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## 1 COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

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2 ~~This chapter addresses the operation of town government and the delivery of services. Many of the~~  
3 ~~policies and guidelines for the work that is done are covered in the transportation, natural resources, land~~  
4 ~~use, and financial policy chapters. This chapter contains an overview of town facilities and services from~~  
5 ~~two perspectives:~~

6 ~~1—The current state of the facility or service and whether there are issues to resolve; and~~

7 ~~2—Changes expected over the next 5 to 10 years relating to facilities and services.~~

8 ~~It is the goal of this chapter to encourage the town to plan for changes in future years, and to establish~~  
9 ~~priorities for facility and service improvements in conjunction with a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for~~  
10 ~~funding for these improvements.~~

### 11 **Introduction**

12 ~~Municipal government provides and maintains facilities, services and infrastructure. These~~  
13 ~~include Norwich provides solid waste disposal and recycling, roads and sidewalks, emergency services~~  
14 ~~(including police, fire protection, and emergency medical response), recreation, public records and~~  
15 ~~orderly development of land through planning and zoning, and administration of these functions. In order~~  
16 ~~to pay for these services and the schools, the town assesses property and collects taxes.~~

17 ~~During the past 30 years, both population growth and the increasing expectations of Norwich residents~~  
18 ~~have resulted in significant facility and service expansions and improvements. Town budgets have~~  
19 ~~reflected these changes. As shown in Figure 4-3, the rate of growth has slowed since the late 1980s, even~~  
20 ~~during periods of a strong economy.~~

21 ~~Although most aspects of town services have become more efficient through technology and better~~  
22 ~~planning, there have been expansions of town administration budgets due to decisions to turn to~~  
23 ~~professional management to take charge of town operations formerly run by volunteers. These decisions~~  
24 ~~include the addition of a part-time professional assessor in 2001, the switch to a town~~  
25 ~~manager/selectboard form of government in 2002, and the addition of a part-time paid fire chief in 2008.~~  
26 ~~Another source of increased municipal expenses has been unfunded mandates by the state, requiring the~~  
27 ~~town to perform additional services at its own expense.~~

1 **Facilities**

2 **Public Works Buildings**

3 ~~The existing Department of Public Works Garage, built in 1976, is an 80-foot by 50-foot (4,000 square~~  
4 ~~foot) steel frame building with five bays and limited additional space for storage, and administration.~~  
5 ~~There are no offices or break rooms separate from the garage work area. A 2012 report listed many~~  
6 ~~functional deficiencies, code compliance issues, and additional operational space needs. Proposals to~~  
7 ~~double the size of the building and address the deficiencies, along with bond votes including a Public~~  
8 ~~Safety building for fire and police, were presented to the town twice in 2015 and were defeated. In~~  
9 January of 2016, the town submitted an application to FEMA to use \$ 432,968 of Alternative Funds from  
10 the loss of the Norwich Pool Dam in Irene to add a 4,000 square foot addition on to the building to house  
11 office space and other necessary enclosed spaces. The project also addresses energy efficiency and  
12 indoor heated storage for additional vehicles and equipment. Funding was approved in February 2017,  
13 and construction began in the fall of 2017, ~~the building was commissioned in xxx, 2018.~~

14 **Fire Police Public Safety Building**

15 ~~The existing Fire Department Building was originally built in 1925 as a wood frame building and was~~  
16 ~~replaced in 1980 with a steel frame 4,096 square foot garage with a brick veneer façade, and a wood~~  
17 ~~framed training / meeting room. The building is marginally heated and there was an exhaust extraction~~  
18 ~~system for the fire apparatus installed in 2009. The building is of adequate size to house the fire~~  
19 ~~apparatus and equipment but does not have enough room for related support activities.~~

20 ~~The former Police Department office, adjacent to the Fire Department Building, was built as a private~~  
21 ~~residence in 1957. The town acquired the building in 1994 as a short term solution for housing the Police~~  
22 ~~Department. The plywood-sheathed ranch style house on a slab was never designed to accommodate the~~  
23 ~~complex requirements of a modern police department. The building has been torn down.~~

24 ~~Proposals to build a new Public Safety building for fire and police adjacent to the existing Fire Department~~  
25 ~~building, along with bond funding, were presented to voters twice in 2015 and were defeated. The~~  
26 ~~voters approved a third plan and bond for \$1,400,000 in November 2016. Construction for the new~~  
27 ~~building began in the late spring of 2017 and it was officially opened in April 2018.~~

28 **Tracy Memorial Hall (Town Hall)**

29 Tracy Hall, completed in 1939, contains seven town offices, records vaults, a gym/auditorium, and two  
30 meeting rooms. The building underwent major interior and structural renovations in 1994–5, ~~including~~  
31 ~~an installation of an elevator, new electric service, wiring for IT services, new HVAC, and a reconfiguration~~

1 | ~~of spaces. The cost was approximately \$850,000~~ funded with a 20-year bond, which was retired in 2016.  
2 | The various spaces are used by town offices, recreation, and, when available, by outside groups.

