

Nacogdoches Comprehensive Plan Update

Community Facilities & Services

CHAPTER 9

The purpose of the Community Facilities and Services element is to determine whether key public facilities and services managed by the City will be sufficient to serve projected future population growth and development. This includes the essential public safety services of police and fire, as well as popular public library services. The chapter also highlights the need for new facilities, or renovation and/or expansion of existing sites, to serve new and changing public service demands. The location of existing community facilities is shown in Figure 9.1.

Public facilities and related services play an important role in community livability by creating a healthy and safe environment. Needs and action recommendations included in the Community Facilities and Services element depend, in part, on projected population growth, future land use plans, annexation strategy, parks and recreation planning, and other factors. In particular, the Future Land Use Plan reflects the desired growth pattern within the City and will influence the provision and location of public facilities. Facility needs will also feed into implementation planning and multi-year capital improvements programming.

Key Issues

Through a combination of public and departmental input, the following key issues were identified regarding police, fire and library facilities and services:

- ◆ **Achieving High Standards of Public Safety Service** – Among the most valuable services a municipality provides are the essential public safety services of police protection and emergency fire and rescue response. By

safeguarding lives and property from criminal activity and catastrophes, these City departments also contribute daily to the community's quality of life and its appeal to new residents and businesses as a safe, inviting place to locate. As in most communities, such services require a strong and ongoing commitment through annual city budgets and capital improvements programming to maintain adequate facilities and equipment, staffing levels, and training and certification. All of this adds up to quality, timely service delivery, which is a continuing challenge as population and community growth extend the service areas within which police and fire personnel must respond as promptly as possible to emergency calls and incidents.

- ◆ **Enhancing Desired Library Services** – After basic police and fire protection, libraries rank comparably with parks as the most popular of City services among taxpayers and residents. Similar to police and fire, citizens have high expectations for their libraries in terms of hours of operation, breadth of collection, and access to technology, which may be difficult to meet given competing City priorities and mandates to address. Like the Police and Fire departments, the Nacogdoches Public Library also has space and staffing challenges that will need attention. The Library has achieved mutually beneficial cooperation with the Stephen F. Austin State University library on a number of fronts, and it appears that greater involvement of Nacogdoches County in budgetary support and/or provision of library services is needed if currently underserved populations within the City and County are to be addressed in coming years.



Goals, Objectives and Actions

The goals, objectives and action steps outlined in this element of the Nacogdoches Comprehensive Plan Update are based on traditional planning principles for community facilities and services as well as input from City department representatives and community residents and leaders during the planning process. The goals, objectives and actions appear in no particular priority order.

Achieving High Standards of Public Safety Service

Goal: A Police Department that fulfills its mission and duties with adequate personnel, facilities and service provision capabilities.

Goal: A Fire Department that has the resources and facilities to provide superior fire and rescue services in a safe and reliable manner.

Objectives

- ◆ Ensure the Nacogdoches Police Department has adequate personnel, in terms of numbers, training and certification, to meet the current and future crime prevention and law enforcement needs of the community.
- ◆ Maintain adequate facilities, vehicles and equipment to enable the Police Department to provide quality community policing services to Nacogdoches residents and neighborhoods.
- ◆ Continue solid training and continuing education opportunities for Nacogdoches police personnel.
- ◆ Maximize community involvement in crime prevention, public safety, and neighborhood and business security efforts.
- ◆ Ensure the Nacogdoches Fire Department has adequate personnel, in terms of numbers, training and certification, to meet the current and future fire prevention/suppression and emergency response needs of the community.
- ◆ Maintain strategically located and adequately staffed and equipped fire stations to project the Fire Department's fire suppression capabilities in a prompt and effective manner.
- ◆ Continue thorough training and continuing education opportunities for NFD personnel to maintain certifications and ensure safety.
- ◆ Continue to pursue supplemental funding through grants and other means to support NFD's mission.
- ◆ Maximize community involvement in fire prevention and public safety efforts.
- ◆ Work toward an improved ISO rating for Nacogdoches through a combination of adequate staffing, sufficient water infrastructure, and the best possible interagency communications that local budgets will allow.



Actions

- Work toward the necessary budget support to enable the Police Department to reach the permanent staffing level for sworn officers that was recommended by a recent City-sponsored management audit (64 versus the current 57 positions). This would reduce the beat area covered by individual officers and result in speedier response times.

- Provide the necessary budget support to enable the Police Department to attract and retain qualified dispatch personnel to maintain a fully-staffed Communications Division.
- Explore options for expanding parking supply at the Police Department and Municipal Court facility.
- Support the hosting of a Texas Department of Public Safety Special Crimes Investigator/Polygraph Operator at the Police Department, which would benefit both law enforcement agencies.
- Devote additional City resources toward the establishment of a Narcotics Unit to investigate drug-related cases so that existing patrol staffing can be maintained.
- Continue to monitor population growth and development trends in and around Nacogdoches to identify changing police and fire staffing needs in light of increasing service demands and service area enlargement.
- Maintain inventories of NPD and NFD equipment and identify replacement and acquisition needs in advance to ensure appropriate budgeting. Also support regular software and equipment upgrades to ensure the departments have state-of-the-art technology.
- Continue to provide training of police and fire personnel to meet and, when possible, exceed all applicable state and national standards and certifications.
- Continue NPD's planning and service coordination with other City departments and other area law enforcement and emergency response agencies.
- Address urgent maintenance and repair needs at the City's fire stations and training facility (paint, electrical upgrades, roofing, floors, kitchens/restrooms, interior/exterior walls).
- Consider candidate sites for the potential relocation of Fire Station No. 2 (1900 E. Main) to Southeast Stallings Drive in the vicinity of the new middle school, in part to provide better service area coverage through greater separation between the downtown and southeast stations.
- Explore construction of a new, smaller Fire Station No. 3 in the southwest area, financed in part through the sale of the existing building and the resulting cost-savings that would accrue over time.
- Work toward the necessary budget support to enable the Fire Department to attain per-shift and per-station/apparatus staffing targets for fire suppression personnel per ISO criteria and state mandates. Also address gaps in support staff, particularly to expand community programs.
- Achieve consensus and a joint funding arrangement between the City, County and Hospital District for a combined Dispatch Center to resolve ongoing communications and alert problems/delays for all types of emergency response including police, fire and rescue, and emergency medical services (EMS).
- Continue planning and service coordination with other City departments and other emergency response agencies in the area.
- Engage volunteers, retired NFD personnel and others in expanded community outreach and fire prevention efforts such as CPR training, school programs, fire extinguisher classes, etc.
- Given the Pineywoods setting of Nacogdoches and continued subdivision development in forested areas, continue to raise public awareness of brush and wildland fire risks, prevention measures and emergency planning.

