TOWN OF NORWICH
VILLAGE MASTER PLAN
SCOPE OF WORK

Prepared by the Steering Committee on behalf of the Planning Commission, July 27, 2026.

INTRODUCTION

The Norwich Planning Commission is seeking proposals from a consultant group to complete a Village Master Plan for Norwich utilizing funds from a Municipal Planning Grant awarded in January 2026 by the Department of Housing and Community Affairs.

The Consultant must seek input from a broad cross-section of Norwich residents and business owners, in a way which fosters public engagement and community connection.

The steering committee clearly articulated that the final Village Master Plan must:

- Be concise, functional and useful.
- Promote and encourage community and consensus building.
- Include an Implementation/ Actions Section which clearly states **what** the goals are, **who** should do the work, and **when** it should be done.

In order to be efficient in time and funding, build on previous studies, and maximize public input from all sectors, the Planning Commission established a Steering Committee to frame the Scope of the Village Master Plan and prepare a written Scope of Work to be utilized by the Consultant Planning Group as the framework for their analysis. The steering committee is representative of a cross section of the Town and the various community networks. Several members have children in the school. Several members attended school in Norwich and one has recently returned with her young family.

DELIVERABLES.

1. Map(s) of the Village Area which includes the following:
    - Delineated Historic Center which contains the Churches, Town Offices, School, Historical Society, Grange Hall, Norwich Public Library and the majority of the Houses indicated on the National Register of Historic Places Map.
    - Areas where a diversity of living units, including single family homes, duplexes, multifamily and single rental units could be constructed in a manner which maximizes permeable surfaces and energy efficiency.
    - Develop a <u>fully functional, interconnected</u> trail system to ensure a walkable pedestrian /bicycle friendly Village Area which ties the school and other civic buildings into the trail system and connects the Village from one end to the other, including Huntley Meadow and King Arthur Flour. These trails must maximize use of permeable surfaces.

- Indicate those parcels in the Village which are presently privately conserved or in public ownership and identify other possible public access areas.

2. Public engagement: design and conduct Charettes in partnership with the Steering Committee; synthesize input and provide guidance. Consultant must build trust among townspeople, not just facilitate dialogue; (history of ideas going nowhere due to lack of buy-in.)

3. Narrative/Action Plan with recommendations, action plans, goals with a clear indication of who should undertake each goal, why it is needed, and when the goal should be completed for the following research questions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS/CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Are there approaches to helping maintain and expand retail and other commercial activities in the Historic Town Center, such as tax incentives, tax exemptions, public private partnerships? For example, maintaining existing businesses requires forward planning on septic/sewer before ownership changes trigger compliance requirements

- What would be the best way to have the Town take ownership and maintenance of those sections of sidewalk in town which are presently owned and maintained by the Fire District, Prudential Committee?

- Are there public /private partnerships, signage, and landscaping that could be used to better delineate the commercial and retail center of the Historical Village and in the southern end of the Village around King Arthur Flour?

- How could a Capital Budget Plan be used to ensure timely repair to the Town Office Building, Tracy Hall, and help revitalize the Town Center.

- Make zoning recommendations, if necessary, that will help achieve the plan's goals or remove obstacles.

- What is the best approach to resolving the fact that there is no municipal wastewater system in the Village?

- What is the best planning approach to helping increase a diversity of housing units for first home buyers, middle housing and senior housing?

- Are there public /private partnerships that would help us mitigate against the extensive area of flood hazards and river corridors running through the center of the village.

Village Area Boundary **(**See Map 1).
The Steering Committee met several times over a period of 3 months, reviewed a wide range of data and maps, conducted personal site visits, walked, bicycled and drove the entire area, and consulted with colleagues and friends in their networks and drafted a Map of the Boundary of the Village Area for which a Master Plan is requested. This Master Plan will become part of the updated Town Plan. The Town has started the process for updating its present Town Plan, with the goal of completion in 2028. Once the Town Plan is approved the factual information, goals, policies and recommendations can be utilized to guide updates to the town's Land Use Regulations.

