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HOUSING POLICY  
DEVELOPMENT, HCD

March 19, 2008

MAR 21 2008

Housing Policy Division  
California Department of Housing and Community Development  
1800 3rd Street  
P.O. Box 952053  
Sacramento, CA 94252-2053

RE: General Plan Annual Report

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Enclosed herewith, please find a copy of the City of Norwalk's General Plan Annual Report as required by Government Code Section 65400(b).

Should you have any questions, please contact me at (562) 929-5775.

Sincerely,

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
Planning Division



Bing H. Hyun,  
Planning Manager

Attachment

HOUSING POLICY  
DEVELOPMENT, HCD

MAR 21 2008

**CITY OF NORWALK**  
**2007 GENERAL PLAN ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT**

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**  
**PLANNING DIVISION**

**April 1, 2008**

## **INTRODUCTION**

On February 29, 1996, the Norwalk City Council adopted the City's current General Plan for implementation. The General Plan contains ten elements: Circulation, Community Design, Conservation, Educational and Cultural Resources, Housing, Land Use, Noise, Open Space, Safety and Utility Infrastructure. Of these elements, Community Design, Educational and Cultural Resources and Utility Infrastructure are the three new elements that were added to the General Plan as part of the 1996 comprehensive General Plan update.

As required by Government Code Section 65400 (b), every city must submit an annual progress report to their legislative body, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), and the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) on the implementation status of their General Plan. The annual report must also include discussion on the City's progress in providing its required share of affordable housing pursuant to Government Code Section 65584 and its efforts to remove governmental constraints for the maintenance, improvement and development of affordable housing per Section 65583.c (3) of the California Government Code.

This General Plan Annual Progress Report covers period from January 1, 2007 to December 31, 2007.

## **STATUS OF GENERAL PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS**

### **General Plan Elements**

**Land Use Element** – The City of Norwalk is considered a developed community comprised mostly of single-family residential neighborhoods, with its predominant commercial and industrial land uses situated along several major roadways. As a developed community, any future development in the city would occur as infill or redevelopment.

In February 1996, an updated Land Use Element was adopted as part of the City's comprehensive General Plan update. Since adoption of the 1996 General Plan, the City has processed a variety of new land use developments.

In 2006, the City initiated a moratorium prohibiting medical marijuana facilities in all zoning districts during the pendency of the City's review and adoption of permanent zoning regulations for such uses. Pursuant to state law, the City Council granted extensions to maintain the moratorium until August 14, 2008.

Since the previous 2006 General Plan Progress Report, three (3) General Plan Amendments have been submitted for City Council approval between January 1, 2007 and December 31, 2007. The following is a discussion of each General Plan Amendment:

- In September 2006, General Plan Amendment No. 163 was filed to change the General Plan Land Use designation of approximately 5,500 square feet of 12323

Firestone Boulevard from "General Commercial" to "Low Density Residential". The Planning Commission recommended that the City Council approve General Plan Amendment No. 163 on October 25, 2006. The City Council reviewed and approved General Plan Amendment No. 163 on January 16, 2007.

- In April 2007, General Plan Amendment No. 164 was filed to change the General Plan Land Use designation of approximately 50-acres of the southeast corner of Excelsior Drive and Norwalk Boulevard from "Low Density Residential" to "Specific Plan Area No. 15". This site is currently owned by the Department of Defense and contains several storage tanks that were used to store jet fuel. The adopted Specific Plan Area No. 15 will allow a mixed-use development, which will include industrial and retail uses. Additionally, a portion of the property will be dedicated to Holifield Park, which is located to the east of the subject property. The site was originally designated for residential land uses. However, the United States Air Force advised the City that any sale of the property would include a requirement that a covenant be placed on the property prohibiting any residential development. As a result, a General Plan Amendment and Zone Change became necessary. The Planning Commission recommended that the City Council approve General Plan Amendment No. 164 on April 11, 2007. The City Council reviewed and approved General Plan Amendment No. 164 on May 1, 2007.
- In April 2007, General Plan Amendment No. 165 was filed to change the properties at 13316 Rosecrans Avenue from Low Density Residential to Neighborhood Commercial. The Planning Commission recommended that the City Council approve General Plan Amendment No. 165 on September 12, 2007. The City Council adopted General Plan Amendment No. 165 on January 15, 2008.