### 3 | **Capital Planning and Budgeting**

4 | Since 1994, major renovations and new buildings have been funded with bonding. Repairs, maintenance  
5 | and minor improvements are funded from reserve accounts established for each building. The reserve  
6 | accounts are funded annually based on the age of the building and anticipated major repairs. The amount  
7 | for the Tracy Hall reserve account has been increased in recent years in anticipation of replacing of HVAC  
8 | equipment, flooring and other major repairs. Funding of reserve accounts for buildings being replaced  
9 | with new ones will be reduced.

## 10 | **Public Works Department**

11 | ~~In 2007, the Highway Department, Solid Waste and Recycling Department, and Buildings and Grounds  
12 | Department were combined into the Public Works Department under the Public Works Director. This  
13 | created a more efficient arrangement promoting the sharing of resources.~~

14 | ~~The Public Works Director, who reports to the Town Manager, oversees department operations and staff  
15 | and also prepares budgets, bids for major purchases, multi-year paving and bridge repair plans, and grant  
16 | applications. As with most town departments, federal and state policies and regulations have greatly  
17 | increased the administrative work load at the town level.~~

### 18 | **Highway and Bridge Maintenance**

19 | The Highway Crew, comprised of five full-time employees and a seasonal employee, maintains the roads,  
20 | bridges, and equipment. Major equipment includes:

- 21 | • 5 plow/dump trucks
- 22 | • 1 mid-sized truck for in-town use
- 23 | • 1 pickup truck
- 24 | • 1 loader
- 25 | • 1 backhoe loader
- 26 | • 2 graders

27 | Replacement of equipment is funded from a designated equipment fund supported with annual  
28 | budgeted payments determined by long-range equipment replacement needs. Major equipment  
29 | purchases have also been paid by low-interest, short-term bonds. Public Works Equipment is included in  
30 | the Norwich Capital Budget Plan and Report (known as Norcap).

**Comment [u1]:** Create table

~~Smaller road maintenance projects and maintenance of the unpaved roads are performed by the highway crew in the summer season. Major projects, including re-treatment of paved roads and bridge replacement, are contracted out. Re-treatment of paved roads represents a significant portion of the Public Works Budget (20% in 2017), and according to a study done in 2005 known as the Marcon Report, should be closer to 30% in order to prevent the roads from deteriorating over time. The long-term costs of fixing deteriorated roads far exceed those of maintaining the road surface on a regular basis. In addition to maintaining roads, the Town of Norwich has 69 major bridges and stream crossings, 822 road crossing culverts, and 326 driveway culverts to maintain. The town receives some state funds for maintaining roads based on mileage and also receives special grants for major paving projects. In past years, the town received state funds for bridge replacement and repair. In the future these funds are to be allocated regionally based on importance to the region and condition of the bridge. This will reduce funds available for smaller bridge projects.~~

The impact of growth on the highway and bridge maintenance budgets primarily depends on the location of development, rather than the size of the development. Development in areas accessed from state highways may have a minimal effect on the town highway budget, as opposed to development in areas far from the village on narrow town roads at higher elevations. Land use policies will affect future highway and bridge budgets.

### **Buildings and Grounds**

The Buildings and Grounds Department, established in 2008, includes one full-time employee responsible for maintaining the grounds of all town property, maintaining sidewalks during the winter, repair and maintenance of town buildings, and maintaining recreation fields and facilities. The department's equipment includes a Holder articulated tractor (used for removing snow from sidewalks and for mowing), additional mowers, and other tools.

~~The need for the Buildings and Grounds Department was precipitated by agreements with the state requiring the town to maintain some areas adjacent to state highways in exchange for the state constructing enhancements. The department also lowers the cost of maintaining town property by eliminating the use of multiple outside contractors. The department maintains recreation fields, town-owned open space along highways, and the grounds associated with town buildings and facilities, and performs other maintenance projects that were formerly contracted out in a piecemeal manner.~~

### **Solid Waste and Recycling**

Norwich residents use the transfer station off New Boston Road for most of their solid waste disposal and recycling needs. The station is managed by the Public Works Department and is staffed by three part-time attendants. Residents have the option of using a private hauler or taking their trash and recyclables to the

1 transfer station. Over the years, there has been a steady increase in the types of materials accepted for  
2 recycling. ~~Resale of recycled materials helps to offset facility expenses, but is subject to unpredictable~~  
3 ~~fluctuations in the marketplace.~~

4 The town's membership in the Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste Management District provides residents  
5 with additional options for disposing of hazardous waste at special collections in the District, and access  
6 to the Hartford Solid Waste/Recycling Transfer Center, where construction and demolition waste may be  
7 disposed of along with recycled materials and trash.

