NEWPORT CITY, VT | MUNICIPAL PLAN 2022

Adopted by the Newport City Council

October 17, 2022

NEWPORT
Vermont est. 1918

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OVERVIEW

Overview

Small by "city" standards, Newport, Vermont is big on personality with a warm, kind touch. While you will be blown away by the natural beauty surrounding Newport, from rich mountain views to stunning sunsets on the lake, you will be even more taken with the folks who call Newport home. From shopkeepers to restaurant and cafe owners, just about everyone you meet will go out of their way to make your stay in Newport exceptional. And if you take the time, you will find lots of interesting and colorful stories to share about how they ended up in Newport and, more importantly, why they stayed.

Newport is defined by the ultimate open space, a picturesque panorama of hill, water, and quaint settlement patterns. A state with a strong environmental ethic and a population which has harnessed the abundant natural resources for their livelihood. They share an international lake defined by the enclosing mountains with their neighbor to the north, Canada.

The drainage ways, streams, and rivers find their way to Lake Memphremagog ("Beautiful Waters"), one of the largest natural amenities of the Northeast Kingdom, which flows north to Canada.

The region and Newport's natural amenities host a variety of recreational experiences. These activities range from hiking and biking trails, abundant fishing, winter sports, boating, municipal/state forest, and the National Northern Forest Canoe Trail, all crowned by the surrounding mountains.

On a local level, the City of Newport shares the benefits of small parks, marinas, recreational athletic fields, neighborhood walkways, a public beach and campground, picturesque cemeteries, and a collection of natural areas displaying local flora, fauna, and aquatic life forms.

The open space system also plays a strong role in defining the character and public realm of the downtown. The continued improvement of the Main Street corridor's streetscape and the integral connection to the lake and Gardner Park define the quality of life for Newport residents.

After only a brief visit, one realizes that Newport, Vermont is true to its motto "Genuine by Nature."

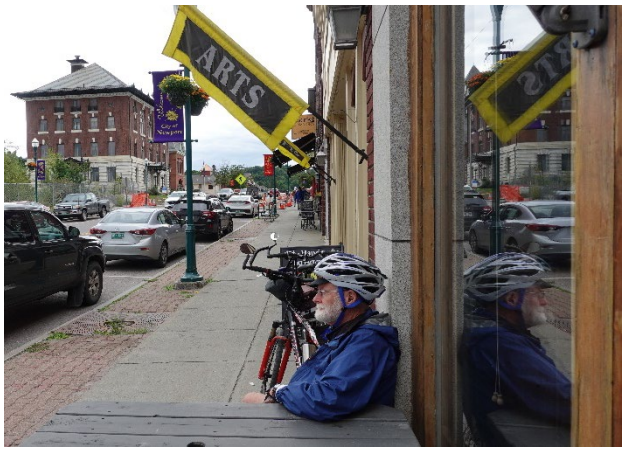
Looking Back

The past five years have been transformative for Newport. Beginning in 2016, the City undertook several important planning steps to rethink the needs of its residents, clarify and focus its downtown and waterfront development strategies, and reinforce its commitment to environmental stewardship of its pristine and stunning natural setting. Highlights from these efforts include:

- Completing an Age Friendly Community Action Plan (2016) that recognized the importance of elders in Newport and their vital role in supporting a rich and vibrant community. The plan's calls for action supported increasing options for senior housing, supporting better access to health care, and introducing supportive services to enable aging-in-place where possible.

- Coming on the heels of the Age Friendly Community Action Plan, the city partnered with the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) to conduct the Newport Street and Sidewalk Audit (2017). This analysis considered two key walking routes in Newport, one in downtown and the other leading to Vista Foods on Route 5. The results affirmed that, generally, Newport's pedestrian systems are fair to good, but key improvements could enhance pedestrian mobility to the benefit of all.

- Also, in 2017, the city supported a Downtown Development Strategic Analysis that investigated the market, physical, and regulatory issues surrounding long-undeveloped lands within the city's designated downtown center. This work, which supported a subsequent Council on Rural Development Community Visit Process, highlighted that future development would be best accomplished as a partnership between the private and public sectors, that housing and accommodations are key elements, and that the pace of action relies on establishing indicators of vibrancy.



- In 2018, in partnership with non-profit Newport City Downtown Development (NCDD), the city established a Newport City Downtown Development Strategic Plan FY 2018-2020. Developed by White & Burke, this guidance document introduced the idea of Newport as a place to "live, work and play," clarified and reinforced the importance that the natural environment, outdoor recreation, and tourism have in Newport's economy. The plan reiterated the city's long-held perspective that public-private partnerships are essential to support growth and prosperity. An ambitious plan, the effort helped advance the city's evolving downtown strategy.

- In 2018, the city published the Waterfront and Downtown Master Plan. This critical document captured in visual and narrative elements much of the previous planning for the downtown core. It highlighted the importance of outdoor recreation and community access to the waterfront in supporting a lively downtown environment. It depicted the inclusion of multi-story and mixed-use buildings with improved pedestrian accommodations. It doubled down on the need for effective stormwater management systems to preserve water quality.

  The plan also described specific upgrades to the Gateway Center City Dock, noting its role as the physical link between the downtown and the Lake. In substance, this plan tied the idea of vibrancy to physical enhancements that encourage people to come and play downtown.

In March of 2020, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic became evident across Vermont. Through executive actions, Vermonters were asked to curtail gathering together in the interest of public health. Newport, like all Vermont communities, responded to the crisis. Tourism during the pandemic suffered, with the near elimination of cross-border access to Canada. Local businesses pivoted to support community needs. Remote learning and web-based work became increasingly commonplace. The arts community found creative ways to connect to their patrons.

But the pandemic nurtured Vermonters' interest in their state, town, and community. Recreation thrived, with parks and bike paths seeing increased visitation. These trends were pronounced, with many state parks and ski areas seeing near-record visitation and sales of campers, outdoor gear, and lifestyle products surging. Newport's parks were busy with the outdoors, recognized as a

respite from quarantine. While the legacy of the pandemic is unwritten, its repercussions will likely be felt for some time. New opportunities are emerging with remote work, significant community infrastructure investments, and a greater emphasis on living well in a natural environment.

While the pandemic may have slowed some of the City's momentum, the Vision expressed in this Municipal Plan demonstrates that Newport is an active and vibrant community full of hope, enthusiasm, and energy in all sectors of community life. Upon this base of enthusiasm, community spirit, and energy, this Plan seeks to provide direction for Newport to continue making significant accomplishments in the future.

Community Engagement

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The process ensured that every planning endeavor provided opportunities for community engagement. Additionally, the plan development was highlighted in two annual Zoom meetings hosted by the City.

Two surveys were conducted throughout the course of this plan development process. The first survey—the Public Visioning Survey--was conducted between October 12 and October 30 of 2020 and received 206 responses. This survey allowed community members to help guide the vision statement by identifying certain items and attributes they would like to see showcased by Newport in the future. The second survey—the Actions and Objectives Survey—was conducted between July 16 and August 1 of 2021 and received 64 responses. This survey allowed respondents to prioritize various policy and infrastructure items they felt would help make Newport a great place to live, work, and play.

Both surveys were advertised through news releases in daily and weekly periodicals and posts on the City website, social media, and Front Porch Forum.

Visioning Survey Results

Information gleaned from the surveys helped form the foundation of the draft city-wide vision. Community members were asked what issues and opportunities they see, as well as what their experience is with select characteristics such as cleanliness, traffic, recreation, housing, and quality of goods and services. Respondents ranked characteristics such as the quality of restaurants and attractiveness of public spaces highly and ranked both the quality and availability of housing poorly. Respondents wanted to see more small single-family homes, retirement community housing, and affordable housing developments added to the housing stock. Respondents also wanted to see more services provided in their downtown and more public access to the lake and recreation areas.

Actions and Objectives Survey Results

In this survey, respondents were asked to provide feedback on the draft city-wide vision statements for live, work, and play and identify objectives and action items they felt would most fulfill that vision. For the live element, respondents identified making the downtown more welcoming to visitors and locals as the most important objective. For the work element, respondents identified increasing the opportunity for training and skills development in support of a local job as the most important objective. For the play element, respondents identified promoting year-round recreation and assuring that natural resources are protected and preserved as the most important objective.

CITY-WIDE VISION

City-Wide Vision

This Municipal Plan intends to help guide Newport's future growth and potential for the betterment of its residents while honoring and adapting the City's rich history. Newport's exceptional environment and diverse opportunities provide the pillars upon which residents and visitors can live, work, and play.

A Place to Live

The city knows that providing both long-term and short-term housing opportunities is critical. Newport's focus is on maintaining current residential areas, preserving historic character, creating a framework for the development of new and renovated housing, and promoting housing and accommodations that meet the needs of residents, workers, and visitors alike.

Although the City has a limited land base, it can support future business, residential, and recreational needs in well-suited redevelopment or infill development areas. Growth can and should be respectful of the environment and encourage greater interconnection between neighborhoods and the downtown area.

A Place to Work

The City's advantages include a diverse employment base encompassing manufacturing, retail, banking, professional services, healthcare, and regional state offices. Newport wants to preserve its historic status as the business and employment hub of Orleans County.

A Place to Play

The city's proximity to Canada affords opportunities for cross-border business and tourism. The city is well-positioned for access to recreational opportunities due to its location on Lake Memphremagog and its proximity to ski areas, bike paths, snowmobile trails, and other forms of outdoor recreation. The City should continue to take advantage of these assets to benefit both visitors and residents to enhance the quality of life in the community. The City should continue to build upon the work that has been done to date to improve waterfront access and pedestrian access to the city's downtown and in-town recreation resources.

This Vision for Newport rests on these three pillars, expressed in this Municipal Plan, by exploring foundational elements, establishing clear objectives, and definable actions.

PLAN FOUNDATION

Plan Foundation

The focus of this Municipal Plan is to illustrate how the city is supporting-- and can continue to support-- the realization of its vision as a place where people live, work, and play. Broadly, this means that Newport strives to be a place where people can find affordable and adequate housing, where people can find a meaningful career, and where people can access a variety of leisure and recreation activities.

To support those overarching goals, Newport must establish a solid foundation on which to build. The foundation elements below cover a diverse range of topics such as leisure, housing, and environmental stewardship. These elements were specifically chosen due to their importance in Newport and their intersection with many components of the live, work, and play model.

Each foundation element has a clear and specific vision statement describing a future in which Newport has made progress. These statements reflect community inputs during the development of this plan and support, in various ways, the live, work, and play model. Together, these vision statements combine in support of the overall city-wide vision.

But to establish a vision for housing, development, or any of the foundation elements it is important to understand the underlying planning considerations and trends that are the most likely to influence Newport’s future. The accompanying appendices provide a detailed narrative of those considerations as well as a brief synopsis. These considerations and trends cover a wide range of topics, from census and demographic conditions to Newport and Canada's economic and cultural relationship. In addition, they address historical perspectives and current needs.

The graphic below summarizes the relationship between these planning considerations and the objectives and actions for foundation elements described in this chapter.

The objectives set forth for each foundation element were crafted to be focused and clear. Some of these objectives are very tactical, addressing a particular issue. Other objectives seek to break down complex issues to enable the city to make incremental progress. For example, keeping housing affordable an immensely challenging problem, so to advance those objectives, the plan outlines interim steps that, when combined, advance the vision.

HIGH-LEVEL VISION

CITY-WIDE VISION STATEMENT

The City-Wide Vision reflects Newport's intention to build on its strengths and support residents and visitors alike by investing in quality of life and becoming a great place to live, work, and play.

FOUNDATION ELEMENTS

The eight Foundation Elements represent important aspects of life in Newport that help create a great place to live, work, and play.

FOUNDATION VISION

Each Foundation Element has a vision statement that relates to the city-wide vision statement and helps identify the intention of the element

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Each Foundation Element includes a high-level contextual discussion of challenges and opportunities

OBJECTIVES

Each Foundation Element includes a set of objectives, or long range goals, that help define what success looks like.

ACTIONS

The Actions include a variety of items that will help achieve the stated objectives.

SPECIFIC ACTIONS

COMMUNITY

VISION

> *The City provides essential services that support an active and engaged citizenry.*

Maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle is essential if we want our community to be a place to live, work, and play. The City recognizes that a full array of services is needed to enrich, empower, and protect all Newport residents. Our education opportunities are an important resource for preparing the City's youth for tomorrow and giving the current workforce the right tools to adapt to a changing economy.

Like the rest of Vermont, Newport's population is aging. The needs of the elder community, including adequate access to health services, improved accessibility and mobility, and broader options to support living-in-place and long-term care are crucial, and will increasingly become so. The City also recognizes that a truly vibrant community addresses a spectrum of needs, including food access, social justice, and a continuum of care for those struggling with mental health and addiction challenges.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Education

The City's schools are part of the North County Supervisory Union (NCSU), which also encompasses Brighton, Charleston, Coventry, Derby, Holland, Jay-Westfield, Lowell, Newport Town, and Troy.

Newport City Elementary School emphasizes literacy, math, science, and social studies but recognizes the importance of the arts and physical activity in developing the whole child. Art, music, and physical education are taught by full-time teachers and instrumental music by a half-time teacher. Special education services are provided by full-time certified special educators and a full-time speech/language pathologist. Remedial instruction is available through a full-time Reading Recovery teacher, and a full-time Reading Specialist.

Afterschool and Summer programming takes place in all graded NCSU schools. Programming employs 165 staff, and more than half of all K-8 NCSU students attend.

North Country Union Junior High School is in Derby. Towns without 7th and 8th grades (and this includes Newport City) send their students there.

North Country Union High School is the largest union high school district in Vermont. Its academic offerings include honors or accelerated programs, college preparatory programs, general programs, and alternative programs. The High School campus is also home to the North Country Career Center, one of 16 regional technical centers in Vermont that provides career and technical training to high school students and adults. The Career Center emphasizes work-based learning, allowing students to link their classroom experience to a broad array of employment and career

opportunities, including automotive, building trades, IT, forestry and agriculture, healthcare, and hospitality and tourism. Evening classes are also available for adults.

NCSU offers an alternative program through Turning Points at the E. Taylor Hatton School in Morgan. Turning Points, which has a capacity of 35 students, provides alternative education and mental health services to local students with emotional and behavioral challenges.

Privately tuitioned education in Newport is available through the United Christian Academy covering grades K-12, as well as Stanstead College, just over the border, for grades 7 through 12.

While primary and secondary schools are the backbone of the educational system, the city also knows that learning and training are a life-long need. In addition to the adult education opportunities at the Career Center, the Northeast Kingdom Learning Services offers a variety of programming, including GED tutoring and testing, workplace skill development, Vermont Migrant Education programming, CDL, and financial literacy.

Post-secondary education is available in Newport at the Community College of Vermont on Main Street. Classes are held during the day, evening, and on the weekends to accommodate older and working learners. Classes are held at the State Office Building as well as at the North Country Career Center. This is a two-year college, and various Associate Degree programs are available.

Health and Wellbeing

North Country Hospital

North Country Hospital serves about 27,000 residents of Orleans County and northern Essex County. The hospital, which opened its present location in Newport in 1974, is governed by a board of trustees comprised of community members. North Country Health System is a member of the American Hospital Association and the Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems. North Country Health System encompasses inpatient and outpatient services, a Wellness Center on Crawford Farm Road and physician practices in three buildings on Medical Village Drive. North Country Hospital and Northern Counties Healthcare are opening a walk-in urgent care clinic on Main Street in the summer of 2022.

As the community's needs become increasingly complex, so do the needs of the hospital facilities. North Country is currently pursuing an expansion and renovation to consolidate inpatient care and expand laboratory and emergency services. Northeastern Vermont Development Association, the regional planning commission and development corporation, has included North Country Hospital on its list of projects for priority consideration by grant funders.

Aging in Place and Beyond

The Meeting Place is a state-certified adult day service located in Newport. The Day Care is open Monday through Friday from 7:00 am until 4:30 pm, and Saturday from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm. It has a professional staff including an RN, LPN, activities coordinator, and a licensed social worker. This is a very active group, and depending on their capabilities, they are engaged in various activities and outings.

Home health and hospice care is available through Orleans Essex Vermont Nursing Association and Hospice Inc., which provides registered nurses and certified nursing aides for the following long-term care in the home, case management and treatment for acute care, and community health, education and screening clinics.

Skilled nursing care is available in Newport. Bel-Aire Center and Newport Health Care and Rehabilitation both offer short-term recovery and rehabilitation, as well as long-term care. Maple Lane, another small skilled nursing care facility, is located in Barton.

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Recovery

Northeast Kingdom Human Services is the mental health service agency for the Northeast Kingdom, with its main office located in Derby. NEKHS provides services to children and adults with chronic mental illness, developmental/intellectual issues, substance abuse problems, and other mental health and psychiatric medical needs.

Baart Behavioral Health Services provides medication-assisted treatment for people with an addiction to opiates and other drugs and alcohol. This service is provided with comprehensive substance abuse treatment and other health care services through the clinic or community linkages. SaVida opened a new treatment center in Newport in 2019. SaVida's licensed clinical professionals deliver medical care, counseling, case management, and long-term support. Their providers prescribe and manage FDA-approved medications such as buprenorphine and naltrexone, which do not require daily dosing like methadone. Medical visits are by appointment – typically weekly or even monthly for those in sobriety. SaVida Health is also a part of Vermont's Hub and Spoke program. This model has allowed Vermont to establish a novel foundation for high quality primary care with embedded multidisciplinary support services, better coordination and transitions of care, and more seamless linkage among the multitude of partners from many disciplines. Journey to Recovery (JTR), also in Newport, is a peer support-focused resource that provides personal coaching and emergency room support (when paged by North Country nursing staff). In addition to substance abuse recovery, JTR also provides support on gambling addiction, co-dependency, and eating disorders.

Regional Services

Other choices of healthcare services are available within a 45-minute drive south on I-91 to St. Johnsbury at the Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital. Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center offers a large tertiary center further south on I-91 in Lebanon, New Hampshire. Other physician and service choices are available by driving southwest to Copley Hospital in Morrisville. Even further southwest in Burlington is the University of Vermont Medical Center.

Interstate access to healthcare should not be considered accessible or convenient. Rather, a trip to an out-of-town specialist often becomes a full-day commitment at best. Recent plans to regionalize service raises a critical debate about sustainability versus patient access. Citing limited resources, Planned Parenthood made the difficult decision to close its Newport offices in early 2022. Services were consolidated in the St. Johnsbury location, which added two days of service to accommodate the increased caseload. In March 2022, the Veterans Administration recommended closing its

Newport Clinic and relocating services to a new multi-specialty clinic in St. Johnsbury. While the stated reason for the closure was to "maintain access and increase future sustainability," those who have limited mobility or access to transportation would face considerable hardship.

The rural healthcare delivery system has its challenges. While consolidating limited resources can be critical for maintaining operational sustainability, the City advocates for giving patient access additional weight in future decisions to site healthcare. As a regional service center, Newport is home to a large population who do not or cannot drive. According to recent Census data, more than 16% of the City's households do not own a car. Additionally, nearly 30% of Newport residents of all ages possess some form of disability (e.g cognitive, vision, hearing, ambulatory, self-care, independent living). Healthcare services that cannot be readily accessed by the entire community are ultimately not sustainable.

Social Justice

Northeast Kingdom Community Action is a large nonprofit in the Northeast Kingdom whose mission is "Believing in each individual's potential for positive growth and change." NEKCAA is committed to empowering those who seek assistance to improve the quality of their lives. NEKCA maintains an office on Lake Road, as well as offices across the Northeast Kingdom, to provide direct program activities, referrals, advocacy, and education in a non-judgmental manner to people and communities. NEKCA's programs include Head Start, food shelves, fuel assistance and other emergency help, teen centers, and many others.

The Orleans County Restorative Justice Center, also in Newport, provides conflict resolution as an alternative to the court system, primarily for first-time offenders. Restorative justice seeks to instill accountability by examining the harm impact of a crime and exploring ways to repair that harm.

Umbrella is an advocacy program that operates out of St. Johnsbury and Newport to support individuals victimized by domestic or sexual violence. The program promotes social change through education, resource sharing, and collaboration about domestic and sexual violence and the perpetuation of the underlying social tolerance. Umbrella's Cornucopia, a senior meal site and vocational training program for women in transition, is in Derby. Cornucopia participants receive instruction in basic culinary arts and hospitality while cooking for Newport area seniors and the homebound.

Food Access

Active dairy farming in Newport is long gone, and the City has few agricultural production resources. (Bluffside Farm, now owned and managed by the Vermont Land Trust, is situated on what was the last operating farm in the City). Nevertheless, the City is able to leverage many connections to local food. The Newport Farmers' Market, which has been in operation for more than four decades, is open seasonally Saturdays and Wednesday on the Causeway.

Community gardens are a way to support the attractiveness and vibrancy of the City and encourage local access to quality produce. Bluffside Farm offers an allotment-style garden with 20

plots, all of which are used by the community. Beginning in 2020 the community garden efforts have pulled in numerous regional growers and collaborators, including Green Mountain Farm to School, the North Country Career Center, Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, Northeast Kingdom Community Action, and the Center for an Agricultural Economy. Currently, there is a small distribution area for excess vegetables, and Vermont Land Trust is eager to engage in strategic planning to increase production capacity and educational programming. Bluffside's barn, sugar house, and pavilion may be useful for production, aggregation, or storage.

Newport City recognizes the importance of community gardens to the vitality of the community and supports efforts in any neighborhood to maintain and expand community gardens. Additionally, the city will make city-owned lots and empty space available for community gardens and farmers' markets as interest is shown. The City has adopted an events policy and interested parties should consult with the policy before pursuing such an endeavor.

Based in Newport, Green Mountain Farm to School is Newport's local food hub, which provides programming and gardening in the Newport schools. Their Lunchbox food truck provides fresh and healthy free summer meals to children 18 years and younger, no questions asked – and all others for a low price. In recent years, their Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Coupon program allows families receiving federal SNAP benefits, known in Vermont as 3SquaresVT, to purchase $75 worth of fresh fruits and vegetables at local NEK grocery stores, such as Vista Foods in Newport. Their aggregation and distribution service, Green Mountain Farm Direct, supplies local food to schools, institutions, and retail outlets in the region.