**Circulation** – The Circulation Element of the 1996 General Plan defines the transportation needs of the City and presents a comprehensive transportation plan to accommodate those needs. The element also focuses on identifying and evaluating local circulation needs, while balancing those needs with regional demands and mandates.

The City of Norwalk currently participates in local and regional transportation planning and decision-making by implementing and conforming with the guidelines of the Los Angeles County Congestion Management Plan and the Los Angeles County Master Plan of Arterial Highways.

Through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), the City continues to make a variety of improvements to its existing network of public streets (e.g., street resurfacing, sidewalk repair, American Disabilities Act (A.D.A.) compliance, etc.). In the 2007 calendar year, several residential areas throughout the City were repaved and had curb and gutter repairs, which were administered through the Local Street Overlay and the Curb and Gutter Repair Programs.

Some of the residential areas that were targeted by these programs include:

- south of Imperial Highway, north of Rosecrans Avenue, east of Norwalk Boulevard to the eastern city limits,
- south of Rosecrans Avenue, north of Excelsior Boulevard, east of Behrens Avenue to Leibacher Avenue and
- south of Cheshire Avenue, north of 160<sup>th</sup> Street, east of Norwalk Boulevard and west of Blackburn Avenue.

Additional street improvements that were completed in the calendar year of 2007 included two (2) new traffic signals and one (1) traffic signal upgrade. New traffic signals were placed at the intersections of Firestone Boulevard and Paddison Avenue and at Rosecrans Avenue and Greenstone Avenue. A traffic signal was upgraded at the intersection of Lakeland Road and Pioneer Boulevard.

Other street improvements (e.g., street dedications, street widening, sidewalk construction, deceleration lanes, etc.) are funded and built by developers as part of their conditions of approval for developing their property. In addition, developers are responsible for paying their "fair share" of the cost to mitigate anticipated traffic impacts associated with new development in the City.

In addition to conducting street and circulation improvements, the City also provides a local transit operator for the community, which provides fixed-route and paratransit service since 1974. Norwalk Transit System (NTS) utilizes twenty-two (22) heavy-duty vehicles and four Dial-A-Ride vans; continues to provide connector shuttle bus service between the Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs Transportation Center and the Metro Green Line Studebaker Station in Norwalk. Presently, Metrolink (commuter rail service between Orange County and Los Angeles) provides weekday train service to the Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs Transportation Center. This rail feeder service implemented by Norwalk Transit provides direct interconnectivity between rail stations (Metrolink-commuter rail and Metro Green Line-light rail).

**Housing** – In a continuing effort to provide housing assistance within the community, the City of Norwalk has the Norwalk Housing Authority and a CDBG Program Section. The Norwalk Housing Authority (NHA), which is a separate legal entity established in 1976, assists lower income families to secure decent, safe, and sanitary housing at affordable prices. The Housing Authority administers the ongoing Section 8 Certificate and Housing Voucher Programs. The federally funded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program has the responsibility of administering a wide range of programs whose objective is to provide housing in a sound environment, principally for low and moderate-income households. The focus of CDBG activities are to provide financial assistance in the form of low cost home improvement programs, provide essential public services, stimulate the revitalization of older declining neighborhoods and monitor the modernization of essential infrastructure in neighborhoods with a high concentration of low/moderate income residents.

*Share of Regional Housing Need* - The City's Housing Element identifies Norwalk's housing goals and objectives. As part of the current housing element, the City's share of affordable housing units (based on household income and size) has been incorporated into the City's Housing Element. A Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA)

conducted by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) determines the number and type of housing units. Table No. 1 (below) identifies the specific number and type of affordable housing units to be constructed within the City of Norwalk between 2000-2007. The identification of affordability type is categorized as Very Low (less than 50 percent of Los Angeles median income), Low (50-80 percent of L.A. County's median income), Moderate (80-120 percent of L.A. County's median income), and Above Moderate (greater than 120 percent of L.A. County's median income). It should be noted that the "Above Moderate" income range is based on estimated original home sale prices and/or construction costs, with the assumption of a four-person household size. Actual affordability however, is based on many factors including, but not limited to, financing terms, required down payment, permitted debt ratio and household size (number of persons in family).