8 The District, consisting of 10 towns, owns a permitted site for a new landfill in Hartland, which may be  
9 constructed and opened in the near future. This new facility is projected to receive the district waste for  
10 more than 50 years. Additional solid waste from other regions of Vermont and New Hampshire will  
11 provide substantial funding for the facility.

12 Reduction of the volume of solid waste through recycling and the purchase by residents of goods with  
13 less packaging has been a goal of the town and the District. ~~Education of residents and businesses has~~  
14 ~~been an effective tool for reducing the amount of solid waste.~~

## 15 **Utilities**

### 16 **Water Supply**

17 The Town of Norwich currently has no direct role in public water supply. All properties, except for those  
18 within the Norwich Fire District, obtain potable water from on-site wells or small, state-regulated water  
19 systems. The District, managed by its Prudential Committee, operates a public water system serving the  
20 historic village center and some outlying areas, roughly 20% of the parcels in Norwich. This water system  
21 was substantially improved in the late 1980s. A 1988 well rehabilitation program resulted in substantial  
22 water capacity beyond current needs. The Prudential Committee foresees no major changes to the  
23 system during the next few years, but is considering possible connection to the Hanover system as a  
24 backup service measure.

Comment [u2]: Get status update

25 The water service area has undergone only minor geographic expansions over the past 20 years. The last  
26 major expansion in the water service area was the addition of the McKenna Road properties. More recent  
27 expansions have been incremental in nature, and have included only one or two buildings at a time. No  
28 significant expansions to the system are anticipated at present. The District's policy for expansion  
29 requires a developer to provide complete funding for any system improvements. ~~However, in most~~  
30 ~~instances, the absence of municipal water is not a limiting factor on development capability in Norwich.~~

1 The Norwich Fire District (not to be confused with the Norwich Fire Department) was created in 1922 and  
2 operates as a municipal entity within the town with its own right to tax and create ordinances. A three-  
3 member Prudential Committee elected by the voters of the District governs the District, which includes  
4 the Village Business and Village Residential Districts and some additional properties along Route 5 North.

5 Over the years, the Fire District has performed various governmental services for its constituents and the  
6 residents of Norwich, including zoning ordinances (before town-wide zoning was adopted), operating the  
7 volunteer fire department prior to the town taking over, installing sidewalks, and enacting specific  
8 ordinances regarding hunting and canine control. Since the 1971 purchase of the privately owned  
9 Norwich Water Supply Company, the district has operated the municipal water department.

10 Of the 974 acres of the Fire District's land, 917 acres are in the watershed of the Charles Brown Brook,  
11 the former source of water for the municipal system. In 1995, 350 acres of the watershed land were  
12 placed under an agreement between the town and the District, and in 2001 the remaining 567 acres  
13 were added to the agreement. The District retains title to the property with a conservation easement  
14 given to the town in exchange for an exemption from town property taxes.

15 Forestry, educational, and recreational uses of the property are under the control of a Land Management  
16 Council, composed of three voting members appointed by the Prudential Committee and the Selectboard  
17 and four non-voting members representing the Conservation Commission, Prudential Committee,  
18 Recreation Council, and Selectboard. Timber sales from the property support the management activities.

19 ~~As the town grows and faces additional development and service issues, it is possible that the goals of the~~  
20 ~~Town of Norwich and Norwich Fire District will be better served by merging. This issue should be~~  
21 ~~considered and evaluated periodically.~~

## 22 **Sewage Treatment**

23 There is no municipal sewage disposal system in Norwich. The costs and benefits of a municipal sewage  
24 treatment system have been considered several times in the past, most recently in 2005, when the  
25 Selectboard charged a committee with evaluating the need for a municipal sewer system and the  
26 feasibility of building one, either with a new treatment facility or through hooking up to the existing  
27 systems in Hanover or Hartford. The report found that:

- 28 • There is no area-wide failure of existing systems that would indicate a need for a municipal  
29 system.
- 30 • A conventional municipal wastewater treatment system would be prohibitively expensive.
- 31 • Tying into another municipal system, most likely Hartford, may be feasible.

1 The report acknowledged that a municipal system would allow for more growth, ~~but did not take a~~  
2 ~~position on whether this was good or bad. The full report is available from the Town Manager's Office or~~  
3 ~~on the town web site.~~

4 ~~Concern has been expressed about a municipal sewage treatment system allowing too much~~  
5 ~~development in areas it would serve, however, concentrated development in designated areas closer to~~  
6 ~~existing roads and facilities may be more beneficial in the long term. We must determine what the town~~  
7 ~~is prepared to support in terms of growth, while recognizing that the choice is only ours in the negative.~~  
8 ~~We may be able to prohibit too much growth, but we cannot conjure it. This Town Plan does not~~  
9 ~~authorize the expenditure of town funds to construct, improve or maintain a connection to a neighboring~~  
10 ~~town's sewage and/or water system. Such a move would require specific authorization and support in the~~  
11 ~~Town Plan via a future amendment. This issue is discussed more thoroughly in the Land Use and Housing~~  
12 ~~chapters, and appropriate guidance for the placement and density of future development is included in~~  
13 ~~current land use regulations based on the goals and policies supported in this plan.~~