Enhancing Desired Library Services

Goal: An adequately staffed and housed public library able to meet the high expectations of local patrons for a range of information services.

Objectives

- ◆ Ensure the Library has adequate space to meet public service expectations and provide a suitable work environment for library professionals/staff and committed Friends group volunteers and financial supporters.
- ◆ Maintain Library staffing, collections and equipment in line with population growth and service demands, particularly to support popular areas of service (e.g., children's and youth resources, technology) and meet State of Texas standards.
- ◆ Continue to maximize grants and other external funding, recognizing that current library funding opportunities offer the City minimal assistance for basic facility expansion and renovation needs.
- ◆ Continue mutually beneficial coordination of services and resources with the Stephen F. Austin State University library.
- ◆ Explore means for extending public library services to underserved populations through joint City-County efforts.
- ◆ Maintain community interest in Library services and needs, particularly through a strong Friends of the Nacogdoches Public Library group.

Actions

- Explore options for expansion of Library space to address patron demand for collection enhancement, more computers for Internet access, additional office and storage space, and dedicated space for use of existing video/satellite teleconferencing equipment and other classroom-type needs (e.g., computer training, including in Spanish).
- Work toward the necessary budget support to address Library staffing inadequacies in the children's and technology areas. Any expansion of library hours, such as patrons' desire for more weekend hours, would also require additional staff positions to provide adequate public service.
- Plan ahead for routine maintenance of the City Library facility (e.g., roof repairs, interior painting, carpet, etc.). Also prepare for technology upgrades/replacement (computers, teleconferencing equipment).
- Consider adjusting Library hours in response to patron needs (e.g., more weekend hours), provided that adequate staff coverage is available.
- Implement a bookmobile service for areas of the community where children and adults are unable to reach the central Library facility conveniently. Consider cooperative planning/funding of this and possibly other Library extension services with Nacogdoches County for underserved areas.

Nacogdoches Police Department

The mission of the Nacogdoches Police Department (NPD) is to "protect the 'Oldest Town in Texas' by providing effective law enforcement, public safety and specialized services to the community." NPD's primary function is to enforce all federal, state, and local laws within the city limits. The department uses a

“community policing” approach, in partnership with Nacogdoches citizens, to achieve its mission and goals.

Information regarding the department's priorities state that, “The NPD will pay special attention to the enforcement of Federal, State and Local Laws, crime prevention and detection, criminal investigations of major felony crimes, traffic control and accident investigations, crowd control and public official security, Lake Nacogdoches safety rules and regulations, police community relations and training programs, Emergency Management Operations and will continue to support and participate in the planning and management goals of the City of Nacogdoches.”



Police Facility

NPD operates from one central facility, located at 312 W. Main. The City is currently implementing a \$2.9 million project of expansion and renovation (of two existing structures) plus new construction at this site that will provide additional space while addressing building condition issues such as air conditioning, plumbing, electrical, exterior, roof, etc. Additional property needed for the expansion project was purchased by the City in 2002 for approximately \$500,000.

NPD administrators believe a centrally-located main facility serves the entire City more effectively and economically than numerous sub-stations. In addition, Mobile Data Terminals were recently added to patrol vehicles, reducing the need for office space and visitation by patrol officers.

While the City of Nacogdoches has considered the idea of a combined police/fire “public safety facility” in the past, the concept is not currently being pursued. However, the City continues to employ a unified police/fire dispatch operation from the NPD facility.

Police Staffing

At the time this Comprehensive Plan element was prepared, NPD had 71 total staff positions, including 56 law enforcement officers (with one position vacant):

- ◆ Administration: Chief, Assistant Chief, Secretary, Training Officer and Community Service Officer (5)

- ◆ Criminal Investigation: Lieutenant, Sergeant, Evidence Tech, Juvenile Detective, four Detectives (8).
- ◆ Patrol: Captain, four Lieutenants, eight Sergeants, Lake Officer, Warrant Officer, 30 Patrol Officers (45).
- ◆ Dispatch: Supervisor and nine dispatchers (10).
- ◆ Records: Supervisor and two clerks (3).

Through the Administrative Division, the Chief and Assistant Chief of Police are responsible for maintaining exclusive control of the stationing and transfer of all supervisors, patrol officers, and civilian employees. The administrators organize, direct and control all NPD resources. They also promulgate all rules and regulations necessary for efficient police operations.

The NPD Patrol Division is the largest and most visible part of the department. Patrol officers are the first responders to all emergency law enforcement situations, and their physical presence on the streets of Nacogdoches serves as a deterrent to criminal activity. Patrol Division responsibilities include neighborhood police patrol, traffic law enforcement, accident investigation, primary crime investigation (theft, robbery, burglary, assault, murder, etc.), crowd control, and community services. NPD operates four patrol shifts, with officers working a 12-hour schedule (early shift change at 5:00 and 6:00 a.m., and night shift change at 5:00 and 6:00 p.m.). Each shift is comprised of a patrol lieutenant, two patrol sergeants, and seven patrol officers. Patrol officers drive marked police units.