Newport's food access system consists of food pantries, congregant meal sites, and meal delivery services -- all of which were significantly challenged by the disruption of the pandemic. The innovations and collaborative efforts to overcome those challenges now have the potential to broaden food access for Newport residents. For example, Green Mountain Farm to School, participated in the Everyone Eats program, which distributed prepared meals out of the United Church. Similarly, Vermont Food Bank piloted a program with Rural Community Transport to deliver food boxes to households in need. Early in 2020 (just around the start of the pandemic, Vermont Food Bank was able to launch its Veggie Van Go service at the North Country Hospital. The service, which distributes boxes of fresh produce to households, received an overwhelming response. As of April 2022, more than 750 households in the Newport area were participating. The service has had to relocate around Newport several times because of the heavy volume. Veggie Van Go does not require pre-registration or income qualifications, which suggests that food insecurity is an unmet and untracked need -- transcending traditional income guidelines, such as federal food stamp (SNAP) qualifications. A food access study could help to identify and remove barriers to healthy food and increase efficiencies for multiple entities engaged in food distribution.

Local Governance and Essential Services

The City of Newport operates under a City Manager and Council form of government. The City Council is made up of the Mayor and four Alderman. The City Council is the legislative body of the community and is responsible for developing policies and ordinances that preserve and protect the health, safety, and welfare of all our residents. Staffing and support are rounded out by a full-time City Clerk and Treasurer, a Public Works Department, Recreation Department, Police Department, and Fire Department.

Emergency services in the City of Newport are provided by a professional team of local, county, and state police officers, a primarily volunteer fire department, federal law enforcement partners, and private-sector paramedics. Given the city's location, emergency services must address the recreational and commercial use of the lake and the community's proximity to the Canadian border. Its police and fire departments participate in mutual aid agreements with surrounding towns. A full-time police department serves the City of Newport. The department is headquartered in the Municipal Building.

The Newport City Police dispatches 24/7 for all of Orleans County. The Vermont State Police and Orleans County Sheriff's Department, both located in Derby, provide backup assistance when needed.

Fire and Rescue Service

The Newport City Fire Department is staffed with a full-time fire chief and a roster of thirty-one volunteer members. Personnel receive fifty to sixty hours of training annually and a majority of the department is Fire Fighter I Certified.

The station house is a self-contained building with gas utilities and a generator so that it can serve as a disaster shelter. It also houses a Command and Control unit for disaster management response efforts.

Ambulance services for Newport City are provided by Newport Ambulance Service, Inc., a nonprofit headquartered on Union Street. Newport Ambulance also serves Newport Center, Brighton, Morgan, Derby, and Coventry from this location, as well as communities in Lamoille County from a station based in Johnson. Both Newport Ambulance sites operate at the paramedic level, with four ambulances in Newport and three in Johnson, with the capacity for supplying Advanced Life Support intercepts to surrounding communities.

Telecommunications

Cell phone service is generally available through the City. DSL and cable options are available for Internet access. Newport's service saturation is relatively high for the Northeast Kingdom; however, there are still some service points covering about four miles that do not meet the current FCC standard for broadband. Newport Wireless Mesh, which provides low-cost internet access by sharing bandwidth and cost to keep service affordable, is a non-profit community-supported

service for the downtown neighborhoods. Its backhaul is provided by a fiber optic line from Consolidation Communications.

Newport City is a member of NEK Broadband, a communications union district. Formed in March of 2020, NEK Broadband strives to bring reliable and affordable high-speed internet (at least 100 mbps symmetrical) to every e911 address in the Northeast Kingdom. Some local businesses offer Wi-Fi for their patrons, and Goodrich Library offers free Wi-Fi as well. Currently, there is no free public Wi-Fi zone for the Downtown area, as has been rolled out in more than 30 downtowns across the state. Free Wi-Fi zones are invaluable in emergency and disaster recovery. They can also be a boon to visitor tourism. Newport Wireless Mesh may be a valuable resource for this endeavor.

NEK-TV is the PEG (Public, Educational, and Governmental) access TV station for Orleans County via Comcast Cable. Studio facilities are located on Main Street. NEK-TV broadcasts twenty-four hours a day with either locally produced shows or NEK-TV public notices bulletin board.

OBJECTIVES

- Maintain and enhance a comprehensive range of healthcare services based in Newport that includes a critical access hospital
- To support institutions of higher learning, particularly institutions such as technical schools and colleges that provide a skilled workforce to support present and future area businesses
- To support above-average educational opportunities for all ages
- To support high-quality, affordable childcare
- To ensure adequate emergency service resources

ACTIONS

- Assess and monitor emergency service provider staffing and address deficiencies if identified
- Participate in the Communications Union District to close Internet service gaps
- Assure that through the development of the downtown and waterfront that essential services and needs are supported and integrated where possible
- Continue efforts to engage and inform the community on an annual basis through online community meetings and outreach efforts
- Collaborate with Community partners on a city-wide symposium of addiction recovery service providers to identify service and support gaps in Newport's recovery community.
- Coordinate with Newport City Downtown Development to explore the potential for free public highspeed internet in support of local businesses, residents, and visitors
- Support a food access study for the Newport area

HOUSING

VISION

> ***Newport has established policies and regulations that support quality and diverse housing for current and future residents.***

Safe, sound, and affordable housing is a prerequisite for economic stability and growth. Newport City seeks to attract all housing types, especially affordable housing that will connect safely with schools, play areas, bicycle and pedestrian routes, and public transportation. As a regional service center, Newport City must offer a range of housing opportunities, including rental housing and accessory apartments attached to single-family residences. According to most recent Census data, Newport City supplies more than one-third of the entire county's rental housing stock.

When asked to rate various aspects of life in Newport, survey respondents assigned some of the lowest ratings (fair/poor) to the quality and availability of housing. The City needs to develop a deeper understanding of the housing environment in order to improve the quantity, quality of current housing offerings, and expand the breadth and depth of affordable housing choices. We also need to better understand how short-term rentals and vacation homes affect the City's housing stock.

Planning Considerations

Age of Housing Stock

Like similar communities in Vermont, the city's housing stock is overwhelmingly older, and at an age where repairs and upgrades are needed to maintain a quality living situation. Roughly 65% of Newport homes were constructed pre-1940. They are characteristically wood frame with maintenance and repairs typical of older housing.

Changing Demographics

Although Newport's population is decreasing, households are getting smaller, which means that the demand for diverse housing stock will continue to increase. The existing supply of large, pre-1940 single-family homes, however, will not likely meet the needs of a changing and aging demographic. In the Visioning Survey, aging in place seems to be a major concern. The top four types of housing respondents stated they would like to see more of in Newport included small single-family homes (62.5%); retirement community housing (60.2%); assisted living facilities (44.5%); and affordable housing developments (42.4%).

AARP has designated Newport as an "Age Friendly City," in which AARP assists in efforts to help people live more easily and comfortably in their homes and communities as they age. AARP's network of Age-Friendly Communities targets improvements that influence the health and quality of life of older adults through eight domains of livability. Those include outdoor spaces and

buildings, transportation, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, communication and information, and community support and health services. AARP will work with the city government and an advisory council over the next several years to address concerns specific to Newport and the surrounding area. The City adopted an Age-Friendly Action Plan in 2016 and supported an Age-Friendly Committee to monitor implementation of the plan. Although the Committee's activities were disrupted by the pandemic, the City hopes to reconvene the group.

Conversion of Housing Stock

With the stock market decline of the early 2000's, several older buildings were purchased and renovated into rental properties, and existing apartments were upgraded by private individuals as investments.

During the past fifteen years, over forty affordable rental apartments in Newport have received substantial rehabilitation by both public and private means. This has resulted in a qualitative improvement but has not increased the total number of apartments. A fair number of private investors have embraced this issue and gone forward with positive changes. Other property owners have taken a different approach and have converted single-family or multi-family homes into Airbnb type rentals, causing a depletion of the permanent rental stock. Recent changes to Vermont statute allow municipalities to regulate short-term rentals, provided that the regulations do not reduce the availability of long-term rental housing.

Affordability

A household's total housing costs should be 30% or less of the household income to be considered affordable. While the 30% rule applies to housing costs for all income brackets, Vermont statute provides a definition for affordable housing which is tied to the incomes of those living in the housing. Owner occupied housing is considered "affordable" if it costs 30% or less of the income of a household earning up to 120% of the area median income (AMI). For rental housing to be considered "affordable" it must cost 30% or less of a household earning up to 80% of the AMI. The difference in the income levels is a recent change in Vermont Statute, and it reflects the lack of workforce housing for those looking to purchase a home. This change recognized that in areas with high poverty and low median incomes, full-time wage earners, even those in entry level jobs, are often disqualified from subsidized housing because their incomes are just over the limit established by AMI. The housing and rental housing stock that is both affordable and available to this middle-income group is typically low-quality. By statutory definition, housing costs for homeowners include principal, interest, taxes, insurance, and association fees. For renters, costs include rent, utilities, and association fees.

Existing programs, such as the Section 8 Rental Assistance Program reduce household rent burden (rent exceeding 30% of income) by subsidizing rent. This program, as administered by the Vermont State Housing Authority, pays the difference between the Fair Market Rent and 30% of household income for those who qualify. The waiting list for Section 8 Certificates are up to two years for

eligible households. Other rental assistance is available through project-based rental assistance. This assistance remains with a project but accomplishes the same end as the Section 8 program, reducing rent to within 30% of income.

RuralEdge is a nonprofit organization working to address housing and poverty in the Northeast Kingdom. RuralEdge manages many rental properties across the Northeast Kingdom, offering assistance to homebuyers through affordable mortgages and financial literacy education.

Rental income, as measured by HUD Fair Market Rents, has increased over the past five years. Rural Edge administers a revolving loan fund program that is funded through the Vermont Community Development program to be able to assist low-income homeowners or multi-family homeowners with four units or less to repair and maintain the existing housing stock.

The Vermont Community Development Program can provide funds to the City to help non-profit and for-profit housing developers improve multi-family housing stock.

Homelessness

Newport has a homeless population, but it's difficult to quantify. We know that homelessness has increased statewide for two consecutive years – and we've seen a significant increase in the number of unhoused families with children. Much of the increase is likely due to COVID. Statewide, the annual point-in-time (January 26, 2022) count of individuals experiencing homelessness outside of Chittenden County is 2,112[1]. Homelessness is usually defined by lacking a regular, fixed, and nighttime residence, but this definition fails to capture individuals who may be at risk for homelessness, such losing a job, facing a volatile domestic situation, falling behind on bills, or currently "couch surfing" with friends or relatives.

The Northeast Kingdom does not have an emergency homeless shelter for extreme weather emergencies, such as cold snaps or extended heat advisories. There are no private motels that accept state vouchers for emergency housing. Currently the only COVID shelter options for the homeless are in Chittenden or Rutland County.

Homelessness affects a large and diverse segment of the population. Some struggle with mental illness or drug addiction, and some are fleeing domestic violence. Some individuals may be experiencing "chronic" homelessness, which is defined as being homeless more than four times over the past three years. Ending homelessness is a systemic and pervasive issue that cannot be solved on its own and requires cooperation and support from the City.

[1] Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness 2022

Accessory Dwelling Units

Sometimes called "mother-in-law suites," accessory dwelling units are important source of affordable housing. They can also generate income for homeowners. Under Vermont law, accessory units are not just for family members -- anyone can rent an accessory dwelling. Vermont's fair housing laws have required that accessory dwelling units be allowed as a permitted use of a single-family dwelling since 2004, but there were important statutory updates in 2020, including changes to definitions and dimensional standards. Newport's zoning bylaws should be reviewed in light of these changes, as well as periodically, to make sure that the regulations continue to meet state laws.

New Opportunities for Housing

Residential development will add to the tax rolls and increase demand for municipal services such as water and sewer. With the availability of municipal water and sewer, regulations allowing concentrated development, and lack of available land, most new development will be additions to our core development and should minimize the impact on our infrastructure. In Newport City there are two such areas with potential for residential development; one is near the golf course and the other is the Palin Farm. Other opportunities include second-story properties and adaptive reuse of older commercial and civic buildings.

In the near term, the development that continues within the Estates Drive and the Jackson Street neighborhood will provide additional middle-income homes. Municipal water and sewer hookups are already available in those areas. In the past, there were proposals for senior housing on modestly sized lots to the north and west of the Bogner site. The Kingdom Come/Kingdom Go lands that border the Newport Country Club is a long-term project that has been permitted for residential development. The Mount Vernon Estates condominium development also adjoins the Country Club and has the potential to add several multi-unit buildings. There is also a parcel of land located to the north and west of the former Bogner complex that may be suited to residential development.

OBJECTIVES

- To recognize the scarcity of land for future development within the city
- To increase diversity of housing options
- To support the improvement, accessibility, and functionality of existing housing
- To assure access to critical infrastructure in support of housing
- To work regionally in addressing housing needs
- To understand how Short-Term Rentals (STR) are impacting housing in Newport and the role they might play in shaping the needs for new lodging and accommodations

ACTIONS

- Complete a Community Housing Study to assess the condition of existing housing in Newport. A public survey to owners, landlords, and tenants could help the city better understand the a) type, age, and condition of housing, b) the affordability of housing, and c) the needs that residents have for housing. Seek a municipal planning grant or block grant to pay for the study
- Complete a Short-Term Rental Review to determine the number and availability of STR properties within the city. Review aggregator websites such as Airbnb and VRBO to get a snapshot of where units are, when they are generally available, and the current rental market conditions
- Convene a Housing Symposium to build a collaborative dialog with stakeholders, including, but not limited to, residential and commercial property owners, Rural Edge, local employers, Support and Services at Home (SASH), AARP, and USDA Rural Development
- Collaborate with local housing agencies to better understand homelessness in Newport. This may entail workshops and community forums
- Identify properties that can serve as emergency shelters in extreme weather events (e.g. warming shelters and cooling shelters)
- Complete a Zoning Bylaw Review and Audit that addresses how the current code (including the Form-Based Code) enables (or does not) denser multi-family housing, flexible commercial/residential housing conversion, and accessory dwelling unit development. Seek a municipal planning grant to pay for the review and audit
- Complete a city-wide residential buildout analysis to ascertain the potential capacity of residential units within the city's land base based on zoning modifications (increased densities, new forms, reduced setbacks). Test these buildout projections against the City's availability of municipal infrastructure (water, sewer, broadband)
- Explore public-private partnerships for housing development on city-owned lands that supports the city's goals
- Support ongoing implementation of the Age-Friendly Action Plan and provide support for its implementation and monitoring
- Explore the potential benefits of Neighborhood Development Area, a program that is available to Designated Downtowns. The program encourages new and infill housing within a half-mile of the Designated Downtown through the use of incentives

DOWNTOWN CONNECTIVITY

VISION

> *Newport's Downtown is well integrated with surrounding residential neighborhoods and its waterfront, enabling easy access to critical services and vibrant civic gathering spaces.*

Providing public access to and from the Downtown depends on many state and local partnerships. Ongoing investments in downtown infrastructure must be focused on striking a delicate balance between efficient vehicular circulation and a safe and welcoming environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Cars, Trucks, and People

Driving in the downtown has been a concern –and a topic for study -- for decades. Because Lake Memphremagog and South Bay divide the city, all traffic is funneled over the Veterans Memorial Long Bridge or the Causeway. The Veterans Memorial Long Bridge, which was rebuilt in 2013, helps in lessening the traffic congestion at Railroad Square. East-west traffic still relies on Route 105, which goes through Downtown.

Traffic congestion and parking inadequacies were first identified in the City of Newport Urban Area Highway Plan prepared by the State in 1962, and similar concerns were raised in the 1970 City Plan. The completion of a 1991 traffic and parking study by Pinkham Engineering Associates, and a report prepared by Landworks on Main Street and the Waterfront spurred on many improvements. An updated Traffic and Parking Study was completed by Kevin Hooper and Associates in 1999, and Smart Mobility completed a Thoroughfare Study for the City in 2010. Stantec completed a traffic study in 2017. The two latter documents continue to guide investments in downtown transportation infrastructure.

Newport has also hosted the Regional Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT), and this team has made many recommendations related to traffic congestion. The Planning Commission has also weighed in by offering a long-term plan for a third bridge designed for truck traffic through Coventry Street and Western Avenue to bypass Railroad Square through which all traffic currently passes. There have also been studies of a traffic circle at Coventry and Main Streets.

There is a substantial amount of traffic passing through Downtown, and traffic counts are relatively high for a Vermont downtown. Volumes are generally the highest on the segments along Main Street, especially between Coventry and Railroad Square, and on Causeway. The City also has one

of the highest volumes of trucks for a Vermont downtown. Trucks are likely to divert along Coventry (Alternate Route 5), which considerably reduces truck traffic on Main west of Coventry.

High traffic volumes are not necessarily a bad thing. They are indicative of higher levels of commercial activity. However, safe turning and compatibility with pedestrian activity are essential. While much of the attention and investment in the City's street network has supported vehicular traffic, the economic vitality of the Downtown is highly dependent on its ability to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists and create an attractive public space.

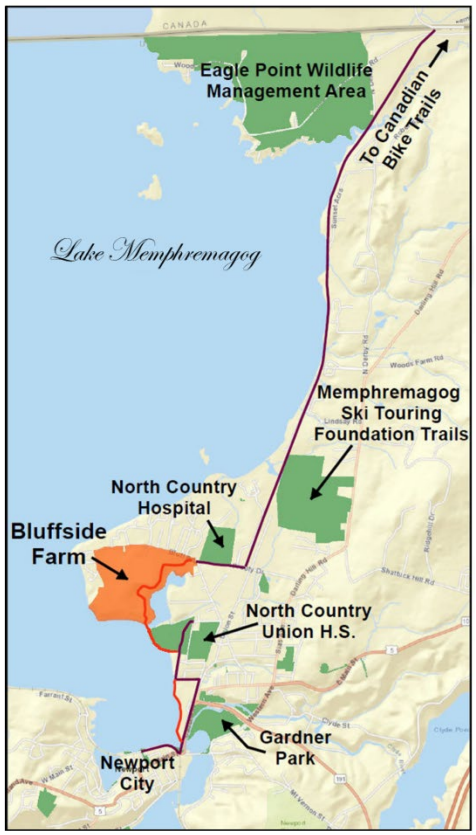
As documented in AARP's 2017 Street and Sidewalk Audit for Newport, walkable communities provide residents with economic and health benefits. For example, housing and local businesses co-located within a ½ mile radius enable residents to become less auto-dependent. Additionally, studies have found a direct correlation between walkability and housing values. Finally, health benefits associated with walkability include lower rates of disease due to reduced obesity rates.

The recent streetscape improvements along Main Street reflect many of the core walkability concepts highlighted in the Thoroughfare Plan and the Street and Sidewalk Audit: *Narrow vehicle lanes to reduce traffic. Widen sidewalks where possible to shorten pedestrian crossings. Add street furniture.* Additional measures to improve the Downtown's walkability include:

- Traffic calming on Causeway through landscaping, and possibly through synchronization of traffic lights;
- Safer crossings into Gardner Park;
- Signed bicycle lanes on shared routes on secondary streets;
- Enhanced sidewalks and on-street parking on Coventry Street;

Cycling and Walking Paths

Newport supports a world-class bicycle and walking network, and there are opportunities to extend this network even further. Newport's Bicycle/Pedestrian Path was first constructed during the summer of 2009 and is recognized as a great asset to the city. The path begins at the City Gateway Center, continues along the waterfront to Vista Foods, then follows the railroad tracks to Landing Street. It follows several other streets towards Prouty Beach and eventually connects with the Beebe Spur Path. The recreation path goes from Newport to the Canadian border, providing a safe means of travel and a recreational resource that utilizes our beautiful waterfront. In 2021, the Vermont Land Trust completed a connector path linking Prouty Beach and the Bluffside Farm to the Beebe Spur Path.



Advocacy

Newport has an opportunity to continuously improve multimodal connectivity through partnerships with state and regional initiatives. Local Motion is a statewide non-profit that seeks to bring walking and biking within reach for all Vermonters. Their work includes technical assistance, workshops, and bike safety classes for all ages, as well as bike-friendly resources for businesses and communities. They even provide an opportunity for the public to try e-bikes through their traveling e-bike lending library.

The Safe Routes to Schools program is directed toward school age children and the community at large by enhancing safety, walkability, bikeability and accessibility for walking routes between the school and neighborhoods. The Newport City Elementary School has participated in the program, resulting in a Travel Plan with recommendations for infrastructure improvements and best practices. The report found that nearly half of the students lived within a mile of the school, and the vast majority (98%) lived within a two-mile distance. The plan has recommendations for improving the safety of walking routes along areas on Main Street, which has two crossings from an active rail line, and at Union Street/Maple Street. The plan also recommends the installation of crosswalks at Elm Street/Indian Point and at Western Ave/the Access.

Transportation is a key domain of the AARP Age Friendly Plan for Newport. While the research and outreach found that the main form of transportation was driving, many individuals still walked, rode with others, biked, or used wheelchairs or walkers. In 2017 AARP staff, volunteers, committee members of Newport's Age Friendly Advisory Council along with community members, and Hospital and City staff surveyed the intersections, sidewalks, and crosswalks in Newport to shed light on the opportunities to enhance pedestrian access, improve health and further efforts to make Newport an age friendly community. The resulting Street and Sidewalk Audit contains a series of recommendations for improving safe walkability.

OBJECTIVES

- To support improved public access and increased recreational utilization of the lake
- To support improved access to services in the downtown area
- Ensure new development and redevelopment projects are sensitive to the location and the community
- Provide connections between and within residential areas and major destinations with bicycle and pedestrian facilities

- Optimize street design for safe and efficient pedestrian and vehicular traffic flow and for adequate parking throughout the city

ACTIONS

- Review the Zoning Bylaw to ensure that parking standards include appropriate provisions for bike racks
- Partner with Local Motion and others to host bike safety workshops and the traveling e-bike lending library
- Pursue a “bicycle friendly” designation for Newport
- Partner with organizations such as Local Motion to host workshops on safe cycling in downtown areas
- Review and update the Age Friendly Action Plan
- Review the Safe Routes to School Travel Plan and AARP Street and Sidewalk Audit to ensure that recommendations are taken into consideration for planned improvements and maintenance
- Support the development of a docking facility on the shore of the Waterfront Plaza property
- Improve the public dockage in the vicinity of the Gateway Center and the launch area
- Ensure Newport’s ongoing representations in the regional planning commission’s Transportation Advisory Council meetings
- Review the zoning bylaw to ensure safe walkability along curb cuts and parking areas

DEVELOPMENT

VISION

> *Constrained by its size, the City of Newport has prioritized growth by maximizing land-use potential while preserving local character, infrastructure availability, and natural resources.*

Given the relatively small land area, the City of Newport is largely "built out," limiting future residential density unless changes in development types or patterns are explored. While Newport has many public parcels, it has historically leveraged its use for recreation or access to Lake Memphremagog. Some properties are suitable for redevelopment or adaptive reuse, and the city has pursued changes to zoning districts to support those efforts. In support of existing and new land uses, the city needs to ensure its infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) is well maintained and accommodates future changes.

