

***Economic Development Strategic Plan
for the City of Norwich, CT***

January 2015

Prepared for the
City of Norwich, Connecticut
with assistance from the
***Economic Development Strategy
Committee***

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1. Report Scope and Summary

REPORT OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The objectives of the plan are to position the city for long-range economic growth by retaining the businesses we have, helping them to expand and upgrade and attract new business and industry and to increase the visibility of Norwich in a crowded and competitive economic development marketplace. Major recommendations covered in this plan are:

1. Expand Business and Industry
2. Position for Economic Growth
3. Elevate Downtown
4. Increase Waterfront Access and Activity
5. Identify Economic Development Investment Vehicles

The Strategic Plan report is presented in four sections:

1. Report Scope and Summary—Findings and Recommendations
2. Economic Profile and Competitive Assessment—Compare and contrast of Norwich's assets/attributes versus its liabilities
3. Economic Development Opportunities—Outlines target businesses and industries
4. Strategic Goals, Objective, and Action Plan—Five year action plan

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MISSION

An Economic Development Strategy Committee was established and a number of workshops were held with representatives covering such areas as: safety, education, energy, economic development, and city infrastructure. These workshops focused on various aspects of an economic development assessment and plan, including community strengths and challenges, economic growth and development needs and opportunities, and strategies and actions needed to move the city forward.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Findings

- Population growth trends up 13% with housing and job implications
- Labor force split nearly equally between white- and blue-collar, with a projected need for additional white-collar labor
- Medium-sized manufacturing shows high potential economic value
- Leverage economic strengths and mitigate challenges
- Three (3) economic growth targets:
 1. Commercial and industrial products and services
 2. Green industries and technologies
 3. Entertainment, recreation, and leisure services

Strategic Goals and Objectives

Long-range economic development goals and objectives are presented in detail in Section 4. Goals and objectives are summarized below.

- ***Goal 1. Expand Business and Industry in Norwich***

Objective 1.1. Identify Desirable Business and Industry Targets

Objective 1.2. Market Norwich to New Business and Industry

Objective 1.3. Provide Outreach to Existing Business and Industry

Objective 1.4. Establish an Effective Internal Organizational Structure

Objective 1.5. Establish an Effective Regional Coordination Framework

- ***Goal 2. Position Norwich for Economic Growth***

Objective 2.1. Improve Existing Infrastructure

Objective 2.2. Improve Public Transportation Infrastructure

Objective 2.3. Improve Communication Infrastructure

Objective 2.4. Promote Development/Adaptive Reuse of Properties

Objective 2.5. Identify and Plan New Business and Industry Locations

Objective 2.6. Attract and Prepare the Workforce for Tomorrow's Jobs

Objective 2.7. Provide for a Safe Community and Neighborhoods

- **Goal 3. Elevate Community Image and Urban Services**

Objective 3.1. Plan and Develop a Vibrant Downtown

Objective 3.2. Improve Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation

Objective 3.3. Improve Wayfinding

- **Goal 4. Increase Waterfront Access and Activity**

Objective 4.1. Improve Existing Public Access Facilities

Objective 4.2. Identify and Promote Development of Waterfront Sites

- **Goal 5. Invest in the Future of Norwich**

Objective 5.1. Establish Local Incentive Policies and Programs

Objective 5.2. Develop New Public Financing Mechanisms

Objective 5.3. Actively Seek Federal, State, and Regional County Financial Support

Objective 5.4. Attract and Prepare the Workforce for Tomorrow's Jobs

GROWTH TRENDS AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Population Growth

The City of Norwich's population increased by 4,205 residents from 36,117 in 2000 to 40,322 in 2012, or 12 percent; the highest growth in the region. The city is the largest municipality in New London County, and makes up approximately 15 percent of the county's total population.

The county is projected to grow to 279,756 by 2016 and to 285,773 by 2025.

Opportunities for future growth are considerably higher if the City of Norwich can tap its hidden potential and begin planning for long-term development. Jobs and housing are inherently tied to each other. The city currently has to meet the demand for increased jobs to be created and filled by local residents. If demand is met, there is an anticipated need for additional dwelling units to be developed over the next five to ten years.

Labor Force

The Norwich labor force is split 53/47, respectively, between blue- and white-collar. This reflects the orientation of the Norwich workforce towards the services, construction, and

industrial sectors. This is in contrast to New London County, in which 60 percent of the labor force is white-collar. New London County also has higher percentages in white-collar sectors, particularly management, business, science, professional, and technical occupations.

Norwich ranks lower than the county and several cities in percentages of the population with bachelor and advanced degrees. This reflects the current blue-collar orientation of the local labor. There are, however, a number of knowledge-based and technology-oriented manufacturers and service firms in the local area. Despite demographic statistics, the presence of these firms indicates that the Norwich area can also attract and support professional and technical workers and higher wage businesses and industries representative of the new economy. This means Norwich will either have to grow its population with advanced degrees and/or attract that segment to the city.

Industry and Employment

As of 2012, employment in Norwich is 9.7 percent of total private employment in the county. At the same time, the city's workforce makes up 14.7 percent of the county's total workforce that are 16 years and older. Average payroll in Norwich was 89.9 percent of the countywide average in 2013.

Norwich's economic development potential is closely related to the economy of eastern Connecticut and more specifically New London County. The county's economy is clearly driven by the needs and demands of the local population and visitors. The annual employment and associated average annual income for the accommodation-related and food services, retail and wholesale trade, health and social services, local government, and manufacturing accounted for 83 percent of all covered employment in the county in 2013. In total, these categories accounted for 74 percent of the total annual wages available in New London County.

Table 1. Comparative Employment Categories

County					Norwich			
Category	Percent of Workforce	Average Salary	Annual Wages	Percent Economic Impact	Percent of Workforce	Average Salary	Annual Wages	Percent Economic Impact
Government	21.5%	\$46,352	\$1,518,733,579	34%	8.0%	\$51,910	\$71,056,544	15%
Retail & Wholesale Trade	14.0%	\$50,666	\$594,675,274	13%	15.6%	\$43,217	\$92,441,400	19%
Health/Soc. Services	14.0%	\$46,668	\$797,774,541	18%	29.5%	\$50,446	\$253,801,870	52%
Accom/Food/Assoc.	12.6%	\$48,084	\$224,702,950	5%	12.0%	\$19,953	\$40,515,284	8%
Manufacturing	11.7%	\$91,882	\$1,308,760,167	29%	3.2%	\$54,386	\$29,277,751	6%

Conversely, these

five categories made up only 65 percent of the total annual wages available in Norwich. Other

than the influence of seasonal visitors and tourists, the current employment base does not provide compelling evidence of significant economic activities in the County serving external markets. There are a number of medium-sized manufacturing and service firms in the County that do serve external markets. Unfortunately, Norwich's manufacturing represents a smaller than ideal percentage of that particular cluster. This is an important resource for future growth.

Competitive Economic Strengths and Challenges

Success in strengths is the ability to effectively leverage what you have. The leading strengths for the City of Norwich are:

- Multiple highway access points to RTs 395 and 2
- Affordable real estate costs
- Streamlined permitting process
- Waterfront
- Municipal-owned utilities and fiber optic access
- Baseball stadium, golf course, ice rink, and marina
- Fiscally sound
- Art, theatre, and culture

Conversely, the City of Norwich recognizes some challenges and is actively addressing them:

- Limited class A space
- Condition of Housing Stock
- Workforce and employment opportunities misalignments
- Budget limitations
- Lack of inventory for development (property) due to Brownfield conditions
- Over abundance of class C commercial space

Development Opportunities and Targets

Business and industry opportunities for Norwich include a range of manufacturing and service activities that relate very well to existing economic activities and resources in the city and county, as well as new and emerging services and technologies.

Opportunities for the city were discussed with the Economic Development Strategy Committee (EDSC). It was determined that a process by which to identify and then recruit several types of business, industrial, and other economic activities should take place. A few examples of opportunities and targets recommended by the EDSC and consultants are:

- ***Commercial and Industrial Products and Services.*** The Norwich area has a number of firms that produce equipment, components, parts, and supplies for and provide services to the electronics, computer, medical, automotive, aviation, and other industries. The fabricated metal products, machinery, computers and electronics, and medical products industries are leading manufacturing sectors in New London County. Broad segments of these industries rely on the type of labor force that can be found in Norwich.
- ***Green Industries and Technologies.*** Green industries include a wide variety of energy conservation and environmental protection and clean-up technologies, products, and services, including consulting and design services and energy-efficient building materials and equipment. Having a public utility company which encourages the use of green technologies and provides access to fiber optics is expected to put Norwich in contention for a share of these industries, including firms that design, produce, install, and service environmental and energy conservation equipment and facilities.
- ***Entertainment, Recreation, and Leisure Services.*** Potential commercial access to the scenic rivers provides Norwich with opportunities to attract and develop commercial and marine uses of interest to tourists and provide entertainment and leisure activities to residents. Desirable waterfront uses include restaurants, specialty retail shops, and marine activities such as fishing and sightseeing tours.