The NPD Communications Division has "911" operators on duty at all times to receive police, fire, medical and any other type of emergency call. Trained dispatchers initiate both Police and Fire Department response through a computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system. This system speeds response time and is also important for accurate record-keeping, which is a major NPD responsibility.

The NPD Criminal Investigation Division includes eight officers fulfilling the detective function. They are responsible for conducting follow-up investigations of all major felony and class A and B misdemeanor crimes. Duties include gathering evidence, maintaining crime scene security, interviewing witnesses, locating informants, and arresting suspects. Division officers drive unmarked vehicles and wear plain clothes so they will not be recognized as police officers.

Specialized officers within NPD include:

- ◆ **Lake Nacogdoches Patrol Officer** – In addition to routine law enforcement, this officer also enforces water safety laws such as Boating While Intoxicated and other unsafe actions at Lake Nacogdoches as prescribed by City ordinances and rules.
- ◆ **Warrant Officer** – This officer is assigned the task of serving class C warrants issued from the Nacogdoches Municipal Court. This officer also assists the court in the processing of prisoners, arraignments, bonds, and all necessary documentation.
- ◆ **Community Services Officer** – This officer provides educational programs for Nacogdoches citizens and is liaison for various community-oriented programs, including Crime Stoppers, TRIAD, Youth Violence and

Prevention Coalition, Adopt-A-School, and the Citizens Police Academy Alumni Association.

NPD places a high priority on training and continuing education, with many classes taught in-house by department instructors. Advanced and specialty schools such as homicide investigation, SWAT, accident reconstruction, gang training and others are attended by officers with specialized duties. NPD's leadership notes that the City administration has been supportive of the department's efforts to far exceed minimum state standards for peace officer training.

In assessing its staffing adequacy, NPD uses a formula developed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police. During 2000, the department also was the subject of a routine management audit (prepared by Bannon & Associates), which recommended a staffing level of 64 sworn officers. At the time this Comprehensive Plan element was prepared, NPD had 56 officers plus one vacant position. NPD will soon have 59 positions after successfully obtaining funding for two additional officers through the competitive COPS Universal Hiring Program. Statistics maintained by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) show that police departments nationwide average 2.5 officers per 1,000 population. While this is only another informal benchmark for comparison, NPD's projected contingent of 59 officers relative to approximately 30,000 City residents works out to 1.96 officers per 1,000 population. If Nacogdoches grows to 34,000 residents by 2020 as projected in Chapter 2, then it will need 67 total officers just to maintain the current ratio of 1.96 officers per 1,000 population.

NPD divides the City into five patrol areas as shown in Figure 9.1. For purposes of assigning officers, each of these areas is then further divided into two patrol beats for a total of 10 beats citywide. With adequate staffing, NPD would ideally assign one patrol officer to each of the 10 beats. In the meantime, patrol officers must cover larger geographic areas, which slows police response time.

NPD reports that cooperation among area law enforcement agencies is better than ever. Such coordination is essential for emergency/disaster response planning. In the wake of September 11, 2001, many area counties and cities have formalized mutual-aid agreements that cover not only police and fire coordination but also public works resources. NPD is part of a Combined Emergency Response Team (CERT) that includes officers from the Deep East Texas Narcotics Trafficking Task Force, the Nacogdoches Independent School District Police Department, and the Nacogdoches Sheriff's Office.

Other Police Services

Other services provided by NPD include:

- ◆ **Citizens' Police Academy (CPA)** – CPA is an educational program, overseen by NPD's Community Service Officer, that is designed to enhance and promote citizen understanding and awareness of day-to-day Police Department functions. On one evening a week for 12 weeks, participants receive training from NPD officers in traffic law, crime scene search, tactical operations, arrest search and seizure and several other topics related to professional law enforcement. Participants also ride along with officers on patrol as part of the training. Past CPA graduates have formed

a CPA alumni organization that has become a great support group for NPD.

- ◆ **Neighborhood Association Support** – Also administered by the Community Service Officer, this program enables NPD to provide support to recognized neighborhood groups, including three current ones (East Side, West Side, Pecan Orchard). This helps to increase citizen awareness and encourage communication between neighborhood associations. NPD provides information on existing groups and formation of new groups.
- ◆ **Crime Stoppers** – This program facilitates the cooperation of citizens with NPD in helping to fight and prevent crime. Any individual with knowledge of a felony crime can call at any time to give anonymous tips and clues to the officer on duty. If the information given to Crime Stoppers leads to an arrest or grand jury indictment of a felony offender, then a cash reward of up to \$1,000.00 can be awarded to the informant.
- ◆ **Alarm Ordinance** – The NPD Alarm Unit administers the City's alarm ordinance, which requires permits for monitored as well as unmonitored alarms. Fines are assessed when police respond to alarm activations at locations without the required permit. Excessive false alarms are also cause for fines.
- ◆ **Special Events Permits** – These permits must be requested from the NPD Captain of Patrol for activities that will utilize any part of a public roadway and require any portion of the roadway to be blocked or coned off (e.g., parades, block parties, fun runs, commercial productions and festivals). Permit requests are reviewed for safety concerns and consideration of other activities that may be planned for the same time or location.
- ◆ **Women's Safehouse** – The Women's Shelter of East Texas is aimed at victims of domestic violence who need temporary housing. The safehouse is run by staff and volunteers who are trained to help women heal the psychological and physical scars of abuse or violence. Medical and counseling services are available, and police officers can provide protection at the facility.

Future Police Department Priorities

- ◆ **Address Inadequate Staffing.** NPD requires additional budget support to reach the permanent staffing level for sworn officers recommended by a recent management audit (64 versus the current 57 positions) and suggested by other national benchmarks for police staffing in communities. While current staffing provides for basic coverage of patrol and criminal investigation functions, increased staffing would reduce the beat area covered by individual officers and result in speedier response times. In the meantime, the City has depended on grants to bolster police staffing, including for the last seven officers hired.
- ◆ **Focus on Drug-Related Crimes.** NPD administrators would prefer to establish a Narcotics or Street Crime Unit to investigate drug cases instead of using the local Narcotics Task Force. Without additional budget support for this purpose, NPD would have to divert officers from existing patrol ranks, further depleting already-understaffed patrol shifts.