The City of Newport is one of Vermont's smallest communities in terms of geographic area. However, the population density is one of the heaviest in the state. Newport's 2020 Census (4,455) is closest to that of a half-century ago (4,664). However, the population is more dispersed away from the downtown core. There is an opportunity to add more population to the downtown area by creating new housing opportunities. Planning for growth must therefore balance anticipated and desired future development on the remaining open land within the city's boundaries with redevelopment of older existing neighborhoods.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Downtown

Newport's overall development patterns are largely oriented around its compact core. "Downtown Newport" is concentrated from East Main Street along the Causeway, Main Street to School, and Third Streets, along with Coventry and Second Streets, with a scattering of professional buildings within the city's core. Higher density residential areas surround the downtown business district, with general residential in outlying areas. The residential properties along East Main Street to the Derby town line, however, have been converting to professional offices and commercial uses over the past decade.

Targeting economic and residential growth to compact mixed-use centers promotes economic vitality and lessens reliance on automobiles, thereby reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Sustaining traditional settlement patterns through compact development allows for the efficient use of land, infrastructure, and resources. Directing reinvestment and growth into existing centers and neighborhoods reduces the fragmentation of open space.

Downtown Newport has long been an important economic, cultural, and civic hub for the City, as well as the region. In 2007, the City's downtown core received "Downtown Designation" through the State of Vermont. This designation is not a regulatory one. Rather, it's an incentive program to help

preserve the historic character and enhance the economic future of communities by promoting reinvestment and rehabilitation in downtown properties through tax credits, greater flexibility for permitting and approvals, and higher alignment for potential grant and funding sources.

Designation boundaries, which are depicted on Plan Maps, do not necessarily align with zoning districts. Downtown Designation must be renewed every eight years. The most recent renewal was in 2018.

The core objective of the Downtown Designation is to guide land-use planning. Vermont's distinctive sense of place is tied to its primary land use planning goal: to plan development to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside. To achieve compact development, the Downtown Designation program provides financial incentives and technical assistance to support local efforts to restore historic buildings, improve housing, design walkable communities, and encourage economic development.

The Lake and Waterfront

It is impossible to separate Lake Memphremagog from the City of Newport. Not only does the City's land use pattern connect to and celebrate this fantastic body of water, but it is Newport's heart.

Newport has not always made the most of this unparalleled asset. Most of the buildings on the waterfront, for example, do not even face the lake. In recent years, however, the waterfront plaza has received some renovations. There is a walking path from the Gateway Center at the Newport City Dock, which continues in a gravel path behind the Plaza, connecting to the bike path and the Bluffside Farm. The owners of the East Side Restaurant will be adding more docks, and the Plaza has added docks to attract more boaters to the area.

The 2018 Waterfront and Downtown Master Plan prioritizes investments to link the Waterfront to the Downtown. The study area is broadly defined by the length of Main Street, portions of Waterfront Plaza and Gardner Memorial Park, and most significantly the northern shoreline along Lake Memphremagog. The expectation from this plan is that increasing human presence will stimulate the need for new development, accommodations, housing, retail and support new jobs and economic growth.

Implementation of the Waterfront and Downtown Master Plan identifies significant infrastructure investments in five areas:

- **The Waterfront**: Transform the waterfront into a regional destination
- **Main Street**: Position's Main Street to become Newport's "hub" of activity
- **Gardner Park**: Pursue investments that enhance recreation and programming
- **Eastern Waterfront**: Plan for long-term investments along this area and the Causeway
- **Downtown Commercial**: Target investments and growth that reinforce the City's "Downtown fabric," including the interior neighborhoods adjacent to the downtown core

Recent efforts to roll out the Master Plan, such as repaving and street scaping along Main Street, will continue to drive the City's long-range implementation goals of this plan. The Master Plan calls for a review of the City's existing form-based code to identify design challenges that may inhibit future desirable development.

Other specific implementation initiatives are highlighted throughout the Plan.

Residential Neighborhoods

The west side from Farrant Street toward the City center and from Memphremagog Views to the South Bay contains high density and mostly older housing. The topography in that section of the City does not lend itself to large flat lots. The East Side includes several distinct neighborhoods. From Union Street's intersection with Indian Point Street, Elm Street, Sias Avenue, Western Avenue, and along East Main Street and its abutting streets are mostly older homes. A similar neighborhood exists along Glen Road, Mount Vernon Street, and the Clyde/Hill Street section. General residential neighborhoods include "The Bluffs," which also contain the streets that intersect with Bluff Road. This is an area with newer homes and larger lots with relatively flat topography. A few remaining summer camps exist along the lakeshore near the end of Bluff Road. However, many of the older lakefront seasonal camps have been replaced with year-round homes. The other distinct neighborhood on the east side is from Elm Street to the Derby town line along Sias Avenue and its side streets, including the Jackson Street development. Newer homes and larger lots prevail in this area, which also contains Newport Elementary School.

Renter-occupied units are located primarily in the older neighborhoods, where many older homes have converted into apartments. There are a few older apartment buildings near the downtown with three or more stories. Rural Edge has acquired and substantially renovated several multifamily buildings and constructed several new buildings just off Main Street. Other significant multifamily housing development in recent years includes the redevelopment of the former Slalom Ski Wear building on Highland Avenue into approximately twenty-five apartments and construction of two new multifamily buildings in the same neighborhood containing a total of twenty-one units.

Industrial and Commercial Development

Historically, the railroad determined the location of industrial and commercial uses in Newport. Union Street, north of Bluff Road, is an industrial and commercial development area that contains the City's only heavy industry, Columbia Forest Products. Other uses in the area include the city garage, the Newport Ambulance facility, several health care facilities, repair shops, the National Guard Armory, a printing company, a photography studio, and other businesses. Adjacent to this area is the North Country Union High School campus and the attached North Country Career Center, which provide skills for a diverse workforce.

The industrial parks on Route 5 and Lakemont Street provide parcels of land for future industrial growth. The former Vermont Teddy Bear Factory off the Lake Road currently provides space for daycare center as well as warehousing. The former Bogner Apparel property, a 25 acre parcel situated north of Lake Road, is the focus of a unique partnership between the City and the

Northeast Kingdom Development Corporation, a private nonprofit economic development entity. The NEKDC intends to purchase the site and lease it to a local manufacturer of snow groomers, which would work with other companies to develop, manufacture, and service smart off-road electric vehicles and batteries. The City has recently applied for grant funds to assist with acquisition and redevelopment. The partnership, if successful, could add up to 150 jobs to the area and establish a precedent for future public-private economic development endeavors.

Public Lands

The City has substantial amounts of public land in relation to its acreage or population. Those areas include much of the downtown waterfront to the north of Main Street, Gardner Park, Prouty Beach, and the South Bay fishing access on Coventry Street. Due to its acquisition by the Vermont Land Trust, the former Scott farm on the Bluffs no longer has potential for development for residential or any other use requiring construction of improvements or installation of utilities. However, the Land Trust is cognizant that the property can add significant value to the community for recreation and education. (See LEISURE)

Areas for Future Development

Due to the compact, dense development patterns, there is little room for sprawl, except for some incremental development along the Lake Road. In fact, Newport has few privately-owned parcels of land suitable for development. One area includes portions of the former Prouty and Miller property, near the I-91 interchange. Proximity to the interchange makes the site a logical spot to encourage new retail, office, and residential development. Portions of that parcel have already been developed and include several professional and commercial uses.

In time, Crawford Road and Schuler Road, both of which border the property and surrounding area, but are located primarily in the Town of Derby, may become paved arteries capable of carrying some of the traffic that might otherwise congest the Route 5 corridor between Newport and Derby. Both roads now serve as shortcuts or a bypass for those persons with “local knowledge.”

One of the most significant undeveloped areas is the former Palin farm on US Route 5. A large portion has been re-zoned for commercial use. A connector road between this area and existing and planned development to the east in Derby would reduce Route 5 traffic. Shoppers and others would enter this area once and stay off Route 5 rather than making multiple entries and re-entries.

Future Infrastructure Investments

Ensuring the City’s water and sewer capacity is adequate and kept up-to-date with commercial and residential use standards is of utmost importance. The city has continued to invest in upgrades to its water treatment and reservoirs to assure it remains so. The city’s wastewater system is similarly well maintained and operates at just over 50% of its design capacity – a considerable margin to support more growth. The city has also separated its stormwater management system from the sewer system, supporting better water quality for the lake and further reducing wastewater

demands. Recent wastewater upgrades at Prouty beach improve recreational facilities and heighten stewardship of the lake. More upgrades are planned.

Installing sewer lines along some of the significant streets not presently served by sewers may become necessary to facilitate development. The Palin Farm parcels, for example, will need to be served by off-site water. This is a $4.9 million infrastructure investment, and the City is exploring funding mechanisms, including the use of ARPA funds. There are also some outlying areas on the Bluffs that will require a pump station. Both infrastructure upgrades would be developer-funded.

More information about the City's Water and Sewer is available in Appendix B: WATER & SEWER.

Identification of major traffic arteries is essential in planning future development. Traffic and circulation planning for the city has maintained reasonably good circulation conditions. However, new considerations on the flow of vehicles and pedestrians are on the table with an evolving downtown. The city also recognizes that transportation must also consider other modes, rail, air, and ferry.

The City maintains a five-year capital improvement budget and plan (CIP) in accordance with Vermont Statute. The CIP was adopted by the City after required public notice and hearing in May 2021 in order to anticipate and plan for long-term infrastructure investments. Street reconstruction and resurfacing are one of the largest expense areas of the CIP at nearly $1.7 million. This figure does not include the cost of water and sewer line improvements (another $1.7 million), which occur every time a road is rebuilt. The table below does not include the cost of Highland Avenue, which was resurfaced in FY2020.

Table 1: Road Upgrade Schedule

2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2025-25	2025-26	2026-27
Outlook St. Summer St. Winter St. Second St. Eastern Ave. Hillside St. Prospect St. Green Pl. Field Ave. Main St. Municipal Lot Gardner Park Sidewalks	Garder Park Rd. Central St. Glen Rd. (partial)	Glen Rd. (partial)	Sias Ave. Logan Dr. Farrant St. Scottsdale Dr. Colodny Terr. Bluff R.	Lake Rd (1/2) West Main	Lake Rd (1/2) West Main St. Freeman St. Veterans Ave.

OBJECTIVES

- To focus on rolling out the Waterfront and Downtown Master Plan project

- To support an evolving tourism industry and maintain/expand the diversity of businesses to support the local economy
- To remain vigilant on evolving TIF and other funding strategies in Vermont in support of the financing of critical infrastructure
- To align future development outcomes with infrastructure capacities and stewardship objectives
- To deliver infrastructure that effectively and efficiently serves the needs of the city

ACTIONS

- Support the continued development of the "City Center Industrial Park" on the Newport-Derby Road, the Lakemont Industrial Zone on Lakemont Street, and the former Bogner Property on the Lake Road
- Actively seed and maximize subsidies for small to large high technology or telecommunication businesses either in the city or in Orleans County
- Expand existing sewer and water systems to all currently unserved properties, including the "Bluffs" residential area of the city and the Palin Farm
- Move forward with the 2021-2026 Capital Investment Plan (CIP) with a focus on waterfront amenities and recreation enhancements, including the marina, Prouty Beach, and other critical upgrades
- Work with Newport City Downtown Development Corporation and other partners on future CIPs to address needs for development planning, housing, and quality-of-life improvements
- Align future city investments and policies with phased development of the downtown and waterfront, including consideration of:
    - Creation of a waterfront or lakeside zone district within the bylaws to guide development for the common best interest
    - Changes to existing development regulations to support or enable to effective implementation of the Waterfront and Downtown Master Plan
    - The expansion of a public docking facility on the shore of the Waterfront Plaza property
    - The development of another public docking facility at the Railroad Bridge at the "Causeway". Improve the public dockage in the vicinity of the Gateway Center and the launch area
- Pursue through all available avenues a substantial improvement in lake traveler border crossing processing by the U.S. Immigration & Naturalization Service, U.S. Customs and Homeland Security

LEISURE

VISION

> ***Newport supports various opportunities for residents and visitors to engage in activities that promote health, well-being, and a sense of community.***

The parks, waterfront, beaches, open spaces, and recreational assets that the city has nurtured are a vital part of what makes Newport unique. Together, these facilities support a healthy community, add deeply to residents' quality of life, and tangibly illustrate the importance of being active to visitors. Recent and future investments in Newport's recreation opportunities, as well as attractions in nearby Jay Peak, will enhance the City's regional draw as an outdoor recreation center.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The Lake

The City of Newport is blessed with a magnificent location in the Northeast Kingdom, with Lake Memphremagog being our brightest natural asset. Lake Memphremagog is about thirty miles long and straddles the U.S.-Canadian border, with the majority of the Lake in Canada. Newport sits at the extreme southern end of the lake.

Fishing and hunting are extremely popular on the lake. Lake Memphremagog is host to numerous fishing tournaments, and in the winter, the lake is dotted with ice shanties. The Fish and Wildlife Refuge along the South Bay is a haven for hundreds of species of native birds and animals. From late spring through early fall, boaters, paddlers, swimmers, jet skiers, and wind surfers utilize the lake. There has been a recent increase in activity during both summer and winter on the lake. There have been numerous additional swimming, boating, skating, and snowmobile events. Kingdom Games (kingdomgames.net) offers events throughout the year, including swims the entire length of the lake, attracting an international group of open water swimmers. The lake is a mecca for snowmobiles and ice fishing in the winter. The lake is dotted with fishing shanties as anglers hope to catch trout, salmon, bass, or perch.

The Newport City Dock, located just north of Main Street, contains a public launch, a boat washing station, the Memphremagog Yacht Club, a border crossing checkpoint, numerous seasonal and transient dock slips, three mooring fields, retail gasoline, ice, lake charts, a pump-out station. It also serves as the current home of Northern Star Lake Cruises, which offers a variety of cruises. The City maintains the dock, as well as the Gateway Center, which was built on the waterfront in 1992. There is snack bar at the Gateway Center. The Gateway Center is available for events and meetings.

Connecting the Newport City Dock to Main Street and providing visiting boaters with positive docking experiences should be priorities for future improvements. The Waterfront and Downtown

Master Plan therefore calls for reinforcements at the waterfront's core, where day-to-day operations take place. The plan calls for building out the existing pier to accommodate larger vessels to draw in larger groups of boaters, especially from Canada. The plan also calls for seasonal slips, as well as a specially designated customs dock.

Just west of the Gateway Center is the Newport Marina, which offers full services and is the only marina on the U.S. side of the lake. The privately-owned marina has started to lease boats, canoes, and kayaks to attract additional people to the waterfront.

Newport City Recreation

The City takes its stewardship responsibilities very seriously, knowing that recreation is a shared passion for the community, and an essential pillar in defining land use, conservation, and development outcomes. It leverages these recreational facilities in support of programs and events that celebrate the city's spirit and draw in visitors. The mission of the Recreation Department is to provide the citizens of Newport with a broad selection of high-quality recreational opportunities through facilities and programs and to enhance the quality of life for all ages. The primary goal is to create community through people, parks, and programs.

In addition to the City Dock and Gateway Center, the Parks and Recreation Department maintains Gardner Park, Prouty Beach and campground, Pomerleau Park, the Municipal Building Gymnasium, and the Forever Young Senior Center. Activities include a wide array of programs and events designed to meet the recreational needs of all ages of the community.

Gardner Park contains five softball/baseball fields, a skate park, a pump track, a roller hockey rink, a playground, a recreational ice rink, a hockey rink, a dock, fishing opportunities, picnicking opportunities, a historic grandstand, farmer's market, community garden, concert gazebo, snack bar, and more. Rather than undertaking comprehensive steps to alter the park in its entirety, the Waterfront and Downtown Master Plan emphasizes short-term interventions that do not preclude the opportunity for future projects: rebuild the playground, renovate the bathroom and skate rental, and improve the boat ramps and waterfront access. These short-term projects will have the highest immediate impact, and a gradual face lift of the park can still occur while allowing the community to continue its use without the burdens of extensive construction or costly renovations.

In addition to campsites and a broad array of amenities Prouty Beach and Campground offers recreation trails and sledding, as well as beautiful views of downtown Newport across Memphremagog. It is recommended that the campground continue to expand to meet the increasing demand for campsites and improve amenities for residents and visitors.

Pomerleau Park, located on Main Street, contains the junction of the recreation path and boardwalk. Along the paths, there are benches and shade trees. Also found in the park is a mock lighthouse built to act as a ticket booth. Pomerleau Park is an excellent location for visitors to rest and view the lake and should be maintained as such. If, and when, the former wharf that docked tour boats is rebuilt, this park would serve as an ideal location to board passengers.

The Municipal Building Gymnasium, located on the first floor of the Newport Municipal Building, hosts numerous programming activities and indoor sports and fitness classes. Its historic character of the facility should be maintained. While the mezzanine has the potential to serve as a two-lane, continuous walking/jogging path, it will require costly repairs before it can be safely used. A scoping study is needed.

The City provides recreational programming for all ages, from preschool to seniors. These programs take advantage of the beautiful facilities owned and maintained by the City of Newport. In addition, they capitalize on the various skills and abilities of community members and Parks & Recreation staff. Programming for all ages should remain a priority of the City, and more innovative programs should be added where there is a recreational need to be met.

Bluffside Farm and Trail

Bluffside Farm, the largest undeveloped property in Newport, was acquired by the Vermont Land Trust. The 129-acre property offers year-round trail use. A cooperative arrangement with Memphremagog Ski Touring has already resulted in establishing trails for winter cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Plans are well underway to develop a path for summer use by cyclists and pedestrians that will link the downtown and Prouty Beach to the Bluffs neighborhoods, the hospital, and the recreation path that extends from Prouty Drive to the Canadian border. That path includes a one-mile boardwalk and bridge across Scotts' Cove, which was completed in fall of 2021.

In addition, the Land Trust has encouraged the use of the property by North Country Union High School for practical teaching activities that complement its curriculum and are consistent with the Land Trust's mission. The Land Trust has relocated its regional office from St. Johnsbury to an existing building on the property. It is also evaluating potential uses for the barn and agricultural lands that comprise part of the property. Any such uses will be consistent with the overall mission of the Land Trust to preserve agricultural and forest land.

Billings Point

The Billings Point area to the west of South Bay and north of Airport Road may be suitable for infrastructure development to enhance recreation opportunities for residents and visitors alike. South Bay is known for its relatively calm and sheltered waters compared to the main body of Lake Memphremagog. As such, it is a popular destination for kayaking and canoeing. South Bay also serves as a point of access to the Black and Barton Rivers for those activities. The bay has the potential to be used by scullers and other forms of rowing as well. Presently, the only direct access to South Bay is either by water or from the state fishing access on Coventry Street. The State of Vermont's position regarding fishing access is that its use is limited to fishers.

Newport Country Club

Newport Country Club straddles the Newport City-Derby border off Mount Vernon Street. The driving range is in Newport and has a new building erected on the site. A popular recreational attraction for the area, Newport Country Club continues to improve its facilities and appeal to tourists and locals alike.

Green Spaces and Public Gardens

Through the hard work of City employees and volunteers , green spaces and public gardens add beauty and vitality to the City. The City landscaper, gardener, and tree warden work seven days a week to enhance and beautify public spaces, such as the new Main Street parklet, and the plantings along the bike path and beach. Those efforts are enhanced by volunteer organizations such as the Rotary, which recently donated funds to expand the gardens at Pomerleau Park.

The Four Seasons Garden Club began in 1979, meets the second Tuesday of each month and is open to all who enjoy a love of gardening and the environment. The Club is a member of the Federated Garden Clubs of Vermont, the Vermont Community Botanical Garden, and the National Garden Clubs, Inc. Its stated purpose is to stimulate the knowledge and love of gardening, to aid in the protection of native trees, plants, birds, and animals and to encourage and promote civic planting and beautification.

Members participate in educational programming, as well as the planting and upkeep of the garden at the Golden Days Memorial Garden at Gardner Park, and the garden at North Country Hospital, which honors the fight against breast cancer. This garden was awarded the National Garden Club's Pink Trowel Award for 2011.

OBJECTIVES

- To provide places for people to connect
- To ensure that people of all interests, age groups, and abilities have access to recreational, artistic, cultural, and leisure facilities
- To support a broad base of recreational activities and programs
- To support a range of park types and sizes to meet the varied needs of the community

ACTIONS

- Encourage the schools to make recreation facilities available to the general population
- Create more awareness of recreational and cultural activities by leveraging a variety of media to reach a diverse audience
- Identify and implement financial, regulatory, and other mechanisms to support the development, operation, and maintenance of the parks and open space system

- Conduct annual surveys to evaluate citizen interest in recreational programs
- Encourage the expansion of public gardens to enhance the City's beauty and expand the sense of community
- Work with key stakeholders to assess the status of the arts community in Newport, and investigate how grant funding might be leveraged in support of the creative economy
- Support a scoping study for the repair of the mezzanine

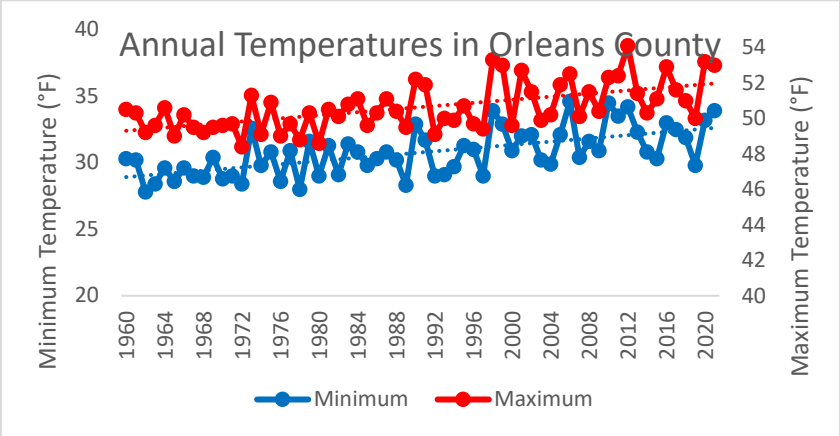
STEWARDSHIP

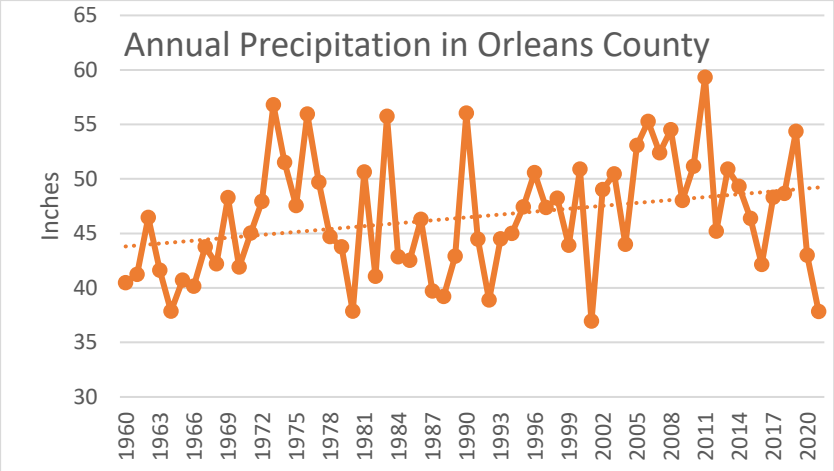
VISION

> *Newport promotes climate resilience by maintaining and protecting its natural assets, maximizing energy efficiency and minimizing adverse environmental impacts for today… and future generations.*

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Our region is already experiencing a long-term warming trend, and we can expect warmer winters with an incremental loss of snow cover, increasingly erratic patterns of precipitation, and flooding. And recent droughts are not an aberration from long-term trends: weather patterns are moving to extremes: either too much precipitation or not enough.