Success in attracting non-resident visitors to Norwich also depends on types of commercial amenities planned and developed in the target areas and other destination related activities planned for and developed in the future. Other business and industry needs and opportunities must be identified as stated in the Strategic Goals, Objectives, and Action Plans in order to sustain or grow the tax base in Norwich.

2. Economic Profile and Competitive Assessment

ECONOMIC PROFILE

1. Population growth highest amongst peers
2. Targeted growth areas in the city
3. 53/47% white-collar vs. blue-collar
4. Post-secondary education lags peer group
5. Population median age in line with the rest of the country
6. Lower housing costs
7. Income levels are slightly lower than average in its peer group

The focus is on retaining, expanding and attracting manufacturing, professional, scientific, and technology sectors to the City of Norwich and region.

Growth Trends

The City of Norwich's population increased by 4,205 residents from 36,117 in 2000 to 40,322 in 2012; the highest growth in the region. The city ranks first in size in the county, and maintained its share of the county population from 2000 to 2012. Norwich had the greatest amount of growth, accounting for an 11.6 percent increase (see Table 2).

Table 2. Comparison of Population Growth Trends, 2000-2012

Area and City	Population		Pop. Growth 2000-2012
	2000	2012	
New London County	259,106	273,723	5.64%
Norwich	36,117	40,322	11.64%
Groton	39,925	40,115	0.48%
New London	26,185	27,613	5.45%
Windham County	117,559	118,046	0.41%
Hartford County	844,980	893,504	5.74%
Providence County, RI	621,602	627,414	0.94%

Source: American Community Survey, 2012.

Connecticut projections developed for "Connecticut by the Numbers" (2013) shows New London County growing to 279,756 by 2016 and to 285,773 by 2025. Using a conservative assumption that Norwich maintains a 3 percent share of countywide growth into future, the city population would increase to 41,531 by 2025.

Prospects for future growth in the city, however, are considerably higher as the proposed target areas provide opportunity to sustain and/or grow both the commercial and residential tax bases. **The target areas are:**

- 1. Shipping Street**
- 2. Capehart**
- 3. Chestnut Street**
- 4. Ponemah Mill**
- 5. Norwich harbor and waterfront development**
- 6. The downtown**

With the conservative estimate in population growth comes labor force growth and need for new jobs. Therefore, it is important to understand employment needs of businesses and how these needs match the assets Norwich has. It is also important to understand how residential property maintenance and growth impact vacancy and unemployment rates. Striking a balance between residential and commercial needs is an imperative.

Labor Force Characteristics

Occupational Profile. There are an estimated 20,078 persons age 16 and older in the Norwich labor force as of 2012, according to US Census Bureau American Community Survey data (see Table 3). Approximately 53 percent are considered white-collar workers, and approximately 47 percent are blue-collar. This is in contrast to New London County, in which approximately 60 percent of the labor force is in white-collar occupations. In relation to the five counties mentioned above and the City of New London, Norwich ranks sixth overall in terms of having a white-collar labor force.

The largest blue-collar occupational group in Norwich is services, which accounts for 30.9 percent of the labor force, which is in line with the countywide percentage of 30.1 percent. Management, businesses, science, and professionals—a white-collar group—is the next largest with 26.8 percent of the labor force, compared to 37.4 percent countywide. Considering a slight margin of error, sales and office occupations are relatively tied with the management occupation group. While management, business, science, and professionals' occupations are not considered lower wage occupational categories, services as well as sales and office occupations do fall into this category.

Table 3. Labor Force Occupational Profile, Norwich and Other Areas, 2012 (1)

OCCUPATIONS	Fairfield County, Connecticut		Hartford County, Connecticut		New London County, Connecticut		Windham County, Connecticut		Providence County, Rhode Island		New London city, Connecticut		Norwich city, Connecticut	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
White Collar														
Management, business, science, professional and technical and arts occupations	194,476	43.70%	179,779	41.20%	49,902	37.40%	17,472	30.00%	99,177	33.60%	3,341	27.30%	5,383	26.80%
Sales and office occupations	109,603	24.60%	109,581	25.10%	29,889	22.40%	13,882	23.90%	75,231	25.50%	2,890	23.60%	5,309	26.40%
Total White Collar	304,079	68.30%	289,360	66.30%	79,791	59.80%	31,354	53.90%	174,408	59.10%	6,231	50.90%	10,692	53.20%
Blue Collar														
Service occupations	74,456	16.70%	74,721	17.10%	30,176	22.60%	11,875	20.40%	60,403	20.50%	3,681	30.10%	6,206	30.90%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	34,571	7.80%	27,083	6.20%	11,115	8.30%	5,931	10.20%	20,530	7.00%	1,012	8.30%	1,413	7.00%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	32,235	7.20%	45,435	10.40%	12,394	9.30%	9,021	15.50%	39,888	13.50%	1,297	10.60%	1,767	8.80%
Total Blue Collar	141,262	31.70%	147,239	33.70%	53,685	40.20%	26,827	46.10%	120,821	41.00%	5,990	49.00%	9,386	46.70%

(1) Population age 16 and over

Note: Percentages may not add to 100.0 due to rounding

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Educational Attainment. Another labor force indicator is education. Table 4 shows comparative levels of education attained by the resident population age 25 and older in Norwich, New London, Groton, and three counties—New London, Windham, Hartford, and Providence. Percentages of residents who graduated high school are about the same in all five jurisdictions. Norwich has the second highest combined percentage of residents with a high school diploma (or equivalency) through to completion of post-secondary education, but is lowest in percentages with bachelor and advance degrees. This may indicate that most future economic growth opportunities for the city will continue to be in traditional industries already found in Norwich and in production and service activities that provide off-site support to advanced technology industries in the Southeastern Connecticut region.

Table 4. Educational Attainment, Norwich and Other Areas, 2012 (1)

Area and City	High School	Some College	Associates	Bachelor	Advanced
<i>New London County</i>	31.3	19.9	8.1	16.9	14.3
Norwich	35.4	23.5	7.3	12.6	8.3
Groton	33.1	20.7	6.3	15.8	11.9
New London	33.2	33.2	5	11.2	10.1
Windham County	37.2	19.4	7.3	13	9
Hartford County	27.7	18	7.6	19.7	14.7
Providence County, RI	28.3	18.4	7.6	15.8	10.2

(1) Population age 25 and over

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey;***Other Demographic Factors***

The median age of 39.2 years is on par with the Connecticut counties, according to American Community Survey data (Table 5). The Norwich median household income is also comparable to what may be perceived as more affluent communities. The city's per capita income represents the statistical middle of the comparative areas, reflecting the size of the average household in Norwich as being smaller than in other communities.

Table 5. Demographic Comparisons, Norwich and Other Areas, 2012

Area and City	Median Age	Median Household Income (\$)	Median Family Income (\$)	Per Capita Income	Median Value Owner-Occupied Home (\$)
<i>New London County</i>	40.3	68,310	83,928	33,968	260,600
Norwich	39.2	51,304	63,182	27,903	198,000
Groton	34.7	51,833	57,450	30,243	234,600
New London	30.6	44,106	50,971	22,157	196,400
Windham County	39.4	58,489	72,958	27,456	219,300
Hartford County	39.9	64,752	81,533	34,356	246,400
Providence County, RI	37	49,213	62,779	26,175	236,700

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey.

Norwich also has a lower estimated housing value than the other areas to which it is compared.

In economic development terms, income comparisons suggest that Norwich households have the same spending power as households in other New London County communities and can support the same type of retail outlets found in other communities. The concern of course is saturation of market. The generally lower housing cost in Norwich is also a plus factor for recruiting certain types of new business and industry.

Industry and Employment

State of Connecticut Department of Labor Statistics shows a total of 89,378 private sector jobs in New London County with an average annual payroll per employee of \$50,399. The same source shows 14,047 private sector employees in Norwich, with an average annual payroll of \$41,569 or 82.4 percent of the countywide average.

Norwich's economic development potential will be driven to a large extent by the New London County economy, making it important to understand the structure of the county economy (see Table 6). The county economy is driven by the needs and demands of the local population and visitors, as service sectors, retail trade, and local government accounted for 75 percent of all jobs in 2012—9.4 percent with the construction industry included. Portions of the manufacturing, transportation, and wholesale trade sectors are also dependent on local demands for goods and services.

