

Norwalk Police Department

Strategic Plan

2017 - 2021



Greg Staples
Chief of Police

Department History

Originally settled in 1852 by Samuel Snyder the small settlement known as Pyra was located just south of Des Moines Iowa. Over the next few years, the community grew and in 1856 the name was changed to Norwalk. This was done by George Sawn. In 1900 Norwalk was first incorporated as a town with a land size of one square mile.

Upon incorporation, law enforcement services for Norwalk were carried out by a Town Marshal and any number of authorized deputy marshals. The last Marshal to serve Norwalk was WL McNamara who began his term in 1965.

In August 1973, Norwalk was first chartered as a City and by ordinance the Police Department was created. WL McNamara continued to serve as the City Police Officer until October 1974 when Michael W. Richardson became the first Chief of Police for the City of Norwalk. Section 30.01 of the Code of Ordinances for the City of Norwalk establishes the Department as follows:

The Police Department of the City is established to provide for the preservation of peace and enforcement of law and ordinances within the corporate limits of the City.

Chief Richardson served Norwalk for the next 25 years and retired in April 1999. During this time the Department staff increased to six officers. Upon Richardson's retirement, Norwalk's second chief was hired. Eddie H. Kuhl was sworn in as Chief of Police in August 1999. A number of accomplishments were achieved during Chief Kuhl's tenure. Most notably:

- Completion of a modern public safety headquarters that continues to allow professional police services to flourish
- Establishment of a written directive system to guide departmental procedures and performance
- Establishment of a connection to the regional dispatching services at Westcom
- Implementation of the School Resource Officer program and the DARE golf tournament
- Increasing the authorized strength of officers to 13

Chief Kuhl retired with distinction on October 1, 2013. A search process for a new Chief of Police was implemented. On January 2, 2014 Mayor Tom Phillips appointed Gregory W. Staples of Roanoke Virginia as Norwalk's third Chief of Police. Chief Staples began his tenure in Norwalk one month later in February and continues to serve the Community at this time.

The current Departmental staff is proud of the long history of service to the Community and pledge to continue this high level of service. Officers of the Department strive to serve the Community in a manner that is reflective of the desires and needs of all residents of Norwalk and continually work to satisfy their mission statement.

Executive Summary

The Police Department is dedicated to its mission of working openly to provide “noticeable, professional and dedicated service through citizen focused efforts that solve problems, maintain public trust and produce a safe, prosperous community”. As protectors of the Community, the Department will never waiver from the commitment to this mission. Since the founding of the Norwalk Police Department, the officers and employees of the agency have served the Community with honor. The current Departmental staff is proud of the long history of service to the Community and pledge to continue to pursue our mission with value oriented service that emphasizes:

- Accountability for our actions and in-actions
- Citizen-centric customer service
- The diversity of life experience among us

This vision reflects the Department’s recognition that staff must exhibit strong leadership in effectively utilizing our strengths while at the same time recognizing our limitations and working to improve service in the areas where improvement is required. The Department’s mission and vision establish that a major outcome of achievement will be an improved quality of life for the citizens of the Community. Growth of the City, both in size and number of residents will be the major obstacle to achieving this goal.

The City of Norwalk has experienced an accelerated growth pattern beginning in 2008 when the Western Annexation was completed. This annexation increased the geographic profile of the City by approximately 40% and brought the total square miles under City control to 11. In the years after the newly completed annexation, the national and local economy began to improve. The new territory and the strengthening economy allowed new aggressive development plans. During 2016, the residential growth of 174 housing starts in the City was unprecedented. Construction plans and plat designs submitted for 2017 also indicate that residential and commercial growth will continue at or above the pace established in 2016.

Residential expansion such that Norwalk has experienced is rapidly changing the landscape of the Community and the added residents are changing what the Community expects from the Police Department. The influx of new residents has increased the demand for commercial development. Several new commercial, retail and office - type developments are being planned or have started construction. Once complete, these developments may alter the bedroom community personality of the City. New commercial opportunities will bring people to Norwalk. Nonresidents coming to the City to take advantage of new shopping and restaurant offerings will also change the expectations of what services the Police Department should provide.

To prepare for these new expectations, the Police Department, including the chief, held numerous discussions with community members and business leaders concerning the future of the Department. The discussions were conducted through personal meetings, group meetings and a phone survey of past crime victims. Questions to the Community included:

- What does the Police Department do well?
- How can the Police Department improve service?
- What should the Police Department focus on as the City grows and changes?
- What are your expectations of the Police Department?