**TABLE 1**  
**CITY OF NORWALK**  
**REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS**  
**8-1-00 to 12-31-07**

<u>Income Category</u>	<u>Required Housing Units</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Very Low	100	22.5%
Low	83	18.6%
Moderate	109	24.5%
Above Moderate	153	34.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Housing Objectives and Programs* - The following summarizes the progress that the City has made toward achieving Housing Element objectives and development of specific programs affecting housing:

With respect to Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for the 2007 calendar year, CDBG funds have rehabilitated 60 homes as of December 31, 2007 to benefit low and moderate-income households in order to prevent or eliminate slums or blight within the community. In addition, CDBG funds have been previously allocated to support housing services to several non-profit organizations that provide shelter for abused, homeless or disadvantaged women and children.

The Home Investment Partnership (HOME), administered by the Community Development CDBG Division, also provides a variety of resources to assist elderly, low-income residents, in addition to the City's special needs population. For the 2007 calendar year, the HOME Repair Program has assisted 17 low-income residents as of December 31, 2007 by providing needed residential repairs in addition to necessary handicap accessibility improvements. During the 2007 calendar year 15 housing units have been constructed.

**Conservation** – The Conservation Element of the Norwalk General Plan is intended to provide for the conservation, development and utilization of natural resources (e.g., water, minerals, energy sources etc.). Since the City of Norwalk is a completely

urbanized community, there are limited natural resources that can be conserved and/or developed. However, conservation of existing resources from contamination and providing adequate mitigation measures to ensure that new development does not adversely impact the existing environment is being routinely achieved.

In the on-going effort to improve water quality and eliminate pollutant discharges into municipal storm drains and underground aquifers, the Engineering Division is currently responsible for city compliance with the Federally mandated National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES).

Through the Capital Improvement Program, the City has taken some measures to ensure the water quality and conservation. Some of the measures that were taken in the 2007 calendar year include the installation of twenty-two (22) water sampling stations to test the water for the presence of chemicals and maintenance improvements to water well sites. Additionally, a project involving the construction of water interconnections to connect the City's water system with other water companies systems for emergency purposes was initiated and is scheduled to be constructed in the 2008 calendar year.

Program activities to ensure the conservation of natural resources include interagency coordination with local and regional agencies, annual inspection and monitoring of the open channels and the implementation of Best Management Practices (BMP) for public construction projects.

**Open Space** – The City's Open Space Element is primarily dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the City's remaining open space. These areas are generally located within public parks, schools, and developed greenbelts. Currently, the City is responsible for the maintenance and repair of 129 acres of park grounds, sixteen (16) baseball diamonds and the Aquatic Pavilion.

In the 2007 calendar year, the Recreation and Park Services Department, in coordination with the Community Development Department, completed some enhancements to several parks through the Capital Improvement Program. Renovations to Bob White Park, Lakeside Park, Norwalk Park and Gerdes Park were completed in January 2007 and a 1,900 square foot community center was constructed at Sara Mendez Park.

**Noise** – The Noise Element of the General Plan is dedicated to protecting the community from excessive noise. The City recognizes that there are two major categories of noise sources, mobile and stationary. Because the City is located along several major transportation corridors (e.g., three freeways, three railroad lines, and several major arterial streets serving regional traffic), the City has constructed screen walls along Imperial Highway between Hoxie Avenue and west of Studebaker Road. Additional screen walls have been constructed along the western and southern property lines of the Norwalk Transportation Center to mitigate the impact of any excessive noise created by mobile noise sources (i.e., cars, trucks and motorcycles etc.).

With respect to stationary noise sources, they are generally associated with industrial and commercial activities, construction work, and human activity. Mitigation of these

noise sources typically involve limiting business hours, restricting commercial and industrial business operations to enclosed buildings, and/or considering land use compatibility when determining an acceptable limit for noise exposure for various land uses. A variety of these options continue to be implemented for all new developments in the City as a means of mitigating adverse noise impacts.

**Safety** – The Safety Element addresses both natural and man-made hazards that may result in the loss of life and/or damage of property. In an effort to minimize such loss/damage due to seismic activity, flood, fire, and man-made hazards, the City has created an Emergency Preparedness Section in the Safety Element to prepare and develop emergency plans, drills, training and communication/coordination with intergovernmental agencies.