Largest individual employment sectors in the county are:

- Local government (21.5%)
- Health care and social services (14 %)
- Accommodations, food service, and associated services (12.6 percent)
- Retail trade (11.7 percent, not including wholesale)
- Manufacturing (11.7 percent)

Sectors having the highest average annual wages are:

- Professional, scientific, and technical (\$91,888)
- Manufacturing (\$91,882)
- Wholesale trade (\$74,593)
- Finance and insurance (\$63,740)
- Construction (\$55,856)

Focal opportunities for economic development in Norwich are in the manufacturing sector and the professional, scientific, and technical service sectors.

Several job sectors, principally accommodation/food service, arts/entertainment/recreation, and retail trade are influenced heavily by visitors and tourists. Other than these non-resident influences, the county does not have a significant export-based economy. Here, the presence of improving Norwich's position in the county in regards to manufacturing as well as the professional, scientific and technical services sector is important.

Table 6. New London County Employment Profile, 2014

New London County						
Covered Employment & Wages by Industry						
(2013 QCEW Program Data)						
Naics Code	Industry	Units	Annual Average Employment	Total Annual Wages	Annual Average Wage	Weekly Average Wage
	County Total	7,065	122,143	6,023,247,122	49,313	948
Private Ownership						
	Total Private	6,628	89,378	4,504,513,543	50,399	969
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	61	1,100	36,466,498	33,164	638
21	Mining	9	63	3,279,559	52,333	1,006
22	Utilities	*	*	*	*	*
23	Construction	601	3,454	192,932,203	55,856	1,074
31-33	Manufacturing	183	14,244	1,308,760,167	91,882	1,767
42	Wholesale trade	351	2,865	213,684,608	74,593	1,434
44-45	Retail trade	1,029	14,248	380,990,666	26,739	514
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	114	3,048	138,695,259	45,507	875
51	Information	87	1,166	57,782,724	49,546	953
52	Finance and insurance	286	1,925	122,725,817	63,740	1,226
53	Real estate and rental and leasing	217	901	39,160,886	43,448	836
54	Professional and technical services	696	5,109	469,419,696	91,888	1,767
55	Management of companies and enterprises	38	704	33,130,633	47,049	905
56	Administrative and waste management	375	2,453	82,760,355	33,736	649
61	Educational services	95	2,235	105,918,869	47,389	911
62	Health care and social assistance	740	17,095	797,774,541	46,668	897
71	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	127	1,909	49,140,556	25,745	495
72	Accommodation and food services	727	12,125	224,702,382	18,532	356
81	Other services, except public administration	863	3,433	89,890,381	26,187	504
99	Nonclassifiable establishments	*	*	*	*	*
Government Total						
	Total Government	437	32,765	\$1,518,733,579	\$46,352	\$891

(1) North American Industry Classification System code number

(2) Average annual employment

Source: Connecticut Department of Labor

SITE SELECTION FACTORS

Site selection factors were reviewed with the Economic Development Strategy Committee as background for identifying Norwich's competitive economic strengths and challenges for attracting and sustaining job-generating and tax revenue-producing business and industry:

- Transportation
 - Interstate highway access; other streets and highways
 - Railroads and airports
- Utility Systems and Services
 - Water supply/waste disposal
 - Communications/Internet access
 - Energy services
- Labor Availability and Training
 - Labor force size, unemployment, educational attainment, and skill sets
 - Workforce training facilities and services
- Quality of Life Factors
 - Primary, secondary, and higher education
 - Recreation and culture
 - Health care/medical services
 - Overall cost of living
- Public Attitudes, Policies, and Practices
 - Citizen perceptions of and support for growth
 - Political leadership
 - Land development and use policies and regulations
- Business Cost Factors
 - Land and building costs
 - Taxes and financial incentives
- Sites, Buildings, and Other Factors
 - Available sites and buildings—shovel ready
 - External perceptions of Norwich
 - Inter-local coordination and cooperation

As further context for discussion, *Area Development* magazine's 2013 Site Selection Survey of corporate executives and site consultants were reviewed with the EDSC. The results summarized in Table 7 indicate that labor costs, highway access, and other cost factors rank highest in location decisions.

Table 7. Survey of Site Location Decision Factors, 2013

Site Selection Factor	Corporate Survey		Site Consultant Survey	
	Percent (1)	Rank	Percent (1)	Rank
Labor				
Availability of Skilled Labor	86.9	6	92.2	4
Availability of Unskilled Labor	55.5	21	61.9	22
Training Programs	61.7	20	67.1	21
Labor Costs	96.7	1	94.3	2
Low Union Profile	75.8	11	80.0	14
Right-to-Work State	74.0	14	81.2	13
Transportation/Telecommunications				
Highway Accessibility	92.9	2	98.9	1
Railroad Service	27.4	25	38.1	25
Accessibility to Major Airport	49.0	22	79.0	15
Waterway or Oceanport Accessibility	17.7	26	23.8	26
Availability of Advanced ICT Services	83.2	9	81.3	12
Finance				
Availability of Long-Term Financing	65.4	18	75.0	18
Corporate Tax Rate	87.0	5	78.4	10
Tax Exemptions	88.4	3	89.6	8
State and Local Incentives	84.9	8	92.0	5
Other Business Factors				
Availability of Buildings	75.7	12 (tie)	77.9	17
Availability of Land	75.7	12 (tie)	90.8	6
Occupancy or Construction Costs	86.7	7	92.9	3
Expedited or Fast-Track Permitting	72.2	16	85.1	11
Raw Materials Availability	57.0	21	53.0	24
Energy Availability and Costs	88.0	4	89.7	7
Environmental Regulations	71.2	17	78.8	16
Proximity to Major Markets	73.3	15	88.5	9
Proximity to Suppliers	63.9	19	70.9	19
Inbound/Outbound Shipping Costs	81.7	10	67.5	20
Proximity to Technical University	36.7	24	60.7	23
Quality of Life Factors				
Climate	55.0	6	53.4	8
Housing Availability	62.4	3	66.6	5
Housing Costs	61.5	4	71.0	1(tie)
Health Care Facilities	68.4	2	60.5	6
Ratings of Public Schools	61.4	5	71.0	1(tie)
Cultural Opportunities	46.0	9	48.9	9
Recreational Opportunities	52.7	7	53.5	7
Colleges and Universities in Area	50.7	8	70.1	3
Low Crime Rate	79.0	1	69.0	4

(1) Combined percentage responding "Very Important" and "Important"

Note: Top 10 business factors and top three quality of life factors are highlighted in **bold italics**

Source: *Area Development* magazine, 12/12-1/13

COMPETITIVE ECONOMIC STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

Strengths are positive attributes and characteristics that enable a community or area to attract and sustain business, industry, and economic growth in an extremely competitive regional, national, and global marketplace, including up-to-date infrastructure, adequate and skilled labor, high quality of life, and favorable business climate. Strengths of the City of Norwich are:

- Multiple highway access points to RTs 395 and 2
- Municipal owned utilities
- Three Rivers Community College, Norwich Free Academy and Norwich Tech
- Norwich Public Schools
- Backus Hospital
- Waterfront with a deep water harbor
- Architecture and history
- Diversity of the population
- Unique villages within the city with their own history and identity
- Cost per square foot is competitive
- Fiber optic infrastructure
- Art, theatre, and culture
- City employees
- Per capita, one of the highest number of acres of open space
- Baseball stadium, golf course, ice rink (public private partnership), and marina
- Fiscally sound; contingency fund and pension fund are in good shape
- Community Policing Program
- Position with the state and region is improving

It should be understood that a great many Connecticut communities can claim the same or similar strengths and more. Success in economic development depends on how well local strengths are used and communicated to external markets.

Regional Location and Transportation Linkages

Norwich has multiple access points to I-395 and Route 2, a major north-south and east-west highway corridor serving Connecticut. I-395 connects Norwich to I-95 as well as I-90 (Massachusetts Turnpike). Boston, New York, Hartford, New Haven, Providence, and Worcester are all within reasonable commute times. Route 2 also allows easy connectivity to I-91, which provides distribution through to Canada.

There are multiple commercial rail access points throughout Norwich. Long-range transportation plans for Southeastern New London County include the improvement of commercial rail lines in Norwich. This includes the potential to expand passenger rail within city limits, recently augmented with an eight million dollar Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grant.

The majority of the private right-of-way, totaling 21.02 miles, including passing sidings, still exists and is visible on satellite maps.

