

LETTER FROM THE MAYOR



Strategic Planning in Darien: A Comprehensive Approach

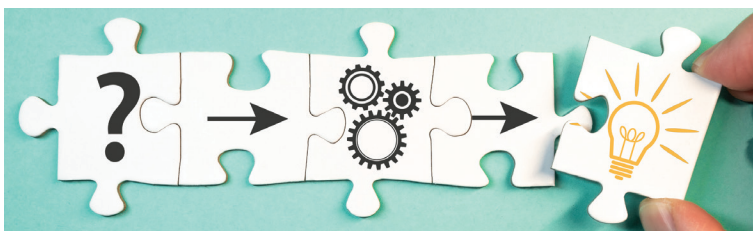
In our summer edition of this newsletter, I discussed how the City of Darien embarked on a strategic planning initiative aimed at reinforcing our community foundation and setting a clear trajectory for our future growth. This process,

informed by extensive community engagement and collaboration with key stakeholders, resulted in several critical strategic initiatives: Fiscal Responsibility, Fostering Collaborative Relationships with the Darien Park District and other community groups, Economic Development, Communication Enhancement and Community Relationship Building and methods for Promoting Darien. Each initiative was chosen to not only address immediate community needs, but also to foster long-term sustainability and city growth.

I would like to present a brief introduction on each of the key initiatives that emerged through extensive review of data accumulated during the early stages of the strategic planning process.

KEY INITIATIVES

- 1. Fiscal responsibility** - Fiscal responsibility became the cornerstone of our strategic planning. Recognizing the importance of sound financial management, we aimed to ensure that city financial resources were being used effectively. We focused on our budgeting and financial review process and identified methods for insuring financial transparency and accountability. As always, our goal is to continue to build trust with our residents as we aim to maintain fiscal health, while enhancing our ability to invest in vital services and city infrastructure.
- 2. Fostering Collaborative Relationships with Community Organizations** - A second strategic initiative and a crucial aspect of our strategic plan involves fostering a strong relationship with the Darien Park District and our many local service groups. Recognizing that collaboration enhances community well-being, we plan to initiate meetings and joint programs aimed at aligning objective and resources. By strengthening these relationships, we seek to create a cohesive approach to community services, enhancing resources while promoting a sense of unity among local organizations.



CITIZEN OF THE YEAR



The City of Darien conducts a search every year for an individual who has dedicated themselves to enriching our Darien Community through their participation in a social, service, educational or religious organization. The Citizen of the Year Committee asks that you nominate an individual whose service in one or more of these groups goes "above and beyond the call of duty," and demonstrates through their work a true love for the City of Darien. Nominations applications are now available on the City's website, www.darien.il.us, and are due by Monday, January 6, 2025 at 5 p.m.

The individual selected by the committee will be honored at our "Darien Honors Celebration," scheduled to take place on Friday, February 28 at Alpine Banquets in Darien (check the website for info on how to order tickets).

At the event, we will also be paying tribute to person of the year of the following Darien's Service and Volunteer Clubs/ Organizations:

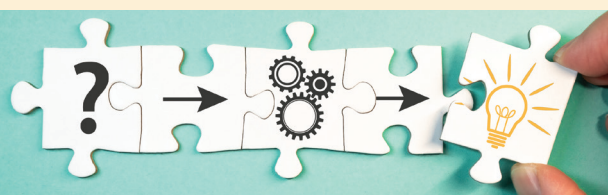
- Darien Women's Club
- Darien Lions Club
- Darien DYC
- Darien Chamber of Commerce
- Darien Rotary Club

Darien is a "nice place to live," due to the efforts of many of our wonderful volunteers, and we want to acknowledge their efforts at our "new" honors celebration.

Special Note: A nominee for Citizen of the Year must be a Darien resident and cannot be a current elected official.

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3. Economic Development Planning - Our third strategic initiative, Economic Development Planning was a focal point of our planning process. Understanding the impact that economic growth has on the services we can provide, we saw the need to take a thorough analysis of our local economic conditions and future trends in order to identify growth opportunities as well as methods for attracting businesses that would also impact job growth. This initiative, while focusing in on attracting new businesses, has a secondary purpose; nurturing existing businesses and creating an environment where entrepreneurship can thrive.

4. Supporting and Enhancing Communication & Community Relationship Building - We have worked diligently over the last five years to increase transparency through the addition of new communication tools as well as methods for enhancing community engagement. With that in mind, our fourth strategic initiative is a combination of two concepts that are vital components to our strategic plan. Supporting and Enhancing Communication was identified as a pivotal factor in the success of our strategic plan. Darien recognized early on the importance of keeping residents informed and engaged. To this end, we are committed to enhancing our communication strategies through various channels, including social media, newsletters, podcasts and public forums. Our goal is to create a communication network that eventually leads to a more engaged and informed community.

The second component of our fourth initiative involves goals for increasing our ability to enhance **Community Relationship Building** among our residents and community organizations. We have, over the last five years, created a number of new events that would strengthen community ties and foster interaction among residents. Based on our examination of these events, we understand that designing and implementing new community events work to cultivate a sense of belonging and pride in the city. Our goal is social cohesion and to promote a collective identity, which will serve to make Darien not just a nice place to live, but a thriving community that belongs to all of us.