- ◆ **Bolster Communications Division.** NPD administrators report significant difficulties in hiring qualified dispatch personnel, in part, due to the increasingly “high-tech” nature of the job as well as the salary level relative to the stress level and demands of dispatch positions. Understaffing in the Communications Division leads to situations where off-duty dispatch personnel must be called in to cover for others who are away on sick or annual leave or using compensatory time, which adds to the stress on current staff.
- ◆ **Increase Parking Supply.** While the renovated and expanded Police Department site will provide adequate space for many years, NPD’s parking situation remains a problem. Space is particularly limited on days when Municipal Court is in session. NPD currently has a lease agreement with the Farmer’s Market across Pearl Street, which helps with overflow parking.
- ◆ **Enhance Interagency Coordination.** NPD and the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) have had preliminary discussions about NPD potentially providing office space for a DPS Special Crimes Investigator/Polygraph Operator, which would benefit both law enforcement agencies.

Nacogdoches Fire Department

The mission of the Nacogdoches Fire Department (NFD) is to “protect and enhance the quality of life in Nacogdoches through a comprehensive program of services directed toward public education, prevention, and control in areas of fire, rescue, medical emergencies, hazardous materials incidents, and disasters.” NFD’s emergency response services are immediately available to area residents by calling “911.” Fire Department personnel engage in various activities throughout the year to be prepared to respond when needed.

The Fire Department is responsible for responding to calls of service involving fires, motor vehicle or industrial accidents, medical assistance, and hazardous materials incidents. Many other activities are conducted such as building survey and pre-fire planning of various sites, issuing burning permits, conducting public education and safety classes in public schools, conducting tours of the fire stations and fire museum, completing water supply tests, and reviewing streets and access information for new development. NFD personnel are also responsible for maintaining in quality condition the stations, apparatus and equipment of the department.

Fire Facilities

The City currently has five fire stations located around the community to provide quick response to emergency situations:

- ◆ Station 1 at 3106 North Street
- ◆ Station 2 at 1900 E. Main
- ◆ Station 3 at 408 Southwest Stallings
- ◆ Station 4 at 3501 Northeast Stallings
- ◆ Station 5 (and the main NFD offices) at 214 E. Pilar

The City also owns property for a future fire station at the front of the Nacogdoches County Expo Center site on the northwest portion of Loop 224. Each fire station has an associated fire district in which it provides primary response, with support provided by other stations as needed. NFD also provides first response to fire situations within its two-mile extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). City dispatchers use a computerized process to confirm which fire company should respond and forward helpful information on the name of the subdivision in which the emergency is occurring, the closest intersection to the location, and where fire hydrants and water supplies are located in the area.

NFD also must provide emergency response at the municipal airport and at Lake Nacogdoches to the west of the incorporated city. Typical response to airport incidents includes an engine, a tanker and a rescue truck, with additional units available as needed. NFD sends an engine and a rescue truck to any boating or drowning incidents at the lake. The City also has a Swift Water Rescue Team with certified personnel. Nacogdoches County maintains a dive team.

NFD continues to pursue grant funding opportunities, recently taking delivery of a tanker/grass fire truck acquired through a grant. The department has also applied for a new rescue truck.

The only current interagency sharing of facilities involves the co-location of two County Hospital District ambulances in two NFD fire stations. The District is responsible for emergency medical services (EMS) county-wide, and, as a result, the City does not operate an ambulance service. Instead, NFD personnel are trained as first responders and assist the Hospital District's EMS group.

NFD administrators report that all five stations have limited space for personal storage, department equipment storage, and offices. Additional storage space is also needed for seldom-used trailers and antique fire apparatus. Possibilities include storage within external buildings or at the fire training field.



Adequacy of Fire Coverage

NFD uses the Insurance Services Office (ISO) standard for station location and response evaluation, which calls for the first engine to arrive at a fire scene within three minutes. The population and territorial growth of Nacogdoches has posed challenges for the Fire Department because of greater travel distances to outlying areas and the lower density of development in many such areas. As noted in the Annexation chapter of this plan (Chapter 12), NFD would be most concerned by increasing development to the southwest and northwest of the existing City due to distance and limited access and facilities in these areas. NFD administrators point to the many undeveloped areas within the existing city limits, which would be easier to serve than areas that are currently developing outside the loop.

The extent of the Nacogdoches primary response area, combined with NFD staffing limitations, means that a first-arriving unit at a fire scene may have to wait for other vehicles and personnel to arrive because of state mandates on the minimum number of firefighters to commence an interior fire attack. Even in the northeast part of the City, which is one of the best areas for fire response in terms of access and water infrastructure, Fire Station 4 on Northeast Stallings often has only two personnel on duty, and it may take five to 10 minutes for any backup units to arrive depending on the level of activity at other stations.

Another concern for any fire department is the availability and adequate pressure of water service for firefighting purposes, especially in low-density, newly-developing areas. The City of Nacogdoches is currently completing a water line improvement program that will resolve many of the water-related challenges NFD has faced as the City has grown. NFD reports that the City is in “good shape” regarding its fire hydrant coverage. Elimination of dead-end mains with subdivisions and more looping and interconnection of water lines will address problems of inadequate water quantity and/or pressure in certain areas.

In addition to providing fire and rescue response within the city limits, NFD is also considered the first responder on structure, vehicle and grass fires and motor vehicle rescue situations in the City’s extensive two-mile extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). NFD reserves the right to refuse service in the ETJ when response activity is too great inside the City. NFD coordinates with 18 volunteer fire departments that operate around Nacogdoches.

