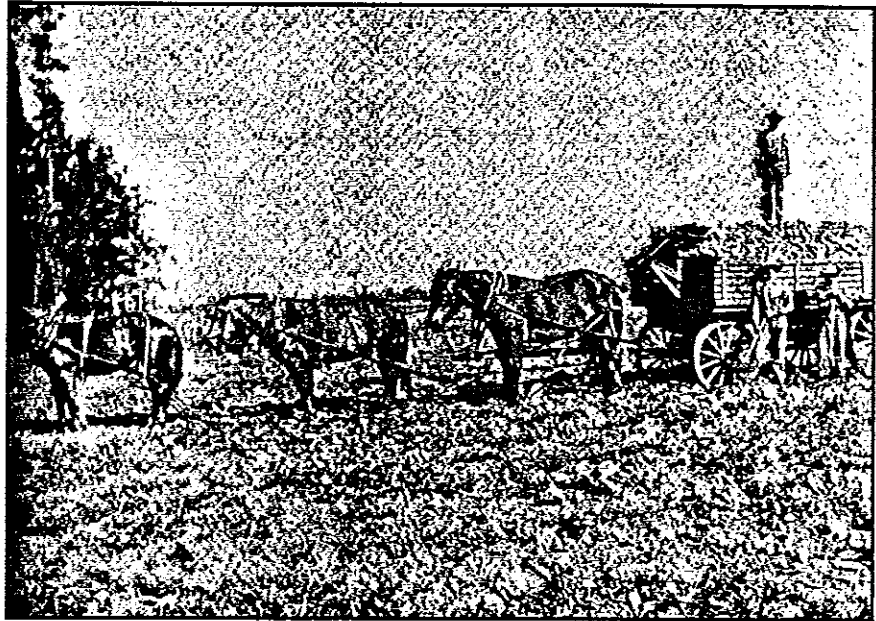




ABOUT THE GENERAL PLAN
The City of Norwalk
General Plan

SECTION 1

About the General Plan



Sugar Beet Farm, City of Norwalk, early 1900's

1. Purpose

The beginning of the development of the Norwalk community can be traced to the establishment of Norwalk Station by the railroad in 1874, and the subsequent recording of a tract map in 1877 for the town site. Following years of rapid growth, Norwalk became a city on August 26, 1957. Since that time, the City of Norwalk, which now comprises about 9.35 square miles, has continued to grow and develop into a prosperous and culturally rich community of over 90,000 residents. The future will bring to Norwalk new challenges and opportunities, and it is the purpose of this General

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Plan to help decision makers address critical issues impacting the City.

The Norwalk General Plan articulates a vision that gives direction to the long-range development of the City, and serves as a stimulus and guide to future public and private decisions. The General Plan is a policy document which represents the official statement of the City of Norwalk regarding the development needed to achieve its social, physical, and economic goals. Although it is comprised of individual sections, each dealing with a particular area of planning concern, the General Plan embodies a comprehensive approach in which the total range of urban concerns and issues are treated in an integrated manner. The General Plan is intended to be a framework for more detailed plans, or for making incremental development and plan implementation decisions.