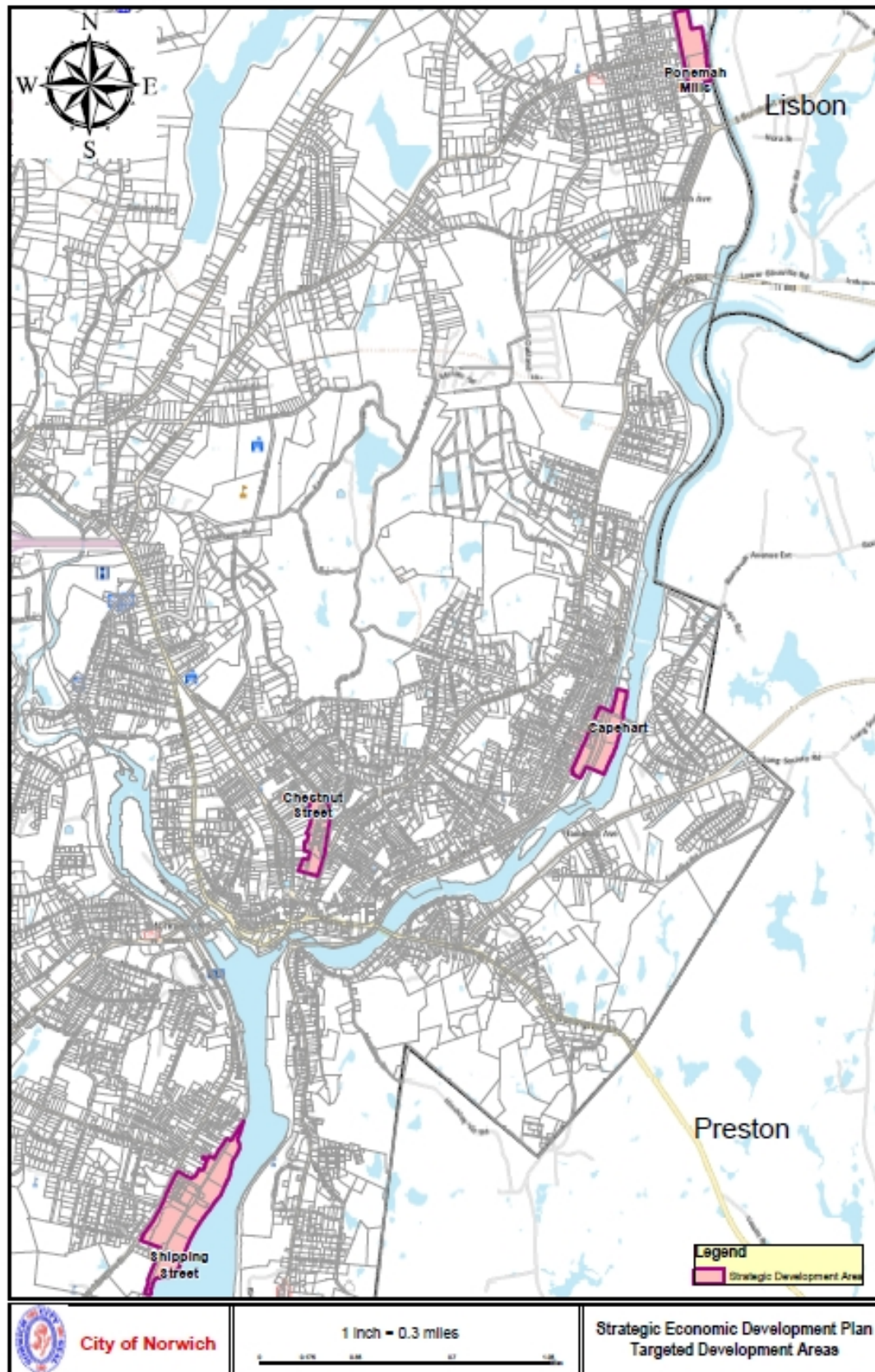
Although rail freight service was replaced by motor freight service to a great extent because of the Interstate Highway System, rail freight activity is making a dramatic comeback with increases in highway congestion and regulations affecting trucking and drivers. The existing rail spur and a presumed ability to re-establish service in other areas are potentially significant marketing assets for the city.

In addition to having a great interstate highway system and commercial rail access for heavy freight transportation, Norwich has a deep-water harbor that has access to the Long Island Sound. Due to its depth and width, it is a designated federal turning basin. Businesses in Norwich have access to “barging” product up the river, manufacturing products on site, and then shipping a completed project via rail or truck to an eventual final destination.

Available Industrial Site Inventory

Commercial inventory on the waterfront and near major transportation routes or commercial centers remains underutilized. Target development areas are highlighted below.

Figure 1. Development Target Zones



Existing Industries

New London County is known primarily for its tourism, pharmaceutical, and nautical manufacturing influences (primarily the sub-base), although there are a number of medium-size industrial employers in the county. Several are located in the Norwich area, creating the potential of being a leading industrial center in the county.

Manufacturers in the Norwich area include:

- Gunther International, LTD
- Freeport-McMoRan, Inc.
- PlasPak Industries
- Atlantic Packaging
- Mini Melts
- New England Glass and Mirror Company
- Nutron Manufacturing
- Crest Mechanical, etc.

Economic Development Strategy Committee—Strengths

Competitive strengths identified by the EDSC are inclusive of or additional to those described above and are summarized below, not necessarily in order of importance.

- Competitive location
 - Situated between Boston, New York, Hartford, Providence
 - Access to I-95, 395, 2, 91, and the Mass Pike
 - Access to three rivers
- Good available industrial land inventory with zoning and utilities
- Good existing infrastructure
 - Roads which are generally under capacity and well maintained
 - Existing rail spur(s) and deep-water access
 - Three Rivers Community College/Technical High School
- Pleasant and quiet small town-like atmosphere; good place to live and raise a family
- Positive public and political climate for development and growth with opportunities to plan for and accommodate growth
- Business-friendly city government, including streamlined permitting
- Existing industrial land uses and firms show that Norwich is a good location for industry and industrial growth

Traditional Industrial Labor Force

Norwich has a well-established history of blue-collar oriented industrial, construction, and service activities and many in the labor force are long-time residents. There is an ample supply of available and reliable labor with skills in the construction trades and manufacturing.

Three Rivers Community College

Three Rivers programs include offerings in: computer science, AutoCad/GIS, design and drafting, manufacturing, and electrical and mechanical systems (HVAC, etc).

There are also programs that focus on: hospitality, business management, retail, health care, information technology, etc.

Business Friendly Environment

The political and executive leadership in Norwich is pro-business and pro-growth, as evidenced by various initiatives taken in recent months and years to develop community visions and position the city for economic development and growth. Broad segments of the community were involved in the creation of a number of programs set to incentivize business development. The willingness of residents to invest tax dollars into stimulating growth is reflective of the support available to businesses interested in our city.

Quality of Life

Norwich is overwhelmingly viewed by residents and businesses as a good place to live and work. Residents enjoy the numerous parks, minor league baseball, municipal golf, ice rinks, amenities, historical flavor, and comparatively low cost of living associated with the city. Many enjoy the waterfront access and manageable size of the city, all while being able to take advantage of shopping and entertainment opportunities in places nearby, including casinos, an aquarium, beaches, museums, etc.

Three rivers border the city, which provides many opportunities for residents, visitors, and businesses to take advantage of water-related activities. This includes recreational boating, fishing, shipping, and accessing green power. The city has many beautiful parks, a private marina, and a public boat launch. There is an untapped opportunity in the waterfront commercial development including: restaurants, marine facilities, providing tours, fishing charters, and boat/kayak access. Increased access to and activity on the rivers will enhance leisure opportunities for residents and help promote Norwich as a visitor destination.

The City of Norwich is considered safe and has an active community-policing program that integrates public safety directly into the neighborhoods it serves. The department is also mindful of eradicating blight and ensuring adequate lighting provides safe travels throughout the city.

Economic Development Strategy Committee—Review of Challenges

Competitive challenges identified by the EDSC are inclusive of or are additional to those described above and are summarized below, not necessarily in order of importance.

- Limited sidewalks and bike paths for pedestrians and cyclists
- Many local workers with traditional blue-collar manufacturing backgrounds lack skills oriented to new industries and occupations
- Norwich’s downtown has yet to gain its full vibrancy potential
- Limited number of non-fast food chain restaurants in city
- The perception of a high local property tax millage rate compared to other New London County municipalities

Internal Circulation and Wayfinding

Inadequacies in internal circulation and wayfinding describe difficulties in finding, accessing, and serving areas in the city, particularly those in the downtown and targeted development areas. The downtown contains roads that can be challenging to navigate and proper signage through the city would better pronounce major industrial areas of the city. These areas are hidden resources unlikely to reach their potential without better regional convenience and exposure. Additional work will need to be done on pedestrian and bike paths.

Workforce Preparation

Norwich has a solid blue-collar industrial labor force. However, it is less competitive in terms of more educated professional and technical workers. Prospects for this to change over time are good, particularly with the advent of new engineering technology programs at Three Rivers Community College and development of target areas, which may provide a laboratory for advanced green technologies. Also on the positive side are a number of small production and consulting firms in Norwich that have skills geared to the new knowledge-based, technology-oriented economy. This is also being looked at in the public education sector with several initiatives to have the education system effectively connect and serve the community, including after school enrichment programs, family liaisons, and adult learning programs, all designed to produce successful and productive young

adults who contribute to the community.

