



City of Norwich Comprehensive Plan





Acknowledgements

This Comprehensive Plan document is the end product of work by dozens of individuals who worked cooperatively for the success of the City of Norwich. The following people contributed many hours of concerted effort to the production of the plan. Their commitment, energy and enthusiasm made this plan possible.

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“If you don’t know where you are going, any path will take you there.”

Setting the Scene

The City of Norwich (population 7,355) is the most populated municipality in Chenango County and is the county seat. Norwich has many of the amenities of a larger City while maintaining a small town atmosphere. The City has a number of assets to build on including:

- Vision and articulate leadership
- An intact historic downtown
- An Empire Zone designation
- A regional museum draw with the Northeast Classic Car Museum, Chenango County Historical Museum and the Bullthistle Model Railroad Museum
- Norwich has a satellite campus of SUNY Morrisville located downtown
- Significant available office and commercial space
- Intact neighborhoods with active residents

Recent planning initiatives include the development of a Museum District Plan, Downtown Streetscape Plan, Downtown Revitalization Strategy, East/West Parks Master Plan, a Firehouse Reconstruction Plan, and a County Economic Strategy and Action Plan. The last Comprehensive Plan for the City was completed in 1967, over 35 years ago, and does not reflect the significant changes that have occurred locally or nationally in that time. The City took advantage of the momentum created by other recent local planning initiatives to develop a comprehensive document to guide municipal leaders and residents in making decisions and taking action to ensure that the City reaches its preferred future.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

Under New York State law, municipalities are granted the authority and responsibility to prepare and adopt comprehensive plans. As defined in the state legislation, a comprehensive plan is a document that presents goals, objectives, guidelines and policies for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement growth and community development. Also known as a master plan or land use plan, a comprehensive plan provides guidance to municipal leaders and helps to ensure that the needs of the community will be met.

It is important to understand that the action items described in the plan are not requirements. Rather, they are recommendations designed to provide focus and direction as Norwich moves ahead to reach its preferred future. It will be up to the local community to decide on an ongoing basis which initiatives they wish to implement and how they wish to proceed. City government will serve to support, facilitate and remove barriers during the implementation process. Continued active citizen participation will be key to the ultimate success of this plan. Although any future land use regulation must be in accordance with the principles of the Comprehensive Plan, there is no legally binding requirement



that the City implement each of the action items proposed in the plan. The Common Council should carefully examine proposed land use strategies to minimize the cost to residents and protect private property rights.

Planning Process

The City of Norwich has been developing this Comprehensive Plan over the past year with the assistance of River Street Planning & Development, who were engaged by the City to facilitate the planning process. The focus of the comprehensive planning effort is asset based, building on community strengths and existing programs and efforts to:

- Improve livability through economic growth that creates new business and job opportunities, strengthens the downtown, expands the tax base and generates wealth and investment
- Protect and enhance residential neighborhoods, expanding housing options by enhancing existing residential areas and creating new housing
- Enhance the appearance of and attractions to the City by building on its cultural assets including the Chenango County Council of the Arts, local museums in the recently designated Museum District and attractive historic homes and commercial structures

The work of River Street and City staff has been guided by a project Steering Committee. The role of the Steering Committee has been to guide and lead the planning process; collect and share relevant information; review documents; supervise the consultant team; educate residents about the process and the plan roles and responsibilities, charge and scope; and perform community outreach and publicity.

In addition to its work with the Steering Committee, River Street and the City held focus groups with business leaders, economic development partners, housing groups, residents and other important stakeholders to gain insights on important issues facing the City and region. Steering Committee and focus group input was supplemented by community meetings, including a visioning workshop and an action planning session. Additionally, the consultants contacted key stakeholders for additional information on economic development, housing, real estate tax base, natural resources, historic resources, recreation, transportation and infrastructure, and community service issues.

Community Profile

The City of Norwich Comprehensive Plan is made up of two main sections: the Community Profile, which is a summary of existing conditions, and the Action Plan, which identifies specific short- and long-range projects and planning efforts. The plan is supported by separate technical memorandums that address historic preservation and zoning recommendations. Based on research and interviews conducted by the project consultant and the public input process described above, the Community Profile describes the City, its residents and its resources; identifies needs; and discusses key issues, opportunities, and challenges impacting future growth in Norwich. It provides a profile of the City of Norwich with respect to population, land uses, historic and natural resources, economic development, housing, community services, real estate tax base,



transportation and infrastructure, recreation, and regional issues, and is designed to serve as a basis for developing community goals, objectives, strategies and policies. The following briefly summarizes findings from the Community Profile:

- **Population & Income:** Norwich's population decreased by 3.4% between 1990 and 2000, accounting for 70% of Chenango County's total population loss (the County loss was minimal at less than 1.0% of its population). City residents are older than statewide averages with a median age of 39 years (versus 36 years for New York State). Adjusted for inflation, median incomes decreased slightly between 1989 and 1999. While the percentage of residents living in poverty increased slightly, the change followed county-wide trends and is not significantly higher than county rates.
- **Economic Profile:** Since 1987, the City has lost 1,496 jobs, including 320 middle-management positions. The City and County have responded to Norwich's economic challenges with the support of a number of economic development organizations and initiatives including Chenango County Chamber of Commerce, Norwich Business Improvement District (BID) and a New York State Empire Zone, creating strong opportunities for financial and technical assistance to attract new economic development. Recently the local economic development agencies in Norwich have collaborated to consolidate and provide economic development through one agency in the County. The Chenango County Chamber of Commerce is now Chenango County's lead economic development agency. Despite the loss of major companies including Procter & Gamble (although they still have a research and development facility outside the City), Champion Products, Norwich Shoe Company and Victory Markets, the City still relies heavily on a few major employers including NBT Bank, the hospital and government agencies. During the planning process, a number of small business owners expressed the concern that small business services are not meeting the needs of current and prospective business owners.
- **Housing Characteristics:** Norwich has significant vacant rental housing stock with a 12% vacancy rate, up from 5% in 1990. For-sale vacancy rates have also increased, from 1% to 3%, and inflation adjusted home values decreased by 25% between 1990 and 2000. Poor quality rental conversions have created a significant number of substandard rental units, and realtors and other housing professionals describe a need for high-quality housing in all markets, though low values are discouraging reinvestment. SUNY Morrisville has identified a need for student housing within the City in order to serve its downtown Norwich campus expansion.
- **Natural Resources & Environment:** Much of the City is in the FEMA 100-year floodplain, and while flood mitigation projects have reduced flooding risk, insurance requirements add to the cost of property ownership in the City. Despite its long industrial history, the City has relatively few former industrial sites contaminated by prior uses. Most of the sites have been identified and many have already been cleaned up for reuse. The Chenango River and Canasawacta Creek offer recreational and educational opportunities.
- **Historic Resources:** The City's downtown and surrounding neighborhoods contain many historically and architecturally significant buildings, a resource that offers cultural, educational and economic benefits. Downtown development guidelines support economic



development by building on downtown's historic assets, though additional preservation requirements, economic incentives and technical assistance are needed throughout the City's historic areas to encourage preservation and enhancement of the City's historic resources.

- **Recreation:** The City's parks, recreational facilities and community programs provide a variety of activities for younger children, though area teens seek more recreational opportunities and chances to get involved in the local community. The new Norwich Family YMCA is an important asset for the City and a demonstration of strong community support for the organization and family-oriented recreation needs.
- **Transportation & Infrastructure:** Infrastructure is adequate to meet current needs and accommodate growth, with significant water and waste water capacity, though storm sewers are in need of repair. Sidewalks are in poor condition and the City lacks a comprehensive strategy to improve and replace them. Downtown parking is viewed as a problem, though supply is adequate to meet current needs.
- **Community Services:** The City has made significant investments in its public facilities, enhancing services available and supporting the historic downtown. SUNY Morrisville plans to open its new downtown campus in the spring/summer of 2005, expanding the City's higher educational opportunities. The hospital provides full-service healthcare, a rare amenity for a small rural community.
- **Regional Issues:** The City of Norwich is the county seat and the most populated municipality in the county, providing many services to the surrounding towns and region. The City provides water, sewer and fire and ambulance and operates youth programs for the surrounding towns. The City and surrounding towns need to work together to improve coordination of services and development goals. The Chamber of Commerce's Route 12 Steering Committee is providing a good model for regional coordination.

Vision and Goals

A City vision and set of planning goals form the foundation of the Comprehensive Plan. The visioning process began with a community-wide visioning workshop held on June 19, 2002 at St. Bartholomew's Parish Center. At this meeting River Street Planning presented an overview of the comprehensive planning effort and explained the visioning process. Participants were asked to finish three statements.

"What I love about the City of Norwich..."

"Things I would change about Norwich..."

"When these things are preserved or changed, Norwich will..."

Participants identified many things that they love about the City of Norwich. One of the main themes that emerged was that Norwich is a place with a high level of cooperation, community activism and volunteerism. The people in Norwich are very civic in terms of philanthropy and no funding initiative has ever failed in the City. The Museums, YMCA, Arts Council, and a variety of clubs and community activities (Chenango



County Fair, Colorscape Chenango, Pumpkin Festival, Gus Macker Tournament etc.) for kids and adults all contribute to the reasons why residents love Norwich. Norwich is also a safe and walkable City.

In discussing community challenges, many residents cited the need to encourage inter-municipal cooperation between the City and surrounding towns. Residents would like vacant storefronts to be filled and for existing business to have predictable hours. Participants felt a need for more economic development in the City. Additionally, run down housing, and taxes are also a major concern.

Finally, residents described their preferred future for the City. Most responded that they want a future in which young people will stay and work in Norwich. Further, storefronts would be filled and there would be a variety of employment opportunities available.

The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee used feedback from the visioning workshop, along with issues identified at focus group meetings to frame a draft vision and set of goals for them to consider and refine. In a committee visioning workshop, the Steering Committee used this information to develop a future vision and a set of seven goals around which the action plan is organized. The goals address municipal services, economic development, downtown Norwich, transportation, historic preservation, housing, and arts, culture and recreation. The vision statement and goals are listed briefly below. The City-wide action plan is organized by the goals, and provides specific action items the City is considering in order to support each goal.

Action Plan

The action plan component of the Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide City leaders and other stakeholders, both current and future, with guidance regarding the kind of place residents would like Norwich to be in the future, a set of goals for achieving that future vision, and a set of implementation strategies that will facilitate the accomplishment of each goal. The stakeholders and partners to be involved and, where appropriate, a list of funding sources are provided for each action plan element.

The action plan focuses and condenses the inventory of initiatives that the City of Norwich will pursue. This element will build on the vision and goals that were developed by the Steering Committee and residents of Norwich. The Action Plan will guide decision-making by concisely focusing resources on shared goals, objectives, and implementation strategies. Further, the plan will clarify roles, responsibilities and commitments of key stakeholders and developers.

An action planning matrix was prepared which describes the specific actions and tasks the City will take to advance each of the key initiatives and projects, defining project tasks, schedule, City and stakeholder roles and responsibilities and funding needs. The matrix is organized into sections based on the goals set during the visioning and goal setting process.



The purpose of a vision statement is to provide direction regarding the community’s growth and development, serving as a foundation underlying the development of goals and strategies for implementation. Reflecting the common values of local residents, it expresses the “ideal future” that the community hopes to attain. Residents and leaders of the City of Norwich have established the following vision statement for Norwich:

Norwich will stand out for its physical and civic character, distinguished by its high level of citizen stewardship and leadership. Its generous volunteerism will support efforts to make it a vibrant community of choice that acts progressively to attract and retain both residents and businesses.

To fulfill this vision and maintain the City of Norwich as a good place to live, work and visit today and in the future, the following goals have been established:

Goal 1: Efficient and Progressive Municipal Services: The City and other local government entities will take steps that secure a prosperous future by ensuring that civic and physical infrastructure can meet demands with high quality services including excellent public safety services that protect residents’ treasured feeling of community. Norwich will strive to remain competitive in tax policy and will evaluate opportunities to create “One Norwich” through increased efforts at inter-municipal cooperation, shared services and regionalization.

Goal 2: Diverse Economy Connected to the World: The strong local economy of the Norwich area will be connected to the world by investing in technologies that distinguish it as a development location. The area’s diverse job base will provide management and executive positions at growing companies as well as a good supply of varying skilled, full-time jobs. A strong small business base will complement continued development of large commercial and industrial activities. Expanding tourism activity will supplement Norwich’s economic resources. Youth employment and training opportunities will be nurtured.

Goal 3: Vibrant Downtown: Norwich’s vibrant and alive downtown will be recognized for its architecture, pedestrian amenities, retail choice and unique visual appeal. Emphasis will be placed on maintaining and enhancing Norwich BID efforts to ensure a positive downtown identity.

Goal 4: Integrated Multi-Modal Transportation System: The City will accommodate a range of transportation choices that is safe, economical, ecologically sound, and aesthetically pleasing, serving a diverse population including the physically challenged.

Goal 5: Standout City of Character, Architecture and History: Norwich will celebrate and protect historic and environmental resources including its waterways, urban forest, picturesque natural setting and historic buildings. These offer some of the community’s greatest competitive advantages. They must be cherished, protected, and enhanced.



Goal 6: Residential Neighborhoods of Choice and Quality: Norwich’s neighborhoods will offer housing choice and quality across all market segments, for both owners and renters. Historic homes and buildings will be protected and new market rate and executive housing will attract business owners, managers, and their employees to live where they work.

Goal 7: Inspired by Diverse Art and Cultural Offerings: Creative arts and cultural organizations, museums and many civic volunteers will work in partnership to make Norwich a regional center for festivals and tourism through maximum usage of parks, the fairgrounds and other recreation venues and investments in other hospitality infrastructure.

These goals guided the comprehensive planning process and allowed for the development of the initiatives and projects outlined in this Action Plan.

Action Plan Matrix

City staff and the Steering Committee worked with the consultant to identify projects to address key issues raised during the planning process. The result is an Action Plan Matrix that identifies potential projects to implement the City’s goals. The Action Plan Matrix defines the purpose, implementation steps, timing, potential stakeholders and implementing partners, estimated budget and potential funding sources. The actions proposed in this Comprehensive Plan are described below.

Goal One: Efficient & Progressive Municipal Services

- The City will take a lead role in facilitating regional cooperation with the County and neighboring municipalities.

Outcomes of this process could include the development of a growth and development boundary policy with the surrounding local governments to identify and plan mutually beneficial opportunities for extending and sharing municipal services (e.g. water, wastewater treatment, fire and police protection). Such efforts should be aimed at improving and extending infrastructure and services to the greater Norwich area, while creating cost efficiency and economies of scale for taxpayers and residents for the service area. This effort will include an examination of the form and structure of local governments to maximize efficiency of service delivery. It will examine appropriate regional approaches to service delivery including the possibility of government partnerships.

- Develop a comprehensive 15-20 year capital asset management plan that lists all major City assets, capital projects, major maintenance and improvement projects and a schedule for each, priorities for grant opportunities, and a funding and spending strategy to support the plan.
- Amend local ordinances, regulations, and develop new policies to enhance land use management decision making for the City.



This action will involve a comprehensive overview of the City's land use regulations, development standards and building regulations to identify and implement strategies to enhance these development tools to facilitate private investment and support the goals of the comprehensive plan.

- Develop a five-year fiscal plan for the City.

Goal 2: Diverse Economy Connected to the World

- Continue to be an active partner of the region's economic development including efforts to retain and create jobs, grow small businesses and expand the City's tax base.

Goal 3: Vibrant Downtown

- Identify opportunities for local government to strengthen and improve special events, and increase coordination of tourism development efforts. Such efforts may include the acquisition and leasing of portable stage / bandshell equipment, etc.
- Develop an upper floor rehabilitation program to improve commercial buildings in the downtown Broad Street area.

Goal 4: Integrated Multi-Modal Transportation System

- Develop a comprehensive sidewalk construction, replacement, and maintenance program.
- Enhance and/or adopt specific guidelines for traffic calming and pedestrian safety measures.
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle amenities in residential neighborhoods, parks and in the commercial core.

Goal 5: Standout City Character, Architecture & History

- Raise awareness of elected officials, City staff, and residents regarding the economic benefits of historic preservation and strategies for capitalizing on the City's architecture and heritage.
- Develop façade and structural improvement programs to upgrade the appearance of commercial and residential buildings.



- Develop a comprehensive strategy to enhance the appearance of the Museum District.

Goal 6: Residential Neighborhoods of Choice & Quality

- Develop residential rehabilitation program to improve older and historic housing stock, and reduce density of apartment conversion buildings.
- Utilize financial incentives available under New York State law to encourage home reinvestment.
- Ensure coordination with public and non-profit housing organizations to implement housing improvement and assistance programs.
- Enhance as needed and enforce the City's property nuisance law to more effectively address disruptive properties.

Goal 7: Inspired By Diverse Art & Cultural Offerings

- Develop a consortium to maximize impacts of individual arts, culture, and educational organizations, events and programs.
- Develop and implement a parks and recreation strategy for the City that considers current needs and limitations to enable the City to establish a strong set of parks, trails and recreation and cultural programs. The strategy will consider maintenance and expansion needs and new partnerships and models for service delivery.

Plan Implementation

Plan implementation should begin when the Common Council formally adopts this document. The adoption of the Comprehensive Plan means that City leaders and the citizens of Norwich accept this plan as the guide to future decision making and development in Norwich. Municipal leaders and other stakeholders should use the plan to assist in making decisions and setting priorities, including those established by the annual budget.

As required under state law, any new land use regulations or amendments in the City must be in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, an important role of the City Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals will be to review this document to make sure that the goals and ideas of the plan are integrated into land use and development decisions. State law also stipulates that all plans for capital projects of another governmental agency on land included in the plan take the plan into consideration. This provision is designed to prevent government actions from disregarding the recommendations of a comprehensive plan.



The involvement of local residents will be vital in helping the City to successfully achieve the goals outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. Although some actions will be appropriate for implementation by the Common Council and/or municipal department staff, others will call for participation by civic organizations, public/private partnerships, citizen committees, and other entities. It is expected that the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee will play a major role in developing partnerships with other members of the community, local businesses and organizations, state agencies, and others who can assist with implementation efforts.



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Introduction

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Vision and Goals

A City vision and set of planning goals form the foundation of the Comprehensive Plan. The visioning process began with a community-wide visioning workshop held on June 19, 2002 at St. Bartholomew's Parish Center. At this meeting River Street Planning presented an overview of the comprehensive planning effort and explained the visioning process. Participants were asked to finish three statements.

“What I love about the City of Norwich...”

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Action Plan

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An action planning matrix was prepared which describes the specific actions and tasks the City will take to advance each of the key initiatives and projects, defining project tasks, schedule, City and stakeholder roles and responsibilities and funding needs. The matrix is organized into sections based on the goals set during the visioning and goal setting process.

The purpose of a vision statement is to provide direction regarding the community's growth and development, serving as a foundation underlying the development of goals and strategies for implementation. Reflecting the common values of local residents, it expresses the "ideal future" that the community hopes to attain. Residents and leaders of the City of Norwich have established the following vision statement for Norwich:

Norwich will stand out for its physical and civic character, distinguished by its high level of citizen stewardship and leadership. Its generous volunteerism will support efforts to make it a vibrant community of choice that acts progressively to attract and retain both residents and businesses.

To fulfill this vision and maintain the City of Norwich as a good place to live, work and visit today and in the future, the following goals have been established:

Goal 1: Efficient and Progressive Municipal Services: The City and other local government entities will take steps that secure a prosperous future by ensuring that civic and physical infrastructure can meet demands with high quality services including excellent public safety services that protect residents' treasured feeling of community. Norwich will strive to remain competitive in tax policy and will evaluate opportunities to create "One Norwich" through increased efforts at inter-municipal cooperation, shared services and regionalization.



Goal 2: Diverse Economy Connected to the World: The strong local economy of the Norwich area will be connected to the world by investing in technologies that distinguish it as a development location. The area's diverse job base will provide management and executive positions at growing companies as well as a good supply of varying skilled, full-time jobs. A strong small business base will complement continued development of large commercial and industrial activities. Expanding tourism activity will supplement Norwich's economic resources. Youth employment and training opportunities will be nurtured.

Goal 3: Vibrant Downtown: Norwich's vibrant and alive downtown will be recognized for its architecture, pedestrian amenities, retail choice and unique visual appeal. Emphasis will be placed on maintaining and enhancing Norwich BID efforts to ensure a positive downtown identity.

Goal 4: Integrated Multi-Modal Transportation System: The City will accommodate a range of transportation choices that is safe, economical, ecologically sound, and aesthetically pleasing, serving a diverse population including the physically challenged.

Goal 5: Standout City of Character, Architecture and History: Norwich will celebrate and protect historic and environmental resources including its waterways, urban forest, picturesque natural setting and historic buildings. These offer some of the community's greatest competitive advantages. They must be cherished, protected, and enhanced.

Goal 6: Residential Neighborhoods of Choice and Quality: Norwich's neighborhoods will offer housing choice and quality across all market segments, for both owners and renters. Historic homes and buildings will be protected and new market rate and executive housing will attract business owners, managers, and their employees to live where they work.

Goal 7: Inspired by Diverse Art and Cultural Offerings: Creative arts and cultural organizations, museums and many civic volunteers will work in partnership to make Norwich a regional center for festivals and tourism through maximum usage of parks, the fairgrounds and other recreation venues and investments in other hospitality infrastructure.

These goals guided the comprehensive planning process and allowed for the development of the initiatives and projects outlined in this Action Plan.



Plan Implementation

Plan implementation should begin when the Common Council formally adopts this document. The adoption of the Comprehensive Plan means that City leaders and the citizens of Norwich accept this plan as the guide to future decision making and development in Norwich. Municipal leaders and other stakeholders should use the plan to assist in making decisions and setting priorities, including those established by the annual budget.

As required under state law, any new land use regulations or amendments in the City must be in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, an important role of the City Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals will be to review this document to make sure that the goals and ideas of the plan are integrated into land use and development decisions. State law also stipulates that all plans for capital projects of another governmental agency on land included in the plan take the plan into consideration. This provision is designed to prevent government actions from disregarding the recommendations of a comprehensive plan.

The involvement of local residents will be vital in helping the City to successfully achieve the goals outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. Although some actions will be appropriate for implementation by the Common Council and/or municipal department staff, others will call for participation by civic organizations, public/private partnerships, citizen committees, and other entities. It is expected that the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee will play a major role in developing partnerships with other members of the community, local businesses and organizations, state agencies, and others who can assist with implementation efforts.

Periodic Review

The Common Council will arrange for periodic review of the Comprehensive Plan *at least* every five years. The review will assess the need for amending or updating the plan to address emerging issues as appropriate.

To keep plan implementation on schedule, the existing Planning Commission will be charged with annual review and evaluation of plan implementation for a period of not less than five years. The committee will prepare an annual status report on the accomplishments of the last 12 months to inform residents about what is being implemented. The status report will be presented at a public meeting, perhaps incorporated with the Mayor's annual State of the City address.



Action Plan Matrix

The actions proposed in this Comprehensive Plan are described in the following Action Plan Matrix. For each proposed activity the matrix identifies detailed implementation steps, time frame for completion, potential partners and stakeholders, a budget estimate for the city to undertake the action with city staff or consultant resources, and potential funding sources.

Moving Forward Together

The active participation of residents, small business owners and major employers in the City of Norwich was critical to the development of this Comprehensive Plan. The project Steering Committee, which included representation from many different organizations and stakeholders, provided valuable guidance in the development of this document and making this a plan that belongs to the Norwich community, not merely the city or its hired consultants. Continued participation by these groups will be critical to ensure successful implementation of the projects identified in this plan.

The theme that runs throughout the plan is the concept of regional cooperation. It is clear that the City cannot, and should not take sole responsibility in the implementation of this plan. A partnership approach is apparent in every project proposed in the following Action Plan with the city just one of many stakeholders that also includes local non-profit organizations, economic development agencies, Chenango County, New York State and, importantly, the surrounding towns of Norwich and North Norwich.

The concept of regional cooperation is one that arose repeatedly during the planning process. It was raised by City officials, the Steering Committee, and participants in the community workshops, focus groups and stakeholder interviews. As the county seat and the most populated municipality in Chenango County, the City of Norwich is linked to surrounding communities by the services it provides including fire and ambulance services, library and youth programs and some water and sewer extensions. The Greater Norwich Empire Zone services the City and towns of Norwich and North Norwich. The Norwich City School District encompasses approximately 110 square miles and extends into 10 townships in Chenango County.

The City and the towns of Norwich and North Norwich depend on one another for economic development opportunities, municipal and social services and community identity, but lack formal coordination of efforts beyond individual infrastructure and service agreements and the Greater Norwich Empire Zone. Better communication and integration of services will be critical to the future of the greater Norwich “region” not just to the City or individual towns. The City recognized this even during the planning process by including a representative of the Town Board of Norwich on the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.



The question is not whether local municipalities and the County can work together more effectively and efficiently to provide services, attract new development and enhance tax revenues as needed by all, but how to implement a regional approach that meets everyone's needs. The ultimate form that increased regional cooperation is not clear and is not for the City alone to decide. The single largest commitment the City has undertaken in the following Action Plan is that of facilitator of a process to determine how best to work together as a region. The outcome of this effort affects not only the implementation of this plan but the ability of all communities in the region to succeed in a 21st century economy. It will require that the towns of Norwich and North Norwich, Chenango County and regional economic development entities understand the benefits to each and the cumulative benefits to the region as a whole because it will require the willing and active participation of each.



Action Planning Matrix

The Action Planning Matrix consists of an outline of identified implementation projects in matrix format. The matrix is organized by goal area. For each activity, implementation steps have been identified along with timeframes for accomplishments, stakeholders responsible for its accomplishment, estimated costs to complete activities and potential funding sources. The timeframe for all activities identified is from now (2003) to 2008-2013.

It should be noted that the expense of implementation will not be taken on by the City all at once. Moreover, the budget estimates reflect a choice the City can make by doing the activity in house or what it may cost to hire outside help in 2003 dollars. Also state funding opportunities may be more readily available to the city with an adopted comprehensive plan.



City of Norwich Comprehensive Plan Action Planning Matrix

Activity	Implementation Steps	Time Frame	Stakeholders/ Partners	Budget Estimate	Funding Sources
Goal 1: Efficient and Progressive Municipal Services					
<p>The City will take a lead role in facilitating regional cooperation with the County and neighboring municipalities.</p> <p>Outcomes of this process could include the development of a growth and development boundary policy with the surrounding local governments to identify and plan mutually beneficial opportunities for extending and sharing municipal services (e.g. water, wastewater treatment, fire and police protection). Such efforts should be aimed at improving and extending infrastructure and services to the greater Norwich area, while creating cost efficiency and economies of scale for taxpayers and residents of the service area. This effort will include an examination of the form and structure of local governments to maximize efficiency of service delivery. It will examine appropriate regional approaches to service delivery including the possibility of government partnerships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set up an initial set of meetings with municipal leaders on the concept of regional cooperation. ▪ Create a Task Force with representation from all municipalities and expertise in the various service areas. Participating municipalities should also be encouraged to provide professional staff time and/or funds to assist the Task Force in its effort to improve and extend infrastructure and services to the greater Norwich area while creating cost efficiency and economies of scale for taxpayers and residents. ▪ Create working groups within the Task Force to examine the individual service areas and report back to the full Task Force. For example, public safety officials on the Task Force would serve on the working group assigned to assessing opportunities for improving fire and police protection within the overall service area. ▪ Identify current problems, capacity issues, operating revenues and expenses and opportunities to achieve cost economies through expansion or consolidation of services. ▪ The Task Force will develop a more detailed budget estimate. 	<p>Start Date: Initial work on this action should begin immediately (Year 1).</p> <p>However, the entire process is anticipated to take 5-10 years (Medium- to Long-Term)</p>	<p>City of Norwich, Norwich City Council, Norwich Planning Commission, Norwich City Attorney, City Director of Finance, Town of Norwich, Norwich Town Board, Norwich Town Attorney, Town of North Norwich, North Norwich Town Board, North Norwich Planning Board, North Norwich Town Attorney, Chenango County Board of Supervisors, Chenango County Department of Planning and Development, Local Economic Development Agencies</p>	<p>Municipal Staff Time: Task Force Members 2-3 hours/month in general meetings 3-4 hours/month in working group meetings. For each service area, 10-20 hours of staff time per municipality to identify current priorities, capacity issues, operating revenues and expenses, etc. 10–20 hours to research past findings and recommendations 20-30 hours to identify barriers to government partnering</p>	<p>Municipal Budget</p>



Activity	Implementation Steps	Time Frame	Stakeholders/ Partners	Budget Estimate	Funding Sources
<p>The City will take a lead role in facilitating regional cooperation with neighboring municipalities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify analysis areas requiring independent study/ professional expertise-assemble funds to hire consultants and undertake required studies. ▪ Formal presentation of Task Force analysis and recommendations to the governing bodies of the participating municipalities. ▪ Adoption of growth and development policy and strategy for implementation. ▪ Form a discussion group of the chief elected officials of the participating communities. ▪ Research past findings and recommendations regarding government partnering and regionalization opportunities. ▪ Identify areas of local government structure that inhibit efficient service delivery and opportunities for local government partnering. ▪ Determine legal implications/requirements for effecting government partnerships. ▪ Follow-up on legal requirements. 	<p>See above.</p>	<p>See above.</p>	<p>20-30 hours to determine legal implications/ requirements/ implementation 2-3 hours for monthly meetings of CEOs Staff costs would average \$20 per hour. – OR – Consultant services could cost from \$10,000 - \$75,000 depending upon the number of service areas determined promising for municipal sharing or consultation.</p>	<p>See above.</p>



Activity	Implementation Steps	Time Frame	Stakeholders/ Partners	Budget Estimate	Funding Sources
<p>Develop a comprehensive 15-20 year capital asset management plan that lists all major city assets, capital projects, major maintenance and improvement projects and a schedule for each, priorities for grant opportunities, and a funding and spending strategy to support the plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inventory major city assets. ▪ Identify (by city department) major and minor improvement projects. ▪ Meet with stakeholders to prioritize projects and develop a schedule for completion. ▪ Secure financing for Capital Asset Management Plan. ▪ Complete projects as funding is secured. ▪ Develop a more detailed budget estimate. 	<p>Start Date: This activity should begin immediately (Year 1) and should be completed within Year 1. Meet on a continual basis to update and modify plan as needed.</p>	<p>City Department Heads, City Council, Planning Commission, Office of Community Development</p>	<p>Municipal Staff Time: 50-200 hours of staff time to develop plan depending on quality of existing inventory, identification of improvements, etc. Actual staff costs would probably average \$20 per hour. – OR – \$10,000-\$15,000 if developed by consultant. \$250,000 annually to implement projects.</p>	<p>Potential funding sources for capital projects: US DOT TEA-21, NYS GOSC Small Cities Program, NYS OPRHP Environmental Protection Fund/ Bond Act & Land Water Conservation Fund, NYS Department of Transportation, NYS Empire State Development, USDA Rural Development</p>
<p>Amend local ordinances, regulations and develop new policies as needed to enhance land use decision making for the City.</p> <p>This action will involve a comprehensive overview of the city’s land use regulations, development standards and building regulations to identify and implement tools to enhance these development tools in a manner that will facilitate private investment and support the goals of the comprehensive plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review local land use regulations on the following issues: ▪ Determine areas that could be improved to enhance land management decisions. Meet with local businesses to identify any problems or issues that they have faced in dealing with the City's zoning ordinance and municipal code. Further identify ways to make the zoning ordinance business friendly. ▪ Research laws related to operation of bed and breakfast inns and home occupations and amend the zoning ordinance as needed. ▪ The Planning Commission will develop a more detailed cost estimate. 	<p>Start Date: Initial work on this action can begin in Year 1. Anticipated adoption of new amendments or zoning ordinance in Year 2-4. (Short-term)</p>	<p>Office of Community Development, Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Commission, Local Businesses, Bed & Breakfast Operators, Lodging Operators, Code Enforcement Office, Property and Business Owners</p>	<p>Municipal Staff Time: depends on the scope of each amendment. Actual staff costs would probably average \$20 per hour.</p> <p>– OR – Consultant – up to \$25,000 - \$35,000 for new ordinance. Cost for changes would vary depending on the scope of the overall effort.</p>	<p>New York State Planning Federation, Municipal Budget</p>



Activity	Implementation Steps	Time Frame	Stakeholders/ Partners	Budget Estimate	Funding Sources
Amend local ordinances, regulations and develop new policies as needed to enhance land use decision making for the City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review current zoning districts and Expand the R-1 zoning to further restrict the areas in which multi-unit conversions can take place. ▪ Revise language to strengthen residential class preservation. ▪ Determine whether current deficiencies can be addressed with minor changes or that a comprehensive re-write of the zoning ordinance is needed. ▪ Formally adopt amendments or new land use regulations. ▪ Codify all land use and municipal code regulations in one book. ▪ Investigate the feasibility of financial incentives to encourage the conversion of apartments back to single-family dwellings. 	See above.	See above.	See above.	See above.
Develop a five-year fiscal plan for city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review existing budget process. ▪ Extend current three-year projections to five years. ▪ Develop materials that effectively articulate the process in layman’s terms to local residents, providing city staff and elected officials with the information needed to describe the city’s fiscal strategy. 	Start Date: This activity should begin immediately (Year 1) and should be completed within Year 1. Meet on a continual basis to update and modify plan as needed.	City Department Heads, City Council, Mayor, City of Norwich Finance Office, Norwich Finance Director	Municipal Staff Time	Municipal Budget



Activity	Implementation Steps	Time Frame	Stakeholders/ Partners	Budget Estimate	Funding Sources
Goal 2: Diverse Economy Connected to the World					
Continue to be an active partner of the region's economic development including efforts to retain and create jobs, grow small businesses and expand the City's tax base.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet with regional economic development partners as needed to articulate the city's needs. ▪ Attend meetings regarding regional economic development issues as appropriate. ▪ Apply for grant funding to support local and regional economic development needs as appropriate. 	Start Date: This activity should begin immediately (Year 1) and will be an ongoing effort.	Chamber of Commerce, Norwich Business Improvement District, City of Norwich, Chenango County, Delaware-Chenango BOCES, SUNY Morrisville, Business Owners	Municipal Staff Time 3-4 hours initial meeting 2-3 hours/month in general meetings Actual staff costs would probably average \$20 per hour.	Potential funding sources for economic development: NYS GOSC Small Cities Program, Empire State Development, US Small Business Administration, USDA Rural Development



Activity	Implementation Steps	Time Frame	Stakeholders/ Partners	Budget Estimate	Funding Sources
Goal 3: Vibrant Downtown					
<p>Identify opportunities for local government to strengthen and improve existing special events, and increase coordination of tourism development efforts. Such efforts may include the acquisition and leasing of portable stage/bandshell equipment, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet regularly with event coordinators to discuss upcoming special functions. Identify any issues and problem areas in coordinating events. ▪ Implement improvements to identified problems as appropriate. ▪ Meet with downtown businesses, property owners, and interested groups to identify and address issues that are negatively impacting the business district. ▪ Identify ways to positively portray the business district. ▪ Develop a more detailed budget estimate. 	<p>Start Date: This activity should begin immediately (Year 1) and the City will need to meet on a continual basis.</p>	<p>Event Coordinators, Local Museums, Hotel and Bed and Breakfast operators, Norwich Business Improvement District, City of Norwich, Chenango County, Chamber of Commerce, Local Businesses, Property Owners</p>	<p>Municipal Staff Time: 2-3 hours for monthly meetings Actual staff costs would probably average \$20 per hour \$20,000 annually for projects</p>	<p>Municipal Budget</p>
<p>Develop an upper floor rehabilitation program to improve commercial buildings in the downtown Broad Street area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct initial market analysis to determine the extent of the potential market. ▪ Inventory existing upper-story space including total space available, renovation needs and costs estimates, and occupancy characteristics. ▪ Research parking needs and funding opportunities. ▪ Develop marketing plan to attract identified end users of developed space. 	<p>Start Date: Initial work on this action can begin within Years 1-2. Rehab work anticipated to be completed within 5-10 years. (Medium- to Long-Term)</p>	<p>Norwich Business Improvement District, Property Owners, City of Norwich</p>	<p>\$15,000-\$25,000 for market analysis and feasibility study Municipal Staff Time: 2-3 hours for monthly meetings Actual staff costs would probably average \$20 per hour</p>	<p>Potential funding sources for rehab: NYS GOSC Small Cities Program, Empire Zone Tax Incentives, NYS OPRHP Environmental Protection Fund, Private Developers, Property Owners</p>