#### 14 **Electricity Distribution**

15 Electricity is supplied in Norwich by Green Mountain Power (GMP). There are two electrical transmission  
16 lines originating at the Wilder Dam, one running north along Interstate 91 into Thetford (GMP) and  
17 another running northwest along Turnpike Road into Sharon (VELCO). There are three-phase power lines  
18 along most of the Route 5 corridor and in Norwich Village, which are needed to facilitate power  
19 generation at distributed, community-scale sites (as compared to traditional utility-scale power plants or  
20 dams) closer to where the electricity will be used. Still smaller single-phase power lines prevail outside  
21 the village, connecting neighborhoods and single homes to the larger distribution network.

22 ~~Adoption of a "smart grid" into the systems of both electric utilities would improve the energy efficiency~~  
23 ~~of Norwich consumers. A "smart grid" delivers electricity from suppliers to consumers using two-way~~  
24 ~~digital technology to control appliances at consumers' homes to save energy, reduce cost and increase~~  
25 ~~reliability and transparency. It also incorporates overall digital management of the distribution system to~~  
26 ~~monitor disruptions in service and generally improves the efficiency of the system. This, however, is a~~  
27 ~~system-wide change, not something that can be initiated by the town.~~

#### 28 **Telecommunications and Broadband**

29 ~~Cell phone service and high-speed internet access have become a necessity in our lives, just as electricity~~  
30 ~~and the telephone were in the early part of the last century. These modern technologies utilize towers,~~  
31 ~~antennas, and additional wire strung along poles or underground. Federal statutes mandate that these~~  
32 ~~services be made available to everyone, thereby limiting the rights of towns to review and condition~~  
33 ~~these projects and, in some cases, eliminating local review entirely.~~

1 Norwich has one 87-foot-high cell tower above Upper Loveland Road with antennas for two providers.  
2 Due to hilly terrain and the limited number of towers, cell service in Norwich is spotty and, in some areas  
3 of town, nonexistent. ~~The current zoning regulations permit towers only in the Rural Residential District.~~  
4 ~~Although this limitation remains appropriate for towers, antennas can now be installed on utility poles,~~  
5 ~~buildings and other structures, Zoning regulations need to be updated to allow for new and alternative~~  
6 ~~technologies, while making sure visual impact is minimized and that obsolete and unused infrastructure is~~  
7 ~~removed. Ridgeline and scenic areas, as designated in zoning regulations, should also be protected from~~  
8 ~~siting. In addition, the town may want to investigate whether it can earn revenue by licensing the use of~~  
9 ~~rights of way to telecommunication companies.~~

10 ~~The availability of cell service (which often also delivers Internet access) and broadband internet access~~  
11 ~~are services providing important benefits to residents including safety and security, education, economic,~~  
12 ~~health monitoring, entertainment, etc. The town should continue to support these services while~~  
13 ~~minimizing the adverse visual impact of towers, antennas and wires to the extent possible.~~

14 Although parts of town have access to broadband internet service over cable, DSL (digital subscriber line)  
15 or wireless providers, many areas away from the Village Business District and main roads cannot obtain  
16 high-speed internet connections. These areas of town are limited to slow dial-up or almost as slow  
17 expensive satellite service.

18 ECFiber provides service in portions of the town at speeds substantially faster than either cable or DSL.  
19 ~~Provision of broadband service to all areas of town is essential for a variety of reasons such as:~~

- 20 ~~• Economic development;~~
- 21 ~~• Education;~~
- 22 ~~• Reducing travel;~~
- 23 ~~• Accessing medical services from home; and~~
- 24 ~~• General well-being of residents.~~

25 ~~Provision of state-of-the-art cell phone and broadband services to all areas of town is also an important~~  
26 ~~ingredient in attracting individuals and families to Norwich.~~

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1 **Emergency Services**

2 **Police**

3 Before 1973, when the Norwich Police Department was originally established by the appointment of a  
4 Chief of Police, police services were provided by part-time elected constables. Since then the force has  
5 increased to a chief, three full-time officers, two part-time officers and a full-time clerk-dispatcher. While  
6 the department is available on a 24-hour basis, regular patrol services are now provided for an average of  
7 16 hours each day.

8 The majority of the departmental budget is allocated to regular patrol operations. The department's  
9 major equipment includes two cruisers, a four-wheel-drive patrol vehicle, extensive communication and  
10 video systems, firearms, and other specialized equipment.

