years; a little less tribal

Themes: Can NESEA play a role in connecting policy makers?

Headlines: Conferences facilitate cross pollination among various disciplines and sectors

Learnings: People really value our efforts to bring the next gen into NESEA through the Kate Fund and BE the Future (multiple respondents mentioned this)

Themes: NESEA has become broader and thinner over the years; now more focused on overall sustainability than just energy and building science

Quotes: "What NESEA does is bring together all those constituencies - policy, practitioners, people in the field. NESEA creates an opportunity to fertilize ideas and bring together people from different levels - in the field and those making policy decisions and everything in between."

Additional: Keep offering ½-day and full-day workshops - deep dive is important to some of our Staff

Headlines: Cross disciplinary network to build your career

Learnings: Could NESEA help set “standards” (not codes, but this is what makes a good building)
Themes: Need to freshen up content - have “covered a lot of beaten ground.” Introduce young people w/new ideas
Quotes: “NESEA members laugh at themselves, talk about what didn’t work as well as what did - what went on behind the curtain.”
Additional: Get the word out - more collateral. I like hearing about ALL of what NESEA does, even if it’s outside of my region, as long as the info is well organized so I can skip what I’m not interested in

Headlines: “geeky, but in a good way”
Learnings: NESEA should provide inspiration for broader scale change, not just one building at a time; tap into the millennials and next gen innovators
Themes: Help me justify my involvement in NESEA by providing more business development opportunities. Bring more owners in.
Quotes: “I count on NESEA to cast the net widely for the most interesting stuff I ought to know about. Keep trolling for whatever is the coolest stuff and share it.”
Additional: Offer more hands-on stuff

Headlines: Sense of community - feels like “coming home”
Learnings: Attend to what people need at different times in their careers
Themes: Find ways to partner
Quotes: “NESEA hasn’t changed, but I have. My evolution: I came for the technical content. I stay for the people and the relationships
Additional: Redesign conference schedule so heavy hitters (Marc, Terry) are keynotes, try to get people to go see the new, younger presenters

Learnings: Go after the middle market - the “pretty good building” on both the resi and commercial front - for broader-based solutions
Themes: Serve NYC better - not just conference but Pro Tours and local events
Additional: Do more on the policy and program design front - along the lines of the ACEEE summer study that happens every two years (peer reviewed papers, 1000 attendees, 5 days in CA, focus on prog and policy design and evaluation). If NESEA were to provide a comparable resource in the Northeast, we and others would go (ex. Cadmus, ERS, AEG, CLEAResult, RISE, GDS, ICF, ADA, AESP, NEEP) -- this could be sort of like a Bottom Lines peer group for utility program administrators. Alternatively, a conference track on utility program design, or partnership w/ACEEE

Themes: Appeal more to the people actually doing the work, not just consultants

Themes: Continue to offer opps throughout the year - Pro Tours

Headlines: NESEA = Conference
Quotes: The BuildingEnergy Conference. BuildingEnergy conference is the thing I associate with NESEA, even though I know that is not its primary purpose.

Headlines: NESEA should lobby for members
Quotes: The main barrier/obstacle we face is legislation. We need more voice at the state house to offset the voice of utilities. It's hard for one little company to take that on, so we look to you to take the lead on this. Whether it's through more lobbyists or more events at the state house, there are big picture things that need to be addressed.
[Any association's strength is] Having a robust membership that can articulate ideas and thoughts. Then a central location like NESEA can translate those thoughts into legislation and can organize them into one unified voice. That's the most important point of organizations like NESEA, SEBANE, etc. I know NESEA offers memberships, but I am not actually sure if my company is a member. Other than getting better prices for conferences, it would be great if NESEA could provide a lobbyist and quarterly meeting that paying members were required to attend and then use the dues to further the cause. However, you do run the risk of these events becoming irrelevant if no action is taken as a result of them. Perhaps a

government relations official could sit in and these meetings could be used to educate.