Community Identity

Norwich is missing a central place with the streetscape and architectural ambiance and mix of civic and commercial uses that characterize traditional downtowns. A strong public desire for a vibrant downtown Norwich was expressed through the recent (2010) approval of the downtown bond program, resulting in creation of a program to incentivize downtown improvements. The importance of a downtown to economic development cannot be overstated, particularly in attracting knowledge-based businesses and professionals to the community.

Waterfront Commercial Development Opportunities

The three rivers in Norwich provide excellent waterfront opportunities. Commercial development—restaurants, shops, marine amenities, etc.—found in many waterfront communities and attractive to residents and visitors alike are not robust in Norwich. The lack of waterfront commercial development reduces the opportunity of Norwich to participate in another form of economic development—tourism, including ecotourism. Developing the waterfront will also increase the quality of life for existing and prospective residents.

Urban Services and Amenities

Although residents give Norwich high marks as a family-friendly place to live, they would like to see more restaurants, sidewalks, bike paths/trails, and indoor gathering places. Public transportation services are also limited.

Many of these are dependent on the size and incomes of the local population and others are related to the financial capacity of the city. The fact that Norwich is lacking in many of these amenities suggests that the market is unaware that the city has the size and income levels to support more services than currently found.

Median household income in Norwich is comparable to that in surrounding cities, however, increasing the city's visibility in the marketplace remains a challenge. Investing in the target areas and other vested developments will aid in raising the visibility of the city, as will strategic waterfront development and redevelopment.

Property Taxes

The comparatively high property tax rate in Norwich results from a greater than average proportion of residential uses in the local tax base, which are much more costly to serve than commercial and industrial land uses and there are services provided in Norwich that surrounding towns do not perform such as refuse pick-up. Once the appropriate balance of residential to commercial/industrial land use is struck, property tax rates should fall in line with or be less than surrounding areas.

3. Economic Development Opportunities and Possible Targets

SELECTION CRITERIA

Identification and selection of the types of businesses, industries, and institutions well suited for the City of Norwich and for which the city can become competitive are based on several considerations, including:

- Those already located in the City and Region seeking to grow and expand
- Those targeted for recruitment by the State of Connecticut
- Those defined and adopted as targets by economic development agencies in Connecticut
- Those growing nationally and regionally with tendencies to locate and expand in New England
- Those already well-represented in New London County and Norwich
- Those having location and operating characteristics compatible with the labor, transportation, and other resources in New London County and Norwich

REGIONAL TARGET INDUSTRIES

Target industries are economic activities that state, regional, and local economic development agencies and organizations identify as priorities for attracting, stimulating, and sustaining new tax-producing investments and good jobs. Economic development targets actively promoted in Southeastern Connecticut, some of which may be applicable to Norwich, are listed below.

Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD)

DECD has statewide responsibility for marketing Connecticut to new business and industry. The organization has identified the following types of business and industry as those having the greatest appeal for and economic impact on Connecticut, and are considered those for which Connecticut is an attractive and competitive location:

- Clean Energy—solar, biofuels, fuel cells, etc.
- Health care/Biosciences—biotechnology, medical device mfg, pharmaceuticals, health care
- Information Technology—photonics/optics, digital media, software and computer systems design, computers and microelectronics, telecommunications
- Aviation/Aerospace

- Homeland Security/Defense
- Insurance, Financial, and Professional Services
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Emerging Technologies—materials science, nanotechnology, marine science
- Green Technology
- Food manufacturing
- Data storage and management
- Remote emergency operations facilities

Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region

The Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region (seCTer) is a public-private regional economic development agency serving the towns of New London County Connecticut. Its mission is to promote and preserve the region's attractiveness, to encourage new businesses, and to assist and to nurture existing and expanding local enterprises. Some focuses include:

- Advanced Manufacturing—research, engineering, and manufacture of high performance components, equipment, and systems for medical, computer, auto, and power industries
- Agri-technology
- Aviation and Aerospace
- Clean Technology and Sustainable Energy
- Digital Media
- Film and Television Production
- Financial Services and Technology
- Life Sciences and Biotechnology
- Warehousing and Distribution
- Modeling, Simulation, and Training
- Optics and Photonics
- Software and Hardware

Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board (EWIB)

The EWIB analysis identified five sectors in the regional economy that continue to perform well and are positioned in high-growth global industries:

- Defense
- Aerospace/Electronics
- Health Care/Biomedical
- Energy Companies
- Engineering Firms

NORWICH INDUSTRIES

Types of businesses and industries for which Norwich is very well suited and capable of attracting and supporting include those already located in the city, including the following manufacturing and service industries:

- Construction
- Health Care/Biomedical
- Fabricators
- Packaging
- Equipment Manufacturing
- Information Technology
- Energy and Energy Management
- Engineering Firms

Many of the existing manufacturing and related service industries in Norwich are listed in Table 8 below. Estimated employment is also shown.

Table 8. Norwich Industries

Norwich area employment (numbers in thousands)	Oct. 2014	Change from Oct. 2013 to Oct. 2014	
		Number	Percent
Total nonfarm	128.2	0.2	0.2
Mining, logging, and construction	4.3	0.4	10.3
Manufacturing	14.8	0.3	2.1
Trade, transportation, and utilities	23.0	0.5	2.2
Information	1.2	-0.1	-7.7
Financial activities	3.0	-0.1	-3.2
Professional and business services	8.4	-0.3	-3.4
Education and health services	20.9	-0.5	-2.3
Leisure and hospitality	16.7	0.9	5.7
Other services	3.6	0.1	2.9
Government	32.3	-1.0	-3.0

Source: U.S. BLS, Current Employment Statistics.

Source: [US Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), City of Norwich

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY OPPORTUNITIES AND TARGETS

Business and industry opportunities for Norwich include a range of manufacturing and service activities that relate very well to existing economic activities and resources in the city and New London County, as well as new and emerging services and technologies associated with green energy advancements. Characteristics of a number of businesses and industries in New London County shown in Table 9 below provide a basis for identifying economic development opportunities in Norwich.

Table 9. Details for Selected New London County Employment Sectors, 2013

(1) North American Industry Classification System Source: Connecticut Department of Labor

New London County						
Covered Employment & Wages by Industry (2013 QCEW Program Data)						
Naics Code	Industry	Units	Annual Average Employment	Total Annual Wages	Annual Average Wage	Average Weekly Wage
	County Total	7,065	122,143	6,023,247,122	49,313	948
	Private Ownership					
	Total Private	6,628	89,378	4,504,513,543	50,399	969
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	61	1,100	36,466,498	33,164	638
21	Mining	9	63	3,279,559	52,333	1,006
23	Construction	601	3,454	192,932,203	55,856	1,074
31-33	Manufacturing	183	14,244	1,308,760,167	91,882	1,767
42	Wholesale trade	351	2,865	213,684,608	74,593	1,434
44-45	Retail trade	1,029	14,248	380,990,666	26,739	514
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	114	3,048	138,695,259	45,507	875
51	Information	87	1,166	57,782,724	49,546	953
52	Finance and insurance	286	1,925	122,725,817	63,740	1,226
53	Real estate and rental and leasing	217	901	39,160,886	43,448	836
54	Professional and technical services	696	5,109	469,419,696	91,888	1,767
55	Management of companies and enterprises	38	704	33,130,633	47,049	905
56	Administrative and waste management	375	2,453	82,760,355	33,736	649
61	Educational services	95	2,235	105,918,869	47,389	911
62	Health care and social assistance	740	17,095	797,774,541	46,668	897
71	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	127	1,909	49,140,556	25,745	495
72	Accommodation and food services	727	12,125	224,702,382	18,532	356
81	Other services, except public administration	863	3,433	89,890,381	26,187	504
	Total Government	437	32,765	\$1,518,733,579	\$46,352	\$891
	Total Federal Government	70	2,525	154,596,550	61,224	1,177
31-33	Manufacturing	2	237	21,566,841	91,095	1,752
44-45	Retail trade	6	264	7,128,116	27,043	520
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	29	434	23,892,908	55,042	1,059
52	Finance and insurance	1	9	632,837	70,315	1,352
53	Real estate and rental and leasing	1	13	183,827	14,706	283

54	Professional and technical services	1	19	1,396,666	73,509	1,414
61	Educational services	1	312	25,287,064	80,962	1,557
62	Health care and social assistance	2	179	12,105,121	67,658	1,301
71	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	2	239	4,369,394	18,276	351
81	Other services, except public administration	1	7	132,459	18,270	351
92	Public Administration	24	813	57,901,317	71,256	1,370
	Total State Government	88	3,961	253,390,979	63,967	1,230
61	Educational services	4	820	40,460,085	49,367	949
62	Health care and social assistance	31	1012	64,510,803	63,767	1,226
71	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	5	174	8,027,962	46,138	887
92	Public Administration	48	1,956	140,392,129	71,775	1,380
	Total Local Government	279	26,279	1,110,746,050	42,268	813
22	Utilities	13	342	28,054,375	82,150	1,580
23	Construction	21	327	18,164,040	55,477	1,067
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	1	57	2,896,783	50,970	980
51	Information	12	205	5,290,988	25,862	497
53	Real estate and rental and leasing	3	29	1,223,059	42,054	809
54	Professional and technical services	6	25	2,104,467	84,179	1,619
56	Administrative and waste management	20	121	5,969,378	49,470	951
61	Educational services	22	6,768	328,747,746	48,573	934
62	Health care and social assistance	16	131	3,867,645	29,505	567
71	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	22	15,484	560,430,807	36,195	696
72	Accommodation and food services	4	110	1,729,659	15,760	303
81	Other services, except public administration	1	5	127,734	25,547	491
92	Public Administration	138	2,676	152,139,369	56,846	1,093

All economic development opportunities are well suited for Norwich and some are already well represented in the city. Certain information services, professional, scientific, technical services, and administrative support services found in the county are also well suited for Norwich.