In 2004, the City of Norwalk adopted a National Hazard Mitigation Plan (NHMP). This disaster plan integrates community resources into municipal disaster management, including a list of local resources such as personnel, equipment, material, specialized medical and other training and auxiliary communications/L.A. County Disaster Communications Services. In conformance with the NHMP, the City of Norwalk has continued to perform quarterly mock disaster drills and conduct monthly training regarding emergency response that will help establish and maintain an on-going state of readiness within the City organization.

During the 2007 calendar year, the Public Safety Department has also continued to assist the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department to enhance community safety through crime prevention. Some of the existing law enforcement programs that have promoted public safety in Norwalk include: Norwalk Community Court, Multi-Agency Focus Team, Norwalk Enforcement Team (NET), Sheriff Problem Solving Team, Junior Park Ranger Program, Community Safety Partnership Team, Norwalk Apartment Partnership Association, Parking Enforcement on Private Property (PEPP), Graffiti Abatement Team, District Attorney/Court Liaison, Norwalk Park Patrol and Security, and AMC/Civic Center and Transportation Center Security.

In addition, the City continues to participate in a multi-agency crime task force that maintains collaborative partnerships between various law enforcement agencies, courts, parole officers, the District Attorney's office and local school districts.

**Community Design** – The Community Design Element was adopted as part of the General Plan update in 1996. Although the Community Design Element does not prescribe a set of particular design standards, it does offer guiding principles that promote quality design. Within this context, aesthetic considerations such as architectural style, scale, massing and building orientation are important design features associated with any new development, particularly, when a project design may impact the surrounding physical environment. Hence, the City takes into account all such design considerations during the development review process for all projects that require discretionary approval. Therefore, through the Community Design Element of the General Plan, the City of Norwalk has continued to promote and obtain aesthetically attractive, quality developments throughout the City.

Additionally, the City has also done initiated improvements that promote community design and enhance the appearance of the City. In 2007, the City upgraded 216 bus stops that incorporate latest technology and a modern design.

**Educational and Cultural Resources** – Educational and Cultural Resources is another new element that was added in the 1996 General Plan update. The purpose of the element is to maintain and enhance the quality of education within the community and provide a sense of community identity through the preservation and expansion of the City's cultural facilities, programs, and services.

At present, Norwalk's educational resources include a Community College and two public school districts that serve twenty-seven (27) schools ranging from elementary through high school level. The City's cultural resources include two public libraries (e.g. the Norwalk Regional Library and the Alondra Library), and the Cultural Arts Center, which is located at the Arts and Sports Complex. In addition, there are 11 parks throughout the City, which are sources of educational and cultural activities for Norwalk residents. There are also several historic resources within the community such as the Sproul Museum, the Paddison Ranch Buildings, the Darius David Johnston House, and the Front Street Buildings that celebrate the City's historic past during the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Norwalk has continued to promote and support its educational and cultural resources through continued community involvement and public awareness activities.

The City has continued to enhance and develop the City's educational and cultural resources. In 2007, a 1,900 square foot community center was constructed at Sara Mendez Park, which will be a resource to the community and will promote educational and cultural activities. Furthermore, the City constructed a patio at the Social Services facility to be used for community functions and renovated the parking lots at the Alondra Library the Social Services facility.

**Utility Infrastructure** – The City's new Utility Infrastructure Element, adopted during the 1996 General Plan update, is intended to ensure that adequate utility levels (e.g., water, sewer, storm drains, natural gas, electricity, etc.) are provided within the City to meet Norwalk's current and future needs. During the past year, the City has continued to maintain all existing utility infrastructure and enhance its functional longevity to maximum performance. In 2007, the City repaved Norwalk Boulevard and Foster Road between Pioneer Boulevard and Rosecrans Avenue as part of their efforts to maintain the City's infrastructure.

## **CONCLUSION**

The 2007 General Plan Annual Progress Report is the seventh annual report on the implementation status of the Norwalk General Plan. To date, staff believes the City has continued to faithfully implement the City's 1996 General Plan as the actions, plans, programs and projects documented in this report represent the City's commitment to achieve the goals and objectives set fourth in the ten (10) elements of the Norwalk General Plan.