In my opinion, any organization should strive to make it easier for its membership to feel part of a bigger group through strength in numbers, knowledge attainment, and legislative action. Policy is just as important as what's happening in the manufacturing world. It's important to have a strong voice in policy. NESEA should do more advocacy at the State level on policy. [NESEA should] proactively gather people on policy at the State level.

Headlines: Content is conservative

Quotes: There is too much emphasis place on commercially proven products/activities, and it's frustrating to just see things I've seen somewhere else. Show us NEW PRODUCTS. It is a very safe conference, showing things that are solid, but that can be seen somewhere else. It's a bit conservative.

Headlines: NESEA should update members on industry trends

Quotes: I wish there were more sessions on what's coming up and new products and activities in the industry.

[You could host meetings to] discuss things like new technology and financing initiatives. You could have a quarterly or bi-annual newsletter with industry specific updates. I would feel very good about being part of a specific solar group.

You could do more press releases like SEIA, who puts out a weekly newsletter that members can submit items to.

Headlines: Planning Committee Frustration

Quotes: It is not clear how final decisions on content are made by planning committees, and I am not the only one who thinks this. Although I don't necessarily want to know. It would be good to acknowledge some of the committees efforts.

Headlines: Conference conflicts

Quotes: The timing of the conference is not good because the PV America conference is always one week before and also in Boston. We now only exhibit there instead of at BuildingEnergy because it doesn't make sense to do 2 conferences in the same city in 2 weeks, and only 40-50% of people at BuildingEnergy are potential customers for us, while 100% of people at PV America are. It would be great if you could change the time of the conference.

Headlines: NESEA is good at/for sharing relevant information

Quotes: NESEA provides an opportunity for businesses and the public to see what the state of sustainability is in its many forms. It's a forum for businesses to see developments in the industry and allows the public to be informed if they are interested. [NESEA's strength is] The sharing of information to professionals and owners in general, and putting together conference sessions that are relevant. Consider recording and posting to your tube all BE sessions. Create an online platform for sharing best practices among practitioners.

Headlines: Conferences-convening like minded people

Quotes: Convening (like minded) people, educating, re energizing folks - leaving conferences/events feeling like you are a part of a community

Additional: share strategic planning process with members and stakeholders. Create basecamp (or similar) to allow comments

Headlines: Access other professionals

Learnings: Provide affordable housing Developers with a dedicated conference topic. Case Studies. reach out to affordable housing developers who may not have access to info on energy efficiency.

Themes: Housing developers / case studies

Quotes: Great organization to meet qualified professional in the high performance building sector through conference and Pro Tours, magazine, and masters series.

Additional: Have Board Members rotate from a pool of candidates, as opposed to being elected.

Headlines: Education & Networking

Learnings: More events and speakers. Maybe partner with another organization in New York to throw more events?

Themes: Networking

Quotes: Although NYC-centric, the projects presented in the sessions are relevant and transferable. Boston "best of the best presenters", stronger culture of community
Additional: build on outreach to students and EPs

Headlines: Regional focus is a plus

Learnings: More events and speakers. Maybe partner with another organization in New York to throw more events?

Learnings: Better marketing. good events and conferences but not enough people know about them!

Headlines: 1st time speaker

Learnings: NESEA could do more to reach out to new speakers

Headlines: Gathering of Like Minded Individuals

Headlines: Big Tent

Headlines: Broaden the audience base

Headlines: Get involved in policy work

Learnings: Understand our three roles: education, advocacy, and convener.

Themes: We need to be more vocal and public with our work.

Headlines: Expert witnesses for policy makers

Learnings: Policy makers (city, state, federal employees) see NESEA as an essential resource and ally.

Quotes: NESEA is a place where the policy maker and the practitioner meet -- the people who are doing the work in the field engage with those who are setting the policy.

Quotes: Be more conscious and deliberate about creating ongoing feedback loops between field experience and policy making

Quotes: testimony that various NESEA members gave at Stretch Code hearings across the state in 2009. NESEA should do more of that.

Quotes: Our 501(c)3 status does not prevent our members from testifying at public hearings as reliable expert witnesses who identify themselves as NESEA practitioners.

Quotes: We should get more involved in the policy making process.