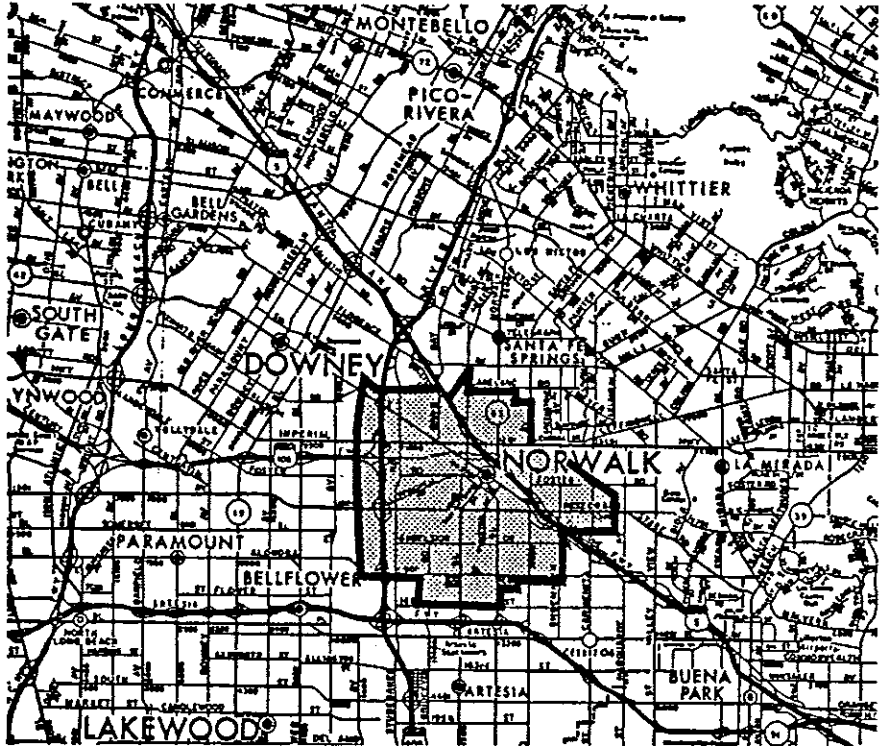


*Election workers tabulate votes for Incorporation of the City of Norwalk,
Tuesday, July 23, 1957*

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2. Authority and Scope



Location Map of the City of Norwalk

California State law requires every city to prepare and adopt a comprehensive, internally consistent, long-term General Plan for its physical development (Government Code Section 65300, *et seq.*). Functioning as the foundation on which all future land use decisions will be based, the General Plan serves as an important guide for local decision makers.

The General Plan should be an internally consistent and compatible statement of policies for the legislative body. A General Plan establishes development policies which set forth objectives, principles, and standards.

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It must include seven elements: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, and Safety. It may also include any other elements, or address any other subjects, which, in the judgment of the legislative body, relate to the development of the City. Therefore, its format may consist of a single document, or a group of documents relating to subjects or geographic segments of the planning area.

3. General Plan Structure

The Norwalk General Plan has been formatted to address the very specific and unique needs of the City. The four principal components of the Plan are described as follows:

a. Vision Norwalk

Vision Norwalk is a preamble to the General Plan, which provides a "big picture" concept of the future direction of the City. Vision Norwalk declares the general intent of the City toward its future long-range development and prosperity. Vision Norwalk provides broad direction for the City's evolution, and is intended to serve as a reference for future decisions.

b. Area Plans

Area Plans have been developed for specific geographic areas of the City which are likely to play a significant role in the City's future. Due to the changing needs and forces acting upon them, these areas are in need of more focused planning solutions and strategies.

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It should be noted that Area Plans are planning policy documents that are part of the General Plan. However, an Area Plan need not address each of the General Plan's required elements, as long as the General Plan already satisfies these requirements through the Citywide elements.

For each of the Area Plans, a "vision" is presented of what that area could become. This is followed by a discussion of the economic development concept, the designated land uses, the urban design concept, existing historic and cultural resources, circulation, infrastructure, and, finally, a discussion of the Plan's objectives, policies and implementation programs.

c. Opportunity and Special Site Studies

Opportunity and Special Site Studies are similar to Area Plans, except that they generally encompass specific sites or smaller geographic areas. For each Special Site Study, there is a discussion of the underlying issues and opportunities, recommended land uses, objectives and policies, and implementation programs.

d. Citywide Elements

The Citywide elements include the seven elements required by the State, as well as three optional elements. Once adopted, an optional element becomes an integral part of the General Plan. It has the same force and effect as the mandatory elements, and must be consistent

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with the other elements. The Citywide elements included in the General Plan are summarized as follows:

- **Land Use** - The Land Use Element designates the general distribution and intensity of uses of the land for housing, business, industry, open space, education, public buildings and grounds, and other categories of public and private uses. The Land Use Element also establishes standards of population density as well as the building intensity for the various land uses identified.
- **Circulation** - The Circulation Element is correlated with the Land Use Element, and identifies the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other local public transit facilities.
- **Housing** - The Housing Element is a comprehensive assessment of current and projected housing needs for all segments of the community, and all economic groups. In addition, it embodies policy for providing adequate housing and includes action programs for this purpose.
- **Conservation** - The Conservation Element addresses the conservation, development and use of natural resources such as water, forests, soils, rivers, and

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mineral deposits.