The Boundary of the area took into consideration the desire to preserve the historic Center of the Town, retain conserved and public green spaces, ensure flood resilience and maximum permeable surfaces throughout the Village, ensure the area could be easily made fully walkable and bikeable, identify an area for potential new high diversity of housing types, and identify areas for commercial development both in the Historic Village Center and at the Southern Gateway.

The Steering Committee took into consideration the Future Land Use Areas Map (See Map 7) developed by Regional Planning, and with reference to the housing goals suggested for Norwich by TRORC, having opted into Tier 1B status for both the Village center & area. At present, the housing target for the Tier 1B area is 162 units by 2030.

STEERING COMMITTEE
Jaan Laaspere, Chair, Norwich Planning Commission.
Brendan Classon, Vice Chair, Norwich Selectboard.
Cole Flannery, Member, Norwich Business Council, Owner Half-Step Beer and Wine, Norwich.
Brian Loeb, Member Affordable Housing Committee
Elena Kennedy, Director, Consulting at TNTP
Alec Orenstein, Vice Chair, Norwich DRB.
Jess Phelps, Chair, Historic Preservation Commission; Board President, Norwich Grange Hall; Associate General Counsel, Lyme Timber Company.
Ann Sargent, Member Norwich Business Council; Owner, Ann Sargent Design Co., Norwich.
Christian Spalding, Member, Planning Commission; Director of Operations, Dartmouth Inst. For Health Practice & Clinical Practice.
Andrew Torkelson, Member Norwich Conservation Commission; Cardiologist.
Lucinda Walker, Director Norwich Public Library.
Sheridan Zimmer, Education Consultant.
Staff:
Steven True, Director Planning and Zoning
Jean Richardson, Facilitator

RELEVANT PLANS, STUDIES, REPORTS AND REGULATIONS

4. *Comprehensive Plan, Norwich Vermont, 1967*. (This was the first Norwich Town Plan and Zoning and Subdivision. Provides historic context).
5. *Norwich Town Plan, 2020- 2028*. (available on Town Website)
6. *Norwich Land Use Regulations*, October 2021 (available on Town Website).
7. *Main Street/RT 5 and Rt 10A Transportation Corridor Plan*, December 2000, SVE Associates.
8. *Mixed-Use Charette. Summary Report, Preliminary Design Guidelines and Recommendations*, May 2005, TRORC.
9. *Route 5 South-River Road Study*, 2015 (relevant for housing and commercial development analysis).
10. *Norwich Housing Strategy, 2020-2024*, approved by the PC November 21, 2019. (relevant for housing policies, and possible zoning and land use regulation changes).
11. *Beaver Meadow Road Sidewalk Scoping Study*, March 2021, DuBois & King.
12. SAU70 2026 Survey Free-Text Answers: Marion Cross School Edition
13. NOTE: A Stormwater Grant has recently been received

PAST CONDITIONS

The Town of Norwich was founded in 1761 and divided into Lots such that every "proprietor" would receive both a small river Lot on the Connecticut River and a 100-acre parcel inland. Over the next 50 years or so the topography of the town and its relationship with the Connecticut was such that the Village Center of Norwich became established on "the Plain", where it is today, near the river. The Military Academy was built on this limited flat land. This Academy became Norwich University (later re-located to Northfield).

Norwich has long held a connection with the Town of Hanover and Dartmouth College, founded in 1769, on the east side of the Connecticut. Education has long been a Norwich town focus.

Primary transportation routes developed along the Connecticut River, and the rail line was built adjacent the river, with overland routes all funneling down from north to south into Bloody Brook valley which runs through the Village center. Commercial enterprises grew up in a relatively small area between the village Civic center and the Connecticut.

EXISTING CONDITIONS - Town of Norwich.