Business and industrial opportunities for the city were discussed at length with the Economic Development Strategy Committee. Discussions resulted in the identification of several types of business, industrial, and other economic activities as recruitment targets of community improvements and marketing efforts. Opportunities and targets recommended by the Committee and consultant are outlined below.

Commercial and Industrial Products and Services

Norwich has a number of firms that produce equipment, components, parts, and supplies for and provide services to the electronics, computer, medical, automotive, aviation, and other industries.

There are leading manufacturing sectors in New London County, and broad segments of these industries rely on the type of labor force found in Norwich. A Southern Connecticut location

with access to major highways makes Norwich a convenient location for the off-site production of components, parts, and supplies for and servicing of industries throughout New England.

Green Industries and Technologies

Needs for and interests in energy conservation, reducing carbon footprints, minimizing emissions and pollutants, and conserving natural resources have given rise to a new and emerging generation of businesses and industries. Green industries, as they are called, are popping up on economic development radar screens and wish lists at all levels of government across the U.S., as states, regions, and communities vie for shares of these promising growth industries. Green industries include environmental remediation equipment and services and various energy conservation technologies and products.

Entertainment, Recreation, and Leisure Services

Frontage on and potential access to the scenic riverfront provides Norwich with opportunities to attract and develop commercial and marine uses of interest to tourists and that provide entertainment and leisure activities to residents. Desirable waterfront uses include restaurants, specialty retail shops, and marine activities, including fishing and sightseeing tours on the rivers.

Success in attracting non-resident visitors to Norwich also depends on types and scope of commercial amenities and facilities planned and developed ultimately in the target areas.

Other Development Opportunities

Other business and industrial opportunities identified by the EDSC included the following:

- ***Motor Freight Trucking.*** Freight carriers and terminal facilities are needed to serve existing and future industry at competitive freight handling and distribution costs and convenient services.
- ***Affordable Housing Manufacturing.*** Demand for new types of housing components, systems, and products that make housing more affordable and energy-efficient will increase in the future. An available and experienced construction labor force in Norwich makes this industry an attractive opportunity. Indeed, the city could serve as a model for use of new technologies and housing design concepts. The city should consider establishment of policies and regulations that allow and encourage design and

development of small homes that incorporate new technologies on small lots in identified areas of the community.

- ***Systems Design and Engineering.*** Systems design and engineering was offered as a potential target because it is a leading Central Connecticut industry and because of emerging electrical and mechanical technology capabilities at Three Rivers Community College.

4. Strategic Goals and Objectives

GOAL 1. EXPAND BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY IN NORWICH

The City of Norwich recognizes needs to diversify and expand its economic base by attracting and sustaining new businesses, industries, and other economic activities that increase and upgrade employment opportunities for local residents, that increase household incomes and standard of living, and that increase local tax revenues needed to provide expected levels of community services to residents and businesses. The city further recognizes the importance of retaining existing businesses, industries, and needs that it may have to maintain operations and expand. The following objectives are designed to implement this goal.

Objective 1.1. Identify Desirable Business and Industry Targets

Over the next 12 months, the designated economic development agency will quantify and qualify the existing business needs, categorized by industry.

The following business and industry clusters are associated with Norwich:

- **Commercial and Industrial Products and Services.** The Norwich area has a number of firms that produce equipment, components, parts, and supplies for and provide services to the electronics, computer, medical, automotive, aviation, and other industries. The fabricated metal products, machinery, computers and electronics, and medical products industries are leading manufacturing sectors in New London County. Broad segments of these industries rely on the type of labor force found in Norwich.
- **Green Industries and Technologies.** Green industries include a wide variety of energy conservation and environmental protection and clean-up technologies, products, and services, including consulting and design services and energy-efficient building materials and equipment. The development of target areas, with an orientation to the use of green technologies, is expected to put Norwich in contention for a share of these industries, including firms that design, produce, install, and service energy conservation and environmental protection materials, equipment, and facilities.
- **Entertainment, Recreation, and Leisure Services.** Potential commercial access to scenic rivers in Norwich provides opportunities to attract and develop commercial and marine uses of interest to tourists and that provide entertainment and leisure activities to residents. Desirable waterfront uses include restaurants, specialty retail shops, and marine activities such as fishing

and sightseeing tours. Attraction of non-resident visitors and spending to Norwich is also a function of types of future commercial development in the target areas.

Actions to implement Objective 1.1 include the following:

- 1.1.1. Compile up-to-date lists of existing firms and their employment levels in the Norwich area that best represent these business and industry clusters as a basis for (a) designing and implementing marketing initiatives to attract new firms in these clusters and (b) carrying out business outreach activities aimed at retaining existing firms.
- 1.1.2. Meet with identified businesses within those clusters to discuss the outlook for the industry, opportunities to attract suppliers of equipment and parts used by these businesses, and actions the city and others need to take to ensure the long-term maintenance and growth of the industry in Norwich.
- 1.1.3. Coordinate with Norwich Public Utilities (NPU) to discuss opportunities to partner with “green” industry firms in order to attract and grow businesses in Norwich.
- 1.1.4. Partner with NPU and development community to encourage the use of “green” technologies and new design concepts in making housing and business operations more affordable and energy-efficient.
- 1.1.5. Implement land use policies and development regulations that allow and encourage the use of “green” technologies and concepts in the city.
- 1.1.6. Provide Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region (SeCTer) copies of this Strategic Plan, highlighting these target clusters, plus information on existing industries to county, regional, and state economic development allies, including, SeCTer, Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG), Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), Department of Housing (DOH), Chambers, local government, etc., and other agencies and organizations that promote and facilitate economic development in the region.

Objective 1.2. Market Norwich to New Business and Industry

External marketing of Norwich by direct mail, print media, and other means to site location consultants, corporations, and other business entities will be carried out primarily at county, regional, and state levels all of which have much greater marketing expertise and resources than small municipalities. The Mayor will (a) ensure that county, regional, and state economic development allies are made and kept aware of activities in Norwich, (b) respond to requests for information professionally and promptly, and (c) be adequately prepared for visits by allies and prospects to the community.

Actions to implement Objective 1.2 include the following:

- 1.2.1. Inventory existing properties available, taking advantage of the various marketing tools and outlets available
- 1.2.2. Create an identifiable brand or theme for economic development in Norwich that conveys the assets and direction of the city with respect to growth of business and industry—consider arts/culture, recreation industries, and green technologies, see Table 10 below.
- 1.2.3. Prepare and distribute to regional, state and national outlets a comprehensive economic development brochure containing a brief demographic/economic profile of the city, list of economic development targets, map showing major community assets, and contact information.

Table 10. Total employment in each cluster within the State of Connecticut and the U.S.

Source: CT DOL

Cluster	Connecticut Employment	United States Employment	Connecticut Percent of United States
Aerospace	30,230	440,956	6.9
Maritime	10,802	485,617	2.2
Insurance & Financial Services	136,624	7,220,769	1.9
Metal Manufacturing	58,731	3,284,447	1.8
Bioscience	44,945	2,558,254	1.8
Tourism	67,404	4,879,532	1.4
Software & Info. Technology	36,635	3,050,343	1.2
Plastics	7,973	726,232	1.1
Agriculture	71,851	6,864,180	1.0
TOTAL	1,704,000	127,804,256	1.3

Objective 1.3. Provide Outreach to Existing Business and Industry

Retention of existing business and industry in Norwich is as important as attracting new activity. Although corporate downsizing and realignment is beyond the control of the city, attention to the concerns and needs of existing firms and recognition of their contributions to community's well-being may be the difference between investing and growing at home or closing and moving elsewhere.