- **Open Space** - The Open Space Element details plans and measures for preserving open space for natural resources, the managed production of resources, outdoor recreation, public health and safety.
- **Noise** - The Noise Element identifies and appraises noise problems within the community, and helps to guide land use decisions.
- **Safety** - The Safety Element establishes policies and programs to protect the community from risks associated with seismic, geologic, flood, fire, and other urban hazards.
- **Community Design** - The Community Design Element explores issues related to the visual environment. Whereas the majority of General Plan elements focus on functional design issues, this element establishes that the City is also concerned with the aesthetic form of development.
- **Educational and Cultural Resources** - The Educational and Cultural Resources Element is an assessment of the educational and cultural resources of Norwalk. It provides policies for the preservation and enhancement of these resources.

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- **Utility Infrastructure** - The Utility Infrastructure Element addresses the issues related to the City's infrastructure capacity, and establishes policies for the maintenance of existing facilities and the provision of new facilities.

4. Implementing the General Plan

Achieving the "vision" outlined in the General Plan requires consistent and thorough implementation of the goals, objectives, policies, and programs contained within. The City of Norwalk may use a variety of tools to implement the General Plan including, but not limited to:

- **Police Powers (Regulatory)**
 - Specific Plans
 - Zoning Ordinances
 - Subdivision regulations
 - Park dedication requirements
 - School dedication requirements
 - Review and regulation of Conditional Use Permits, Zone Variances, Subdivisions, and other land use entitlements
 - Housing and building regulation
 - Code Enforcement
 - Environmental Procedures
 - Design Review
- **Corporate Powers (Acquisition and Development)**
 - Construction of streets, roads, water and sewage treatment facilities and other public works improvements.

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- Acquisition and development of parks
 - Acquisition and development of sites for low to moderate income housing
 - Purchase of development rights and scenic easements
 - Establishment of policies governing the timing of improvements to public services
 - Creation of development corporations
- Others
- Redevelopment
 - Development Agreements
 - Intergovernmental coordination
 - Public information
 - Data Management
 - Cooperative arrangements with private sector

In essence, every decision and action within the City is an opportunity to further the goals and objectives of the General Plan. Where any project, activity, or issue appears to conflict with the General Plan, the item may be submitted to the Planning Commission for their review and consideration.

5. Maintaining the General Plan

The basic underlying concept behind the General Plan is that the Plan is a "living document", which is continuing, comprehensive and cohesive. This process requires the Plan to be reviewed on a systematic and timely basis. Section 65400 of State Planning and Zoning Law requires that, after the legislative body has adopted the General Plan, that the planning agency do the following:

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- Investigate and make recommendations to the legislative body regarding reasonable and practical means for implementing the General Plan, so that it will serve as an effective guide for orderly growth and development, preservation and conservation of open space land and natural resources, and the efficient expenditure of public funds relating to the subjects addressed in the General Plan.
- Provide an annual report, by October 1 of each year, to the legislative body, the Office of Planning and Research, and the Department of Housing and Community Development, regarding: the status of the plan and progress in its implementation; and the degree to which the General Plan complies with guidelines developed and adopted by the State Legislature, and the date of the last revision to the General Plan.

Such a review would measure progress toward achievement of the Plan's goals and evaluate program performance. It would also provide an opportunity to review and re-evaluate goals, objectives, and policies, in light of trends and new opportunities. In this manner, each succeeding review of the General Plan would provide for not only its updating for relevance, but also for further refinement of the Plan. Successful implementation of the General Plan requires that the viewpoints of citizens be accurately represented. Their participation is critical for the collection of information, and formulation of effective and realistic policies and implementation measures. For this reason, extensive public participation must be an integral part of every future update.

GENERAL PLAN STRUCTURE