Source: NOAA Climate at a Glance

Although Newport may become an attractive destination for individuals in more severely impacted regions of the country, <u>everyone</u> in Newport will be affected by climate change. Some will experience greater hardship than others. Individuals living in flood-prone areas, lower income energy-burdened households, and seniors are more likely to be impacted disproportionately. Climate change presents a daunting challenge to our community, one that must be met by bold actions on every level.

Wildlife Connectivity

Despite Newport's dense settlement patterns, the City has critical natural resources that allow for the movement, migration, and dispersal of wildlife and plants. The Lake, the South Bay, and the conserved wetlands in the South Bay Wildlife Management Area comprise a significant riparian

wildlife connectivity corridor, a connected network of shoreland, streambank and wetland areas in which natural vegetation occurs, providing natural cover for wildlife movement and plant migration. These areas are high in biological diversity, and the wetlands in the South Bay area are ranked "Highest Priority" in the Agency of Natural Resources Biofinder map. In addition to storing floodwaters, these wetlands provide habitat to many species of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and insects, including critical and endangered species.

The largely unfragmented area just north of the wetland complex is considered a "priority connectivity block." Connectivity blocks are a network of forest blocks that collectively provide a regional scale of terrestrial connectivity to priority forest interior habitat blocks south and west of Newport in Westfield and Lowell, which support biological requirements of wide-ranging animals, such as bear, bobcat, and martens.

Flood Resilience

Newport City is located at the southern end of Lake Memphremagog and is entirely within the Memphremagog Watershed, which encompasses a total of 687 square miles of which 489 square miles are in Vermont and 198 square miles of which are in Quebec. Three main rivers, the Clyde, the Barton, and the Black, flow into Lake Memphremagog at the southern end of the lake. The Barton and Black rivers flow into South Bay and the Clyde River enters in the center of the city at Railroad Square.

In general, floods in the area are caused by heavy rains. Springtime rains are often associated with snowmelt. A winter thaw, accompanied by rain often leads to ice jams which also cause riverine flooding. Hurricanes traveling up the east coast of the country produce occasional flooding situations. Much of the land immediately surrounding Lake Memphremagog is susceptible to periodic flooding.

Flooding, Floodplains, and Wetlands

The level of Lake Memphremagog is controlled by a dam at Magog, Quebec. The normal operating range of the lake is maintained in accordance with an international treaty that sets an upper limit to the operating range of 683 feet. However, this upper limit is not a flood control measure, because water levels can go much higher in a significant flood.

The City is subject to flooding from Lake Memphremagog, which can encroach into areas around Gardner Park, as well as several yards and basements on Glen Road. Low lying areas of Newport are also subject to periodic flooding caused by overflows of the Black River and Clyde River and their tributaries. Wetlands along Landing Street provide a degree of floodwater storage. The extensive wetland complex in the South Bay Wildlife Management Area also provides floodwater storage.

The most frequent flooding occurs in early spring due to snowmelt and heavy rains, but flooding has historically occurred in every season. Flooding has also occurred due to debris collection and ice jams. Flooding has incurred significant damage to infrastructure, including roads, culverts, and

bridges, and the City has received public assistance from FEMA to repair storm- and flood-damaged infrastructure.

The National Flood Insurance Program

The City has participated in the National Flood Insurance Program since 1981, which allows Newport residents to purchase flood insurance. To participate in the National Flood Insurance Program, the City must administer and enforce development standards for mapped floodplains in accordance with federal standards. These standards include provisions such as elevating and floodproofing structures and ensuring that all development is anchored in flood-prone areas so that it will not drift downstream.

The regulated floodplain areas are depicted on a FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM). These are low-lying areas adjacent to water bodies that become inundated as floodwaters rise up during a significant flood known as a "base flood." The FIRM is accompanied by a Flood Insurance Study that identifies a base flood elevation of 686 feet for the floodplain areas surrounding the lake. (A base flood elevation is the height that waters can be expected to rise during a significant flood.) According to the regulations, new and substantially improved buildings in the floodplain areas must be raised to at least the base flood elevation.

The base flood is sometimes called the "100-year flood," but this term is misleading because it creates the impression that a flood of that magnitude will only occur once a century. Actually, the "100-year flood" has a 1% chance of flooding in ANY given year. With a 1% annual chance, a structure in the flood hazard area has more than a one-in-four chance of being affected by a flood during a thirty-year mortgage. By comparison a structure has less than a one-in-ten chance of being affected by fire over the same mortgage term.[2]

Floodplains provide an important ecological function by storing and conveying floodwaters, reducing downstream flood velocities, and mitigating riverbank erosion. They also help to protect water quality by filtering nutrients and impurities from runoff, so keeping them free from development can help mitigate the impacts of flood.

With a FEMA Risk Mapping process underway, now is a good time to reassess Newport's approach to flood risks and consider more flood resilient development standards, such as limiting development in the floodplain, elevating structures higher than the base flood elevation, and limiting the amount of fill that can go into the floodplain.

River Corridors

Mapped floodplains do not adequately depict the full range of flood risks a community might face. That is because river channels are constantly undergoing some physical adjustment process. This might be gradual, resulting in gradual stream bank erosion or sediment deposit – or it might be

[2] www.floodready.Vermont.gov

sudden and dramatic, resulting a stream bank collapse. Land near stream banks are particularly vulnerable to erosion damage by flash flooding, bank collapse, and stream channel dynamics.

The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, Agency of Natural Resources, has identified river corridors and has mapped them along streams with a watershed of two square miles or more. In Newport, these streams are the Clyde River and the Black River. The mapped river corridors are comprised of meander belt and a riparian buffer, both of which help to maintain stream equilibrium conditions. The meander belt is an area calculated to accommodate the lateral movement of the stream channel that may occur. The width of the meander belt will vary, depending on the amount of land draining to a given point on a stream. The riparian buffer component is designed as an extension of the meander belt to provide additional development setback space so that when the stream channel reaches the edge of the meander belt, there is still room to establish or maintain a naturally vegetated buffer that would function as resistance to further lateral streambank erosion. For streams with smaller watersheds, it is assumed that a 50-foot vegetation buffer will usually provide ample room for a meander. The Black River passes through the South Bay Wildlife Management Area and will not see new development. Other river corridor areas in the City, however, may not be protected from the existing flood hazard regulations.

Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund

When a community requires public assistance for damaged infrastructure, FEMA funds generally cover 75% of the loss. The State's Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF) covers half of the remaining matching funds (12.5%), if the community has taken all of these steps to reduce flood damage:

1. Adopt the most current Town Road and Bridge Standards (which can be found in the VTrans Orange Book: Handbook for Local Officials).
2. Adopt flood regulations that meet the minimum standards for enrollment in the National Flood Insurance Program
3. Maintain a Local Emergency Management Plan (adopt annually after town meeting and submit before May 1)
4. Adopt a FEMA-approved Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

The City currently meets all of these requirements. The Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, which identifies priority hazards for the community, is set to expire November 2022 and will have to be updated and readopted for another five years. The priority hazards in the plan are severe winter storms, extreme cold, flooding, and high winds. FEMA is instituting new standards for local hazard mitigation plans in early 2023, so the plan update should evaluate additional risks that we might anticipate from climate change, such as excessive heat, drought, invasive species, and infectious disease.

Under ERAF, the City may receive an <u>increased</u> state match, if the City adopts flood regulations that are more aggressive than the minimum standards of the National Flood Insurance Program. These above-and-beyond standards include prohibiting most forms of new development in the river

corridor, prohibiting most forms of new development in the Special Flood Hazard Area, and requiring structures that are more than 50% damaged to be elevated to at least one foot above the base flood elevation.

More information about Flooding and Flood Resilience is available in Appendix C.

Memphremagog Watershed Association

Founded in 2007, the Memphremagog Watershed Association (MWA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the environment and natural beauty of the Memphremagog Watershed, ensuring its protection for generations to come.

The Memphremagog Watershed includes 90 inventoried lakes and ponds, which collectively cover 17,660 acres, or more than 5% of the basin. The watershed boundaries extend to the east to include portions of Norton and Averill, south to the eastern portion of Craftsbury and western portion of Greensboro, west to the edge of Lowell, and north into Canada.

There are three main rivers in the U.S. portion of the Lake Memphremagog basin - the Black, Barton and Clyde rivers, which flow northerly into the southern end of Lake Memphremagog. There are also several smaller streams that flow directly into Lake Memphremagog covering an area of just under 30 square miles. Most of this area is drained by the Johns River which originates in Derby west of Nelson Hill.

The objectives of the organization are to promote ecological awareness of the lake and its watershed; educate the public and promote preservation of the watershed, and collaborate with other lake associations, local, state, and federal governments, and businesses to develop guidelines and policies that protect and improve the quality of life in the watershed. The MWA participates in water quality monitoring of the lake and its tributaries.

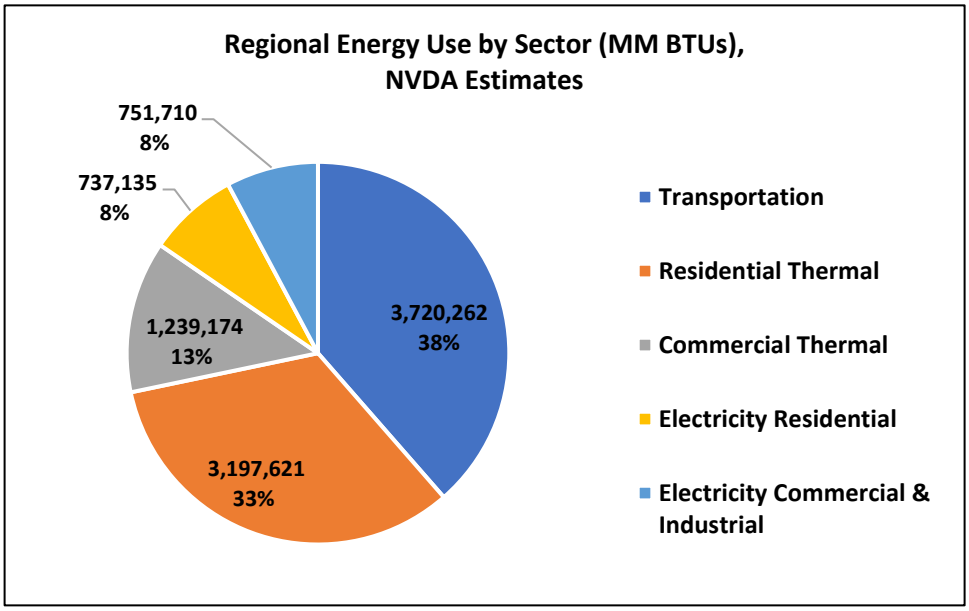
MWA's recent projects and activities that support these objectives include:

- Public workshops on native plantings and the natural restoration of river and lake banks;
- Public presentations on water quality in the lake, as well as threats to water quality, such as aquatic invasive species, leachates, and algae blooms;
- Clean-ups, shoreline restoration, and riparian buffer plantings;
- Water quality sampling and yearly monitoring of the Lake for invasive species and cyanobacteria (bluegreen algae), and
- Birding and stewardship at the Eagle Point Wildlife Management Area.

MWA is a member of the Quebec/Vermont Joint Steering Committee on Lake Memphremagog and has been working on stormwater management and mitigation through Vermont Agency of Natural Resources grants.

In its strategic planning, MWA works in coordination with the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation's Basin 17 Water Quality Management Plan, a tactical plan for improving and protecting water quality in the Memphremagog watershed.

Energy



The region's energy use is dominated by transportation and heating (thermal) for living spaces and water. Electricity usage accounts for the smallest sector. Longer commutes and incidental trips (even in densely settled Newport) and long heating seasons are the biggest drivers of energy use. Very little of our region's energy use comes from renewable sources. Renewables account for probably about 6% of transportation energy use, and much of that comes from ethanol. While homeowners may use more renewables in residential heating, such as cord wood, pellets, and heat pumps, renters tend to have few choices for heating sources. Overall, thermal energy use is still dominated by fuel oil, followed by propane.

Vermont's Statewide Energy Plan (2022) is structured to meet the greenhouse gas requirements of the Global Solutions Warming Act by achieving an 80% reduction in 1990 greenhouse gas levels by the year 2050. The plan's overarching goal is to meet 90% of our energy use through the use of renewables by the year 2050. To meet this goal, we will need to:

- Reduce overall energy use through aggressive weatherization
- Switch to cleaner burning renewable sources, such as all-electric vehicles and heat pumps

Energy Burden

Vermont's Energy Plan recognizes that our current energy system is marked by "systemic inequities" facing many of our communities, including "*energy burden*," which is a household's total energy spending as percentage of income. A 2019 report from Efficiency Vermont estimates average statewide energy burden to be about 10%, but in the Northeast Kingdom, the rate trends much higher. The greatest determinant of energy burden is income, not fuel cost, so even though many residents are able to reduce their costs by burning wood, they still struggle to make ends meet. Those who are energy burdened are less likely to pursue weatherization or fuel switching. Even if those measures save money in the long run, they can't afford it.

Energy burden is one of Newport's biggest energy obstacles, as Orleans County has some of the lowest household incomes in the state. Furthermore, Newport's housing stock is relatively old and probably energy inefficient. Pre-1940 structures are far more likely to be "leaky" and in need of aggressive weatherization upgrades that residents simply cannot afford.

HEAT Squad, a recent arrival to the Northeast Kingdom, makes affordable whole energy audits available to all households and assists with procurement and oversight to homeowners seeking contractors for their efficiency projects. Reduced audit costs are generally available for households with incomes up to 125% of the area median income, and HEAT Squad representatives can coordinate rebates through Efficiency Vermont and other resources for their clients. Many people probably don't realize that they meet income qualifications for HEAT Squad's services. For example, in 2022, a qualifying two-person household would have a household income of $80,800 or less.

A similar **free** program for qualifying low-income homeowners is available through Northeast Employment and Training Organization. Grants and low-interest financing options are also available through USDA. Rural Edge can also assist income-eligible homeowners with low-interest loans on projects that may include weatherization. While HEAT Squad representatives will make a referral for those who qualify for such services, homeowners are not always aware of these resources. A local energy committee or an energy coordinator could help connect energy burdened individuals with the services they need.

Fuel Switching and Conservation Opportunities

Newport's densely settled and walkable downtown and surrounding neighborhoods provide a unique advantage for reducing our reliance on single-occupancy vehicles. A district heating system, the use of a single heating plant to heat multiple buildings along a street or a development, is a possibility for Newport. Local industrial plants that have large boilers for processing heat, are looking for additional ways to use the waste heat produced. While there are no installations to date, the concept merits consideration.

The Planning Commission strongly advocates the conservation of energy. Energy conservation should be part of daily life, at home, school, and the workplace. The use of energy efficient appliances, lighting, and building materials is highly recommended. It is also recommended that residences and businesses avail themselves of the many energy efficient services and programs currently offered by energy suppliers, especially Vermont Electric Cooperative. Rebates are offered for the purchase of energy efficient appliances and lighting. Energy efficiency programs are available for new home builders. Energy suppliers can also assist with energy conservation programming in schools or through civic organizations. The Planning Commission recommends that all residents develop good conservation practices and take advantage of the many promotional energy conservation programs available in the community.

Opportunities for Fuel Switching

The Planning Commission recommends the development of environmentally sound renewable energy resources including hydropower, wood heating, solar, waste and wind energy. Projects that use waste wood available within the city are especially encouraged. The use of wood for heating by the State of Vermont at the Emory Hebard State Office Building on Main Street, North Country Union High School and Career Center, North Country Union Junior High School and North Country Hospital are not only examples of the use of renewable energy resources but also the use of locally available wood supplies. The increased use of wood and wood pellets for residential home heating

is decreasing the city and region's reliance on imported fuels such as oil. The use of waste is increasing as a source of industrial process heat. Waste wood is increasingly being sold to Vermont wood fired generation plants. The installation of five new 2 MW bio-diesel generation units by Great Bay Hydro also incorporates the use of waste as an energy source. Washington Electric Cooperative installed a generation plant at the regional landfill in Coventry using methane gas recovered from the landfill as a source of fuel. Orleans County farms are installing anaerobic digesters to produce methane gas from animal waste. The methane gas is used to generate electricity.

In recent years, manufacturers have developed air-sourced “cold climate” pumps that operate more consistently over Vermont’s vast temperature ranges. Unlike geothermal units, they do not require excavation or duct work and can be much less expensive to install. Cold climate heat pumps have the capacity to heat about 50% to 70% of a building, depending on the size and layout of the structure. The recently renovated New Avenue apartments in downtown St. Johnsbury heat each unit with a roof-mounted heat pump. Electric baseboards provide backup heat on the coldest days (approximately -10° or more). A similar application is possible in downtown Newport.

Solar Generation

The City’s total installed solar capacity (grid-connected) is currently about 190 kW. Ames Electric installed 87 Kw of solar panels within the city. Waste USA has constructed a 10,600 panel (2MW) installation at the local landfill site in neighboring Coventry. For those who are unable to install solar panels on their own property, Vermont Electric Coop operates a community solar program that allows customers to sponsor a panel in return for a fixed monthly credit on their bill.

Unfortunately, additional solar development in the Newport area is limited, largely due to the massive amount of energy the Northeast Kingdom already generates. Of particular concern is grid congestion in the Sheffield Highgate Export Interface (SHEI), the northwestern area of our region where generation exceeds load. The region generates far more power than it consumes, causing generation to exceed the capacity of the export line. The continued addition of new sources of generation, like solar, forces existing resources, like Kingdom Community Wind and Sheffield Wind to curtail their output due to the lack of capacity to export power. Adding more renewables to an already full grid at this point can simply mean replacing other renewables. While modest transmission upgrades may help to alleviate some congestion in the short-term, the situation will require robust, long-term solutions and options for storage.

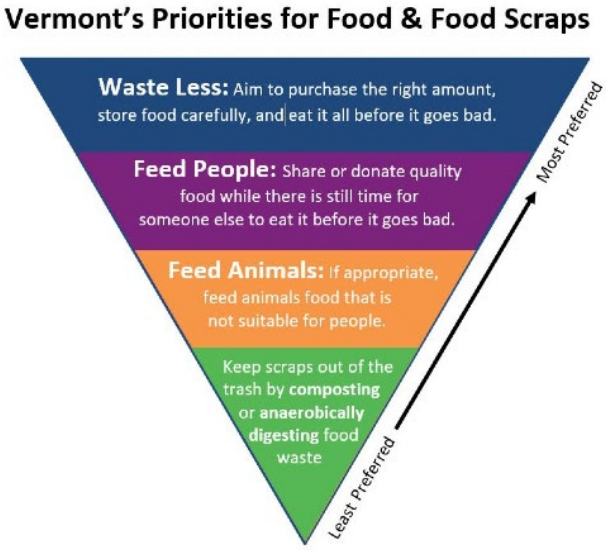
Solid Waste

The Agency of Natural Resources estimates that the average Vermonter generates about six pounds of waste each day. About two pounds of that waste gets recycled or composted, and the rest goes into the trash, where it ultimately reaches the Coventry landfill, Vermont’s only remaining active landfill.

Act 148, also known as Vermont’s Universal Recycling Law, was passed in 2012 to reduce the amount of waste we generate and divert more materials from the waste stream through recycling and composting. The annual diversion rate (the amount of waste kept out of the landfill through recycling or reuse) has stagnated at around 30% to 36% for more than a decade, with more than

half of the waste stream consisting of materials that could have been recycled, donated, or composted. Act 148 therefore bans three major categories from the trash bins:

- "Blue bin" recyclables (such as clean bottles and cans, and dry paper and cardboard)
- Leaf and yard debris and clean wood
- Food scraps



Food waste accounts for the largest share of organics in the waste stream. Food waste can occur at any point along the supply chain: Cosmetically challenged fruits and vegetables are left to rot in the field, food gets spoiled during shipping, retailers dispose of expired goods, and leftovers get scraped into the bin. The Universal Recycling Law outlines how Vermont businesses and residents should prioritize what happens to food waste to achieve greater good. Wasting less food and redirecting edible food to those who need it are the most preferred options for managing food waste. These strategies at the local level might entail activities such as food sharing tables at school cafeterias, outreach and education on food waste, and donation of goods that have reached their sell-by date.

All municipalities must maintain a Solid Waste Implementation Plan (SWIP), either through a solid waste district, or individually, and the SWIP must comply with the standards of Vermont's Materials Management Plan (MMP). The City maintains its own SWIP, which is available for review on the City's website. The Plan is current through 2025 and documents numerous efforts to comply with Vermont's MMP, including:

- Annual reporting on waste disposal, reduction, and diversion rates;
- Providing an "A-Z Waste & Recycling Guide" to the general public;
- Implementing a variable rate pricing structure (aka "pay as you throw") for waste disposal
- Outreach and education to schools and businesses; and
- Technical assistance with waste management at public events.

