



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, and 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 Items: Community Facilities and Services

Strategy	Action Item
<i>Goal 1: Maintain reliable, quality services, utilities, and facilities to encourage growth and reinvestment.</i>	
Support policies that enhance natural areas through the development process.	Provide educational opportunities for City Council to better understand development processes and environmental best practices.
	Encourage implementation of DNR and EPA standards in development.
Develop design guidelines for community gateways and wayfinding signage that welcomes visitors and coheres future and existing aesthetics.	Identify prominent landmarks and areas to indicate.
	Codify design regulations for community signage.
Encourage connectivity among new and existing developments through pedestrian and bicycle facilities.	Review and update walkability study in Greenways Plan to maintain awareness of priority areas for repair.
	Work with Community Development, Public Works, City Staff and Council, Parks and Recreation, and other relevant public resources to maintain a sidewalk connectivity plan that includes procedures for implementing public and private connections.
Explore development incentives that prioritize infill development/ redevelopment and utilize existing public infrastructure.	Identify areas where infill or redevelopment are feasible and prioritize design standards and development incentives that utilize infill and redevelopment areas
	Establish a dangerous and dilapidated program to identify and address dangerous and dilapidated areas.
<i>Goal 2: Ensure that public facilities and City provided services meet the needs of residents and businesses, and</i>	
Develop a first responders and essential services expansion plan to accommodate anticipated growth.	Conduct community wide first responder needs assessment to determine future needs of fire and police.
	Prioritize implementation of the Norwalk Easter Public Library Space Needs Assessment.
Maintain maintenance and replacement schedule.	Identify facilities and services that warrant regular feedback.
	Develop community communication strategy to gather feedback.
Adopt community engagement procedures into City Code.	Identify processes which warrant community feedback.
	Establish procedures to conduct community outreach for necessary processes.

	Priority	Timeline	Potential Partners	Funding Opportunities
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Action Items: Transportation

Strategy	Action Item
<i>Goal 1: Develop a comprehensive system that provides accessibility to traditional and alter</i>	
Prioritize maintenance and improvement of transportation infrastructure to support business and employment growth.	Continue to address transportation infrastructure quality through capital improvement planning.
	Optimize transportation funding through grant opportunities, technical assistance, and local and regional transportation planning.
Maintain and utilize pavement repair/replacement schedule.	Continually update pavement management data every 2-3 years to determine existing and desired pavement qualities.
	Coordinate city pavement repair schedule with existing and future transportation plans and projects.
Maximize traffic efficiency along Iowa 28 corridor.	Continue to support adopted access management plan with local DOT.
	Update traffic studies along corridor as needed.
Coordinate transportation plans with other city and regional plans.	Identify overlap in Greenspace Plan and Transportation plans to provide non-recreational bike and pedestrian routes throughout the City.
	Continue to explore opportunities for transit connectivity to the greater metro area.
<i>Goal 2: Provide guidance for safe, efficient, coordinate, and convenient multimodal transportation and enhances natural resources.</i>	
Encourage development of environmentally-friendly multimodal transportation facilities.	Utilize the Greenways Plan and the Comprehensive Parks and Open Space Plan to guide transportation development.
	Continue to encourage partnerships with public transportation to provide access to employment and essential services.
Encourage non-vehicular transportation options and overall connectivity.	Support development plans that prioritize non-vehicular transportation.
	Encourage connectivity of both vehicular and non-vehicular transportation through limited use of cul-de-sacs.
Prioritize safety in multimodal transportation development.	Review traffic incident data and identify crash mitigation strategies.
	Identify signage needs and implement cohesive signage for both vehicular and non-vehicular traffic.
Explore alternative parking space requirements that reduce the need for large parking lots.	Conduct parking analysis for downtown and high-traffic areas.
	Review and revise parking regulations to adhere to EPA and ADA standards.
Explore opportunities for more comprehensive multimodal transportation within the City and throughout the region.	Identify processes which warrant community feedback.
	Establish procedures to conduct community outreach for necessary processes.