11 ~~The responsibilities and size of the police department are not dependent on population growth alone.~~

12 ~~Other factors may include:~~

- 13 ~~• Public expectations for police services~~
- 14 ~~• Demographics of town residents~~
- 15 ~~• Types and impacts of commercial businesses~~
- 16 ~~• State and federal mandates for services and reporting~~
- 17 ~~• Use of technology to increase efficiency of the existing force~~
- 18 ~~• Daytime population versus resident population~~

19 **Fire Protection**

20 The Norwich Fire Department is a volunteer department consisting of a part-time (30 hours per week)  
21 salaried fire chief and 37 members. The fire division has 27 members, some of whom are Emergency  
22 Medical Technicians (EMTs) who work in the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Division. These "on-call"  
23 firefighters and EMTs are paid for time spent in responding to fire calls and for some training time. The  
24 department has one station that houses two engines, one tanker, one aerial ladder, one forestry truck  
25 and one mini-pumper. The department provides fire, emergency medical service, hazardous materials  
26 response (operations level) and rescue services. The department has had a salaried career fire chief since  
27 August 2008.

28 The Norwich Fire Department faces challenges with recruitment and retention of members, as do most  
29 volunteer fire departments. This is a national problem that has been the target of numerous studies.  
30 Among the challenges identified are time demands, training requirements, increasing call volume, state  
31 and federal requirements, high cost of housing, an aging community, and the effects of the decline in

1 volunteers. Daytime responses are a particular challenge to the department, since there are a limited  
2 number of members available during workdays. Norwich and its adjoining communities rely on mutual  
3 aid, and multiple departments are dispatched to credible reports of building fires.

4 Norwich's recent classification from the Insurance Services Office (ISO) of 4 on a scale of 1 to 10 is one of  
5 the best ratings in Vermont and the Upper Valley, resulting in lower insurance premiums for all home  
6 owners. These ratings are based on equipment, training, communications, dispatch time, and water  
7 supplies. Homeowners may receive greater discounts if they are in the Norwich Fire District and are  
8 situated nearby a fire hydrant.

9 In addition to fighting fires, the Norwich Fire Department has been proactive in fire prevention and  
10 preparedness, with the goal of significantly reducing loss from fire without expanding the town budget.  
11 Zoning and subdivision regulations have been amended, requiring new development to provide all-season  
12 access for fire trucks and an adequate water supply to fight fires. In some cases, residential sprinkler  
13 systems will be required where there is limited access to a water supply.

14 The town has excellent water supply for fighting fires in and near the Village Business District due to the  
15 good pressure and capacity provided by the Norwich Water District hydrants. In outlying areas, water is  
16 brought from the Village Business District area by tankers or pumped from rivers, streams, or ponds. The  
17 Fire Department has installed nine dry hydrants accessible to fire equipment along ponds, streams, and  
18 rivers in the rural areas. The goal is to have water supplies for fire pumpers in every area of the town.  
19 Landowners are encouraged to install dry hydrants when building or renovating ponds.

20 ~~Although these water supplies are effective for property protection, residential sprinkler systems, in~~  
21 ~~conjunction with smoke alarms, improve protection of lives and property from fires in homes. A~~  
22 ~~residential sprinkler system is designed to control a fire long enough for the occupants to escape. Some~~  
23 ~~communities around the country are now requiring a residential sprinkler system in new homes. The~~  
24 ~~Norwich Fire Department highly recommends them, especially for homes at a distance from the~~  
25 ~~firehouse.~~

#### 26 **First-Response & Emergency Medical Services**

27 Emergency medical services are provided by the First Aid Stabilization Team (FAST) Squad. The FAST  
28 Squad has 18 members trained at or above the EMT-Basic level who provide patient care prior to the  
29 arrival of an ambulance from the Hanover Fire Department. The FAST Squad and Police Department have  
30 several automated external defibrillators.

31 First-response ambulance and emergency medical services are provided by the Town of Hanover through  
32 a contractual agreement based on both a per-capita payment from Norwich (in 2010, \$82,000 annually)

1 and user fees. Fees not paid by the user must be paid by the town. Future service cost increases are likely  
2 to be covered by user fees, rather than through the per capita fee.

3 Given the investment involved in equipment and personnel, this agreement is advantageous to Norwich.  
4 It is expected that this arrangement will be continued for the foreseeable future.

### 5 **Emergency Dispatch and 911**

6 Emergency calls are answered by VT 911. Police services are dispatched by the Hartford dispatch center.

7 Fire and emergency medical calls are dispatched by the Hanover dispatch center.

8 Assigning numbered street addresses for all occupied structures and locations where citizens gather is an  
9 important component of quick emergency response. Norwich has created official names for all public  
10 roads and for private roads serving three or more residences. Street numbers based on distance from the  
11 beginning of the road have been assigned to all residences and businesses. Landowners are required to  
12 display house numbers visible from the road, but this has not been fully enforced.

### 13 **Emergency Management**

14 The Town Manager serves as the Emergency Management Director. The Manager is assisted by a Deputy  
15 Emergency Management Director (currently the Fire Chief) and an Emergency Management Coordinator.