A lingering issue involves emergency alerting and communications problems. Much interagency discussion and effort has gone toward the concept of a combined dispatch center, but cooperative action and funding among the City, County and Hospital District will be required to bring this idea to fruition. All “911” calls within the City for NPD and NFD are handled by the Police Department. However, calls for fire and rescue response in the ETJ and beyond go to another emergency service answering point and then must be relayed to the City’s communication center, which leads to delays.

Fire Staffing

The Nacogdoches Fire Department is led by a Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief. In addition to fire suppression personnel, NFD has staff assigned to administrative functions, dispatching, emergency medical service, investigation and public education.

The City's Fire Marshal, based at Station 5 downtown, is responsible for a range of activities aimed at preventing fires and hazardous situations and investigating those that have occurred. These activities include arson investigations, false alarms, fire lane parking violations, fireworks regulations, fuel storage tank regulations, building occupancy loads, and reporting of fire hazards. The Fire Inspector within the City's Inspection Services Department deals with fire inspections for businesses, fire sprinkler systems and fire extinguishers. Each year investigators in the Fire Marshal's office investigate several cases involving arson, bombing, explosive devices, false alarms, fire code violations, over-occupancy complaints, and threats to bomb or burn. Arson fires cause tens of thousands of dollars in damages, and lives have been lost in Nacogdoches from fires that were set intentionally.

NFD administrators evaluate the adequacy of fire suppression staffing based on the Insurance Services Office (ISO) system, which evolved from the former State of Texas Key Rate System. The ISO is a private company that provides statistical, actuarial and underwriting information concerning the property and casualty industry for a variety of purposes, including publishing the fire class rating system. Nacogdoches "barely" achieved a "4" rating from ISO. The rating is based on the quality of fire equipment and personnel, water availability, and proper communications. The rating affects homeowner's insurance premium rates within the community (the lower the number, the higher the level of protection achieved). Manpower concerns were cited as the biggest issue in Nacogdoches' rating assessment.

Using the ISO benchmark of one firefighter on duty per 1,000 population, with a 50-percent increase for additional shifts, NFD's staffing target is 45 firefighters to cover the current City population of approximately 30,000 persons. NFD has met this staffing target for several years. However, ISO also expects three on-duty staff for each required engine or ladder company. Under this requirement, NFD would need 15 firefighters on duty per shift each day. When leave hours are factored in, it would actually take 21 persons per shift for NFD to maintain adequate coverage. Since 1998, the department's average daily staffing has been just under 13 persons on duty per day. Even this staffing level has required use of off-duty personnel working overtime. Administrators also cite continued staffing deficiencies in other NFD functions besides fire suppression. The City of Nacogdoches will need to continue to address NFD staffing to meet existing service demands as well as future growth in and around the community.

Besides staffing, other factors in NFD's response capability include the City's terrain and layout. Two major creeks must be crossed at major roadway locations, and occasional flooding results in problem areas that must be negotiated at times. A major rail line traversing the community also requires that fire apparatus sometimes take alternate routes. Emergency response can also be delayed by adjacent subdivisions that were built without connecting roads.

All applicants for fire personnel positions within NFD must complete both written and physical ability exams, pass a background investigation, and receive certification as a Firefighter and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). The department reports that, unlike some other communities, it has not experienced significant turnover from younger firefighters leaving for better opportunities elsewhere. Instead, NFD is currently working through a period with a higher-than-usual number of retirements. However, NFD administrators have

recommended that the City increase the certification pay of EMS-certified personnel to match the pay scales of other area cities.

While NFD maintains adequate continuing education to meet state requirements, it does not offer specialized or new training activities due to the lack of a full-time, assigned fire training officer. The Assistant Fire Chief fulfills this role while completing many other duties.

Other Fire Department Services

Beyond its primary function of fire and rescue response, NFD provides non-emergency services to the citizens of Nacogdoches. This includes fire prevention and survival skills instruction, home and business fire safety inspections and escape planning, holiday season safety tips, and charitable services. Fire stations also host tours by groups of citizens, students, Cub Scouts, Brownies and other organizations.

Because smoke detection devices greatly increase survival chances during a fire, NFD has a Smoke Detector Giveaway Program that provides free detectors to senior citizens and those within the City limits who cannot afford to purchase detectors. Renters are encouraged to request that their landlords install detectors.

The department also has a "Yellow Tag" Program under which locations without posted street addresses are identified and occupants are informed of the need to install address numbers for quicker emergency response. The department will tag the location and inform the occupant that they need to install address numbers so that emergency service personnel can locate the site quicker.

NFD logs a report of all fires that occur within the City. Data compiled includes who called in the fire, the stations and personnel that responded and when, the location and nature of the blaze, injuries or deaths sustained during the emergency, and even probable cause of the fire. The department provides incident reports for insurance purposes and directs individuals to other departments and agencies that keep information of potential interest.

It was pointed out by NFD administrators that the department could offer more community programs and non-emergency services if additional administrative staffing were possible.

Future Fire Department Priorities

- ◆ **Overcome Inadequate Staffing.** NFD fire suppression personnel are currently spread too thin to meet minimum manpower requirements mandated by the state and necessary for meeting ISO targets, which eventually impacts the cost of homeowner's insurance in the community. This is just to deal with current service demands, not to mention the additional demands of a growing city. While the City's five existing fire stations each have one engine or ladder truck, each apparatus is supposed to have a minimum of three persons assigned to it at all times. Because the department can only achieve a minimum 12 firefighters on duty at a time, this means only two apparatus have three persons assigned while three vehicles have only two persons riding. In addition, due to requirements on the minimum number of personnel that must be on scene

to start the firefighting process, NFD usually must send four vehicles to a structure fire, with a fifth apparatus and overtime personnel on standby for difficult fires. As mentioned in the earlier Fire Department discussion, depending on the varying response times of multiple units, this can lead to the serious problem of firefighters waiting for additional units to arrive so they have the minimum number required to go to work on a fire.