Activity	Implementation Steps	Time Frame	Stakeholders/ Partners	Budget Estimate	Funding Sources
Goal 4: Integrated Multi-Modal Transportation System					
Develop a comprehensive sidewalk construction, replacement, and maintenance program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set up a pavement management program to inspect city streets for condition of pavement, curbs and sidewalks. ▪ Catalog sidewalk conditions and create criteria for prioritizing improvements based on conditions, neighborhood needs, matching resources available and potential to facilitate new development. ▪ Prioritize areas of greatest need. ▪ Identify and secure funding. ▪ Prepare more detailed cost estimates. 	Start Date: Initial work on this action can begin within Years 1-2. This will be an ongoing effort.	City of Norwich Department of Public Works, Chenango County Department of Public Works, NYS Department of Transportation, Property Owners	Cost will vary by block. Estimate \$25,000 per block.	Potential funding sources for construction: NYS Department of Transportation, NYS GOSC Small Cities Program, Transportation Enhancement Program, Municipal Budget
Improve pedestrian and bicycle amenities in residential neighborhoods, parks and in the commercial core.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify areas where pedestrian and bicycle amenities could be improved. Identify amenities that would enhance bicycle and pedestrian use. ▪ Determine more detailed cost estimates for improvements. ▪ Prioritize projects. ▪ Secure funding. 	Start Date: Initial work on this action can begin within Years 3-4. Anticipated completion in Year 10-15. (Long-Term)	Office of Community Development, Department of Public Works, Traffic Commission, Parks Commission	Municipal Staff Time: 30-40 hours Actual staff costs would probably average \$20 per hour Improvements range from \$50,000 - \$150,000	Potential funding sources for amenities: NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Environmental Protection Fund, Transportation Enhancement Program



Activity	Implementation Steps	Time Frame	Stakeholders/ Partners	Budget Estimate	Funding Sources
<p>Enhance and/or adopt specific guidelines for traffic calming and pedestrian safety measures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review street classification system to determine the current function of roadways, classifying each as an arterial, collector/distributor, or local street. Then determine desired function of each street given surrounding land uses, access needs of commercial, employment, education and residential uses and alternative availability. ▪ Determine which streets would be appropriate for calming measures and the type of calming measures to implement such as tree planting, road narrowing, curb bump-outs ▪ Guidelines for a traffic calming strategy would include a prioritization system for making decisions about how to allocate traffic calming improvements. Guidelines would also include a description of traffic calming measures. ▪ Identify needs for new pedestrian facilities, amenities, and safety features, which could include signage, crosswalks, curb extensions, signals, special pavement treatments at crossings and traffic signal improvements. ▪ Develop a more detailed budget estimate. 	<p>Start Date: Initial work on this action can begin within Years 3-4. Anticipated completion in Year 6-7. (Medium-Term)</p>	<p>Office of Community Development, Department of Public Works, Traffic Commission, Residents, Planning Commission</p>	<p>Estimate \$5,000 for initial classification \$30,000 annually to implement improvements</p>	<p>Potential funding sources for construction: NYS DOT, Transportation Enhancement Program, Municipal Budget</p>



Activity	Implementation Steps	Time Frame	Stakeholders/ Partners	Budget Estimate	Funding Sources
Goal 5: Standout City Character, Architecture, and History					
<p>Raise awareness of elected officials, city staff, and residents regarding the economic benefits of historic preservation and evaluate strategies for capitalizing on the city's architecture and heritage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research and prepare education and training materials. ▪ Implement outreach and training regarding the economic benefits of preservation and community character protection and the range of tools available and commonly used. ▪ Review existing regulations and modify as needed. Issues to be addressed include: building heights, setbacks, and architectural review procedures. ▪ Meet with stakeholders to discuss adoption of a local historic preservation law or guidelines to protect older and historic residential and commercial buildings and establish a formal basis for discussion and disposition of historic buildings in the City. ▪ Develop design guidelines for historic district, central business district, and/or older and historic residential areas. ▪ Develop a more detailed budget estimate. 	<p>Start Date for raising awareness: Initial work can begin in Year 1. Anticipated completion in Year 2-3. (Short-Term) Start Date for strengthening regulations and developing design guidelines: Initial work on these actions can begin in Year 2-3.</p>	<p>City Historian, Planning Commission, Office of Community Development, Zoning Board of Appeals, Norwich Businesses Improvement District, City Council, Owners of Historic Properties</p>	<p>\$5,000 - \$10,000 depending on scope</p> <p>\$30,000 for development of design guidelines and collateral materials.</p>	<p>Municipal Budget, National Trust for Historic Preservation, NYS OPRHP Environmental Protection Fund, Preservation League of NYS, NYS Council on the Arts, Local Banks, Local Businesses, Property Owners, Historical Society</p>



Activity	Implementation Steps	Time Frame	Stakeholders/ Partners	Budget Estimate	Funding Sources
<p>Raise awareness of elected officials, city staff, and residents regarding the economic benefits of historic preservation and evaluate strategies for capitalizing on the city's architecture and heritage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider the establishment of a Historic Commission to oversee historic preservation programs and regulations. ▪ Develop outreach and promotion materials to familiarize property owners, businesses, and developers with guidelines and requirements. 	<p>Anticipated completion in Year 4-5. (Short- to Medium-Term)</p>	<p>See above.</p>	<p>See above.</p>	<p>See above.</p>
<p>Develop façade and structural improvement programs to upgrade the appearance of commercial and residential buildings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Delineate a façade improvement district to concentrate impact of improvements on aesthetic and community visibility issues. In conjunction, develop a façade program that pools voluntary tax or private donations from individuals and businesses in a low-interest lending program (to be used for small scale improvements). ▪ Secure funding (to be loaned or granted) to property owners for larger scale improvements. ▪ Research the development of tax incentives for improvements. ▪ Develop a more detailed budget estimate. 	<p>Start Date: Initial work on this action can begin in Year 1-2. Program is anticipated to be in full operation in Year 3-4 (Short- to Medium-Term)</p>	<p>Chamber of Commerce, Planning Commission, City Council, Office of Community Development, Tax Assessor, Local Businesses, Local Homeowners, Local Financial Institutions, Norwich BID</p>	<p>\$250,000 (Start-Up Funding)</p>	<p>Potential funding sources for the façade program: National Trust for Historic Preservation, NYS GOSC Small Cities Program, NYS OPRHP Environmental Protection Fund, Preservation League of NYS, NYS Council on the Arts, Local Banks, Local Businesses</p>



Activity	Implementation Steps	Time Frame	Stakeholders/ Partners	Budget Estimate	Funding Sources
<p>Develop a comprehensive strategy to enhance the appearance of the Museum District.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish a Museum District Committee (if not already in place). ▪ Meet with committee to create a recognizable identity for the Museum District. ▪ Target façade and/or rehab programs to this area (See Actions 6.2). ▪ Complete streetscape improvements within the District. ▪ Work with the Museums to coordinate events and programs. ▪ Secure financing for improvements. ▪ Develop a more detailed budget estimate. 	<p>Start Date: Initial work on this action can begin in Year 2-3. Anticipated completion in Year 8-10. (Medium-Term)</p>	<p>Office of Community Development, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Museums, Chenango County Department of Planning and Development</p>	<p>Municipal Staff Time 5-8 hours/month in general meetings Actual staff costs would probably average \$20 per hour One target area Façade/Rehab Program \$250,000</p>	<p>Municipal Budget Potential funding sources for Museum Programs: National Endowment for Humanities, Institute of Museums & Library Services</p>



Activity	Implementation Steps	Time Frame	Stakeholders/ Partners	Budget Estimate	Funding Sources
Goal 6: Residential Neighborhoods of Choice and Quality					
<p>Develop residential rehabilitation program to improve older and historic housing stock, and reduce density of apartment conversion buildings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct a survey of all housing units in the City. Based on results, prioritize areas where the housing need appears to be greatest. ▪ Conduct a more formal housing condition and income survey of the priority areas. ▪ Prioritize those areas with greatest needs in terms of housing conditions and income. ▪ Submit applications to funding agencies for financial assistance. ▪ Develop outreach, education and promotion materials to help market rehab program to appropriate audiences and encourage participation. ▪ Revise local code governing multiple residential unit conversions and density. 	<p>Start Date: Initial work on this action can begin in Year 1-2. Secure funding for first round of program in Year 2-5. (Short- to Medium-Term)</p>	<p>Office of Community Development, Property Owners, Norwich Housing Authority, Opportunities for Chenango Inc, Chenango County Planning and Development, Chenango Housing Council and Consultant could provide assistance in marketing older and historic housing to targeted buyers.</p>	<p>\$5,000 for grant application, up to \$5000 for survey, \$400,000 for a housing rehab program per target area</p>	<p>Municipal Budget for survey. Potential funding sources for rehab: NYS GOSC Small Cities Program, NYS DHCR Programs, USDA Rural Development, NYS Affordable Housing Corporation, National Trust for Historic Preservation (for historic homes)</p>



Activity	Implementation Steps	Time Frame	Stakeholders/ Partners	Budget Estimate	Funding Sources
<p>Utilize financial incentives available under New York State law to encourage home reinvestment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet with stakeholders to discuss financial incentives available under NYS law to encourage home reinvestment. ▪ Adopt of the NYS 421(f) Tax Relief Program The 421(f) tax incentive program is authorized by the state and can be implemented by municipal resolution. The tax relief program can be used for buildings at least five years old for capital improvements that cost \$3,000 or more and increase the property’s value by at least \$5,000. The exemption is limited to the first \$80,000 increase in value. Upon application to the assessor, the property owner may receive a 100% exemption on the increased assessed value of the property resulting from the improvement for the first year. The exemption decreases by 12.5% every year for seven years. ▪ Conduct public outreach to make property owners aware of what types of improvements may result in an increase in assessed valuation. ▪ Also, if local preservation law is adopted, monitor federal and state legislation regarding historic homeowner tax credits. 	<p>Start Date: Initial work on this action can begin in Year 1-2. Anticipated adoption in Year 2-4. (Short- to Medium-Term)</p>	<p>Office of Community Development, City Council, City Attorney, City Assessor</p>	<p>\$5,000 for brochure and mailing, Municipal Staff Time</p>	<p>Municipal Budget NYS OPRHP and Preservation League of New York State regarding historic homeowner tax credits.</p>



Activity	Implementation Steps	Time Frame	Stakeholders/ Partners	Budget Estimate	Funding Sources
Ensure coordination with public and non-profit housing organizations to implement housing improvement and assistance programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet regularly with the Chenango Housing Council and other providers as appropriate. 	<p>Start Date: Initial work on this action can begin in Year 1 and will be an ongoing effort. (Short-Term)</p>	<p>Office of Community Development, Chenango Housing Council, Norwich Housing Authority, Opportunities for Chenango Inc., Norwich Code Enforcement Officer</p>	<p>Municipal Staff Time: 2-3 hours/month in general meetings</p>	<p>Municipal Budget</p>
Enhance as needed and enforce the City’s property nuisance law to more effectively address disruptive properties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluate staff capacity, ongoing code enforcement efforts and needs, and the effectiveness of existing penalties for noncompliance. Existing penalties and enforcement procedures would also be evaluated in terms of effectiveness and strengthened as needed to accomplish nuisance abatement goals. ▪ Based on the evaluation, code enforcement programs would be modified and strengthened, which may involve hiring of additional personnel, training, outreach and support. 	<p>Start Date: Initial work on this action can begin in Year 1-2. (Short-Term)</p> <p>Enforcement will be an ongoing effort.</p>	<p>Office of Community Development, Zoning Board of Appeals, Norwich Code Enforcement Officer</p>	<p>Municipal Staff Time: 30-40 hours to consider and adopt changes as needed with enforcement an ongoing staff need. Actual staff costs would probably average \$20 per hour</p>	<p>Municipal Budget</p>



Activity	Implementation Steps	Time Frame	Stakeholders/ Partners	Budget Estimate	Funding Sources
Goal 7: Inspired By Diverse Art and Cultural Offerings					
Develop a consortium to maximize impacts of individual arts, culture, and educational organizations events and programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inventory existing programs. ▪ Meet with agencies to determine needs for new programs and facilities. ▪ Identify potential funding sources for any identified new programs and/or facilities. ▪ Develop strategy for preparing funding applications for identified projects. ▪ Prepare community cultural plan and consortium of arts, education, culture and service agencies. ▪ Develop pilot arts zone in accordance with state guidelines (if program materializes). Develop consortium leadership, meeting schedule and goals on a quarterly or annual basis. ▪ Develop an interpretive plan for architecture and heritage. 	Start Date: Initial work on this action can begin in Year 1 and will be an ongoing effort.	Chenango County Council of the Arts, Event Coordinators, Norwich City School District, Norwich BID, SUNY Morrisville, local museums, educational institutions, and arts organizations.	Municipal Staff Time: 2-3 hours per month. Actual staff costs would probably average \$20 per hour \$10,000 for community cultural plan; up to \$10,000 in support from local government	NYS Council on the Arts, SUNY Morrisville, Norwich City School District, National Endowment for the Arts, Private Foundations, Municipal Budget
Develop and implement a parks and recreation strategy for the City that considers current needs and limitations to enable the City to establish a strong set of parks, trails and recreation and cultural programs. The strategy will consider maintenance and expansion needs and new partnerships and models for service delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet with the Parks Commission to discuss updating the 1992 Parks Master Plan. ▪ Review Parks Master Plan. ▪ Incorporate the East and West Parks Master Plan, if the Parks Master Plan is updated. ▪ Identify needs for rehab, new facilities and services. ▪ Prioritize projects. ▪ Develop a capital improvement plan for recreation projects (see Action 1.2). ▪ Identify other potential funding sources to augment city funds. 	Start Date: Initial work on this action can begin in Year 5. Anticipated adoption in Year 10. (Medium- to Long-Term)	Parks Commission, City of Norwich Youth Bureau, Norwich BID, Headwaters Youth Conservation Corp, Office of Community Development, YMCA	Municipal Staff Time: 75-150 hours Actual staff costs would probably average \$20 per hour – OR – Consultant: \$20,000 - \$30,000 to prepare plan.	NYS OPRHP Environmental Protection Fund, Transportation Enhancement Program, National Recreation Trails Program, Municipal Budget



Action Plan Narrative

Implementation Methodology

Comprehensive planning logically forms the basis of all efforts by the community to guide the development of its governmental structure as well as its natural and built environment. The Comprehensive Plan is a means to promote the health, safety and general welfare of the people of the City of Norwich and to give consideration to the needs of the people of the greater Norwich area of which the City is a part. Significant decisions and actions affecting the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the City can be influenced by the goals, objectives, policies, or implementation measures stated in the Plan.

Implementation measures evolve from the formulation of clear, concise and well-considered goals, objectives and policies, and are a critical part of the comprehensive planning process. Taken together, these elements of the plan serve as the heart of the document and provide the framework for implementation strategies. The City's goals, objectives, and policies establish the basis for municipal decision making, infrastructure improvements, inter-municipal agreements, and public and private investment. Numerous incremental decisions will be made in the future affecting development and the quality of life in and around the City. Effectiveness of the Comprehensive Plan will rely on the consistency of decision making at the local government level as well as public involvement. It is important that future decisions be consistent. One reason is to provide the public, developers and others with a degree of predictability about the City's actions. More importantly, policy achieves its effectiveness by being applied consistently over time. Consequently, a common foundation is needed from which consistent decisions will be made. An adopted comprehensive plan, with its official statements, can serve as the basis for this consistency and also provide public accountability.

The mere adoption of the Comprehensive Plan by the Common Council will not improve the quality of life for City residents and stakeholders. Actions that result from consultation with the Comprehensive Plan are considered implementation measures. It is the implementation of the Plan that will have a positive impact on the community and improve the quality of life in the City of Norwich.

This Plan was created as a general framework for decision making and more detailed planning. The Plan is written in accordance with the criteria contained in Section 28-a of New York State General City Law. In approving and adopting the Comprehensive Plan, the City Common Council and future members of the City's legislative body, City boards and commissions, have a foundation which guides a course of action to realize the Plan's vision.



Periodic Changes to the Plan

Even though the Plan serves as a foundation for consistency in policy and decision-making, the Plan must not be rigid or viewed as a regulatory tool. The Plan has to be reviewed regularly in order to reflect new information, changing conditions, and the evolving needs of the community. If the Comprehensive Plan or part of it becomes inappropriate because of new conditions, values, or ideas, the Plan should be revised, not ignored. The Comprehensive Plan should remain as a living document that changes over time to reflect such changes in community sentiment.

When conditions do indicate a need for amending the Plan, such changes to the document should only occur after thoughtful consideration of factual information. In order to maintain the integrity of the Plan careful attention is required during the process of periodic review and revision.

Role of Local Government Council, Boards, and Commissions

The State legislature has identified that one of the most important powers and duties it has granted to city governments is the authority and responsibility to undertake city comprehensive planning, and to guide land use development for the purpose of protecting the public health, safety and general welfare of its citizens. The Common Council and the citizens that make up the boards, commissions, and committees play an important role in the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Decision making boards, such as the Common Council, Planning Commission, and the Zoning Board of Appeals are the primary governmental bodies that will take an active role in carrying out the objectives in the Comprehensive Plan. All departments within the City and all other citizen commissions and committees should also be cognizant of the Plan's components, and make decisions based upon the goals and objectives as indicated in the Plan.

Before the Comprehensive Plan becomes an effective tool for the City, the Common Council must formally adopt the Plan. Through its legislative authority, the Common Council is responsible for considering the goals and objectives stated in the Plan to formulate projects, policies, and develop a budget in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan. Through the adoption of this Plan the Council will be eligible to pursue grant programs and low interest loans to implement various projects identified herein. As the legislative body, the Council will also have final approval and adoption powers over any proposed amendments to existing regulations that will allow implementation of the regulatory suggestions of the Plan.



The City Planning Commission will be responsible for coordinating Comprehensive Plan activities by providing direction and reviewing activities undertaken by the City to ensure compatibility and consistency with the Plan's goals and objectives. The Planning Commission will recommend to the City Council regulations relating to any subject matter over which the Planning Commission has jurisdiction under State statute, local law or ordinance of the City. Moreover, the Planning Commission will assure that proposed new regulations and amendments to existing regulations are consistent with the goals of this Plan prior to making recommendations to Council. The Planning Commission will also review subdivision, planned use development, and potentially special use permit applications.

Additional responsibilities of the Planning Commission will include a periodic review of the Comprehensive Plan. Periodic review will involve an annual review and evaluation of plan implementation for a period of not less than five years from the date of initial adoption. Furthermore, the Common Council and Planning Commission will arrange for a periodic review of the Plan at least every five years. The review will assess the need for amending or updating the Plan to address emerging and evolving issues.

As indicated in General City Law, Section 81a, the jurisdiction of the Zoning Board of Appeals shall be appellate only unless otherwise provided by local law or ordinance. This means that the zoning board hears and decides appeals from the Code Enforcement Officer including any order, requirement, decision, interpretation, or determination made by such official who is charged with the enforcement of the city's Zoning Ordinance and Sign Ordinance. In most cases the Code Enforcement Officer's determination that is challenged. It is the zoning boards responsibility to exercise its appellate jurisdiction by hearing appeals for use and area variances, interpretations, and in the case of the City's Sign Ordinance, sign variances. Not only does the zoning board have appellate jurisdiction, the board also retains original jurisdiction to consider special (use) permit applications, given to it by the City's legislative body through the Zoning Ordinance. The difference between original jurisdiction and appellate is that an applicant is not seeking a determination from the Code Enforcement Officer prior to applying for a special (use) permit from the zoning board. Additionally, the City should rename its generic term of "special permit" to "special use permit" which gives the process an identity, as it is the use of the land that is being considered.

Historically, special use permit requests have revolved around whether or not a proposed use is compatible in any given neighborhood. There is potential for a proposed special use to be incompatible with the neighborhood in which the use is proposed. The special use permit is a flexible tool which enables a use of land which in concept is appropriate, but such use might otherwise not be in harmony with the neighborhood in which it is proposed. The special use permit review procedure is intended to achieve harmony between the use and neighborhood by applying thoughtful conditions and criteria on the permit. The City should consider transferring special use permit powers from the Zoning Board of Appeals to the Planning Commission. The planning commission's duties should be structured to consider the ongoing and long-term planning needs of the community, whereas the zoning board's responsibilities tend to be appellate in nature. The legislative body through the Zoning Ordinance delegates the authority of special use permit review to a particular board.

An additional duty the Zoning Board of Appeals should take on to assist the City in maintaining effective land use regulations is to report to the Common Council on ineffective, contradicting, and poor language in the Zoning Ordinance and Sign Ordinance. In its capacity as an appellate



board, the zoning board can provide thoughtful advice on how to correct problems with such regulations. The zoning board is able to identify, analyze, and solve language problems with a regulation since they deal with appeals and interpretations.

Role of Business Community, Chamber of Commerce, Civic Organizations, and Private Citizens

Since the City of Norwich Comprehensive Plan places a great deal of emphasis upon the continued stability and viability of its downtown and economic welfare, it is very important that the business community be involved in the implementation of this Plan. The primary vehicles through which the business community would be represented throughout the implementation process is the Norwich Business Improvement District Management Association Inc., the Downtown Merchants Association, and the Chenango County Chamber of Commerce.

The Norwich BID was created pursuant to General City Law, Section 24. The establishment of business improvement districts is an effective means for restoring and promoting business activity in downtown areas. The Norwich BID and the legislative body should work together to provide district improvements such as but not limited to landscaping, lighting, pedestrian amenities, ramps, sidewalks, plazas, parks, parking lots, removal and relocation of utilities and vaults, and construction of physically aesthetic and decorative safety fixtures, equipment, and facilities.

Input from private citizens and other members of the community has been an integral component of the comprehensive planning process via the public workshops and focus groups. Therefore, it is important that the public at large continue to be involved in the implementation of the Plan. Civic organizations and the Chenango County Chamber of Commerce can also provide valuable feedback to the City. These organizations are constantly in communication with local residents and businesses. Information gathered from these avenues can be valuable if shared with the City to help define future priorities.

The effectiveness of the local government in the City of Norwich is contingent upon the participation of all its citizens through activities such as voting, attendance at public meetings, and communication with elected and appointed officials. It is a democratic society in which the people of the City of Norwich continue to control the actions of its local government. Therefore, citizen participation in the implementation of the Plan is important to ensure that the goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan are being met and properly administered.

Individual citizens can be among the first to note a shortcoming of City policy. Citizens must remain familiar with the goals and objectives of the plan, maintaining vigilance over City policymaking, and voicing opposition or support, as appropriate for proposed actions.



Action Plan

Goal one of the action plan has been developed in order to assure that the Norwich community receives optimal services from city government. The City of Norwich is willing to cooperate with other local governments in an effort to eliminate unnecessary duplication of services. Such efforts may provide a more prosperous future for those municipalities who participate and work with their neighboring local governments. Additional activities identified for goal one include the development of a 15-20 year capital asset management plan, amendment and revision of land use regulations, and the development of a five-year fiscal plan.

Goal two is created in a form whereby residents and stakeholders view the future of the Norwich economy in relation to the world. The primary function of this goal is to maintain and improve efforts to retain and create jobs, grow small businesses and expand the City's tax base. The community vision for this goal is that the Norwich area will be connected to the world by investing in technologies that distinguish it as a development location. Furthermore, a diverse job base will be present including management and executive positions at growing companies as well as varying skilled full time jobs. The small businesses of the community will continue to provide a foundation for every day commercial activity.

Norwich has a strong collection of community events held in downtown Norwich. Goal three focuses on downtown Norwich to help preserve and enhance the appearance and vibrancy of downtown. The City will organize and collaborate with event coordinators to enhance the success of particular events. Not only does the City wish to assist the success of downtown events, but the City also intends on improving the condition of downtown. The City will assist in an effort to see upper floors of downtown buildings be reconditioned and used. In order to accomplish this, an upper floor rehabilitation project may need to be pursued to refurbish some buildings up to code.

Obviously the Norwich Business Improvement District will play an important role in helping the City reach the general goal of a vibrant downtown. A major improvement being undertaken by the Norwich BID is the downtown streetscape project. This project is designed to enhance the aesthetics and condition of North and South Broad Street in the central business district area.

Transportation infrastructure is the focus of goal four. The City will provide a range of transportation choices that are safe, economical, ecologically sound, and aesthetically pleasing, to serve a diverse population including the physically challenged. It is evident that the people of Norwich value a pedestrian oriented downtown. This value is being preserved in connection with goal three (vibrant downtown), which encompasses the downtown streetscape project, sidewalk and crosswalk improvements and potential medians that serve as traffic calming devices. The goal of traffic calming is to create transportation networks conducive to multiple modes of transportation. The Department of Transportation defines traffic calming as "the combination of mainly physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behavior, and improve conditions for non-motorized street users."



Additional concerns found during information gathering sessions indicate that Norwich needs to address sidewalk and street maintenance throughout the city as a whole. The conditions of neighborhood sidewalks and streets are such that residents feel a pavement management program to inspect city streets for condition of pavement, curbs and sidewalks should be established. The quality of pavement and sidewalk surfaces is very important to bicyclists and pedestrians, as well as motorists. The City of Norwich will work to maintain a smooth road and sidewalk surface, free of cracks, potholes, and bumps. The city will also work to review the street classification system and catalog sidewalk conditions to create criteria for prioritizing improvements.

Another goal of the City is to preserve the character, architecture, and history that has shaped Norwich into what it is today. The community values these attributes and many other communities across the United States have found such characteristics to be valuable. Those communities that have recognized the economic value of their architectural and historic character have taken active steps to protect and enhance these assets. Goal five identifies steps the City will take to educate citizens and elected officials on the benefits of preserving community character and historic preservation. Furthermore, the City will continue to seek funding to help with façade and structural improvements for aging buildings in designated areas.

Neighborhoods have been a concern in the City, especially the degrading residential neighborhoods. Buildings or residential structures that are permitted to deteriorate can detract from the desired image of the community and pose safety hazards. Norwich will remain committed to the residential neighborhoods and support residential rehabilitation programs to improve aging and historic homes. As identified by regional cooperation in goal one, the City will communicate with the Chenango Housing Council to coordinate housing improvement and assistance programs. Goal six also identifies that Norwich will preserve quiet residential neighborhoods by addressing higher density apartment conversions in the City's land use regulations. Preserving and enhancing residential character is important to homeowners because they have made an investment in the community, and the condition of the immediate neighborhood surrounding their homes directly impacts their quality of life. Not only do structural features of neighborhoods impact communities, but nuisances such as poorly maintained properties and behavioral problems negatively impact residential neighborhoods. These problems are commonly referred to as a "cancer" that can spread throughout an entire neighborhood. The City will work to address these problems through proper code and law enforcement. The City of Norwich will become a better place if these issues are addressed. The better the conditions in the City's most difficult neighborhoods, the less of a negative impact those neighborhoods will have on the surrounding community.

The final goal in the Comprehensive Plan addresses art, culture, and recreation. As Norwich is the County seat and is essentially the "gathering place" for Chenango County, the City will encourage arts and cultural organizations, museums, and volunteers to work in partnership to maintain Norwich as a regional center for festivals and tourism. City parks are commonly used for such events. The City Parks Commission will continue to convene and consider revising the 1992 Parks Master Plan as needed. Many people have expressed the desire for the City to pursue trail-making activities along the river. The youth have expressed this interest just as much, if not more than the adults who live and work in Norwich.



Funding Sources: Federal, State, and Local

In addition to the City budget, there are numerous federal, state, and local funding programs that can help facilitate the implementation of the City of Norwich Comprehensive Plan. The following describes such programs that may be useful in carrying out the action plan. Not only should the City of Norwich pursue these funding opportunities, but other local development organizations may want to seek this funding.

- New York State Governor's Office for Small Cities Community Development Block Grant program

The Governor's Office for Small Cities administers the Community Development Block Grant Program for the State of New York. The Community Development Block Grant Program provides grants to eligible cities, towns, and villages with a population under 50,000 and counties with an area population under 200,000 to revitalize neighborhoods, expand affordable housing, and economic opportunities and or improve community facilities and services. Funding amounts and availability may fluctuate from year to year. Typically, applications for funding are due in early April with grant announcements in August.

Applicants of the Small Cities Program must ensure that 70% of all activities funded under the Small Cities Program primarily benefits low- and moderate-income households, those with incomes at or below 80% of the area median income established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Each Small Cities funded activity must meet one of the national objectives: benefiting low- and moderate-income households, aiding in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight or meeting community development needs having a particular urgency.

Contact: NYS Governor's Office for Small Cities
Agency Building 4/6th Floor
Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12223
Phone: 518-474-2057 Fax: 518-474-5247
info@nysmallcities.com

- New York State Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation's Environmental Protection Fund/1996 Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act

The Environmental Protection Fund provides a permanent source of funding for the acquisition and development of parklands and playgrounds, the preservation and restoration of historic properties and the continuing development of New York State's Heritage Areas Systems within the physical boundaries of New York State. The Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act provides grant assistance for three types of projects: park,



historic preservation, and heritage area systems. The state provides no more than 50% of the funding for such projects, and the funds are normally provided on a reimbursement basis. All projects must have a sponsor that is a municipality, state agency, public benefit corporation, public authority or not-for-profit corporation that has been awarded state assistance and will assume responsibility for the project. All projects must be recommended to the Commissioner of Park, Recreation, and Historic Preservation by the governing body of the sponsor. The following is a brief description of the Grants Programs available under the Environmental Protection Act of 1993 and the Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act of 1996.

Parks Funding is available for projects to preserve, rehabilitate or restore lands, waters or structures for park, recreation or conservation purposes, including such things as playgrounds, courts, rinks, bandshells and facilities for swimming, boating, picnicking, hunting, fishing, camping or other recreational activities.

Historic Preservation Funding is available for projects to improve, protect, preserve, rehabilitate or restore properties on the State or National Register for use by all segments of the population for park, recreation, conservation or preservation purposes, in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.

Acquisition Funding is available for the acquisition of a permanent easement in or fee title to lands, waters, or structures for use by all segments of the population for park, recreation, conservation or preservation purposes, including open space or properties on the State or National Register or identified in a local heritage area management plan.

To be eligible for funding under the Bond Act, a park project must develop, expand or enhance public access to water bodies, promote water based recreation or enhance the natural, cultural or historic aspects of water bodies. This is a 50/50 match program. Additional program requirements under the EPF program include: federal funds are not eligible as match, state funds are; three year retroactivity on some project elements; funding cap of \$350,000 and a covenant term of 5-20 years, based on grant for historic preservation projects. Under Bond Act federal and state funds are not eligible as match; one year retroactivity on some project elements; funding cap of \$500,000; and covenant term of 23 years for historic preservation projects.

Contact: New York State Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation - Central Region
Jean Egenhofer
Clark Reservation
Jamesville, NY 13078-9516
(315) 492-1756; FAX (315) 492-3277
<http://nysparks.state.ny.us/grants/>



- NYS Empire State Development

Empire State Development (ESD) is New York State's economic development agency. ESD offers a variety of financial and tax incentives for the relocation, start-up and expansion of businesses. Energy savings programs encourage investment in energy saving technology and training assistance is available to small and large businesses.

Contact: Empire State Development Regional Office - Central New York Region
333 East Washington Street
Syracuse, New York 13202
(315) 428-4097
www.empire.state.ny.us

- United States Department of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service Education Grants

The program seeks to help improve lives and communities through an educational process that uses scientific knowledge focused on issues critical to the economic, agricultural, societal, health/safety, and environmental progress of all Americans. In addition, the program identifies and solves farm, home and community problems through the practical application of research findings of the USDA and land-grant colleges and universities. The cooperative extension system is a future-oriented, self-renewing, national educational network providing excellence in programs that focus on contemporary issues and needs of people. Grants are available to designated land-grant institutions in the United States.

Contact: Extension Service
Department of Agriculture
14th Street and Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250
(202) 720-2810
www.usda.gov

- U.S. Department of Transportation, Transportation Equity Act – TEA 21

TEA-21 provides funding for twelve eligible Transportation Enhancement categories, including the Recreational Trails Program, Landscaping and Other Scenic Beautification; and Historic Preservation. The Recreational Trails Program provides funds to States to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both nonmotorized and motorized recreational trail uses. Funds may be used for the maintenance and restoration of existing trails; development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities and trail linkages; purchase and lease of trail construction and maintenance equipment; construction of new trails; acquisition of easements or property for trails; and operation



of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection related to trails. Landscaping and Other Scenic Beautification category includes landscape planning, design, and construction projects that enhance the aesthetic or ecological resources along highways, other transportation corridors (railways, bike paths, sidewalks, etc.), points of access, and lands qualifying for other categories of Transportation Enhancement activities. Eligible activities under streetscape projects include lighting, historic sidewalk pavers, benches, benches, planting containers, decorative walls and walkways, signs, public art, historical markers, etc. Historic Preservation projects should enhance the transportation experience by improving the ability of the public to appreciate the historical significance of a transportation feature, or the area served by the feature. All historic preservation projects must clearly demonstrate a relationship to the surface transportation system. All proposed projects must be either listed on, or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Contact:	U.S. DOT Federal Highway Administration 400 Seventh Street Southwest Washington, DC 20590 (800) 240-5674 (202) 366-3297 FAX	Robert Reinhardt NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation Empire State Plaza, Building #1 Albany, New York 12238 (518) 474-0415 (518) 474-7013
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John Ryan
Transportation Enhancements Coordinator
New York State DOT - Region 1
84 Holland Avenue
Albany, New York 12208
(518) 486-5520

- Preservation League of New York State's Rural New York Historic Preservation Grants

Grants of up to \$5,000 and in-kind support are available to organizations and agencies that work to protect, preserve, and promote historic buildings, downtown areas, and landscapes. Innovative "grassroots" projects that relate to local economic development and planning efforts are especially encouraged. The program seeks to support the work of preservation not-for-profit groups and assist projects in areas where there is limited historic preservation activity. Projects that can serve as models for local, state and national issues are of special interest. Examples of eligible projects include: facade designs for Main Street buildings; management plans to retain and augment local business in historic downtowns; publication and exhibits to promote preservation and tourism; landscape plans for historic waterfront areas; and feasibility studies for the re-use of historic buildings. The program cannot fund general operating support, private historic properties or landscapes, the purchase of building materials, equipment or historic markets, maintenance and repair costs, or capital campaigns.



Contact: Tania Werbizky
Preservation League of New York State
44 Central Avenue
Albany, New York 12206
(607) 272-6510/(518) 462-5658

- Residential Emergency Services to offer (HOME) Repairs to the Elderly (RESTORE)

RESTORE funds may be used to pay for the cost of emergency repairs to eliminate hazardous conditions in homes owned by the elderly when the homeowners cannot afford to make the repairs in a timely fashion. Eligible applicants include not-for-profit corporations and municipalities. All areas of the State are eligible. To be eligible for assistance, homeowners must be 60 years of age or older with an income that does not exceed 80 percent of the area median income. Work undertaken cannot exceed \$5000 per building. Funds must be used for low-income elderly owner-occupied households in one- to four-unit owner-occupied dwellings.

Contact: Syracuse Regional Office
800 South Wilbur Avenue
Syracuse, NY 13204
(315) 473-6930; Fax: 315-473-6937
www.dhcr.state.ny.us

- Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)

The weatherization services provided are determined by an on-site energy audit process, which includes life-saving health and safety tests and an extensive analysis of fuel consumption and lifestyle. Weatherization services are provided by 73 organizations referred to as subgrantees. All areas of the State are eligible. Funds are used to assist low-income persons, particularly the elderly, handicapped, and families with young children; and to reduce national energy consumption, while minimizing the impact of higher fuel costs on low-income families.

Contact: Syracuse Regional Office
800 South Wilbur Avenue
Syracuse, NY 13204
(315) 473-6930; Fax: 315-473-6937
www.dhcr.state.ny.us



- New York State Affordable Housing Corporation, Affordable Homeownership Development Program

This program provides grants for new construction, acquisition/rehabilitation or improvement of one to four family homes, cooperatives and condominiums which will be owner-occupied. Grants cannot exceed 60% of total project costs and are limited to \$20,000 per unit or \$25,000 per unit for projects located in high cost areas or projects receiving a U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development Service Loan. Eligible applicant is a municipality, a housing development fund company, any not-for-profit corporation or charitable organization which has as one of its primary purposes the improvement of housing, or a municipal housing authority.