	Priority	Timeline	Potential Partners	Funding Opportunities
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Action Items: Parks and Recreation

Strategy	Action Item
Goal 1: Develop and support a comprehensive system of safe, aesthetically pleasing, and usable parks and recreation facilities.	
Increase accessibility to trails, parks and open spaces.	Evaluate and address ADA compliance in improvement and redevelopment projects in public rights of way.
	Utilize the Greenways Master Plan and the Comprehensive Park and Open Space plans to guide the development of trails, parks, and open spaces.
Prioritize distribution of adequate green space in future development.	Identify areas deficient in recreational space.
	Reevaluate size and spacing standards for neighborhood parks and ensure long term sustainability of management costs.
Collaborate with regional governments, agencies, and organizations to connect Norwalk's recreational trails to the Central Iowa Trails system.	Identify opportunities for and encourage involvement in regional trail development.
	Coordinate Norwalk's transportation and recreation plans with those of the region to optimize projects and development.
Establish a trail system which enhances the community's walkability, and provides safe access to community parks, schools, and regional trail systems	Conduct a community walkability study.
	Coordinate the Greenways Master Plan with the Norwalk School District to increase accessibility to school facilities.
Goal 2: Provide a robust recreation system for all residents and visitors.	
Collaborate with adjacent municipalities and agencies for recreation facilities and programs.	Identify and address gaps in recreation opportunities between existing and adjacent communities and agencies.
	Continue to coordinate with adjacent communities and agencies for recreational facilities and programs.
Improve accessibility of recreation facilities and programs for residents and visitors.	Evaluate physical and financial accessibility to recreational services for residents and visitors of all socioeconomic situations.
	Engage community members to help guide recreational planning and development.
Diversify recreational facilities to expand opportunities for numerous activities.	Develop a comprehensive inventory of current and desired recreational facilities and activities.
	Establish a means to fund current and additional recreational opportunities for residents and individuals.

	Priority	Timeline	Potential Partners	Funding Opportunities
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Action Items: Agriculture and Natural Resources

Strategy	Action Item
<i>Goal 1: Manage, enhance, and preserve land and water resources and the natural environment.</i>	
Protect wetlands from unmitigated negative impacts.	Establish community development standards that protect floodplains as defined by FEMA and designated on FIRM maps from incompatible development.
	Adopt City Ordinances that support National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit.
Support healthy watersheds.	Incentivize robust plantings in new development areas.
	Preserve the natural character of the watershed through greenspace acquisition, floodplain regulations, and drainage corridor buffer protection.
Enhance existing natural areas.	Identify unique natural areas for restoration projects.
	Apply for funding opportunities for natural restoration projects.
<i>Goal 2: Protect and enhance the natural settings unique to the character of Norwalk.</i>	
Encourage use of greenspace in new developments.	Incentivize establishment of greenspace in new development areas.
	Incentivize robust plantings in new development areas.
Conserve and restore natural features such as trees and natural waterways.	Officialize the City's natural resources efforts through certification programs such as Tree City.
	Establish development regulations that conserve and/or restore natural features to that comparable to pre-development.
Support community gardens, farmers markets, and other similar community based food projects.	Conduct community needs assessment for local food systems.
	Identify resources such as space, time, and partnerships to establish a robust local food system.



	Priority	Timeline	Potential Partners	Funding Opportunities
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Action Items: Housing

Strategy	Action Item
<i>Goal 1: Retain and attract residents including young professionals, families, and retirees by</i>	
Encourage development and redevelopment of mixed-density neighborhoods.	Support the inclusion of rental housing in neighborhood planning efforts to meet the community's business and employment growth needs.
	Utilize development and land use plans to guide development and placement of a variety of housing units include single-family detached, townhome, duplex, multifamily apartment buildings, mixed-use buildings, and other forms of housing sought out by homebuyers and renters.
Produce and maintain community facilities, utilities, and infrastructure that are attractive to developers, current residents, and future residents.	Adopt development standards that cohere the community and enhance the built environment.
	Engage residents in community development plans to align new development with the needs of residents.
Support the development of homes that serve a diverse population.	Provide targeted development incentives to attract developers to new housing projects.
	(Encourage and adopt policies and regulations aimed to integrate housing types and density.) "Encourage policies and regulations aimed to integrate housing types and density, including a review of current zoning regulations such as lot width and setback standards."
Reduce barriers to housing development opportunities.	Regularly review zoning and subdivision codes to ensure they are not a primary barrier to development.
	Incentivize mixed-density housing developments.
<i>Goal 2: Maintain quality housing and community character by encouraging the maintenance of the community.</i>	
Reduce barriers to housing opportunities for current and future residents.	Encourage development of a diverse range of housing opportunities.
	Increase accessibility of community services (City of Norwalk, Warren County, and regional housing programs) that aid in housing needs.
Pursue opportunities to improve existing housing stock.	Evaluate need and opportunity for dedicated City funding focus towards housing improvements.
	Coordinate existing funding including local organizations and grant opportunities to help improve housing stock.
Improve the local rental process for both renters and tenants.	Increase accessibility of rental information for tenants by including information on City website and various public spaces.
	Provide renters information regarding rental inspection programs and best practices through the City website and various public spaces.