Casella Waste Management, owner and operator of the Coventry landfill, assists the City with the development and maintenance of its SWIP. Casella acquired the landfill in 1995 from Waste USA, who acquired the site in the early 1990s and developed the first lined cell. Prior to the acquisition by Waste USA, the site hosted a racetrack, mobile home park, junkyard, and an unlined landfill in a wetland – a practice that is now banned by federal regulations.

Casella's most recent expansion was permitted three years ago. The first cell in the 50+ acre expansion site was completed in November. All operations are now in the new cell, which has an underdrain system with a six-foot separation from the bottom of the landfill to the groundwater. The recent expansion is anticipated to last for the next 22-25 years. There is one more possibility

for expansion, which would entail excavating the old unlined landfill and restoring it, along with any contaminated soil and groundwater, to current environmental standards. This next expansion will be very challenging but could expand the capacity of the landfill for another 5-7 years.

What happens to Vermont's trash after the Coventry landfill reaches capacity is unknown at this point. To date, there is no indication that Act 148 has reduced waste disposal levels.

More information about the landfill is available in Appendix C: Solid Waste.

Historic Preservation

Newport has an historic district that was established in the early 2000s in anticipation of receiving Downtown Designation. The boundaries must overlap at least part of the Downtown Designation area, but they can be adjusted over time, as needed, with the assistance of an architectural historian. Historic preservation activities are monitored by the Historic Preservation Commission, which consists of 5 members appointed by the City Council for 3 year terms. They usually meet quarterly, and their meetings are typically held in conjunction with Planning Commission Meetings.

OBJECTIVES

- Help keep Newport's air and water clean
- Mitigate Newport's flood hazards in the most cost-effective manner possible
- Assure that future land use development considers flooding impacts
- Recognize that Newport's present and future economy is based significantly on tourism and recreation and that its economic wellbeing and growth are dependent on a healthy Lake Memphremagog and watershed
- Recognize the importance of energy use as a vital part of the city's environmental stewardship
- Remove economic barriers so that Newport residents can afford weatherization and switching to cleaner burning energy technologies
- Increase the diversion rate from Newport's waste stream
- Protect and promote Newport's historical assets

ACTIONS

- Incorporate the recommendations and strategies from the 2017 Local All Hazards Mitigation Plan into city policies, bylaws, and development review process
- Evaluate flood risks and mitigation opportunities as new map data becomes available
- Review and update the City's flood hazard regulations and consider more flood resilient development standards that limit fill in floodplains, elevate structure above the base flood, and limit new encroachments into river corridors
- Keep the Local Emergency Operations Plan current

- Update the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan to address likely impacts from climate change
- Support the Memphremagog Watershed Association and other environmental organizations working to protect and reclaim the natural environment within and surrounding the city
- Support the utilization of renewable energy resources within the city, mainly hydropower, solar power, and wood heat, as long as the use of these resources do not themselves cause undue adverse impacts to the environment
- Follow State of Vermont's best practices of low impact development (LID) in all future new or retrofit development, especially as it applies to minimizing impervious surfaces and mitigating stormwater runoff
- Ensure that all future development follows the permitting requirements of Vermont's Shoreland Protection Act and local by-laws where necessary and appropriate
- Incorporate energy-efficient lighting, provide electric car charging ports, and support solar-ready development projects in Newport's downtown where feasible
- Communicate the stewardship objectives of Newport through interpretive signage and public communication to assure the environmental message reaches locals and visitors
- Establish an energy committee to stimulate awareness of weatherization, fuel switching, and sustainability efforts
- Work with the regional planning commission to sponsor a regional energy fair
- Support or sponsor an annual "repair café" to prevent electronics and household goods from going to the landfill
- Support outreach and education on food rescue efforts
- Support outreach and education on reuse, recycling, and reduction of single-use plastics
- Organize an historic walking tour
- Consider installation of additional historic markers and signage

VIBRANCY

VISION

> *Through its mix of uses, historic character, and lively streetscapes, Newport's downtown is recognized as the heart of the city and unites the interest of locals, tourists, and businesses.*

Downtown Newport has historically been the centerpiece of commercial and cultural activity. However, long-term demographic and economic shifts have led to decreased investment. While the long-range impacts of COVID-19 remain to be seen, bricks-and-mortar retail and restaurants were either disrupted or shuttered. Much of downtown's professional workforce migrated to remote work, and the future of the downtown office environment remains in question. Online retail, which surged during lockdown, is rapidly changing shopping patterns.

In the Actions and Objectives Survey, respondents identified "making downtown welcoming to visitors and locals" as the most important objective in making Newport "a great place to live". The City must collaborate with partners and stakeholders to adapt to these changes to make Newport's downtown a hub of community, cultural, commercial, and civic activity. This will require ongoing investments that contribute to the area's vitality and make it a destination for residents and visitors alike.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

A Reinvigorated Main Street

Numerous studies and plans call for transformative growth in Downtown Newport, but how is "growth" defined in a fully built environment? "In Downtown Newport "growth" entails achieving the highest and best use of the City's urban core, resulting in a strong and resilient economic hub, a livable and walkable community, and a vibrant social, recreational and cultural center for residents and visitors to enjoy.

The Waterfront and Downtown Master Plan, for example, has a vision for a reinvigorated Main Street that serves as a "hub of activity" for all. Recommendations for Main Street range from simple improvements, such as adding street scaping and street furniture, to wayfinding and signage, and to far more complex endeavors involving the redevelopment of critical sites with street frontage.

Central to this reinvigorated hub, is the potential infill development on the vacant lot on the south side of Main Street. While buildings in this area will be informed by the City's zoning requirements for building form, setback and use, the ultimate goal is a high-quality development that reinforces the street by having active ground floor uses and parking at the rear of (or under) the lot. The City will review the regulations and make changes as necessary to create the framework for a successful redevelopment.

Newport's Downtown & Waterfront Master Plan contains a long-range "Vision Plan" with conceptual illustrations for a re-invigorated downtown. Figure 1 is a depiction of possibilities -- not concrete plans.

A successful re-envisioning of Main Street will depend on a number of factors. If, for example, the vacant lot site is redeveloped with ample underground parking, it may be possible to expand the Municipal Building on the east side, where the existing parking lot is located. The remaining portion of the existing parking lot (to the rear of the addition) could then serve as an event space and public plaza. Additionally, the City may be able to work with the State to identify the long-term needs of their court facilities. It is common that these types of facilities become outdated for their current users and are often re-purposed to accommodate other redevelopment opportunities. By developing a shared vision, the City and State could identify actions to advance the future of these great resources.

Figure 1: A Re-Envisioned Main Street

1: Main Street

2: City Hall

3: New plaza

4: Addition to City Hall

5: Improved Sidewalks*

6: Goodrich Memorial Library

7: Future Development

8: Improved crosswalks*

9: Bump outs*

10: Street Trees

Source: Waterfront and Downtown Master Plan, Prepared by VHB, October 2018
**Since this master plan was completed, the City improved sidewalks and crosswalks and added bumpouts.*

The Role of Arts and Culture

Arts and culture play a critical role in downtown revitalization, because of their appeal to residents and visitors alike. Formed in 2006, the MAC Center for the Arts (MAC stands for Memphremagog Arts Collaborative) showcases local artists in a 2,000 sq. ft. street-level gallery on Main Street. Additional gallery and classroom space is located downstairs. MAC is a nonprofit collaborative organization offering membership and sponsorship opportunities for artists, hand crafters, photographers, writers, performers, business and community groups and patrons of the arts. Members hold creative classes, many of which are free of charge, or require a nominal fee only. Additional nearby attractions, such as the Newport Area Concert Band performances in Gardner Park, as well as the nearby Haskell Opera House and the Old Stone House, add to Newport's appeal as a cultural center as well.

Newport City's Goodrich Memorial Library is located at the corner of Main Street and Field Avenue. This beautifully restored, three-story brick building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It serves the citizens of the City of Newport, the Town of Newport Center, and Coventry. Originally built in 1898, the library has been serving the public for over one hundred years while providing the latest literary, educational, and technological resources. Today, the library offers free wireless internet throughout the building and is listed as a 'hot spot' for visitors to the area. It currently provides downloadable audio books and e-book service, along with free access to video conferencing equipment.

The library hosts a range of educational programs for all ages through the year. In addition, the second floor has a unique natural science collection with many period art displays devoted to the history of Newport. There are also rooms available to the public for meetings.

Canada as an Asset

Given its proximity to Canada, forging strong economic and cultural ties has been and will continue to be an essential part of Newport's future. The ability to welcome Canadian visitors arriving by boat on Lake Memphremagog offers a unique tourism experience. Bilateral trade with and investment in Newport area businesses by Canadian entrepreneurs has resulted in many notable successes. Through this relationship, Newport seeks to function as a gateway supporting Canadian access to the US marketplace, recreational tourism in Newport and the Northeast Kingdom, and vibrancy in local jobs and economic vitality.

The State of Vermont also recognizes this opportunity and has established the Vermont-Quebec Enterprise Initiative (VQEI), believing that our relationship provides an excellent foundation upon which to build even greater economic ties. Businesses in Quebec with an interest in expanding or developing in the US market are invited to explore Vermont and available benefits. Businesses like Revision Military, Louis Garneau, and many more, have all expanded to Vermont from Quebec and are thriving in their new home.

Newport's walkable downtown, lined with local restaurants, cafes, a market, an Arts Center, historic buildings, state and municipal office buildings along with its nearby network of bike paths and trails, and a community beach are all waiting to welcome Canadian guests and businesses.

The Downtown Designation Organization

An organizational structure is necessary to sustain a comprehensive and long-term downtown revitalization effort. The municipality must therefore designate a nonprofit corporation as the organization responsible for the revitalization of the designated downtown district. (This corporation is also responsible for maintaining Downtown Designation, which is discussed in greater detail on Development, page 18).

The downtown designation organization is responsible to develop a comprehensive revitalization strategy for the downtown district that demonstrates broad-based community support. The strategy must involve a long-term commitment to enhancing economic opportunities, preserving historic buildings, and improving public spaces and infrastructure in the commercial district.

In 2007, the City of Newport appointed Newport City Renaissance Corporation as the organization responsible for maintaining the downtown designation status. In 2018 the organization was renamed Newport City Downtown Development (NCDD) to better convey the work of the organization.

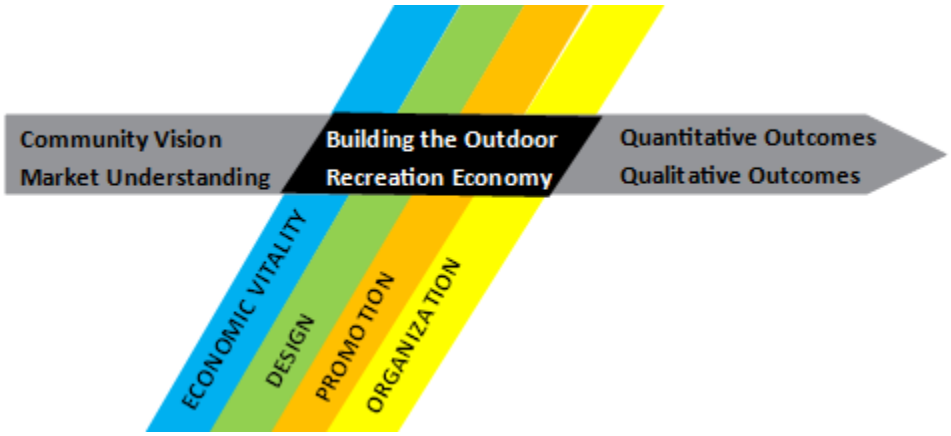
The downtown program uses the "Main Street Approach" which is a strategy that encourages the community to take steps to enact long term change, while also implementing short term, inexpensive activities that attract people to the downtown and create a sense of enthusiasm and momentum about their community. The approach advocates for four focus areas: Economic Vitality, Design, Promotion, and Organization. Each of these focus areas is supported by a committee.

At the center of the Main Street Approach is the *Transformation Strategy, which* frames a focused, deliberate path to revitalizing or strengthening a downtown or commercial district's economy. The Transformation Strategy informs the work of the Economic Vitality, Design, Promotion, and Organization committees – and it must be informed by a solid understanding of local and regional market data and sustained and inclusive community engagement.

Based on research, studies, and ongoing community engagement, the NCDD has adopted the Transformation Strategy of developing Newport's Outdoor Recreation Economy. Its work focuses on:

- directly supporting related businesses and organizations (*economic vitality*);
- creating new markets through business recruitment and expansion (*economic vitality*);
- pursuing infrastructure updates, trail development, and improved public access to Lake Memphremagog *(design);*
- beautification efforts (*design*);
- marketing the Newport brand (promotion), and

- partnerships with local, regional, state and New England organizations and programs to draw new markets in outdoor recreation into Newport, while still attracting employers and families, supporting individual and community health; and contributing to a high quality of life (organization).



OBJECTIVES

- To promote Newport's downtown as a place of action and activity
- To embrace the "Live, Work and Play" City Vision and communicate it broadly
- Actively support the visual and performing arts in Newport and around the region
- To address how zoning and city policies can support a greater diversity of uses, activities, events, and associated community needs
- To increase cooperation between the city, the business community, tourism agencies, the historical society, and the arts community in support of year-round downtown promotion and programming

ACTIONS

- Hold a Newport Vibrancy Summit with the Newport City Downtown Development (NCDD), the Northern Forest Center, and other key stakeholders to explore the post-pandemic tourism environment in the region and the role the city can play in attracting new entrepreneurial residents and investment
- Work with key stakeholders to assess the status of the arts community in Newport, and investigate how grant funding might be leveraged in support of the creative economy
- Establish a coordinated process to ensure issues around historic preservation, culture, and arts are captured in tourism branding and marketing as a vital part of a vibrant Newport
- Study the viability of providing a "Welcome to Newport" outreach program for new residents, highlighting key civic and cultural assets, educational opportunities, recreational pursuits, and ways for them to engage with the community

- Continue education and events programming at the Library and explore how remote access can expand the distribution of offerings

REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

VISION

Newport is the cultural, civic, and economic center of Orleans County and leverages its role to advance regional development, employment, and tourism.

The City of Newport's role in the region creates deep connections with its surrounding neighbors. As a regional service center of the Northeast Kingdom, the city knows that its changes will shape the outcomes for others. It also knows that by leading on welcoming visitors to the region, working collaboratively with surrounding communities on critical infrastructure, and deepening cooperation on recreational and cultural initiatives, the City of Newport and the surrounding region will reap considerable benefits. In essence, a rising tide can lift all boats.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Neighboring communities

As the seat of Orleans County, Newport City has a sphere of influence beyond the municipalities that border it and stretches across the international boundary located just a short distance up Lake Memphremagog. Specifically, the adjacent towns of Newport Town, Coventry, and Derby comprise the inner ring of the greater Newport region.

The town of Brighton (Island Pond), the largest municipality in Essex County located right over the county line next to Charleston and Morgan, and Orleans County's other towns, from southernmost Greensboro to sparsely populated Holland, are pulled toward the hub of the county.

Bisected by Interstate 91 and possessing various residential, business, and geographical settings, Derby is Newport's most dominant and influential neighbor. Derby surpassed Newport in population in the 2010 Census, and it is now the most populous Orleans County municipality. When Newport's sewage treatment plant was rebuilt in 1982, the Village of Derby Center purchased an allocation of 150,000 gallons per day. The sewer line from Derby Center to Newport's wastewater treatment plant along Route 5 has been joined by a new water line to help develop a private industrial park and improve Newport City's water supply. Further cooperative efforts investigating the provision of sewer in areas of Derby that are adjacent to the city and maintaining the quality of Lake Memphremagog are recommended.

Canada

Although Canada does not directly border the City of Newport, many Canadians visit and shop here. Some Canadians have second homes around the shores of Lake Memphremagog within the boundaries of Newport City, Newport Town, and the Town of Derby, and several Canadian-based

companies have operations here. Canadians can access the City via US Interstate 91, Route 5, and, for some, by boat via Lake Memphremagog. The I-91 corridor crossing in Derby Line is the 10th busiest port of entry with significant resources from Homeland Security to provide security screenings and processing of traffic.

Newport as a Regional Employment Center

According to most recent Census data and W2s, Newport City provides covered employment to more than 2,556 individuals, accounting for more than 30% of all covered employment in the county. Nearly 80% of these employees live outside Newport, which means that the City receives a daily influx of commuters. The disruption of the COVID 19, however, may have lasting impacts on employment patterns. At the start of the lockdown in 2020, many workers switched to working from home, some permanently. Although the City may lose some daily commuters, there may be new opportunities from an increasingly mobile workforce, especially telecommuters who want to move away from larger, more expensive housing markets. Although the long-term impacts of remote work remain to be seen, the City should take measures to attract a highly mobile workforce by improving the availability of workforce housing and ensuring that affordable high speed broadband is uniformly available.

Major transportation corridors

Before Interstate 91 was built, State Highway 5 was the main north-south road link to the City, and it still plays a significant role in connecting the city with Coventry and Derby. State Highways 100 and 105 remain the east-west traffic routes. Interstate 91 has shortened the travel time from points north, such as Sherbrooke and Montreal, and from the south, such as White River Junction and Boston. As a result, the interstate has become the main north-south route for travel to and from the city. Although two exits in Derby connect Newport to the interstate system, Exit 27 is the primary connection, feeding the I-91 access road and Western Avenue, Clyde Street, and Union Streets.

The Newport-Derby Road (Vermont Route 5) is a five-mile stretch of road that runs from the international boundary at Derby Line through Derby Center to Newport City. Linear development along this route poses a stark contrast to the smart growth mixed-use development patterns envisioned for downtown Newport. Nearly all this development is commercial, and much of it extends beyond the City's borders. The City has some control of future development through the revision and enforcement of zoning standards. For example, encouraging vertical development over horizontal, limiting curb cuts, and carefully siting parking areas may help to minimize further road congestion and linear sprawl along Route 5. Similarly, a thorough reassessment of development standards in the downtown area may ultimately support a broader mix of uses, creating a desirable alternative for potential developers.

Shared services

In addition to sewer, the City is connected to several area towns through various legal, cultural, governmental, and inter-municipal means-- especially emergency services. Newport's Fire Department, for example, is one of 19 participants in a mutual aid agreement with neighboring communities. North Country Hospital, which opened in 1974, serves Orleans County and northern Essex County. Newport Ambulance Service, Inc., is a non-profit entity that serves the City, as well as multiple towns in Orleans and Lamoille County.

Multimodal connectivity

As a bona fide regional service center, Newport must leverage alternatives modes of transportation in and out of the City: air, rail, and transit. Future planning will need to support a genuinely multi-modal system. Public transit options are currently limited, and as state and federal infrastructure projects are initiated in the coming decade, Newport should support regional efforts to expand multimodal transportation.

Vermont's Climate Action Plan (released December 2021) places renewed emphasis on the importance of reducing vehicle miles travelled from single-occupancy vehicles, which account for about 40% of Vermont's total greenhouse gas emissions. Even though we need better metrics for measuring emission reductions from transportation alternatives, we already know that increased investment in transit, microtransit, rail, bike and pedestrian infrastructure will have a beneficial effect. Safe, reliable, and convenient transportation options will also improve social equity for those who do not or cannot drive. Investment in multimodal transportation systems in compact, densely settled areas like Newport will be especially impactful, where a range of goods, services, and housing options are available.

Air

The Northeast Kingdom International Airport (NEKIA), known as the Newport State Airport until 2015, is located in Coventry, just south of Newport City off Route 5. It has two runways, primary and crosswind. With the expansion of the primary runway to 5300', larger jets are able to land all year. The 4000' crosswind runway is closed during the winter months. A parallel taxi-way and improved lighting were also completed in 2017.

Jet traffic continues to increase with chartered flights carrying U.S. and Canadian passengers to and from the area. The existing 1940s-era terminal is currently inadequate for U.S. Customs and must be replaced with a larger and modern terminal with restrooms and waiting areas. If Newport is to fulfill its role as a regional service center, ongoing investment in the Northeast Kingdom International Airport is imperative.

NEKIA serves seasonal vacationers who have summer homes in the area or are visiting for a variety of outdoor activities such as skiing, hunting, fishing, boating, hiking or a wide range of cultural and sightseeing purposes. There are no commercial flights or charter services available at the NEKIA, but it is expected that these services will become available in the future. Should this occur, there may be a need for on-site airport emergency services such as fire and security.

Along with use by local firms such as the Indian Head Division of Columbia Forest Products and the Orleans Division of Ethan Allen Furniture, NEKIA is used by the Vermont State Police, Border Patrol, the Army National Guard, and other government agencies.

Future construction of a warehouse and hangar space would help with the expansion of regional passenger service aircraft to the airport. Other possible considerations for expansion may be an on-site rental car company, private air medical transport provider, and finally a partnership with a local college similar to the well-known Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's flight training program.

Planned improvements and expansion of the airport will promote and raise this transportation link in its level of importance to the community and the business sector.

Freight Rail

Freight rail lines are vital to Newport's transportation system and economy. According to the Vermont 2021 Rail Plan, rail is about four times more fuel efficient than truck, with the capacity to move a ton of freight more than 470 miles on just a gallon of fuel.

Newport's rail lines are part of a 24-mile segment owned by Canadian Pacific (CP). The line enters Vermont from Richford, crosses back into Canada, re-enters Vermont near Troy, and then continues through Newport along the South Bay's eastern edge, with spur lines heading northeast and northwest. The CP line terminates at the Newport-Coventry border, where it connects with the Connecticut River Subdivision of the Washington County Rail (WACR), a 102.2 mile state-owned line that connects to White River Junction. From there, the line connects to the New England Central Railroad Company (NECR) to points south. The CP/WACR line through Newport to White River Junction is a class II freight line, which means that the maximum allowable speed for freight is 25 mph. (For context, most rail lines in Vermont are a class 2 or 3. Only the NECR line south of White River Junction has a class 4 rating.)

Newport-based Columbia Forest Products, Poulin Grain, and Feed Commodities International use the freight line. An Orleans County brewer has recently been using the line for transporting hops.

Growth and expansion of freight use will depend on weight-bearing capacity. Under current national standards, a rail car should be able to be loaded with up to 110 tons of cargo for a total of 286,000 pounds. Although the weight capacity of CP line through Newport meets this standard, the WACR segment from the Newport-Coventry border to White River Junction does not. The current Vermont Rail Plan calls for upgrades to 21 bridges along this segment that are rated to the 1996 standard (263,000 lbs.) Mid- to long-term cost of upgrades are more than $87 million.

