

The Reinventing Stamford Story

Empowering Stamford Citizens to Define Their Future

In many ways Stamford has been a remarkably successful small city...

- Repeatedly surfing the waves of economic change.
- A vibrant business satellite to NYC.
- A city that serves as its own suburb.
- 50 years of bipartisan redevelopment, concentrating growth in a compact, rail-connected downtown.
- A high value of diversity.
- One of the safest cities of its size.

But the way we developed – around silos of activity – caused us not to see some critical connections...

- Balancing large firms with entrepreneurial ones.
- Balancing job growth with the production of workforce housing.
- Preserving affordability of space in order to maintain diversity of people and uses.
- Shifting the education system from a focus on rules-based thinking to a focus on pattern recognition, to feed an economy starving for innovative talent.
- Exploiting the synergy between business innovation and civic engagement, which draws upon the same pattern recognition skills.
- Using private development to enhance the public realm, balancing the needs of cars and pedestrians.
- Local transit that leverages regional rail.
- A human network that enhances and protects the natural system.

As a result...

- Employment in Stamford is too concentrated in financial services, large firms.
- Downtown is too one-dimensional as an office center, and too auto-oriented.
- Lack of affordable housing makes it difficult for new workers and new families to live here.
- Schools operate in a bubble, and are not preparing enough graduates with the innovation skills to create the next economy.
- Too heavy a carbon footprint, and lack of attention to risks of climate change.

Increasing change and unpredictability...

- Our world is exponentially more unpredictable, more fast-paced, more complex and more dangerous than our parents' world.
- Our challenge in the past was to exploit the occasional wave of economic change.
- Today's challenge is to simultaneously exploit multiple and constant waves of economic, environmental and social change.

Acknowledging the connectedness of various dimensions of strategy in how we...

- Create new economic opportunity.
- Prepare talent.
- Make places.
- Configure our transportation networks.

A more connected Stamford would be...

- Resilient, thriving, organically innovative.
- An irresistible talent magnet, with schools deeply connected to the community.
- A model of green living, where the human system enhances the natural system.
- A vibrant public realm, enhanced by a diverse mix of office, housing and retail uses.
- A walk-able and bike-able city, that is easy to get around in, with or without a car.
- Connected by faster and more frequent rail service to the other nodes in the region.
- In short, a place of choice for all ages and incomes.

How do we get there?

- Our small size is an advantage.
- There are twice as many city employees in NYC as people in Stamford.
- Breaking the silos there is a major undertaking....Here, it means walking down the hall or across the street.
- This is not about petitioning government to do something; it's about taking the reins of our own destiny.