16 The Town Emergency Management Committee, comprising elected and appointed town officials, is a  
17 consensus group that assesses risks and prepares the local hazard mitigation plan, local emergency  
18 operations plan, continuity of government plan, and other documents in coordination with regional,  
19 state, and federal emergency management agencies.

20 In addition to maintaining and updating operations planning for a coordinated emergency response to  
21 major events, the committee also prepares pre-disaster mitigation plans for physical and regulatory  
22 changes to minimize the damage and loss of life in a major disaster. The types of disasters prepared for  
23 include natural disasters such as floods and ice storms, major fires, terrorism, hazardous material spills,  
24 and health-related events such as a pandemic outbreak of disease.

25 Disaster planning has evolved from focusing primarily on response and recovery to mitigation and  
26 resilience. Resilience is a concept focused on identifying and managing risks, proactively reducing  
27 vulnerabilities and improving response and recovery. A resilient community has the ability to withstand,  
28 respond and adapt to challenges. The goal is to ensure that communities are continually building capacity  
29 to adapt to a changing climate and respond to natural disasters. A resilient community thinks long term  
30 and is able to reorganize and renew itself, ideally in ways that put it in a stronger position than before the  
31 disaster.

1 The Town of Norwich has a FEMA-approved Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, which was adopted in 2015.  
2 The purpose of that plan is to identify hazards facing the community, assess the likelihood and risks  
3 associated with those hazards, and develop strategies to reduce the risks from known priority hazards. It  
4 is also a requirement for the town to qualify for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grants. That plan, as most  
5 recently adopted is incorporated by reference into this Town Plan. The Town of Norwich also updates and  
6 adopts a Local Emergency Operations Plan on an annual basis.

7 In the event of a federally-declared disaster, 75% of the eligible public costs (road repairs, for example)  
8 are reimbursed by the federal government. The Vermont Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund provides  
9 state funding to match that federal public assistance. Norwich is eligible for a 12.5% match, rather than  
10 the base 7.5% match, because the town has adopted:

- 11 • Flood Hazard Regulations;
- 12 • Town Road and Bridge Standards;
- 13 • A Local Emergency Operations Plan; and
- 14 • A Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

15 ~~If Norwich were to expand its flood hazard regulations to also limit new development within state-~~  
16 ~~mapped river corridors and to participate in FEMA's Community Rating System, the state match~~  
17 ~~percentage would increase to 17.5%.~~

## 18 **Town Government & Administration**

### 19 **Selectboard and Town Manager**

20 ~~The Town of Norwich has been governed by an elected Board of Selectmen (changed to Selectboard in~~  
21 ~~1996) since the first town meeting in 1761. In 2002, the town adopted the Selectboard/Town Manager~~  
22 ~~form of government.~~

23 ~~The Town Manager reports to the Selectboard and is subject to the direction and supervision of the~~  
24 ~~Selectboard. The Town Manager's responsibilities, as prescribed by state statute, include the general~~  
25 ~~supervision of the affairs of the town and more specifically, to be the administrative head of all~~  
26 ~~departments of town government and responsible for the efficient administration and finances of those~~  
27 ~~departments. The Selectboard is responsible for setting town policies, adopting budgets prepared by the~~  
28 ~~Town Manager, adopting ordinances, making appointments to town boards and committees and laying~~  
29 ~~out roads. The specific responsibilities of a Town Manager and the Selectboard are found in 24 V.S.A~~  
30 ~~Chapters 33 and 37.~~

1 **Town Clerk**

2 The Town Clerk is an elected official with specific statutory duties, including maintaining permanent town  
3 records of land transactions, roads, town meetings, and vital records (births, marriages and deaths). The  
4 town clerk also supervises elections, registers voters, issues licenses for marriages and dogs, and is the  
5 clerk for the Board of Civil Authority and the Board of Abatement. The town clerk is assisted by at least  
6 one part-time assistant town clerk.

7 Prior to the arrival of the Town Manager, the town clerk provided many additional services related to the  
8 day-to-day operation of the town that were not part of her statutory duties, including Tracy Hall  
9 operations and communicating resident concerns to department heads. These services are now the  
10 responsibility of the Town Manager's office.

11 The level of activity in the Town Clerk's office is based more on the number of real estate transactions  
12 and elections rather than the population growth, although there is some correlation. The future transition  
13 to digital records and indexing may result in efficiencies that will limit the need for additional personnel in  
14 the future. The 1994 renovation of Tracy Hall created sufficient office and vault storage space for now  
15 and the foreseeable future.