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Action Items: Economy and Employment

Strategy	Action Item
Goal 1: Strengthen the local economy of Norwalk.	
Support the development of public and private partnerships that aid existing and potential businesses.	Support the Norwalk Area Chamber of Commerce and provide resources for businesses to engage with the Chamber via the Chamber website and various public spaces.
	Develop City-sponsored events to increase awareness of local businesses.
Provide guidance for future economic growth.	Engage with the Norwalk community to understand economic needs of businesses and residents.
	Create a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) plan to help guide future economic growth.
Coordinate existing community plans to direct development incentives, annual budgets, and capital improvement planning.	Establish procedures to review, revise, and track implementation of all local community plans.
	Incentivize involvement of local businesses and organizations to help improve coordination of local plan implementation.
Improve neighborhood resilience and market Norwalk as a premier place to grow families and businesses.	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.
	Promote community engagement through opportunities such as community events and marketing of said opportunities.
Goal 2: Prioritize development of the physical environment that supports local businesses and residents.	
Improve visibility of and access to businesses in Norwalk.	Develop signage regulations that support business advertising and marketing.
	Support transportation infrastructure that provides intuitive access to business centers.
Create walkable, people-centered places that are enjoyable to inhabit and that enable people to walk between businesses.	Use wayfinding signage throughout the community to direct traffic to local businesses.
	Analyze parking regulations to optimize parking availability for customers and employees, minimize unused parking, and promote walkable areas.
Focus on revitalization and accessibility of business districts.	Ensure that all land uses are connected by safe and efficient vehicular and non-vehicular transportation infrastructure.
	Incentivize beautification methods in business districts (such as plantings, murals, and façade improvements) that create a more enjoyable space for residents and visitors to walk.

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Action Items: Intergovernmental Cooperation

Strategy	Action Item
<i>Goal 1: Goal 1: Coordinate with Warren County, neighboring counties, and neighboring municipalities.</i>	
Coordinate with Warren County and surrounding municipalities to develop mutually beneficial land use plans.	Identify areas of overlapping or adjacent jurisdiction.
	Form relationships with necessary partners to develop procedures for coordinating future growth plans.
Coordinate with local partners to develop a cohesive, convenient transportation system.	Participate in intergovernmental councils and committees.
	Identify overlapping needs and work to make Norwalk's plans considerate and beneficial to the region.
Communicate and coordinate any changes that may impact Norwalk and its 28E agreements.	Be present and active in decisions that impact adjacent and overlapping municipalities.
	Establish intergovernmental communication procedures in the Hazard Mitigation Plan.
<i>Goal 2: Partner with local, state, and federal agencies to enhance the culture and resources.</i>	
Support the Norwalk Community School District in their growth and community engagement activities.	Engage with the Norwalk Community School District regarding community activities.
	Promote community activities on the City website and various public spaces.
Partner with the Norwalk Community School District for land use, utility, and transportation improvement planning.	Collaborate with the school district in their plans for mutually beneficial building and site improvements.
	Include a school transportation representative in transportation planning activities to provide insight on school transportation needs.
Partner with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to advance planning efforts for natural resources, green space, and trail development.	Seek representatives from Warren County Conservation, Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District, and other state agencies to help guide planning efforts and implementation.
	Promote local conservation efforts on the City website and various public spaces.