Actions to implement Objective 1.3 include the following:

- 1.3.1. Visit and meet with existing businesses and industries to determine and help address their concerns and needs for assistance, including (a) technical and business planning assistance, (b) employment and workforce development assistance, (c) financial assistance through the U.S. Small Business Administration and/or other resources, and (d) assistance from the city on various code, permitting, land use, and access issues, (e) marketing support.

- 1.3.2. Coordinate with business retention specialists, including CT SBDC, DOL, CTWorks, and DECD on identification and implementation of best practices for fostering retention and growth of existing business and industry.

Objective 1.4. Establish an Effective Internal Organizational Structure

Successful economic development depends to a large extent on how well a community is organized to deal with challenges that limit its ability to attract and retain business and to provide marketing support to county, regional, and state economic development allies.

Actions to implement Objective 1.4 include the following:

- 1.4.1. Schedule and facilitate regular mayor's economic development cabinet meetings to discuss issues affecting economic development and business vitality in Norwich.
- 1.4.2. Report and advise the Council on a quarterly basis regarding issues related to economic development.
- 1.4.3. Coordinate activities between accessory committees and agencies (i.e. Harbor Management, Redevelopment Agency, to ensure all economic related activity is synchronized).

Objective 1.5. Establish an Effective Regional Coordination Framework

Successful economic development is also dependent on the extent to which local governments, community, and business organizations cooperate in addressing challenges and needs that cross jurisdictional boundaries.

Actions to implement Objective 1.5 include the following:

- 1.5.1. Develop and maintain an ongoing working relationship within the region, including the SeCTer, SCCOG, DECD, SEAT, all related railroads, such that the county is well versed on economic development, transportation needs, and opportunities in Norwich and the city is knowledgeable of factors affecting its future.
- 1.5.2. Develop and maintain ongoing working relationships with the adjacent counties, such that the economic development and quality of life interests of Norwich are known, coordinated, and complementary and have optimal representation at the county and state level.

GOAL 2. POSITION NORWICH FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

The City of Norwich recognizes the need to become a more competitive and attractive location for business and industry by taking full advantage of its existing assets and by correcting or minimizing

factors that put the city at a competitive disadvantage to other communities and that may hinder its success in attracting new business and industry and retaining existing firms.

Objective 2.1. Improve Existing Infrastructure

Norwich has a history of providing and maintaining quality infrastructure. Through the years, this has required on-going evaluations to ensure properly designed and maintained infrastructure systems are in place in order to facilitate economic growth.

Actions to implement Objective 2.1 include the following:

- 2.1.1 Complete an assessment of infrastructure barriers in the targeted areas, as well as strengths such as access to rail, deep water, water/sewer service, fiber optic, natural gas, and electricity.
- 2.1.2 Ensure utility capacity, especially for target areas.
- 2.1.3 Create an implementation plan that aligns with the 5-year Capital Plan to address infrastructure impediments, including road systems, with a focus on targeted areas.

Objective 2.2. Improve Public Transportation Infrastructure

Norwich has service gaps in its internal road network and in connectivity between employment centers and regional highways. Improvement of these gaps is necessary to maximize the development potential of existing development areas.

Actions to implement Objective 2.2 include the following:

- 2.1.1. Create a Master Development Plan (MDP) for Route 82 Corridor/Exit 80.
- 2.1.2. Coordinate with SEAT regional plans.
- 2.1.3. Work with railroads and developers to ensure Norwich is included in expansion opportunities.
- 2.1.4. Develop transportation nodes with adjacent regions.

Objective 2.3. Improve Communication Infrastructure

Norwich has a unique ability to provide fast access and wireless Internet coverage through use of fiber optics. Using this to the city's advantage can positively affect both the quality of life of residents and improve business efficiency. It may also work to encourage businesses to consider Norwich.

Actions to implement Objective 2.3 include the following:

- 2.2.1. Determine where gaps in fast access DSL and cable broadband services exist; reach agreement on an appropriate course and schedule of actions to close remaining service gaps; do the same with wireless providers in the area to increase wireless coverage in Norwich.

Objective 2.4. Promote Development and Adaptive Re-use of Existing Properties

It is in the interest of the city to generate jobs and increase the property tax base by promoting and facilitating development, redevelopment, and reuse of existing vacant and underutilized residential and/or commercial properties. All projects shall be consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), Comprehensive Plan, and when applicable, existing plans such as Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), Harbor Management, Area-wide Brownfield Plan, Vibrant Communities Initiative, 5-Year Consolidated Plan, and 5-Year Capital Plans. Actions to implement Objective 2.3 include the following:

- 2.3.1. Evaluate re-use potential and impediments around developing Ponemah Mill, Capehart Mill, Chestnut Street Mills, and Shipping Street.
- 2.3.2. Establish action plan with activities and timeline focusing on developing sites mentioned in 2.3.1.
- 2.3.3. Establish action plan with activities and timeline focusing on Norwich Harbor and Waterfront Redevelopment.
- 2.3.4. Establish action plan with activities and timeline focusing on Otrobando Avenue redevelopment project.
- 2.3.5. Establish action plan with activities and timeline focusing on “Urban Agri-tech.”
- 2.3.6. Establish action plan with activities and timeline focusing on Mill and Underutilized Site Reuse.

Objective 2.5. Identify and Plan New Business and Industry Locations

There are opportunities to develop new locations for business and industry, particularly in and around the following areas: Ponemah Mill, Capehart Mill, Chestnut Street Mills, and Shipping Street area. It is in the interest of the city to ensure that these areas are identified, planned, and reserved for future job and tax producing business and industry development.

Actions to implement Objective 2.5 include the following:

- 2.4.1. Research and prepare draft MDP for Route 82 Corridor/Exit 80, etc.
- 2.4.2. Research and prepare conceptual planning around four stated targeted development areas and at a minimum consider: (a) pre-approved conceptual site plan opportunities; (b) existing/future uses for commercial/residential; (c) transportation needs; (d) utilities; (e) access to food; (f) poverty; and (g) existing future education needs.
- 2.4.3. Adopt land use policies and regulations that reflect the type of business development envisioned for the area and limit less desirable and productive land uses.

- 2.4.4. Work with rail carriers as appropriate, and businesses and property owners adjacent to rail right-of-way to identify and provide an area for potential passenger and or freight rail and associated commercial development.
- 2.4.5. Work with developers, real estate professionals and planners to identify barriers, general locations, and phasing of potential commercial and residential development and types of tenants/firms that are anticipated or may be targets of future marketing efforts.

Objective 2.6. Provide for a Safe Community and Neighborhoods

The City of Norwich recognizes that public safety is more than just having police and fire departments. Communities must have excellent emergency response, exceptionally trained emergency personnel and provide for appropriate response during storms. This includes clearing roads of debris, ice, and snow as well as providing reliable utility service. It is also true that economic stability and growth are more likely to occur in areas where there is a prompt as well as professional response to emergencies and where safe and clean streets exist.

Actions to implement Objective 2.6 include the following:

- 2.5.1. Identify key safety concerns and crime patterns in the target areas, utilizing information from existing tracking systems and anecdotal evidence collected.
- 2.5.2. Use technology to more effectively track and address the status of blighted properties.
- 2.5.3. Coordinate with NPU regarding lighting as a means to address crime-related activity in targeted areas.
- 2.5.4. Establish a core location to (a) operate a Data Center and Back-up Data Center for Disaster Recovery; (b) operate a control room to meet NERC requirements and storm response; and (c) provide the city with an Emergency Command Center.
- 2.5.5. Upgrade utility infrastructure per approved plan and funding for continued reliability.

GOAL 3. ELEVATE COMMUNITY IMAGE AND URBAN SERVICES

The City of Norwich recognizes there is a close relationship between attracting and retaining business and industry and community quality of life. The city is committed to improving the living and work environments as well as urban services for existing and future residents and businesses.

Objective 3.1. Plan and Develop a Vibrant Downtown

The Vibrant Community Initiative (VCI) focus area spans several blocks on Main Street. It encompasses the intersection of Main and Washington Streets on the west to Franklin Square on the east. It begins with a major gateway to the downtown on the west and the heart of the downtown on the east.

According to the Cecil Group, Consultants for the Norwich Vibrant Communities Initiative, “...Improving this focus area is considered critical to the revitalization of downtown Norwich.” The target projects are the Bulletin and Richards Building, the Flat Iron Building, Main Street Cluster, and Franklin Square.