- ◆ **Address Building Maintenance Issues.** NFD administrators identified urgent repair needs at all five fire stations plus the NFD training building. Most buildings are in need of electrical upgrades, roofing work, new floor coverings, kitchen/restroom renovation, internal and external woodwork replacement, painting, and new paving. It is expected that these renovations will be included in future iterations of the City's Capital Improvements Program. It is also recommended that the City follow a systematic plan and program of routine maintenance to extend facility life and avoid more costly repairs later due to deferred maintenance.
- ◆ **Relocate Station 2.** Within the next 10 years, the City may close the existing Station 2 on E. Main at MLK and open a relocated station along the southeast portion of Loop 224 between Woden Road and E. Main near the new middle school. In addition to placing a station closer to a potential growth area with increasing service demands, this would also provide greater separation from Station 5 downtown.
- ◆ **Relocate Station 3.** One consideration by the City is to build a smaller Station 3 somewhere in the same southwest loop area, using the proceeds from the sale of the existing building (and accrued cost savings over time) to help fund the new construction.
- ◆ **Renovate Station 5.** Renovation versus new construction is the likely "better" option for the central fire station downtown, according to NFD administrators. They predict an extensive renovation of the existing facility at some point.
- ◆ **Centralize Emergency Dispatching and Communications.** Budget constraints and administrative complexities stand in the way of a unified communications approach and potential "state of the art" joint "911" call center and dispatch facility among the City, County and Hospital District. However, most agree on the need for such coordination of resources and efforts to avoid placing lives and property at greater risk due to delayed emergency response. This will continue to be a priority issue as more development occurs in areas of overlapping jurisdiction, which lengthens the process of verifying incident locations, determining the appropriate first responder, and transmitting critical information to other agencies with different communication systems.

Nacogdoches Public Library

As stated on its website (<http://npl.sfasu.edu>), the Nacogdoches Public Library (NPL) "serves as a center of reliable information, provides opportunities for persons of all ages to educate themselves, and continually seeks to identify community needs and provide programs to meet those needs. The library also seeks to cooperate with other organizations in meeting community needs. The public library strives to serve the constituency in a practical way, fortifying people with the necessary information that will improve the quality of their lives."

The Library strives to serve all ages and needs through by in-house materials as well as loaned items from libraries across the nation. Library materials include books, magazines, audiocassettes, videotapes, DVDs, and large-print books. These materials are drawn from collections of children's, young adults, biography, science fiction, westerns, mystery, Spanish, Christian, reference, and nonfiction topics. NPL also has Internet access and electronic databases for public use. Library staff are available to help people locate the information they need.

While the Library is a City of Nacogdoches function and receives its primary funding through the City's annual budget, NPL serves the entire county from its location on North Street (proof of residency is required for county residents to obtain a library card). Nacogdoches County currently contributes \$8,400 per year toward library operations. The Library is open to the general public, but anyone from outside the County who wishes to check out materials must pay a fee as established by the City Commission (currently \$25 annually). NPL also participates in a Texas State Library program called TexShare, through which an individual may use his or her local library card at libraries in other Texas cities. While the Library is aware of out-of-town visitors who come to NPL for genealogy research or to access the Internet, no official visitation figures are kept.

NPL also has an established relationship with the Stephen F. Austin State University library through a contract that enables the City library to use SFA's automated circulation system. City and university library patrons also benefit from a reciprocal borrowing agreement between the libraries, with items transported by a courier service as needed (SFA students, faculty and staff need only show a valid university I.D. to check out materials). In addition, the SFA technology department provides contract services to oversee NPL's data and networking arrangements for Internet access and videoconferencing, while also providing technical advice and support as needed.

The Library also receives audiovisual equipment, videos on loan and other services through its membership in the Houston Area Library System.

Library Facilities

The Nacogdoches Public Library is located at 1112 North Street, in the same facility as the City's Community/Recreation Center, where it has been housed since the building opened in 1998. The Library is open to the public from 9:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Monday and Thursday; 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday; and, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday. The Library is closed on Sunday and major holidays.



NPL administrators report that the Library space has not had any significant recent improvements, nor are they any plans given the relatively new status of the City facility. However, they point out multiple roof leaks over the last several years, which likely indicates the need for major roof repairs in the near term.

Interior painting and re-carpeting will also be necessary at some point given the level of public use.

The Library collection continues to grow to meet patrons' high expectations for new materials. With projected growth of approximately 3,400 items per year (2,100 adult, 810 juvenile and 230 young adult), NPL administrators predict the collection will outgrow current shelf space in five to six years. Other space issues include insufficient office space and storage space and difficulties with shared classroom space also under high demand from Parks and Recreation Department patrons.

Regarding NPL's technology and multimedia resources, the Library currently uses a computer-based catalog system that is shared with the Stephen F. Austin State University library. In addition to computers used by Library staff, NPL has 11 public computers, which are very popular and are therefore limited to one hour of use per person per day. The computers have Internet and e-mail access, access to a selection of electronic databases, and word processing and spreadsheet software. Patrons are charged for printing (currently 15 cents per page), and first-time database users must show their library card to receive a password. The Library's Internet service is provided through SFA, which also hosts NPL's website. The Library's on-line catalog is also web-based so that anyone using the Internet from home or work can access it, as well as the various electronic databases available through the Library.

In recent years NPL has received two Texas Infrastructure Fund (TIF) grants and one Gates Foundation grant for computers, training and teleconferencing equipment. The Library also obtained two Loan Star grants from the Texas State Library for books. The Texas Book Festival provided two other grants for books. The Library also encourages donations in the form of money or books. Such gifts may be a memorial or in recognition of other special occasions. Books which NPL purchases with gift money receive a bookplate in honor or in memory of a designated person.

Another source of funds for NPL is fees from overdue materials. After initial notices, a patron's record is blocked until overdue or lost items are resolved. NPL's current fees are 10 cents per item per day for overdue books and \$1.00 per item per day for all audiovisual materials, including videotapes and DVDs. When a fee for lost materials must be assessed, the fee includes the replacement cost of the item plus a \$10.00 processing fee.