Contact: Michael R. Houseknecht, Regional Director
NYS Affordable Housing Corporation
119 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12210
(518) 424-2118

- Federal Home Loan Bank of New York, Affordable Housing Program

The Affordable Housing Program (AHP) provides subsidized funds to finance the purchase, construction, and/or rehabilitation of owner-occupied housing for very low-, low- and moderate income households with incomes at or below 80% of the area median income; and to finance the purchase, construction, and/or rehabilitation of rental housing, where at least 20% of the rental units will be occupied by and affordable for very low-income households (50% or below median) for the remaining useful life of such housing or the mortgage term. Affordable for very low-income households means the monthly housing expenses charged to tenants for rental units made available for occupancy by very low-income households, shall not exceed 30 percent of the income of a household at 50% of the median, adjusted for family size.

AHP applicants must be member institutions of the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York. Nonprofits, local governments, community development corporations, individuals and others seeking AHP funding should establish relationships with a member institution of the Bank. The Bank will limit the amount of AHP subsidy it will offer to any Project to 10% of the total amount of AHP subsidy available during the application period in which the Project Application is submitted. However, the total AHP subsidy may not exceed \$20,000 per Project unit.

Contact: Joseph Gallo, Vice President – Affordable Housing Program
Federal Home Loan Bank of New York
101 Park Avenue
New York, New York 10178-0599
(212)681-6000; Fax (212) 441-6890



- National Endowment for the Arts

The Endowment is interested in local projects that can have significant effect with their community. Nonprofit tax-exempt organizations may apply. Applicants may be arts institutions, local arts agencies, arts service organizations, Federally recognized tribal communities and tribes, official units of state or local government, and other organizations that can help advance the mission of the Arts Endowment. The Arts Endowment offers Grants to organizations under four categories: Creation & Presentation; Planning & Stabilization; Heritage & Preservation; and Education & Access.

Contact: National Endowment for the Arts
Nancy Hanks Center
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20506-0001
www.arts.endow.gov

Community Profile



Bruchausen Park



Ward School – Birdsell Street



Northeast Classic Car Museum



Abandoned Industrial Building



Residence



Chenango County Fairgrounds



History and Overview

The City of Norwich is located in the central part of Chenango County. It is the County seat and the most populated municipality in the County and serves as the commercial and cultural focus of this largely rural area. The 2000 Census reported a population of 7,355 people, a 3.4% decrease from the 1990 population of 7,613. The City of Norwich encompasses about 1,100 acres of land. The City enjoys a continental climate with a mean January temperature of 20° F and a mean July temperature of 68° F. The average rain fall is 40 inches and average growing season is 120 days.

Regional transportation access is provided via New York State Route 12 and Route 23 that connects the City to surrounding communities in the County and to the New York State Thruway, Interstate 88, Interstate 81 and State routes 17 and 20. The New York Susquehanna and Western Railroad provides freight rail access through the City, but there is no stop in Norwich. The City of Norwich is 215 miles from New York City and 130 miles from the Capital in Albany. Important regional connections include Binghamton, 40 miles to the south, and Syracuse, 60 miles to the northwest.

Norwich and the surrounding region have a long human history. During the 18th century the area was dominated by the Iroquois Confederacy. The confederation of five nations consisted of the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas and Senecas. Internal conflicts and European pressure eventually broke down the confederacy and many Iroquois left the area. Those remaining signed treaties with the American government ceding their land in return for goods and money.

Early settlers came largely from New England, especially Massachusetts and Connecticut. These early residents brought with them the name “Norwich,” originally brought from England to Connecticut, now to name their new home in New York. Norwich incorporated as a village on April 17, 1816 and incorporated as a City in 1914.

When the Erie Canal began construction in 1817, the Chenango valley and the City of Norwich were still a frontier area. The success of the Erie Canal stimulated the hopes and imaginations of inland residents with the prospect of better connections to markets and supplies. Despite an adverse report by the Canal Commissioners, the New York State Legislature authorized the construction of the Chenango Canal in 1833. The Chenango Canal connected the Erie Canal just west of Utica to the Susquehanna River at Binghamton. Construction began in 1834, and the canal opened in 1837. While the canal significantly improved passenger and freight movement for the Chenango valley, it failed to increase the population or have a radical impact on the valley’s economy. Ultimately, it was a financial failure and was closed in 1878 due to declining revenues after the construction of railroads in the area.

Due to its relative isolation, Norwich was forced to develop a fairly self-sufficient economy. The earliest industry included sawmills, gristmills, woolen mills and a hammer factory. As the area grew and manufacturing and transportation systems became more sophisticated,



industry expanded to include the Norwich Furniture Company, the Norwich Silk Manufacturing Company, a piano and a violin factory and most importantly for the long-term economic impacts on the City, the Norwich Pharmacal Company started by the Reverend Lafayette Moore in 1885. Incorporated in 1889, it grew to be the principal industry of Norwich, manufacturing pharmaceutical products including Pepto-Bismol and Norwich Aspirin. Headquartered in the City, the company continued to grow providing not only manufacturing jobs but a significant number of management, research and other professional opportunities, providing the basis for a strong middle class for the City.

In 1982, Procter and Gamble purchased what was then called the Norwich-Eaton Pharmaceuticals as a tool to expand its pharmaceutical operations. During the 1980s and 1990s, Procter and Gamble continued to expand and centralize its pharmaceutical operations, ultimately closing all but a small research and development facility in Norwich, moving most operations to Cincinnati, Ohio. This shift resulted in dramatic job losses in all sectors of the economy. Procter and Gamble ultimately bequeathed its main facility, The Eaton Center, to the Chenango County Area Corporation (CCAC) in 1994. The CCAC offices are located in The Eaton Center and the organization manages the operation of the site. The large amount of available space in this facility has created a significant office space surplus in the local commercial leasing market.

Norwich's historic downtown is a considerable asset to the City. The downtown retains the majority of its older and historic structures, and while maintenance and building conditions have become concerns in recent years, a number of notable historic structures have been preserved or rehabilitated including the Chenango County Courthouse, the former high school on West Main, the police station and City offices. The Norwich Business Improvement District (BID) recognized the economic potential of the City's historic assets in the Vision for the Downtown Norwich Marketplace. The BID has worked with the Action Alliance for Downtown and the City to establish a set of design recommendations for signage in downtown that will preserve and enhance its historic character. Design recommendations can be found in the City's sign ordinance.

The City's housing market has been greatly impacted by the changes in the local economy in the last 10 years. Vacancy rates have increased for both rental and for-sale housing, with rental vacancies over 11% and for-sale housing nearly 3%. Many of the vacant rental units are in an increasing number of single-family homes that have been split into multiple-unit dwellings. These units are often substandard, unattractive to potential renters and a burden to the surrounding neighborhood. Despite high vacancy rates, housing professionals report a shortage of quality units in all market sectors (for-sale, rental, affordable, market rate and senior).

The City of Norwich has been through dramatic changes in the last 10 years. Its plan for the future must build on its considerable assets including historic resources, ample infrastructure, quality community services, strong sense of community and others to stimulate the tools to create new growth and development.



Demographics

Issues, Opportunities, and Challenges

- Since 1990, the City of Norwich’s population has declined 3.4%
- Minorities comprise 3.9% of the City’s overall population.
- Norwich’s population is growing older. The median age of City residents is 38.9 years old, compared to 35.9 statewide.
- Approximately 81.5% of Norwich residents have a high school diploma. Further, 20.9% of residents have a bachelor’s degree or higher compared to 14.4% in Chenango County.
- Median incomes in the City of Norwich have actually decreased during the past decade, after adjusting for inflation.
- Norwich contains a significant proportion of low and moderate income households (55.1%).
- The Census also reports that 18.7% of residents live below the poverty level.

Population

Located in Chenango County, the City of Norwich encompasses 2.0 square miles. According to the 2000 Census, the City has a population of 7,355. Since 1990, the City lost 258 residents or 3.4% of its population. Chenango County had a 1990 population of 51,768. In 2000, the Census reported the County’s population at 51,401, a loss of less than 1.0%. The City of Norwich accounts for 14.3% of the County’s overall population base.

TABLE 1: POPULATION TRENDS				
<i>Municipality</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i># Change</i>	<i>% Change</i>
City of Norwich	7,613	7,355	-258	-3.4%
Chenango County	51,768	51,401	-367	-0.7%

Source: US Census Bureau (1990 and 2000).



Households

Reflecting the general trend toward smaller families and the increasing prevalence of single parent (or even single person) households, the average household size in Norwich has been decreasing steadily, to 2.18 persons per households in 2000 from 2.26 in 1990. In 2000, the Census Bureau reports that there were 3,131 households in Norwich, a decrease of 4.4% since 1990. In comparison, households increased 3.8% in Chenango County.

<i>Municipality</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i># Change</i>	<i>% Change</i>
City of Norwich	3,276	3,131	-145	-4.4%
Chenango County	19,195	19,926	731	3.8%

Source: US Census Bureau (1990 and 2000).

Race

One of the most notable changes in the 2000 Census was on the question of race. Each respondent was asked if they were Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino. The Census also asked individuals to report the race or races they considered themselves to be. The Census reports that the 2000 data on race are not directly comparable with data from the 1990 Census or earlier censuses and that caution must be used when interpreting changes in the racial composition of the US population over time.

	<i>1990 Number</i>	<i>1990 Percent</i>	<i>2000 Number</i>	<i>2000 Percent</i>	<i>% Change 1990-2000</i>
White	7,371	96.8%	7,071	96.1%	-4.1%
Black	85	1.1%	102	1.4%	20.0%
American Indian	60	0.8%	19	0.3%	-68.3%
Asian or Pacific Islander	20	0.3%	51	0.7%	155.0%
Other Race	0	0.0%	6	0.1%	n/a
Two or More Races	n/a	n/a	56	0.8%	n/a
Hispanic Origin	77	1.0%	50	0.7%	-35.1%
<i>City of Norwich</i>	<i>7,613</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>7,355</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>-3.4%</i>

Source: US Census Bureau (1990 and 2000).



According to the 2000 Census, there are 284 minorities in the City of Norwich comprising 3.9% of the population. With the exception of American Indians, all ethnic groups experienced population increases. The largest minority group is the Black or African American population, which comprise approximately one-third of all minorities and 1.4% of the citywide population. Less than 1.0% of Norwich residents reported that they were of two or more races.

Age

According to the 2000 Census, the median age of City residents is 38.9 years. This compares to 35.5 in 1990, showing an aging of Norwich’s population of 3.4 years in ten years' time. In comparison, the median population age for New York State as a whole increased from 33.8 to 35.9 between 1990 and 2000. Thus, the City's population base appears to be aging much faster than the State as a whole.

TABLE 4: AGE CHARACTERISTICS						
<i>City of Norwich</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>%</i>	<i># change</i>	<i>% change</i>
Pre-School (0-4)	555	7.3%	474	6.4%	-81	-14.6%
School (5-19)	1,539	20.2%	1,526	20.7%	-13	-0.8%
Adult (20-64)	3,973	52.2%	3,799	51.7%	-174	-4.4%
Senior (65+)	1,546	20.3%	1,556	21.2%	10	0.6%
Total	7,613	100.0%	7,355	100.0%	-258	-3.4%

Source: US Census Bureau (1990 and 2000).

Between 1990 and 2000, all age groups, with the exception of seniors, experienced declines in population. Pre-school children under 5 experienced the greatest population loss at 14.6%, while the number school aged children declined less than one percent. Adults (20–64), whom account for 51.7% of the City’s overall population, declined 4.4% between 1990 and 2000.

Educational Attainment

Data on educational attainment levels in Norwich reveal that 81.5% of residents over the age of 25 have a high school diploma. Chenango County has a slightly lower percentage of high school graduates (80.6%). Additionally, 20.9% of City residents have a bachelor's degree or higher. This is significantly higher than Chenango County (14.4%). According to the New York State Department of Education, the Norwich City School District had a high school dropout rate of 3.3% during the 2000-01 academic year. The statewide dropout rate was 3.8%.



TABLE 5: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT LEVELS, PERSONS 25+						
	<i>No High School Diploma</i>		<i>High School Diploma or higher</i>		<i>Bachelor's Degree or higher</i>	
	<i>1990</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>2000</i>
City of Norwich	24.0%	18.5%	76.0%	81.5%	20.5%	20.9%
Chenango County	24.5%	19.4%	75.5%	80.6%	13.1%	14.4%
New York State	25.2%	20.9%	74.8%	79.1%	23.1%	27.4%

Source: US Census Bureau (1990)

Income Levels

According to the 2000 Census, the median household income for the City of Norwich was \$30,730 and per capita income was \$18,428. Chenango County had a slightly higher median household income of \$33,679 but a lower per capita income of \$16,427 in 2000. Further, 1,294 or 18.7% of City residents are living below poverty level, according to the 2000 Census. This figure is higher than Chenango County (14.4%) and New York State as a whole (14.6%).

Poverty statistics presented by the Census Bureau use thresholds prescribed for federal agencies by Statistical Policy Directive 14, issued by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine poverty. The official definition uses 48 thresholds that take into account family size (from one person to nine or more) and the presence and number of family members under 18 years old (from no children present to eight or more children present). Furthermore, unrelated individuals and two-person families are differentiated by the age of the reference person (under 65 or 65 and over). The poverty thresholds are not adjusted for regional, state, or local variation in the cost of living. Family income then determines who is poor. If a family's total income is less than the threshold for the family's size and composition, the family and everyone in it are considered poor. If a person is not living with anyone related by birth, marriage, or adoption, the person's own income is compared with his or her poverty threshold as an "unrelated individual." The total number of people below the poverty level is the sum of the number of people in poor families and the number of unrelated individuals with incomes below the poverty threshold.



	City of Norwich (1989)	Adjusted* City of Norwich (1989)	City of Norwich (1999)	Chenango County (1989)	Adjusted* Chenango County (1989)	Chenango County (1999)
Median Household Income	\$22,872	\$30,730	\$28,485	\$26,032	\$34,975	\$33,679
Median Family Income	\$29,839	\$40,090	\$39,808	\$30,388	\$40,828	\$39,711
Per Capita Income	\$13,716	\$18,428	\$17,339	\$11,830	\$15,894	\$16,427
Individuals Below Poverty Level	17.4%	n/a	18.7%	11.7%	n/a	14.4%
Families Below Poverty Level	14.1%	n/a	14.7%	8.8%	n/a	10.7%

Source: US Census Bureau (1990 and 2000).
 For purposes of comparison, 1989 dollars have been adjusted for inflation to 1999 dollars.

Income data collected from the census reflects the income levels of the previous complete year in which the census is taken in order to obtain an accurate survey an annual income. To gain a better understanding of changes in income between the censuses taken in 1990 and 2000, 1990 (based on 1989 income) Census income data was converted to 1999 dollars using the consumer price indices of 1989 and 1999 as calculated by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics to calculate an inflation rate, which was 34.4% over the 10 year period. As Table 6 indicates, when year 1989 incomes in the City of Norwich were adjusted for inflation, median household income actually decreased 7.3% from 1989 to 1999 and median family income decreased (less than 1.0%). Per capita income decreased by 5.9%. In comparison, Chenango County’s median household income decreased by 3.7% and median family income decreased by 2.7% however, per capita income increased by 3.4%.

Norwich contains a significant proportion of low and moderate income households. Census figures indicate that approximately 55.1% of households in the City in 2000 were considered low and moderate income households (i.e., households with income less than 80 percent of the Chenango County median) as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Further, 34.8% of households in the City are very low income, earning 50% or less of the County median family income.



Economic Development

Issues, Opportunities, and Challenges

- The Greater Norwich Empire Zone provides significant economic incentives to businesses that are located within the zone boundaries.
- Nearly two-thirds of residents are employed in the services and manufacturing industries.
- Retention and recruitment of employees was identified as a major issue during focus group meetings with economic development professionals and small business owners.
- The City's shrinking tax base is a growing concern for businesses and residents as more properties are coming off the tax rolls.
- A small business development program is sorely needed and desired by the community.
- Since 1987, approximately 1,496 manufacturing jobs have been lost in the local area, including 320 middle management level jobs from one City employer alone.
- NBT Bankcorp Inc. recently completed renovations to the old A&P supermarket building, which now houses the Bank's information processing division and call center.
- Approximately 42.8% of Norwich residents who were employed in 2000 worked in the service sector, including 439 (14.8%) in health care and social services and 388 (13.1%) in educational services. An additional 21.2% of employed residents worked in manufacturing industries. Eleven percent of residents worked in the retail trade sector.



Labor Force Characteristics

The civilian labor force in Norwich consists of residents aged 16 and older who are employed or actively seeking employment, excluding those enrolled in the armed forces. According to the 2000 Census, 3,172 residents, or 55.3% of its working age population, participated in the civilian labor force in 2000. The labor force participation rate has decreased slightly in Norwich since 1990, when the City had a resident civilian labor force of 3,479, accounting for 59.5% of the population aged 16 and over.

Although the manufacturing sector still employs a significant percentage of Norwich residents, it has declined over the past decade with the downsizing and loss of such companies as the Norwich Shoe Company, Victory Markets, Champion Products, and Procter & Gamble. In 1990, the manufacturing sector employed 1,002 residents (30.9%). Since 1990, a total of 374 manufacturing jobs have been lost for a decrease of 37.3%.

According to the 2000 census figures, unemployment in the City of Norwich was 6.4%, slightly higher than the County unemployment rate of 5.6%. It should be noted that the Census unemployment rates are not derived from the same data that the New York State Department of Labor uses to determine unemployment rates. The most recent statistics from the Department of Labor indicate that Chenango County had an unemployment rate of 5.3% for the month of July 2002. Unemployment data for the City of Norwich is unavailable.

Economic Trends in Norwich

The City of Norwich is the County seat of Chenango County. The City's economic base has long been tied to the industrial and manufacturing sector that still has a significant presence in the community. Major employers in the City include NBT Bankcorp Inc., Snyder Communications (publisher of The Evening Sun, local Penny Savers and various circulars), Chenango Memorial Hospital, Norwich Aero Products Inc. (manufacturer for the aerospace industry), Norwich City School District and Frontier (local telephone company). A number of major employers are located just outside the City. OSG Norwich Pharmaceuticals is a contract drug manufacturer. Quest International makes food additives. General Electric has an Aerospace plant (Unison Industries). Additionally, Procter & Gamble still has a research and development facility outside the City.

TABLE 7: RESIDENT EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY		
	2000	
Industry	Number	Percent
Agriculture, Forestry and Mining	16	0.5%
Construction	87	2.9%
Manufacturing	628	21.2%
Wholesale Trade	23	0.8%
Retail Trade	327	11.0%
Transportation and Utilities	37	1.2%
Information	204	6.9%
FIRE	192	6.5%
Services (Total)	1,272	42.8%
Professional services	155	5.2%
Educational Services	388	13.1%
Health Care and Social Services	439	14.8%
Arts, entertainment and Recreation	42	1.4%
Accommodation and Food Services	143	4.8%
Other services (except public admin)	105	3.5%
Public Administration	183	6.2%
Total	2,969	100.0%

Source: 2000 Census



NBT Bank N.A. and OSG Norwich have both experienced economic growth. NBT Bancorp Inc. is the only publicly traded company headquartered in Chenango County. Further, Snyder Communications and William Andrew Inc. / Knovel Inc are growing publishers in the City. William Andrew is a traditional book publisher specializing in scientific technical text. Knovel Inc was created to distribute scientific text electronically. Snyder Communications is also having success distributing Circulars Unlimited electronically and reaching a national client base.

A number of projects with economic development potential are currently underway in the City. The City of Norwich is currently undertaking a Streetscape Project in the downtown. The YMCA recently constructed a new \$7M center in the heart of downtown. Further SUNY Morrisville is building an expanded state-of-the art building on the edge of downtown to accommodate a projected enrollment increase.

Industry Mix

The analysis in Table 8 and 9 reviews Norwich’s industry mix in 1995 and 1999 (2000 data is not yet available) and compares the local trends in Chenango County, New York State and the nation. The analysis provides some insights into whether the trends Norwich is experiencing are occurring elsewhere, or if they are unique to Norwich.

The most recent data available on industry mix in the City of Norwich is 1999 data from Zip Code and County Business Patterns¹. The US Census report provides zip code-level information including number of establishments and employees but not revenue or wages. In the analysis below, the “Norwich Area” is defined as the 13815 zip code. This zip code includes the City of Norwich and the Town of Norwich.

<i>Industry</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>% Change</i>
Forestry, fishing, hunting, agricultural support	7	3	-57.1%
Mining	0	1	n/a
Construction	29	28	-3.4%
Manufacturing	21	20	-4.8%
Wholesale Trade	12	12	0.0%
Retail Trade	125	124	-0.8%
Transportation/utilities	11	6	-45.5%
FIRE	37	37	0.0%
Services	166	197	18.7%
Unclassified	3	3	0.0%
Totals	411	431	4.9%

Source: Zip Code Business Patterns (1995 and 1999)

¹ Zip Code or County Business Patterns, a product of the U.S. Census Bureau, is an annual series that provides economic data by industry on a “place-of-work” basis. Although it covers most economic activity, it excludes data on self-employed individuals, employees of private households, railroad employees, agricultural production employees, and most government employees.



TABLE 9: INDUSTRY MIX TRENDS FOR NUMBER OF ESTABLISHMENTS (1995-2000)				
<i>% Change (1995-2000*)</i>				
<i>Industry</i>	<i>Norwich Area**</i>	<i>Chenango County</i>	<i>New York State</i>	<i>United States</i>
Forestry, fishing, hunting, ag support	-57.1%	-57.1%	-88.4%	-75.9%
Mining	n/a	100.0%	-8.5%	-13.2%
Construction	-3.4%	-15.7%	10.1%	11.9%
Manufacturing	-4.8%	-10.9%	-14.4%	-9.1%
Wholesale Trade	0.0%	-13.0%	-13.5%	-13.8%
Retail Trade	-0.8%	-1.1%	2.1%	5.6%
Transportation/utilities	-45.5%	-24.3%	-38.9%	-27.2%
FIRE	0.0%	-8.8%	2.8%	15.2%
Services	18.7%	17.0%	20.3%	18.4%
Unclassified	0.0%	55.6%	144.9%	43.6%
Totals	4.9%	0.2%	5.3%	6.9%

Source: Zip Code Business Patterns (1995, 1999 and 2000); *For the Norwich Area, the data collected was from 1999 because 2000 data is not yet available. **The Norwich Area includes all geographical areas located in the 13815 zip code.

As the table above indicates, there were 431 business establishments in the Norwich Area in 1999, an increase of 4.9% since 1995. Most businesses were in the services and retail trade sector. The services sector experienced the greatest increase in businesses (31) between 1995 and 1999. Norwich lost businesses in the forestry, fishing, hunting and agriculture sector (4), transportation/utilities (5), manufacturing (1), and construction (1). Three sectors (wholesale trade, finance, insurance, and real estate (FIRE) and unclassified establishments) remained unchanged. The table below illustrates industry trends from 1995 to 1999 for the Norwich area compared to the County, state and nation.

Retail Trends (1992-1997)

The most recent sales data available for the City of Norwich is from the US Bureau of Census in the 1997 Economic Census. The following analysis reviews Norwich’s retail trade industry between 1992 and 1997 and provides a detailed analysis of the performance of the mix of stores. It also provides a regional comparison of Norwich to Chenango County.

For the purpose of this analysis, “retail-related” refers to all types of retail included in the Economic Census of Retail Trade as well as eating and drinking establishments which the US Census Bureau no longer includes in the Census of Retail Trade, and instead includes this category in the Census of Accommodations and Food services. In 1997, retail-related sales in Chenango County amounted to approximately \$317.8 million. Of this amount, \$162.1 million or 51.0% originated in the City of Norwich.



Establishments

There were 120 retail establishments in the City and Town of Norwich according to the 1997 Census of Retail Trade. The most common type of retail-related business was eating and drinking establishments which comprised one-quarter of all retail businesses in Norwich. There were also 13 motor vehicle and parts stores, 11 food and beverage stores. The table below provides a more detailed breakdown of the types of retail stores found in the City and Town.

TABLE 10: RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS (1997)			
<i>Type of Business</i>	<i>Stores</i>	<i>Sales (000s)</i>	<i>Employed</i>
Motor Vehicle and Parts	13	47,772	149
Furniture and Home Furnishings	4	n/a	a
Electronics and Appliances	9	n/a	b
Building Materials, Garden Equipment, Supplies	9	7,094	50
Food and Beverage Stores	11	n/a	c
Health and Personal Care Stores	9	14,616	130
Gasoline Stations	10	13,503	66
Clothing and Accessories	8	n/a	b
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, Music	5	n/a	a
Department Stores	3	n/a	e
Miscellaneous Stores	6	n/a	b
Nonstore Retailers	3	7,052	36
Eating/Drinking Places	30	9,124	279
Total	120	162,094	1,314

Source: 1997 Economic Census of Retail Trade, Accommodations and Foodservices
a: 0 to 19 employees; b: 20 to 99 employees; c: 100 to 249 employees; e: 250 to 499 employees



Retail Change over Time

Retail businesses increased 11.1% from 1992 to 1997 in the City of Norwich. In 1997, the City had 39.9 % of Chenango County’s retail establishments. This percentage has remained essentially unchanged in comparison to 1992, when Norwich had 39.3% of the County’s retail businesses. Detailed information on changes in the retail mix between 1992 and 1997 are shown in the table below. Percentages in the table reflect changes between 1992 and 1997. For example, the number of motor vehicle and parts stores in Norwich increased by 44.4% over the five year period. In Chenango County, the store count for this category increased about the same percentage as the City (46.2%) but sales from motor vehicle and parts stores increased twice as much as City figures (46.3% versus 22.5%).

TABLE 11: RETAIL STORE COUNTS AND SALES TRENDS PERCENTAGE CHANGE (1992-1997)

	Norwich Trade Area		Chenango County		New York State	
	Stores	Sales	Stores	Sales	Stores	Sales
Motor Vehicle and Parts	44.4%	22.5%	46.2%	46.3%	22.3%	34.4%
Furniture and Home Furnishings	30.0%	n/a	30.8%	3.6%	-10.3%	12.3%
Building Materials, Garden Equipment, Supplies	80.0%	-1.9%	23.8%	58.4%	20.1%	71.5%
Food and Beverage Stores	22.2%	n/a	-30.3%	-41.2%	-13.2%	-8.7%
Health and Personal Care Stores	125.0%	17.7%	50.0%	24.2%	63.6%	48.0%
Gasoline Stations	25.0%	45.8%	40.9%	23.1%	13.9%	7.4%
Clothing and Accessories	-27.3%	n/a	-16.7%	-28.1%	8.9%	23.0%
General Merchandise	n/a	n/a	16.7%	n/a	-8.2%	14.0%
Eating & Drinking	11.1%	-4.9%	11.5%	14.0%	16.0%	48.2%
Total	11.1%	22.6%	9.5%	16.2%	2.3%	18.4%

Source: 1997 Economic Census of Retail Trade, Accommodations and Foodservices and 1992 Census of Retail Trade.

Employment

A total of 1,314 people were employed in the retail industry in 1997. This represented 49.8% of those employed in retail County-wide. In comparison there were 1,024 retail employees in Norwich in 1992. Since 1992, employment in retail trade businesses rose 28.3%. Chenango County employed 2,226 persons in retail in 1992 and 2,641 in 1997 resulting in an increase of 18.6%.



Sales

In 1997, retail businesses in the City of Norwich generated \$162,094,000 in sales. This is a 22.6% increase in sales generated in 1992 when 1992 dollar amounts are adjusted to 1997 dollars to reflect inflation².

Retail trade businesses in 1997 in Norwich generated 51.0% of Chenango County's retail sales compared to having 14.7% of the County's population in 1990 and 14.3% of the County's population in 2000. In 1992 Norwich had 48.3% of Chenango County's retail sales.

Retail Sales

Based on data from the 1997 Retail Census, the average retail store in Norwich generated \$1.490 million in gross revenue, more than stores County-wide (\$1.165). The retail businesses generating the most revenue per establishment in the City of Norwich included motor vehicle and parts stores (\$4,055,000) and nonstore retailers (\$2,594,000). Eating and drinking establishments generated the least amount of revenue per store. This is typical for eating and drinking places County-wide.

An analysis of per capita sales for retail establishments provides a good comparison of local sales generated by businesses in Norwich and Chenango County. This analysis estimates retail sales data for the year 2001 assuming that the retail trade market was similar in 2001 to that of 1997, by taking 1997 U.S. Economic Census of Retail and Accommodations and Food Services data and adjusting the sales data to 2001 constant dollars. These annual sales were then divided by 2000 Census populations to derive estimated per capita sales.

In the City of Norwich, total per capita sales for retail-related businesses are estimated to have been \$23,494 compared with \$6,821 in Chenango County. This suggests that the City of Norwich may be exporting goods to other parts of the area.

Per Capita Demand

An analysis of resident consumer spending was undertaken based on 2001 estimates from Claritas Inc. Claritas, Inc. is a private company that provides marketing information resources including estimated and projected demographic data. The analysis examines the spending behaviors of the people who live in the City, while the Retail Sales Analysis above examines the performance of the retail establishments in the City.

Data from Claritas on expenditures in selected retail stores shows that the City of Norwich is a weak market compared to the nation. Resident spending in all categories ranked well below the US average. Most stores had rankings between 50 and 70 on an index in which the US

² To compare sales in 1997 constant dollars, sales figures were adjusted to reflect the change in the consumer price index (CPI) as published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. For example, to calculate 1992's sales figures into 1997 constant dollars, the following formula was used: $1997 \text{ Price} = 1992 \text{ Price} \times (1997 \text{ CPI}/1992 \text{ CPI})$



average is 100. Chenango County had slightly better markets than the City but spending was still estimated to be below the US average in almost every store type. The one exception was Gasoline Stations with Convenience Stores which had a rank of 100. The following table shows estimated per capita consumer expenditures per selected store type for the City of Norwich, Chenango County and New York State.

TABLE 12: CONSUMER EXPENDITURE ESTIMATES (2001)			
Store Type	Per Capita City	Per Capita County	Per Capita State
Building Materials & Garden Equipment	\$192.98	\$208.60	\$286.29
Hardware Stores	\$13.26	\$14.54	\$21.08
Nursery/Lawn/Garden Supply	\$72.02	\$75.72	\$95.67
Home Centers	\$42.78	\$46.64	\$66.70
Gasoline Stations w/ Convenience Store	\$526.99	\$532.47	\$480.73
Gasoline Stations w/o Convenience Store	\$235.89	\$246.36	\$219.51
Grocery Stores	\$1,963.10	\$1,904.02	\$2,026.69
Health and Personal Care	\$344.81	\$322.37	\$411.44
Department Stores	\$810.99	\$805.63	\$1,222.44
Clothing & Clothing Accessory Stores	\$400.71	\$401.63	\$658.71
Shoe Stores	\$62.46	\$64.74	\$99.70
Furniture Stores	\$149.38	\$147.11	\$257.48
Other home furnishing stores	\$106.33	\$107.52	\$185.88
Household Appliance Stores	\$49.20	\$49.26	\$76.27
Radio/TV/Other Electronics	\$107.97	\$105.52	\$175.81
Computer & Software Stores	\$39.91	\$38.85	\$68.72
Electronic Shopping & Mail Order	\$221.81	\$215.59	\$323.93
Eating Places	\$ 994.26	\$948.21	\$1,152.33
Drinking Places	\$ 89.93	\$80.74	\$107.27
Total Retail Expenditures	\$6,424.76	\$6,315.50	\$7,936.66

Source: Claritas, Inc. and River Street Planning & Development, LLC

According to Claritas data, residents of Norwich are projected to spend slightly more in all selected retail stores than residents in Chenango County, but less than New York State residents on average.



Agriculture

According to the 1997 Census of Agriculture, the most recent agricultural census produced by the United States Department of Agriculture, there were 183,312 acres of farmland in Chenango County, with 801 farms, 485 of which were full time. Most of the farms are family farms, with 12.5% operating as partnerships or corporations. Chenango County's agricultural industry ranked twenty-fourth in New York State in terms of total value of agricultural products sold. The top five agricultural commodities sold were dairy products (ranked 11th in the state), cattle and calves (ranked 12th in the state), hay, silage, field seeds and grass seeds, corn for grain, and nursery and greenhouse crops.

Local Economic Development Organizations and Programs

The *Chenango County Chamber of Commerce* became Chenango County's lead economic development agency in June 2003 when the Board of Directors at the Chenango County Area Corporation consolidated management of the Area Corporation with the Chamber of Commerce. The move to consolidate was spurred by anticipated cutbacks in funding at the state and county levels as well as an identified need to provide economic development through one agency in the County. The Chamber will now coordinate the County Industrial Development Agency and the Empire Zone. The Greater Norwich Empire Zone (EZ) Program provides tax incentives and benefits to firms locating or expanding in the zone. The Chamber will also manage the Business Assistance Loan Funds (BALF). Loans are available for projects that retain or create jobs or have another significant impact on the County's economic development. Loans may not exceed \$100,000 and will carry an annual rate of 75% of New York prime rate that is fixed for the term of the loan at the time of the closing. Businesses will be required to pay a loan application fee equal to 1% of the loan request (\$100 minimum). Further, businesses will be expected to create jobs in ratio of one job for each \$10,000 of loan proceeds or demonstrate other significant economic impact.

The *Norwich Business Improvement District (BID)* was established by the City of Norwich in 1986. The BID provides for district improvements which will restore or promote business activity in the district; the operation and maintenance of any district improvements; and additional maintenance for the enjoyment and protection of the public and the promotion and enhancement of the district whether or not in conjunction with authorized capital improvements.

The City of Norwich has two loan programs: Retail Loans Program and Business Development Loans. The Retail Development Loan Program provides loans for nearly all business purposes, including inventory, equipment, acquisition, display lighting, façade improvements, sidewalk replacement, interior design, working capital and signage. Projects must address one or more of the following goals and objectives: strengthen the retail/commercial base in Norwich by stabilizing existing businesses and attracting new ones, retain jobs and create new ones, stimulate new commercial investment and implement projects consistent with the Business Improvement District plans. The maximum amount of the retail loan is \$25,000 per business site and loans will be made for up to 50% of the project cost. The term of the loan is up to five years at one-half of prime. Successful loan applicants are also eligible to receive a grant not to exceed \$500 for a sign upgrade.



The goals and objectives of the Business Development Loan Program (BDLP) are to create new employment opportunities through the expansion of existing or the creation of new businesses in the Greater Norwich area, to retain existing employment opportunities in the Greater Norwich area, to increase taxable value of property, to identify and provide assistance for projects which present growth potential in terms of future employment, to provide essential services or businesses lacking in the neighborhood or community, and to leverage greatest level of private funds possible. Loan proceeds may be used for inventory, purchase of capital equipment, renovations and/or additions and acquisition and/or new construction. Loan proceeds for the refinancing of existing debt are prohibited. Loans are fixed at 75% of prime as published in the Wall Street Journal the week before the loan closes. Approximately \$10,000 is loaned for every permanent full-time job that is created or retained.

Current Economic Development Initiatives

The City of Norwich is involved with a number of economic development projects, with the highest priority of creating and retaining jobs.

Borden Avenue Industrial Complex

- *Borden Avenue Infrastructure Project:* Some of the buildings located in this industrial area are not connected to municipal water and sewer. The City recently received a Small Cities Grant to extend public water and sewer in this area. This project will further the creation of job opportunities and facilitate business expansion efforts.
- *Transportation Building:* The Transportation Building is temporarily housing the City's Fire Department while the Main Street building is being redeveloped. Once the Fire House is renovated, the Transportation Building must be sold. Precision Countertops occupies the other half of the Building and has a lease with an option to buy. If this business is not in a position to purchase the building, the City will begin a concerted marketing effort to secure a buyer.
- *Northern Industrial Complex:* There is a 250,000 square foot building that has been rehabilitated and has 80% occupancy. The Developer would like to expand further south. The Developer owns approximately 30 acres of developable land with rail north of the building. The City owns about 29 acres north of the developer's land. The site lacks access/egress and infrastructure.





