

A BLUEPRINT

IMPROVING CITY FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT



for Newton's Future

SUMMARY

SPEND PUBLIC DOLLARS EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY

Newton residents expect excellent local services and are willing to pay for those services, but do not want to see their tax dollars spent inefficiently and irresponsibly. A number of areas in Newton government operations can be made more efficient, reducing costs and improving the value realized for tax dollars.

- Improve preventative maintenance
- Implement water conservation measures including use of gray water systems, well water and improved water technologies
- Leverage new technology to improve delivery of City services
- Emphasize regional cooperation by creating regional purchasing agreements to reduce duplicative research costs, coordinate open space and economic development efforts, concentrate services and leverage from other communities' innovation

PURSUE ALTERNATIVE REVENUE ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Newton is heavily reliant on property tax revenue to pay for local services that may only rise by 2 ½ percent per year. This has amounted to total property tax revenue growth of 3-3.5% per year. Due to rising costs rising, expenses have outpaced this growth. When faced with similar budget constraints, other communities sought out new creative sources of revenue. Newton is well-positioned to pursue many such revenue-enhancement strategies that have met with success in other communities.

- Payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILOT)
- Pursue available grant funds by hiring an outside grant-writing firm, researching available grants, prioritizing grant opportunities and tracking our success.
- Use impact fees to allow flexible development options
- Form a municipal power company
- Develop and implement sustainable growth strategy
- Attract private philanthropic support by exploring the creation of a fund-raising position, providing donor recognition opportunities, reducing barriers to giving and creating a Newton Foundation.

Ken Parker
Mayor Candidate for Newton 2009
www.parker2009.org

REFORM MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

As documented by the Blue Ribbon Commission in their January, 2006 report on Newton's finances, our city is suffering from a structural deficit that, if not addressed, will result in dramatic reductions in services over the next decade. Short- and medium-term initiatives to control costs and to generate new revenue will help us get through the next few years, but long-term fiscal stability requires more fundamental reform.

- Modernize Newton government by creating CFO and CIO positions, reorganizing departments and establishing financial and health care advisory committees.
- Increase productivity and accountability by involving employees in setting objectives, offering better tools and training, using project teams, providing feedback to employees and contractors, documenting important processes, updating human resource practices, adopting Total Quality Management protocols and introducing competition to cost centers. • Improve results measurement, customer service and transparency by developing a customer service database (NewtonStat), integrating feedback into City processes, proving access to financial information, developing web-based information tools and fostering a culture of transparency.
- Reform City budget and financial planning by implementing programmatic budgeting, factoring spending and revenue relationships into decisions, creating a five-year fiscal plan, developing a financial investment and capital