



N O R W I C H

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023 – 2026

STEWARD



CONNECT



SUSTAIN

CONTENTS



1

INTRODUCTION

2

COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS

3

COMMUNITY ROLES

4

MISSION AND VISION

5

STRATEGIC PLAN STRATEGIES

12

APPENDICES I & II

INTRODUCTION

Norwich Historical Society's (NHS) 5-year strategic plan was just coming to an end when the COVID-19 emergency arrived. The pandemic compelled NHS to lean into its mission to find what was true about it, lean into community needs, and lean into being place-based. The relevance of civic life to our mission became a core tenet as we began a new plan in 2022.

We therefore engaged in a community-based process to inform our new strategic plan, which places Norwich Historical Society at the center of the community. To move toward making this ideal a reality, we revised our mission statement and designed a new vision. We recognize challenges and opportunities in the community and see them as an invitation to *steward*, *connect*, and *sustain* our community.



AN ORGANIZATION AT THE CENTER OF COMMUNITY

To not only be a community center, but also an organization at the center of the community, Norwich Historical Society developed its strategic plan through a community engagement model, involving 20 local nonprofits and several individuals. Participants were asked three questions:

- What hopes and dreams does your organization have for Norwich?
- What challenges make it hard to reach those hopes and dreams?
- What changes are needed in Norwich to reach these hopes and dreams?

Three themes emerged:

A Connected Community

There is a hunger for in-person connection and community; among some long-term residents there is a sense of loss and disconnection which is exacerbated by population turnover. More opportunities and spaces for face-to-face communication would facilitate building empathetic relationships.

Our Connected World

We live in a connected world that extends through the Upper Valley and beyond. Our decisions around issues such as affordable housing and climate change impact staffing, volunteerism, and diversity in community nonprofits, businesses, and organizations and impact people well beyond Norwich.

Collaboration and Collective Action

Zoning, village density, infrastructure and energy issues, land conservation, and retaining the historic character of the community are all priorities that could be advanced through collaboration among town leaders and committees. Communicated visions can create collective action.

In conclusion, there is an overall desire for stronger social networks, better norms of communication, engagement in mutual assistance and volunteerism, and a growth in trustworthiness in government and among residents.

COMMUNITY ROLES... FOR A HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Taking these community conversations to heart, and thinking about what NHS can contribute to the community, the Board identified three roles using a model that identifies ways to engage in social change efforts more effectively, collaboratively, and sustainably.

Builders

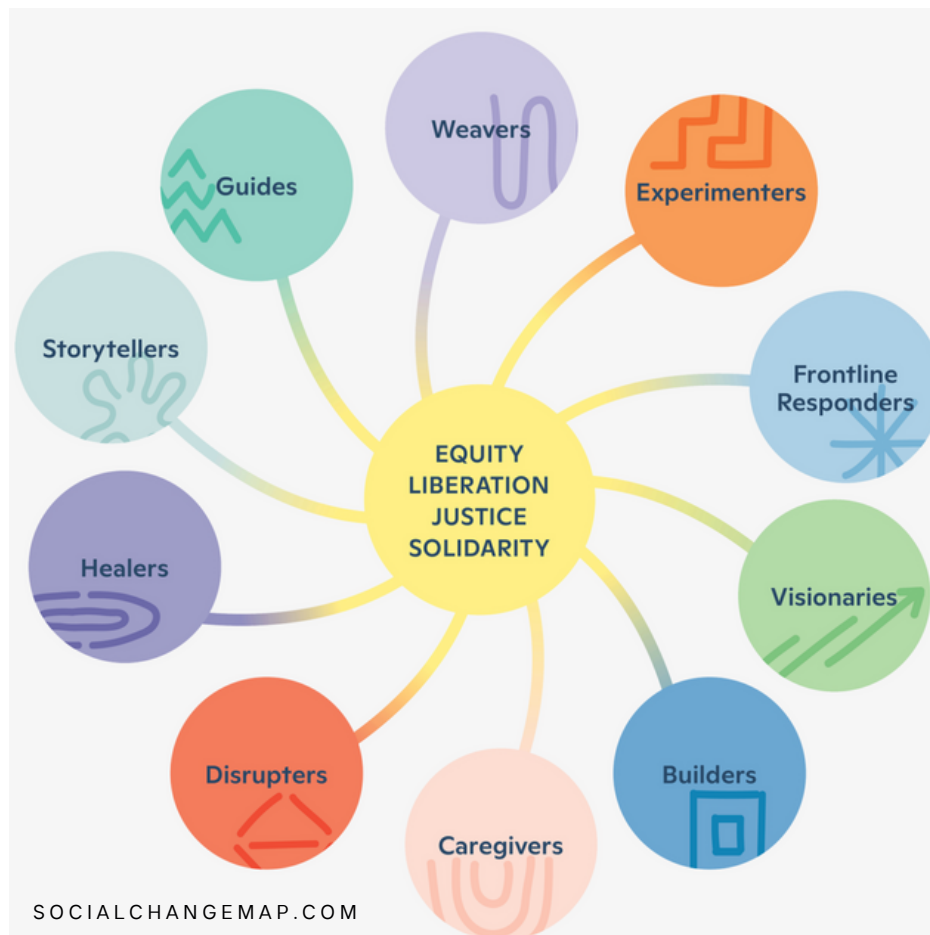
who develop, organize, and implement ideas, practices, and resources in service of a collective vision.