1. Size 44.5 square miles
2. Land Use: 98% of Norwich is rural, agricultural, or forested.
3. Norwich is primarily a residential town.
4. Topography, Flood Hazard Area and River Corridor: Norwich is a hilly, forested town with a relatively major river, Bloody Brook, flowing north to south through the Historic Village Center into the Connecticut River, entering just south of the bridge to Hanover in NH. (See Map 2).
5. Population: Total: 3,640; 87% white; 1,393 households; 2.6 persons per household.
6. Number of Housing Units: 1,556; 90% occupied; 87% Single family homes.

7. Per capita income: $75,000 (more than 1.5 times Vermont and US average).
8. Poverty: 2.8% below poverty line. (US rate is 12.5%; Vermont is 9.26%).
9. Geographical Mobility: 16.8% moved in previous year. This data was questioned. (1.4 times VT and national average).
10. Number of Children under the age of 18: 1,300 which is 25-29% of Norwich total population (Vermont is 14%). This reflects the central role of the school and education on virtually all aspects of land use, daily life, land uses and land values in the Village and surrounding rural residential areas.
11. Norwich School District: 335 students. One school in town, grade K-7. After which the children attend School in Hanover, Dresden School District, New Hampshire.
12. Education: 99.5 % of high school graduate. 81 % bachelor's degree or higher. This is more than double the rate in the US.
13. Public buildings in Village Master Plan area: Tracy Hall/Town Offices Public Safety building; Fire Station; School; Post Office; Three places of worship; Public Library, The Grange Hall.
14. Within the Village Master Plan historic district area there are approximately fourteen (14) Commercial buildings each with a few businesses including a few retail businesses.
15. The Historic Village Center retains many original buildings and open spaces. (See Map 3).
16. The southern entrance/gateway to the Village Area includes the Farmers Market which began in 1977, and King Arthur Flour which was established here in 1984 and approximately 10 more commercial buildings.
17. Waste Water Disposal:
    Norwich has no municipal wastewater system. All disposal is on site individual or small community septic systems, of varying ages.
18. Potable Water:
    The total number of households in Norwich Town is 1,556. About 80% of these rely on on-site private wells, with 20% on Public Water Systems.
    The Vermont DEC, *Drinking Water and Groundwater Protection Division*, Lists 4 Public Water Systems for Norwich in the *Drinking Water Public Library:*
    1) Norwich Fire District 1: Town Center primarily**.** Community system; serves 870 population. Class 3D. (See Map 4, Water Lines and Hydrants).
    The Norwich Fire District is the primary supplier of potable water in the Village Area. It utilizes 2 gravel packed wells and stores 500,000 gallons of water in a concrete underground reservoir.
    This Fire District is run and operated by the Prudential Committee, with 2 full time staff. This Committee was formed by the Selectboard in 1922. The Prudential Committee meets once a month.
    The Fire District also owns sidewalks, buildings and forested land.
    2) Norwich Meadows – down near Route 5. Community System. Serves 36. Class 2.
    3) Norwich Service Center – Transient, Non-community system. Serves 25.
    4) Norwich Commerce Park – Transient non-community system. Serves 65. Class 1A.
19. Sidewalks:

There are sidewalks on both sides of the streets in most of the Village Area in this Masterplan. The Town owns and maintains about half of these, and the Fire District owns and maintains the other half of the sidewalks (See Map 5).

20. Trails, Recreation Paths, Conserved and Public Spaces:
    Trails and public open spaces have long been of importance to the residents of Norwich, and the Steering Committee envisages that these will continue to be of critical importance to the town. These are shown on Map 1.