As in many communities, the Friends of the Nacogdoches Public Library is a very significant source of financial and public support to the City library. Friends group members describe themselves as "enthusiastic library supporters who promote an informed interest in the library." Members pay individual fees of \$10.00 or \$15.00 for a family. All organizational proceeds are used to benefit NPL. In addition to operating an ongoing book sale, the Friends' many worthwhile activities include:

- ◆ donating funds for book purchases;
- ◆ sponsoring various NPL programs, including author visits;
- ◆ purchasing the Library's magazine offerings each year;
- ◆ providing bookmarks, posters and book bags, plus promotional materials for the juvenile area;

- ◆ providing prizes for the Summer Reading Club;
- ◆ overseeing the Books for Babies literacy program, which helps parents and grandparents of newborns to appreciate the important role they play in child development;
- ◆ furnishing refreshments for library training sessions held at NPL by the Houston Area Library System; and,
- ◆ providing four computers equipped with learning programs so that children without access to a computer can learn to use one or increase their proficiency.

The Friends group also provided the shelving for the Library when it opened in its current location.

Library Staffing

The Nacogdoches Public Library (NPL) is led by a Director, who is one of two professional librarians employed. The Library also currently has a Children's Librarian, four clerks, and two part-time book shelvees.

NPL administrators point out staffing deficiencies in the children's and technology areas. They also note that another professional librarian and another clerk would be needed to provide adequate public service should the library eventually expand its public hours, as some patrons desire.

NPL has avoided becoming dependent on volunteer workers as this type of support fluctuates over time. A program through Stephen F. Austin State University enables SFA students to be paid for 20 hours of work at the City's library. These students provide support in the children's area.

NPL staff receive training through the Texas State Library and the Houston Area Library System in the areas of computer use, databases, and public relations. These entities offer programs in various area libraries and through satellite teleconferences, which is helpful since only a few staff can travel to an off-site training program. On an in-house basis, training occurs through staff sharing information with each other at staff meetings and by working individually with newly-acquired computer software.

Other Library Services

- ◆ **Children's Services** – The Nacogdoches Public Library has an extensive collection of books and other resources for children of all ages and reading levels, including fairy tales, easy readers, picture books, reference and nonfiction books, award-winning fiction, biographies, Spanish-language books, and books on children's reading for parents and teachers. Children's magazines, audiocassettes, videotapes and DVDs are also available, plus games on four computers. NPL has a wide-ranging collection of paperback books for children and another large group of paperbacks chosen for young adults age 12 and older.

The Library offers a variety of programs for children. Preschool story hour is held each Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. for children ages 3, 4 and 5 years old. Story time in Spanish is held the first Saturday of each month during the school year. Every month through the school year the Junior Forum

has an evening pajama story time program. Special programs for daycares and school groups are scheduled by appointment. Also, NPL offers stories by telephone by calling a special number. The Library conducts an extensive Summer Reading Program for children and teens. Special summer programs are also offered every Tuesday morning at 10:00 a.m. during the months of June and July.

- ◆ **Handicapped Services** – NPL offers a variety of services to help citizens with visual or physical handicaps to enjoy reading. Physically handicapped citizens can take advantage of the library's push-button, automated doors for wheelchair access. Also, a public Internet computer has large print available for the visually impaired, an enlarged print reader, and "JAWS" speech software.
- ◆ **Teleconferencing Capabilities** – NPL provides public use, by appointment, of satellite and videoconferencing facilities.
- ◆ **Sterne-Hoya Museum and Library** – The Nacogdoches Public Library also oversees this important facility, which houses a strong Texana collection, a children's collection, and various books on local genealogical materials. These books are for research purposes only and are not part of a lending collection. The museum is located at 211 South Lanana Street. Hours of operation are Monday through Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Future Library Priorities

- ◆ **Prepare to Address Library Space Needs.** Even though the Nacogdoches Public Library has only been in its current facility for less than a decade, space issues are already a concern for a variety of functions. In addition to needing more space for collection growth in line with patron expectations, particularly for the juvenile area and then the young adult area, staff work space and storage space is inadequate. NPL's Assistant Director does not have an office despite responsibility for the reference and young adult collections, personnel timesheets, and Library publicity, among other activities. The Library also has no current space within its facility for storing digital technology equipment, book carts and collection overflow (i.e., a non-public "stacks" area). NPL administrators also point out that more public computers would be beneficial given the level of patron demand, but the Library does not have space to accommodate more terminals.

Another ongoing problem is the lack of an appropriate space to use as a classroom area for computer instruction and for video/satellite teleconferencing, which limits the use of this valuable equipment already in NPL's possession. Currently, the meeting room in the Community Center is used for this purpose, but it is a shared space that is often in use for Parks and Recreation Department classes and programs.

- ◆ **Plan Ahead for Library Facility Maintenance and Equipment Upgrades.** The side effects of a popular City facility will need to be addressed to avoid the higher longer-term costs of deferred maintenance. This includes interior painting, replacement of worn carpet, and roof repairs since the Library has already experienced leaks the last few years. While expansion of the Library's computer resources would be desirable, NPL will also need to replace computers periodically, including the

11 existing Internet computers and four children's learning computers, to stay current with technology and software standards expected by patrons. Rapid technological advances will also detract from the longer-term utility of NPL's current video/teleconferencing equipment, perhaps within the next five years.

