

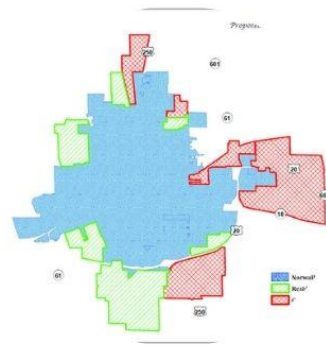
2025-2035

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Preserving
our
heritage.

Planning
for
growth.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2025-2035

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Preserving our heritage. Planning for growth.

The City of Norwalk is thriving. Our high levels of community pride and civic engagement, paired with the stable financial position of the City, made 2024 the ideal time to undergo a comprehensive planning process.

A robust, year long-process led to the vision you see here. a vision for growth with integrity, in line with Norwalk's identity as safe and family friendly, while positioned for growth. The extensive public input throughout this process gives the administration complete faith that we can execute the goals of this plan.

David W. Light

BUILDING ON OUR ASSETS



AMENITIES



UPTOWN NORWALK



LOCAL HEALTHCARE



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



LOCATION



SUMMIT MOTORSPORTS PARK

PUBLIC INPUT | FOR THE PUBLIC'S PLAN



FOCUS GROUPS
13



SURVEY RESPONSES
858



EXPERT INTERVIEWS
15



STEERING COMMITTEE MTGS
12

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

SMALL COMMUNITY, SAFETY, LOCATION BETWEEN TOLEDO & CLEVELAND, HOSPITAL, DOWNTOWN, LOVE OUR BUSINESSES & LOCAL OWNERSHIP, CONSTRUCTION LEADERSHIP

Weaknesses

RETAINING YOUNG PEOPLE, HOUSING, NO LAKE/COMPARED TO SANDUSKY, PROPERTIES OUT OF CONTROL, HARD TO START A BUSINESS, LAND FOR DEVELOPMENT, CLOSED ATTITUDES

Opportunities

MARKETING & PROMOTION - TARGET BUSINESSES, YOUNG PEOPLE, BROADBAND & WIFI, TAKING ADVANTAGE OF GROWTH IN OHIO, TAKE ADVANTAGE OF COST OF LIVING HOUSING, PRESERVATION, RECYCLING, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Threats

RETAINING AND ATTRACTING YOUNG PEOPLE & WORKFORCE AGED RESIDENTS, I.REVENUE, DRUG USE, BUSINESS MERGERS

5 Goals:

- Setting standards and processes that drive quality
- Highest and best use of assets
- Planning for growth
- Building and maintaining Norwalk's brand
- Strong fiscal management and planning

VISION

The Norwalk area is a community that is committed to preserving its rich heritage and fulfilling quality of life while fostering planned growth.

MISSION

Our community will create a safe, family friendly environment in which we will preserve our natural resources and our strong neighborhoods, while promoting business growth, intergenerational opportunities, and proactive responses to future challenges, both locally and in a global community

In the 2025-2035 Comprehensive plan, analytical & anecdotal data are provided to view these 5 goals through 6 lenses. Building on that background information, over 140 strategies and tactics are provided to guide the City, residents, and partners over the next 10 years. Read the full plan at norwalkoh.com.

DREAM BIG NORWALK

GOALS IN ACTION



Building
Attractive
Gateways



Embracing
Uptown
Anchors



Facilitating
Infill
Development

2025-2035

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

6 LENSES

Land
Use

Housing

Natural
Resources,
Transportation,
Utilities,
Infrastructure

Economic
Development

Community
Character, Quality
of Life, and
Downtown
Norwalk

Community
Facilities,
Community
Services

2025-2035

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Goals



Strategies



Tactics

SUMMARY OF GOALS & STRATEGIES

GOAL 1: SET STANDARDS & PROCESSES THAT DRIVE QUALITY THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY

- Demand quality in all construction endeavors.
- Review and revise, as necessary, Norwalk's building and property maintenance codes.
- Be safe and accessible by foot and by bicycle.
- Improve water taste by dredging the reservoir and taking other steps as deemed appropriate.
- Practice better access management.
- Strive to make municipal processes and procedures as accommodating to the timely approval and launching of business projects as possible,
- Incorporate cross-sector City goals within the established Business Retention and Expansion program.
- Improve Norwalk's existing housing stock and neighborhood "curb appeal" through code enforcement and incentives.
- Improve referral services for residents' socioeconomic issues.
- Maintain frequent communications between the City and Norwalk's major public institutions and public service agencies.

THESE STRATEGIES:

Focus on processes, partnerships, and modernizations.

GOAL 2: HIGHEST & BEST USE OF ASSETS

- Promote and implement infill projects.
- Follow the principles of asset-based community development.
- Encourage the renovation and adaptive re-use of the former fire station on Whittlesey Avenue, and research, promote, and facilitate the use of incentives to preserve and bring into active and productive use. The facility could have potential as a functional municipal asset.
- Consider the adaptive reuse of one or more vacant school buildings as housing.
- Consider the development and encouragement of multi-generational housing.
- Revise and augment public transportation.