BUDGET AND PROPOSED WORKPLAN FOR DRAFTING THE VILLAGE MASTER PLAN

Organizational Meetings	*Nominally 4-6 Meetings between Steering Committee & Consultant over the course of the project (kick-off, organizational, strategy)*	*Consultant*	*50*	*$110.00*	*$5,500.00*		*$*	*$5,500.00*
Growth, Housing & Infrastructure charette	*Assembly of materials*	*Consultant*	*32*	*$80.00*	*$2,560.00*		*$0.00*	*$2,560.00*
Growth, Housing & Infrastructure charette	*Meeting time and travel*	*Consultant*	*8*	*$90.00*	*$720.00*		*$0.00*	*$720.00*
Growth, Housing & Infrastructure charette	*Data analysis and chapter drafting*	*Consultant*	*32*	*$110.00*	*$3,520.00*		*$0.00*	*$3,520.00*
Historic Preservation, Resilience & Community Building charette	*Assembly of materials*	*Consultant*	*32*	*$90.00*	*$2,880.00*		*$0.00*	*$2,880.00*
Historic Preservation, Resilience & Community Building charette	*Meeting.time and travel*	*Consultant*	*8*	*$80.00*	*$640.00*		*$0.00*	*$640.00*
Historic Preservation, Resilience & Community Building charette	*Data analysis and chapter drafting*	*Consultant*	*32*	*$110.00*	*$3,520.00*		*$0.00*	*$3,520.00*
Village Master Plan Draft Review	*Review of entire draft plan for clarity, readability to ensure that a broad swathe of the population can read and understand the document without prior planning knowledge.*	*Consultant*	*40*	*$90.00*	*$3,600.00*	*3*	*$0.00*	*$3,600.00*
Communications	*Materials*	*Consultant*			*$0.00*	*Postcard Mailing (1,350@0.62), Communications*	*$837.00*	*$837.00*
Marketing	*Materials*	*Consultant*			*$0.00*	*Presentation Materials Posters, Renditions, GIS*	*$5,000.00*	*$5,000.00*
Totals				**Total**	*$22,940.00*		**Total** *$5,837.00*	**Total** *$28,777.00*

Total Project Costs: *$28,777.00*
State Grant Funds (Grant Amount Requested): *$20,899.00*
Total Match Funds: *$7,878.00*
Minimum Required Match: (10% of Total Project Cost) *$2,877.70*
Additional Match Funds (Optional): *$5,000.00*