Quotes: A group like NESEA could play a more important role in driving policy and building coalitions of like-minded groups to counter louder voices in the industry who believe changes should come more slowly

Quotes: A resource that public policy people could direct others to (voters, legislators, etc) to get information and alternate points of view

Headlines: Easier access to a wider variety of offerings

Learnings: Many of our offerings are beyond the budget reach of public employees.

Themes: Shorter, more convenient, cheaper program offerings.

Quotes: as a government employee, either can't afford the fee or the schedule doesn't work for her. She can't get buy-in from her boss to pay for or grant time to attend.

Learnings: If public employees have a hard time coming to us, we need to figure out how to go to them.
Quotes: events on Fri. nights to Saturday morning or Early morning or lunch-time events might also draw more gov. workers

Learnings: We set barriers to participation in our events that we may not be aware of; these barriers prevent some of the people who can help us most achieve our mission from helping us.

Quotes: NESEA professionals need to broaden their base, and NESEA needs to implement training and programs that facilitate that

Quotes: It needs more events, and more training, including hands-on training for tradespeople

Quotes: Provide more ways for people in NYC to gain more exposure to NESEA - perhaps opportunities for small groups of people (evening, breakfast?) to attend something along the lines of a pre-conference workshop, but not attached to a conference, so could happen at any time during the year.

Quotes: Float the idea of pre-conference workshops for NYC

Quotes: maybe NESEA should develop short educational video snippets on energy topics that could be viewed on a cell phone

Quotes: Littler, shorter offerings could go a long way, be a "gateway drug" for the conference and pro tours.

Quotes: The younger generation wants information in 5-minute or shorter chunks.

Quotes: NESEA would also benefit from creating even more opportunities for conversations and networking, including outreach to people from outside the NESEA region.

Headlines: Expand perception of small-scale, residential focus to include C&I

Learnings: We need to take a hard look at our programming and our marketing to figure out why we're still perceived as primarily residential.

Quotes: NESEA is gradually migrating away from an exclusive focus on single-building solutions to neighborhood and community scale solutions

Quotes: NESEA needs to get stronger in C&I

Quotes: Particularly strong in the residential sector.

Quotes: We need to be more inclusive and "fix" our reputation for being predominantly residential.

Quotes: Expand C&I presence. Include a broader perspective from vendors and practitioners.

Headlines: Increase NESEA's visibility and presence

Quotes: Our logo doesn't stand out for her

Quotes: She gets our acronym confused with another organization's

Quotes: There's a huge tract of the population that's poorly informed about energy efficiency

Quotes: Consider the ACI model of a major conference every year (in NESEA's case, BE Boston) plus regular regional conferences that are scaled down and that maybe offer the most popular sessions at BE Boston.

Quotes: We need to get better at marketing our expertise and experience.

Quotes: The message is not getting out adequately

Quotes: Increase NESEA brand presence in NYC to drum up more interest for conference;

Quotes: NESEA should be the hub for the high-performance design and construction sector -- the go-to place for information and advice by means of conferences, tours, and website.

Quotes: How do we ride the next curve of innovation and reach the next circle of stakeholders beyond the one we serve now? We need in particular to reach those who think the problems are too great.

Quotes: Most of the architecture and construction world in our region does not know we exist, which after 40 years is "unfortunate."

Headlines: More collaboration

Quotes: It's odd that VEIC and NESEA do not collaborate at all, given the degree of geographic and mission overlap

Quotes: Historically, collaboration between NESEA and the DOER has not been all that well coordinated, but when it has been coordinated it has been very effective. We should be more deliberate about the collaboration in the future.

Quotes: Maybe collaborate with Home Depot (!)