The ability to transfer freight between rail and other modes (chiefly truck) is another important consideration of the freight system. Trucks are often needed to move goods the "last mile" to and from freight facilities such as warehouses, stores, and manufacturing facilities. For rail-truck transfers, there are two common methods: *intermodal* terminals, which allow for the transfer between rail and truck of intact containers and trailers, and *transload* facilities, which allow for the transport of materials to and from railcars using other modes, such as forklifts. There are no

intermodal terminals in Vermont, but there are 16 transload facilities in Vermont, with two just south of Newport in Orleans and Barton. Both are privately owned.

Land use is also an important consideration for maintaining a viable freight system. Future industrial uses should be located near related developed areas with easy access to highways and railroads. Moreover, properties with good rail access development must remain available for rail-oriented development. Once a rail accessible property has been developed for another use, it is very difficult to restore its valuable potential for rail.

Passenger Rail

Apart from the occasional excursion train, there has been no passenger rail service in Newport since 1965. At that time users could travel to north to Montreal and south to White River Junction. Newport could benefit from a passenger service for weekday commuters and vacationers, and it merits study for future consideration. According to Amtrak's sustainability report, intercity or long-distance travel by rail is 46% more energy efficient than traveling by single occupancy vehicle and 34% more efficient than air travel.

Transit

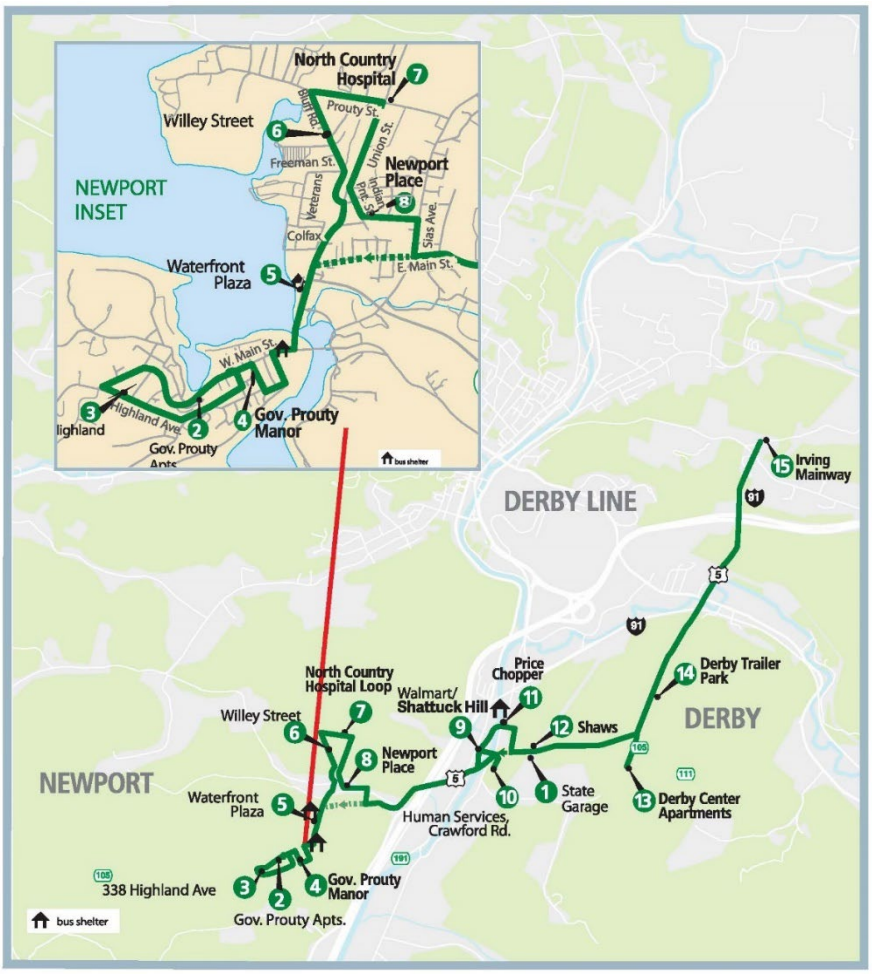
Newport is served by Rural Community Transport (RCT), whose mission is "to provide public transportation services for everyone that are safe, reliable, accessible, and affordable to enhance the economic, social and environmental health of the communities we serve." RCT offers a variety of services – shopper bus routes and commuter bus routes; as well as non-emergency medical transportation; rides to wellness, recovery services, and jobs; and rides for elderly and disabled. Services are free, with the exception of Community, Organizations, Departments, and Schools (CODS), which is paid by the client for private trips, such as going to the airport, school, grocery shopping, etc. RCT Van and bus drivers are paid an hourly rate, and volunteer drivers receive the federal mileage reimbursement rate. A new fixed route is being added to the Burke/Kingdom Trails area, and RCT will be adding two electric vehicles to its fleet. In 2020, Green Mountain Transit transitioned four routes to RCT: The US Route 2 Commuter, The Morrisville Shopping Route, the Morrisville Loop, and the Route 100 Commuter. Collectively, routes cover:

- St. Johnsbury – Lyndonville
- St. Johnsbury – Montpelier
- Morrisville – Morrisville / Johnson / Barre / Waterbury
- Newport – Highlander / Kingdom Shopper
- St. Johnsbury – Littleton, NH and Woodsville, NH

Connecting service is available to the LINK Express/Burlington, Waterbury Commuter, Barre City Commuter, Hospital Hill routes, and Jay-Lyn Shuttle.

The Newport area is served by two "fixed deviated" routes, which means that the driver can go up to ¾ mile away from the route to accommodate users. The monthly Kingdom Shopper from Island

Pond to Derby and back was disrupted by the pandemic. The Highlander (route shown below) makes four round trips between Derby and Newport daily, Monday through Friday.



COVID was a major disruption to RCT. Ridership and availability of volunteer drivers was reduced by half over 2019. Nevertheless, RCT will play a heightened role in the Climate Action Plan and is open to collaborative efforts to fill service gaps. For example, area employers who want to develop a transportation demand management program for their employees can work with RCT to devise new routes. RCT will be reviewing their promotion and marketing strategies to encourage more people to use transit. Admittedly, it is difficult to get those who have a choice to opt for public transit over single-occupancy vehicles. Reliable, customer-centric, user-friendly vehicles with WIFI and other amenities may help to change behaviors. The City can help in this effort by raising awareness of RCT's availability. For example, the City can partner with RCT during downtown events, when parking may be limited or difficult to access. This approach has been successful in St. Johnsbury, which hosts a First Night Celebration.

OBJECTIVES

- To recruit employers who can leverage the talents and skills of the residents of Newport and the region through diverse business enterprises
- To support remote working from Newport
- To attract tourism and tourism-related businesses
- To support the role that Newport plays as a hub for cultural and civic activity
- To expand the physical connections between Newport and the region

ACTIONS

- Work with rail line operators and owners, VTrans, and the regional planning commission to ensure that rail service continues to be a vital resource to Newport
- Review the Zoning Bylaw to ensure that industrial properties with rail access are protected for future use
- Work with the Regional Development Corporation, the Department of Economic Development and others to establish and promote an inventory of rail accessible industrial properties
- Work with economic development agencies to assess the viability of incentive programs, including New Markets Tax Credits, tax stabilization, and tax increment financing, Vermont Employment Growth Incentive, and alternative financing options such as Vermont Community Development Program, Vermont Economic Development Authority, Northern Community Investment Corporation, Northeastern Vermont Development Association, and revolving loan funds
- Work with economic development agencies to encourage intermodal rail freight use by private businesses where viable
- Locate a high-tech business or businesses in Newport City or Orleans County to leverage workforce skills
- Work with the Department of Homeland Security and all state and federal environmental agencies to improve public access for foreign lake users
- Work with Department of Homeland Security and all state and federal agencies to improve access and amenities for users of the Northeast Kingdom International Airport
- Develop a destination resort industry within our city, i.e., lodging and restaurant facilities that also provide convention center and recreational activities
- Create commercial, industrial, and residential zones and corresponding zoning regulations that make locating here easy and convenient for employers
- Work collaboratively with neighboring towns in the exploration of a system of multi-use paths to expand access to the region's natural areas (including the Barton River or Black River) or Jay Peak
- Explore how the Northeast Kingdom's NEK Broadband Communications Union District can help leverage and support Newport's economic development options and its regional role as an employment center
- Encourage local employers to partner with RCT to develop and enhance commuter options for employees
- Use RCT busses and vans during downtown events to help raise awareness of their services

Looking Ahead

Newport, while small with approximately 5,000 people, draws its economic strength from its diversity of economic activities. The city does not rely strictly on industrial, tourist, governmental, or any other single source for its economic stability. It is this diversity that gives Newport its unique character and ambiance. This diversity of interest and economic opportunities informs the future direction of the city. The city's future is not served well by heavy reliance upon industrial, tourist, retailing or any other economic activity at the exclusion of all others. Instead, the city's existing charm and future well-being are best served by a continuation of a wide base of diverse economic, recreational, and cultural and lifestyle choices. It is to this end that this Municipal Plan for the City of Newport is designed.

OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES:

As Newport looks ahead several overarching principles will inform its decisions and the actions it takes.

1. Respecting Private Property Rights – The city respects private property rights and the importance of private investment.
2. Being Fiscally Responsible – The city will support new initiatives and investments but recognizes the need to be wary of excessive property taxes and public expenditures. Leveraging investments by industrial and commercial developers and private corporations in partnership with the city can help keep residential property taxes low.
3. Maintaining an Ecological Balance – The city will balance its needs to deliver essential infrastructure, support its local economy and maintain a healthy community with its desire to minimize impacts to critical environmental and ecological systems. Newport will partner with private corporations who share its sense of stewardship for the environment.
4. Expanding Newport's Tourism Footprint – The city will seek to expand upon its regional role in the tourism economy, focusing on its unique relationship to Lake Memphremagog. The city will support improved access to and utilization of the Lake and guide the market development of its downtown to benefit broader tourism opportunities and enhance public use.
5. Maintain Economic Diversity – While the city knows that tourism can play a greater role in the local economy, supporting diverse businesses including industrial, commercial, and services, are critical to maintain options for work and livelihoods.
6. Supporting Residents, for Life – The city will seek opportunities to support Its resident's ability to live, work and play throughout their lives in Newport by maximizing the availability of good paying jobs, supporting above-average educational and technical training, improving access to recreation, supporting high-quality affordable childcare, and maintaining affordability.
7. Leading the Region – The City plays a significant role in the region and works in partnership with its neighbors to promote economic development, tourism, and environmental stewardship. The city will maintain this role as it moves forward.

Taking Action

The Vision expressed in this Municipal Plan sets the city on a path forward. The mantra of Live, Work and Play resonates with the moment and appears poised to reverberate in the years ahead. While advancing the objectives and actions outlined in the plan will undoubtedly take time and effort, Newport has many strong assets to build from. This plan identifies many objectives and actions that the City will move forward on in the future. The following list includes five shorter-term actions that were identified as priorities through the public engagement process and finalized with City staff including addressing housing needs and creating a more vibrant Newport. Completing these actions will help deepen the understanding of the planning environment, respond to community needs, and set the foundation for future development implementation. These actions also ensure there is information and understanding in place to support larger capital improvement projects and city initiatives.

Action 1	WHAT	Complete a Zoning Bylaw Review and Audit that addresses how the current code (including Form-Based Code) enables (or does not) denser multi-family housing, flexible commercial/residential housing conversion, and accessory unit dwelling unit development. Seek a municipal planning grant to support the effort.
	WHY	Setting the footing for future waterfront development will be enhanced by understanding and adjusting the existing zoning. Weaving into this process issues related to hazard mitigation and housing will only further guide the PC in having the proper regulations to achieve the City vision.
	WHO	Zoning Administrator, City of Newport Planning Commission, and potential outside consultant
	Supported Foundation Element: Housing, Development Stewardship	**Supported Vision Element:** Live
Action 2	WHAT	Complete a Community Housing Study to assess the condition of existing housing in Newport. A public survey to owners, landlords, and tenants couple help the City better understand the a) type, age, and condition of housing, b) the affordability of housing, and c) the needs that residents have for housing. Seek a municipal planning or similar funding mechanism to support the effort.
	WHY	Understanding the current housing context will provide a solid basis for making changes to zoning, focusing waterfront redevelopment efforts, and leverage resources for renewal, brownfields, and development.
	WHO	City of Newport Planning Commission, Downtown Development Corporation, Rural Edge, AARP, potential outside consultant, and state and regional partners such as Vermont Housing Authority and Northeastern Vermont Development Association.
	Supported Foundation Element: Housing	**Supported Vision Element:** Live

Action 3	
WHAT	Incorporate the recommendations and strategies from the Local All Hazards Mitigation Plan into city policies, bylaws, and development review process.
WHY	Planning infrastructure in light of hazard mitigation is essential. Bringing those considerations into the underlying policy framework will steer future development in the right direction related to adaptability and stewardship objectives.
WHO	City of Newport Planning Commission, Department of Public Works, Parks & Recreation Department, Zoning Administrator
Supported Foundation Element: Housing	**Supported Vision Element:** Live

Action 4	
WHAT	Hold a Newport Vibrancy Summit with the Newport Downtown Development Corporation (NDDC), the Northern Forest Center, and other key stakeholders to explore the post-pandemic tourism environment in the region and the role the city can play in attracting new entrepreneurial residents and investment.
WHY	While the pandemic is not over, it will be someday. Setting the stage for shared objectives on tourism planning, making Newport a place to live/work/play, and strengthening the partnerships for that purpose need to start now.
WHO	City of Newport Planning Commission, Newport Downtown Development Corporation, Northern Forest Center, NVDA, North Country Chamber of Commerce, Parks & Recreation Department
Supported Foundation Element: Vibrancy	**Supported Vision Element:** Live/Work/Play

Action 5	
WHAT	Coordinate with Newport City Downtown Development to explore the potential for free public highspeed internet in support of local businesses, residents, and visitors.
WHY	Expanding broadband within the City and making public wifi available supports businesses and can leverage considerable new infrastructure monies likely to flow through the state and federal governments.
WHO	City of Newport Planning Commission, Department of Public Works, Downtown Development Corporation, NVDA, Consolidated Communication, NEK Community Broadband, Newport Wireless Mesh, potential outside consultant
Supported Foundation Element: Vibrancy	**Supported Vision Element:** Live/Work/Play

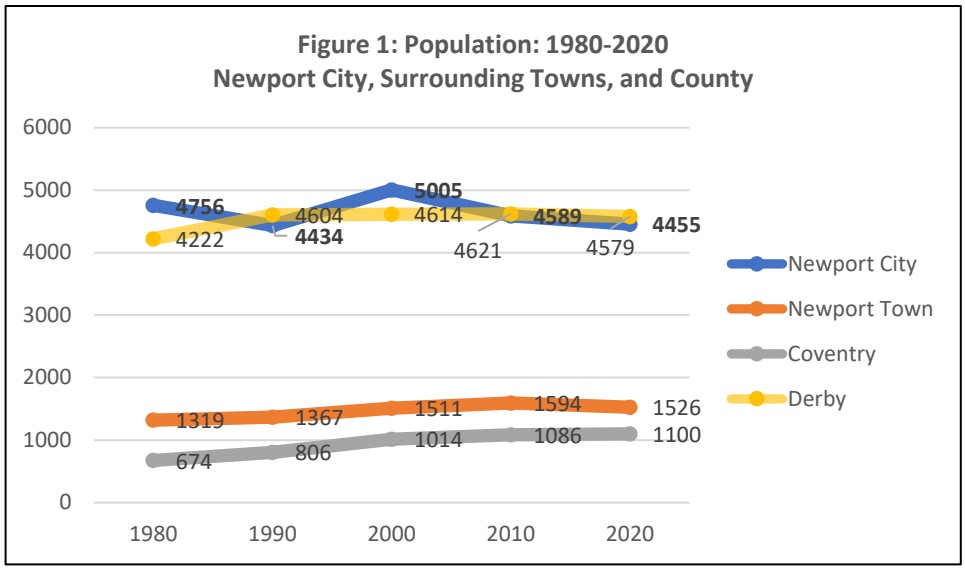
APPENDICES – ADDITIONAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

APPENDIX A:
LIVE, WORK, PLAY BY THE NUMBERS

Live

Population

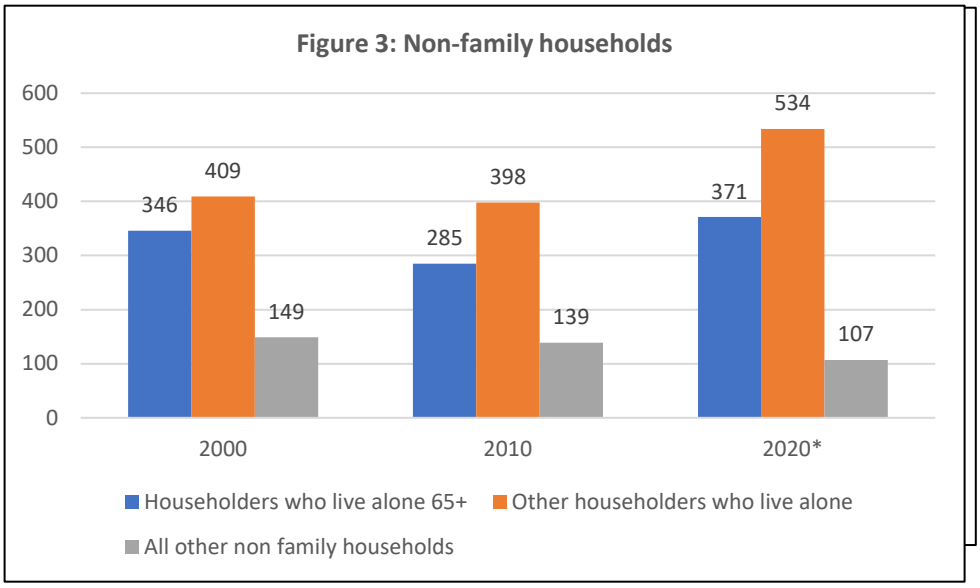
According to the 2020 Census, Newport City experienced a 2.9% drop in population over the past decade. Neighboring Newport Town experienced a 4.3% drop over the same period. Derby saw a slight decrease by just 0.9%, and Coventry experienced a minor increase of 1.3% from the previous decennial Census. (Figure 1)
Source: Decennial Census 1980-2020



By contrast, Orleans County's total population experienced a fairly robust increase of 7.9% over the same period.

Households

The average household size has decreased since 2000, from 2.18 per household to 1.98 persons. This decrease can likely be attributed to a shift to non-family households. Of the estimated 1,942 households in Newport, more than half are non-family households. The vast majority of non-family households are people who live alone, and that share appears to be increasing. Individuals aged 65 and older account

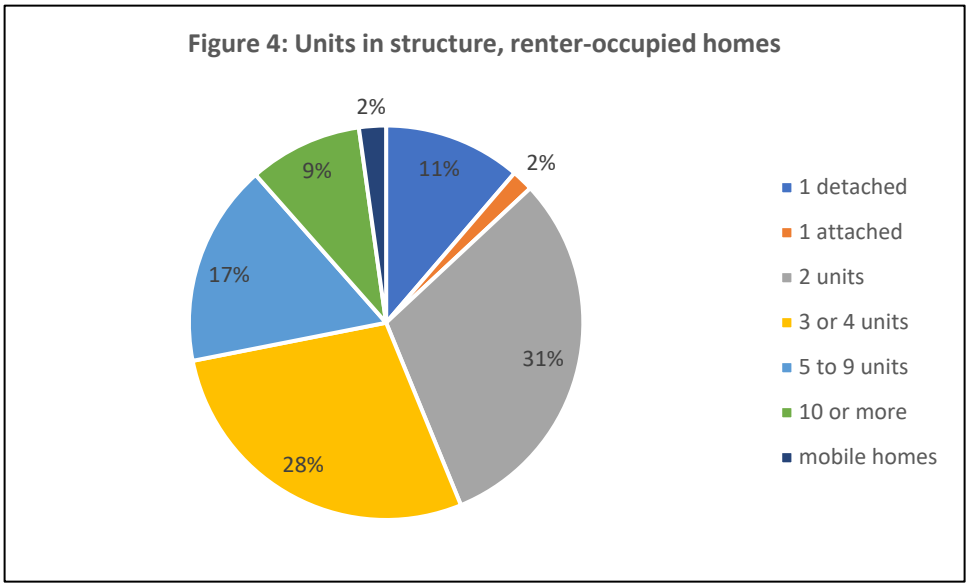


more than a third of all non-family households. (Figures 2 and 3) Source: Decennial Census 2000-2010, *2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates – demographic profiles from the 2020 Census are not available until early 2023.

Physical characteristics of housing

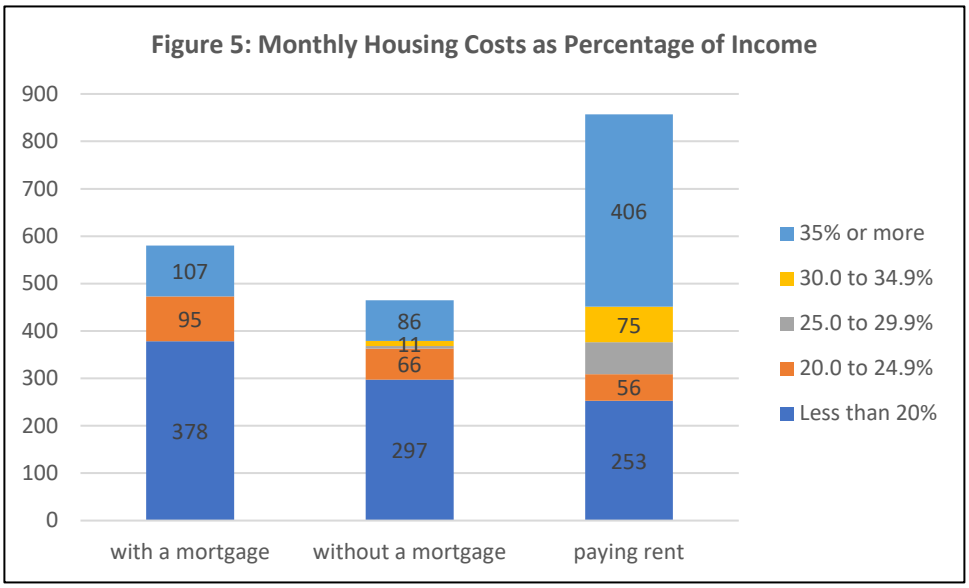
According to most recent American Community Survey estimates, about 92% of owner-occupied housing units are single-family, detached homes. Roughly 7% are attached units, duplexes, or structures with three or four units. The balance consists of mobile homes or other housing types.