Storytellers

who craft and share community stories, cultures, histories, and possibilities through art, media, and movement.

Weavers

who see the through-lines of connectivity between people, places, organizations, ideas, and movements.



FINDING OUR ROLES

NHS Board members met in retreat to discuss what roles best fit with the historical society's mission and vision. Members also considered their own roles in the community.



COMMUNITY-CENTERED MISSION AND VISION

MISSION

Norwich Historical Society cultivates a vibrant sense of place and community through discovering, preserving, and sharing the history of Norwich.

VISION

We envision a community where Norwich residents are grounded in their local history and landscape. They understand that history deepens their connections to each other and their community. As a result, they are more engaged citizens and better stewards of their community and the world.

STEWARD

USE THE PROPERTY TO CREATE A GREATER SENSE OF
BELONGING FOR THE COMMUNITY



Norwich Historical Society's property lies at the center of Norwich. It is our responsibility to provide a model of best practices for integrating historic preservation and sustainable practices.



STRATEGY 1

Review and update the facilities plan.

STRATEGY 2

Assess the artifact collection for condition, scope, and provenance; make recommendations for storage or deaccessioning.

STRATEGY 3

Create a long-range Green Plan to reduce the historical Society's carbon footprint and support community energy initiatives.



CONNECT

ENHANCE THE YEARLY PROGRAM PLAN TO DEEPEN CONNECTIONS AND SENSE OF PLACE.



To support a resilient and connected community, we must engage with all generations through inclusive programs and activities.

STRATEGY 1

Develop a strong youth program.

STRATEGY 2

Develop collaborative welcome-to-Norwich program that connects new residents to the community.

STRATEGY 3

Improve the depth and breadth of our collection, exhibitions, and programs to better represent all of Norwich history and its people.

SUSTAIN

BUILD A FIRM FOUNDATION FOR THE NORWICH HISTORICAL SOCIETY.



Norwich Historical Society must work toward a sustainable future to ensure the longevity of our work. Diversifying income streams and developing appropriate staffing creates the foundation for the future.

STRATEGY 1

Develop a sustainable revenue model that meets and grows with the annual operating budget.

STRATEGY 2

Develop scopes of work for potential staff positions (paid/unpaid) to help accomplish this plan.

OUR PEOPLE

Board of Trustees

Anna Adachi-Mejia
Terry Appleby
Donald Bartlett
Ann Bauer
Judy Brown
Mary Brownlow
Cam Cross
Carolyn Clinton
Tammy Heesakker
Cheri Mather
Wendy Thompson
Carla Vincent
Heidi Webster
JoAnne Withington

Standing Committees

Executive
Collections
Development
Facilities
Finance
Governance and Nominating
Historical Outreach

Strategic Planning Committee

Anna Adachi-Mejia
Carolyn Clinton
Sarah Rooker
Heidi Webster
with Anne Peyton,
Yellow Brick Road Consulting

Staff

Sarah Rooker, Director

Volunteers

Our many volunteers help with all aspects of running NHS including collections care, event support, grounds keeping, and tour guiding. Thank you!



You never know
what help will be
needed at NHS!



YOU ARE OUR FUTURE

**SUPPORT OUR MISSION TO CULTIVATE A VIBRANT
SENSE OF PLACE AND COMMUNITY**

BECOME A MEMBER

Members are the foundation for all we do. Membership dues keep the lights on, the building heated, and our office running smoothly. Become a member today and become a steward of your community.

DONATE TO THE ANNUAL FUND

Year-end gifts from the community, members, and friends are a major part of our yearly operating budget. Please consider a gift at year-end to help sustain our work throughout the year.

BECOME A BUSINESS SPONSOR

A business sponsorship supports the promotion and preservation of Norwich’s heritage while providing companies with opportunities to be recognized throughout the Upper Valley.

VOLUNTEER WITH US

The Norwich Historical Society runs on the participation and energy of many, many volunteers. We have a special place for you whether it's being a tour guide, mowing the lawn, or joining the Board.

