

Foreword

September 1, 2006

Dear Citizens:

It is a pleasure to present the City of Norwalk's blueprint for the future, a Comprehensive Plan that examines the issues most likely to influence the City's development over the next twenty years. By defining who we want to become in the future, this strategic planning document will guide City decision-making in a wide range of areas as we grow.

The Comprehensive Plan is the product of two years of effort by local citizens, business leaders and government officials. Over 700 people played a role in shaping this document, from community forums held in October 2004 to focus groups in the winter of 2005 to resource panels which met during the summer and fall of 2005. All provided input and feedback as the plan developed. As a result, this document does not represent any one person's vision, but the entire community's. It clearly affirms the principle and importance of the role of community in implementing the policies outlined in the Comprehensive Plan.

This plan has already proved to be an integral component of City actions since those public forums. Even in draft form, it has defined who we are in response to requests by developers, and it will continue to influence City development decisions in the future.

While the document describes a vast number of issues requiring attention, a number of priorities must be at the forefront:

- Community Character/Quality of Life – The mission expressed in the Comprehensive Plan reflects the fundamental values of the community: We must plan for orderly growth while maintaining our rich heritage and the safe, family-friendly atmosphere we love.
- Economic Development /Downtown Norwalk – A healthy business base is the key to the health of the community. We must strive to retain and attract new industry as well as support the entrepreneur and family-owned shops.
- Infrastructure and Utilities/Natural Resources – Continued improvements to infrastructure must be designed to meet growth needs and regulations while reflecting good stewardship of our environment and resources. A primary focus must be securing a secondary water source as wells as ensuring access to high-speed telecommunications.
- Transportation/Housing – We must maintain and build transportation systems that are safe and efficient and advocate for a full mix of quality housing options.
- Community Services/Facilities – We must continue to strive for strong and reliable safety forces with adequate facilities and personnel. We must preserve and promote the many service organizations sustaining the City, as they are essential to a sound quality of life.

- Land Use – The heart of this Comprehensive Plan is centered in our Land Use Plan. Where will we grow and how? We must preserve a sound balance between emerging residential use and commercial needs.

Over 300 recommendations are made in this document, each with a targeted time frame for achievement. This timeline may evolve through the years as objectives and priorities change and are meshed with the limited resources available. The timeframes reflected in the Summary Chapter are:

- Short term – to be completed between 2006 and 2010.
- Medium term – to be completed between 2011 and 2015.
- Long term – to be completed in 2016 or later.
- Ongoing – signifying activities that are already or should become an integral part of daily government. They represent the approach the City will take in responding to needs, the environment we want to sustain, and the impression we want to leave with residents, workers and visitors.

This plan is yours. It reflects the vital interests, hopes and dreams of this community. I challenge you to become stewards of the plan, to become familiar with the agenda set forth here, and in the years ahead to challenge our public servants to hold to its vision.

With gratitude for all the hard work put into the development of this plan, and with great pride in the Norwalk community, I am pleased to present the City of Norwalk's Comprehensive Plan.

Sincerely,

Susan S. Lesch

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Mayor