16 **Finance**

17 ~~The Finance Director is responsible for the accounting functions and tax collecting of the town. These~~  
18 ~~functions include payables, receivables, payroll, fixed assets, reporting, and preparing for the annual~~  
19 ~~audit. Prior to 2002, an elected treasurer performed these duties. With the transition to the~~  
20 ~~Selectboard/Town Manager form of government, the position of Finance Officer reporting to the Town~~  
21 ~~Manager was created. The Finance Officer has a part time assistant. The role of the Treasurer is now~~  
22 ~~limited to paying orders authorized by the Selectboard and investing funds with the approval of the~~  
23 ~~Selectboard.~~

24 **Listers/Assessors**

25 ~~A contract assessor was hired in 2012 to assist the Board of Listers by assuming the technical~~  
26 ~~responsibilities of inspecting and assessing properties, preparing the Grand List, and interacting with the~~  
27 ~~state. The elected Board of Listers hears and adjudicates grievances, lodges the Grand List, and~~  
28 ~~participates in Board of Civil Authority hearings. The contract assessor is engaged to complete a town-~~  
29 ~~wide reappraisal on a three-year cycle, visiting one-third of the properties in town each year.~~

30 **Planning and Zoning**

31 ~~The Planning and Zoning Office is responsible for the regulation and permitting of land development in~~  
32 ~~Norwich. The Planning Coordinator and Zoning Administrator are two separate positions held by the~~

1 ~~same person. The Zoning Administrator reviews all applications for development, issuing or denying~~  
2 ~~permits, or forwarding the application to the Development Review Board for a warned public hearing.~~  
3 ~~The Zoning Administrator is clerk for the Development Review Board, preparing and warning hearings,~~  
4 ~~assisting at hearings, and issuing decisions written by the board. The Zoning Administrator is also~~  
5 ~~responsible for enforcement of the zoning and subdivision regulations.~~

6 ~~The Planning Coordinator provides support to the Planning Commission in preparing the Town Plan and~~  
7 ~~land use regulations, and assists the Town Manager in transportation planning and other matters. In~~  
8 ~~addition to the Planning Coordinator/Zoning Administrator, a part-time assistant was added to the office~~  
9 ~~in 2007 to process the paperwork associated with permit applications and hearings, and manage the~~  
10 ~~databases. Changes in workload are related to the economic climate for development and changes in the~~  
11 ~~town's land use regulations requiring more permits and hearings.~~

## 12 **Cemeteries**

13 Of the 10 cemeteries in Norwich, lots are only available at Hillside, where roads and lots were added in  
14 2008, providing additional space. There may be a need for additional space in the future, and potential  
15 sites should be identified and reserved for cemetery space.

16 The income from the Perpetual Care Trust Fund covers from 20 to 50 percent of the amount the town  
17 spends on maintenance in the cemeteries. This percentage fluctuates based on interest rates and the  
18 amount spent on restoration of headstones. The town has been appropriating \$15,000 in recent years to  
19 supplement the interest from the Perpetual Care Trust Fund.

## 20 **Recreation**

### 21 **Recreation Department**

22 The Norwich Recreation Department manages a year-round recreation program for all Norwich residents  
23 and non-residents as space permits. Prior to 1995, the Norwich Recreation Council was an independent  
24 organization supported by fees, donations, and an annual appropriation from the town. In 1995, the town  
25 assumed responsibility for the council's financial operations, and it became the Norwich Recreation  
26 Department. The director became full-time in 2002. ~~Some instructors are paid either by the hour or a~~  
27 ~~percentage of fees, while the team sports programs depend primarily on volunteers from the community.~~

28 The number of students in Norwich has dropped substantially in the last 10 years, causing participation in  
29 specific programs to be reduced, but the number of programs has increased. Despite the drop in resident  
30 children, the Recreation Department still offsets its annual budget with user fees at a higher proportion  
31 than similar departments in the region.

- 1 The town's recreation facilities include:
- 2 • Huntley Meadow, with four tennis courts and six fields: two baseball diamonds, two full-size  
3 fields and two ¾-size fields. Three of these fields were added over the last six years. A mountain  
4 bike track was added by the Trails Committee in summer 2017.
  - 5 • The Norwich Green, with small fields for lacrosse, soccer and baseball.
  - 6 • Two gyms: Marion Cross School and Tracy Hall.
  - 7 • Barrett Meadow, with a small field for limited activities.
  - 8 • Indoor space at Marion Cross School for summer circus camp and other classroom programs.
- 9 The two gyms are sufficient for current and foreseeable needs.
- 10 Currently, the Recreation Department offers some non-athletic programs such as television production  
11 and sponsors some special events such as dances and road races. Adult programs include mountain  
12 biking, dance, capoeira, Chi Kung, and snowshoeing.
- 13 The Norwich Recreation Department continues to try new programs for residents of all ages. New  
14 facilities under consideration include an access to the Connecticut River for kayaks and canoes, and more  
15 running trails.