Quotes: Develop more relationships with institutions of higher ed. similar to St. John's

Quotes: Develop more corporate sponsors that provide scholarships for students to attend conference

Appendix E: Summary of Board/Staff Interviews by Jeanette Millard

- Interviews focused on Role of the Board, Clarity about that role, Board/Staff relationship
- Overall Staff summary was sent to Board – summary of work last FY by Jeanette – so no further feedback about Staff/operations was officially gathered

Topic: Role of the Board

Is to focus on the WHAT – the Staff focused on the HOW

- Clear agreement on this
- Board members who get operational are doing that in specific membership roles (not Board role)
- Is clearer now that the Board has “cleaned up” its membership

Could be expanded to include the WHY

- Is happening more now with Strategic Planning
- Carry the vision and mission forward
- Really glad the Board is so engaged in doing the SP now

To be reflection of, and set the tone for, the organization

- Represent cross-section of the environment
- Used to be more elitist, more factions

Ambassador (“friend-raiser”) is most important role

- Expanding our ability to bring in funding **and** raise the presence of NESEA
- Building the relationships is the main thing

Financial / fiscal / fundraising role

- Not mentioned first or second some of the time
- Questions about the \$1,500
 - Should it be more?
 - Board could bring in more money with some focus on it
 - Would be good to be clear that a certain amount is *not* “in kind donation”
- General agreement that “it is the relationships and networking, not the “ask.”

Our role is as a brain trust – be creative and put forth ideas

- It is up to Jennifer to decide if it is part of fulfilling the mission
- A safe place for Jennifer to explore ideas, get input, not attacked

Topic: Board functioning overall

- “Can have lots of discussions but need to speak as ONE”
- “We need to be very aware of professionalism and governance – “we need to play by the rules.”
- “We are lucky to have Jennifer! – and it is good she doesn’t pick Board members”
- “We have a strong Board now, we work well together, and people are engaged and committed”

- “We don’t always agree but we shouldn’t – we can talk it out and move on together”
- “Is it a conflict of interest for a Board member to be a conference chair?”
- Board chair should hold Board members accountable
- Sometimes this role falls to Jennifer – she is very hands-on
- Different chairs have been better or worse at holding people accountable
- “The Board has no term limits!”
- “The Board needs a vibrant leadership pipeline” – there’s not a formal way for members to get more involved

Topic: Relationship / work with Staff

- Is friendly and cooperative, if limited
 - Work together on projects (BE, ProTours)
 - A few Staff now come to meetings – good!
 - Some Staff don’t know much about the Board, and don’t really care
- Could be expanded (heard from both groups)
 - Staff member on each sub-committee would be good
 - Less stress on Jennifer as “the one Staff person” on every committee
 - Better info and more clarity to have Staff & Board work together
 - “Thank you for asking me!”
 - Board would understand things like Staff turnover more
 - Okay if **Staff** initiates it and Jennifer approves – otherwise we are in their business
- Was history of Board over-stepping, so we have been *careful* about it recently
- “I love this Board – as a Staff person, they have my back.”

Suggestions

- Need Staff person on development committee, e.g.
- Need internal training on fundraising and Board roles overall – could be good for the Board to have a level deeper understanding of the financial part
- Need to strengthen the on-boarding process
- See the Pro-tours as mini-membership meetings – with current and possibly new members – would be good to have at least one Board member at as many as possible (also so they can see what goes on there)

Other

- We could do more networking **among** NESEA members
- There’s not a good way to record which members volunteer and work regularly with NESEA
- Is this SP an update to the 2013 plan?
- What are the sub-committees and what do they do? Needs clarifying
- General concern by all: Staff turnover
 - If we have continued Staff turnover no strategic plan will help.
 - Some sense that recent OD work has improved this, or will improve it

Appendix F: Parking Lot Issues

The Board and Staff identified a number of issues that will still need to be discussed and resolved as we implement this plan:

Communications-related issues:

- Correct misperception that NESEA is not focused on C&I (we are doing a lot in the C&I arena, but our reputation as a residentially-focused org persists)
- Do a better job publicizing all that we are doing on the EP/student front
- Make clearer how members can become involved on committees - communicate more clearly the pathways in
- Identify our target audience(s). Where are they? How do we reach them? How do they differ from our membership?
- Jeanette suggests a graphic to present core and peripheral audiences (working from the center of the bullseye outward)

Other issues not explicitly incorporated into the strategic goals:

