



Norwalk,  
Iowa

# Chapter 5 Implementation



# Implementation

## *Guiding Daily Decisions*

### City Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibility for implementing this plan lies primarily with the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Staff.

#### City Council

City Council sets priorities, approves budgets and tax rates, and often has the final say on key aspects of public and private development projects. The value and legitimacy of this plan is directly related to the degree to which Council members are aware of the plan and expect City actions to be consistent with this plan. Each Board member should have a copy of this plan and be familiar with the major goals and objectives described herein. The City Council should expect and require that staff recommendations and actions both reference and remain consistent with this plan, or that the plan is amended as needed to fit changing conditions.

#### Planning and Zoning Commission

Land use and development recommendations are a core component of this plan, and the Planning and Zoning Commission has a major role in guiding those decisions. Planning and Zoning Commission members shall each have a copy of this plan and shall be familiar with the content, especially Chapter 4: Land Use. It is generally the responsibility of the Planning and Zoning Commission to determine whether proposed projects are consistent with this plan, and to make decisions and recommendations that are consistent with this plan. In cases where actions that are inconsistent with this plan are deemed to be in the best interest of the City, the Planning and Zoning Commission should initiate efforts to amend the plan to better reflect City interests. This will help to reinforce the legitimacy of the plan as an important tool in guiding City decision making.

#### City Staff

City staff have a significant influence on the selection and completion of all kinds of capital and operational projects. It is imperative that City staff know about, support, and actively work to implement the various strategies and actions in this plan.

Specifically, the following people should consult and reference the comprehensive plan during goal-setting processes, annual budgeting, planning for major public projects, and in the review of private development projects:

- City Manager
- Community Development Staff
- Economic Development Staff
- Public Works Staff

These key staff members are expected to know and track the various goals, strategies, and vision laid out in this plan, and to reference that content as appropriate in communications with residents, business owners, and elected and appointed officials. All other staff members should be aware of the plan and the connections between the plan and City projects. The purpose of this extra effort is to strengthen staff recommendations and reinforce the plan as a relevant tool integral to City functions and decision making.

## Education and Advocacy

Implementation of this plan also depends on the actions and decisions of entities other than City government. Some responsible, non-municipal parties that the City collaborates with include:

- Norwalk Community School District
- Warren County
- Iowa Department of Transportation
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

It is necessary to persuade these entities to be active partners in the implementation of the vision, goals, strategies of this plan.

The following City activities can support this effort:

- Share this plan with each organization, including a memo highlighting sections of the plan that anticipate collaboration between the City and the organization.
- Take the lead role in establishing a collaboration for key or crucial initiatives of the City that require regional collaboration
- Know and communicate the intent of relevant objectives and strategies—partner organizations need to understand and buy into the rationale before they will act.
- Utilize the goals and vision from the plan to support requests for monetary support for City efforts.

## Utilizing Existing Tools

Many of the strategies identified in this plan presume the use of existing City ordinances, regulations, and programs. The City's key implementation tools include:

### Operational Tools

- Annual Goal-Setting Process
- Annual Budget Process
- Capital Improvement Plan

### Regulatory Tools

- Building and Housing Codes
- Zoning Ordinance
- Subdivision Regulations
- Warren County Ordinances
- State Regulations
- Federal Regulations

### Funding Tools

- User Fees
- Tax Abatement
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts
- Development Fees
- State, Federal, and Private Grant Programs

### Surrounding Area Comprehensive Plans

- Warren County Comprehensive Plan
- Madison County Comprehensive Plan
- Des Moines Metropolitan Area Plans
- City of West Des Moines Comprehensive Plan
- City of Cumming Comprehensive Plan
- City of Des Moines Comprehensive Plan
- Iowa DOT Future Improvement Plans

## Guiding Annual Decisions

### Annual Report

To provide lasting value and influence, this plan must be used and referenced regularly, especially during budgeting and goal setting processes. To inform the annual processes, City staff will prepare a concise Comprehensive Plan Annual Report for the City Council with input from the Planning and Zoning Commission, including the following information.

- Action items in progress or completed during the prior 12 months (celebrate successes!)
- Staff recommendations for action items to pursue during the next 12 months, including removing or adding items.
- City actions and decisions during the past 12 months not consistent with the plan (if any).
- Staff recommendations for any amendments to the adopted plan.