As expected of a regional service center, Newport City supplies the bulk of multi-unit rental housing for the county. The vast majority of rental housing opportunities are multi-units (i.e. structures with three or more dwelling units). (Figure 4.) Sources: American Community Survey



Affordability

Housing is considered "affordable" if total housing costs do not exceed 30% of income. By that measure, renters in Newport are least likely to have affordable housing. Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Work

As a regional service center, Newport provides Orleans County and northern Vermont residents with a significant range of employment opportunities. According to most recent Census data, Newport provides primary employment to more than 2,000 individuals living outside of Newport. More than a quarter of individuals employed in Newport live in Newport as well. (Figure 6)

These figures come primarily from W-2s issued in 2019. The long-term disruptive effects of the pandemic have yet to be identified, but it is highly likely that long-term commuting patterns will change. A May 2021 [Center for Research on Vermont statewide study] found that prior to March 2020, about 70% respondents said they did not work from home at all. Looking forward, 75% now agree or strongly agree that they expect to work from home more in the future

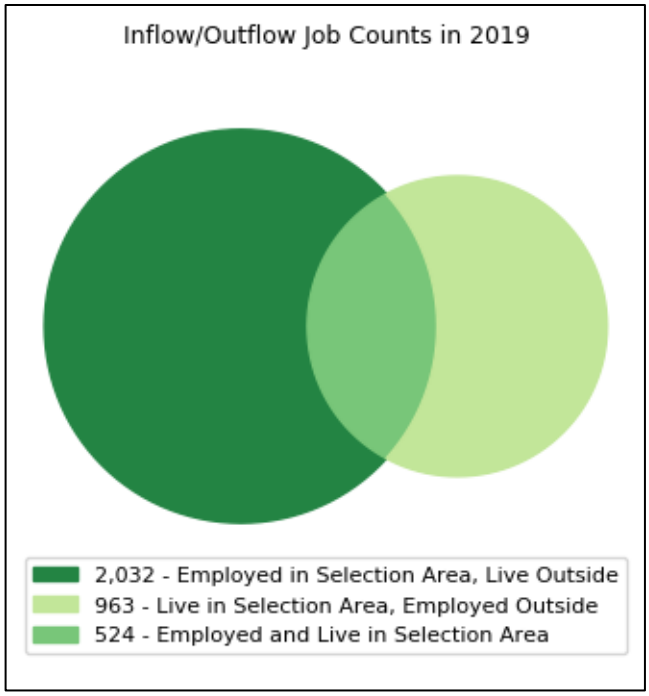
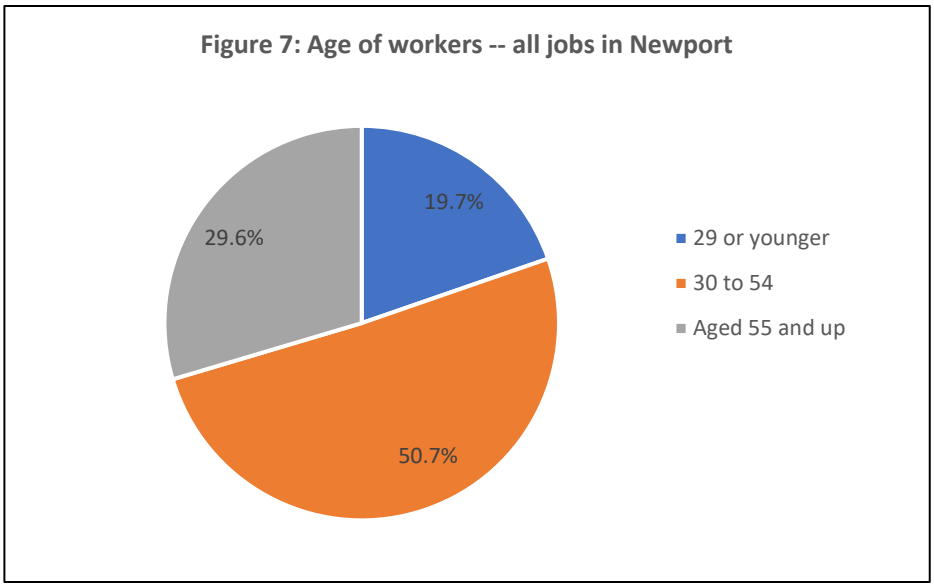


Figure 6: Source is Census on the Map

According to Census data, nearly a third of Newport workers are aged 55 or older. (Figure 7) Largest employment sectors are: healthcare and social assistance (31.1%), manufacturing (15.8%), educational services (15.2%), retail trade (7.8%), accommodation and food services (6.9%), waste management and remediation (5.0%), and public administration (4.5%).



Play

Recreation and physical activity have long been important components of Newport's culture. Back in 2014, the Age Friendly Community Advisory Council surveyed 4,000 Newport and Orleans County residents over 45, generating a 27% response rate. According to survey results, Newport residents overwhelming believe that they are in excellent, very good, or good health, with 84% responding in those categories. More than half indicated that they exercise every day or several times a week, and nearly all respondents indicated that remaining physically active for as long as possible is important to them.

Newport City Downtown Development's "Active by Nature" grant, funded by USDA Rural Development in 2014, found that all of these popular activities could be accommodated a few-miles radius of downtown Newport: biking, walking, hiking, running, skateboard, golfing, fishing, birdwatching, swimming, sailing, canoeing, kayaking, skating, skiing, snowmobiling, and ice-fishing.

The City has nearly 300 acres of land that are either public owned or permanently conserved for the purpose of some form of outdoor recreation.

Property	Acres
South Bay Wildlife Management Area (State of VT)	103.5
Bluffside Farm (Vermont Land Trust)	129
Prouty Beach	29.0
City Dock and Gateway	.97
Pomerleau Park	.74

Gardner Park	20.0
City Forest	9.9
State Boat Launch (leased to State of VT)	.41
Total acreage	293.52

APPENDIX B: WATER & SEWER

Water Supply

Newport has the great fortune of having a clean and abundant water supply. Public water is supplied by two wells on Coventry Street, both from the same aquifer. The idea of two wells came about when the need for cleaning our then only well took longer than expected and the water reserve was nearly depleted. The second well was drilled and online in 2004. Both wells have the capacity to supply approximately 1.4 million gallons per day (gpd). The current average use per day is 600,000 gpd, with the highs of 900,000 gpd. The water is chlorinated and fluorinated at the wellsite.

The city has a source protection plan, better known as the Wellhead Protection Area (WHPA) which was written and designed in 1996 and is updated and provided to the State of Vermont for their approval every five years (see Map M-1). The city feels that with the two wells it does not need to look at alternative sites for another water supply. In 1999 the city connected to the town of Derby's water line along the Newport Derby Road. This was done to enable the City Center Industrial Park to have enough water pressure for sprinkler systems and it gave the city an emergency backup water supply. For non-emergency situations we have a water allocation of 10,000 gpd with the Village of Derby Center.

The city's Water Department has seen some major improvements in recent years. The city's water reservoir was completely cleaned in 2018. This is done approximately every ten years. In 2004 the wetted area of the water tower was completely cleaned and painted. The water tower was painted during 2018. The biggest improvement was that in 2007 the city Water Treatment Plant was finished and went online. This plant was federally mandated because the allowable arsenic levels were lowered nationally. Newport's levels were at 18 parts per billion (ppb) and now are at or below the mandated 10 parts per billion (ppb). In August 2019 the plant tested at 7 parts per billion. The plant was built at the current well site location. The cost of this project was approximately 2.5 million dollars and is being paid for by the city.

The city's water lines vary based on their age and condition. Water services are currently being replaced as part of the street reconstruction program. In 2011 the city replaced water services along Third and Pleasant Streets in preparation of the state's Route 5 paving project. During 2013 two standalone water projects were completed. The first project was tying in two dead end water mains connecting Cedar Street to Pine Street, which consisted of 400 feet of 8" ductile iron. The second project was laying 1,650 feet of 12" water line from the intersection of Mount Vernon Street and Western Avenue to Kent Lane. In 2014 this line was extended across the I191 access road, a directional bore was placed under the Clyde River and proceed along Western Avenue to the

intersection with East Main Street with an additional 2,450 feet of 12" water pipe. The water flow capacity increased when this project was completed. Most all property within the city has connected to or has the capability of connecting to the municipal water supply. The city's water system is in great shape and is ready for what the foreseeable future brings it.

Wastewater Treatment

Newport's wastewater is processed at its treatment plant located at 94 T.P. Lane off of Western Avenue. The Newport City Wastewater Treatment Plant provides primary and secondary wastewater treatment. The Treatment Plant completed its twenty-year upgrade in 2007. The upgrades were as follows; new headworks, new lift pumps and controls, septage receiving facility, digester upgrades, clarifier upgrades and a change from chlorine gas to liquid chlorine. These upgrades allowed the treatment plant to increase its total allowable discharge of treated wastewater from 1.2 million gallons per day to 1.3 million gallons per day. The Village of Derby Center needed no additional wastewater allocation at the time of the upgrade. The average daily flow from the plant is approximately 450,000 gallons per day from which about 75,500 gallons per day come from Derby. This upgrade was paid for by the City of Newport and Village of Derby Center on the basis of plant ownership. The cost of the upgrade was approximately $4,555,000.00.

The Village of Derby owns and maintains sewer lines and pump stations in Derby Center and adjacent areas. These lines connect to Newport City's sewer line system along the Newport Derby Road. Approximately 75,500 gallons per day of wastewater comes from Derby. They are currently allocated for 150,000 gallons per day. The village pays Newport its prorated share of the operational cost based on actual wastewater flow. In addition, Derby pays 11.5% of capital costs incurred.

Due to the State of Vermont changing the amount of arsenic allowed in sludge from 50 ppm to 20 ppm, the city no longer land applies our sludge. We now dewater our sludge once a year. The dewatered sludge is transported to the Casella landfill on the Airport Road.

Newport has separated 99% of their storm drains from the sewage lines and this has resulted in a significant reduction of flow to the plant during storms. Approximately 50% of the city's sewer lines have been replaced as part of the ongoing street reconstruction program. During fiscal year 2009 the city installed additional sewer lines at the Prouty Beach Campground. All fifty-two camping sites have on-site sewer availability. In 2011 we replaced 260 feet of sewer line that was seventeen feet deep along the Clyde River on Upper Clyde Street. During 2012 the city designed and installed an entire sewer system on Spring Street and Indian Point Street to change the direction of wastewater flow. This enabled elimination of a sewer overflow adjacent to the Clyde River along with the elimination of a sewer line across the Clyde River.

The city's Wastewater Treatment Plant with its excellent operation record stands ready to handle what the foreseeable future brings it.

APPENDIX C: SOLID WASTE

Solid Waste Operations

The practice of lining landfills began in the 1990s when Waste USA acquired the Coventry Landfill. Today, Casella operates about 90 acres of lined bathtub-like cells, all of which have a redundant double containment system. The first liner captures the leachate and is pumped out constantly, because the liner cannot contain more than a foot of water at any time. The second liner is monitored for infiltration as well.

The leachate from 90 acres of landfill, is conveyed by double-lined piping to a 20,000-gallon underground storage tank, which is also double-contained for safety. Leachate then moves from the underground tank to an-above ground 450,000-gallon double-lined tank. From there, the standard practice is to transfer leachate to waste treatment facilities for processing and disposal. The site – which moves anywhere from four to ten tanker truck loads of leachate a day -- has a buffer designed to handle precipitation. For example, 30 to 40 inches of melted snow accumulating over the year can produce about 14 to 19 million gallons of wastewater, all of which must be diverted into the lining.

Leachate includes some industrial components. Whether and to what extent the leachate is considered hazardous is determined by the substances found in the leachate and state and federal standards.

There is a 520,000 gallon storage tank currently not in use but remains available for a proposed pilot program with the State of Vermont for pre-treating leachates to reduce PFAS levels.

When the landfill reaches capacity and closes, Casella will be required to monitor ground water for another 30 years, and their Act 250 permit requires an additional 15 years of monitoring beyond that period. Additionally, there is money in a bond to sustain the monitoring of this site in the event Casella goes bankrupt.

About 80% of the waste that the landfill receives comes from Vermont sources. There is no out-of-state municipality that can bring garbage to Casella, so out-of-state sources consist of "special wastes," which covers a very broad range of materials from food products, to contaminated soils, bricks, debris, or blocks. Wastes must be solid. Materials must first be sent it to a lab and get a profile. Once data comes in, it is reviewed, and a package to the State of Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, who will determine if Casella can accept the material. It is a rigorous process on a case-by-case basis for accepting the materials. On occasion, the State has sent witnesses to ensure proper disposal on some items.

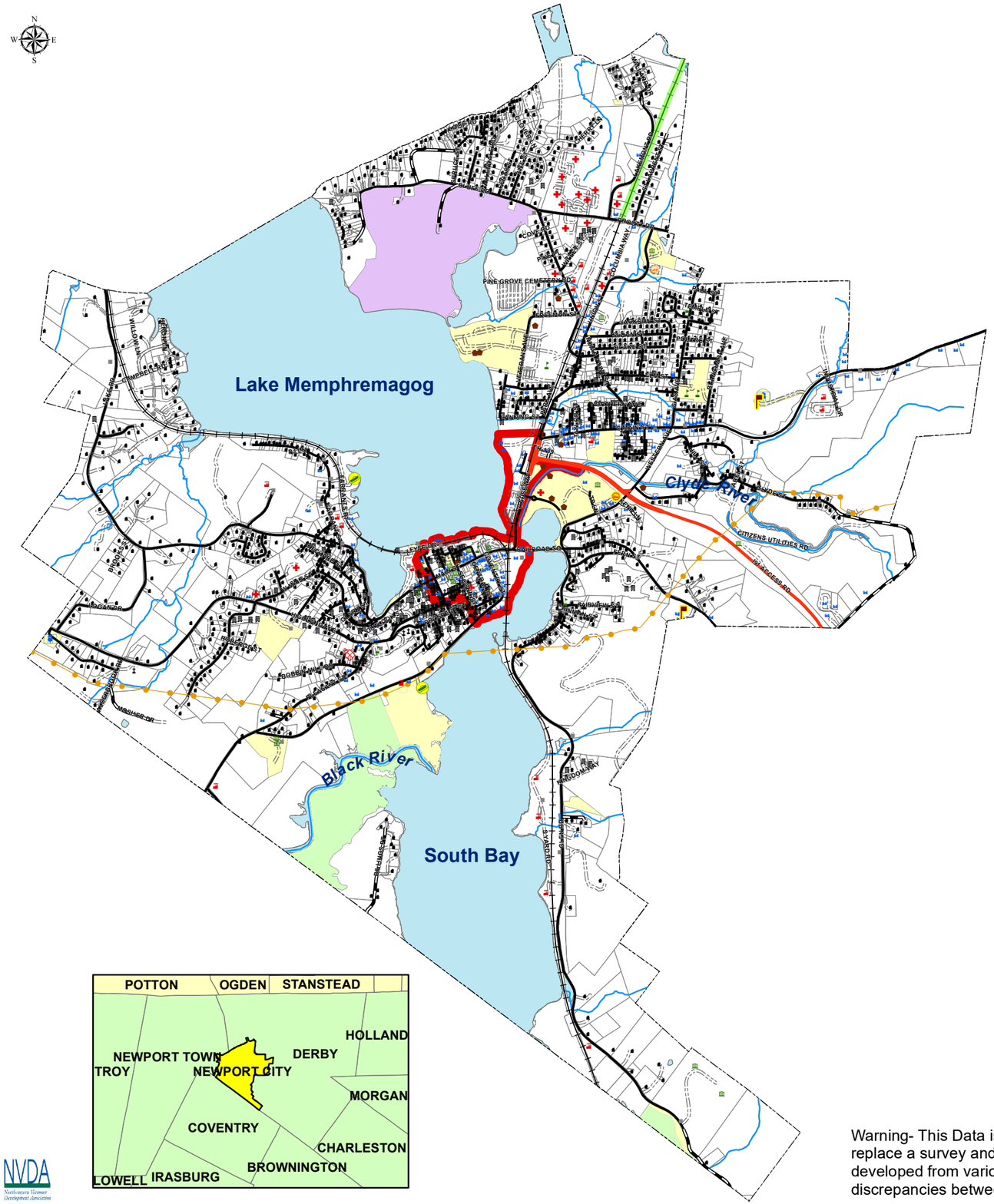
Methane

Landfill methane is a renewable energy source, and a division of Casella operates five engines to capture and produce 7.0 MW of power, which is enough to power 6,000-7000 households. A division of Casella has been operating the methane generation since 2005 for Washington Electric Coop, which in turn sells its Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs). Even though the RECs may be sold out of the region, homes and businesses in Newport are likely powered by Coventry's methane generation at any given time.

Currently about 78 acres of the Coventry landfill are producing methane. The first cell in the most recent expansion area is not producing yet. There are limited opportunities to expand energy generation with Washington Electric, since 100% of its portfolio is already renewable. However, Casella has initiated discussions with Washington Electric and Vermont Gas to do something with the methane other than generation. There are five greenhouses heated geothermally from the landfill, since the waste mast is always warm. Each greenhouse is 100 feet by 30 or 40 feet wide. Since Act 148 bans organics from the waste stream, there is a possibility that methane production may be somewhat reduced in the future.

Newport City, VT
B1 - Base Map

05/09/2022



- Single Family Home
- Multi-Family Dwelling
- Commercial Building
- Government
- Industrial
- School
- Medical
- Ambulance
- Fire Station
- Civic
- House of Worship
- Communications Tower
- Water Tower
- Boat Ramp/Dock
- Solar Facility
- Other Building
- Major Electric Transmission Line
- US & State Highways
- Paved City Road
- Unpaved City Road
- Private Road
- Railroad Tracks
- Rail Trail
- Streams
- Designated Downtown Boundary
- Newport City Properties
- State Lands
- Lakes, Ponds, and Rivers
- Vermont Land Trust
- Parcel Boundaries - 2020

Warning- This Data is for planning purposes only and does not replace a survey and/or engineering study. Because this map is developed from various scale sources, there may be some discrepancies between data layers.

0 — 1 Miles

NVDA Northeastern Vermont Development Association

Newport City, VT
B2 - Land Use/Cover Map

05/09/2022

- US & State Highways
- Paved City Road
- Unpaved City Road
- Private Road
- Streams
- Railroad Tracks
- Rail Trail
- Lakes, Ponds, and Rivers
- Parcel Boundaries - 2020
- TownPoly

Land Use/Cover Types

- Developed
- Open/Agricultural
- Forest
- Barren

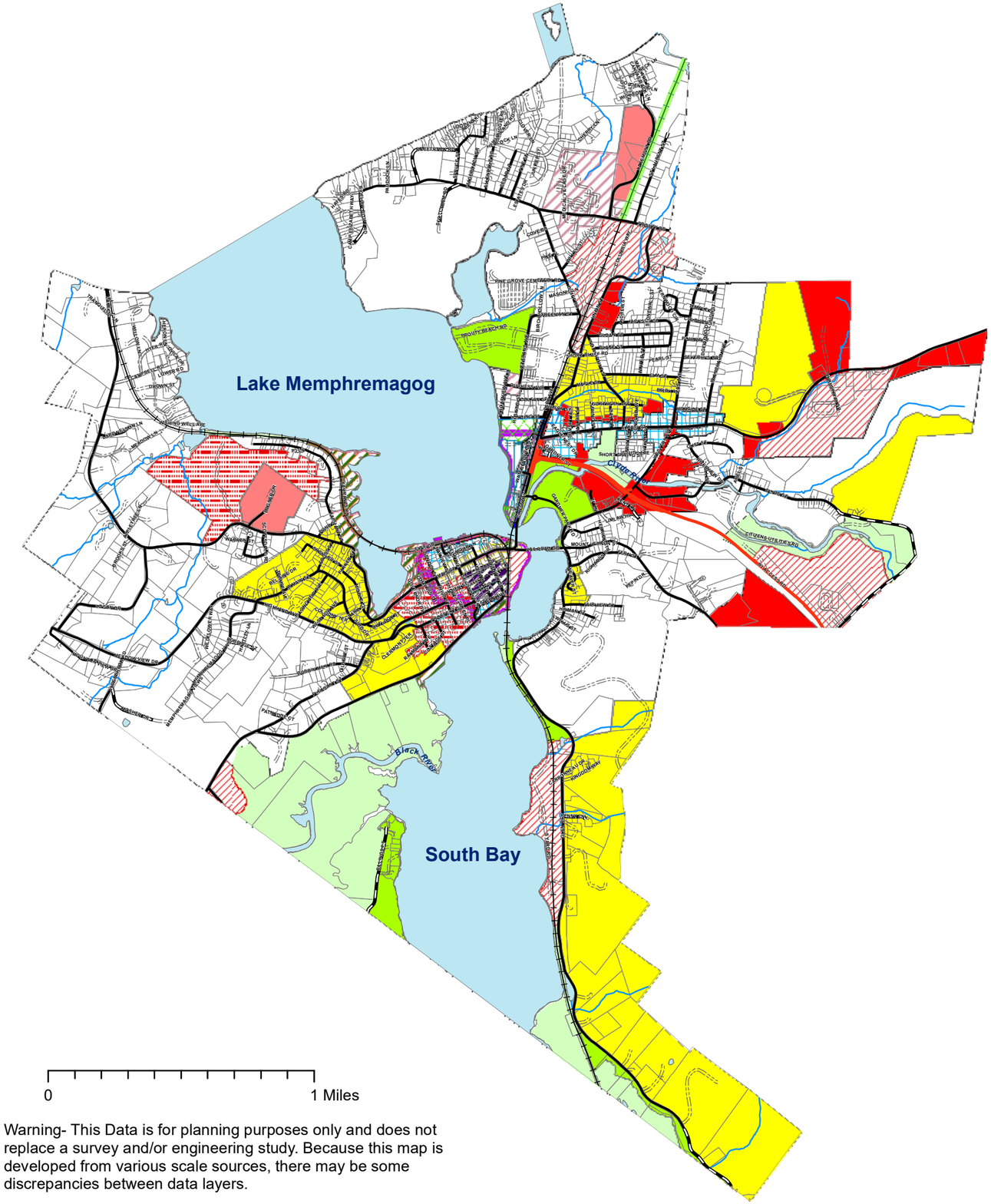
0 — 1 Miles

Warning- This Data is for planning purposes only and does not replace a survey and/or engineering study. Because this map is developed from various scale sources, there may be some discrepancies between data layers.