Actions to implement Objective 3.1 include the following:

- 3.1.1. Shift the use character, perceptions, and market position of the downtown—repurpose with multi-family housing, destination retail, service and restaurant businesses and civic, cultural, and entertainment functions.
- 3.1.2. Create meaningful change (critical mass)—change must occur in close proximity to shift the sense of quality, safety, attractiveness, and character.
- 3.1.3. Cluster initiatives that change the character of sub-districts.
- 3.1.4. Provide consistent development stewardship - commitment and designated roles and responsibilities for entities and organizations engage in redevelopment. The Redevelopment Agency (RDA) will focus on Mill Renovation in the downtown. The RDA will examine historic mill properties and develop a long-term strategy.
- 3.1.5. Implement the most advantageous locations for social services, court-related activities, and government function as they correspond to downtown goals.
- 3.1.6. Attract funding and financing in a public-private cooperative. This will attract private sector investors.

Objective 3.2. Improve Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation

Quality of life in Norwich will be enhanced greatly by having an adequate system of bicycle paths and pedestrian trails and walkways. The city will study and prepare plans for improvement that alter the relationship between circulation, parking, and redevelopment.

Actions to implement Objective 3.2 include the following:

- 3.2.1 Identify and assess needs for and costs of improved bicycle and pedestrian circulation in the city and prepare a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan that addresses needs for new and upgraded bicycle and pedestrian paths, trails, and walkways that improve service and connectivity throughout the community.
- 3.2.2 Identify priorities and develop a program to fund and make improvements over time within available financial resources, including outside grants.

Objective 3.3. Improve Wayfinding

It will be easier to navigate around the City of Norwich when traffic patterns are analyzed and appropriate changes are made to flow, signage and access.

Actions to implement Objective 3.3 include the following:

- 3.3.1 Change location and patterns of use considering the most advantageous locations for social services, judicial and government activities, business growth and pedestrian and bicycle traffic patterns.
- 3.3.2 Alter the relationship between circulation, parking and redevelopment.
- 3.3.3 Install appropriate signage to aid in navigation and lane designations.

GOAL 4. INCREASE WATERFRONT ACCESS AND ACTIVITY

The City of Norwich recognizes the importance of the Shetucket, Thames, and Yantic Rivers making the community an attractive place to live and work and in promoting the city as a potential visitor destination. The city further recognizes a need to provide increased access to and enjoyment of the rivers. To accomplish this successfully, it is necessary to promote as well as facilitate development of waterfront properties. These properties should be available for commercial, recreation and marine uses that are attractive and inviting to residents and visitors alike.

Objective 4.1. Improve Existing Public Access Facilities

A well maintained, safe, attractive, and interconnected system of public waterfront areas and facilities will be an integral part of the downtown and enjoyed by persons of all ages, interest, and abilities.

Actions to implement Objective 4.1 include the following:

- 4.1.1. Design facilities according to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- 4.1.2. Include plans for trails with waterfront areas and trails providing for walking, jogging, picnicking fishing, bicycling, and boating.
- 4.1.3. Develop water trails for canoes and kayaks on the Thames, Yantic, and Shetucket rivers.
- 4.1.4. Use the waterfront as a focal point for community activities throughout the year.

Objective 4.2. Identify and Promote Development of Waterfront Sites

Norwich has yet to take advantage of its scenic waterfront location as a commercial asset with shops, restaurants, and marina facilities attractive to residents and visitors alike. These facilities are common in most waterfront communities and contribute to local quality of life, as well as providing jobs and generating tax revenues. Opportunities for compatible waterfront commercial development should be pursued in Norwich to provide additional recreation/leisure activities for residents, while allowing the city to attract non-resident visitor activity and spending.

Actions to implement Objective 4.2 include the following:

- 4.2.1. Implement strategies to support and expand opportunities for vessel and shore-based recreational fishing in the Thames, Yantic, and Shetucket rivers.
- 4.2.2. Distribute information packets concerning fishing opportunities.
- 4.2.3. Redevelop the Shipping Street area with a public boat launch facility with a goal to provide safe and sufficient parking. Note: \$200,000 has been obtained for an environmental study.

GOAL 5. INVEST IN THE FUTURE OF NORWICH

The City of Norwich understands that extensive private capital is needed to acquire and/or develop existing industrial/brownfield sites, to acquire and develop new commercial and industrial sites, to redevelop downtown and waterfront properties, and to start new business ventures. The city further recognizes the need to be competitive with other communities and to seek and provide incentives, financial and otherwise, to attract and leverage private investment, and will do so within the limits of available resources. Lastly, the city recognizes that using defined target areas provides excellent opportunities to increase inventory and stimulate development growth.

Objective 5.1. Establish Local Incentive Policies and Programs for targeted areas

Incentives have become common at all levels of government in attracting new business and industry to an area or community. Most incentives are employer-driven, particularly those at the state level and funded by government grants, in that they are based on the number of jobs created and averages wages of those jobs, generally in relation to the average wage level or median household income in the area. Local incentives, which typically are in the form of property tax rebates for a period of years, generally are more flexible, in that they can be both developer-driven and employer-driven.

Actions to implement Objective 5.1 include the following:

- 5.1.1. Survey local economic development incentive policies and programs in other New London County communities and other comparable communities to determine best practices in competitive communities.
- 5.1.2. Develop and adopt an incentive policy and program for Norwich that makes the city competitive with its peers and can be implemented within available resources.

Objective 5.2. Develop New and Coordinate Existing Public Financing Mechanisms

Tax increment financing is an invaluable tool for funding improvements and programs that directly benefit development areas, including use of these funds as financial incentives to property owners, developers, and businesses for facade improvements, new construction, and working capital, among other uses. The tax increment financing concept can also be adapted for other uses, as recommended below.

Actions to implement Objective 5.2 include the following:

- 5.2.1. Consider establishing a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District for target areas, as permitted by Connecticut Statute, to raise property tax revenues from increased property values and new development in the redevelopment area for the purpose of reinvesting these funds in the this area for various public improvements, incentives, and programs that directly benefit the redevelopment area.
- 5.2.2. Review existing language and successful use on: (1) Assessment Deferral Program; (2) local Enterprise Zone Program; (3) Bonding; and (4) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).

Objective 5.3. Actively Seek Federal, State, and Private Financial Support

Funding is available from Federal and state sources for community economic development projects, including the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Rural Development Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Connecticut Office of Trade, Tourism, and Economic Development (OTTED). Additional funding support for needed public projects is provided by the Connecticut Department of Transportation, Department of Economic and Community Development, and Department of Housing. The city should actively seek financial support from these sources to promote economic development in Norwich.

Actions to implement Objective 5.3 include the following:

- 5.3.1. Develop, prioritize and update biannually a list of needed and otherwise desirable economic development projects, including public infrastructure projects that provide and improve access and utility services to existing and potential business/industrial areas.
- 5.3.2. Meet annually with the Council SeCTer, SCCOG, and all appropriate federal, state and regional agencies to present and discuss the Norwich Economic Development Strategic Plan to: (1) aid in support of any existing or potential projects for funding consideration; and (2) review eligibility criteria for federal and/or state funding to determine if Norwich is an eligible recipient.
- 5.3.3. Work with the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG) to include Norwich economic development road projects in the long-range transportation plan and enlist support of the SCCOG in financing road improvements in the Norwich area.

5.3.4. Participate in regional, statewide and national organizations to advance Norwich's interests.

Objective 5.4 Attract and Prepare the Workforce for Tomorrow's Jobs

Norwich's labor force will be geared to types of business and industry identified as primary economic development targets under Goal 1. As technological advances are made in these industries to increase production, reduce labor costs, and service customers, attraction of new skilled workers and training of existing workers will be needed to keep Norwich competitive for these and other businesses and industries.

Actions to implement Objective 5.4 include the following:

- 5.4.1. Set and meet expectations for academic achievement for all students.
- 5.4.2. Connect families in meaningful ways with the school and community, including: (a) increasing the Mentoring Program; (b) expanding enrichment programs through the Norwich Public School's Education Foundation; (c) developing additional innovative and personalized after school programs; (d) continuing to build partnerships with the city, local Not-For-Profits (NPOs) and businesses; and (e) co-locating critical medical and social services in the schools, including the Family Liaison programs.
- 5.4.3. Be a leader in providing a wide array of digital and multi-media services.
- 5.4.4. Implement multiple strategies to attract, identify, develop and retain extraordinary educators and staff.
- 5.4.5. Survey a sample of existing industries in Norwich to determine where there are deficiencies in the current labor force in terms of skills and other factors and how those deficiencies affect their business; determine if these employers train workers in house and/or rely on or could benefit from external training programs.
- 5.4.6. To the extent that external training programs are needed by or are of interest to employers, enlist the guidance and support of Three Rivers Community College and other educational institutions within the region in helping local employers meet workforce training needs.
- 5.4.7. Coordinate with Norwich Free Academy, Three Rivers College and the Norwich Technical High School for preparing high school students for careers, including industrial trades.
- 5.4.8. Ensure long term facilities are suitably designed and available to meet the growing educational needs.