- One-day cities conference
- Deliver programs at all levels of built environment
- Bottom Lines group for cities and towns (needs funding)
- Robust, member-curated online community
- Reciprocal alliances what advance the mission and broaden our reach
- Leverage our capital with other nonprofits - knowledge, passion, connections
- Shore up profitable programs
- Improve Board fiduciary oversight
- Serving other areas outside the Northeast, but within the same climate zone

Appendix G: Implementing the Plan

Key questions while monitoring implementation of the plan

To monitor and evaluate progress on the plan, we will consider the following questions: Are goals and objectives being achieved or not? If they are, then acknowledge, reward and communicate the progress. If not, then consider the following questions.

1. Will the goals be achieved according to the timelines specified in the plan? If not, then why?
2. Should the deadlines for completion be changed (be careful about making these changes -- know why efforts are behind schedule before times are changed)?
3. Do personnel have adequate resources (money, equipment, facilities, training, etc.) to achieve the goals?
4. Are the goals and objectives still realistic?
5. Should priorities be changed to put more focus on achieving the goals?
6. Should the goals be changed (be careful about making these changes -- know why efforts are not achieving the goals before changing the goals)?
7. What can be learned from our monitoring and evaluation in order to improve future planning activities and also to improve future monitoring and evaluation efforts?

Reporting status of implementation

Results of monitoring and evaluation will be in writing, and will include:

1. Answers to the "Key Questions While Monitoring Implementation of the Plan"
2. Trends regarding the progress (or lack thereof) toward goals, including which goals and objectives
3. Recommendations about the status
4. Any actions needed by management

Procedure for changing the plan

Regarding any changes to the plan, we will answer these questions:

1. What is causing changes to be made?
2. Why the changes should be made (the "why" is often different than "what is causing" the changes).
3. What specific changes should be made, including to goals, objectives, responsibilities and timelines?

We will manage the various versions of the plan (including by putting a new date on each new version of the plan), and will always keep old copies of the plan.

Appendix H: Communicating the Plan

This plan will be widely communicated including through use of the following approaches:

1. Every Board member and Staff member will receive a copy of the plan.
2. The NESEA ED and People Management Team will share the plan with NESEA Staff upon adoption, during a Staff meeting.
3. Circulation and discussion of the plan will become part of our onboarding of new Board members, Staff, and interns.
4. We will highlight portions of the plan in each Members Monthly newsletter, starting first with the updates to the mission, vision, values.
5. We will share the plan with all stakeholders who were interviewed in developing the plan.
6. The Board and Staff will identify other major stakeholders, with whom we will share the plan.
7. Share “one-pager” of the strategic plan to share with NESEA members, lapsed members, and others TBD.
8. Consider presenting the plan in some way at upcoming conferences or NESEA events, NESEA Night.

Appendix I: People Involved in Developing and/or Approving the Plan

NESEA Board Members

Damainique Bruce, Net Impact Board Fellow
Michael Bruss, Bruss Project Management, Board Chair 2015-2016
Saheel Chandrani, Johnson Controls
Caitriona Cooke, Consultant
Martine Dion, SMMA, Board Vice Chair
Paul Eldrenkamp, Byggmeister, Board Treasurer
Jenna Ide, City of Salem, MA
Phil Kaplan, KTA, Board Chair 2017
Rob Meyers, South Mountain Company
Lauren Brust Moss, NORESCO
Fortunat Mueller, ReVision Energy
Rick Renner, Richard Renner Architects, Board Secretary 2015-2016
John Skipper, Con Edison
Ben Southworth, Garland Mill Timber Frames, Board Secretary 2017
Lisa Tallet, National Grid

NESEA Staff

Miriam Aylward, Director of Program Development
Zach Bitzer, Development Coordinator
Susan Farber, Conference Coordinator
Beth Fraser, Director of Operations
Jenny Goldberg, Marketing Manager
Eli Lisseck, IT and Database Manager
Florence MacGregor, Program Manager
Jennifer Marrapese, Executive Director
Katie Schendel, Membership Manager
Diane Robinson, Executive Assistant
Gina Sieber, Business Manager