The Department’s customers are the citizens of Norwalk, visitors to the City, businesses within the City and all those persons and entities that come in contact with members of the Department. The Department has three key businesses that our customers most closely associate with our service. Each Key Business Area is supported by a number of business activities. These are:

<u>Key Business</u>	<u>Business Activities</u>
Public Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responding to calls for service 24 hours per day; - Conducting patrols of City streets, parks, schools and businesses; - Providing for the public administration of the Department - Conducting traffic crash investigations; and - Organizing traffic safety programs and traffic control measures
Law Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conducting investigations of past crimes - Conducting investigations into narcotic violations - Maintaining a property and evidence room - Preparation of criminal cases and testimony in court - Making arrests and issuing citations
Public Education/Public Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conducting specialized programs in the school district - Providing crime prevention services to businesses and citizens - Maintaining active and creating new liaisons with Community groups, citizens and businesses - Providing opportunities for citizen volunteering and citizen involvement in Department activities - Maintaining an active social media presence - Providing public information on request - Maintaining active liaisons with other City Departments

As a full time law enforcement agency there are numerous mandates on how services and business activities are delivered to the Community. The Department must adhere to mandates imposed by Iowa Code, City Code, court rulings, and many others. Finally, the business priorities of the Department must adhere to the Council's vision for the City.

In 2013, the City commissioned the writing of a comprehensive plan. During the analysis phase of the plan writing, an identified strength of the City was that it has a "good Police Department". Many of the objectives listed in this document are structured to maintain this core City strength. Within the comprehensive plan two goals are directly linked to the Police Department:

- Maintaining a good community character
- Maintaining adequate public safety staffing

In early 2017, the Norwalk Council enacted goals and objectives to guide City operations over the next two years. During this process, the Council fully recognized the number and wide scope of recent achievements by the Department; most notably the increase in community policing activities and a national award for traffic safety initiatives. The final report from the goal setting exercise lists two areas of focus for the Police Department.

- The need to decrease marijuana and alcohol use among students
- The need to maintain adequate public safety staffing levels to maintain safety and a low rate of crime

These adopted goals / objectives are for short term consideration; two years or less. While the Police Department's strategic planning document is meant for longer term consideration of five years. Therefore, as Council members change and as goals set by the Council change, the strategic priorities outlined in the Police Department Strategic Plan may need to change.

During the goal setting discussion the Council identified the need for a City wide strategic plan. When that document is finished, the Police Department's goals, business activities and focus areas may need to change to be more in sync with the priorities identified by Council.

Citizen and Officer input discussed earlier formed the basis for development of strategic issues and process improvements that the Police Department should focus on in the coming years. This plan addresses the four areas identified. Long term success for the Department is contingent on successfully addressing the strategic issues and the specific goals and objectives related to each issue. The issues are:

- Community Policing
- Personnel
- Crime and Investigations
- Technology

This strategic planning document outlines a road map for the course of departmental operations over the next five years. Time limits set in each objective are meant for completion by the end of the designated year.

Strategic Issues

Strategic Issue - Community Policing

Issue Question: How can we use community policing activities to increase effectiveness in our outreach activities and expand opportunities for citizen involvement?

Goal: Expand opportunities for collaboration with the community through focus on problem solving, community policing and increased presence in the community.

- Objective 1:** By 2018: Establish policies and procedures that incorporate the principles of community policing and problem solving into the everyday operations of the Department
- Objective 2:** By 2019: Establish a crime prevention program that assists businesses and residents in the environmental and operational control of crime
- Objective 3:** By 2019: Create and maintain a Citizens Academy program that gives opportunities for the public to learn about the Police Department
- Objective 4:** By 2021: Develop a facilities and equipment plan to identify needs in terms of building space, vehicles and vehicle parking
- Objective 5:** Ongoing: Establish programs and activities that provide for increased opportunities for interaction with the public
- Objective 6:** Ongoing: Assist neighborhoods and communities with the development of neighborhood groups such as watches or civic leagues that can help the Department solve problems, increase the quality of life for residents and improve communication with the Community
- Objective 7:** Ongoing: Develop working relationships with the school district to provide for increased student - police interaction

- Objective 8:** Ongoing: Develop programs to increase traffic safety awareness and reduce traffic crashes
- Objective 9:** Ongoing: Look for grant funding opportunities that can be leveraged to increase the community policing activities of the Department
- Objective 10:** Ongoing: Develop initiatives and incorporate procedures to reduce the fear of crime
- Significance:** Problem solving is a main component of community policing. To be successful as an agency dedicated to community policing, the Department will need to incorporate problem solving into the daily fabric of operations. Traditional law enforcement concepts can be enhanced through the establishment of community partnerships and increased opportunities for community engagement.

The Department receives strong public support from the community at large, the business community and the school district. This support is critical for effective operations and maintaining an emphasis on community policing principles will strengthen the support we receive. As a matter of routine, the public assesses the Department in an informal manner whenever there is police / citizen interaction. The presence of programs that emphasize problem solving and community interaction will provide an environment of trust and fairness that the Community will recognize.

Strategic Issue – Personnel

Issue Question: How can we provide an adequate number of staff, sworn and civilian to perform the tasks required by a growing community?