Downtown Initiatives

- *Streetscape Project:* This project will involve a number of improvements to help beautify the downtown. Improvements include adding new period lighting fixtures, sidewalks, street trees, decorative crosswalks, medians, distinctive gateways at the entrances of the BID and relocating utility lines underground. The BID intends to initiate project construction in the spring of 2003.
- *Downtown Revitalization Strategy:* A downtown Market Analysis was recently completed by Zogby International. Information from the Study will be used to help market and/or facilitate identified business opportunities. Focus groups are being organized to continue identifying business opportunities for local entrepreneurs and for attracting new businesses to Norwich. The Merchants Association has been resurrected and has shared the findings with the merchants and at the same time assured that recruiting efforts should not be viewed as threatening. Additionally, the Merchants Association is developing promotional materials to capitalize upon the annual festivals held in and around downtown, the Farmer's Market, and other smaller events held downtown.
- *Retail Development Loan Program:* As previously mentioned, the City has a Retail Development Loan Program. The City anticipates at least two loan closings per year.
- *Screening and Signage:* Screening the parking areas downtown is very important to the community. The City is working with existing businesses to screen their properties. The City is also looking to create design guidelines and sunset provisions for signage to help preserve and enhance the integrity of the downtown.

Commercial Development

- *Prentice Street Site:* The City is currently marketing this three-acre site, which is partially owned by the City. The site would be ideal for commercial or light industrial use. The Hale Street frontage is zoned PUD, while the remaining area is zoned industrial.
- *Hale Street Site:* The City envisions the street as a commercial/light industrial corridor. Adelpia recently occupied one building that had been vacant for a long time. However, Burrells recently moved to this street from a location outside the City. The radio station building is being sold to OFC. Additionally there are vacant parcels along Hale and Prentice Streets that could accommodate growth.





- *O'Hara Drive Site:* O'Hara Drive contains a mix of uses, including industrial, office and an elder care facility. There is currently 1.5 acres of vacant land in this area that is available for development.
- *Norwich Shoe Factory:* Under the recently awarded Small Cities Grant, the City has funds to demolish this vacant building. The site (6 acres) will then be available for redevelopment.

Business Assistance

- *Community Development Fund:* The City has HUD funds (\$360,000) to make economic development loans to local businesses.
- *Business Development:* The City of Norwich, along with the Area Corporation (which includes the Local Development Corporation and the Greater Norwich Empire Zone) are working with local companies such as Knovel, Precision Built Tops and New York International to foster their development.
- *Business Retention and Expansion:* The Greater Norwich Local Development Corporation, the Area Corp and Industrial Development Agency retained Business Retention Technologies (BRT) of Erie, Pennsylvania. This company is developing an extensive database of all employers in Chenango County with staff in excess of five persons. BRT is finalizing the development of Chenango Business Link, a business retention program. The program will link County businesses with a full range of local, regional and state resources that can help these businesses grow and expand. The program will also obtain valuable information from CEO's which will be useful in creating programs, policies and strategies that can make Chenango County a more competitive place for business.
- *Gas Station:* The last gas station in the City of Norwich recently closed. The City is looking to attract a new gas station and have identified three potential sites. The City is also looking to attract an instant oil change business, since there is currently no facility available in the area.
- *Kelly Building:* The building is a four-story warehouse located on American Avenue. The developer wants to convert the building into high-end loft apartments.
- *Camp Building:* The Camp Building is located at 14-16 S. Broad Street. The Bank has foreclosed and sold this property. The first and third floors are not built out. The second floor is occupied by SUNY Morrisville, which plans to vacate.



- *Elks Club:* The City purchased the Elks Club. Interior and exterior renovations have begun. The Elks have insinuated that they would be willing to relocate if suitable place was found. The building would be perfectly suited for high end dining and/or hospitality facilities.
- *Farmers Market:* The City is looking to strengthen the Farmers Market. It is currently held in East Park, two days a week.
- *Downtown Upper Floors:* Approximately one-half of the second and third stories of downtown buildings are unutilized. The City would like to identify and facilitate additional use of the upper floors.

Economic Development and Small Business Owner Focus Groups

As part of the Comprehensive Plan, focus group meetings were held with economic developers and small business owners on August 12, 2002. Many of the same issues were brought up by participants at the two meetings. Major concerns identified by the Economic Development Focus Group include the following:

- The major issues are the retention and recruitment of the work force, especially skilled workers. It has been such a problem for major employers in the City that they are now trying to recruit and retain local residents.
- Finding appropriate jobs for the spouses of recruited employees and quality housing are major issues for attracting and retaining people.
- The City should focus on the growth and retention of existing business here, especially small business.
- There should be one phone number to call for information on who to call for various issues related to small business.
- Property tax implications are a growing problem in the City and they are losing property off the tax rolls. For instance CWS is a non-profit that acts like a business and has been purchasing a lot of property around the City. The City needs to address its tax base and its threat to quality of life issues.
- The surrounding towns all equally share success in City. We need to find a way for non-profits and surrounding towns to pay for services. Consolidation of government is an option.
- The biggest employers in the City are the schools, hospitals, and government/non-profits. The City needs private businesses that will employ more people.



- One suggestion was to have an introduction to Norwich meeting every few months for new employees at all area businesses. It would be an opportunity for newcomers to meet people, learn about the community and opportunities to get involved.

Major concerns voiced at the small business focus group include:

- The current zoning is unfriendly to small businesses.
- An issue is attracting employees to the community to live and work. Many employees drive in from Syracuse, Binghamton and Utica to work. Some employees rent apartments and stay in town during the week. There is a need to “sell Norwich” to help attract employees to the area with the help of every sector (schools, housing, community services and employers).
- The perception that no parking is available downtown. There are over 1,000 spaces within 200 yards of downtown, so there is ample parking.
- The quality of the labor force is drastically low.
- Businesses start small and then they turn into larger corporations. (Years ago, NBT Bank N.A. only had 100 employees now they have 400). The City needs to recognize the contributions of small businesses and give them the tools to grow right here in Norwich.
- Some of the small business owners did not know what tools were available to them in the area when they were starting out. In some cases existing small business owners have been asked by potential entrepreneurs how they started their business in Norwich.
- There is a need for a one-stop shop and a program to help small business owners set up a business or make major expansion or such changes as grooming existing employees to take over businesses.
- There should be a manual/guide for people starting businesses in the City of Norwich that describes things they should know about façade improvements, sign ordinance, zoning, etc.
- Chenango County is only one of two counties in New York State that does not have its own source of Community College. We eventually need to have a four-year college, but recognize that this is a long term goal.
- Key issues identified by this group that must be addressed in Norwich include: schools and education (including higher education), housing, preserving the infrastructure, promotion of Norwich (the City has a lot of things to offer, but need to let people know that), Tax



Issue (increasing number of non-profits currently own 38% of land in the City), and retention plans for key employers like NBT Bank N.A.

Tourism and Downtown Interest Holders Focus Groups

The City of Norwich also held focus groups with tourism and downtown interest holders. Five people attended the downtown interest holder focus group meeting, while seven attended the tourism focus group meeting.

Downtown Interest Holder Focus Group

The Downtown Interest Holders group consisted of representatives from the Norwich BID, the YMCA and three local businesses. Participants were asked a series of questions on downtown facilities, programs and issues facing Norwich. The bank and the YMCA were cited as the most popular destination downtown. Other facilities used regularly by participants included restaurants, parks, churches, the Arts Council, post office, library and municipal offices.

Facilities and programs the City of Norwich should consider developing include riverwalk trail, public restrooms, parking facilities, unique shops, a gazebo/stage that is useful for performances, convention center, banquet facilities, additional lodging, and additional events, such as a softball tournament or seasonal festival.

Aspects of downtown Norwich that the focus group participants enjoyed comprise the following: small town atmosphere, vibrant downtown, safety, parks, courthouse, aesthetics of environment, and the farmers market. The group also discussed the vehicle and pedestrian conflict downtown, particularly at the intersection of East and West Main Streets and NYS Route 12 (Broad Street). Pedestrians have a difficult time crossing at any of the crosswalks at this intersection. It was suggested that there should be a red light all four ways to allow pedestrians to cross safely. Motorists have problems as well. There are no left turn arrows for vehicles on East and West Main Street turning on to Broad Street. There are certain times during the day when drivers will have to wait a few cycles of green lights before they can successfully turn left onto Broad Street.

The City would like to redevelop second and third floors of downtown buildings. Potential uses identified by participants included housing, artist studios, offices, storage, daycare, shops and restaurants. Participants also noted that with development, other issues would arise including, the need for additional parking for tenants, elevator, and façade improvement on the back of buildings.

The three biggest issues facing Norwich in the next decade as articulated by this focus group were the cost of small city government/consolidation; quality of schools; and the loss of tax base/population. Participants also identified the following issues: future of



The Eaton Center, viability of older local structures, stability of merchants, simplify the review process for businesses seeking to locate in Norwich, neighborhood improvement, quality of life and the sidewalk improvement program.

Parking was also discussed by participants. The 2, 3 and 4 hour parking does not work with downtown merchants. Employees need to move their car every few hours which upsets business owners. Participants also feel that there is not enough parking, signage needs to be improved, parking lots need routine maintenance (i.e. sweeping, snow removal, mowing, etc.).

Recommendations on one thing downtown interest holders would like to change about downtown Norwich included having more thriving, long-term merchants, productive upper second and third floors, more customers, implementation of the streetscape project and a more pedestrian friendly downtown.

Tourism Focus Group

The Tourism Focus Group meeting included representatives from the Farmer's Market, Chamber of Commerce, Car Museum, YMCA, Newspaper, Twisted Groove Festival, and County Museum. The discussion revolved around the impact of tourism on the City, problems, ways to expand/promote tourism, and issues facing Norwich. According to participants, tourism brings in money, showcases Norwich and what the City has to offer, revitalizes the City, brings together the community, and contributes to diversified quality of life. On the other hand, tourism in general wears down infrastructure and brings extra traffic and associated problems causing an additional strain on infrastructure, police, and DPW staff. Further, with a small community such as this we are always asking the same people every year to volunteer. This may burn out the volunteers.

Local tourist attractions and events draw many people from out of the area. The Car Museum attracts people from all over the world and recently had an inquiry from India. There are artists that come from as far away as Florida for Colorscape Chenango, while the Gus Macker Basketball Tournament brings in teams from California and Texas. Twisted Groove, our 3 year old growing rock-n-roll showcase this year brought in 12 out of state ticket purchases and many such inquires. Chenango County Blues Festival, our 11 year old jazz festival is nearing 10,000 attendees. Nite Eagle, a folk/jazz coffee house 5 miles south in Oxford draws regularly from Pennsylvania. The smaller events draw from the local region. Additionally, bus tours have expressed an interest but details need to be worked through.

The focus group participants identified the following as their goals as tourism professionals: to bring more people to the area; need one place for an Information / Visitor Center; develop a tourism web page for Norwich; capitalize on fishing opportunities and outdoor sports revolving around the river; expanding hours of operation of downtown businesses; provide additional hotel rooms that are not expensive; improve parking for events; follow through with the new Museum District and work together on the promotion of this; and inform visitors of other events and attractions of the area.



Problems identified by participants include: parking, not enough hotel rooms, downtown shops and restaurants have limited hours of operation, attractions are seasonal, lack of events in the winter, conflict of local events (exacerbates room shortage and drives up room prices, access to the Interstate system, corporate (non local) event sponsorship is difficult to secure at this point and inexpensive prices for events hurt locally but brings in outsiders.

Participants noted that the City's link with Cooperstown and Museum Trail is helping and that the Car Museum feeds others, but hours are a conflict. The History Museum also notes that genealogy research is attracting people to the Library and County Building. It was suggested that the Chamber should lead efforts to bring in more outdoors people and that a much better job of promoting biking, fishing, cross country skiing, hunting, and running could be done. Further, the new SPCA's unique design (large room with a preserved tree with platforms and ropes for cats to use and wooden limbs strung together to resemble Chenango County) is bringing in visitors.

Participants were asked if there were specific elements, projects or infrastructure investments that were necessary to expand and/or promote tourism. Transportation improvements, additional accommodations and improved signage in the city were identified by the group. The Visitor Center needs to be visible. Parking area for recreational vehicles is also needed. The Fairgrounds should be improved so that it can be more utilized and provide better services. Further, completion of the riverwalk, or greenway trail would be beneficial and expand on river opportunities by improving the park facilities on the river and provide for fishing opportunities. Unmanned brochure stations need to be regularly stocked. There is also a need for local businesses to assist in sponsorships for activities and events.

The three biggest issues facing Norwich in the next decade were identified as the consolidation of the Town / City; loss of industry; and aging Infrastructure, neighborhoods, and "fabric" (Old buildings being torn down & replaced.)

Recommendations on one thing to improve "tourism" included: focusing efforts toward History and the Arts; coordinate communication between tourism agencies to avoid duplication of efforts and to use each other as resources; receive more money; taking advantage of the Nation's new found love of rural environment; finding ways to use the rail line; building on idea of appealing to early settlers' home communities (maybe their western destinations too); feature the City's natural beauty and lack of crowds; promote the river; Rebuild Kiwanis Park to capitalize on riverview; finish the riverwalk and hold river events.

Housing

Issues, Opportunities, and Challenges

- Tenure of housing units is equally split between owners (48.2%) and renters (51.8%).
- About 60% of housing units were built before 1940.
- Vacancy rates in the City have increased significantly during the past 10 years. The homeowner vacancy rate is 2.9% and the rental vacancy rate is 11.9%.
- There are approximately 531 subsidized housing units in Norwich. The Norwich Housing Authority maintains waiting lists for public housing and Section 8 units.
- There are a variety of housing assistance programs available to Norwich residents.
- Housing needs identified by the Chenango Housing Council include the need for an assisted living facility and an emergency shelter program for youth and a housing rehabilitation program to address problems typical of an aged housing stock.
- The Chenango Housing Council will be conducting a Countywide housing assessment.
- During the visioning workshop, residents mentioned the need for improved housing conditions and more affordable housing.
- There is a shortage of quality housing (rental, owner, market rate, affordable) available in the City according to housing professionals at Focus Group meeting.
- Other needs identified at the Focus Group meetings include improving the housing stock, converting multi-unit homes back to single and two-family homes, and student housing to accommodate the projected increase in students attending SUNY Morrisville in the next five years.
- Housing is also a major issue in attracting and retaining employees in Norwich.

General Housing Characteristics

According to the 2000 Census, the City of Norwich has 3,500 housing units. Of the total housing units counted in the census, 3,131 were occupied. Owners make up 48.2% of the occupied housing in the City and renters 51.8%. The 2000 Census also reports that the vacancy rate of for-sale housing in the City was about 2.9% and the vacancy rate for rental housing was 11.2%. Vacancy rates have risen considerably since 1990, when the vacancy rates were close to the norm of 1% for-sale vacancy and 5% rental vacancy.



TABLE 13 : GENERAL HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS					
	1990		2000		% change 1990-2000
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Total Housing Units	3,502	100.0%	3,500	100.0%	-0.1%
Total Occupied Units	3,271	93.4%	3,131	89.5%	-4.3%
Total Owner Occupied Units (% of occupied)	1,651	50.5%	1,508	48.2%	-8.7%
Total Renter Occupied Units (% of occupied)	1,620	49.5%	1,623	51.8%	0.2%
Vacant Units	231	6.6%	369	10.5%	59.7%
Vacant For-Sale	23	1.4%	45	2.9%	95.7%
Vacant For-Rent	101	5.9%	204	11.2%	102.0%

Source: US Census Bureau (1990 and 2000).

Based on the 2000 census, the predominant housing type in Norwich is the single family, detached structure, which makes up 43.2% of the market. Two, three- and four-family buildings comprise 34.0% of the entire housing stock in the City. Apartment buildings of five or more units account for 649 units, 18.5% of the market. Further single family attached structures comprise 2.3% of the housing stock and mobile homes account for 2.0%. The 2000 Census reports that only 89 housing units or 2.9% of the housing stock in Norwich was built during the 1990s. In contrast 59.6% of the units were built before 1940.

Characteristics of Rental Housing

Rental housing accounts for 51.8% of occupied housing in the City of Norwich according to 2000 Census figures. The average household size of renter occupied units is 1.93. Three-quarters of the City's rental units are one- and two-bedroom and 16.0% are three-bedroom. One-half of rental units are in two, three and four family structures.

The median gross rent in Norwich was \$343 in 1990. Adjusting the 1990 median rent for inflation to 2000 dollars results in a median rent of \$452. The 2000 Census reports that the City has a median gross rent of \$436. Rental costs have actually decreased 3.5% in comparison to 1990 figures when adjusted for inflation.



As part of the housing analysis, a survey of recent rental listings was conducted from the July 17, 2002 edition of The Evening Sun and the July 16, 2002 edition of the Norwich Pennysaver. There were 15 apartments listed for rent. Most of the apartments available in Norwich were for



one- and two- bedroom units. Rents were generally in the \$300-\$400 range, with some apartments including utilities. The average asking price for a one-bedroom unit was \$336.67. The asking price for two bedroom units was \$477.50 and \$575 for a three-bedroom unit.

One factor in assessing general housing needs within a community is the availability of housing choice. A healthy housing market should provide sufficient opportunities to its residents to secure good quality units that address their particular needs in terms of number of bedrooms, location, price and other considerations. The generally accepted standards for measuring availability in a healthy housing market are vacancy rates in the area of 5% for rental units and 1% for purchase housing. In 1990 the rental vacancy rate was close to the norm at 5.9%. However, the City-wide vacancy rate for rental housing (2000) was significantly above the norm at 11.0%.

The needs of lower income households can best be understood by examining the numbers of cost burdened households in the City of Norwich by income range and tenure. Cost burden is defined as the extent to which gross housing costs exceeds 30% of gross income, based on data published by the Census Bureau.

According to 2000 Census information, 621 households in Norwich reported rental housing costs in excess of 30% of income. This represented 40.7% of all renter households. Not surprisingly, the extent of cost burden was significantly greater on lower income households. Households with annual incomes under \$20,000 accounted for 507, or 81.6%, of the households determined to be cost burdened.

Assisted Housing

A small portion of the rental housing within the City of Norwich is provided through subsidized funding sources such as the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). There are approximately 541 subsidized housing units in Norwich, of which the City's elderly population occupies 53.2%. General characteristics of these units are presented in the table below.



TABLE 14: SUBSIDIZED HOUSING INVENTORY								
Facility	Total						Subtotal	Subtotal
	Units	0BR	1BR	2BR	3BR	4+BR	Elderly	Non-Elderly
Grace View Manor	40	10	30	0	0	0	40	0
Golden Age Apartments	100	0	100	0	0	0	100	0
Plank Road Manor	32	0	10	22	0	0	0	32
Norwich Center	32	10	19	3	0	0	32	0
Chenango Limited Partnership	32	0	32	0	0	0	32	0
Peacock Park Manor	62	20	40	2	0	0	62	0
Bordentown Circle	40	0	0	24	16	0	0	40
15-25 W Main Street	32	10	19	3	0	0	32	0
Section 8-Housing Authority	166	0	101	43	19	3	20	146*
Section 8-OFC	37	0	15	10	12	0	2	35
Totals	541	40	347	104	47	3	288	253

Source: U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, NYS Division of Housing & Community Renewal and Norwich Housing Authority.

**Of the 146 units, 66 are occupied by non-elderly households and 80 are occupied by non-elderly families/persons with disabilities.*

The Norwich Housing Authority manages two public housing facilities and administers the Section 8 program in the City. Peacock Park Manor is a 62 unit senior housing facility. There is currently a waiting list of 27 households. The Bordentown Circle Apartments is a 40 unit facility for families. There is currently a waiting list of 48 households. As of October 10, 2002, the Housing Authority manages 166 section 8 units. The number of units occupied tends to fluctuate as persons move off the waiting list. Approximately 20 are occupied by elderly households, 66 are occupied by non-elderly households, and 80 are occupied by non-elderly families/persons with disabilities. There is currently a waiting list of 73 households (1 elderly and 72 family).

Opportunities for Chenango Inc. (OFC) also manages a Section 8 program, but mostly on a Countywide basis. This agency manages 177 section 8 units (70 one-bedroom, 57 two-bedroom, 47 three-bedroom and 3 four-bedroom). The majority of units are located outside the City of Norwich. Of the 177 section 8 units, only 37 are located in the City of Norwich. OFC estimates a wait time of approximately 10 months for Section 8 rental assistance.



Characteristics of Owner Occupied Housing

There are 1,508 owner-occupied units in the City of Norwich, comprising 48.2% of occupied housing in the City in 2000. The average household size of owner-occupied units is 2.47. Three-quarters of the City's owner-occupied units are three- and four-bedroom and 15.1% are two-bedroom. The majority of owner-occupied units are in single-family detached structures. According to 2000 Census figures, the vacancy rate of for-sale housing is 2.9%.



The median value of owner-occupied homes in Norwich as reported in the 1990 Census was \$62,100. Adjusting the 1990 median value for inflation to 2000 dollars results in a median value of \$81,818 for owner-occupied units. According to the 2000 Census, median value of owner-occupied units is \$61,000. Owner housing in Norwich is losing market value. Of course this is value reported by people filling out the Census forms. Additional information on sale prices was obtained from the New York State Association of Realtors, which has data on the County level. According to the Association of Realtors, in June 2000, the median sales price of homes in Chenango County was \$49,000. In June 2002, the median sales price was \$63,900 in Chenango County. These prices are similar to the reported 2000 median value of owner occupied units in Norwich.

The 2000 Census reports that 207 or 16.7% of homeowners are cost burdened. Households with annual incomes under \$20,000 accounted for 123, or 59.4%, of the households determined to be cost burdened.

Housing Development Projects

Norwich Housing Authority

The Norwich Housing Authority is in the process of developing single-story handicap accessible duplex units for elderly homeownership. Approximately 10 to 14 units will be constructed on the Brown Avenue site. The site has been cleared. The Housing Authority is currently looking for funding for the infrastructure costs.

The Norwich Housing Authority conducted a housing survey of elderly homeowners (62+) with estimated incomes under \$40,000. The housing survey was designed to determine the need for affordable, low-maintenance, fully accessible homes for ownership. The one-page questionnaire was sent to 417 persons. A total of 132 surveys were returned, although some respondents did not answer every question. Approximately 85% of respondents believe there is a need for affordable, accessible homes for elderly homeowners.



Thoma Development Consultants completed a Feasibility Report for the Brown Avenue Development Project in November 1999. The Consultant concluded that the proposed project is feasible if purchase subsidies were available, unit costs could be reduced and attractive financing programs are in place.

SUNY Morrisville

SUNY Morrisville is building a new facility behind The Eaton Center. The School projects that enrollment will increase significantly, as well as the demand for student housing. Student housing will need to be addressed in the near future.

Planned Unit Development

A Planned Unit Development (PUD) is located in the northeast corner of the City. High-end housing was proposed for this area before Proctor & Gamble left town. Only the water and sewer lines on the site exist. Housing may still be developed on site.

Housing Assistance Programs

The City of Norwich currently has a housing rehabilitation program targeting the Cortland Street Revitalization Area. The program provides assistance to low and moderate income owner-occupied properties and to owners of income properties with a majority of the units (51% or more) occupied by tenants who are low and moderate income. Owner-occupied households are eligible for a 100% deferred payment loan, which must be repaid only if the assisted property is sold or transferred to someone within five years or is not longer used as the original applicant's principal residence. Owners of properties occupied by low income tenants are eligible for a recoverable grant for up to 50% of approved project costs and a deferred payment loan for up to 50%. The City also was recently awarded a Small Cities grant which will provide funds for housing rehabilitation in the Museum District. The City envisions targeting housing in the Greater Downtown Area next.

The City also has an Emergency Repair Program that targets low-income owner-occupied properties within the City of Norwich. The goal of the program is to correct code violations and hazardous or unhealthy situations. Very low income households are eligible for a 100% recoverable grant. Low income households are eligible for a 50% recoverable grant and 3% loan for the remaining 50% of eligible costs. Recoverable grants must be repaid if the assisted property is sold or transferred or is no longer used as the original applicant's principal residence within five years of receiving the grant.

The Norwich Housing Authority and Opportunities for Chenango Inc. (OFC) have partnered to provide an emergency shelter program in downtown Norwich. OFC provides case management services and project management. The Norwich Housing Authority pays the rental fees for shelter. The Housing Authority has also partnered with Catholic Charities to provide an emergency shelter for victims of domestic violence.



The Chenango Housing Council sponsors Work Camp programs. Work Camps are weeklong home-repair projects involving volunteers from Church youth groups located all across the United States. Typical work includes roof repair, porch and step repair, wheelchair ramp construction, interior and exterior painting, weatherization, light carpentry and siding repair. Generally 60 to 80 homes occupied by elderly, low-income and disabled households will be completed during the week. The next work camp is preliminarily scheduled for 2004.

OFC is a community action agency that provides a variety of housing programs to residents of Chenango County, including the City of Norwich. Programs include First Time Home Buyers Program, Weatherization Assistance Program, Housing Assistance Program (Section 8 rental assistance), Section 8 Family Self Sufficiency Program, Housing Counseling, Housing Rehabilitation, HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program), Energy Packaging (case management for the weatherization program), Power Partners (provides assistance with NYSEG bills), Beyond Shelter-Transitional Program, and as mentioned above an Emergency Shelter Program with the Norwich Housing Authority.

The Chenango Housing Council has identified a need, through requests to several member agencies, for accessibility ramps throughout the county. These ramps need to be consistent in construction and should conform to safety and building codes. Often the need is only temporary. A program has been designed based on the successful program in Cortland, NY, and one ramp has been installed. The ramps will be purchased and installed by the Council, working through one of its member agencies – Chenango Housing Improvement, Inc. – and will be reused as needed. The Council is currently working on securing additional funding for this program.

Housing Needs

The Chenango Housing Council is a group of housing providers serving (City of Norwich/Chenango County). The group meets regularly to discuss housing issues and coordinate efforts. Additionally, the Housing Council is in the process of conducting a comprehensive Countywide housing needs assessment that will examine all housing issues and will guide the Council members to avoid duplication of housing initiatives and set overall priorities.

The need for assisted living facilities for the elderly population was identified as a gap in service. There appears to be a significant homeless youth population in Norwich as well. There are emergency shelter programs in the City, but none that serve youth. It was also noted that the housing stock is old and incomes are flat.

A Visioning Workshop was held on June 19th with residents of Norwich. Participants were asked what they love about the City of Norwich and what they would change about Norwich. In response to what they love about Norwich, one resident said that they loved the *“large number of well maintained historic homes.”* More residents spoke about what they would change about Norwich in relation to housing. One person said *“we need good, decent, safe, affordable housing.”* Another resident commented that *“housing conditions are deteriorating.”* *“Absentee ownership is a problem”* was mentioned by another person



Housing Focus Group

As part of the Comprehensive Plan, focus group meetings were held on August 12th with housing providers, as well as with small business owners, economic development professionals and youth. Representatives from local bank, real estate agency, non-for profits and the planning commission attended the Housing Focus Group meeting. A number of needs and issues were identified by participants. Major concerns include the following:



- There is a shortage of high-quality housing stock in every category: market rate, affordable, senior rental and for sale. In some cases you have to look at 10 rental units to find one that is decent and livable (that can even meet HUD Section 8 standards).
- The quality of Norwich's housing stock has deteriorated and needs to be improved. On any given street in the City you will see wonderfully maintained properties, but you will also see at least one badly maintained property. People should be educated on how to fix up homes. Perhaps have home maintenance courses available.
- Many homes in the City have been subdivided into multi-unit apartments. Homes should be converted back to single and two-family units.
- There is need for housing for senior citizens, particularly housing where people could live independently.
- SUNY Morrisville is projecting an increasing number of students within the next five years and will need affordable rental housing for students.
- Housing is just one building block in the overall picture. The area has stagnant wages and no economic growth.

Housing was also mentioned as a major concern at both the small business focus group and economic development focus group. Issues raised at these meetings include the following:

- Every block in the City has at least one home that is in blighted condition. Over the years, many homes in the City have been subdivided and now have 3 or 4 units. Code enforcement and zoning should protect the neighborhoods.
- Housing needs to be addressed. Quality housing that is available is a major issue for attracting and retaining employees.



- The rental housing stock is terrible and many people end up buying homes that they can not afford to maintain.

In response to comments on the condition of the rental housing stock, the Norwich Housing Authority believes that it has actually improved over the past twenty years in part due to the inspection process involved with the Section 8 programs – both the Housing Authority’s and Opportunities for Chenango Inc. The Housing Authority further states that these inspections have at least assured basic safety standards, and with more stringent lead-based paint requirements being put into effect during the past year, more improvements are being required of owners participating in the programs.



Real Estate Tax Base Analysis

Issues, Opportunities and Challenges

- Norwich is comprised of approximately 1,100 acres of land with 390 of those acres are tax-exempt-- 35% of the total property in the city and about 37.5% of the total property value.
- Residential use is the predominant land use in the City, comprising 45.8% of the total acreage. Residential land also contributes 73.6% of the municipal assessment/real estate taxes to the City.
- Similarly, Commercial uses while making up only 12.7% of the land generates 18.2% of the property tax revenues. The only other land use category that generates positive tax revenues is Public Services (including utilities, telecommunications, rail services, etc.) which comprise 3.6% of the acreage yet generate 5.4% of the property tax revenues.
- As might be expected, Vacant Lands contribute less than 1% of the property tax revenues while occupying 13.4% of the City's total land acreage.
- Industrial land contributes less than 1% of the real estate taxes and takes up about 2.3% of the total acreage.
- In terms of taxable assessed value per acre, Residential uses generated an average of \$195,150 per acre. Within this category, the average assessed values ranged from \$207,174 per acre for Single family to \$64,205 per acre for mobile homes.
- In comparison, Commercial uses in the City averaged a taxable assessed value of \$174,566 per acre while Industrial uses averaged only \$46,197 per acre. The least productive of the land uses (except for Recreation) is Vacant lands which averaged \$7,496 per acre for taxable assessed value.

City-wide Tax Base and Real Estate Market Analysis

The City's ability to raise revenue to provide infrastructure and services to the community is affected by its tax base. The existing and future real estate of the City provides opportunities and constraints for maintaining and attracting homeowners, businesses and jobs. This is particularly relevant as the City plans for its future through preparation of a long range comprehensive plan. The analysis of Norwich's tax base reviews assessment trends, land uses, supply and condition of inventory to provide a market view and economic framework for evaluating various development strategies for the future. Regional trends and comparable city comparisons were also considered.

Tax Base Analysis

Norwich is comprised of approximately 1,100 acres of land with 390 of those acres are tax-exempt-- 35% of the total property in the city and about 37.5% of the total property value. Residential use is the predominant land use in the City, comprising 45.8% of the total acreage. Single family residences only account for nearly one-third of the City's acreage. Community services account for 15.8%, followed by vacant land



(13.4%), commercial uses (12.7%), Recreation and entertainment (6.4%), Public Services (3.6%) and Industrial uses (2.3%). There were no Agricultural uses or Conservation lands indicated in the tax base.

City of Norwich Tax Base Analysis

Land Use	# # parcels	Acres	Taxable A.V.	% total acreage	% total A.V.	A.V per acre	Average parcel
Agricultural	0	0.0	\$0	0.0%	0.0%		
Single family	1,487	356.3	\$73,809,918	32.2%	54.8%	\$207,174	0.24
Two family	356	81.8	\$13,428,482	7.4%	10.0%	\$164,141	0.23
3-4 family	71	16.8	\$3,046,889	1.5%	2.3%	\$181,719	0.24
Mobile home	8	2.1	\$134,750	0.2%	0.1%	\$64,205	0.26
Multiple residences on parcel	16	4.2	\$847,983	0.4%	0.6%	\$200,136	0.26
Multi-family apartments	91	46.1	\$7,728,087	4.2%	5.7%	\$167,639	0.51
Vacant residential land	173	85.0	\$754,637	7.7%	0.6%	\$8,883	0.49
Commercial vacant land	27	31.7	\$249,600	2.9%	0.2%	\$7,872	1.17
Industrial vacant land	14	32.1	\$110,800	2.9%	0.1%	\$3,454	2.29
Commercial uses	206	140.0	\$24,447,383	12.7%	18.2%	\$174,566	0.68
Recreation & Entertainment	23	70.5	\$157,100	6.4%	0.1%	\$2,228	3.07
Community services	43	175.0	\$1,450,000	15.8%	1.1%	\$8,287	4.07
Industrial	12	25.3	\$1,169,500	2.3%	0.9%	\$46,197	2.11
Public services	18	39.9	\$7,259,419	3.6%	5.4%	\$181,818	2.22
Conservation lands	0	0.0	\$0	0.0%	0.0%		
	2,545	1106.8	\$134,594,548	100.0%	100.0%	\$121,607	0.43

An analysis of tax revenue generated by each land use indicates that residential land contributes 73.6% of the municipal assessment/real estate taxes to the City. Yet residential uses comprise only 45.8% of the total acreage in the City. Similarly, Commercial uses while making up only 12.7% of the land generates 18.2% of the property tax revenues. The only other land use category that generates positive tax revenues is Public Services (including utilities, telecommunications, rail services, etc.) which comprise 3.6% of the acreage yet generate 5.4% of the property tax revenues.



As might be expected, Vacant Lands contribute less than 1% of the property tax revenues while occupying 13.4% of the City's total land acreage. Similarly, Community Services which generally include primarily tax-exempt uses, generates only 1.1% of the property tax revenues but comprises 15.8% of the land acreage in the City. Tax-exempt organizations including the City of Norwich, Chenango Memorial Hospital, Norwich City School District, Union Free School District, Chenango County and a number of churches and civic organizations account for much of this acreage. Industrial land contributes less than 1% of the real estate taxes and takes up about 2.3% of the total acreage. Recreation and entertainment uses such as parks and athletic fields are often tax-exempt and not surprisingly accounts for negligible taxes revenues but 6.4% of the acreage. The amount of tax-exempt land uses and the under performance of industrial uses and vacant lands puts more burden on the other properties to generate the necessary revenue to support city services and public infrastructure.

In terms of taxable assessed value per acre, Residential uses generated an average of \$195,150 per acre. Within this category, the average assessed values ranged from \$207,174 per acre for Single family to \$64,205 per acre for mobile homes. In comparison, Commercial uses in the City averaged a taxable assessed value of \$174,566 per acre while Industrial uses averaged only \$46,197 per acre. The least productive of the land uses (except for Recreation) is Vacant lands which averaged \$7,496 per acre for taxable assessed value.



Natural Resources

Issues, Opportunities and Challenges

- Much of the City is in the 100-year FEMA floodplain, which requires property owners to purchase federal flood insurance. Flood mitigation projects over the last 40 years have significantly reduced the risk of flooding, but flood insurance requirements add to the cost of property ownership in the City.
- The Chenango River and Canasawacta Creek offer recreational resources and played a strong role in the development of the City and the entire Chenango Valley.
- Despite its long industrial history the City has relatively few sites contaminated by prior uses. Most of the sites have been identified, and many have been cleaned up.

Streams, Wetlands and Floodplains

The City of Norwich is located at the confluence of the Chenango River and Canasawacta Creek. Both streams are a part of the Susquehanna Watershed. The Chenango River is designated as a “Class B Fresh Surface Water” in the New York State Water Quality Classification System. New York State lists recreation and fishing as the “highest and best use” of Class B fresh surface waters and sets water standards to support recreation uses and fish propagation and survival. Both the river and the creek meet water quality standards for Class B fresh surface waters.

The waterways, particularly the Chenango River, played a significant role in the development of the City of Norwich. The Chenango River and foot trails throughout the river valley formed a major transportation artery for Native American tribes including the Oneidas and Tuscaroras. A number of camps were located along the banks of the river. A Native American fortification and meeting place was located about a mile and a half south of the stream junction. The area’s fertile soils supported corn and apple crops for its first inhabitants.

In the early 1800s, the Chenango Valley was still a frontier with principal access provided by the same lakes and streams used by Native Americans. In 1833 the New York State Legislature authorized the construction of the Chenango Canal to join the Erie Canal at a point just west of Utica to the Susquehanna River in Binghamton. When completed in 1837, the canal was 97-miles long, four-feet deep and included 116 locks. The Chenango River and a set of six reservoirs in Madison County provided water for the canal. Though it dramatically improved transportation access to the region, the canal did not attract significant number of new people to the region and was a financial failure, never making back the initial \$4.5 million capital cost or subsequent operating costs. The state abandoned the canal in 1878. Only portions of the canal remain today. The canal segments and rights-of-way that have survived provide opportunities for trail development.



