

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Norwalk Redevelopment Agency has undertaken an initiative to create a Transit Oriented Development Master Plan for South Norwalk Railroad Station Neighborhood. The planning recommendations will be guided by a set of goals and objectives for the community and neighborhoods that are within an easy walking distance of the railroad station and the Intermodal Transportation Center that is located there. The planning initiative recognizes that the proximity to the transit and rail service can create development opportunities and impacts. The purpose of this effort is to manage future change in a manner that will provide benefits that will appropriately enhance the neighborhoods and their component places. These goals and objectives have been prepared based on meetings and discussions with area stakeholders, the preceding public plans and policies for the area, and public input at community conversation meetings associated with this project.

Neighborhoods

Goal: The neighborhoods around the South Norwalk Rail Station should be composed of a continuous and coherent pattern of pedestrian friendly and inviting streets, sidewalks and paths that line and connect blocks with complete and compatible development and land uses that create a cohesive and attractive environment in which to live, work, shop, visit and enjoy.

Objectives:

1. *Locate active retail, commercial and civic uses where they will be successful and contribute to the pedestrian environment.*
2. *Create inviting and active open space as part of the street network to provide regular occurrences of visual relief and opportunities for community interaction.*
3. *Expand the role of the South Norwalk railroad station as a community resource and a place for social connections.*
4. *Extend neighborhood connections along key corridors to the railroad station, featuring active uses and sidewalks that encourage community interaction.*
5. *Engage the South Norwalk artist community to create interesting and attractive public spaces that foster positive community interaction.*
6. *Fill empty lots and underutilized spaces with appropriate uses.*
7. *Connect neighborhood to the waterfront as an attraction for visitors and amenity for residents.*

Economics and Development

Goal: Invite and support development as a combination of new buildings and renovations that create a long-term, sustainable mixed-use pattern that contains a balanced quantity of housing, commercial, retail, civic and institutional uses, while protecting existing residents from displacement.

Objectives:

1. *Provide a balance of retail uses and services that reinforce the neighborhoods as great, convenient places to live and work.*
2. *Support development that offers jobs for people who can walk or bicycle to work.*
3. *Support commercial development that can take advantage of the proximity to the transit hub to reduce vehicle trips and gain competitive advantages.*
4. *Provide and support additional housing to expand the range of choices in terms of housing types and affordability. Affordable housing should be designed to look like market-rate housing.*
5. *Ensure that development efforts are accompanied by public outreach and neighborhood involvement.*
6. *Support development that does not displace neighborhood residents or businesses.*
7. *Provide specific tools such as linkage programs to mitigate the effects of gentrification.*

Urban Design Character and Qualities

Goal: Shape the fabric of buildings, spaces, streets and places to create distinctive and complete urban neighborhoods that contain diverse but well-connected components.

Objectives:

1. *Ensure that retail corridors are lined with active, attractive uses and facades that reinforce the businesses located there.*
2. *Create a variety of different neighborhood environments with different scale and use patterns, ranging from low-scale residentially oriented areas, to active, multiple use concentrations that draw activity along the streets and sidewalks.*
3. *Protect and enhance valued historic structures through adaptive reuse and historic preservation.*
4. *Retain the traditional composition along blocks and streets where historic or traditional components remain substantially intact.*
5. *Where traditional patterns no longer exist, provide compositions that are reminiscent of the past to the extent that they create an emphasis on street frontage and street-facing orientation of buildings, and create a breakdown of horizontal and vertical components to create a variety of scales.*
6. *Focus circulation patterns along public rights-of-way or convenient and visible public easements through the siting of buildings, streets and paths*
7. *Diminish or remove the visual impact of parking from public vantage points, except for on-street parking.*

Diversity

Goal: Encourage and maintain a diverse neighborhood that provides housing, employment, shops, services and restaurants that attract and support a wide range of cultures and incomes.

Objectives:

1. *Create pro-active tools and programs to preserve and encourage diversity through supporting and retaining affordable housing for existing residents and cultural groups for whom South Norwalk has been a home.*
2. *Promote and support multi-cultural businesses and institutions that are inherent components of diverse neighborhoods.*
3. *Expand the range of market-rate housing and types of units*
4. *Provide an excellent living and neighborhood setting for all types of households and population types.*
5. *Retain a mixture of uses and building types to maintain and enhance the existing balance of diverse businesses, and people in South Norwalk.*
6. *Protect existing residents from displacement due to gentrification.*

Circulation and Transportation

Goal: Enhance pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, while channeling and enabling vehicle circulation to be consistent with neighborhood quality and supporting the economic development goals for appropriate locations within the neighborhood.

Objectives:

1. *Provide adequate parking for each use within the district through shared parking.*
2. *Expand on-street parking as a practical resource for neighborhood uses.*
3. *Provide a continuous, safe, well-lit active network of sidewalks and pedestrian paths.*
4. *Create intersection and corridor designs and operational improvements to balance vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle circulation patterns so that every mode is safely and conveniently served.*
5. *Provide the neighborhoods and railroad station with well-defined, safe routes, which connect with regional commuter and recreational bicycle networks.*
6. *Provide for bicycle facilities in locations that support short term, and overnight storage.*
7. *Avoid traffic congestion and speeds that negatively affect the desirability of living or working in the area.*
8. *Improve vehicular traffic circulation in the areas surrounding the railroad station and the connections to regional systems.*
9. *Improve access and efficiency to and between multiple modes of transportation including pedestrian networks, bicycle networks, public bus and rail lines, taxi cabs and private automobiles.*
10. *Manage parking resources to eliminate future commuter parking outside of designated lots.*
11. *Remove pedestrian barriers due to physical design, land use patterns, or other issues.*
12. *Reduce or remove the impact of parking lots on the neighborhood.*
13. *Improve pedestrian and vehicular wayfinding signage in the neighborhoods surrounding the railroad station.*

14. *Improve pedestrian accessibility to the railroad station, through improved lighting and signage, and by reducing the grade approaching the station from the east.*
15. *Provide connections so that anyone can comfortably reach any destination from any other location within the area by foot or on bicycle.*

Community Security and Safety

Goal: The neighborhoods around the South Norwalk Rail Station should be safe and secure environments for residents, commuters, business owners and visitors.

1. *Ensure all sidewalks and pedestrian paths are well-lit, safe and maintained.*
2. *Increase police access and visibility such as emergency call boxes, neighborhood satellite store-front offices, or increased patrols.*
3. *Ensure that retail corridors are lined with active, attractive uses, with various hours of operation.*
4. *Locate open space in areas of existing high activity and develop programs and activities to ensure their continuous use and connection with the community.*