Issue Question: How can we provide a fully trained staff that emphasizes service delivery by maximizing knowledge, skills and abilities?

Goal: Furnish the Community a fully trained police force, staffed at levels that can increase the quality of life for residents and provide effective public safety services

- Objective 1:** BY 2019: Fully train the Community Impact Officers in Crime Prevention, Investigations, and Community Policing techniques
- Objective 2:** By 2019: Fully train the Department in Community Policing techniques and Problem Solving

- Objective 3:** By 2019: Fully train the Department on biased based policing and de-escalation methods
- Objective 4:** By 2021 and Ongoing: Determine the organizational structure for the Department that best suits the needs of an evolving community and maximizes the effectiveness of increased sworn strength
- Objective 5:** By 2021: Begin the process of establishing a reserve police officer program
- Objective 6:** Ongoing: Determine through regular analysis and comprehensive planning the number of police officers required to complete the departmental mission, maintain a low rate of crime and high quality of life
- Objective 7:** Ongoing: Implement strategies that will increase the likelihood of having successful personnel grant applications and apply for all appropriate personnel and training grants
- Objective 8:** Ongoing: Recruit, hire and train a diverse workforce that reflects the community we serve
- Objective 9:** Ongoing: Continue ongoing and regular training to increase effectiveness and maintain compliance with State mandates

Significance: The number of police officers available at any given time to respond to an emergency is a critical governmental component. The current authorized sworn allocation of personnel is limited in its ability to provide the community with comprehensive services such as minimum two officer deployments, on-going narcotic investigations and neighborhood policing. The City Council for Norwalk is aware of this and has begun taking steps to alleviate this concern; authorized staffing has increased by one officer per year for the last three years. The current authorized sworn strength is 16 officers.

As the Department grows and the community evolves into a more populous retail and industrial center, the services provided by the Department will increase and change. Training new officers and current officers in the appropriate disciplines needed to provide effective service is critical.

While comprehensive police services are necessary to ensure a high quality of life and maintain a low rate of crime, it is important to note that there is a need to balance the costs of increases in police personnel with the benefits of the increased services. This strategic plan takes this dichotomy of interests into consideration to help ensure that the community receives the best services possible at a reasonable expense.

Strategic Issue: Crime and Investigations

Issue Question: How can the Department develop and then maintain the capability to respond to an increasing number and complexity of criminal incidents.

Goal: Expand the Departments capability to effectively investigate all criminal incidents that impact the City of Norwalk

Objective 1: By 2019: Have a fully functioning investigative squad that can effectively investigate minor and major crimes

Objective 2: By 2019: Develop operational policies to organize and control the operations of an investigator(s)

Objective 3: By 2021: Have an officer assigned as a narcotic investigator to work closely with other Warren County law enforcement agencies on illegal narcotic distribution investigations

Objective 4: Ongoing: Increase the Department's capability to address an increasing number of crimes and emerging new crimes by aligning resources with crime trends

Significance: As the Community grows in population and evolves into a retail and industrial center, the number of crimes that are reported is expected to increase. The type of crimes that are reported are also expected to change. For example with more retail outlets we can expect more shoplifting, general theft, fraud and robbery cases. With more restaurants we can expect more cases of failing to pay for services, and increased levels of drunk driving. Hotels may bring party calls and transient crimes such as theft, vandalism and prostitution. An increase in industrial centers will increase the number of people who come to Norwalk to work and we could expect an increase in white collar crimes such as embezzlement and employee theft.

The Department understands the threat to public safety that the Community will face as it grows and evolves. Without adequate staffing, proper training and appropriate equipment our ability to solve crimes through investigation and our capacity to effectively and efficiently address crime will be compromised.

Strategic Issue: Technology

Issue Question: How can the Department leverage both current and emerging technologies to enhance our ability to provide effective service?

Goal: Use technology to enhance service delivery and maintain the public trust

- Objective 1:** By 2018: Fully leverage the new computer aided dispatching (CAD) system and the new records management system (RMS) to provide accurate and timely data to be used for resource deployment
- Objective 2:** By 2019: Learn to effectively use the new analytical software purchased with the CAD / RMS to help solve and prevent crime
- Objective 3:** BY 2019: Replace all desktop computers with updated more efficient and robust technology
- Objective 4:** By 2019: Convert all patrol vehicle mobile computers to the established Westcom standard
- Objective 5:** By 2021: Implement a body worn camera program that will increase officer safety, build trust with the community and aid in successful prosecution of offenders
- Objective 6:** By 2021: Investigate the options available and consider IP based cameras at traffic signals and City parks to help monitor and deter criminal activity
- Objective 7:** Ongoing: In conjunction with local vendors explore new technologies to enhance the usability and safety of the patrol fleet
- Objective 8:** Ongoing: Establish new internal procedures using available technology to limit data entry, duplicated efforts and lengthy preparation of materials requested by outside agencies
- Objective 9:** Ongoing: Assist as needed with the Warren County public safety radio system upgrade and establish seamless interoperable communications with other Warren County agencies
- Significance:** The appropriate and effective application of technology will make the Department a more efficient public service agency. The available technology is constantly changing. To maintain service delivery, the Department will have to leverage the technology that is already in place and acquire new systems as they become available. As new and

additional crimes begin to occur, the application of technological systems and software will need to evolve so that we can maintain pace.