ATTACHMENT B - PAYMENT PROVISIONS

I. PAYMENT PROVISIONS AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

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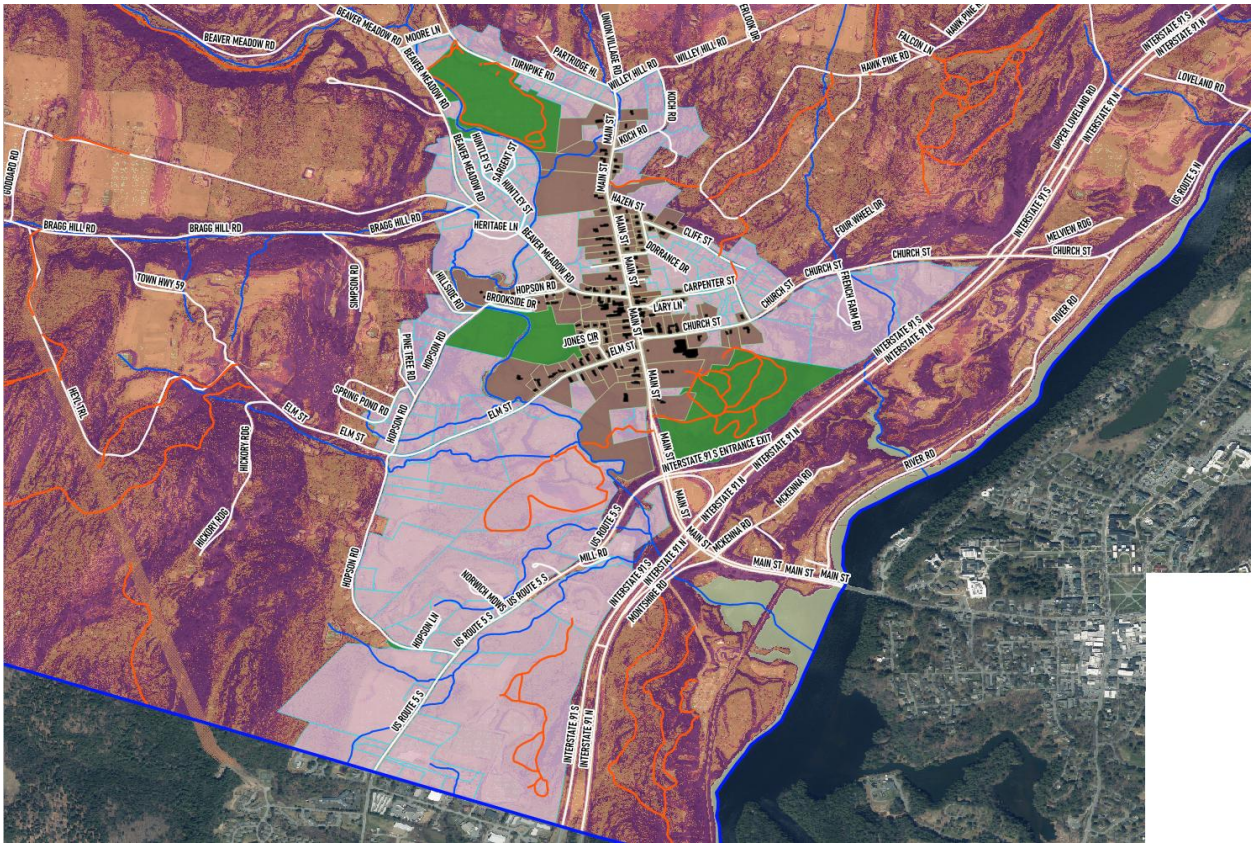
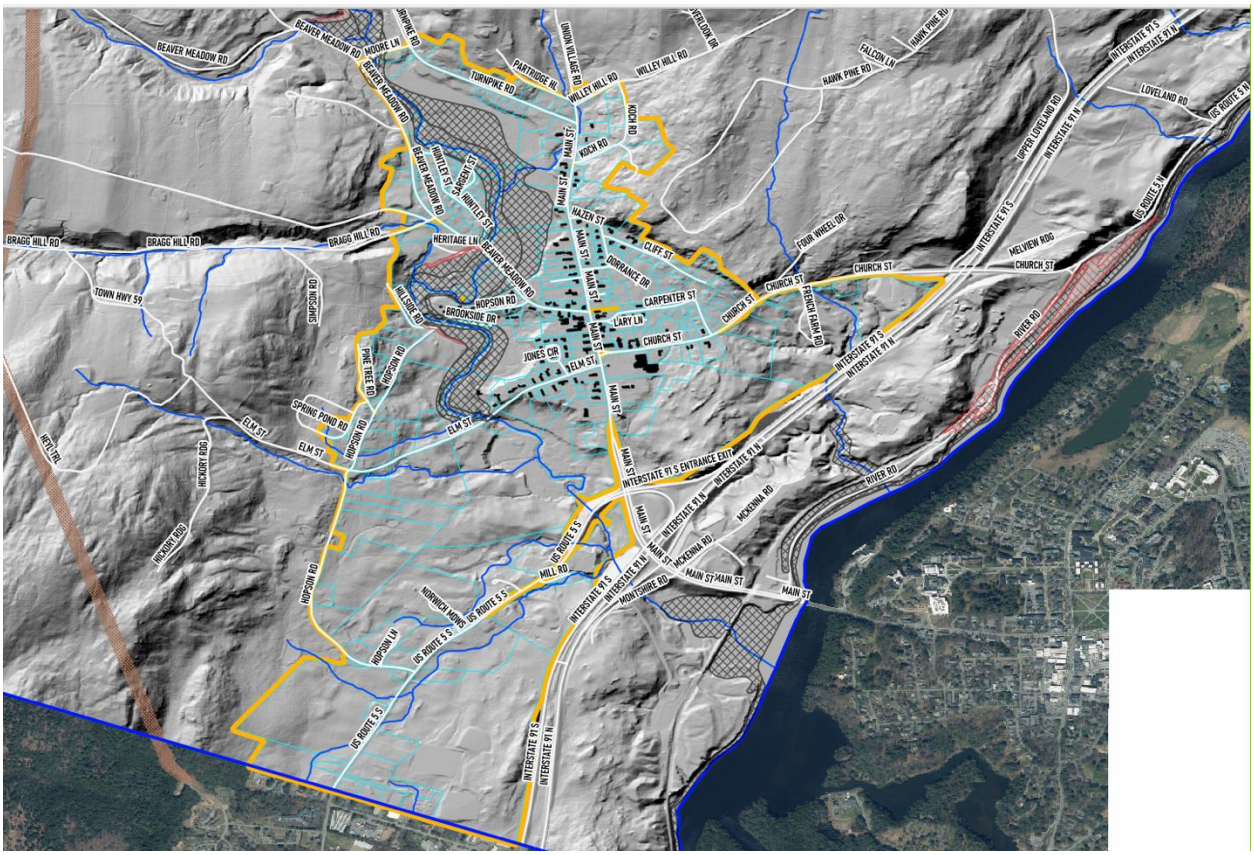
MAP 1. BOUNDARIES OF VILLAGE AREA, TRAILS AND CONSERVED PUBLIC SPACE