VISIT [HTTP://NORWICHHISTORY.ORG/SUPPORT-NHS/](http://NORWICHHISTORY.ORG/SUPPORT-NHS/) TO LEARN MORE.

APPENDIX I

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSES

When asked what hopes and dreams community groups have for Norwich, several themes emerged:

An inclusive and engaged community accommodating different points of view that:

- Actively volunteers and supports community building.
- Takes care of its citizens offering services such as childcare and elder support.

A community that recognizes its role and impact in the broader Upper Valley responding with:

- Access to affordable housing and public transportation.
- Stewardship and adaptability in the face of climate change.

A community that appreciates its historic and rural character by balancing land conservation and preservation with forward-thinking infrastructure and sustainability initiatives.

When asked what changes are needed in Norwich to reach their hopes and dreams, respondents included:

Opportunities to build connections such as a gathering space, intergenerational social events, and opportunities for new residents to learn more about the town.

Forward-looking infrastructure such as affordable housing and public sewer in the village.

A revitalized Business Council to support local businesses and provide increased leadership in the community.

Better transparency in town government.

community

support

collaboration

care

engagement

adaptability

inclusive

housing

building

citizens

points

view

forward-thinking

engaged

businesses

civil

discourse

connections

ground

people's

good

child

mending

volunteers

accommodating

actions

older

local

neutral

needs

town

adults

healing

cross-collaborations

service

rurality

accommodate

meeting

dialogs

friendly

others

warm

inspiring

preservation

housing

historic

welcoming

actively

[illegible]

APPENDIX II

STRATEGIC PLAN TASKS

STEWARD: Use the property to create a greater sense of belonging for the community

Norwich Historical Society's property lies at the center of Norwich. It is our responsibility to provide a model of best practices for integrating historic preservation and sustainable practices.

Strategies

- Strategy 1: Review and update the facilities plan.
- Strategy 2: Assess the artifact collection for condition, scope, and provenance; make recommendations for storage or deaccessioning.
- Strategy 3: Create a long-range Green Plan to reduce the Historical Society's carbon footprint and support community energy initiatives.

Tasks

- Assess the barn and toolshed for collection storage and programmatic uses.
- Make space in the Lewis House collection storage rooms through collections assessment and arrangement.
- Determine more efficient heating options.
- Assess options for solar power.
- Assess greening options for office and collections operations.
- Collaborate with Norwich Energy Committee and Norwich Historic Preservation Commission to create a tour focused on history, energy, and climate.

APPENDIX II

STRATEGIC PLAN TASKS

CONNECT: Enhance the yearly program plan to deepen connections and sense of place.

To support a resilient and connected community, we must engage with all generations through inclusive programs and activities.

Strategies

- Strategy 1: Develop a strong youth program.
- Strategy 2: Develop collaborative welcome-to-Norwich program that connects new residents to the community.
- Strategy 3: Improve the depth and breadth of our collection, exhibitions, and programs to better represent all of Norwich history and its people.

Tasks

- Strengthen curricular connections with Norwich school systems.
- Develop high school youth opportunities.
- Create a history maker space and related activity programs.
- Collaborate with other Norwich nonprofits to create materials for new residents.
- Create property history folios.
- Seek out partnerships that connect to diverse voices in our community.
- Establish a research team to identify diverse topics and projects that resonate with many.

APPENDIX II

STRATEGIC PLAN TASKS

SUSTAIN: Build a firm foundation for the Norwich Historical Society.

Norwich Historical Society must work toward a sustainable future to ensure the longevity of our work. Diversifying income streams and developing appropriate staffing creates the foundation for the future.

Strategies

- Strategy 1: Develop a sustainable revenue model that meets and grows with the annual operating budget.
- Strategy 2: Develop scopes of work for potential staff positions (paid/unpaid) to help accomplish this plan.

Tasks

- Create a long-range development plan to boost operating funds, grow the endowment, and increase capital reserve funds.
- Create a stewardship program that builds relationships and strengthens donor loyalty.
- Create a facility rental policy and marketing plan.
- Re-evaluate the job description of the Director.
- Create separate scopes of work for support positions (paid/unpaid).
- Create a volunteer coordinator position.

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Thank you to the following Norwich organizations for participating in interviews:

American Legion
Dan & Whit's
Hogwash Farm
Marion Cross PTO
Norwich Child Care Center
Norwich Congregational Church
Norwich Conservation Commission
Norwich Energy Committee
Norwich Fire Department
Norwich Historic Preservation Commission
Norwich Inn
Norwich Knits
Norwich Lions Club
Norwich Nursery School
Norwich Planning Commission
Norwich Public Library
Norwich Recreation Department
Norwich Women's Club
St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Parish
Upper Valley Jewish Community

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