	Priority	Timeline	Potential Partners	Funding Opportunities
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Action Items: Resilience

Strategy	Action Item
<i>Goal 1: Encourage sustainable practices throughout the community including development</i>	
Promote environmental sustainability.	Encourage energy efficiency in buildings, lighting, and infrastructure.
	Support development practices that allow for the capture and use of clean energy that does not negatively impact neighboring properties or future growth opportunities.
Engage in maintaining and advertising the Warren County Hazard Mitigation Plan.	Continually monitor local changes that may affect the Warren County Hazard Mitigation Plan.
	Promote education and awareness regarding hazards and risks to the community.
Support economic sustainability.	Establish general cost/benefit analysis procedures to evaluate the efficiency of public expenditures and improvements.
	Utilize CEDS, Norwalk Comprehensive Plan, Long Range Transportation Plan, and other local plans to help prioritize future activities and maximize funding strategies for projects.
<i>Goal 2: Establish and promote a unique and welcoming community culture.</i>	
Collaborate with local leaders to improve residents' connections to City departments, local nonprofit organizations, and each other.	Increase opportunities to engage with the local government.
	Continue providing and promoting educational opportunities for residents to meet local leaders and better understand processes of local government.
Encourage interaction among residents through community-wide events and small-scale gatherings such as neighborhood block parties.	Reduce barriers to gatherings by providing temporary exceptions to regulations such as noise ordinances.
	Develop accessible and simple guidelines for establishing moderately scaled community focused events.
Encourage neighborhood involvement to increase safety through active participation of residents.	(Create safe and inviting spaces for residents to inhabit in their leisure time.) "Establish a committee to develop and oversee a Nuisance Abatement Action Plan to improve the safety and well-being of our residents."
	Establish a community communication network that promotes information sharing.

	Priority	Timeline	Potential Partners	Funding Opportunities
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Action Items: Land Use

Strategy	Action Item
<i>Goal 1: Grow Norwalk in a manner that is financially sustainable and maintains and improves</i>	
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.	Adopt a formal Future Land Use Plan compliance review process for new development and rezoning requests.
	Review the Comprehensive Plan annually and make necessary amendments.
Require new development connect and extend street, water, and sanitary sewer infrastructure necessary	Require new developments to allow for interconnection with public infrastructure.
	Support infill development and proposals adjacent to existing infrastructure.
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.	Establish and enforce street design standards.
	Establish and enforce mobility/connectivity policies.
Adopt and enforce regulations that preserves and enhances community character through the built environment.	Explore overhaul of the City's development regulations to support plan implementation.
	Review impact of Zoning Ordinances (consider a Health Improvement Assessment) on the wellbeing of current and future residents.
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.	Continue to require that new developments to have City utility connections.
	Promote new development in areas that City infrastructure is available or planned.
Preserve right-of-way and easement corridors for future streets and utilities.	Adopt policies that preserve right-of-way and easement corridors.
	Promote development that adheres to right-of-ways and easement corridor policies.
<i>Goal 2: Promote walkable and interconnected neighborhoods to maintain the small town feel</i>	
Require that collector streets connect through proposed developments to provide multiple streets in which to circulate traffic	Adopt a mobility/connectivity policy that limits the use of cul-de-sacs and dead-end roads.
	Coordinate mobility/connectivity policies to regional and local transportation plans to improve coordination of minor and major traffic arteries.

	Priority	Timeline	Potential Partners	Funding Opportunities
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Action Items: Land Use (Continued) & Annexation

Strategy	Action Item
Require new development construct sidewalks and trails and connect these trails and sidewalks to existing and future adjoining developments.	Update walkability study in Greenways Master Plan.
	Consult Greenways Master Plan and Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan in development approval processes.
<i>Goal 1: Conserve Norwalk's natural resources and protect property from flooding and erosion</i>	
Consider adoption of stream buffer, slope preservation, and tree canopy preservation ordinances to protect the natural areas and City's watersheds from overdevelopment.	Conduct a natural resources inventory and watershed analysis to identify natural areas of interest.
	Adopt development standards that include appropriate setbacks and mitigation for natural waterways including the analysis and stabilization of waterways adjacent to new development.
Prohibit development within established floodplains.	Support floodplain delineation studies when floodplain-adjacent development occurs.
	Encourage a local culture that promotes and enhances natural spaces including greenbelt preservation along the North River.
<i>Goal 2: Implement a Strategic Annexation Plan</i>	
Develop an annexation and infrastructure investment priority plan and work with area property owners	Coordinate resident outreach plan for annexation areas.
	Consider annexation incentives for property owners within annexation areas.
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.	Consider coordinating with the county to develop local policies encourage growth within the City's 2-mile extra territorial review area to be congruent with the City's Comprehensive Plan.
	Promote development that adheres to the Comprehensive Plan.
Create an infrastructure extension plan to provide the backbone for major infrastructure, including	Identify potential infrastructure needs for annexation areas.
	Develop funding opportunities inventory for future infrastructure needs.

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