In the past, flooding has been an issue in the City and much of the City is included in the FEMA 100-year floodplain requiring property owners to purchase flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program. Flood mitigation strategies implemented by the Army Corps of Engineers and the City since the 1950s have drastically reduced the amount and severity of flooding within the City. The lack of flooding, as well as a great deal of “flood proof” construction (with first floors of structure built above the floodplain), has caused many residents to be frustrated by the requirement to buy into the flood insurance program. The requirement adds to the cost of owning a home in the City.

The primary flooding issue for the City is due to an inadequate storm sewer system. The storm sewer system is old and cannot handle significant downpours or the combination of rain and snowmelt that occurs when heavy rains occur on top of snow.

Topography and Soils

The City of Norwich is located in the Chenango River Valley on one of the largest tracts of level, well-drained land in Chenango County. Much of Norwich is built on top of a deposit of glacial till that has been given the name “Chenango Gravelly Silt Loam. This soil type has a top layer of brownish loam to a depth of about eight inches and a subsoil of yellowish, gravelly silt loam of about 36 inches in depth. Underlying material below these layers consists of stratified beds of gravel, sand and silt, providing excellent drainage.

Three other soil types with a significant presence in the City include Genesee Silt Loam, Wooster Silt Loam and Lordstown Silt Loam. Genesee Silt Loam is an alluvial soil typically found in river valleys and is the surface soil through which the Chenango River flows. These soils are generally unsuitable for development due to frequent flooding. Wooster Silt Loam is typical of soils that are found on the lower slopes of gently rolling hills. This soil has good drainage and forms one of the most desirable agricultural lands in the County. It has a brownish top layer of six to 10 inches and subsoil extending to a depth of 36 inches or more. The Lordstown Silt Loam is similar to the Wooster with the principal exception that it is essentially a shallow-till soil, generally occupying the upper slopes and hilltops. The underlying rock is usually less than three feet below the surface.

Brownfields

The City of Norwich has a considerable industrial history, which has resulted in some brownfield sites scattered throughout the community. The City, County, State and affected property owners have a good understanding of most of the sites and many have been cleaned up or are in the process of remediation. Key brownfield sites in the City include:

- The NYSEG facility on Front Street, adjacent to the Tops Plaza: The site of a nineteenth century manufactured gas plant was contaminated by coal tar, a byproduct of the energy production process. Used as a light industrial site for years after the closure, the tenant was relocated by NYSEG when the coal tar was discovered. NYSEG is remediating the site it now uses as a dispatch barn for gas company service vehicles. The company intends to continue to use the site as a dispatch center. The site encompasses 1.33 acres.



- 65 Mitchell Street: an oil tank leak at Mirabito Fuel Group, Incorporated has been remediated by the property owner, though the clean up has not been certified by an environmental engineer. Mirabito no longer operates a retail fuel location at this site. However, trucks from a milk hauling operation are parked on site. A change in use of this residentially zoned property would likely require a full Phase II environmental assessment. The leak likely affected adjacent sites, including a City-owned property to the east and the former Penny Saver printing plant. Penny Saver attempted to donate its property to Opportunities for Chenango for conversion to housing. Unsuitability of the existing structure for housing conversion and potential contamination issues stopped the transaction. This site has 1.04 acres.
- Former Agway fertilizer plant: This pie-shaped property adjacent to the railroad tracks along the new Prentice Street extension was the location of an Agway fertilizer plant for years. It is now owned by the New York & Susquehanna & Western Railroad. The site has not been tested for contamination, so there are no known environmental issues associated with the site, but its former use implies that contamination could be possible. Redevelopment of the site would require investigation and completion of any indicated remediation. This former Agway plant (approximately 4 acres) is now part of the Railroad parcel (26.02 acres).
- G W!!!kers facility on Lee Avenue near the railroad tracks: A spill occurred here when the site was owned by Hercules, a maker of aerospace connectors and capacitors. Hercules completed the site remediation. The site encompasses 1.75 acres.
- The site of the former Bilow's Garage, service station on the edge of downtown on North Broad Street was left with underground storage tanks still in place. The owner claims, when the retail gas operation closed (the business still operates as a repair station), the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation allowed the owner to encase the remaining underground tanks rather than requiring removal. This site is approximately 0.3 acres.



Historic Resources³

Issues, Opportunities and Challenges

- More than forty buildings have been lost to redevelopment or fire over the past 30-40 years. These losses have resulted in increasing erosion of community character. There is little to prevent similar losses in the future; public education and dialog is needed to inform residents and facilitate City decision making regarding the protection and enhancement of historic resources.
- The City's older and historic building stock continues to be threatened by new development/redevelopment, fire, alteration, and neglect. Continuing efforts are needed to help property owners to maintain and appropriately enhance older building stock.
- Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods include many historically and architecturally significant residential and commercial structures, with most retaining much of their original architectural character. This is somewhat unusual in upstate New York and is a condition that should be encouraged and maintained through adoption of appropriate local preservation laws and financial incentives to encourage sympathetic alterations, improvements and infill construction.
- A number of buildings in Norwich have been successfully restored and/or adaptively reused, including the Chenango County Courthouse, several former school buildings, and numerous residences converted to office and commercial uses.
- Downtown Norwich has retained much of its historic and architectural character but includes many buildings whose facades have been "modernized" and would benefit from façade improvement and design guidelines or assistance. The efforts of Norwich Business Improvement District should be strengthened, formalized and expanded.

Facilitated by strategies such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street program, communities large and small are increasingly integrating and relying on historic preservation in their community and economic development programs. In doing so, these communities have taken steps to identify, protect, enhance and promote their historic and cultural resources.

A growing body of research indicates that although there are many misconceptions regarding the protection of historic resources, these protections help maintain and enhance property values, enhance community pride, establish a unique sense of place (allowing differentiation from surrounding communities), stabilize neighborhoods, facilitate tourism and attract additional investment.

Communities that successfully use historic preservation tools as part of their comprehensive community and economic development strategies implement policies, projects and programs designed to build on the characteristics, assets and strengths that make them unique and set them

³ This section was prepared using information from the National Register Information System as well as field research and information collected in telephone interviews with Dr. David Drucker, Executive Director, Chenango County Historical Society; Dale Storms, Chenango County Historian; Patricia Scott, City of Norwich Historian, and Pegi LoPresti, Executive Director, Norwich Business Improvement District. Additional sources consulted include National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Forms for the North Broad and Chenango County Courthouse Historic Districts, the National Register Information System, and Peter D. Shaver, compiler, [The National Register of Historic Places in New York State](#), New York, Rizzoli, 1991.



apart from other communities. They look for opportunities to maximize their assets by working with similar communities to protect like resources. They try to evaluate the community impacts that might result from not preserving and protecting historic resources. They also recognize that the decision to protect, preserve, enhance and promote unique assets such as historic resources does not come without costs that must be borne by municipal government, business and industry, and local property owners, and they develop ways to mitigate those costs. Finally, they also establish administrative procedures and practices that allow and encourage public discourse and decision-making.

With these success factors in mind, the purpose of this section is to document the City of Norwich’s existing historic preservation efforts, to assist the City in identifying the economic values and risks associated with historic resources, and provide information that will enable the City to evaluate whether historic preservation strategies are, or can be, effective and worthwhile economic revitalization tools. This section will also assist the City in determining whether there is more it can do to capitalize on the economic development and heritage tourism potential of Norwich’s historic resources.

Community Character

The City of Norwich is relatively compact, with a walkable downtown surrounded for the most part by residential neighborhoods. Although more than forty buildings⁴ have been lost (see below) to demolition, fire and redevelopment, many older and historic buildings retain their historic character and architectural integrity. New residential development is proposed in the northwest quadrant of the City north of Hillview



Drive, with additional new commercial and light industrial development located in the City’s southeast quadrant.

Downtown Norwich retains the majority of its older and historic buildings, although there is some modern infill and some gaps where buildings have been removed or parking lots created. In spite of the loss of numerous historic residential and commercial buildings, many other historic buildings have been rehabilitated. The most notable example is the carefully restored Chenango County Courthouse located near the center of Norwich. Other examples include The Eaton Center building, a historic school building near the library, the police station, the City offices in a former railroad depot, and, with a recent grant award, the historic Norwich firehouse.

Downtown commercial buildings appear to be in fair to good condition, although many original storefronts have been incompatibly modified or enclosed. Similar alterations that detract from the architectural character of commercial buildings include modern plastic awnings and signs, upper stories of facades “slip covered” to appear more modern, blocked up or replaced windows and doors and addition of incompatible tor tech roofs to emphasize first floor commercial uses.

⁴ Information from Dale Storms, Chenango County Historian, who provided photocopies of buildings that have been lost.



Approximately 60% of Norwich’s housing units were built before 1949, with the majority actually constructed during the 1800s. These buildings are in fair to excellent condition, with an unusually high number retaining much of their original architectural character.

Listings in the National and State Registers of Historic Places

The National Historic Preservation Act and New York State Historic Preservation Act establish criteria by which buildings, sites, and structures are determined historic. In order to be designated historic, and listed in the National and State Registers of Historic Places, buildings, structures, sites and neighborhoods are evaluated through a formal survey and nomination process, and, if determined significant based on the established criteria. Listed resources are afforded a basic level of protection from federal and state actions, but local regulation is needed to prevent demolition and other actions.

National and State Register-listed historic resources in the City of Norwich include two federal-and state-designated historic districts (Chenango County Courthouse Historic District and North Broad Street Historic District); and one historic building which contributes to a statewide thematic resource designation (U. S. Post Office in Norwich)⁵.

Norwich’s two historic districts were listed in the National Register in the 1970s. Given that more than forty architecturally and historically significant buildings have been lost in Norwich, and many buildings outside the National Register historic districts are eligible for listing, it is likely that the City could benefit from additional survey and nomination work. While such survey work can be expensive if undertaken at one time, surveys can be broken up into phases or focus on one neighborhood at a time. Historic resource surveys form the basis for all preservation planning, regulation and incentives.⁶

Historic Districts Listed in the National Register of Historic Places

The **Chenango County Courthouse Historic District** is generally bounded by East Main, and West Main Streets and Park Place and bisects North Broad and South Broad (see historic resources map). Listed in the National and State Registers of Historic Places in 1975, it includes approximately 45 commercial, public, and religious buildings and two parks in the central part of the City. Notable buildings include the Greek Revival Chenango County Courthouse (1837), Masonic Temple (1878), Congregational Church (1861), and City Hall (now the fire station) (1903-06).



⁵ Statewide thematic resource designation is a whole national registration nomination for post offices in NYS (i.e. the "theme"....SHPO does thematic listings for a wide range of resources...Erie Canal buildings, firehouses, etc.

⁶ In terms of compliance with federal and state historic preservation laws, properties that are *eligible* for listing in the National Register of Historic Places are treated essentially the same as those that are formally listed.



The **North Broad Street Historic District** occupies three blocks on North Broad between Newton Avenue and Mitchell Street (see historic resources map). Listed in the National and State Registers in 1978, it encompasses approximately 41 residences with outstanding examples of Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, and Stick styles.

The **U.S. Post Office in Norwich** (20-22 East Main Street) is part of a thematic listing in the National and State Registers, “United States Post Offices in New York State, 1858 – 1943. The Colonial Revival brick building was designed by George Ketcham and built 1932-33.

The **Methodist Episcopal Church of Norwich**, now called the North Broad Street United Methodist Church was built in 1875 and is listed on both the State and National Registers. The Architect for the Church was Isaac G. Perry and the interior of the church has not changed too much from the original design.

Buildings listed individually in the National and State Registers of Historic Places, and buildings within National and State Register-listed historic districts are afforded a basic level of protection from federal and state actions. They are *not* protected from demolition or alteration. If the City wishes to use historic preservation as part of its economic development strategy, it would benefit from additional survey work, particularly in older neighborhoods not now designated as historic districts.

Locally-Designated and Protected Historic Resources

The City of Norwich does not have a historic preservation ordinance, design guidelines or design (or architectural review) review ordinance, or neighborhood conservation regulations. City staff and others have established a museum district within the zoning ordinance. The museum district is located along Rexford Street (Route 23). The Museum District (MD) is an overlay within existing zoning districts. It is generally bounded by Waite Street on the north, Silver Street on the east, Mitchell Street on the south, and eastern boundary of the New York & Susquehanna & Western Railroad to the west (west of State Street and Lee Avenue). The district generally includes properties on both sides of boundary streets as well as streets that fall within the district boundaries. A legal description of the district is included in the local law.

In addition, the City recently received a \$750,000 Small Cities grant for implementation of the Museum District Revitalization Program. The program includes housing rehabilitation; creation of handicapped accessible restrooms in existing museums; exterior rehabilitation and restoration of the Historical Society’s maintenance facility; demolition of the vacant Norwich Shoe Factory; and extension of public water and sewer to adjacent industrial areas. The intent is to preserve the historic character of the neighborhood, and enhance tourism.



Other Properties of Significance

Surveys of Norwich indicate that many of the City's residential and commercial buildings retain much of their original architectural character and have been obscured only minimally by later alterations and additions. Many of these buildings may be eligible for listing in the National and State Registers of Historic Places, which would qualify them for existing and future tax incentives.

The National and State Registers of Historic Places concentrate primarily on resources that are historically and architecturally significant at the National and State levels. Listing in the National and State Registers provides only limited protective measures and incentives for the improvement of historic buildings. Generally speaking, protective measures come into play only when Federal or State funding is used to finance a project (construction, demolition, acquisition) or when Federal or State agencies are otherwise involved in the project. National Register listing cannot protect historic buildings from demolition or alteration; only a local historic preservation ordinance can protect historic buildings at the local level. Incentives consist mainly of the honor of being included in the National and State Register and qualify property owner for tax credits. Property owners can potentially be eligible for tax benefits at the federal and local level. State tax incentives for owners of historic properties are pending. These areas may also benefit from development of local historic districts or neighborhood conservation districts, to stabilize neighborhoods, enhance property values, and attract additional investment and rehabilitation.



Comprehensive Planning, Zoning, and Local Ordinances Related to Historic Preservation

Although the Norwich Business Improvement District and other groups and organizations recognize the importance of protecting and enhancing the City's architecture, none of Norwich's planning documents addresses the preservation of historic and cultural resources. The City does not have a local historic preservation ordinance, local historic districts, or a formal architectural review process. As noted below, however, the Norwich BID and Action Alliance for Downtown Norwich, in association with the City of Norwich, established a Design Team and a set of design criteria in 1996 under the auspices of a subcommittee called the Design Team⁷. At present, the BID encourages building improvements that are compatible with the existing architectural character of downtown buildings, but does not have any formal design review procedures.



⁷ See web site: www.norwich.net/business/designtm.htm



The City’s Zoning Ordinance specifies that for B1 businesses, the front setback is 0’ (buildings must be built to the sidewalk). Within the Business Improvement District, corner lots may have setbacks of up to 25 feet on the two sides of the property that address the two streets. All other lots may have setbacks of up to 15 feet. Setbacks are only allowed for public seating, outdoor cafes, and gardens. The BID’s 1996 design criteria encourage protection and maintenance of building facades as well as general beautification and aesthetic enhancements.

Aside from the 0’ front setback requirement, the City Land Use Regulations does not provide any substantive protection from actions such as building demolition and alteration. Additionally, while it is assumed that the Norwich BID seeks to work collaboratively with property owners and that property owners attempt to comply with design criteria when modifying their facades, public and private goals and investments might better be served by establishing a more formal process and protections for historic resources. While a local historic preservation ordinance is an excellent and widely used regulatory tool, façade improvement can occur without such regulations as has recently been done in the Madison County Village of Hamilton. There they had a generous benefactor.

Local Organizations Active in Historic Preservation

There are no historic preservation organizations in the City of Norwich, although to some degree preservation of the downtown commercial district falls within the missions of the Norwich Business Improvement District (encompassing the Downtown Norwich Marketplace and the Action Alliance for Downtown Norwich), and the Chenango County Historical Society.

Norwich Business Improvement District, Action Alliance for Downtown Norwich, Vision for Downtown Norwich Marketplace

The Norwich Business Improvement District (BID) was established in 1986 by the City of Norwich, following petition of property owners in the central business district who were interested in developing programs to help preserve and enhance downtown Norwich as the commercial, cultural and governmental center of the Greater Chenango County, New York, area. The BID is an independent municipal entity, one of the first of its kind to be established in Upstate New York. Activities of the BID are overseen by the Norwich Business Improvement District Management Association, a non-profit, charitable organization established pursuant to New York State’s BID law.⁸

According to the Vision for the Downtown Norwich Marketplace⁹, the Action Alliance for Downtown Norwich and the Norwich Business Improvement District form an “action-oriented task force committed to build a more vibrant and viable business and cultural center for downtown Norwich that will improve the economic status for the community and its citizens.”

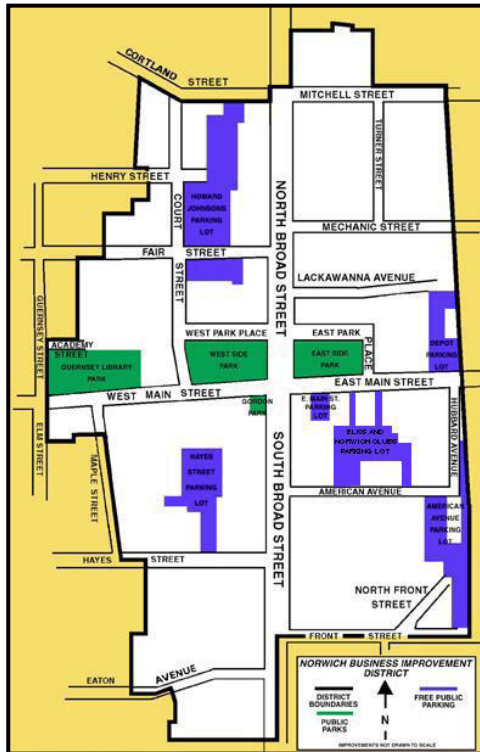
⁸ See <http://www.norwich.net/downtown/bidindex.htm>

⁹ See <http://www.norwich.net/business/vision.htm>



The task force’s mission is “to develop downtown Norwich as a magnet for profitable commerce through developing mutually beneficial opportunities between merchants, business owners, landlords, consumers, community organizations, and local government agencies while maximizing public consensus and support.”¹⁰

The group’s vision recognizes that downtown Norwich is unique and serves as a commercial magnet, drawing visitors and shoppers from a radius of at least 50 miles and tourists from a much wider and more random range. Characteristics which establish uniqueness and magnetism include downtown Norwich’s historic and architecturally significant architecture and a good mix of generally unique business establishments combined with local consumer services, retail, open air markets, and events.



Map 1 Norwich Business Improvement District

In addition, the Norwich BID, Action Alliance for Downtown, and City of Norwich established a Streetscape Committee and the Mercantile Recruitment Committee and corresponding action items in 1996. The “Recommended Directions for Design and Infrastructure” include:

“All new buildings, and renovated structures to the extent practical, be designed to complement the primarily Victorian style architecture found in the downtown Area. This style should include:

- Appropriate colors of exterior paint.
 - Red brick and the appearance of natural materials.
 - Canvas style awnings.
 - Signage appropriate to the building and era.
 - Entrances and rear building faces that are complementary to the style.
 - Construction of multi-story buildings that are synergistic with neighboring structures.
 - Building fronts that are flush with the sidewalk line, except those in situations where such design would not be synergistic with buildings surrounding it.
- The number one priority should be restoration and adaptive reuse of existing Victorian style buildings, rather than demolition. In event it is totally unfeasible to retain an existing building; new construction must conform to the overall design set forth in Item 1.

- All parking lots must be landscaped. All parks, street, and open space planting must be designed and overseen by professionals familiar with Victorian era themes.

¹⁰ See <http://www.norwich.net/downtown/vision.htm>



- Require all owners of buildings, including those that are vacant, to maintain the exterior of buildings on all floor levels, including cleaning of windows and display window areas.
- Bury all overhead wires.
- Create and maintain convenient public toilets in the downtown area.”

Chenango County Historical Society

The mission of the Chenango County Historical Society (CCHS) is to “lead and support the advancement of research, education, preservation and enjoyment of Chenango County’s history and historically significant assets” and the organization envisions Chenango County as a place where history is celebrated and citizens cherish their heritage.”¹¹ CCHS is currently completing a comprehensive survey of the Chenango Canal and has encouraged adjoining Madison County to undertake a similar survey. Their intent is to ultimately survey the entire Chenango Canal corridor in the four counties through which it ran, and to ultimately reopen appropriate portions of the canal for recreational and interpretive uses.

¹¹ See <http://www.chenangocounty.org/chencohistso/mission1.htm>



Recreation

Issues, Opportunities, and Challenges

- Norwich has nine park and recreation areas and provides a wide variety of activities for residents.
- Kurt Beyer Pool is well attended, but is in need of repair.
- The Norwich Family YMCA recently constructed a new facility with generous support from the community.
- Youth are currently raising funds to develop a Skateboard Park at the Borden Avenue Skating Facility.
- Residents attending the Visioning Workshop identified the need for safer playground equipment, more trails, more social events for youth, improved open space and further enhancement of the Hosbach Trail.
- Trails for biking and sports programs for older youth were also identified as recreational needs by local youth attending Focus Group Meetings.

Public Recreation Facilities

The City of Norwich owns nine park and recreational areas encompassing 21.7 acres. The Department of Public Works maintains all park areas and the Office of Planning & Community Development is in charge of parks development. The City also owns a Community Garden on Hale Street which has land (between 400 and 500 square feet) available for gardening.

Attendance figures are kept for Kurt Beyer Pool (daily) and the Borden Avenue Skating Rink (random). This year, a total of 15,447 people have gone to the pool between June 23 and August 1. The pool is generally open between June and early September. The Borden Avenue Ice Skating Rink is an outdoor rink that is used for ice skating during the winter months and roller blading and roller skating during the summer months. Approximately 2,021 skaters used the facility in 2001. To date 1,509 skaters have used the rink between January and July. With the addition of Skateboard Ramps, attendance is expected to dramatically rise during the season.



TABLE 18: CITY-OWNED RECREATIONAL FACILITIES			
<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Facilities</i>	<i>Acreage</i>
Weiler Park	Borden Avenue	Pavilion, Picnic facilities, Playground, 2 ballfields, basketball court, 4 tennis courts, and walking trail (1/3 mile)	7.19
Borden Avenue Skating Facility	Borden Avenue	Skating rink (roller blading/roller skating-summer and ice skating-winter) and Warming Shed	5.68
Kiwanis Park	River Street and Route 23 (Rexford Street)	Pavilion, Picnic facilities, Playground, and basketball court (1/2 court)	2.61
Bruchausen Park	Between Hale Street and Division Street	Picnic facilities, Playground, basketball court (1/2 court), and sitting benches	1.26
Kurt Beyer Pool & Rotary Park	Western end of Cortland Street	Swimming pool, hiking trail, playfields, fishing/pedestrian bridge, handicapped fishing access, playground, pavilion, picnic facilities, basketball court (1/2 court) and volleyball courts	4.58
Gordon Park	West Main Street and South Broad Street	Sitting area	0.13
Auburn Park	Auburn Street and King Street	Picnic facilities and playground	0.25

Source: City of Norwich Office of Planning & Community Development

In addition to the parks owned by the City of Norwich, there are other public recreational facilities located within the City of Norwich.



TABLE 19: OTHER RECREATIONAL FACILITIES IN THE CITY OF NORWICH			
<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Facilities</i>	<i>Ownership</i>
Boat Launch	Behind the High School on the Chenango River	Boat Launch	City of Norwich School District and the City of Norwich maintains.
South Broad Street Park	South Broad Street	Pavilion, picnic facilities, playground, basketball court (1/2 court) and playing fields	Cemetery owns property and City maintains.
Veterans Park	High School Facilities	Playing fields	City of Norwich School District
Chenango County Fairgrounds	East Main Street	Covered grandstand, racetrack, exhibition hall, stables and picnic area.	Chenango County Agricultural Society
Alumni Field	End of Beebe Avenue	Playing fields and tennis courts	City of Norwich School District
Library Park	West Main Street	Playground	City of Norwich School District
East and West Parks	Intersection of East and West Main Street and North Broad Street	Gazebo and benches	Chenango County and the City of Norwich maintains East Park
Flanagan Field	Plymouth Street	Little league baseball fields and picnic facilities	City of Norwich School District and the City of Norwich maintains.

Source: City of Norwich Office of Planning & Community Development



Public Recreation Programs

The City of Norwich Youth Bureau provides a variety of recreational programs and field trips for local youth. With the exception of the Summer Educational & Fun Trips, all programs are open to residents of the City of Norwich, Town of Norwich, North Norwich, Preston, Plymouth and Pharsalia free of charge. These programs are available to residents of other communities for a fee. The chart below summarizes programs currently offered.

TABLE 20: MUNICIPAL RECREATION PROGRAMS/SPECIAL EVENTS			
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Season</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Target Population</i>
Swimming Lessons	Summer	Kurt Beyer Pool	Youth 5-20 years
Competitive Swim Team	Summer	Kurt Beyer Pool	8 years and up
Playground Program	Summer	Perry Browne and Gibson School	5-9 years
Soccer	Summer	Gibson School	K-6 th grades
Gymnastics	Summer	Perry Browne School	K-8 th grades
Tennis	Summer	Norwich High School	K-8 th grades
Summer Educational & Fun Trips	Summer	Various	Various
Thursday Evenings in the Park	Summer	East Side Park <i>(some may be held at Kurt Beyer Park or Borden Avenue Skating Facility)</i>	All
Ice Skating	Winter	Borden Avenue Skating Facility	All
Junior Wrestling	Winter	Middle School Cafeteria	K-6 th grades
Bowling	Winter		5 th -12 th grades
Gymnastics	Winter	Perry Browne School Gymnasium	K-6 th grades
Baseball	Winter	Norwich Soccer Center	Boys 10-19 years
Softball	Winter	Norwich Soccer Center	Girls 10-19 years
Ice Hockey	Winter	Borden Avenue Skating Facility	

Source: City of Norwich Youth Bureau

The Summer Educational & Fun Trips program provides bus trips to museums, zoos, state parks, beaches and amusement parks. Free transportation is provided, but in some cases participants will have to pay their own admission fee.



The Delaware-Chenango Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) also provides a variety of fun and fitness courses. Courses include dog Obedience, painting, yoga, candle making, and cooking, among others.

Privately-Owned Recreation Facilities

The Norwich Family YMCA recently completed construction of a new facility. The new YMCA offers new programming spaces including: a three lane indoor running/walking track, a teen center with organized programming for area youth and teens, a baby-sitting room for parents with young children, private changing areas for families with young children, and a designated off-street pick-up circle area adjacent to the main entrance. The entire facility is handicap accessible. Additionally, the YMCA has a 6-lane, 25 yard swimming pool, whirlpool, sauna, three gymnasiums, three racquetball/handball courts, one squash court, fitness classes and a fitness center. The YMCA also provides youth sports programs, summer camp, child care and a variety of special events.

Lewis Martial Arts is located in The Eaton Center on Conkey Avenue and offers taekwondo, grappling and a climbing wall. To Your Health Fitness Center is also located in The Eaton Center on Conkey Avenue. This fitness center offers cardiovascular, strength, and aerobic workouts for all ages. Canasawacta Country Club is located on Country Club Road. The Country Club has an 18-hole golf course and driving range.

Recent Recreation Initiatives

Norwich Skateboard Park

The City of Norwich has recently developed a skateboard park with the local youth at the Borden Avenue Skating Facility. In the past, skateboarders used parks, the front of businesses and the streets of downtown Norwich. The City involved the youth in all aspects of the planning, fundraising, equipment choice and park operation, so that the youth would have a sense of pride and ownership of the park. Equipment for the skateboard park included portable ramps and jumps, which take up half of the existing rink. The other half of the rink is still available for roller blading and roller skating. The ramps are removed for the ice skating season.

Greenway Plan

The Greenway Trail was first envisioned in the 1967 Norwich Planning Study as a trailway that would encircle the City. Encircling the Greenway Trail proved impractical, now it is envisioned as a river walk. The City is still in the process of developing a Greenway Trail system that would provide residents with recreational opportunities and that would include historical and natural interpretative sites. Currently, the major hurdle is getting the right of way for some property within the City located along the Chenango River. The overall concept would be a continuous trail system that would follow the River from Sherburne to Binghamton and intersect with the Finger Lakes Trail, 8 miles south.



Kurt Beyer Pool

The Kurt Beyer Pool is in need of structural repairs. The City of Norwich has submitted an application to the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation to help refurbish the pool. Funds will be used to complete the engineering plans, sandblasting to remove the paint from the pool floor and walls, prepare surfaces for and replaster with marcite and for construction supervision. In the meantime, the City is building a capital reserve fund in case the grant is not awarded or to serve as a match.

Parks Commission

The Parks Commission is responsible for the development and maintenance of a master plan and making recommendations for management and maintenance of municipal parks, programs and funding for park improvements, and rules and regulations of park facilities. A Parks Master Plan was last completed in 1992. The Parks Commission is currently evaluating the need to update this plan. The City received a Health Heart Grant for the design and labeling of the Chenango Canal Walk trail in Norwich. The Commission is currently involved with drafting the brochure for this walking trail.

Park Improvements

Playground equipment is in need of replacement at the various City parks. Minor replacement is expected to begin this year. The volleyball court at Kurt Beyer Park is heavily used and needs to be upgraded. The tennis court at Weiler Park will need to be resurfaced in the not too distant future.

The Headwaters Youth Conservation Corp (HYCC) has designed the upgrade and the City's Public Works Department will be excavating the area this fall. The HYCC will fill in the area with the proper base materials. The HYCC has also been fixing the trail at Rotary Park. Further, the HYCC is involved with the design and preparation work of the Hosbach Trail along the Chenango River.

East and West Park Master Plan

A Master Plan was recently completed for East and West Park. The Plan was developed to help revitalize the parks and have the parks used more effectively by residents and visitors. Park system improvements include security, electrical and lighting, turf management, irrigation, maintenance, pavement and walkways, tree and plant maintenance, enlarge the pavilion by utilizing historic architecture and improving the sound system, relocate some monuments to a location of visual prominence, and bury overhead electrical lines within the park. Additionally, improvements would include historical park elements such as curvilinear walkways, historic light fixtures, benches along walkways, low level landscape planting, scattered shade trees, open lawn areas and minimal placement of focal features. The Norwich BID is awaiting county approval of the plan.



Park and Recreation Needs

During the Visioning Workshop, participants mentioned the need for more safety features at the playgrounds; walking and biking trails; social events for kids; to enhance the Hosbach Trail; and to develop more places for the general public to walk or even ride bikes/skateboards.

The City of Norwich received comments from a resident concerning the Comprehensive Plan. It was recommended that special events, such as the Gus Macker Basketball Tournament, Colorscape, Crafts Shows and Pumpkin Festival, be held on South Broad Street instead of the parks. It was also recommended that the City examine the feasibility of developing a Civic Center that could have an indoor ice skating rink. Further, it was reported that the tennis courts on Conkey Avenue are being neglected and have fallen into a state of disrepair. It was recommended that with the growing number of residents skateboarding and roller blading that the tennis courts could be turned into a skate park.

A Focus Group meeting was held with six local youth in the Summer of 2002. One youth mentioned that the greenbelt trail is a “great idea, but that it fell through”. He also commented that Route 12 is terrible for bikers and since no one is allowed to ride their bikes on the sidewalks, it makes it difficult to get around the City. Another youth commented that the various sports programs offered in the City for the younger children is great and suggested that the program should be expanded to include older youth. Other concerns related to recreation and leisure activities identified by the Youth Focus Group include the following:

- It is hard to get to do stuff, if not looking for opportunities, wouldn't know about things going on. Need to have the initiative to look for stuff, which becomes more of a research project.
- Norwich shuts down at 9:00pm and if you don't have a car, there is nothing to do.
- We would like to have coffee shops with musicians and a dance club that would cater to youth 18 and over (not just 21 and over).
- I'm a fan of the local music scene and would like to have a place to hang out. There is no common place to go and we are limited to the amount of times we can have friends over before parents start to get mad.
- The YMCA is really the only place to go, but if you are not into sports, it is pretty limited. There is a TV/hang out room there, but that is most junior high kids. I wouldn't go in there.
- Norwich needs a place like the “Night Eagle,” a place where everyone can hang out. Performance venues for music, poetry, plays etc. are needed in the City.
- There are a lot of good bands in the area. There's music in the park, although it is not well publicized, and when people don't show up it is called a failure. I think it needs to be advertised better.
- The skate park is a great idea because the rink does not get used that much in the summer. A lot of people use the rink in the winter.
- Norwich has a lot of well kept secrets that people do not know about. Lots of these secrets are great programs. We need to do a better job of getting the word out.



- When we were in elementary school, they sent us home with community events flyers each week. Now we just get announcements in the morning at school. We don't remember the details of that stuff. We need another way to share information. A community on line bulletin board of programs and events would be great. Is there a better way to use the local government channel to announce upcoming events and volunteer opportunities?
- Need to advertise more on events such as the Twisted Groove Festival that is held at the fairgrounds.
- The Church Youth Groups have a lot of community activities.
- We are really into volunteer and community activities. A City-wide or neighborhood clean-up day where a group of people pick a project to clean-up would be great.
- Would like to see more sporting events and summer leagues.
- The City took out pay phones downtown and installed surveillance cameras. We don't all have mobile phones, so that makes it hard to get in touch with friends when we are out. The surveillance cameras are uncomfortable. We don't feel like we are doing anything wrong, but it still feels creepy to be watched.
- The Car museum is a great asset and is getting better.
- Norwich needs more teenage activities and a place to go. Partying in the woods (or hanging out in the streets) gets old.
- There needs to be more healthy and a variety of teenage activities.
- There needs to be more advertisement of existing programs.



Regional Issues

Issues, Opportunities and Challenges

- The City of Norwich is the County seat and the largest municipality in the County, providing many services to the surrounding towns and region.
- The City provides water, sewer and fire and ambulance and operates youth programs for the surrounding towns
- The City and Town need to work together to improve coordination of services and development goals.

Norwich is the County seat and the largest municipality in the County with a population of 7,355 versus a total population of 51,401. The City represents 14.3% of the County's total population but only 0.23% of the land area. The City extends services well outside of its boundaries. The Norwich City School district encompasses approximately 110 square miles and extends into 10 townships in Chenango County. The City's library, which is chartered to serve the entire school district, serves an even broader area with over 25% of material loans to people living outside of the school district.

Norwich is linked to surrounding communities by the services it provides and the relative isolation from major municipalities. The Greater Norwich Empire Zone serves the City and Town of Norwich and the Town of North Norwich, attracting new development to the region that benefits all of the municipalities and the County in general by attracting a new economic base and residents. New boundary revisions are being prepared that will extend the zone to most of the County.

The City has extended water and sewer service into some areas of the Town of Norwich and is working to extend service to the Town of North Norwich when that community secures capital funds for construction of the extension. The Town of Norwich would like to expand its water and sewer coverage and the City has the capacity and interest to do so. The City and Town are also considering expanding the City's role in the Town's billing and administration tasks. The City also provides fire protection, ambulance, and youth services to surrounding communities.

The City and the Town of Norwich, depend on one another for economic development opportunities, municipal and social services and community identity, but lack formal coordination of efforts beyond infrastructure service agreements and the Greater Norwich Empire Zone. Better communication and integration of services will be critical to the future development of the area. The City has identified the desire and capacity to support new development in the area by infrastructure and service extensions, but such extensions and resulting development must be able to support the goals and objectives of both the Town and the City. Stronger working relationships are needed to make this happen.



Ultimately, annexation of portions of the Town into the City or the City into the Town should be considered as the long term solution to the service integration and coordination issues. Under the current structure, the Town does not have the capacity to deliver and administer many of the municipal services that are needed to accommodate growth or even meet the infrastructure needs of current development. If the City continues to expand its role in service delivery and administration, it will need the tools to ensure long-term benefits of service expansions to the City.

The issue of annexation is complex and challenging due to its political and fiscal impacts. If the Town were to be annexed into the City, Town residents would see property taxes increase significantly without much immediate benefit. The Town's government structure would be dissolved and integrated into the City's. The major difference for Town's residents would be that law enforcement would be provided by the City Police force instead of the County Sheriff. Water and sewer extensions from the City system would be easier as well.