#### 16 **Other Recreation**

- 17 Norwich's trails and Class 4 roads are used for hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, and cross-  
18 country skiing. Town residents also have access to the Appalachian Trail, the Bill Ballard Trail along the  
19 Charles Brown Brook on Fire District land, a network of hiking and skiing trails on Parcel 5 on the Fire  
20 District land on the north side of Beaver Meadow Road, the Norwich Nature Trail in the Milton Frye  
21 Nature Area southeast of the school, the Hazen Trail south of the Montshire Museum, the Bradley Hill  
22 Trail, and the trail to Gile Mountain. Many of these trails could be connected to create a network of  
23 recreational trails throughout the town with the cooperation of private landowners. The Town and the  
24 Norwich Fire District have negotiated an agreement for the Fire District land south of Beaver Meadow  
25 Road to be managed for recreational use by a committee of town residents.
- 26 Bicycle and pedestrian paths, as discussed in the Transportation chapter of this plan, are designed  
27 primarily for people going from one place to another without having to use a car, but are also used by  
28 bicyclists, joggers, and cross-country skiers for recreation.
- 29 The Connecticut and Ompompanoosuc rivers also offer recreation for Norwich residents. There are two  
30 access locations to the rivers for launching boats, one along River Road owned by the town and one in  
31 Pompanoosuc owned by the state. There is no shoreline location along the river easily available to  
32 Norwich residents for swimming.

## Goals, Objectives and Actions

Goal E Provide a full range of community services and facilities in a cost-effective, environmentally sound manner without creating an undue burden on local taxpayers.

Objective E.1 Update the capital improvement program and budget based on projections of the needs of specific facilities and services consistent with historical growth trends in Norwich appropriate for a town of 3,400 residents at the core of a designated Micropolitan Area.

Action E.1.a Update and adopt a Capital Improvement Program that includes all capital construction and purchases over five- and ten-year periods. ~~The plan should be updated each year. The purpose is to spread costs evenly over time and to anticipate major construction projects.~~

Objective E.2 Maintain roads and bridges in the most cost-effective manner (this may require increased maintenance at an earlier stage of deterioration).

Action E.2.a Update the pavement and bridge inventory on an annual basis.

Objective E.3 ~~Expand access to state-of-the-art high-speed internet service to all households and businesses in Norwich.~~

Objective E.4 Maintain the high quality of the Norwich Police Department in serving the community.

Action E.4.a ~~Perform regular reviews of the operations and effectiveness of the Norwich Police Department using the criteria in the 2007 Norwich Police Services Report.~~

Action E.4.b Review the optimum size of the force and hours of coverage based on the needs of the community.

Objective E.5 Maintain the high quality of the Norwich Fire Department and the resulting low ISO score with continued training programs, developing new rural water supplies, and effective pre-planning.

Action E.5.a ~~Recommend residential sprinkler systems to all homeowners in the outlying parts of Norwich. Consider requiring them for new houses not readily accessible to emergency vehicles.~~

Action E.5.b ~~Enforce the existing ordinance requiring all home and business owners to display E911 locatable address numbers either on the building, if visible from the road, or at the entrance to their properties.~~



1 ~~Objective E.6 Maintain the professional staff in a cost-effective manner and keep technology up~~  
2 ~~to date in each town department for the most effective and efficient delivery of services to the~~  
3 ~~residents.~~

4 ~~Action E.6.a Provide technical support to all departments through network servers and~~  
5 ~~equipment replacement programs.~~

6 Objective E.7 Provide recreation facilities and programs for all residents.

7 Action E.7.a Maintain and continue to expand the recreational trail network.

8 Action E.7.b Create additional locations, with adequate parking, for access to the  
9 Connecticut and Ompompanoosuc rivers for swimming and small cartop-type water  
10 craft.

11 Action E.7.c Encourage use of the trail network as an alternate means of commuting from  
12 the village to Route 5 South and the Dresden Fields.

13 Objective E.8 Strengthen Norwich's resilience to disaster, including floods, and ability to  
14 sustainably adapt over time to a changing climate.

15 Action E.8.a Ensure that Norwich's Local Emergency Operations Plan and Local Hazard  
16 Mitigation Plan is kept up-to-date and re-adopted as necessary.

17 Action E.8.b Continue to implement the programs, projects and activities identified in the  
18 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan as most recently adopted.

19 **Goal F**

20 Provide facilities and services in a cost-effective manner that reinforces the town's land use development,  
21 energy, and natural resource protection goals and policies.

22 Objective F.1 Continue to work towards long-term solutions for disposal of solid and hazardous  
23 waste through regional cooperation, and reduction of the volume of solid waste through  
24 recycling and consumer education.

25 Action F.1.a Continue to actively participate in and evaluate the Greater Upper Valley  
26 Solid Waste Management District's plan to build a new landfill in Hartland.

27 Objective F.2 Maintain sources of high-quality potable water for current and future residents of  
28 Norwich.

29 Action F.2.a Continue to develop contingency plans for disasters that may threaten the  
30 village water supply.

- 1        Objective F.3 Focus water supply and wastewater improvements on existing development areas.
- 2                Action F.3.a Research emerging technologies for wastewater treatment, grey water uses
- 3                to enable concentrated development in areas previously identified as unsuitable for such
- 4                uses.