The acquisition of new / upgraded replacement technology such as software and hardware, including the replacement of outdated servers is an expensive proposition. Good financial resource planning will be imperative for successful completion of this strategic goal. Since the City's IT Department is a shared unit with the school district, proper planning for personnel resources in terms of new application development and deployment will also be necessary.

Organizational Structure and Operating Budget

Department staff and the operating budget going forward will have a direct impact on our ability to complete the listed objectives. As a barometer of where we are now in this area, a discussion on the Police Department staffing and budget history is below.

The Department is currently organized in a typical paramilitary fashion with pyramidal leadership. The Department is staffed by a total of 16 full time sworn officers and one civilian assistant. The Department is organized as follows:

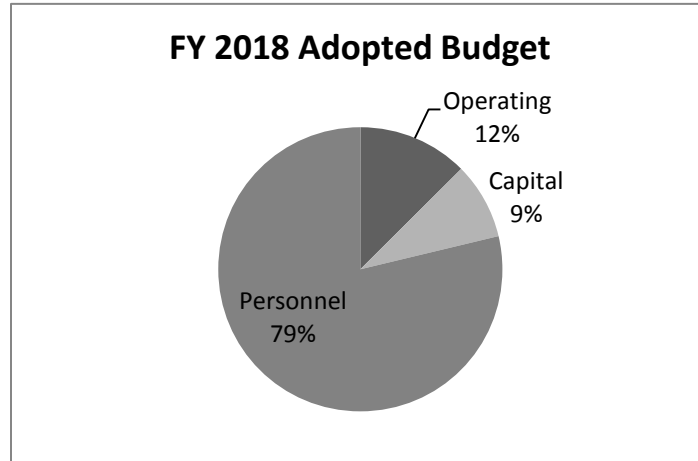
<u>Job Title</u>	<u>FY 2018 Staffing Level</u>
Chief of Police	1
Assistant Chief	1
Sergeant	2
Patrol Officer *	12
Non-sworn Administrative Assistant	1

With the adoption of the 2018 fiscal year budget, the number of authorized sworn police officers is 16.

* Three of the sworn patrol officers have specialized functions. One officer serves as a school resource officer who concentrates on daily activities at the school. The other two serve as community impact officers that operate in a triple role of investigator, community police officer and patrol officer.

Four Year Adopted Budget History

FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
\$1,206,063	\$1,318,702	\$1,397,900	1,606,800



Growth in the FY 2018 proposed budget reflects the addition of one sworn officer, the inclusion of the capital costs of two police cars and other general increases. Capital costs for police cars were not included in the 2017 budget.

Growth in the FY 2017 Budget is due to the addition of one sworn police officer position and other general increases.

Growth in the FY 2016 budget is due to the addition of one sworn police officer position partially funded by a COPS grant and other general increases

It should be noted that funding in the Police Department operating budget for building repair, telecommunications and other services also supply, in part, the Fire Department and the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Next Steps

This strategic plan is a thorough and complete assessment of where the department wants to be at the conclusion of year 2021. Completion of the objectives will be difficult but rewarding. The writing of this document would not have been possible without the help of the community, City staff and the Officers of the Department. Likewise the completion of the objectives described herein will not be possible without the cooperation of the same groups of people who contributed their knowledge, skills and abilities to the thoughts behind the components of the plan.

We would like to acknowledge those who assisted with the development of this written document.

- The citizens of Norwalk who so regularly compliment the department and willingly communicate their desires and expectations for future departmental operations
- The Norwalk business community that welcomes officer suggestions on crime prevention and works closely with departmental staff to help build / provide a prosperous community
- The Officers of the Norwalk Police Department who provided direction, ideas and commentary concerning this strategic document and who will ultimately carry the burden of fulfilling the objectives
- The Roanoke Police Department for its formatting and wording
- The remaining employees of the City of Norwalk who work closely with the Police Department and provide insight into our effectiveness and deficiencies

This Strategic Plan will be submitted to the Mayor, City Council and City Manager for consideration. Subject to the approval or modification of the listed strategic goals by the Elected Officials or City Manager and with available funding, the Department will begin to implement the strategic objectives. During the course of the five years covered by this plan, the Department will regularly review the objectives and report / update any interested party as to the status of completion.