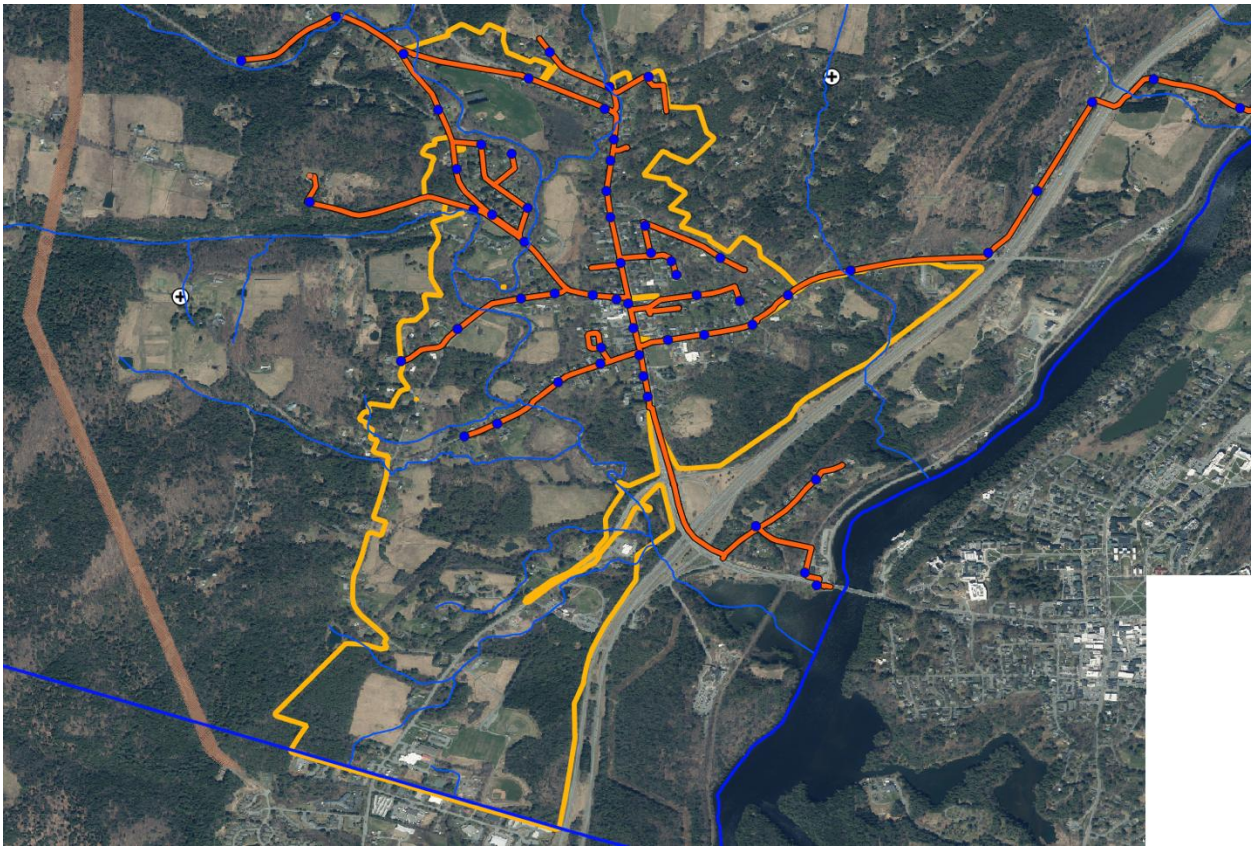


Map 2. TOPOGRAPHY, PROPOSED VILLAGE AREA (YELLOW), FLOOD HAZARD AREA (HATCHED) AND STREAMS

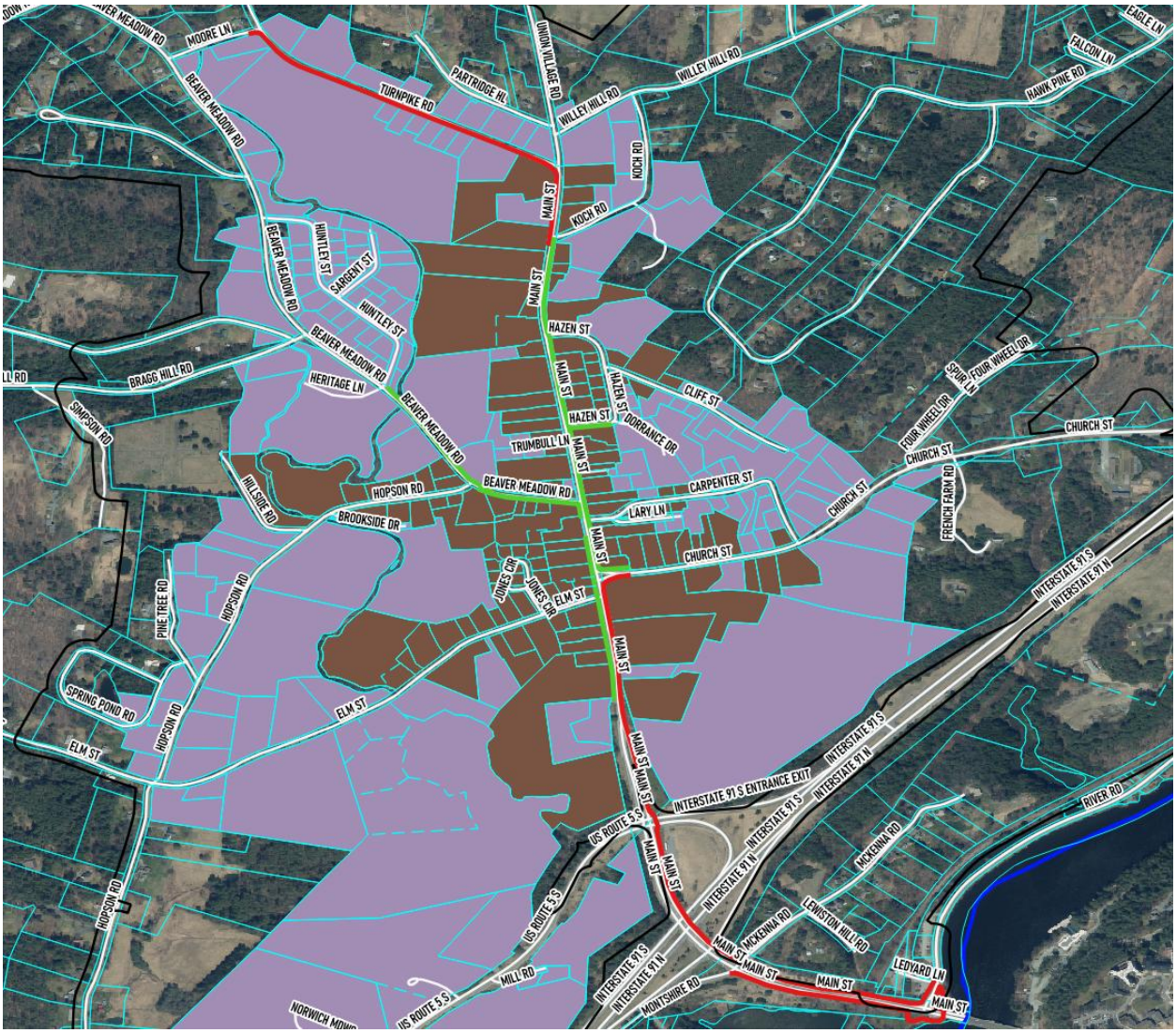
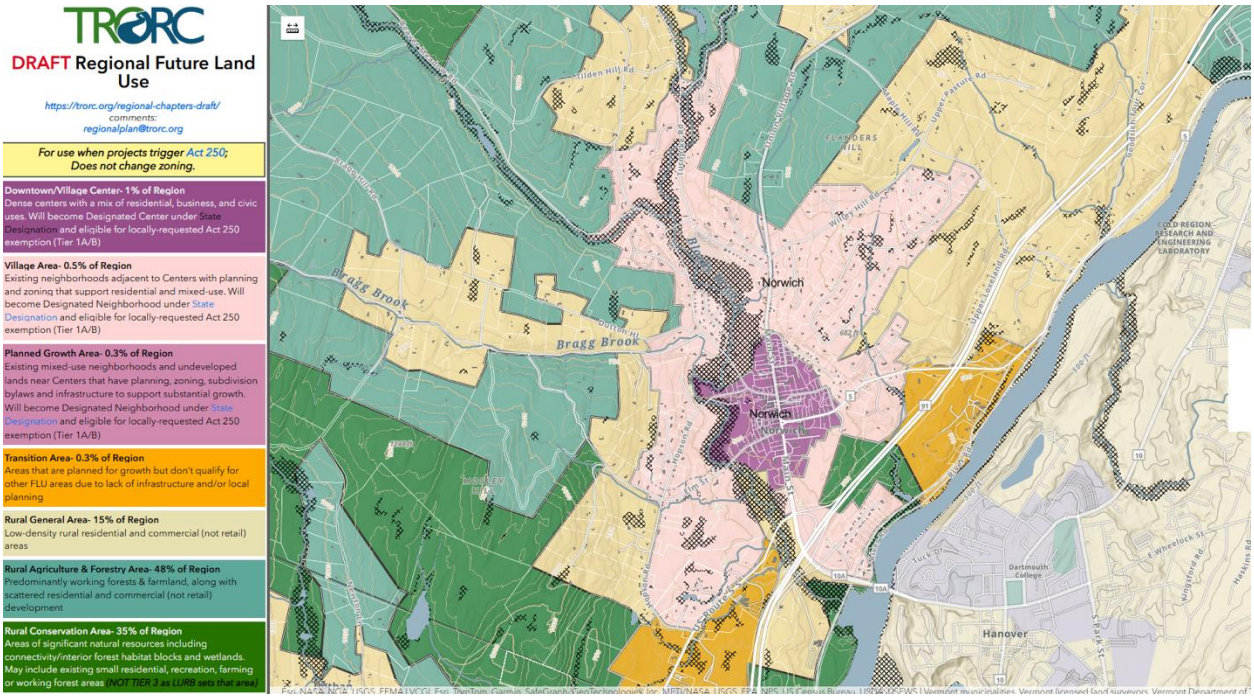


MAP 3 HISTORIC BUILDINGS

MAP 4 WATER LINES AND HYDRANTS IN VILLAGE AREA



MAP 5 SIDEWALKS IN VILLAGE AREA. RED – OWNED BY TOWN; GREEN-OWNED BY FIRE DISTRICT



MAP 6 FUTURE LAND USE AREAS- TRORC, 2026