If the City were to be annexed into the Town, the delivery of existing City services would need a complete restructuring as would the Town's governing structure in order to operate this new larger and more complex entity. For example, the City's police force would be disbanded, with law enforcement provided by the County Sheriff; fire services would be provided through a fire district rather than a City-run fire department, creating a loss of control over this service; and the County would be required to take over sewer and water operation.

The City's role as the County seat provides another layer of inter-agency coordination needs. The County owns significant property in the City, particularly downtown, which creates not only tax base but property control issues for the City. The County owns several visible parcels downtown, including the East and West. Maintenance standards and needs for these parks have been an issue for the City and Business Improvement District as they plan and implement downtown improvements. The East and West Parks Master Plan calls for changes and improvements to the parks that will need approval by the County.



Transportation and Infrastructure

Issues, Opportunities and Challenges

- The City's infrastructure is adequate to meet current needs and accommodate growth and water, sewer and streets are generally in good condition. Storm sewers are in need of repair.
- The City has significant available water and wastewater capacity for extension or to serve new industry.
- Sidewalks are in poor condition, and the City lacks a comprehensive strategy to improve and replace sidewalks.
- The Norwich Business Improvement District will begin implementation of streetscape improvements in the downtown core in 2003.
- New York State Department of Transportation is conducting a Route 12 corridor study from Binghamton to Utica. As the main street through Norwich and the major access route to the City from the north or south, changes to Route 12 operation or alignment would significantly affect Norwich. The Chamber of Commerce is spearheading a regional consortium of interests to ensure that plans for Route 12 are consistent with local community needs.
- Chenango County Public Transit provides a high level of transit service for a largely rural area.
- Low cost rail freight service is available and could be an important new marketing tool.

Water and Wastewater

The City of Norwich's water system dates from the 1880s and is generally in good condition. In 1997 the City began a \$6.6 million overhaul of its water system with improvements expected to be complete by the end of 2002. While some older mains remain, the improvements have addressed the most significant system problems. The system capacity is approximately 5 million gallons per day, while current use is just 0.9 million gallons per day, creating significant excess capacity and an opportunity to attract water intensive industry.

The City's water supply is a mix of about 60% ground and 40% surface water. The surface share is primarily drawn from two reservoirs located in the hills east of the City in the Town of Norwich. The City's source is Chenango Lake, with the City owning all of the water and about 75% of the bottom of the lake. The lake is located above the reservoirs but connects into the water system independently. The presence of year round residences located on the lake and some boating activities are issues for lake water quality. The proximity of septic systems, functional and failing, poses a threat to water quality. The City is working with the Army Corps of Engineers to craft long term solutions to lake quality and reservoir integrity. Approximately \$5M has been pledged and \$200,000 has been allocated.

The City has also identified a set of improvements needed for its early 20th century reservoirs. Both need to be dredged. Access bridges are old and cannot support heavy equipment needed for dredging and some maintenance activities. The 270 acres surrounding the reservoirs were reforested after being clear cut in the early part of the 20th century. The hardwood mixed forest is not the optimal mix to surround a reservoir.



The City is working with students from the Headwaters Youth Conservation Corps and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation to prepare a detailed Forest Management Plan.

The City's wastewater treatment plant was constructed in 1989, though parts of the distribution system dates from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The City replaces about 2,000 feet of sewer mains each year. The City has separate storm water and wastewater systems. Design flows for the wastewater plant are 2.2 million gallons per day during dry weather and 2.5 million gallons per day in wet weather. The plant has a primary treatment capacity of 12 million gallons per day and a secondary capacity of 6.6 million gallons per day.

As of January 1, 2002, water rates for the City are a flat rate of \$33.73 for the first 1,000 cubic feet plus \$2.75 per hundred cubic feet for 1,001 to 13,000 cubic feet and \$2.80 per hundred cubic feet for use above 13,000 cubic feet. The City's sewer rate is \$2.45 per hundred cubic feet, with usage estimates based on total water consumption.

The water and wastewater systems serve all but a few homes and businesses in the City of Norwich and portions of the Town of Norwich along Routes 12 and 23. The Town of North Norwich is currently working to assemble grant funding needed to tap into the City's water and sewer system. The City requires that water extensions be accompanied by sewer extensions. The Town of Norwich would like to expand its participation in the system and the City is willing to extend its service to cover those portions that can practically and economically be reached. The City operates and maintains the system and conducts the meter reading.

The two key issues for water and sewer service extension are billing capabilities for Town customers and hook up requirements along system extensions. Billing is currently handled by the Town, but the City and Town are considering transferring billing responsibilities to the City due to the Town's limited capacity to address such administrative functions. The extension policy stipulates that all property owners along an extension alignment must hook into the system so that sewer and water collections will be adequate to cover all operating cost of the system. While this has happened along the northern extension, it has not south of the City.

Streets

The City of Norwich includes about 40 miles of roads including State Routes 12 and 23. Route 12 runs north-south through Norwich as Broad Street. Route 23 begins running east/west as Rexford Street, becomes Pleasant Street after crossing Broad Street and then turns north to become Plymouth Street. All streets and roads in the City are public roads and are improved with subsurface drainage. Street condition is generally good, with six miles of streets repaved during the last five years as a part of the water system upgrade. The City prohibits "trenching" for utility work, requiring that disturbed road pavement sections be repaved curb to curb as a tool to improve and maintain the condition of the City's streets.



Route 12 is the City’s most traveled roadway. In 2001, the New York State Department of Transportation reported that Route 12, between the Cityline South and County Route 10A, had an Annual Average of Daily Traffic (AADT) count of 15,394 vehicles. The table below shows the most recent AADT counts for state routes and local highways in the City of Norwich.

TABLE 21: PRIMARY VEHICLE FACILITIES IN THE CITY OF NORWICH

<i>Route</i>	<i>Section Length</i>	<i>Start Description</i>	<i>End Description</i>	<i>AADT (Year)</i>
12	0.81	Cityline South	CR 10A	15,394 (2001)
12	0.39	CR 10A	Route 23	13,767 (1996)
12	0.54	Route 23	Cityline North	11,690 (2000)
23	0.96	Cityline West	Route 12	3,935 (2000)
23	0.54	Route 12	Cityline East	4,656 (1999)
Pleasant Street	0.46	Plymouth Street	North Broad Street	2,277 (1999)
Plymouth Street	0.52	Pleasant Street	Cityline	2,277 (1999)
Rexford Street	0.54	North Broad Street	Cityline	4,656 (1999)

Source: New York State Department of Transportation 2001 Traffic Volume Report.

Traffic congestion has not been identified as a problem by the Public Works Department or participants in a community visioning workshop held in June 2002. In fact, a number of residents cited the lack of traffic congestion and ease of travel within the City as key benefits of living the City of Norwich. However, there is concern about traffic at the Broad Street and Main Street intersection.

The most significant transportation project underway for the City is the Downtown Streetscape Improvements. This project will implement improvements on North and South Broad Street from Front to Mitchell Streets and East and West Main from the far ends of the East and West Parks. The project is managed by the Norwich Business Improvement District (BID) and overseen by a Streetscape Subcommittee made up of representatives from the BID Board, the City of Norwich, downtown merchants and other key stakeholders. The project will enhance the look and feel of the historic downtown with:

- New period light fixtures and enhancements to existing fixtures that will improve appearance and the quality of lighting along sidewalks
- New sidewalks with bluestone edging
- Underground utilities to minimize visual clutter
- New street trees
- Medians to narrow traffic lanes and slow traffic speeds



- Distinctive gateways at each end of the district that will be designed by local artists and selected through a community process
- Decorative crosswalks

The total project construction cost is budgeted for \$1.2M+. The BID contracted with a transportation engineer for the work in early 2002. The engineer has developed conceptual project and design drawings, which the City Council used to approve the project concept in July 2002. The next steps are to obtain project approval from NYSDOT because Broad Street is a state highway and to conduct public forums on the project. The BID intends to initiate project construction in the spring of 2003.

The BID is working on a number of fronts to maximize the impact and funding opportunities for the project. It is working with the YMCA and other property owners in the project area to coordinate improvements to ensure that they are consistent with the streetscape project. The City has submitted a \$272,050 grant application to New York State's Economic Opportunity Fund to fund project enhancements that would address technical issues such as sidewalk construction over a number of underground vaults and expand the project dimensions.

The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) is conducting a Route 12 corridor study between Binghamton and Utica with the goal of improving safety, commuter access and movement of goods along the highway. The project encompasses four counties (Broome, Chenango, Madison and Oneida) and two NYSDOT regions. The Chenango County Chamber of Commerce has spearheaded an effort to coordinate the various private and public interests along Route 12 to ensure effective community and stakeholder participation in the project. The resulting Route 12 Steering Committee is made up of representatives of all four counties. The primary goals of the City and its major employers and industries are to improve road safety and access to the City, while ensuring a high-quality pedestrian environment in the City's downtown.

Parking

Downtown Norwich is served by five City-owned and operated parking lots, including the lots on Hayes and East Main Streets and the lots located behind Howard Johnson's and at the new City Court. The American Avenue parking lot is a joint public/private owned lot which is open to the public. In all, the City operates about 500 parking spaces in the business district. Parking is well utilized, particularly during the school year when the SUNY Morrisville Norwich Campus is most active. The peak parking demand is 7:30a.m. to noon and 1:00p.m. to 3:30p.m. during the school year.

Both on and off-street parking is free. On-street parking in the central business district is generally limited to two-hours. Off-street parking is generally limited to three hours, with the exception of the American Avenue lot behind the police station, which provides all-day parking. In general, the parking supply is adequate, though business owners and customers have expressed concerns about the proximity of the parking supply to building entrances. Customers want to park immediately adjacent to building entrances, and this is often impossible in a downtown environment. The other significant concern is the need for strategically located all-day parking to serve downtown employees, so they are not



competing with customers for prime parking spaces. The City owns an unimproved site at Front Street and Virginia Lane that it plans to use for additional parking to support downtown businesses. An underground storage tank on the site has delayed construction of a new parking lot.

Transit and Intercity Bus Service

Chenango County Public Transit (CCPT) operates fixed route and dial-a-ride service for the entire County. All seven routes provide service to the City of Norwich. The system operates Monday through Friday from 6:00a.m. to 6:00p.m. Fixed route fares are \$1.00. Children under 6 years of age ride free when accompanied by an adult. Seniors and disabled persons are eligible for a 50% discount on fixed route service. CCPT operates a route deviation service by advance reservation. This service allows passengers with an origin or destination within ¾ mile of a fixed route to be pick up and dropped off at their destination. Fares are \$2.00 and are discounts are not available. The table below lists the fixed route services offered by Chenango County Public Transit:

TABLE 22: CHENANGO COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSIT ROUTES	
Route 1	Norwich/Bainbridge/Norwich
Route 2	Norwich/McDonough/Norwich
Route 3	Norwich/South Otselic/Norwich
Route 4	Norwich/New Berlin/Norwich
Route 5	Norwich/Earlville/Norwich via River Road
Route 6	Norwich/Greene/Norwich via Route 12
Route 7	City of Norwich north and south loops

Dial-a-ride service is offered throughout the County where fixed route service is not available. Advance reservations are required to use the service that provides transportation from users’ trip origin to their destination or to a connection with fixed-route transit service. The dial-a-ride service area is split between two zones. Travel within one of the zones costs \$3.00. Travel between the zones costs \$6.00.

Shortline has regularly scheduled service stops in Norwich and Chenango County, and private taxi service and limousine service is available.



Rail Access

The New York Susquehanna and Western provides “shortline” rail service through the City of Norwich. This branch of the New York Susquehanna and Western service runs only from Utica to Binghamton, where freight connections are made either through CSX in Utica or Norfolk Southern or CP Rail in Binghamton. This arrangement offers competitive rail freight costs to businesses located along this line. Shippers can negotiate between the three operators in either Utica or Binghamton for the best rate from central New York to their ultimate destination. Non mall shippers have no such options.

The rail infrastructure needs about \$10 million in improvements to bring it to optimal service levels. Current freight usage has not been adequate to finance the needed improvements. New York State recently awarded the New York Susquehanna and Western \$2 million to begin upgrading the line. The railroad has agreed to operate the line for at least 10 years as a condition of funding. Expanded marketing of the cost benefits of rail shipment along this line could be an effective business attraction tool.

Bicycle and Pedestrian System

Most streets in the City of Norwich have sidewalks on at least one side of the street, though many are in poor condition and need replacement and some areas on the periphery of the City do not have sidewalks. The City does not have a comprehensive sidewalk replacement program, though it can require property owners to replace sidewalks as a part of street reconstruction efforts. Sidewalk materials are not regulated, so property owners can use asphalt or other inexpensive products to save money. The City also reconstructs sidewalks as a part of outside-funded rehabilitation projects.

Airport

The nearest airport is Chenango County Lt. Warren Eaton Municipal Airport, located in the Town of North Norwich. The City recognizes that the airport and associated Chenango County/Lt. Warrant Eaton Airport Industrial Park are important assets. Industrial park development creates jobs for existing City residents and potential to attract new residents to the City given the industrial parks close proximity. The City is preparing to extend water and sewer service to the airport to support expanded development. This extension will also provide the backbone for future service expansions in the northern portion of the Town.

Lt Warren Eaton Airport serves Norwich and Chenango County. General aviation services for the airport are provided by a contract with Flight Services Group. The airport includes one runway that is 4,739 feet long and 75 feet wide at an elevation of 1,025 feet. The airport services corporate and private jets with an all-weather service capability offering charter service, full-service maintenance and jet and aviation fuel.



Nearby passenger airports include Binghamton Regional Airport 40 miles from Norwich and Syracuse-Hancock International Airport located 60 miles from the City.

Utilities

Gas and electric service is provided by NYSEG. The Town of Sherburne north of the City, has its own local power system, which charges lower rates than NYSEG. This could create a competitive disadvantage for the City of Norwich in seeking industries with high natural gas or electricity demands. Frontier Communications provides local phone service and high-speed DSL internet access. Cellular service is available through Cellular One and Verizon.

Aldelphia provides cable service to the City, and its franchise agreement is set to expire in 2004. The City is now in negotiations with Aldelphia to structure an agreement that will meet the needs of businesses, residents and local government agencies. Both the City and the school district offer community access channels through the cable service.

Chenango County owns and maintains a new, state-of-the-art landfill in Pharsalia, in the northwest quadrant of the County. The County also owns and operates two transfer stations, one in Brisben in the southwest section of the County, and another in North Norwich. The County operates a recycling program for plastics and newspaper as a part of its waste management program.



Community Services

Issues, Opportunities and Challenges

- The SUNY Morrisville Norwich Campus provides good access to higher educational opportunities for City residents. A new downtown campus expected to begin construction in 2003 will provide a state-of-the-art educational facility.
- Chenango County Memorial Hospital provides full-service healthcare, a rare amenity for a small rural community.
- The Guernsey Memorial Library is a strong community asset, but needs additional space to maintain and enhance its service offerings
- Since 1997, the City has made considerable investments in its public facilities including City Hall offices, in a historic railroad passenger depot; City Court and Council Chamber, in a historic railroad freight house; and Police Station in the historic home to the Norwich City Club. These investments have reinforced the City's identity and its commitment to its downtown and historic resources.
- The City is in the midst of restoring its historic downtown Fire Station. The City recently secured \$1 million through Empire State Development's Community Facilities Program.

Government

The City of Norwich was incorporated in 1914, prior to this, it was the Village of Norwich, which had incorporated in 1816. The City has a weak mayor/ strong council form of government.

The City elects the following positions as prescribed by its charter: a mayor, City judge, acting City judge, one alderman for each of its six wards and two supervisors, one of whom represents wards one through three; the other represents wards four through six. City elections are held during the general election in odd-numbered years. The mayor, supervisors and City judges serve two-year terms. Aldermen serve four year terms.

Department heads and members of boards and commissions serve as officers of the City and are appointed by the Common Council, except that the mayor appoints the water and parks commissions with approval of the Common Council. The City employs about 100 people year-round and fills an additional 40 to 50 temporary positions each the summer. Approximately 75% of jobs offer full-time employment and the remaining 25% are part-time positions.

City Departments include City Clerk's Office, Youth Bureau, Code Enforcement, Community Development, Public Works, Police, Fire, and Emergency Management. A brief summary of the responsibilities of each Department includes the following:



- The City Clerk’s Office handles most of the day-to-day questions posed by residents, including vital statistics (i.e. marriage licenses). This Office also collects taxes and is responsible for the City’s financial matters.
- The City’s Youth Bureau organizes and directs activities for area youth.
- The Code Enforcement Office approves building plans, issues permits for buildings, and makes sure all buildings and signs in the City meet state and local guidelines.
- The Office of Community Development is responsible for planning, zoning, community and economic development, recording local laws before they are adopted or amended, and arrange for sites, poll workers and machines at election time.
- The Department of Public Works maintains the municipal water system, streets, and parks. Engineering services are also handled through this Department with the assistance of the City Engineer.
- The Police Department is a full-service department that is dedicated to the protection and safety of all Norwich residents and visitors. The Department has a dog control officer on staff that is responsible for dog licensing and animal control. Additionally, the department has bicycle and foot patrols, an Honor Guard which handles ceremonial duties, and an Emergency Response Team (E.R.T.), that can handle a variety of tasks that are above and beyond normal police duties.
- The Fire Department responds to emergencies of all kinds and includes both professional and volunteer firefighters. The Norwich Fire Fighters Association (IAFF Local1404) and the Norwich Fire Department also educate local residents on fire and personal safety. The department also maintains and provides an ALS (Advanced Life Support) Ambulance, staffed by professionals for medical emergencies and ambulance service to area residents.
- The Office of Emergency Management provides a coordinating point for the effective management of local emergencies and catastrophic events in the City of Norwich. It is the lead organization in coordinating disaster response from a municipal level to state and federal levels. The department also provides public education and training, including training exercises with City departments and outside agencies. They advise the public through the media, the Emergency Alert System (EAS), and the City Municipal Television Channel about the severity of the emergency and the response and recovery under way. In addition they are available to make presentations to civic and business groups on emergency preparedness.

The City of Norwich Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) is a seven-member board, all of whom are appointed by the Mayor. At this point in time there are also three (3) alternate members of the ZBA, also appointed by the Mayor. The ZBA retains the appellate jurisdiction given by State statute to hear appeals for area and use variances, and interpretations. Additionally, since the City first adopted Zoning in January 1963, the



Common Council of the City of Norwich gave the ZBA original jurisdiction to review Special Permit applications by stating so in the Zoning Ordinance. Additionally, the ZBA has been authorized by the Sign Ordinance to review variances for sign permit applications. It should be noted that General City Law §81-a(4) provides that the jurisdiction of the ZBA is appellate only unless otherwise provided by local law or ordinance. This means that the legislative body may, as part of a zoning ordinance or local law, authorize the planning commission or other administrative body (i.e. ZBA) that it shall designate to grant special permits or even site plan approval as set forth in such zoning ordinance or local law.

The City of Norwich has formed its Planning Commission pursuant to General Municipal Law (GML) Article 12-a, §234. The Planning Commission is a seven-member board, all of whom are appointed by the mayor. The Mayor appoints the Chair for a two (2) year term, and the other six (6) members are appointed by the mayor for three (3) year terms. Appointments are made so that 2 member's terms expire each year. The City has provided for the appointment of three (3) alternate members as well. The Planning Commission has the authority to review Subdivision applications when a parcel is being divided into three (3) or more lots (Chapter 84 of City Codes, Subdivision of Land). Even though the ZBA has the authority to review Special Permit applications the Planning Commission has been authorized by the Zoning Ordinance to review Special Permits for Average Density Development proposals (Article IV, Section 4). Additionally, the Planning Commission is authorized to review Site Plans for Planned Use Development (PUD) applications. Unfortunately, site plan review is not being used to compliment other review processes in land use management decisions. The Common Council ultimately takes final action on the PUD application and Zoning District change. The Planning Commission must also review all proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance.

Since state law now provides for alternates to be appointed in the event of a conflict of interest, the City of Norwich adopted Local Law # 1 of 1998. This Local Law actually supercedes State Law by allowing alternates to serve not only in case of conflict of interest situations, but also in non-conflict of interest situations.

A brief description of City Government Services can be found on the City's website located at <http://www.norwichnewyork.net/index.html>. However, the site should be regularly updated and more additional information on Municipal Departments could be included. An improved website could enhance potential economic development opportunities for the City, as most businesses look for general information on various quality of life aspects of a municipality that they are considering for relocation. Further, the website can provide residents and visitors with valuable information on the City of Norwich.



Educational Services

Public Schools

The City of Norwich is served by the Norwich City School District. The Norwich City School District was organized in 1954 with the consolidation of 21 surrounding common school districts. It is one of seven City-central school districts in New York State. The District encompasses approximately 110 square miles and extends into ten townships in Chenango County. The district includes two elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. The district office, located on South Broad Street, houses the Board of Education and district-wide administration offices. Additionally, the School District employs over 500 people and is one of the City's major employers.

The Norwich City School District had a total kindergarten through 12th grade enrollment of 2,230 for 2000-2001 according to the New York State School District Report Card. The District employs 196 teachers, 23 other professionals and 100 paraprofessionals. In 2000-01, 38.8% of the student body was eligible for free lunches, a number that has fluctuated between 30% and 40% over the last few years. The district's drop-out rate was 3.3%, slightly lower than the New York State average rate of 3.8%. The district's 1999-00 expenditure per pupil was \$9,179, considerably lower than the state average of \$11,040

The high school, with approximately 700 students, was built in 1963 and has had additions in 1976, 1980, 1986, 1988 and 1999. It is located on a seventy-two acre site in the south east corner of the City. The high school offers a comprehensive program of course offerings with major sequences available in: Art, Business, Foreign Language, Human Environmental Studies, Mathematics, Occupational Education, Science, Social Studies, and Technology. College level courses are provided in freshman English, Calculus, Economics, Government, Second Language, Physics and Biology. Diplomas are designated with a New York State Regents seal upon successful completion of the Regents examinations in English, Social Studies, and at least one other three-year sequence. Approximately 60% of students go on to two- or four-year colleges.

Approximately 400 seventh and eight grade students attend Norwich Middle School, located adjacent to the high school on Midland Drive. It opened in 1980 with additions made in 1988 and 2002. The middle school offers continuing education in basic skills begun in elementary school and expands course offerings in a number of specialized areas. Students are divided into four teams, with students in each team taught by the same group of "core" teachers for Math, Science, Social Studies and English. These "team teachers" work with counselors, nurses, librarians and teachers of art, home and career skills, music, physical education, health, language, technology, and special programs to address the needs of individual students.

The City's approximately 1,100 elementary students are served by two schools, Perry Browne Intermediate School and Stanford J. Gibson Primary School. The Primary School serves children in grades K-3 and Perry Browne Intermediate School serves grades 3-6.



Over the last three years, the Norwich City School District has completed renovations and/or expansions at its' four schools. Stanford J. Gibson Primary School and Perry Browne Intermediate School each have added space to accommodate more classrooms. The Norwich Middle School added six classrooms and the computer lab, library media center, gymnasium and administrative and guidance offices were renovated. The Norwich High School added a new science and music wing. Further, the auditorium was refurbished and the hallways were retiled. Each school has state of the art technology, as well. The School District also built a new bus garage. Currently, the School District is working on a five year plan to relocate its administrative facilities.

Private Schools

The City is also served by two private schools, Holy Family Catholic School and Valley Heights Christian Academy. Holy Family Catholic School currently serves students from Pre-Kindergarten to eighth grade. The school is expanding and will be offering eighth grade next year. After-school programming is also available at the school. Approximately 162 students from Chenango County attend Holy Family. The majority of students are City residents. Valley Heights Christian Academy serves students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through twelfth grade. There are currently 115 students enrolled at the school, about one-half are from the City of Norwich.

Delaware-Chenango Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES)

BOCES is a regional educational agency providing services in partnership with 16 local school districts including the Norwich City School District. BOCES offers a variety of programs to students, teachers, administrators and the community.

BOCES provides occupational and education training for high school students and adults. The Occupational Education component is targeted to both high school and adult students. There are 19 programs offered, of which 16 are the traditional programs which include such courses as culinary arts, building trades, auto body, and auto mechanics. There are three New Vision programs (Law and Government, Allied Health and Agricultural and Environmental Sciences) where students learn about these occupations in classrooms located at the work place. The New Vision Program is only available to high school seniors. BOCES is in the process of having their programs certified by the State of New York. Approximately 30% of high school juniors and seniors enroll in the occupational education program. Further, about 40% of these students go on to college.

BOCES also provides special educational programs for students who require specialized services. Programs are offered that meet the individualized needs of students.

BOCES provides support to local teachers and school administrators through professional development courses and training opportunities. BOCES has a vast video library that is available to educators. Further, they also provide technology services, and online professional development.



Non-instructional services are available for schools as well. Services include printing, health and safety training, drug testing, defibrillator training, cooperative purchasing of all school supplies, equipment, and other related services.

The Adult Education component includes career training and retraining for individuals, as well as specialized training for both existing businesses and industry and new industry. They work with the Workforce Investment Board and other governmental agencies to find funding for business and individual training programs.

BOCES provides business and industry training, such as customer service issues, blue print reading, welding, LPN training, nurses assistant training, secretarial/office management and networking. BOCES also provides connections with SUNY Morrisville and SUNY Delhi.

Some of the issues BOCES is looking at include the recruitment of teachers and substitute teachers to the area particularly as teachers retire. They are also working at ways to help parents work with their children. Further, they are looking at ways to reach the high school drop-outs to get them back in school. Job training and re-training for youth is another issue being looked at by BOCES.

SUNY Morrisville

SUNY Morrisville College is a residential college of agriculture and technology offering two- and four-year degrees in more than 75 academic programs and options. SUNY Morrisville has a downtown Norwich Campus offering nine associate degree programs including associate in science, associate in applied science and associate in art for programs in Accounting (AAS and AS); Business Administration (AAS and AS); Individual Studies (AA, AS and AAS); Computer Information Systems (AAS); Computer Systems Technology (AAS); Nursing (AAS); Office Technology (AAS); Liberal Arts - Humanities (AA) and Social Science (AA); and Technical Writing (AAS). The Norwich Campus is working to offer three new associate degree programs: Criminal Justice, Human Services and Early Childhood Education. The Dean would also like to offer more technology programming in the future.

The Norwich Campus currently rents space on South Broad Street, but expects to move to a new \$8 million building at The Eaton Center. The College is expected to announce in November the start of construction of the new campus. The two-story college building will be located on the Conkey Avenue side to the east of The Eaton Center's main building. A lighted walkway will connect the college to The Eaton Center, physically representing the Norwich Campus commitment to integrate hands-on business experience with its curriculum. The building is designed to accommodate 1,000 non-residential students with potential for an addition should future enrollment grow. The College has begun construction of its new facility.

The facility will include classrooms, including two distance-learning classrooms, an electronic library, faculty and staff offices, science and nursing labs, a bookstore, snack shop and student seating areas. The new Norwich Campus building will incorporate state-of-the-art



technology in academic programming. Like the main campus in Morrisville, the Norwich Campus will be "wired" so that students will use technology in every aspect of the learning experience.

Library

The Guernsey Memorial Library is a part of the Four Counties Library System serving Broome, Chenango, Delaware and Otsego Counties. The library is not chartered by the State of New York, but is instead a part of the school system, serving the City School District of Norwich and the surrounding area. The library building, completed in 1969, was built on the original homestead of the Guernsey family in downtown Norwich, a bequest from Mrs. William B. Guernsey in 1902 to the Norwich City Schools for a community library.

The library is open seven days a week during the school year, including evening hours Monday through Thursday and is closed on Sundays in the summer and all holidays. Twenty-four staff members (16 FTE) provide a full range of services for the community including internet access, public meeting space, literacy programs, local history and genealogy research facilities and assistance, reference desk, children's reading and arts programs and an adult summer reading program with bi-monthly meetings. Events at the library include poetry readings and an annual holiday open house.

The library's collection includes about 68,000 books and 3,900 audio visual materials, and annual circulation is about 160,500 items. In 2001, about 18,396 loans were transacted, including 4,818 from people living outside of the library service area, demonstration that the library is a resource for the greater Norwich region, not just for residents of the City School District. Also in 2001, 5,651 people attended library programs. An active "Friends of the Library" group provides volunteer and financial assistance.

As with many community facilities, the library is facing severe space constraints. The library has launched a five-year expansion program that will require additional space for successful implementation. The priority facility needs identified by the library director are:

- Replacement of the HVAC system: The current heating and cooling system has reached the end of its mechanical life.
- Expansion of the children's library: This program has outgrown its space and the reading program can no longer be held in the children's library.
- Office space expansion: Office space available is about one-third the size recommended by state guidelines.
- Local history room expansion: This program attracts people from around the state and is outgrowing its facilities.



Chenango County Council of the Arts

The Chenango County Council of the Arts (CCCA) provides a wide variety of quality educational arts services and cultural programming for residents of and visitors to Chenango County. Programs include: a subscription performance series, a theatre for young audience series, gallery exhibitions, art classes, artists' workshops, the Allegro Run for the Arts 5 mile run, and other special events held throughout the year. The Chenango County Council of the Arts has been in existence since 1975

CCCA also administers grants, offers technical assistance and referrals to artists and not-for-profit organizations, promotes arts events and publishes a quarterly newsletter. As a decentralization site, the Council serves as a pass-through for state funding. Since 1985, the Council has re-granted approximately \$500,000 back into the community. In 2002-03, over \$37,000 will be distributed to various arts organizations, libraries, municipalities, and schools for arts programs.

Its mission is "to support and encourage participation in and appreciation of the arts and humanities in Chenango County." The Arts Council is located at 27 West Main Street at the site of the former Norwich High School. Within the facility, CCCA has a theatre, gallery, classroom/studio space and conference room, all of which are available for rent. The Council shares the building with other tenants including Head Start, United Way, Chenango Housing Improvement Program and the County Review.

Recognizing the emergence of cultural tourism as a significant factor in revitalizing downtowns, the Council has approached City staff to discuss various strategies (i.e. tax breaks, low interest loans) to encourage artists to move to Norwich. The Council has recently completed a long range strategic plan and has identified a number of initiatives to pursue. Proposed projects include: locating a Satellite Gallery or Gallery Shop in the downtown or Museum District; expanding the Arts in Education program and the Performance Series; creating a more visible entrance into the building; addressing parking needs; and working with smaller arts groups to ensure their continued existence in the community.

Theaters

There are two theaters located in the City of Norwich. The Colonia Theater is located at 35 South Broad Street. It was constructed around 1914 and has been showing movies since then. The facility has been used on occasion as a community gathering place. Currently they show new releases. They also have two screens, so they are able to show more than one movie at a time. The other theater is located in the old Norwich High School. It is now called "Chenango Community Cultural Center Theater". It was originally constructed as an auditorium for the school, and a renovation started in 1994. The first re-opening performance was in May 1996. It is located in the same building as the Chenango County Council for the Arts.



Health Services

The City of Norwich is home to Chenango Memorial Hospital, a 139-bed facility with 550 employees, making it the largest employer in the City and the fifth largest in the County. The Hospital is a member of the United Health Services Health Care System. According to the President and CEO of the Hospital, approximately 14% of medical professionals live outside Norwich and Chenango County. Chenango Memorial was founded in 1910 and modernized in 1992 with a \$7.5 million renovation plan. The hospital primarily serves the Greater Norwich Area, while the secondary area includes the remainder of Chenango County. The hospital includes a medical/surgical unit, residential care unit, women's health center, newborn family center, pediatric unit, intensive care, emergency department/walk-in care center and residential long-term care facility. Additionally, there are specialty clinics in pulmonary, cardiology and GI services at the Hospital. The Hospital also serves as the entry point for tertiary services at Wilson Medical Center in Binghamton.

Chenango Memorial's primary care network offers family health centers in Sherburne, Oxford and Norwich, offering patients in rural areas access to quality primary care in their own neighborhoods. The primary care network also includes an internal medicine group, a women's health center and a walk-in center. The hospital also sponsors a large, newly renovated dental center in Norwich, an orthopedic medical center, and a new freestanding physical therapy center, which includes a pool for aquatherapy. Other services include respiratory therapy, an extensive clinical laboratory, a medical imaging department, oncology clinic, and cardiopulmonary area.

Chenango Memorial Hospital houses a Residential Health Care Facility (RHCF), an 80 bed facility that occupies the second floor of the hospital. Services offered include 24-hour skilled nursing care; physical, occupational, and speech therapy; a restorative nursing program; hospice services; social work services; and an activities program seven days a week.

Chenango Memorial Hospital has developed a new program designed to help employees and community members become registered nurses (RNs). The Hospital provides financial aid in return recipients agree to work at Chenango Memorial for at least two years after graduating. Six students received aid this year. Potential participants should look for information about next year's program in the spring of 2003.

The Hospital recently received a legislative add-on grant to support funding of the Unadilla School-Based Health Center to open this fall. Also, the Hospital received funding to support a newborn hearing screening program and, if necessary, receive treatment for hearing ailments.

Chenango Memorial is currently recruiting additional specialists, including the recent addition of an orthopedic surgeon.

Bassett Healthcare Norwich provides primary and preventive health care services, as well as specialty services. Specialty Care is offered on a biweekly or monthly basis and includes endocrinology, mental health services, oncology, orthopedic surgery, and pulmonary medicine. The Norwich Health Center is one of 20 located in upstate New York maintained by Bassett Healthcare. Bassett is open during the week (MWF 8-5 and TR 8-8). Medical staff members at Bassett Health Center are also members of the staff at Chenango Memorial Hospital.



Senior Services

The Chenango County Area Agency on Aging provides a wide variety of services to the elderly throughout the county, including the City of Norwich. Services are available to all senior citizens regardless of ability to pay. There is no charge for services (with the exception of EISEP and housekeeping services), although contributions are accepted. Services available include the following:

- Outreach workers provide case management, information, assistance, and referrals on health, housing, financing, and other matters. Outreach workers are available at the agency and senior centers on assigned days.
- Housekeeper/Chore Workers provide an in-home service that includes case management, light housekeeping, laundry, grocery shopping and simple food preparation to those 60 years of age and older experiencing difficulty maintaining their household due to physical limitations. The cost is shared with the participant based on the participant's income.
- The Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP) provides case management, in home personal care, respire, and ancillary services for individuals who are not eligible for Medicaid. The cost of the program is shared with the participant based on the participant's income.
- Lifeline is an emergency telephone response system which connects the clients, via their telephone, directly to a 24-hour switchboard in the county to provide immediate assistance in an emergency. This service is available to those eligible persons 60 years of age and older. Ten units are available for persons under 60 for a monthly rental fee.
- The nutrition program provides Home Delivered and Congregate Meals for any person over the age of 60 and their spouse regardless of age. Nutrition education and diet counseling are provided by a registered dietitian. There is a suggested contribution.
- For individuals 55 years or age and over, assistance is available in obtaining employment through Title V and Green Thumb.
- The Home Energy Assistance Program provides assistance to those income eligible persons 60 years of age or older with their heating bills and maintenance of their heating systems. Referrals for weatherization are made to appropriate agencies.
- Through the Weatherization Referral and Assistance Program (WRAP), the agency provides the services of an Energy Packager to seniors throughout the county. The Packager assesses the housing needs of clients in relation to energy use, weatherization, and home repair. Further, the Packager acts as liaison between the applicant, agencies and contractors that can provide service.



- Legal service is available to Chenango County residents who are 60 years of age and over. Priority is given to individuals experiencing problems with Social Security, SSI, Medicare, Medicaid, financial management, or adult protective services. There is a suggested contribution.
- The Long Term Care Ombudsman provides assistance to the residents of long term care facilities, and their families and the facilities in resolving problems related to care in residential care facilities.
- Health Recreation Services include blood pressure screenings, flu shot clinics, Alzheimer's Support Group (co-sponsored by Southern Tier Alzheimer's Association), senior games, senior citizens clubs, Community Symposium, Senior Citizen Day Event and Volunteers Recognition Event.
- The Norwich Senior Center provides a variety of activities, special programs and a nutritious meal. The Center is open Monday through Friday 9:00-2:00.
- The Adult Day Center serves people with a physical or mental disability who needs supervision, and offers relief to the caregiver.

Other services offered through the Area Agency on Aging include tax assistance, real property tax credit, real property tax exemption, discount cards, insurance counseling (HIICAP), Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC) and School Tax Relief (STAR).

