

STRATEGIC PLAN OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR THE TOWN OF NEWTOWN CONNECTICUT



**Prepared by the
Newtown Economic Development Commission
July 2005**

Approved by the Newtown Legislative Council October 19, 2005

MISSION

The Economic Development Commission's mission is to implement an orderly and planned economic development for the Town of Newtown, while always keeping in mind the character of the town. The commission will seek to involve all the agencies, commissions, boards and departments in Newtown which are involved in, or are affected by, economic development as well as the people of the town in their work to promote economic development.

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Introduction

The Strategic Plan of Economic Development is the responsibility of the Economic Development Commission (EDC) pursuant to the Town of Newtown Ordinance #66.

Newtown's first strategic plan was prepared by a committee appointed by the Economic Development Commission in 1992. The Legislative Council approved the Strategic Plan on September 9, 1992. An update to the plan was prepared and approved by the EDC in 1999.

This version updates the 1999 plan. The EDC approved this plan on July 19, 2005 and presented it to the Legislative Council for its action. The Legislative Council approved this plan on October 19, 2005.

Purpose of Plan

The Strategic Plan of Economic Development for the Town of Newtown sets forth the strategies and actions that will assist the Commission in achieving its mission and fulfill its responsibility for the promotion and development of the economic resources of the town.

The 2004 update of the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) reviews the current status of economic development and identifies four issues relevant to the economic development of Newtown. The Economic Development Commission (EDC) believes that the issues identified are of importance and has incorporated these into its strategic plan. However, the EDC has revised many of the strategies proposed in the POCD and has identified Action Plans for each strategy which identify the steps to be taken, the responsible party and the time of completion.

It is the EDC's belief that the addition of the Action Steps will facilitate the implementation of the strategies and the achievement of the goals.

Strategic Planning Committee

Brian Aumueller

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Economic Development Commission

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Issue #1

Strategically Grow Newtown's Commercial/Industrial Property Tax Base

Previous Planning documents (Planning Memorandum #9 Economic Development, October 2002; Plan of Conservation and Development, 2004) have presented the case for economic development in considerable detail and have concluded that additional economic development in Newtown, in keeping with the character and vision of the town, is necessary and desirable.

Goal: To grow the commercial/industrial tax base at a rate at least equal to the town's growth in its residential tax base.

Strategy I: Establish EDC as an advocate for existing businesses and develop a business retention program to support their preservation and growth.

Action Steps	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
A. Establish an outreach program to identify those factors critical to the preservation and growth of existing businesses.		
B. Develop plan of implementation.		

Strategy II: Develop programs to attract new businesses to Newtown.

Action Steps	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
A. Attract New Businesses to Newtown		
1. Identify the types of business most desirable for Newtown whose tax revenue is greater than the cost of the town services.		
2. Identify those factors important to these businesses in site selection.		
3. Develop a plan to maximize the appeal of Newtown.		
4. Prepare and implement a marketing plan Targeted at selected businesses.		
B. Facilitate the start-up and growth of new Businesses – i.e. business incubator.		
C. Prepare a business plan for the development of town and privately owned sites for commercial/industrial development.		
1. Development of sites owned by Newtown should have the highest Priority-i.e. Technology Park and Fairfield Hills.		
2. For privately owned land-Buildings jointly prepare a marketing plan with the owner. Seek financial support from owner to implement marketing plan.		
D. Maintain current list of sites for commercial/industrial development.		
E. Evaluate and upgrade EDC web-site.		

Issue #2

The Shortage of Newtown's Viable Economic Development Sites

The 2004 Plan of Conservation and Development states that there is a lack of land suitable to support new economic development activity. While a sizable inventory of vacant land zoned for commercial and industrial uses exists, significant areas of this inventory are incapable of supporting meaningful economic development due to physical limitations, including the presence of wetlands, poor accessibility to major arterials, or utility infrastructure.

Goal: To become a Strategic Partner with the local town officials and an Advocate for the Business community to maximize the effective use of current or potential sites.

1. EDC has supporting role to PZC
2. EDC should be asked to comment on all zoning changes relating to commercial/industrial development.

Issue #3

Redevelopment of Brownfield Sites

Goal: Facilitate the Cleanup and Reuse of Newtown's Brownfield Sites.

Newtown has two brownfield sites. One is the Batchelder property located on Swamp Road in the southern part of town and the other is the Noranda Metal Industries property located on Prospect Drive, off of South Main Street. The Batchelder property has not paid taxes since 1984. The Noranda property is vacant but continues to pay taxes to the town. (Source: Newtown Community Development Office).

Strategy I: Re-establish the Batchelder property as a tax paying entity.

Action Steps	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
A. Identify special incentives for development (i.e. Fast tracking of permits, support for grants, etc.)		
B. Prepare and implement marketing plan jointly with property owner.		
C. Seek financial support from owner for Implementation of marketing plan as required.		

Issue #4

Development of Agriculture and Farm-related Businesses

Newtown has a substantial inventory of open land that was once used to support various forms of agriculture uses. Much of this land may eventually be subdivided for residential development.

Goal: Facilitate the maintenance and development of agriculture, animal husbandry, horticulture and specialty equestrian businesses in Newtown.

Strategy I: Jointly with land owners evaluate the potential for specialized-boutique agriculture, animal husbandry and horticultural businesses.

Action Steps	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
A. Sub-committee to evaluate potential and recommend further action.		

Strategy II: Jointly with land owners evaluate the potential for specialized-equestrian-related businesses.

Action Steps
A. Sub-committee to evaluate potential and recommend further action.