NVDA Northeastern Vermont Development Association

Newport City, VT
B3 - Zoning District Map

05/09/2022



Warning- This Data is for planning purposes only and does not replace a survey and/or engineering study. Because this map is developed from various scale sources, there may be some discrepancies between data layers.

- US & State Highways
- Paved City Road
- Unpaved City Road
- Private Road
- Major Electric Transmission Line
- Railroad Tracks
- Rail Trail
- Lakes, Ponds, and Rivers
- Streams
- Parcel Boundaries - 2020

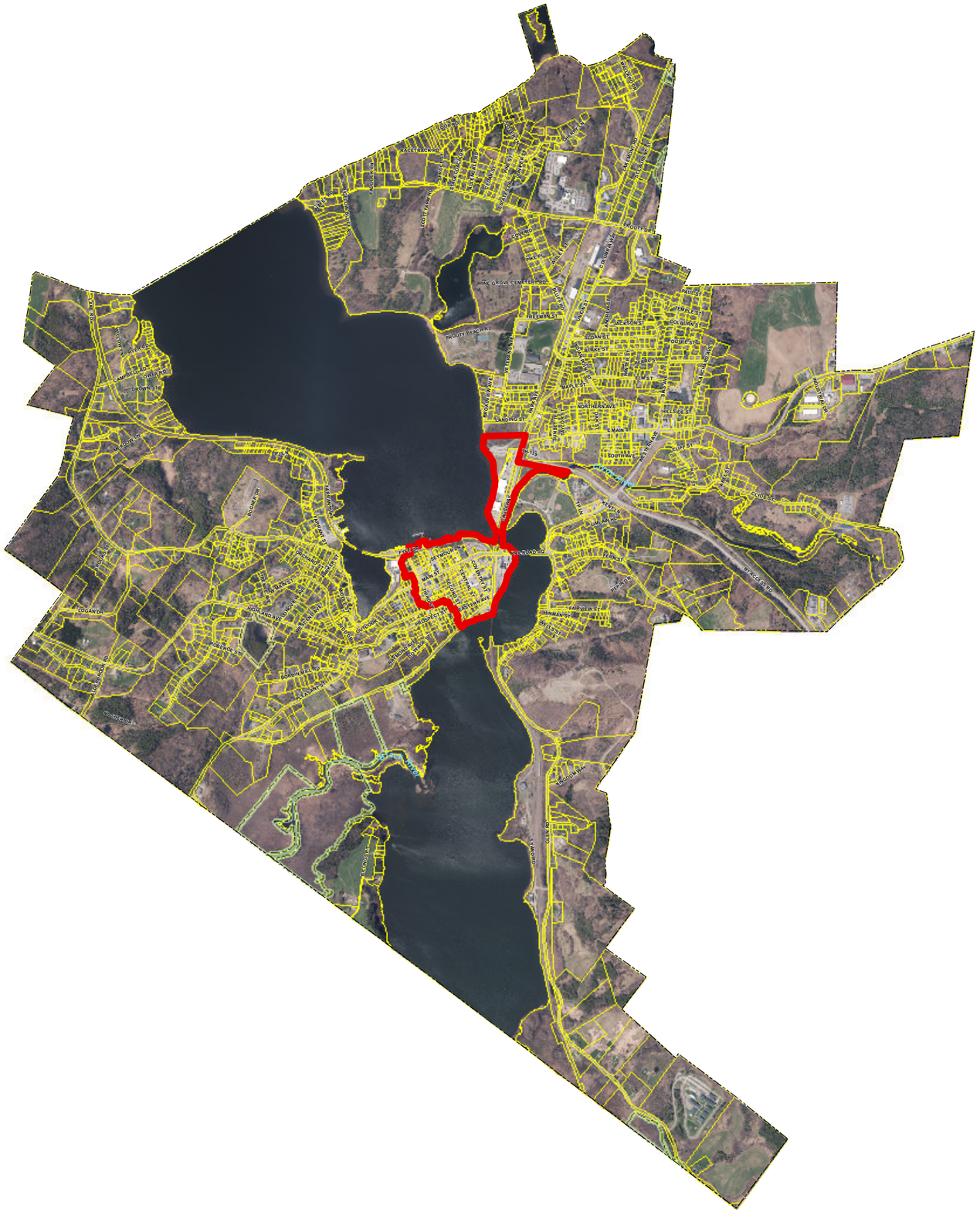
Zoning Districts

- Commercial B
- Conservation
- Designated Green Space
- Existing Recreation Path
- Existing Walk Path
- Form 1 - Main Street
- Form 2 - Downtown
- Form 3 - Urban Multi-Use
- Form 4 - Urban Waterfront 1
- Form 5 - Urban Waterfront 2
- Form 6 Residential/Mixed Use
- General Residential
- Industrial
- Light Industrial
- Primary Street - Type 1
- Primary Street - Type 2
- Primary Transit Street - Type 1
- Primary Transit Street - Type 2
- Primary Transit Street - Type 3
- Proposed New Public Recreation Path
- Proposed Public Alley/Mews or Delivery Channel
- Proposed Public Corridor - Secondary or Tertiary
- Public Health - Office
- Secondary Public Streets
- Urban Recreational
- Urban Residential
- Designated Downtown Boundary

NVDA Northeastern Vermont Development Association

Newport City, VT
B4 - Orthophoto Map

05/09/2022



Designated Downtown Boundary
Municipal Forest
State Conserved Lands
Parcel Boundaries - 2020

0 — 1 Miles

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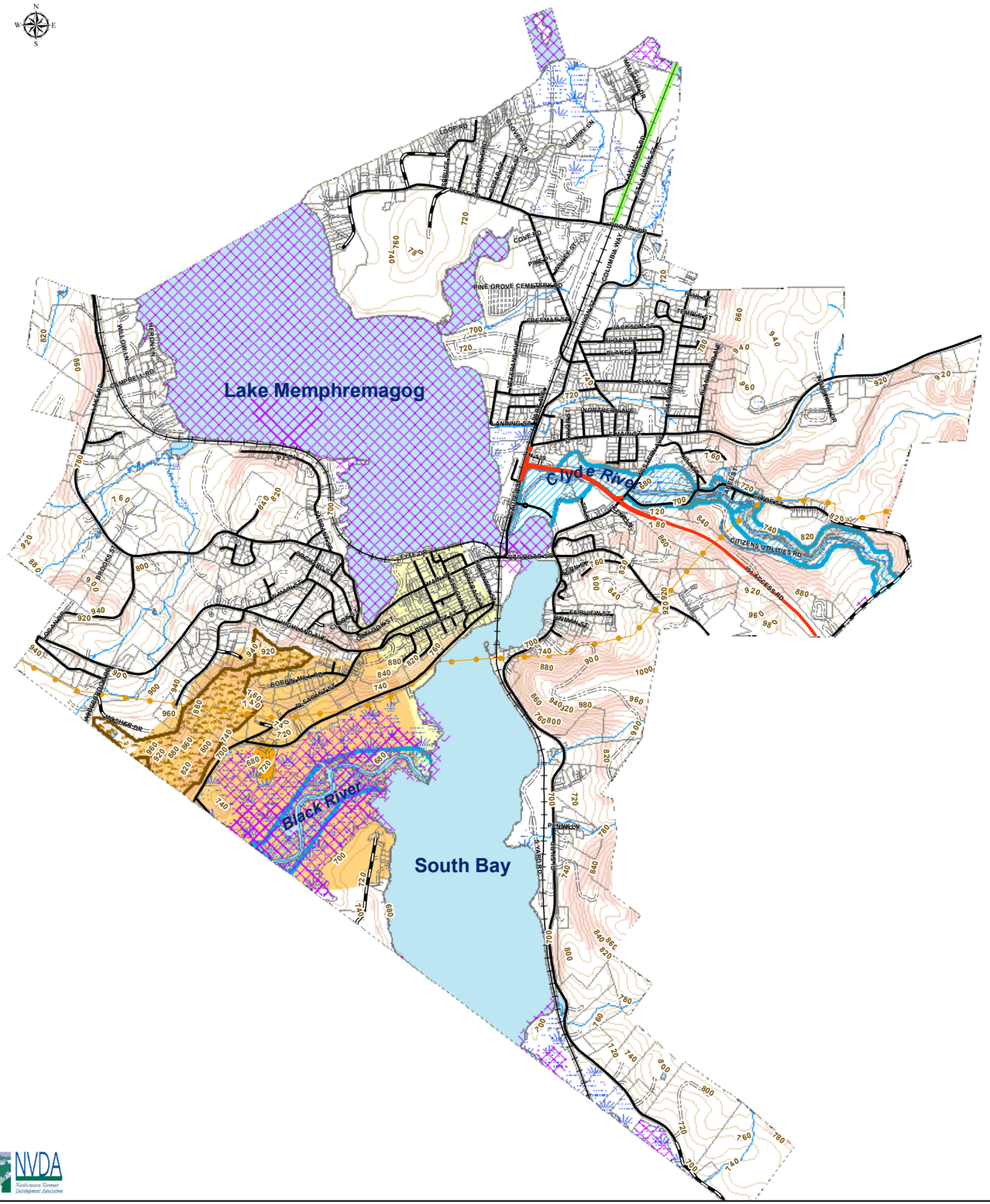
NVDA
Northeastern Vermont Development Association

Newport City, VT
B5 - Natural Resource Constraints Map

06/22/2022



- US & State Highways
- Paved City Road
- Unpaved City Road
- Private Road
- Major Electric Transmission Line
- Railroad Tracks
- Rail Trail
- 20' Interval Elevation Contours
- Streams
- Priority Connectivity Blocks
- Rare/Threatened Species/Habitats
- Lakes, Ponds, and Rivers
- Wetlands
- Parcel Boundaries - 2020
- ANR River Corridors
- Areas over 20% Slope

Groundwater Protection Classifications

- ZONE 1
- ZONE 2
- ZONE 3

0 — 1 Miles

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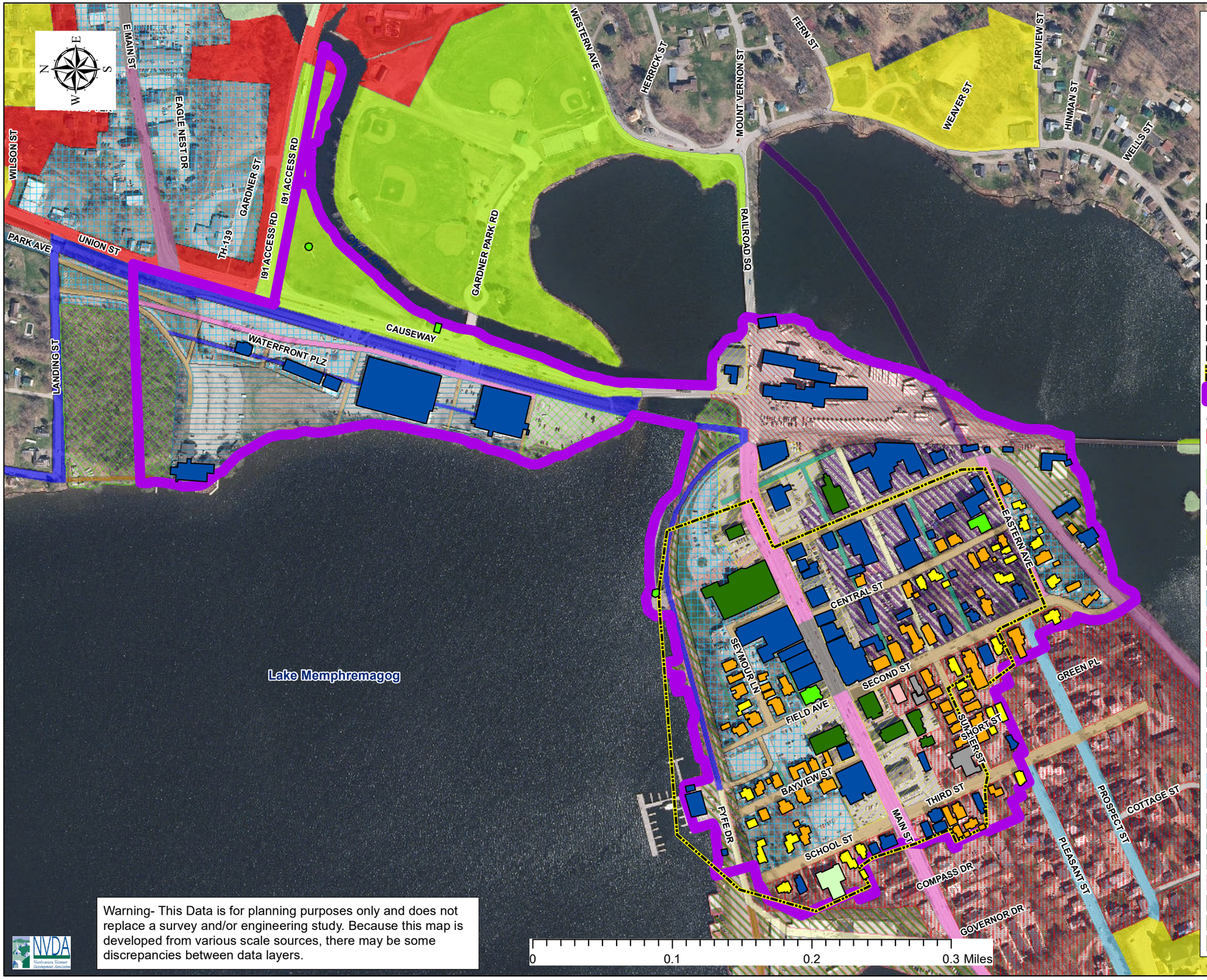
NVDA
Northeastern Vermont Development Association

Newport City, VT
B6 - Designated Downtown Map

05/09/2022



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NVDA Northeastern Vermont Development Association

Building Uses

- Single-Family Dwelling
- Multi-Family Dwelling
- Commercial
- Government
- Industrial
- School
- Civic
- House of Worship
- Historic District
- Designated Downtown Boundary

Zoning Districts

- Commercial B
- Conservation
- Designated Green Space
- Existing Recreation Path
- Existing Walk Path
- Form 1 - Main Street
- Form 2 - Downtown
- Form 3 - Urban Multi-Use
- Form 4 - Urban Waterfront 1
- Form 5 - Urban Waterfront 2
- Form 6 Residential/Mixed Use
- General Residential
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- Primary Transit Street - Type 3
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- Proposed Public Alley/Mews or Delivery Channel
- Proposed Public Corridor - Secondary or Tertiary
- Public Health - Office
- Secondary Public Streets
- Urban Recreational
- Urban Residential

Sidewalk East Side

Newport City, VT

1 inch = 533 Feet

0 533 1066 1600

June 30, 2022

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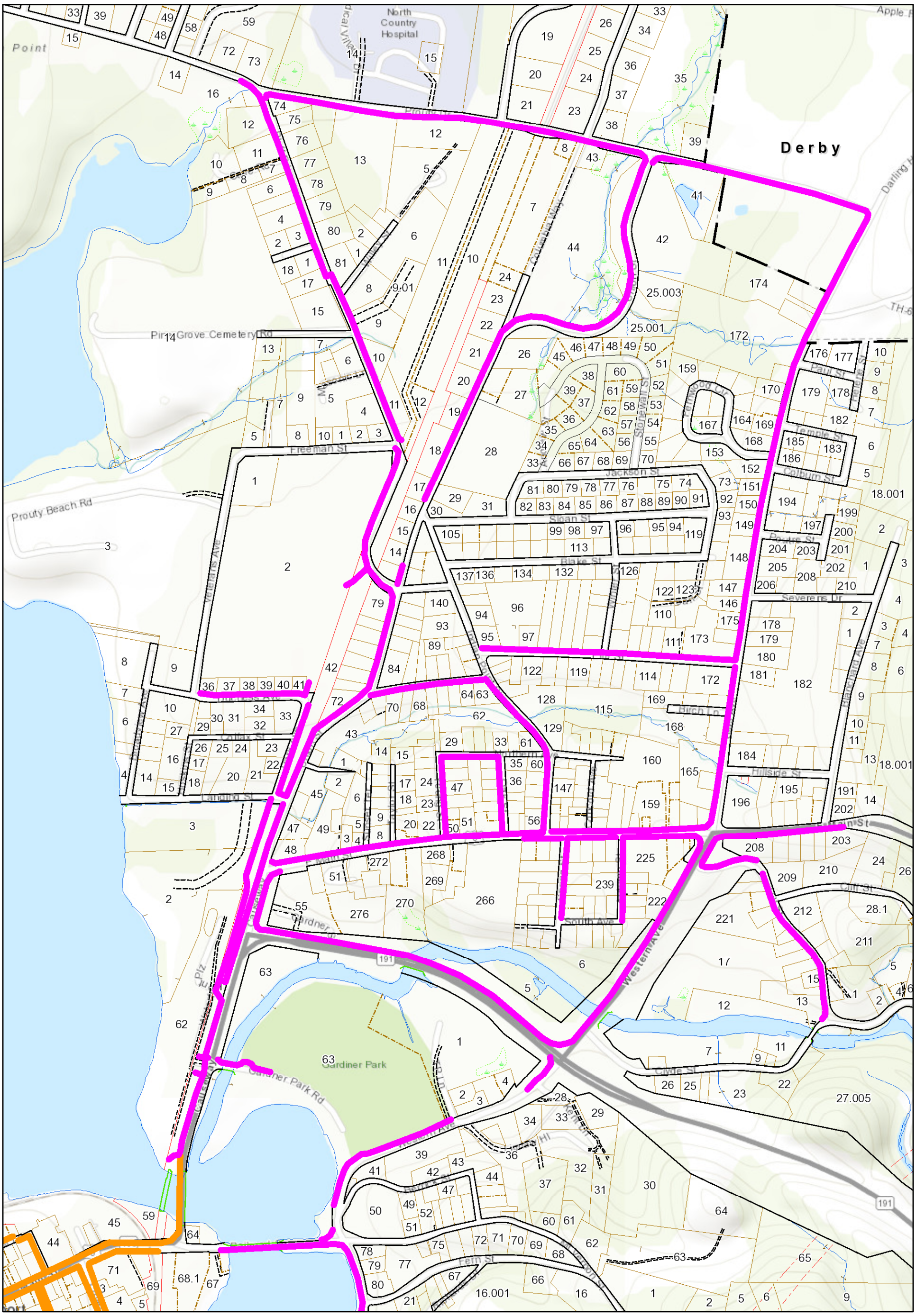

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Sidewalk West Side

Newport City, VT

1 inch = 533 Feet

0 533 1066 1599

June 30, 2022

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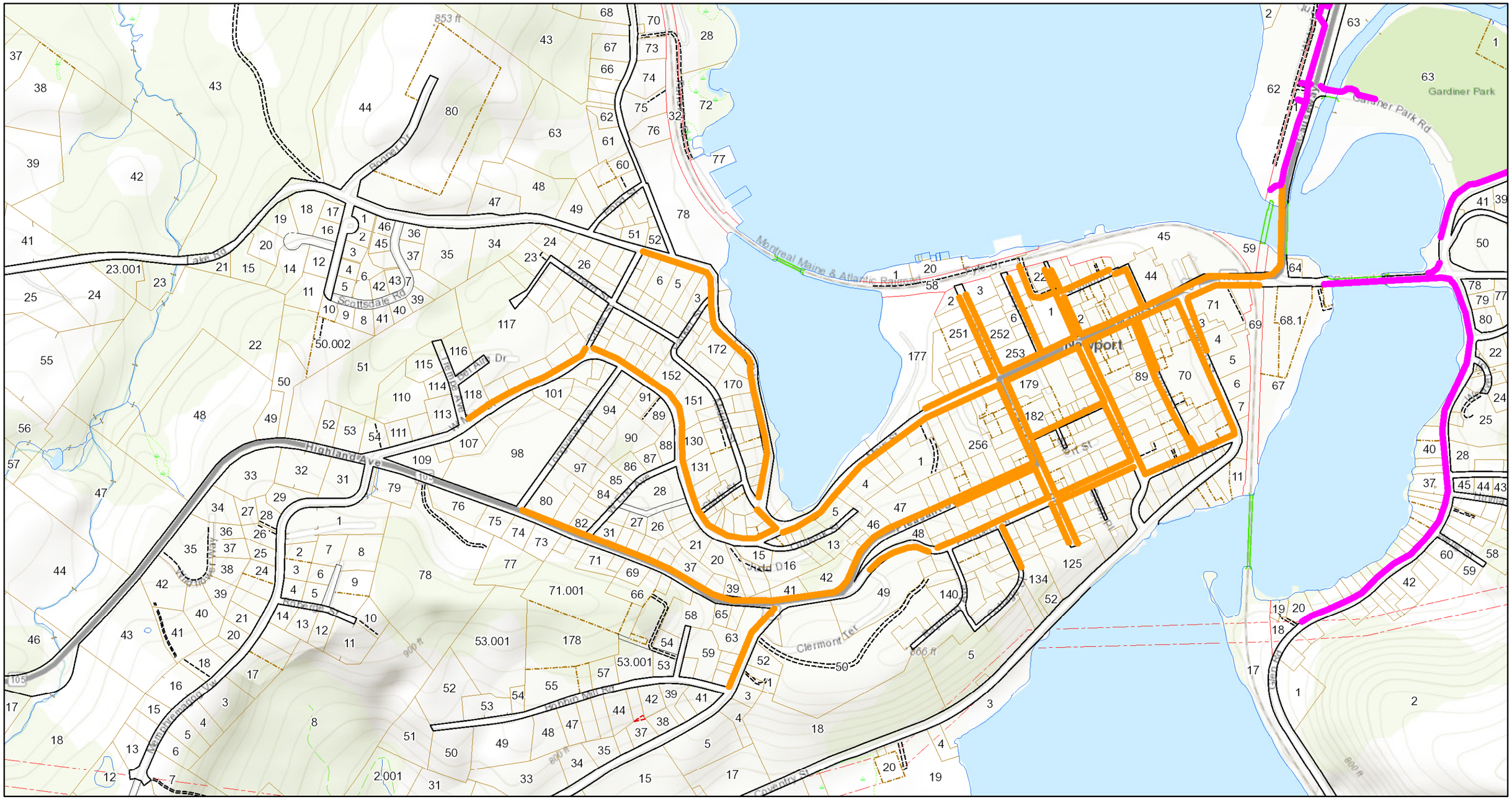

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