The two major needs for the senior population is for transportation services and assisted living. Many seniors do not drive and cannot afford to use taxis, but often need to get to medical appointments. Further, a number of seniors would like to remain in their homes, but could use some help with services that generally would be available in an assisted living facility.

Senior Focus Group

The City of Norwich held a focus group meeting with seven local seniors. Seniors were asked questions on facilities and services they regularly use, needed services, housing, and issues facing the City. Seniors identified a number of services and facilities that they use regularly including: bus and weekend transportation, library, YMCA, Weiler Park, Area Agency on Aging, Opportunities for Chenango, Catholic Charities, SUNY Morrisville, BOCES, food pantries, visiting nurses, and the post office. Additionally, seniors spend a great deal of time volunteering through the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).

Seniors identified a number of services that are needed for their population. Transportation services and infrastructure are a major concern. Sidewalks throughout the city are poorly maintained and need to be fixed. Further the handicap ramps at the corners are often not flush with



the road. Traffic is a problem as well and it is difficult to cross in the crosswalks. Downtown should be more pedestrian friendly. Additionally, many seniors no longer drive and require door-to-door transportation services.

Other services needed for seniors include downtown public restrooms, quality downtown shops, more seating downtown, more convenient medical services, and more publicity on existing services and activities. A Senior Center should be created, where seniors can participate in activities such as pool, music and art.

In terms of housing, the seniors liked the idea of the proposed housing on Brown Avenue. They also feel that there is a need for handicapped accessible units for seniors, which would incorporate such modifications as wider doorways and passageways. Further, there is a need for more adult assisted homes and adult group homes, or someplace where the residents can share responsibilities of living. Seniors are not interested in the senior housing currently available in the City of Norwich because they feel that there would be a lack of privacy and that they would be giving up their autonomy. Other reasons included inaccessible parking for visitors, space for overnight visitors and noise.

Employment for seniors to provide them with another source of income and the need for increased senior services to accommodate the rising senior population were identified as some of the biggest issues facing the City. Business, retention of youth, traffic, and street maintenance were other issues acknowledged by seniors.

Recommendations on one thing seniors would like to change about Norwich included having more activities in the summer, better senior transportation, volunteer taxi service, and more services like a shopping service that the Agency on Aging provides.

Child Care

The Chenango County Child Care Coordinating Council is a resource and referral agency that assists parents locating quality child care as well as helping persons start up a child care facility. The Council also offers a United Way scholarship for income-eligible families, a child car seat program, and teaches parents how to properly install their car seat. Further, the Council provides technical assistance support to registered child care providers in the County. Currently there are 1,300 registered child care slots in Chenango County through 9 daycare centers, including head start programs, 38 family day care providers, 15 group family day care and 5 school age child care programs. According to the Council, the existing supply does not meet the current demand. The greatest need at this time is for under 2 care. The Council is working on ways to increase day care in the outlying underserved areas where there are not many options for child care.



Youth Services

The Place (or the Christian Neighborhood Center of Norwich) is a private, non-profit, faith based youth development organization. Its mission is to help youth develop and grow in productive ways. The agency works with all young people (between 5-25 years old) and their families. The Place provides after school programs, full day summer program, job-training, recreational programs and national service programs.

Chenango Place Products is their job-training program. The Place employs and trains youth by focusing their efforts on design, production, packaging and sale of Chenango County products. Annually, there is \$25,000-30,000 in sales through the business. The Headwaters Youth Conservation Corp is an Americorps Project working with 6 full time and 17-20 youth in the summer. This group will be constructing the Hosbach Trail in the City of Norwich.

There is a fee for the NYS licensed after-school program, but The Place serves all youth regardless of ability to pay. The Place also serves as the Big Brother/Big Sister agency for Chenango County.

This organization believes young people can offer a great deal to the community. This year youth have completed 21,000 hours of community service thorough the programs at the Place. Annually, they serve about 200 young people through their core programs on a daily or seasonal basis. Overall they serve between 2,000 and 3,000 annually through all programs.

Youth Service Provider Focus Group

The City of Norwich also held a Focus Group meeting with four Youth Service Providers from the City Youth Bureau, The Gathering Place, The Place, and BOCES. The discussion focused on needs for youth facilities and programming, types of programs and facilities that should be developed, and issues facing the City of Norwich. When asked to characterize the current facilities and services available to the youth in Norwich, they responded that there are many programs for young kids; however there is a lack of programs for young teens. Attendance is spotty in some of the programs that are offered. They also said that there is a lack of programs pertaining to individual interests.

According to the youth service providers a youth center and cover/enclosure for the skating rink are the greatest needs in terms of youth facilities. A youth center building in Norwich would be helpful for catering to the youth needs, particularly young teens. A cover for the Skating Rink would allow the facility to also be used for community events.

In developing youth programs, the group felt that the City should target events toward specific interests rather than age groups. Transportation was also identified as an issue. The group thought that transportation should be available to people in the outlying areas for special events held in the City and that a youth bus pass should be considered giving youth greater mobility in accessing various events.



The youth service providers thought that there should be one place to call for professional opportunities or summer job listings for youth. This entity should also have a registry for employers and youth who are seeking jobs. Also, this service should be explored with the Department of Labor.

According to the youth service providers, the biggest issues facing the City in the next decade include: employment, community safety, poverty status of residents and recruiting and maintaining enough teachers so there is not such a high turnover, as has been experienced lately.

The service providers identified a number of ways for the City to assist them in their efforts to serve youth. There needs to be a better form of communication to attract the youth and inform them about programs that are available. Providing funding and having more inclusive programs that attract youth from various backgrounds were also identified.

Young Professionals Focus Group

The City also held a focus group meeting with eight young professionals who live and/or work in the City of Norwich. Participants were asked what brought them to the City. The majority of respondents are lifelong residents of the City. Two people specifically came to Norwich because of a job. Most plan on staying in Norwich, but if an opportunity came up that would enhance their career, most would relocate.

Facilities used regularly by young professionals include downtown activities and festivals; school parks, fields, and facilities; YMCA; State Parks (outside City), Weiler Park, Library, Rogers Center in Sherburne; weekend trips to Syracuse or Binghamton for shopping / entertainment; Council of the Arts events; Kurt Beyer Park / Rotary Park; fairgrounds; and Auburn Street Park. The participants also identified a number of events they liked to attend. Events include: Chenango County Blues Festival, Colorscape, Gus Macker, Pumpkin Festival, and related parades and activities around Holidays and events. One person noted that the City has enough events and that the City should concentrate on enhancing our current events rather than adding other events.

The group identified a number of changes to make Norwich more appealing to young adults. In terms of recreation, young professionals indicated that there needed to be more adult oriented activities for holidays and special events, more evening activities, have bands play in the park after festivals, need a dance club and more restaurants, promote existing venues like the Nite Eagle and Champagne Sundays, and someone should open a coffee house with books & internet as an alternative to alcohol places. Additionally the City should establish an event clearinghouse, to limit conflicts and raise awareness about upcoming events. Other changes suggested include diversifying the economy, and involve younger people in committees, boards, etc. Customer service in stores and restaurants is bad, among both owners and employees. Stores should also be opened later in the evening. Upper floors of building downtown should be use for stores.

Facilities and programs the City of Norwich should consider developing include: extending the hours of operation of downtown businesses beyond 5 PM, actively recruiting college graduates like NBT currently does, Seek out entrepreneurs who originally are from Norwich that may



like to locate back to their roots, music store with expanded selection, indoor golf driving range, batting cages, go carts, adult haunted house, Fireman Hose Fight, more residential uses in second and third floor downtown buildings, an Indoor rock climbing facility, and a Coffeehouse / Bookstore.

According to the young professionals, the three biggest issues that will be facing Norwich in the next decade are limited number of employers that provide a wide range of quality jobs; budget constraints, cost efficiency of government, taxes; and consolidation of government services.

Recommendations on one thing young professionals would like to change about downtown Norwich included: its appearance, the attitude and perception of the City, storefront occupancy, have downtown be a thriving business center, thriving community and an inviting City.

Religious Institutions

The City of Norwich is served by 14 churches representing various faiths. Houses of worship include the following: Christian Missionary Alliance Church, Assembly of God – Norwich, Bible Baptist Church, Calvary Baptist Church, First Baptist Church, St. Bartholomew and St. Paul's Catholic Church, United Church of Christ First Congregational, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Christ Lutheran Church, New Beginnings Church and the Broad Street United Methodist Church.

Police Department

The Norwich Police Force includes 22 full-time officers, state of the art investigative equipment and a modern Police Stationhouse including the City Jail. It is a full-service department that includes a detective division. Specialized training of officers includes; fingerprint computerized comparison, traffic accident reconstruction, SWAT, and crime scene evidence gathering. Most officers are cross-trained in a specialized area of police disciplines to better serve the community. The Police Force enjoys cooperative relationships with the Chenango County Sheriff's Office and the New York State Police.

The headquarters of the Norwich City Police Department is located at 18 East Main Street. The Police Department moved into this historic structure, which at one time was the location of the Norwich City Club, in August 2000 after major bond-funded rehabilitation costing \$1.34 million. The City initially bonded \$3.58 million to rehabilitate the fire station and this building to house the police station. The police station project exceeded its initial \$1 million budget due to extensive hidden fire damage in the building.

The police department shares its space with the Norwich Office of Emergency Management. The Office of Emergency Management provides a coordinating point for the effective management of local emergencies to catastrophic events in the City of Norwich. It is the lead organization in coordinating disaster response from a municipal level to state and federal.



The Department implemented a bicycle patrol in the spring of 1997, with seven officers who have been trained in the skills needed to safely and effectively patrol on bicycles. The bike patrol focuses in areas not normally accessible by patrol car, parks and the downtown. The officers on bicycle also educate other cyclists on various safe riding practices. As a crime fighting tool the bicycle patrol has stopped several crimes in progress, including burglary and larcenies. The bicycle patrol uses three Raleigh "police" model bicycles and normally operates from April until the end of November.

The Norwich City Police Department's Emergency Response Team (E.R.T., a.k.a.: SWAT) was formed in 1998. Six officers currently make up the department's E.R.T. Members have gone through standardized training by either the United States military or by retired and active members of SWAT teams based in Los Angeles, California.

Overall, crime rates have declined in recent years. In Norwich, crime declined between 1997 and 1998. The City saw fewer robberies, thefts, and assaults. Only rapes increased from none in 1997 to three in 1998. The Norwich Police Department saw a total of 275 Part I Offenses in 1998¹². The crime rate per 1,000 was 37, a decrease from 41 in the previous year from a total of 308 Part I Offenses reported or known to police. The City has a low personal crime rate, but a high property crime rate. In all of Chenango County, Part I crimes and crime rates per 100,000 people decreased overall, though violent crimes including rape, murder and aggravated assault increased. Chenango County had one murder in 1998 (a rate of 1.9 per 100,000), compared to none in 1997. The total statewide occurrences of Part I crimes decreased across the board in New York State in 1998.

Year	Murder	Negligent Manslaughter	Rape	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Burglary	Larceny	Motor Vehicle Theft	Total	Crime Rate Per 1,000
1998	0	0	3	0	27	34	205	6	275	37
1997	0	0	0	2	30	38	232	6	308	41
% Change	0%	0%	(n/a)	n/a	(-10%)	(-11%)	(-12%)	0%	(-11%)	(-10%)

Source: 1999 Crime and Justice Annual Report, NYS DCJS

According to the 1998 Crime and Justice Annual Report, Norwich had 28 municipal police personnel, including civilians. Cities of comparable population size to Norwich include Hudson, Little Falls, Johnstown, Port Jervis and Rensselaer. Only the City of Little Falls had a lower number of police personnel (20 total). Of the comparable cities, Port Jervis had the most personnel at 39, including 31 full time officers.

¹² Part I Offenses reported or known to police include murder, negligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft.



Fire Department

The Norwich Fire Department includes both professional and volunteer fire fighters and serves the City of Norwich and Town of Norwich, Town of North Norwich and Town of Guilford. The department includes 17 professional firefighters including 15 full-time and 2 part-time members, several of whom are also certified Emergency Medical Technicians, Advanced Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics. The City's professional firefighters are augmented by four volunteer companies. The department maintains and provides a 24-hour Advanced Life Support Ambulance, staffed by professionals for medical emergencies and ambulance service to area residents.

Year	Total Number of Calls
1999	1596
2000	1861
2001	1921
2002 as of 4/14/02	565

The Norwich Fire Department also offers community services including fire and personal safety education, blood pressure screenings, classroom programs and CPR and first aid training. Further, the Fire Department directs the inspection of buildings and other properties for fire hazards and enforces fire prevention code and directs the functions of the Codes Enforcement Officer.

The City has begun a major renovation and addition to its historic Fire Station. This project is the final portion of a major public facilities upgrade that also included the Police Station project described above. The project will restore the early 20th century fire station and construct an addition to accommodate the City's needs. Due to deteriorated building conditions and demolition work already begun at the fire station, the Fire Department has been operating out of the City-owned Borden Avenue industrial site on the eastern edge of the City. The Fire Station renovations are bond-funded along with the already completed Police Station project, and cost over-runs on the Police Station have delayed the Fire Station Project.

The City has a total of \$2.24 million available for the Fire Station project and has expended about \$260,000 for property acquisition, engineering, demolition and asbestos abatement. This work has included gutting the interior of the station to reveal hidden structural problems. An engineering firm is developing construction estimates for the rehabilitation project, and the City is seeking additional state funding (\$1 million from the Empire State Development Corporation) to cover the Police Station cost overruns so that it will be able to restore the original exterior of the historic Fire Station. The City is also working with New York State Energy Research and Development Authority NYSERDA designers to develop an energy efficient structure and systems. NYSERDA would then subsidize the additional costs of the energy efficient construction, and the City would reap the operating cost benefits from reduced energy use. The City has also received NYSERDA funding to complete an energy audit on the City's water and wastewater systems.



Appendix A Technical Memorandum on Recommended Zoning Changes



TO: WES PETTIE, CITY OF NORWICH
FROM: SEAN M. MAGUIRE, LEILA HOLEHAN
SUBJECT: ZONING APPROACH
DATE: NOVEMBER 22, 2002

Technical Memorandum - Zoning

Overview

River Street Planning has devoted considerable effort to understanding the City of Norwich's current Zoning Ordinance including meetings, discussions, and correspondence with City staff, document review and a site visit. These efforts represent the framework for recommending updates to the City's Zoning Ordinance. This memo is intended to summarize our observations and recommendations.

Our understanding of the reasons why the City desires to make revisions to the ordinance is to create an ordinance that will address the current land use and lot characteristics of the City, encourage new investment in the City by creating a streamlined and user-friendly ordinance that identifies what the City specifically expects of development, and to reflect the recent Comprehensive Plan now underway. It will continue to focus commercial development along key corridors, identifying focal points and creating a high-quality sense of place. It will seek to strengthen existing commercial districts and residential neighborhoods while creating a clear understanding of development requirements and protections needed to maintain and enhance property values.

The following pages outline recommendations to be considered when the City of Norwich updates its Zoning Ordinance in accordance with the new Comprehensive Plan. They include general observations and issues for each land use category.



Special Permits and Variances

Our initial inventory and analysis has identified eleven (11) area variances that have gone before the ZBA since 2000. Four of those cases included “substandard” lots that do not conform to the current Zoning Ordinance’s lot characteristics.

2000

- R-2 Area Variance – (Substandard Lot) Carport Setback
- B-2 Area Variance – NAPA New Building Setback
- B-1 Area Variance – YMCA Parking, Setback, Height, Lot Coverage
- R-1 Area Variance – (Substandard Lot) Addition and Deck
- R-2 Area Variance – Detached Two-Car Garage
- R-1 Area Variance – Detached Garage
- R-1 Area Variance – Wheelchair Ramp Setback
- R-1 Area Variance – (Substandard Lot) Addition

2001

- B-2 Area Variance – Signage
- B-1 Area Variance – Signage

2002

- R-1 Area Variance – (Substandard Lot) Detached Garage

While it should be expected that a City will have some challenges to its zoning requirements, it appears that the current ordinance does not adequately address lot characteristics in some established neighborhoods and locations in the City. In some cases, lots are classified as “substandard” because they are smaller than the minimum lot size established in the zoning ordinance. In other situations, accessory structures, e.g. size and locations of garages, are at issue. A comprehensive approach to updating the zoning ordinance must attempt to address these issues in Norwich.

The ZBA has also heard five (5) special permit cases during this same period. These cases are typical of special permit requests.



2000
B-1 Special Permit – YMCA Increased Parking

2001
R-2 Special Permit – Medical Office

2002
R-2 Special Permit – Medical Office
R-2 Special Permit – Bed and Breakfast
R-3 & Museum Overlay Special Permit – Retail Shop

Special permit requests were limited to issues that were directly related to ongoing planning concerns in the City. This being the case, the City should consider transferring special permit powers to the Planning Board. The composition of Planning Boards is structured to consider the ongoing and long-term planning needs of the community. The Special Permit process is a response to long-term needs. A use allowed with a special permit is not a prohibited use and should be allowed as long as specific design or performance standards are considered and weighed in granting a special permit. The Planning Board's background and expertise makes it best suited for this function. This will leave the ZBA with appellate matters only and the Planning Board with responsibilities linked to planning and review matters.

Definitions and Purpose Statements

The City's definitions should be expanded and modernized with uses and development terms. Each zoning chapter should begin with a clear statement of purpose.

Information/Organizational Tools

Tables and simple schematic diagrams should be used to simplify explanations of key issues. For example, tables showing allowed uses, development types, lot coverages and development standards for each district type should create clear guidance and already exist in the current code to an extent. Schematic diagrams can be used to illustrate concepts such as set backs, buffering and landscaping standards and building orientation requirements.



Historic Preservation

The City's current zoning ordinance does not specifically address the two historic districts other than recognizing that they exist. There are no specific zoning or design considerations identified. The City should consider adding language that specifically addresses these historic districts and identifies unique zoning tools that may be helpful to preserving the historical integrity of the districts while promoting compatible new development where applicable.

Planned (Use) Development Districts

Planned development districts refers to the development of land that is under unified control and is planned and developed as a whole in a single development operation or in a series of development phases. PDD's may include streets, other circulation ways, utilities, buildings, open spaces, and other site features and improvements that may not necessarily be easily accomplished under the current zoning regulations. Current planned development districts that are inherently a single-use and can be accommodated by the new Zoning Ordinance should be discontinued and rezoned as the district most appropriate for their use and location. The Zoning Ordinance should continue to allow mixed-use planned development districts, but should provide for mixed-use development districts or large scale developments that could contribute to the economic potential and quality of life for Norwich.

Overlays

The Zoning Ordinance should make use of new overlay districts to encourage specific development activities or protect resources. Potential overlays could address design standards, historic resources, parking, and site plan review.

Signage

The signage ordinance should be revised in some areas to better address illumination, setbacks, enhance appearance and consistency in commercial districts, and streamline the approval process. The issue of political signage on private property should also be examined in depth. Placing specific limitation on those types of signs may not be sound, especially if they have tighter restrictions and time limitations than other types of signs. The ordinance should be incorporated as a separate article in the zoning ordinance.



Accessory Uses

Given the age and relatively small lot sizes for much of the development in the City of Norwich, accessory uses have become a major issue that the current Zoning Ordinance does not adequately address. River Street has reviewed the major needs for this type of development and suggests that the City draft code to facilitate development of accessory uses of a quality and design that will enhance property values for the primary structure and surrounding neighborhood. Part of that will be to address the setbacks of freestanding accessory uses (sheds, garages). The City should evaluate and identify appropriate setbacks from lot lines. Current setbacks are established by zoning district and appear to primarily address main structures and are not necessarily appropriate for accessory uses and structures.

Development Standards

The new Zoning Ordinance should include enhanced development standards to clarify issues such as lot coverages in commercial and industrial districts, requirements for a percentage of open space or greenspace and basic design issues for new development. The goal should be to streamline the development process by setting out development standards that allow for flexibility but provide certainty to property owners, developers and neighbors about expected quality of development.

Residential Districts

Lot size and setback requirements in the current ordinance do not reflect current development patterns, creating barriers for reinvestment in residential properties. Specific changes should include allowances for smaller lots, criteria for setbacks in single-family districts, and consideration of a wider range of lot sizes in some districts. Single-family uses should be clearly defined and may include duplexes and attached homes. Other changes should include a clear and comprehensive description of allowed home occupations, bed and breakfast facilities and group quarters.

Lot Characteristics

The City's current zoning defines minimum lot characteristics for each zoning district. In many cases, the existing lots in these districts have to be classified and considered substandard because they do not meet the minimums for area, setbacks, or coverage. As a result, any improvements to a "substandard" property must be brought before the Zoning Board of Appeals for an area variance.



The City should evaluate its current building stock as it exists and identify a fair set of lot standards to apply to its zoning districts. The City should also consider using more flexible standards in order to avoid rigid minimum values. As an example, the City could apply a more flexible standard to street setbacks as follows:

A minimum setback will be determined by surveying the street setbacks of the three neighboring primary use structures on either side of the new site and using those values to identify a setback/build-to range. The setback of the new structure shall fall within that range.

Off-Street Parking

The City should reexamine its requirements for of street parking including the number of spaces required for each use. There may be instances where the number of required spaces can be reduced to limit the amount of excessive parking. This issue is particularly important to encourage new investment in the downtown.

Administration

The Planning and Zoning Board should adopt official by-laws consistent with state statutes. These by-laws should address time frames for applications, hearings, and decisions as well as addressing other issues such as required attendance by members. All time frames should conform to the state statute, for example all ZBA decisions will be rendered within sixty-two (62) days of a final hearing.



Appendix B Technical Memorandum on Economic Benefits of Historic Preservation



To: Wes Pettee

From: Amy Facca

Date: June 26, 2003

Re: Economic Benefits of Historic Preservation

Examples of communities that effectively and aggressively protect community character and use historic preservation as part of their comprehensive economic development strategies include Charleston, South Carolina; Savannah, Georgia; Denver, Colorado; Alexandria, Virginia; San Antonio, Texas; New Orleans, Louisiana; as well as Saratoga Springs, Corning, Rochester, and Syracuse, New York.

These communities, and numerous others, have been successful because they recognized the economic value of their architectural and historic character and took active steps to protect and enhance these assets. Among these steps are surveying and listing buildings and districts in the National Register of Historic Places; establishing local landmarks and historic districts protected by local preservation ordinances; developing and using design guidelines for the alteration or rehabilitation of existing buildings and new construction; creating a range of incentive programs designed to support and stimulate public and private investment; and establishing a Main Street program or business improvement district to coordinate design, economic restructuring, and promotion of the historic downtown.

While Norwich has listed buildings and districts in the National Register of Historic Places,¹³ a critical early step in protecting and capitalizing on a community's historic character, it could and should do much more to make the most of its distinctive architecture and community character.

A growing body of evidence confirms the success of historic preservation strategies in communities across the nation, including statistics compiled by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Statewide Main Street programs,¹⁴ state-level tourism and economic impact studies,¹⁵ local and regional economic impact studies, and studies which have analyzed the impact of specific actions such as historic designation, tax credits, and revolving loan funds.

However, in spite of this evidence, many communities are reluctant to use historic preservation tools because elected officials, municipal staff, and property owners fear that preservation will impose cost burdens on owners, restrict property owner's ability to alter or improve their building, discourage private investment, and/or increase up building improvement costs.

¹³Listing buildings and districts in the National Register of Historic Places is mainly honorific, but it does help establish a sense of pride in the community and makes buildings eligible for federal historic preservation tax credits. Buildings and districts are listed in the National Register in accordance with strict criteria established in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, its amendments and implementing rules.

¹⁴See www.mainst.org.

¹⁵New York's economic impact study can be found on the Preservation League of New York State's web site at www.preservenys.org.



The documented benefits of preserving historic buildings and downtowns are numerous and include:¹⁶

- ***Strengthening and expanding the existing tax base by encouraging and investing in building maintenance and improvement:*** Appropriate (i.e. architecturally compatible) building improvements increase the economic value of property and therefore increase the tax base. In addition, investment by one property owner, or improvements made to one property, often stimulate additional investment as other property owners seek to improve their buildings. Numerous studies have shown that older commercial and residential buildings that are protected by local historic district laws appreciate at a rate the same as, or faster than that of other neighborhoods, and are often faster than the appreciation rate than other neighborhoods.
- ***Increasing sales and returning revenues to the community:*** A recent study included in the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Dollars & Sense series found that commercial building improvements resulted in an increase in sales the year after improvements; that sales improvements were sustained for several years; and that sales increases exceeded increases in local tax revenues. In all cases, commercial building improvements included three key elements: storefront improvements, business sign(s) or awnings, and interior improvements such as better fixtures and/or finishes.¹⁷
- ***Creating a positive community image:*** As noted by historic real estate economist Donovan Rypkema (see footnotes), downtown is the historic center of most communities, and a healthy downtown is vital for a community's economic well-being. He further notes that downtown most clearly reflects a community's evolution, history, diversity, and differentiation from anywhere else and the community's historic built environment is the most telling expression of those qualities.
- ***Creating visually appealing and economically viable downtown buildings:*** Downtown is home to the community's institutional leadership; the appearance of economic health downtown is perceived as a direct reflection of the quality of that institutional leadership. Because of this and similar factors, creating an appealing and positive community image is critical to attracting new residents, businesses, industries, consumers, visitors and investors.
- ***The appreciation rates for historic buildings often outperform the real estate market as a whole:*** The market often undervalues unrestored historic properties, sometimes to the extent of razing buildings and using the land for parking. However, when these same buildings are restored, they often gain favor with buyers who are willing to pay a premium to own them. The more the public sector recognizes this incremental value—manifested through historic district protections accompanied by development incentives for preservation—the greater the private-sector recognition will be.

¹⁶See Donovan Rypkema's *The Economics of Historic Preservation: A Community Leader's Guide*. Additional information can be found in the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Dollars & Sense series. See www.nthp.org.

¹⁷See Brenda R. Spencer, "An Analysis of the Economic Impact of Physical Improvements on Retail Sales," [National Trust for Historic Preservation's] *Dollars & Sense of Historic Preservation*, No. 012. This study is a summary of the author's Master of Architecture thesis from Kansas State University completed in 1995.



- **Attracting new businesses and increasing investment downtown:** Older buildings provide excellent business incubators for businesses of all sizes. The rehabilitation of older buildings, with attention to their original architectural character as well as characteristics of good design and aesthetics creates a positive impression and stimulates new investment, tourism, and related benefits.
- **Attracting additional tourists:** Cultural tourism – focusing on the arts, museums, and authentically historic environments such as historic downtown and residential areas and historic landscapes, is an international growth industry. Rypkema notes that “state revenues, generated from tourism are many and include: gasoline tax, sales tax, airport boarding fees, room tax, park admission fees, liquor and cigarette taxes, food and beverage taxes, amusement tax, and others. Many of these revenues, and a wide range of other revenue sources related to tourism, also apply to local governments. Similarly, numerous studies have confirmed that cultural tourists typically spend more and stay longer than other tourists.
- **Creating new jobs:** Historic building rehabilitation is labor intensive and requires the expertise of a broad range of professionals such as architects, engineers, and planners, as well as construction trades. Many economic studies have shown that dollar for dollar, historic preservation is one of the highest job-generating economic development options available.

For example, in Michigan, \$1,000,000 in building rehabilitation creates 12 more jobs than does manufacturing of \$1,000,000 of new cars; in West Virginia, \$1,000,000 in building rehabilitation creates 20 more jobs than mining \$1,000,000 worth of coal; in Oklahoma, \$1,000,000 in building rehabilitation creates 29 more jobs than pumping \$1,000,000 worth of oil; and in Oregon, \$1,000,000 in building rehabilitation creates 22 more jobs than cutting \$1,000,000 worth of timber.

Historic preservation creates more jobs than does the same amount of new construction. In addition, historic preservation has significant and ongoing economic impact beyond the project itself, including new businesses formed, private investment stimulated, tourism stimulated, increased property values, enhanced quality of life, sense of neighborhood and community pride, new jobs created, compatible land use patterns, increased property and sales taxes, and pockets of deterioration and poverty diluted. Preservation, as opposed to new construction, also results in a greater dollar for dollar increase in direct local purchases from local retailers and wholesalers.



Appendix C Summary of Community Feedback



Visioning Workshop

A City vision and set of planning goals form the foundation of the Comprehensive Plan. The visioning process began with a community-wide visioning workshop held on June 19, 2002 at St. Bartholomew's Parish Center. At this meeting River Street Planning presented an overview of the comprehensive planning effort and explained the visioning process. Participants were asked to finish three statements.

“What I love about the City of Norwich...”

“Things I would change about Norwich...”

“When these things are preserved or changed, Norwich will...”

Participants identified many things that they love about the City of Norwich. One of the main themes that emerged was that Norwich is a place with a high level of cooperation, community activism and volunteerism. The people in Norwich are very civic in terms of philanthropy and no initiative has ever failed in the City. The Museums, YMCA, Arts Council, and a variety of clubs and community activities (Chenango County Fair, Arts Fest, Pumpkin Fest, etc.) for kids and adults all contribute to the reasons why residents love Norwich. Norwich is also a safe and walkable city.

In discussing community challenges, many residents cited the need to encourage inter-municipal cooperation between the City and surrounding towns. Residents would like vacant storefronts to be filled and for existing business to have predictable hours. The City needs more economic development. Run down housing, and taxes are also a major concern.

Finally, residents described their preferred future for the City. Most responded that they want a future in which young people will stay and work in Norwich. Further, storefronts would be filled and there would be a variety of employment opportunities available.

Comments received from participants at the Visioning Workshop are presented in the following chart.



What I love about the City of Norwich....	Things I would change about Norwich....	When these things are preserved or changed, Norwich will....
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the history – especially the historical walks around town -small town open to input from new people -can walk to do errands -the museums -Leadership Chenango -historical homes -support of the arts -public transportation -CDT (Continuing Day Treatment Program for the Mental Health Clinic) -Dollar Tree -Garage/Rummage Sales -community activities (especially free ones) -that you can go to the Chenango fair on an exhibitors pass if you exhibit something at the fair -Chenango county fair -SUNY Morrisville Norwich Campus -CCPT (public transportation) -Our police department -our local paper -our pennysaver -Literacy volunteers -GED classes -Tops, Service Pharmacy, Dollar Tree -Competition in the grocery stores -Family Health Center -some of the staff at CMH -Mental Health Clinics (mental health services) -Congeniality -Museums -Grocery shopping is easy -YMCA -Walking opportunities -Broad Street’s architectural beauty, and its quality of maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -If the merchants want people to shop locally they must be open their posted hours and offer excellent customer service -Empty storefronts -Reevaluate security in schools – there is no need to make students feel imprisoned. Create an environment that fosters rather than quells learning -Entertainment for twenty-somethings maybe a coffee house? -I would have the taxi cabs open until midnight -I would have public transportation (CCPT) open until later and have Sidney Federal Credit Union, BOCES, and SPCA and the animal hospital on its regular city routes -I would like to see more recycling being done and less junkmail/pennysaver type waste -I would have programs/places like the mental health clinic, Peacock Manor apartments and get our health care facility to do more recycling, (Valleyview nursing home). Like residents get to recycle their junk mail – recycling is limited at Peacock Manor -There would not be alcoholic beverages at fair grounds -We need more economic development -We need more good decent safe affordable housing -We would have more community residents involved in the community gardens and composting -Vacant business buildings would be filled. -A lot of sidewalks are icy/snowy/slippery in the winter. Many sidewalks are uneven and safety issues. -More information/awareness out in the public about the dynamics of all kinds of abuse: domestic violence, psychological abuse, sexual abuse, child abuse, can do – as a community – to protect ourselves, our families, our kids. -More composting in community -Need a small animal veterinarian in town. -We need more economic development -More hours for museum to be open -Public restrooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Attract shoppers, thus dollars -Have a school system that is willing to challenge students at all levels – particularly advanced programs -Better serve those that do not drive and that do not have a vehicle -Have more people that can get and maintain their independence and/or a job whether it’s paid or voluntary -Taxi cabs and CCPT being open later and maybe on weekends too would help with what I just mentioned and it would make a lot of people feel and be a lot safer later at night and there may be less DWI’s, DWAI’s. -With more activities for kids they should have more good supervision, positive activities, less domestic violence, more positive experiences for the kids, etc. Less vandalism -Impress visitors, improve health, provide recreation and use one of our strongest assets -Could improve quality of life, real estate value -Rise to an acceptable level of tested educational success -Be a more welcoming and hospitable community which not only attracts newcomers, but nurtures their growth after they have arrived. -It will be a community with a healthier sense of self- esteem -I love Norwich because I work here. When the “plan” fails and my employer leaves I will hate Norwich -Don’t have to change anything. Norwich is reactive, only change what happens will be enforced. -The only thing that needs to be changed is HOW the city operates. ENFORCE laws and ordinances. Make people (residents & City employees) held



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Being able to walk to everything -Feeling safe – low level of crime -The new YMCA -The Arts Council because of its new director Mrs. Kappel. She adds a breath of fresh air -The strong and active catholic community -We're only 6 hours from the ocean -Safety -Natural beauty -Schools -Friendships -No traffic -Quiet -Kid focus -Generosity of citizens and business -Small city "look" & feel -Activities for children/families -Commitment of a few to help many -Cultural opportunities -Can go to restaurants and see people I know – sense of community small town character -Its home – stability -Public transportation -Volunteerism – sporting activities for kids little league basket ball -Full and active life for seniors: volunteering, YMCA, friend -Scenic beauty -Open space – view -Beautiful city neighborhoods -Very civic in terms of philanthropy – never had an initiative fail -Good corporate citizens – banks, hospital -Role of commercial center and county seal -Convenient – no lines at DMV, post office, easy parking -Traffic not a problem -Everything you need is here – even if not a lot of choices. -Walkable place for shopping and services -Good phone and cable, high speed internet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -More safety features at the playgrounds -Need more good, cheaper childcare -More stress on services available at library – use pennysaver mail, newspaper for this -Need clothing, shoe store -Traffic pattern -Parking -Need senior facilities -Run down housing within the city. Some are primary residences; some are rental properties that show a deliberate lack of pride in their neighborhood. -Taxes, utilities and water sales are too high. We have lived in 5 different communities (smaller & larger than Norwich) and our homeowner expenses are 4 times what we've previously experienced -Hospital services technology are far behind what we've experienced elsewhere. -Supply the schools with good quality teachers. At some levels our students are not doing as well as they could in math and reading. -The high # of people on public assistance and loving it. -The downtown shops could be improved upon. I think Norwich could be the next Manhattan, VT or N. Conway NH outlet shopping. -Provide walking/biking trails to be used by young and old -A system to encourage preservation of visual appeal of our city (residential & business) -Make local small business aware that special, personal service is one of their best assets – work hard at it! -Downtown restrooms public -Quality of public school education -Attitudes of : distrust, apathy, blaming others - I'd ditch the plan and send everyone home. The group is lop-sided and NOT diverse. The group is loaded with special interest. There is no community here. -I would enforce all the laws/ordinances that are not being enforced – make the city employees accountable -Clean up the eyesores – there are plenty of them -Audit small businesses to make sure they are submitting sales tax. Lots of cheaters = loss of sales tax revenue -Firehouse – merge city and town service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> accountable. -COLLECT back taxes. These things are already in place. You need to implement laws etc.. already in place before you develop a plan . You are destined to fail. You have no measures. -Every storefront will be filled -Move volunteers and public transportation to get them where they need to go -Junk cleaned up – cars, junk etc. -Young people will decide to stay and make a living -Move attractive gateways and commercial district -Storefronts will be more attractive -Better employment opportunities -Lost 1,000 kids in schools in last 25 years (from 2,300-1,300) -Wide range of employment opportunities and wages -Intact neighborhoods – owner occupied -10-years from now, 5 thriving businesses not here today -Fair grounds use more of year – not just one week -Taxes will decrease -People will be in front yards -Government will be more policy oriented – less day to day operations -Vibrant, active public spaces -1 Norwich (town/city) -Still have a locally owned thriving bank -Everyone will know our vision -Create wealth -Kids will stay -Need to ask kids why the leave -Jobs for our kids -New SUNY Morrisville facility to meet local needs -Community College – one of 2 counties that aren't here -Policy and regs to protect historic resources -Museum district 1 entity and a tourist attraction -Become more cosmopolitan
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lot of organized events; Arts Fest, Pumpkin Fest, Blues Fest, County Fair -Everyone works together – high level of cooperation -Pride in heritage – even among those who have left -Great place to raise a family; safe, many activities -Rural environment, but close to more urban amenities. -Great soccer program -Sources of assistance – non-profit, church and public -Great educational system; kids say so too -Opportunities for kids to volunteer -Excellent athletics -Students who have moved away say it’s a great place to raise a family -Opportunities to participate in arts -Religious organizations (very strong) -Appears to be run by insiders – but not really so very open process – just show up – you will be a member -Lots of opportunities to be involved -Public land for recreation; hunting, fishing, camping -Ideal location in state - very central with good access. -Fortunate to not have malls -Need to be a Norwich without boundaries -More clubs and organizations then any other city of its size ; sports illustrated article -Organizations work very well together because people know each other -High quality clubs -Good infrastructure -Daily newspaper and local radio positive -Investment in the arts – music, dance, artisans -Community is willing to take a risk and help you do one; raising funds, new business, encourage success -Morrisville -Excellent medical care -ME classic car museum -Large number of well maintained historic homes -Strong can do attitude and work ethic -Eaton center – real asset -Like the weather -Community gardening -Catholic charities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Shared service agreements between town and city -Property taxes - much higher than other states -Too many local governments – turf issues - too much energy going into them – can’t be done is not an acceptable answer -Indifference, hassled, ignored, 2nd rate citizens, biased: small business feels it is treated this way by the city -Need better support for small local businesses -To complex to do business -Need to look at eliminating sales tax -For what we pay for school, it is barely mediocre -Sometimes schools don’t cooperate with parents, don’t identify learning disabilities -Need more clothing and shoe and food stores -Need to change perception that any change is bad change can even include moving assets -Every year we lose 2-3 houses to fires, but hard to infill -N. Broad – complete bypass to get truck traffic off it. NOT a bypass truck and route -We should be annexed into town – only 7,000 people -Transportation access improve to highways -How to reuse upper stories -Housing conditions are deteriorating -Absentee ownership is a problem -Eaton Street, make it one-way -Need more places to go and things to do for young people -Need more social events for kids -Need to look at Airport development -Need to look at Route 12 -County putting together a plan that we should coordinate with -Better access to public land and private resources through easements and acquisitions -More interaction with farmers, CSA’s, farmers markets needs to be year round -How do we protect and maintain a resource -How to better use open space for hunting, fishing, etc. -Support for community garden -Hosback trail needs to be enhanced -Tourism – not the answer, but we still need to maximize its potential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -More activities for kids -Come back to Norwich campaign – accept people will leave, explore but get them back - Remain a safe and beautiful community -Retain and attract young people!
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Roots and wings -Free soup and sandwich supper -Summer progress for kids -Size and relative isolation, quiet, weather, human scale in human and natural environment -Keep industry, grow it and attract more -Can get a bridge game together anytime -“Small-town” atmosphere -Friendly people – cooperation on all levels – professional, charitable, etc. -High level of community activism -Low crime -“Walk”-ability -Natural beauty and bounty of our surroundings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Hike trail well maintained -Businesses need predictable hours -Industry that will bring kids back from college (understand and make available incentives to attract and maintain businesses – employers) -Norwich doing well to participate in cultural tourism in region -Museum District – how to enhance and market it? -Public restrooms/facilities for visitors -Affordable lodging -Local businesses that offer me best value – i.e. convenience, -Merchants need to stay open during events – need better coordination -Downtown business hours same as work hours -More senior center activities, retirement housing -Improve sidewalk maintenance and snow removal -Fill every storefront on Broad -Sell ourselves to political comm. – make our needs know in Albany & Washington -More living wage jobs -Continue downtown improvement efforts -Encourage cooperation with Town of Norwich to assure careful growth and control “sprawl” and unattractive north and south entries to City -Find ways to permanently break the cycle of poverty in multiple generations of resident families (this is bigger than Norwich!) 	
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Focus Group Meetings

Focus group meetings were held on August 12, 2002 with housing providers, as well as with small business owners, economic development professionals and youth. These meetings were held by the Consultant. The City of Norwich also held focus group meetings with tourism and downtown interest holders, local senior citizens, youth service providers, young professionals who live and/or work in the City of Norwich. Feedback received during these meetings is summarized below.