- ◆ **Consider Library Staffing Needs.** The Library currently has staffing needs that impact the delivery of adequate public service in some of its most popular areas, including the children's and technology areas. A technology assistant is needed to handle minor computer problems and teleconferencing activity. The juvenile area needs a clerk assigned to help cover times when the Librarian is not available, especially if the Library's public hours were to be expanded. In fact, as in most communities, patrons would prefer longer library hours, asking for additional hours on Saturdays and a new time slot on Sundays. Any hours expansion would put pressure on library staffing in general, in addition to the current staffing concerns noted above. NPL administrators confirm that staffing constraints, along with the unavailability of meeting room space most evenings, also limits the amount of programming offered by the Library. The Library recently began offering computer training for the general public, and training in Spanish would be a desired addition. However, the Library has cut back on doing other general programs for the public.
- ◆ **Explore Ways to Extend Library Services to Areas of Need.** Operating from its central facility on North Street and with no branch locations, the Nacogdoches Public Library is far removed from residents who live at the edge of the City, many county residents, and others who have limited transportation options. While it is unlikely that the City or County could afford to build additional library facilities in the coming years, Nacogdoches County covers 981 square miles and has no other library service except for a volunteer library in Cushing. Many communities employ a bookmobile service, or small satellite locations, to bring library resources and materials to "underserved" populations who cannot easily come to the library on their own. NPL administrators point to this need within the existing City limits as well as in the County, which would likely require a cooperative City-County initiative to address.

Other Public Facilities

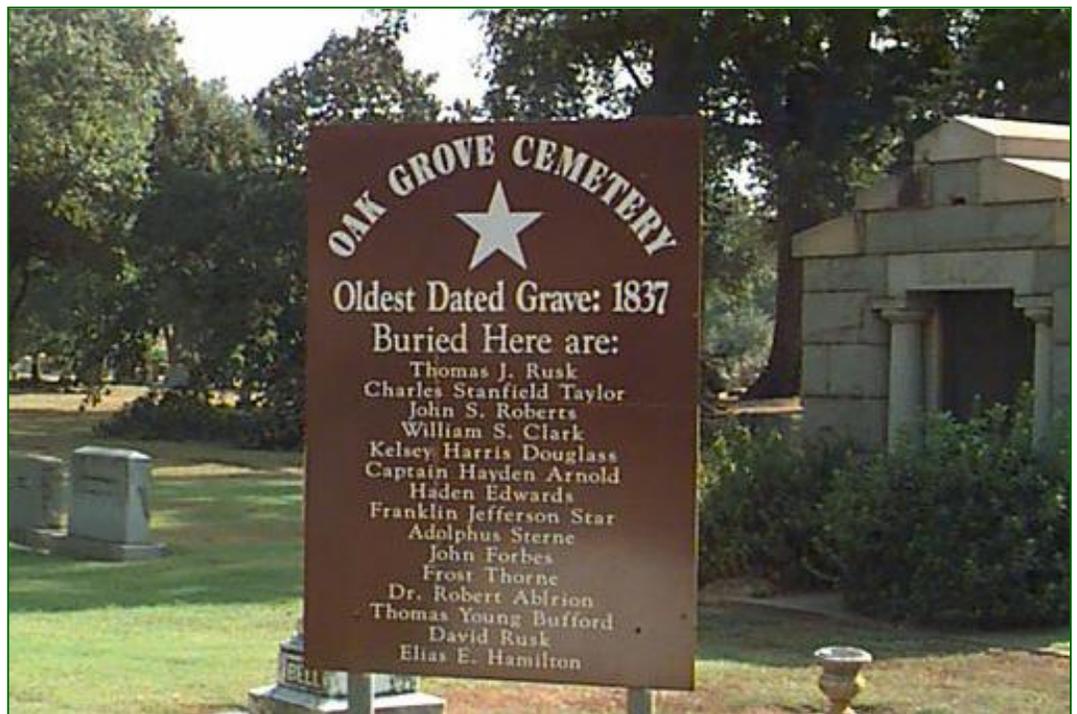
Beyond the key services of police, fire and library, the City must continue to monitor the short- and longer-term adequacy of staffing, facility space and condition, and the effectiveness of service delivery across a variety of municipal functions. In some cases there may be opportunities to consolidate activities and/or space, particularly by bringing together departments that have significant contact with the public. In other cases, equitable access to community services may be a decisive factor in where and how services are provided. In all cases,



it is essential that the City set a good example with the appearance and maintenance of its facilities and with building access in accordance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

Other City facilities that are relevant to overall community planning include:

- ◆ **Animal Control.** In addition to operating the City's animal shelter, the Animal Control Department provides animal control services for residents residing within the City limits. Department staff investigate and take appropriate action in cases involving nuisance animals, abused or neglected animals, lost or found animals, and sick or injured animals. After-hours calls are handled by the Nacogdoches Police Department. The shelter facility provides temporary housing of impounded, stray, quarantined or unwanted animals. The City is in the process of relocating the shelter from 421 Rusk Street (to the west of McDonald's on North Street) to a site along Southwest Stallings Drive, which generated some controversy before the decision was finalized early in 2003.
- ◆ **Cemeteries.** The City of Nacogdoches operates Sunset (5513 North Street), Oak Grove (200 Lanana Street) and Pine Grove (Highway 7 West) cemeteries and also maintains Cleavers and Zion Hill cemeteries. The Cemetery Department office is located at 5127 North Street and handles inquiries regarding records and grave space sales.



- ◆ **Emergency Management.** Through its Emergency Management Department, the City of Nacogdoches keeps its citizens informed and prepared for emergencies, coordinates resources during such events, and provides relief after an emergency. The department's mission is to save lives and protect property by developing programs and emergency operational capabilities in the event of a natural or man-made disaster.
- ◆ **Public Works Department.** The City's Public Works Department serves the citizens of Nacogdoches by making roads, bridges and sidewalks safe and accessible by cleaning them of snow or debris, diverting rainwater into

storm drains, repairing potholes and cracks, and maintaining roads when the surface wears away or sinks. The department also maintains all traffic signs to ensure that motorists can safely travel around the area. Street maintenance includes trimming and pruning grass, trees, brush and weeds in the public right of way. In addition, the department is responsible for all sanitation collection and disposal and operates the City's water and wastewater treatment plants. The Public Works Department is based at 617 Bremond. The City is currently remodeling the old R&K warehouse located near the Baseball Complex for a public works facility, to be completed within the next budget year.