### Link to Annual Goals and Budget

The most important opportunity for this plan to influence the growth and improvement of the City is through the annual goal-setting, budgeting and capital planning processes. These existing annual efforts determine what projects will and will not be pursued by the City, so it is very important to integrate this plan into those processes every year.

The compilation of actions in the next section is a resource to support decisions about how and where to invest the City's limited resources. The Annual Report should draw from these actions and decisions.

The Planning Commission should make formal recommendations for the Council's consideration, identifying those choices and commitments most likely to further the goals and objectives identified in this plan.

The following process and schedule is recommended.

**Step 1** - Staff completes the Comprehensive Plan Annual Report.

**Step 2** - Planning Commission considers Annual Report and makes formal recommendation to Council regarding action items to pursue and comprehensive plan amendments.

**Step 3** - Department Directors consider Annual Report and Planning Commission recommendations, complete goal setting exercises. Council holds a public hearing and considers adoption of any comprehensive plan amendments.

**Step 4** - City Council Goal Setting

**Step 5** - Budget preparation process

**Step 6** - Budget Adopted

# Action Plan

The Action Plan detailed on the following pages is designed as a guide to help City officials, community leaders, and private investors prioritize opportunities and address issues with the City and the surrounding area. The desired vision for the City cannot be created over night. However, by incrementally implemented the recommendations within this plan, the City can achieve the desired outcomes set forth in this comprehensive plan.

## Potential Funding Sources

Below are several of the broad funding sources available to help offset costs to complete the projects listed in this plan.

### **General City Funding**

It is assumed that some general funds and/or general obligation bonds will be required to assist with the completion of projects or as a matching sources for state or federal grants.

### **Special Assessments**

Particular projects that benefit individual properties (e.g. water, sewer, or sidewalk installations) could be funded through special assessments whereby the City recoups initial design and construction costs through increased property tax assessments on those properties for a set period of time.

### **Revenues**

Projects related to drinking water, sanitary sewer, and storm water could be funded using system revenues, bonds, or fees collected from system users across the community.

### **Private**

Donations, Grants - Some of the wayfinding projects could be partially or fully funded through private donations or public fund raising. Funding for other infrastructure projects can also be offset by using funds from impact fees the City collects as part of the approval of new development.

### **State and Federal Grants and Programs**

There are many different state or federal grants and programs that many be able to offset the costs of some of the identified projects. Only those programs most likely to award funding to are listed.

### **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)**

Tax increment financing is a program where the additional taxes generated from a development in a TIF district would go towards specified public improvements in a community. This program helps + the impacts of new development on a community while improving the attractiveness of the City.

# Action Plan (Continued)

## Action

### Community Facilities and Services

- 1.a Provide educational opportunities for City Council to better understand development processes and environmental best practices.
- 1.b Encourage implementation of DNR and EPA standards in development.
- 1.c Identify prominent landmarks and areas of preservation.
- 1.d Codify design regulations for community signage.
- 1.e Implement wayfinding techniques throughout the City using established signage regulations.
- 1.f Conduct a walkability study of the City.
- 1.g Identify necessary sidewalk improvements and potential trail connections.
- 1.h Conduct parking analysis for "downtown" Norwalk and high-traffic areas.
- 1.i Review and revise parking regulations to adhere to EPA and ADA standards.
- 1.j Identify areas where infill or redevelopment are feasible.
- 1.k Prioritize design standards and development incentives that utilize infill and redevelopment areas.
- 2.a Identify regular maintenance and replacement needs.
- 2.b Develop maintenance and replacement schedule of facilities, services, and infrastructure.
- 2.c Identify facilities and services that warrant regular feedback.
- 2.d Develop community communication strategy to gather feedback.
- 2.e Identify processes which warrant community feedback.
- 2.f Establish procedures to conduct community outreach for necessary processes.



# Action Plan (Continued)

	Action
Transportation	1.a Address transportation infrastructure quality through capital improvement planning.
	1.b Optimize transportation funding through grant opportunities, technical assistance, and local and regional transportation planning.
	1.c Conduct pavement management study to determine existing and desired pavement qualities.
	1.d Develop pavement repair and maintenance schedule that coordinates with existing and future transportation plans and projects.
	1.e Coordinate with Iowa DOT for traffic mitigation and growth management best practices.
	1.f Conduct traffic studies along potential growth corridors.
	1.g Review internal and external plans regarding transportation.
	1.h Coordinate local and regional needs for infrastructure, funding, and maintenance.
	2.a Utilize the Comprehensive Plan, Greenways Plan and the Comprehensive Parks and Open Space Plan to guide transportation development.
	2.b Develop regular review and updating process for local plans - focus on coordination of local and regional plans.
	2.c Incentivize development plans that prioritize non-vehicular transportation.
	2.d Reduce the frequency of culs-de-sac to improve connectivity of both vehicular and non-vehicular transportation.
	2.e Review traffic incident data and identify crash mitigation strategies.
	2.f Identify signage needs and implement cohesive signage for vehicular and non-vehicular traffic.



