

Sustainability Plan Sets Goals for a “GreeNR” New Rochelle

As the Census figures released earlier this year show, New Rochelle is a growing community — with 7.1% population growth over the past decade, the City outpaced the state average more than threefold. And while growth is good — it strengthens our economy and creates a more vibrant community — being unprepared for it can stretch the City’s resources and even overwhelm the ability of the environment to support the population.

Sustainable growth — smart growth — means supporting economic growth with environmental protection. It means long-term, forward-looking planning that sets goals and values side by side. To that end, the City of New Rochelle this year completed its first-ever Sustainability Plan, called “GreeNR.” The plan outlines six areas of interest — such as waste reduction, public health, and transportation — and then maps out over forty specific initiatives that the

City might undertake over the next 20 years to achieve those benchmarks.

Because of the continuing challenges of the economy, the initiatives that will be pursued first are ones that either require no added investment or will return immediate savings. For example, City Hall and the Police-Court Building are about to receive substantial upgrades to their HVAC, windows, and lighting in order to cut energy use and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The upgrades will net the City about \$100,000 each year in savings as soon as they are completed.

The City Administration is working to identify more programs that can help meet the GreeNR agenda, such as the recruitment of more green businesses and the creation of more green jobs. With stagnant national job growth, New Rochelle is poised to become a leader in the emerging industry of the green-collar economy.

Clean-Up Effort on Lincoln Avenue

The phrase “unity in the community” took on a new meaning on Saturday, August 20, as several faith-based and community organizations participated in the first-ever Community Beautification Day. The newly formed Community Enrichment Zone, comprised of several bedrock organizations along the Lincoln Avenue corridor, was instrumental in this clean-up effort, contributing volunteers, supplies, and other resources.

This was the first of many initiatives that I intend to introduce to bring people together in a positive way. Common goals can be easily obtained when a collaborative approach is used. Keeping our neighborhoods litter-free is just one way we can come together to strengthen our quality of life and enrich our city.



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DISTRICT 3 UPDATE

From Council Member Jared Rice



Dear Friends,

As my first year representing District 3 draws to a close, I want to highlight for you some of the many topics I have been addressing on City Council.

The spring’s biggest political challenge was to develop a fair and representative new map of city council districts. The issue elicited passionate and diverse opinions, since the final map would help shape policy in New Rochelle for the next three local elections. That’s why I worked so hard to consult with members of our community to develop a plan that respected neighborhoods and enhanced the opportunity for minority representation on Council.

Perhaps even more consequential was the Council’s approval of New Rochelle’s first Sustainability Plan, which sets 20-year goals for economic and environmental initiatives that save the City and residents money while improving the health and quality of our lives. It’s an impressive blueprint that I look forward to shaping and implementing.

While the City lumbers under the same economic downturn facing all municipalities — and families — the Council has been able to make progress on several projects that will help set the stage for recovery as soon as private investors return to the field.

Being your representative has already been one of the great honors of my life, and I look forward to continuing and enhancing our relationship.

Historic North Avenue Church to Become a Place of Worship Once Again

Faith-based organizations are valuable partners for any community, providing services that are not necessarily available through municipal efforts alone. And New Rochelle is blessed with a healthy variety of places to worship, including the vibrant stretch of churches along Lincoln Avenue.

Now Refugio De Esperanza, the home church of New York Yankees philanthropist Mariano Rivera, is set to join our City from its current home in Purchase. And the congregation



will be making a major architectural contribution to New Rochelle as well by renovating — at an estimated cost of \$3 million — the beautiful old Presbyterian Church on North Avenue. During decades of lack of use, this historic site has become an eyesore on a central artery of New Rochelle, but now can once again play an active role in the religious life of our community.

Remington Boys & Girls Club Set for Major Upgrade

The Remington Unit of the Boys and Girls Club provides a wide variety of services and recreational opportunities for the youth in our community. The facility is now planning for renovations that should make it an even greater asset for District 3 and New Rochelle.

The current back door near the Prince Street parking area will be remodelled into a more usable and more attractive front door; a Kids' Cafe will be added to provide nutritious food and opportunities for education about cooking and health; and interior spaces will be generally upgraded with a focus on energy efficiency.

Though managed and operated by the Boys and Girls Club of New Rochelle, the building itself is owned by the City. Nevertheless, no tax dollars are expected to be tapped for this renovation. Funding should come entirely from reserves set aside when the Boys and Girls Club sold their South Side facility to the YMCA, and from donations.

Iona College and City Reach Agreement on Process for New Development

A new high-rise proposed last year by Iona College that had threatened to become a contentious issue for the community has instead turned into an opportunity to re-examine the college's development plans. Following Iona's appointment earlier this year of a new president, Dr. Joseph Nyre, the college has suspended its plans for a 10-story dorm on Mayflower Avenue and agreed to enter into a new planning process with the City and surrounding neighborhood groups.

Redistricting Plan Reflects a Changing New Rochelle

When the 2010 Census released population figures for New Rochelle this past spring, it was clear right away that the balance of our six City Council districts had shifted significantly during the past decade — so much so that New Rochelle was legally required to redraw district boundaries in order to equalize the population among districts and restore fair representation to the City Council.

In the process, several other important legal requirements and community goals were addressed, including maintaining District 3's status as a minority-opportunity district, and enhancing the opportunity for minority representation outside of District 3. In fact, the African-American majority among District 3's eligible voters was increased, ensuring that minority residents will continue to have the opportunity to elect candidates of their choice.

Additionally, the redistricting plan reunited many neighborhoods that were divided on the old maps, and brought even larger areas with common interests, such as the West End and East End, almost entirely within single districts.

Every other redistricting process in New Rochelle has been followed by acrimony and litigation. As a practicing civil rights attorney, I was determined to avoid that outcome this time around. I worked with neighborhood leaders to make sure that our district's concerns were addressed, and helped make revisions to the plan as fair criticisms arose during the several public meetings held to address the topic. As a result — and for the first time ever — the City of New Rochelle was spared the costly legal battles that have followed redistricting in the past, saving taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars.



Iona's success at attracting new students brings with it the aches and pains of growth; when those aches and pains are playing loud music late at night in a residential neighborhood, it's understandable that tensions will

arise between the college and its neighbors. But given Iona's positive impact as an economic anchor for North Avenue, I am hopeful that a fresh look at development needs will go a long way to releasing that tension.