Economic Development and Small Business Owner Focus Groups

Major concerns identified by the Economic Development Focus Group include the following:

- The major issues are the retention and recruitment of the work force, especially skilled workers. It has been such a problem for major employers in the City that they are now trying to recruit and retain local residents.
- Finding appropriate jobs for the spouses of recruited employees and quality housing are major issues for attracting and retaining people.
- The City should focus on the growth and retention of existing business here, especially small business.
- There should be one phone number to call for information on who to call for various issues related to small business.
- Property tax implications are a growing problem in the City and they are losing property off the tax rolls. For instance CWS is a non-profit that acts like a business and has been purchasing a lot of property around the City. The City needs to address its tax base and its threat to quality of life issues.
- The surrounding towns all equally share success in City. We need to find a way for non-profits and surrounding towns to pay for services. Consolidation of government is an option.
- The biggest employers in the City are the schools, hospitals, and government/non-profits. The City needs private businesses that will employ more people.
- One suggestion was to have an introduction to Norwich meeting every few months for new employees at all area businesses. It would be an opportunity for newcomers to meet people, learn about the community and opportunities to get involved.

Major concerns voiced at the small business focus group include:

- The current zoning is unfriendly to small businesses.
- An issue is attracting employees to the community to live and work. Many employees drive in from Syracuse, Binghamton and Utica to work. Some employees rent apartments and stay in town during the week. There is a need to “sell Norwich” to help attract employees to the area with the help of every sector (schools, housing, community services and employers).
- The perception that no parking is available downtown. There are over 1,000 spaces within 200 yards of downtown, so there is ample parking.



- The quality of the labor force is drastically low.
- Businesses start small and then they turn into larger corporations. (Years ago, NBT Bank N.A. only had 100 employees now they have 400). The City needs to recognize the contributions of small businesses and give them the tools to grow right here in Norwich.
- Some of the small business owners did not know what tools were available to them in the area when they were starting out. In some cases existing small business owners have been asked by potential entrepreneurs how they started their business in Norwich.
- There is a need for a one-stop shop and a program to help small business owners set up a business or make major expansion or such changes as grooming existing employees to take over businesses.
- There should be a manual/guide for people starting businesses in the City of Norwich that describes things they should know about façade improvements, sign ordinance, zoning, etc.
- Chenango County is only one of two counties in New York State that does not have its own source of Community College. We eventually need to have a four-year college, but recognize that this is a long term goal.
- Key issues identified by this group that must be addressed in Norwich include: schools and education (including higher education), housing, preserving the infrastructure, promotion of Norwich (the City has a lot of things to offer, but need to let people know that), Tax Issue (increasing number of non-profits currently own 38% of land in the City), and retention plans for key employers like NBT Bank N.A.

Housing Focus Group

Representatives from local bank, real estate agency, non-for profits and the planning commission attended the Housing Focus Group meeting. A number of needs and issues were identified by participants. Major concerns include the following:

- There is a shortage of high-quality housing stock in every category: market rate, affordable, senior rental and for sale. In some cases you have to look at 10 rental units to find one that is decent and livable (that can even meet HUD Section 8 standards).
- The quality of Norwich's housing stock has deteriorated and needs to be improved. On any given street in the City you will see wonderfully maintained properties, but you will also see at least one badly maintained property. People should be educated on how to fix up homes. Perhaps have home maintenance courses available.
- Many homes in the City have been subdivided into multi-unit apartments. Homes should be converted back to single and two-family units.
- There is need for housing for senior citizens, particularly housing where people could live independently.
- SUNY Morrisville is projecting an increasing number of students within the next five years and will need affordable rental housing for students.
- Housing is just one building block in the overall picture. The area has stagnant wages and no economic growth.



Housing was also mentioned as a major concern at both the small business focus group and economic development focus group. Issues raised at these meetings include the following:

- Every block in the City has at least one home that is in blighted condition. Over the years, many homes in the City have been subdivided and now have 3 or 4 units. Code enforcement and zoning should protect the neighborhoods.
- Housing needs to be addressed. Quality housing that is available is a major issue for attracting and retaining employees.
- The rental housing stock is terrible and many people end up buying homes that they can not afford to maintain.

In response to comments on the condition of the rental housing stock, the Norwich Housing Authority believes that it has actually improved over the past twenty years in part due to the inspection process involved with the Section 8 programs – both the Housing Authority’s and Opportunities for Chenango Inc. The Housing Authority further states that these inspections have at least assured basic safety standards, and with more stringent lead-based paint requirements being put into effect during the past year, more improvements are being required of owners participating in the programs.

Youth Focus Group

One youth mentioned that the greenbelt trail is a “great idea, but that it fell through”. He also commented that Route 12 is terrible for bikers and since no one is allowed to ride their bikes on the sidewalks, it makes it difficult to get around the City. Another youth commented that the various sports programs offered in the City for the younger children is great and suggested that the program should be expanded to include older youth. Other concerns related to recreation and leisure activities identified by the Youth Focus Group include the following:

- It is hard to get to do stuff, if not looking for opportunities, wouldn’t know about things going on. Need to have the initiative to look for stuff, which becomes more of a research project.
- Norwich shuts down at 9:00pm and if you don’t have a car, there is nothing to do.
- We would like to have coffee shops with musicians and a dance club that would cater to youth 18 and over (not just 21 and over).
- I’m a fan of the local music scene and would like to have a place to hang out. There is no common place to go and we are limited to the amount of times we can have friends over before parents start to get mad.
- The YMCA is really the only place to go, but if you are not into sports, it is pretty limited. There is a TV/hang out room there, but that is most junior high kids. I wouldn’t go in there.
- Norwich needs a place like the “Night Eagle,” a place where everyone can hang out. Performance venues for music, poetry, plays etc. are needed in the City.
- There are a lot of good bands in the area. There’s music in the park, although it is not well publicized, and when people don’t show up it is called a failure. I think it needs to be advertised better.
- The skate park is a great idea because the rink does not get used that much in the summer. A lot of people use the rink in the winter.



- Norwich has a lot of well kept secrets that people do not know about. Lots of these secrets are great programs. We need to do a better job of getting the word out.
- When we were in elementary school, they sent us home with community events flyers each week. Now we just get announcements in the morning at school. We don't remember the details of that stuff. We need another way to share information. A community on line bulletin board of programs and events would be great. Is there a better way to use the local government channel to announce upcoming events and volunteer opportunities?
- Need to advertise more on events such as the Twisted Groove Festival that is held at the fairgrounds.
- The Church Youth Groups have a lot of community activities.
- We are really into volunteer and community activities. A City-wide or neighborhood clean-up day where a group of people pick a project to clean-up would be great.
- Would like to see more sporting events and summer leagues.
- The City took out pay phones downtown and installed surveillance cameras. We don't all have mobile phones, so that makes it hard to get in touch with friends when we are out. The surveillance cameras are uncomfortable. We don't feel like we are doing anything wrong, but it still feels creepy to be watched.
- The Car museum is a great asset and is getting better.
- Norwich needs more teenage activities and a place to go. Partying in the woods (or hanging out in the streets) gets old.
- There needs to be more healthy and a variety of teenage activities.
- There needs to be more advertisement of existing programs.

Downtown Interest Holders Focus Groups

The Downtown Interest Holders group consisted of representatives from the Norwich BID, the YMCA and three local businesses. Participants were asked a series of questions on downtown facilities, programs and issues facing Norwich. The bank and the YMCA were cited as the most popular destination downtown. Other facilities used regularly by participants included restaurants, parks, churches, the Arts Council, post office, library and municipal offices.

Facilities and programs the City of Norwich should consider developing include riverwalk trail, public restrooms, parking facilities, unique shops, a gazebo/stage that is useful for performances, convention center, banquet facilities, additional lodging, and additional events, such as a softball tournament or seasonal festival.

Aspects of downtown Norwich that the focus group participants enjoyed comprise the following: small town atmosphere, vibrant downtown, safety, parks, courthouse, aesthetics of environment, and the farmers market. The group also discussed the vehicle and pedestrian conflict downtown, particularly at the intersection of East and West Main Streets and NYS Route 12 (Broad Street). Pedestrians have a difficult time crossing at any of the crosswalks at this intersection. It was suggested that there should be a red light all four ways to allow pedestrians to cross



safely. Motorists have problems as well. There are no left turn arrows for vehicles on East and West Main Street turning on to Broad Street. There are certain times during the day when drivers will have to wait a few cycles of green lights before they can successfully turn left onto Broad Street.

The City would like to redevelop second and third floors of downtown buildings. Potential uses identified by participants included housing, artist studios, offices, storage, daycare, shops and restaurants. Participants also noted that with development, other issues would arise including, the need for additional parking for tenants, elevator, and façade improvement on the back of buildings.

The three biggest issues facing Norwich in the next decade as articulated by this focus group were the cost of small city government/consolidation; quality of schools; and the loss of tax base/population. Participants also identified the following issues: future of The Eaton Center, viability of older local structures, stability of merchants, simplify the review process for businesses seeking to locate in Norwich, neighborhood improvement, quality of life and the sidewalk improvement program.

Parking was also discussed by participants. The 2, 3 and 4 hour parking does not work with downtown merchants. Employees need to move their car every few hours which upsets business owners. Participants also feel that there is not enough parking, signage needs to be improved, parking lots need routine maintenance (i.e. sweeping, snow removal, mowing, etc.).

Recommendations on one thing downtown interest holders would like to change about downtown Norwich included having more thriving, long-term merchants, productive upper second and third floors, more customers, implementation of the streetscape project and a more pedestrian friendly downtown.

Tourism Focus Group

The Tourism Focus Group meeting included representatives from the Farmer’s Market, Chamber of Commerce, Car Museum, YMCA, Newspaper, Twisted Groove Festival, and County Museum. The discussion revolved around the impact of tourism on the City, problems, ways to expand/promote tourism, and issues facing Norwich. According to participants, tourism brings in money, showcases Norwich and what the City has to offer, revitalizes the City, brings together the community, and contributes to diversified quality of life. On the other hand, tourism in general wears down infrastructure and brings extra traffic and associated problems causing an additional strain on infrastructure, police, and DPW staff. Further, with a small community such as this we are always asking the same people every year to volunteer. This may burn out the volunteers.

Local tourist attractions and events draw many people from out of the area. The Car Museum attracts people from all over the world and recently had an inquiry from India. There are artists that come from as far away as Florida for Colorscape Chenango, while the Gus Macker Basketball Tournament brings in teams from California and Texas. Twisted Groove, our 3 year old growing rock-n-roll showcase this year brought in 12 out of state ticket purchases and many such inquires. Chenango County Blues Festival, our 11 year old jazz festival is nearing



10,000 attendees. Nite Eagle, a folk/jazz coffee house 5 miles south in Oxford draws regularly from Pennsylvania. The smaller events draw from the local region. Additionally, bus tours have expressed an interest but details need to be worked through.

The focus group participants identified the following as their goals as tourism professionals: to bring more people to the area; need one place for an Information / Visitor Center; develop a tourism web page for Norwich; capitalize on fishing opportunities and outdoor sports revolving around the river; expanding hours of operation of downtown businesses; provide additional hotel rooms that are not expensive; improve parking for events; follow through with the new Museum District and work together on the promotion of this; and inform visitors of other events and attractions of the area.

Problems identified by participants include: parking, not enough hotel rooms, quality of Howard Johnson's, downtown shops and restaurants have limited hours of operation, attractions are seasonal, lack of events in the winter, conflict of local events (exacerbates room shortage and drives up room prices, access to the Interstate system, corporate (non local) event sponsorship is difficult to secure at this point and inexpensive prices for events hurt locally but brings in outsiders.

Participants noted that the City's link with Cooperstown and Museum Trail is helping and that the Car Museum feeds others, but hours are a conflict. The History Museum also notes that genealogy research is attracting people to the Library and County Building. It was suggested that the Chamber should lead efforts to bring in more outdoors people and that a much better job of promoting biking, fishing, cross country skiing, hunting, and running could be done. Further, the new SPCA's unique design (large room with a preserved tree with platforms and ropes for cats to use and wooden limbs strung together to resemble Chenango County) is bringing in visitors.

Participants were asked if there were specific elements, projects or infrastructure investments that were necessary to expand and/or promote tourism. Transportation improvements, additional accommodations and improved signage in the city were identified by the group. The Visitor Center needs to be visible. Parking area for recreational vehicles is also needed. The Fairgrounds should be improved so that it can be more utilized and provide better services. Further, completion of the riverwalk, or greenway trail would be beneficial and expand on river opportunities by improving the park facilities on the river and provide for fishing opportunities. Unmanned brochure stations need to be regularly stocked. There is also a need for local businesses to assist in sponsorships for activities and events.

The three biggest issues facing Norwich in the next decade were identified as the consolidation of the Town / City; loss of industry; and aging Infrastructure, neighborhoods, and "fabric" (Old buildings being torn down & replaced.)

Recommendations on one thing to improve "tourism" included: focusing efforts toward History and the Arts; coordinate communication between tourism agencies to avoid duplication of efforts and to use each other as resources; receive more money; taking advantage of the Nation's new found love of rural environment; finding ways to use the rail line; building on idea of appealing to early settlers' home



communities (maybe their western destinations too); feature the City's natural beauty and lack of crowds; promote the river; Rebuild Kiwanis Park to capitalize on riverview; finish the riverwalk and hold river events.

Senior Focus Group

The City of Norwich held a focus group meeting with seven local seniors. Seniors were asked questions on facilities and services they regularly use, needed services, housing, and issues facing the City. Seniors identified a number of services and facilities that they use regularly including: bus and weekend transportation, library, YMCA, Weiler Park, Area Agency on Aging, Opportunities for Chenango, Catholic Charities, SUNY Morrisville, BOCES, food pantries, visiting nurses, and the post office. Additionally, seniors spend a great deal of time volunteering through the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).

Seniors identified a number of services that are needed for their population. Transportation services and infrastructure are a major concern. Sidewalks throughout the city are poorly maintained and need to be fixed. Further the handicap ramps at the corners are often not flush with the road. Traffic is a problem as well and it is difficult to cross in the crosswalks. Downtown should be more pedestrian friendly. Additionally, many seniors no longer drive and require door-to-door transportation services.

Other services needed for seniors include downtown public restrooms, quality downtown shops, more seating downtown, more convenient medical services, and more publicity on existing services and activities. A Senior Center should be created, where seniors can participate in activities such as pool, music and art.

In terms of housing, the seniors liked the idea of the proposed housing on Brown Avenue. They also feel that there is a need for handicapped accessible units for seniors, which would incorporate such modifications as wider doorways and passageways. Further, there is a need for more adult assisted homes and adult group homes, or someplace where the residents can share responsibilities of living. Seniors are not interested in the senior housing currently available in the City of Norwich because they feel that there would be a lack of privacy and that they would be giving up their autonomy. Other reasons included inaccessible parking for visitors, space for overnight visitors and noise.

Employment for seniors to provide them with another source of income and the need for increased senior services to accommodate the rising senior population were identified as some of the biggest issues facing the City. Business, retention of youth, traffic, and street maintenance were other issues acknowledged by seniors.

Recommendations on one thing seniors would like to change about Norwich included having more activities in the summer, better senior transportation, volunteer taxi service, and more services like a shopping service that the Agency on Aging provides.



Youth Service Provider Focus Group

The City of Norwich also held a Focus Group meeting with four Youth Service Providers from the City Youth Bureau, The Gathering Place, The Place, and BOCES. The discussion focused on needs for youth facilities and programming, types of programs and facilities that should be developed, and issues facing the City of Norwich. When asked to characterize the current facilities and services available to the youth in Norwich, they responded that there are many programs for young kids; however there is a lack of programs for young teens. Attendance is spotty in some of the programs that are offered. They also said that there is a lack of programs pertaining to individual interests.

According to the youth service providers a youth center and cover/enclosure for the skating rink are the greatest needs in terms of youth facilities. A youth center building in Norwich would be helpful for catering to the youth needs, particularly young teens. A cover for the Skating Rink would allow the facility to also be used for community events.

In developing youth programs, the group felt that the City should target events toward specific interests rather than age groups. Transportation was also identified as an issue. The group thought that transportation should be available to people in the outlying areas for special events held in the City and that a youth bus pass should be considered giving youth greater mobility in accessing various events.

The youth service providers thought that there should be one place to call for professional opportunities or summer job listings for youth. This entity should also have a registry for employers and youth who are seeking jobs. Also, this service should be explored with the Department of Labor.

According to the youth service providers, the biggest issues facing the City in the next decade include: employment, community safety, poverty status of residents and recruiting and maintaining enough teachers so there is not such a high turnover, as has been experienced lately.

The service providers identified a number of ways for the City to assist them in their efforts to serve youth. There needs to be a better form of communication to attract the youth and inform them about programs that are available. Providing funding and having more inclusive programs that attract youth from various backgrounds were also identified.

Young Professionals Focus Group

The City also held a focus group meeting with eight young professionals who live and/or work in the City of Norwich. Participants were asked what brought them to the City. The majority of respondents are lifelong residents of the City. Two people specifically came to Norwich because of a job. Most plan on staying in Norwich, but if an opportunity came up that would enhance their career, most would relocate.



Facilities used regularly by young professionals include downtown activities and festivals; school parks, fields, and facilities; YMCA; State Parks (outside City), Weiler Park, Library, Rogers Center in Sherburne; weekend trips to Syracuse or Binghamton for shopping / entertainment; Council of the Arts events; Kurt Beyer Park / Rotary Park; fairgrounds; and Auburn Street Park. The participants also identified a number of events they liked to attend. Events include: Chenango County Blues Festival, Colorscape, Gus Macker, Pumpkin Festival, and related parades and activities around Holidays and events. One person noted that the City has enough events and that the City should concentrate on enhancing our current events rather than adding other events.

The group identified a number of changes to make Norwich more appealing to young adults. In terms of recreation, young professionals indicated that there needed to be more adult oriented activities for holidays and special events, more evening activities, have bands play in the park after festivals, need a dance club and more restaurants, promote existing venues like the Nite Eagle and Champagne Sundays, and someone should open a coffee house with books & internet as an alternative to alcohol places. Additionally the City should establish an event clearinghouse, to limit conflicts and raise awareness about upcoming events. Other changes suggested include diversifying the economy, and involve younger people in committees, boards, etc. Customer service in stores and restaurants is bad, among both owners and employees. Stores should also be opened later in the evening. Upper floors of building downtown should be use for stores.

Facilities and programs the City of Norwich should consider developing include: extending the hours of operation of downtown businesses beyond 5 PM, actively recruiting college graduates like NBT currently does, Seek out entrepreneurs who originally are from Norwich that may like to locate back to their roots, music store with expanded selection, indoor golf driving range, batting cages, go carts, adult haunted house, Fireman Hose Fight, more residential uses in second and third floor downtown buildings, an Indoor rock climbing facility, and a Coffeehouse / Bookstore.

According to the young professionals, the three biggest issues that will be facing Norwich in the next decade are limited number of employers that provide a wide range of quality jobs; budget constraints, cost efficiency of government, taxes; and consolidation of government services.

Recommendations on one thing young professionals would like to change about downtown Norwich included: its appearance, the attitude and perception of the City, storefront occupancy, have downtown be a thriving business center, thriving community and an inviting City.



Action Planning Workshop

An Action Planning Workshop was held on April 29, 2003 at the Howard Johnson's to present the draft set of actions that were developed by the Consultant and Steering Committee. The Action Plan is intended to provide City leaders and other stakeholders, both current and future, with guidance regarding the kind of place residents would like Norwich to be in the future, a set of goals for achieving that future vision and a list of prioritized implementation strategies that will help facilitate the accomplishment of each goal.

During the Action Planning Workshop, the Consultant discussed the Comprehensive Plan Project approach and progress to date. The Vision Statement and goals were then presented. The draft actions were discussed under each goal. At the end of the presentation, participants were asked for their comments and questions. Specifically, participants were asked:

- What did you like?
- What do you think is the most important action?
- Which actions would you actively work to accomplish?
- What concerns you?
- What is missing?

A summary of the comments received during the meeting are presented under the specific goal.

Goal 1: Efficient and Progressive Municipal Services *The City and other local government entities will take steps that secure a prosperous future by ensuring that civic and physical infrastructure can meet demands with high quality services including excellent public safety services that protect residents' treasured feeling of community. Norwich will strive to remain competitive in tax policy and will evaluate opportunities to create "One Norwich" through increased efforts at inter-municipal cooperation, shared services and regionalization.*

- 1.1 Develop a growth and development boundary policy with the surrounding local governments to identify and plan mutually beneficial opportunities for extending and sharing municipal services (e.g. water, wastewater treatment, fire and police protection). Such efforts should be aimed at improving and extending infrastructure and services to the greater Norwich area, while creating cost efficiency and economies of scale for taxpayers and residents for the service area
- 1.2 Amend local ordinances, regulations, and development of new policies to enhance land use management decision making for the City.
- 1.3 Examine the form and structure of local government to maximize efficiency of service delivery and achieve a regional approach including examination of the possibility of consolidating or partnering with other local governments.



- 1.4 Develop a comprehensive 15-20 year capital asset management plan that lists all major city assets, projects, necessary major maintenance and improvement requirements and a schedule for each, priorities for grant opportunities as they arise, and a funding and spending strategy that supports the plan.

Comments:

- Under Goal 1 – infrastructure, has research been completed on current capabilities of the system? Doesn't the City already have the capacity? Have you examined form of local government? Do you have any examples? Regarding partnerships with one-stop business recruitment – City has already created this - couldn't it just be enhanced? The zoning ordinance was updated four years ago. The City already has rehab programs and reinvestment programs. Lot of city programs are in place – just need to be enhanced.
- What happened with this concept - City and town interaction – merge into “One Norwich”? It has been recognized by the steering committee as an important issue which needs to be further explored and will work toward achieving this.
- The City is 2 square miles, so there's not a lot of room for development. I am supportive of development just outside the city boundary.
- I am completely in favor of consolidation. What is the advantage to the town? We need to figure it out and use it as a selling point.
- What does it mean when you say “Amend local zoning ordinance – Land use class”? Residential versus commercial versus industrial – it does not mean social class.
- With regard to goal 1 – one-third of the city is in the flood plain – Can this be changed? It is a “heavy financial burden on residents”. A flood study was completed in the 80s or 90s – does city floodplain really exist? Floodplains exist as a protective measure, but water courses change and can influence where boundaries are drawn. Chris Olds mentioned that parts of the area along the Chenango River have just been re-assessed, but not sure if the floodplain has been reduced or increased. The City will need to evaluate.
- Consolidation of services – spoke to County and Town Officials – this will be difficult. City will need to put some sort of commission together and will need positive actions to get it enacted.
- Is there discussion of a growth goal? Yes – planned growth –see goal 1. There is little pressure on the land around us and presents a tremendous opportunity. How do we want to use our surroundings?
- The City needs adequate population to provide services and activity levels. We need to improve quality and efficiency of what we have now – key is “Enhancement”.



- Consolidation of services and government (is huge).
- Internal Analysis Committee interviewed every department head, etc in the City of Norwich. They identified a lot of opportunities, how to raise additional revenues, capitalize on revenue savings and analyzed consolidation options.
- There are kids everywhere in the City – need to take into consideration with zoning.
- Small business owner – zoning more “friendly” to small business. The sign ordinance is ridiculous. All ordinances have to be friendly – suburban style zoning ordinance. There needs to be a balancing point.

Goal 2: Diverse Economy Connected to the World *The strong local economy of the Norwich area will be connected to the world by investing in technologies that distinguish it as a development location. The area’s diverse job base will provide management and executive positions at growing companies as well as a good supply of varying skilled, full time jobs. A strong small business base will complement continued development of large commercial and industrial activities. Expanding tourism activity will supplement Norwich’s economic resources. Youth employment and training opportunities will be nurtured.*

- 2.1 Work with local economic development partners to ensure that small business training and assistance needs are being met
- 2.2 Be an active partner in the regional one-stop business recruitment and employee training efforts to support job retention and creation and expansion of the city’s tax base
- 2.3 Revise existing zoning ordinance and municipal code to better support the needs of local business while protecting community character and quality of life.

Comments:

- People need manufacturing jobs and city needs business recruitment efforts.
- Have you looked at low-cost high speed internet access? Not in detail (tech assessment grants).
- “Leadership Chenango” Project found that lack of a major highway hurts Norwich – what are we doing? Highways are not being built in the Northeast. The City needs to maintain infrastructure (high-speed internet and rapid data transmission).
- Think regionally on economic development and building businesses. There is a lot of opportunity and potential for economic growth - need RETENTION and ENHANCEMENT – tremendous impact on small business.



- Improve city economics and improve transportation.
- Be Proactive – the City should invest in technology.
- Observation – in the 50’s Norwich was much bigger, alive, there were more jobs, kids came back here to live. Central NYS and the Southern Tier are economically distressed areas. We need to build a “middle class”. We need jobs and need something for people to move here. The City and Town are always at odds. “Something has to happen” – need for cohesion.
- One concern involves putting money into the community and to keep costs low for businesses here. REDUCING TAXES would be the best thing to do in the community. (Should pull in at the county/regional level) Don’t like to talk about cutting services [consolidate services / fee-for-service agreements / streamline municipal services]

Goal 3: Vibrant Downtown *Norwich’s vibrant and alive downtown will be recognized for its architecture, pedestrian amenities, retail choice and unique visual appeal. Emphasis will be placed on maintaining and enhancing BID efforts to ensure a positive downtown identity.*

- 3.1 Revise city code and zoning ordinance to support the development of bed and breakfast inns and other business uses in historic homes.
- 3.2 Identify opportunities for local government to strengthen and improve special events, as well as increasing the coordination of tourism development efforts. Such efforts may include the acquisition and leasing of portable stage/bandshell equipment, etc.
- 3.3 Develop upper floor rehabilitation program for improvement of commercial buildings in the downtown Broad Street area.
- 3.4 Work with merchants and property owners to identify and address issues that are negatively impacting the business district.

Comments:

- Things that are in our control: vibrant downtown – but missing something – BUSINESSES FEED OFF OTHER BUSINESSES. Specific retail recruitment targets. Keep existing businesses here (Chris Olds program). PIO (Public offering of Norwich) small “venture capitalists” - to help identify businesses and have them grow and stay here.
- Went to BID meeting – Zogby Survey was completed of downtown merchants and service providers. Where is the survey mentioned in the plan? It is mentioned in the Community Profile.
- We need upscale stores in community – particularly apparel stores. We are now known as the Capital of Dollar Stores.
- Vibrant downtown business community – How do you keep businesses open after dark? Need to have residents commit to “Buy Local”. It was suggested that more police presence was needed after dark.



- City needs a larger police force – hard to keep coverage at adequate levels. We want to make people more comfortable in coming to Norwich.

Goal 4: Friendly Community *Norwich will always be a hospitable and caring community, with superior educational, religious, charitable, and health care systems that nurture families and encourage creative partnerships through which residents become engaged leaders in the City's civic life. . The City will make every effort to foster amenities, public and private, that enrich the lives of people of all ages.*

No actions have been identified.

Comments:

- “Friendly Community” – we’re so downtrodden and have bottom-feeder mentality. Everyone’s been positive. Right now we are losing kids because we don’t have jobs.

Goal 5: Integrated Multi-Modal Transportation System *The City will accommodate a range of transportation choices that is safe, economical, ecologically sound, and aesthetically pleasing, serving a diverse population including the physically challenged.*

- 5.1 Develop a comprehensive sidewalk construction, replacement, and maintenance program.
- 5.2 Develop guidelines for traffic calming and pedestrian safety measures to be implemented as part of the Traffic Commission’s regular project review and recommendations
- 5.3 Improve pedestrian and bicycle amenities in residential neighborhoods, parks and in the commercial core.

Comments:

- With regard to pedestrian oriented transportation – there are no taxis or buses late at night – need public transportation at a wider range of hours during the evenings and weekends.
- The City needs more street lights, clear sidewalks in the winter, more lights in Top’s parking lot and a traffic light on Route 12.

Goal 6: Standout City Character, Architecture & History *Norwich will celebrate and protect historic and environmental resources including its waterways, urban forest, picturesque natural setting and historic buildings. These offer some of the Community’s greatest competitive advantages. They must be cherished, protected, and enhanced.*



- 6.1 Strengthen local regulations to support historic preservation.
- 6.2 Develop façade and structural improvement programs to upgrade the appearance of commercial and residential buildings.
- 6.3 Raise awareness of elected officials, city staff, and residents regarding the economic benefits of historic preservation and strategies for capitalizing on the city's architecture and heritage through the establishment of a Historic Commission.
- 6.4 Develop consortium of arts, education, culture and service organizations to better interpret Norwich's architecture and heritage.
- 6.5 Capitalize on the overlay district created for the Museum District.
- 6.6 Articulate the City's development standards and requirements to the development community.

Comments:

- City had the foresight to put together a committee. We moved here because of the school, downtown, “Norwich Field Band”. If it wasn't for the “quality of life”, I wouldn't have moved here. Norwich is more of a diamond in the ruff. The character is still here.

Goal 7: Residential Neighborhoods of Choice & Quality *Norwich's neighborhoods will offer housing choice and quality across all market segments, for both owners and renters. Historic homes and buildings will be protected and new market rate and executive housing will attract business owners, managers, and their employees to live where they work.*

- 7.1 Develop residential rehabilitation program to improve older and historic housing stock, reduce density of apartment conversion buildings.
- 7.2 Revise local code governing multiple residential unit conversions and density.
- 7.3 Utilize financial incentives available under NYS law to encourage home reinvestment.
- 7.4 Conduct an inventory and analysis of existing housing conditions.
- 7.5 Ensure coordination with public and non-profit housing organizations to implement housing improvement and assistance programs
- 7.6 Enhance the city's property nuisance law to more effectively address disruptive properties.
- 7.7 Amend local zoning ordinance to strengthen residential class preservation

Comments:

- By consolidating units, how would that allow the City to grow? Wouldn't the numbers decrease? Things happen over time – not all the multi-units would be consolidated (need to have access to adequate housing).
- City needs to review zoning and housing to preserve what we had and reverse what we have now.
- Need affordable housing options.



Goal 8: Inspired By Diverse Art & Cultural Offerings *Creative arts and cultural organizations, museums and many civic volunteers will work in partnership to make Norwich a regional center for festivals and tourism through maximum usage of parks, the fairgrounds and other recreation venues and investments in other hospitality infrastructure.*

- 8.1 Support arts, educational and cultural organizations in their efforts to enhance current and develop new programs and facilities.
- 8.2 Develop and implement a parks and recreation strategy for the city that considers current needs and limitations to enable the city to establish a strong set of parks, trails and recreation and cultural programs. The strategy will consider maintenance and expansion needs and new partnerships and models for service delivery.

General Comments

- Jay Joyce reminded participants that stakeholders, timeframe, etc have not yet been identified, so please keep that in mind.
- Proposed Goal # 9 should be: Begin positive attitude instead of negative and put a positive spin on things.
- Regarding grant funding for programs – what are the City’s chances with all the competition for funding?
- I don’t see much collaboration between the city and the school district. This relationship needs to be fostered.
- Services for children and youth (youth job training) was not specifically mentioned – hope that this is addressed.
- Norwich has had low taxes. Norwich has good quality of life. People didn’t come here. How do we get people here?
- Prioritizing Goals – will that be done? YES!
- The School system is an entity within its self – it is not really part of the community. School plans need to be coordinated. Bureaucrats need to be more efficient (streamline).
- Jay Joyce stated that the City has 75 employees. Norwich has the tax base we have and we have to make it happen without raising taxes and without adding people to the payroll. We want to put things in the plan that ‘WE CAN CONTROL’. What do you have that’s underutilized? How do you optimize the tax base? How do you help companies to grow?
- What happens after the plan is adopted? It will depend on the City and what they want to do. Will need to identify a process for monitoring and reporting.



- Agriculture outside the city limits is still a vital part of the community. It is in flux but it could be expanded. The “Farmer’s Market” and Cooperative Community Market could be enhanced. There is a community garden on Hill Street.
- New addition of Morrisville campus – mentioned in the plan? Yes.
- How about starting a community college in Chenango County? SUNY Morrisville wants to increase their presence in Norwich.