# Action Plan (Continued)

	Action
Parks and Recreation	1.a Establish regular community outreach procedures to identify the recreation and open space needs and desires of residents.
	1.b Utilize the Greenways Master Plan and the Comprehensive Park and Open Space plans to guide the development of trails, parks, and open spaces.
	1.c Identify areas deficient in recreational space.
	1.d Create development standards to include adequate green space in future land use plans.
	1.e Identify opportunities for and encourage involvement in regional trail development.
	1.f Coordinate Norwalk's transportation and recreation plans with those of the region to optimize projects and development.
	1.g Conduct a community walkability study.
	1.h Evaluate the feasibility of starting a community-wide Safe Routes to School Program.
	2.a Identify overlap in recreation between existing agencies.
	2.b Develop a system (such as a position or committee) to coordinate recreational facilities and programs.
	2.c Evaluate physical and financial accessibility to recreational services for residents and visitors of all socioeconomic situations.
	2.d Engage community members to help guide recreational planning and development.
	2.e Maintain a comprehensive inventory of current and desired recreational facilities and activities.
	2.f Establish a means to fund current and additional recreational opportunities for residents and individuals.



# Action Plan (Continued)

## Action

### Agriculture and Natural Resources

- 1.a Continually support community development standards that protect floodplains as defined by FEMA and designated on FIRM maps from incompatible development.
- 1.b Maintain ordinances that support National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit.
- 1.c Incentivize robust plantings in new development areas.
- 1.d Preserve the natural character of the watershed through green space acquisition, floodplain regulations, and drainage corridor and buffer protection.
- 1.e Identify unique natural areas for restoration projects.
- 1.f Apply for funding opportunities for natural restoration projects.
- 2.a Incentivize establishment of greenspace in new development areas.
- 2.b
- 2.c Identify reasonable means of natural features conservation and restoration during development processes.
- 2.d Establish development regulations that conserve and/or restore of natural features to that comparable to pre-development.
- 2.e Conduct community needs assessment for local food systems.
- 2.f Identify resources such as space, time, and partnerships to establish a robust local food system.



# Action Plan (Continued)

	Action
Housing	1.a Use development and land use plans to ensure that each neighborhood has an appropriate ratio of owner occupied and rental housing units.
	1.b Utilize community plans to guide development and location of varied housing styles to suit the needs of diverse demographics of current and future residents.
	1.c Adopt development standards that cohere the community and enhance the built environment.
	1.d Engage residents in community development plans to align new development with the needs of residents.
	1.e Provide targeted development incentives to attract developers for new housing projects.
	1.f Encourage mixed-density development in new development areas.
	1.g Regularly review zoning and subdivision codes to ensure they are not a primary barrier to development.
	1.h Incentivize mixed-density housing developments.
	2.a Encourage development of a diverse range of housing opportunities.
	2.b Increase accessibility of community services (City of Norwalk, Warren County, and regional housing programs) that aid in housing needs.
	2.c Evaluate need and opportunity for dedicated City funding focused towards housing improvements.
	2.d Coordinate existing funding including local organizations and grant opportunities to help improve housing stock.
	2.e Increase accessibility of rental information for tenants by including information on City website and various public spaces.
	2.f Provide renters information regarding rental inspection programs and best practices through the City website and various public spaces.



	Priority				Potential Partner	Funding Resources
	2022-2024	2025-2030	2031-2040	On Going		
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# Action Plan (Continued)