THESE STRATEGIES:

Are of critical importance to Norwalk's future trajectory due to finite assets such as land.

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

Redevelop former fire station for municipal use.

Develop vacant industrial land.

- Market to recruit an industrial or distribution firm to occupy the remaining 84 acres of the North Central Ohio Industrial Park.
- Work to create safe and attractive “third places” for teens.
- Improve bike trail connectivity.
- Research the feasibility of the development of attractive and safe downtown housing units in upper floors of buildings in the central business district.
- Address any parking issues .
- Capitalize on opportunities for more outside seating and communal open space downtown.
- Program activities in Downtown.
- Encourage and develop one or more distance learning centers.

GOAL 3: PLANNING FOR GROWTH

- Concentrate on specific focus areas for mixed-use development, via incentives, enforcement, gateway development, utility expansion, and destination development.
- Complete comprehensive review and revision of the zoning code.
- Maintain an inventory of available sites.
- Maintain a base of useful and compatible digital orthos to plan the future use in Norwalk and surrounding areas.
- Prioritize accessibility and connectivity to Norwalk's neighborhoods.
- Advocate and research the market for mid-income housing for young professionals.
- Reinvigorate the task force which had been focused on affordable housing.
- Compile information all housing assistance and related programs.
- Take steps to accommodate housing needs of the elderly and disabled
- Meet the needs of existing and projected new businesses and residences in the distribution of energy sources (electricity and natural gas, including appropriate renewable options) and water.
- Rebuild major arterial streets and widen connector and local streets where deemed necessary.
- Investigate and plan truck routes to improve traffic flow through and around the city.
- Redouble efforts to grow the local workforce.
- Attract young households.

THESE STRATEGIES:

Have a heavy focus on housing and population due to current and projected future conditions.

- Support the efforts of the Norwalk Public Library .
- Grow and develop strong children that will be the future leaders of the community.
- Support the development of a community center that will be large enough for all types and sizes of community meetings
- Research and work toward the development of affordable, accessible, and round-the-clock childcare facilities in Norwalk.

GOAL 4: BUILDING & MAINTAINING NORWALK'S BRAND

- Emphasize the restoration and preservation of existing properties,
- Preserve Norwalk's architectural past.
- Maximize the use of public and other accessible spaces throughout the community, with physical improvements and public programming.
- Improve parking conditions through wayfinding signage.
- Continue and expand the city's sidewalk repair and installation program.
- Develop consistent signage throughout Norwalk, including wayfinding and directional signs, trails, and gateway signage.
- Take ongoing steps to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists. Make Norwalk more walkable.
- Support entrepreneurship.
- Develop attractive gateways at major entrances to the City.
- Implement a uniform design for wayfinding and trail signage with a logo identifying Norwalk.
- Promote tourism.
- Achieve effective city-wide promotion of events, organizations, and opportunities for citizen involvement and volunteerism.
- Establish a centralized contact point for downtown development.
- Maintain a relationship between the downtown and Summit Motorsports Park; seek opportunities for cross-promotion.
- Work toward the establishment of an Arts District.
- Incorporate the input of diverse groups.

THESE STRATEGIES:

Reiterate that Norwalk's brand is its historical Uptown District and Norwalk needs to lean into this heritage with signage and branding.

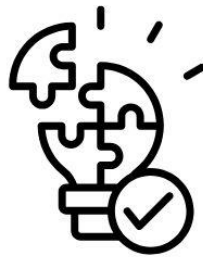
GOAL 5: STRONG FISCAL MANAGEMENT & PLANNING

- Promote the long-range development of the east side and utilities
- Promote the planned development of available land south of the US Route 20 bypass, primarily along or near the U.S. 250 corridor.
- Seek outside resources, as well as local sources of investment capital, when appropriate, to help implement any activity to address the above activities.
- Align this comprehensive plan with Norwalk's and/or Huron County's Comprehensive Housing Improvement Strategy (CHIS).
- Research proactive and innovative financing and incentives, seek and obtain them for City use when warranted, and deploy them to maximize their benefit to Norwalk residents and to the City's housing stock.
- Explore the creative use of existing organizations, development tools, and resources to address housing quality, accessibility, and affordability needs through collaboration.
- Initiate and adhere to citywide capital improvements planning.
- Coordinate infrastructure updates with other municipal priorities, including the south side development plan, needs and plans of major businesses and institutions, and possible new or emerging priorities.
- Support and help implement the goals and objectives of the Huron County-Norwalk Airport comprehensive plan.
- When appropriate based on development goals and where fiscally feasible, participate in economic development projects.
- Periodically review Park and Recreation plans and consider potential for new activities or facilities
- Adhere to and promote the development plans of the Norwalk Park and Recreation Department.
- Support all local schools.
- Support the training and staffing needs of the Norwalk Police and Fire Departments and promote financial plans that can raise sufficient capital prior to the purchase of major items.
- Maintain and upgrade a county- and community-based disaster plan.
- Continue to support and facilitate the efforts of city departments to assist one another.

THESE STRATEGIES:

Ensure all other recommendations in the plan are feasible by using all resources at our disposal.

NORWALK 2035



**Heritage preserved.
Growth Achieved.**