	Action
Economy and Employment	1.a Support the Norwalk Area Chamber of Commerce and provide resources for businesses to engage with the Chamber via the City website and various public spaces.
	1.b Develop City-sponsored events to increase awareness of local businesses.
	1.c Engage with the Norwalk community to understand economic needs of businesses and residents.
	1.d Create a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) plan to help guide future economic growth.
	1.e Establish procedures to review, revise, and track implementation of all local community plans.
	1.f Incentivize involvement of local businesses and organizations to help improve coordination of local plan implementation.
	1.g Direct public and private resource investment into business and residential areas that are in early decline to maximize impact and minimize the potential for blight.
	1.h Promote community engagement through opportunities such as events and marketing of said opportunities.
	2.a Develop signage regulations that support business advertising.
	2.b Support transportation infrastructure that provides intuitive access to business centers.
	2.c Use wayfinding signage throughout the community to direct traffic to local businesses.
	2.d Analyze parking regulations to optimize parking availability for customers and employees, minimize unused parking, and promote walkable areas.
	2.e Ensure that all land uses are connected by safe and efficient vehicular and non-vehicular transportation infrastructure.
	2.f Incentivize beautification methods in business districts (such as plantings, murals, and façade improvements) that create an enjoyable space for residents and visitors to walk.



# Action Plan (Continued)

## Action

### Intergovernmental Cooperation

- 1.a Identify areas of overlapping or adjacent jurisdiction.
- 1.b Form relationships with necessary partners to develop procedures for coordinating future growth plans.
- 1.c Participate in intergovernmental councils and committees.
- 1.d Identify overlapping needs and work to make Norwalk's plans considerate and beneficial to the region.
- 1.e Be present and active in decisions that impact adjacent and overlapping municipalities.
- 1.f Establish intergovernmental communication procedures in the Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- 2.a Engage with the Norwalk Community School District regarding community activities.
- 2.b Promote community activities on the City website and various public spaces.
- 2.c Collaborate with the school district in their plans for mutually beneficial building and site improvements.
- 2.d Include a school transportation representative in transportation planning activities to provide insight on school transportation needs.
- 2.e Seek representatives from Warren County Conservation, Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District, and other state agencies to help guide planning efforts and implementation.
- 2.f Promote local conservation efforts on the City website and various public spaces.



# Action Plan (Continued)

## Action

### Resilience

1.a Encourage energy efficiency in buildings, lighting, and infrastructure.

1.b Support the development practices that allow for the capture and use of clean energy.

1.c Continually monitor local changes that may affect the Warren County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

1.d Promote education and awareness regarding hazards and risks in the community.

1.e Establish cost/benefit analysis procedures to determine the most economically sustainable means of public expenditures.

1.f Utilize CEDS, Norwalk Comprehensive Plan, Long Range Transportation Plan, and other local plans to help prioritize future activities and maximize funding strategies for projects.

2.a Increase opportunities to engage in local political activities.

2.b Provide educational opportunities for residents to meet local leaders and better understand processes of local government.

2.c Reduce barriers to gatherings by providing temporary exceptions to regulations such as noise ordinances.

2.d Develop accessible and simple guidelines for establishing moderately scaled community focused events.

2.e Create safe and inviting spaces for residents to inhabit in their leisure time.

2.f Establish a community communication network that promotes information sharing.



# Action Plan (Continued)

	Action
Land Use	1.a Consult the Comprehensive Plan when reviewing rezoning requests and development proposals (including subdivisions within the City's 2-mile extra-territorial review area) to determine if they are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Plan and related goals and strategies.
	1.b Require new development connect and extend street, water, and sanitary sewer infrastructure necessary to both serve their project and allow for future development of the neighboring properties.
	1.c Require new developments and subdivisions, including rural development) have public streets built to City design standards and have at least one access point to a paved street network.
	1.d Consider prohibiting or discouraging private streets.
	1.e Require any proposed development that cannot connect to City sewer and/or water provide dry sewer mains, easements, plans, and agreements to connect at some point in the future when service is available.
	1.f Preserve right-of-way and easement corridors for future streets and utilities.
	2.a Limit the use of cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets and require collector streets connect through proposed developments to provide multiple streets in which to circulate traffic.
	2.b Require new development construct sidewalks and trails and connect these trails and sidewalks to existing and future adjoining developments.
	3.a Consider adoption of stream buffer, slope preservation, and tree canopy preservation ordinances to protect the natural areas and City's watersheds from over-development.
	3.b Prohibit development within the floodplain.
	4.a Develop an annexation and infrastructure investment priority plan and work with area property owners within those areas to annex into the City of Norwalk when appropriate to make land available for development.
	4.b Discourage rural subdivisions within the City's 2-mile extra territorial review area that either do not meet the City's subdivision regulations or are not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
	4.c Create an infrastructure extension plan to provide the backbone for major infrastructure, including streets, bridges, sanitary sewers and water service, as necessary to prepare areas for future annexation and development.