5. Promote Darien - Our fifth and final initiative, Promote Darien is a strong corollary to the previous four initiatives. A key component of this initiative includes promoting Darien to our businesses, residents and future residents. Several years ago, we developed two videos, one that promoted Darien, A Nice Place to Live, while the other promotes Darien, A Nice Place to do Business. Although our efforts to promote the city through these videos were moderately successful, our strategic planning process revealed the need for new approaches to showcase the city's strengths, such as our quality of life, excellent educational opportunities, and beautiful recreational amenities. By showcasing Darien as a desirable place to live and work, we are aiming to attract new residents and businesses alike. These new promotional efforts will not only enhance the city's image, they will also install pride among current residents, thus reinforcing their commitment to the community.

The strategic planning process we undertook in 2024 represents a comprehensive approach to fostering community well-being and sustainable growth. Our focus on fiscal responsibility, relationship building, economic development, enhanced communication, community building and effective promotion, provides Darien an opportunity to navigate future challenges while capitalizing on opportunities. Our strategic plan exemplifies our commitment to our residents and its vision for a vibrant, engaged, and prosperous community. Through these efforts, Darien is not only addressing the present needs of our citizens but laying the groundwork for a successful and inclusive future.

Sincerely,

Joe Marchese
Mayor

WINTER REFUSE COLLECTION REMINDERS

Yard Waste and Food Scrap Composting

Residents can continue to take advantage of weekly yard waste and food scrap collection services (composting) with Lakeshore Recycling Systems (LRS) Through the week of December 9. These services are included in the monthly fee! Yard waste generally includes leaves, grass cuttings, twigs, small shrubbery clippings, plants and flowers. Limbs should not exceed 4 feet in length and 50 pounds in weight. Branches must be no more than 4 inches in diameter, with the total diameter of the bundle not to exceed 24 inches. Residents can participate by placing yard waste and/or food scraps (there is no need to separate them) in biodegradable paper bags, or in containers and placing them at the curb on your garbage day.



Christmas Tree Collection

Live Christmas trees are a wonderful sign of the holidays and are an eco-friendly choice. You don't have to throw your real Christmas tree in the trash. Christmas trees are biodegradable and they can be easily reused or recycled for mulch.

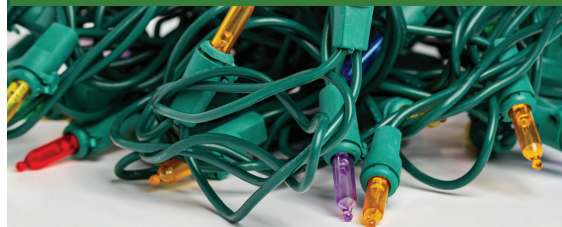
Christmas tree collection will occur the first two FULL weeks of January with regular refuse collection at no charge. Trees longer than 7' must be cut in half.

Trees must be completely free of all decorations and may not be in plastic bags.



Holiday Light Recycling

Pulling out the Christmas decorations? Don't throw out those old lights! Christmas light recycling through Elgin Recycling will be available outside the Darien Police Department through mid-February.



SENIOR CORNER

Senior citizens are a vital part of our community and there are many agencies and organizations that provide services to Darien's seniors. Here are just a few:



Darien Police Department Elderly Services Program - The Darien Police Department's Elderly Services program will respond to seniors in need and help them connect with DuPage County Senior Services. Please contact Sgt. Nick Skweres at nskweres@darienil.gov or 630-353-8337. An Elderly Service Officer (ESO) will reach out to discuss needs and next steps. ESOs check in on registered seniors, provide local resource information, provide presentations for senior groups, investigate crimes, abuse and neglect and serve as a liaison with DuPage County Senior Services. Each registered senior will receive the direct phone and email contact information for their assigned ESO.

DuPage Senior Citizens Council - This agency provides a Home Maintenance Program, Home Delivered Meals Program for eligible seniors and access to valuable resources and publications. Seniors can also take advantage of reduced-fee minor home repairs. For more information, call 630-620-0804 or visit us at 1990 Springer Drive, Lombard.

Prairie State Legal Services - This organization offers free legal services for low income persons and those age 60 and over who have serious civil legal problems and need legal help to solve them. 31W001 East North Avenue - Suite 200, West Chicago, 630-690-2130.

Homebound Delivery - Indian Prairie Public Library - If you are unable to visit the library due to an illness or disability, and for those who are caregivers to family members experiencing illness or disability, the Indian Prairie Public Library offers personalized delivery of library materials for those who qualify. For questions, more information, or to sign up, call Marquita H. at 630-887-8760 ext. 225, or email homebound@ippl.info.

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program - This program helps eligible households pay for winter energy services, gas, heating, and/or electric bill(s). Eligible seniors can apply each year. 630-407-6500 or 800-942-9412. 421 N. County Farm Road, Wheaton.

Downers Grove Township Senior Services - Senior Services provides older adults with vital resources and referral information, Dial-A-Ride transportation access, Benefit Access and RTA applications. Additionally, Senior Services hosts a variety of classes and activities for seniors including Smart Driver classes, crafting, games, cards and puzzles, community dining and more! Check their website for the calendar of events: <https://www.dgtownship.com/senior-services/>.

Dial-A-Ride - Dial-A-Ride (DAR) is a curb-to-curb, shared-ride service for Township residents who are 65 and older. Riders with disabilities, under age 65, may also qualify if they have an RTA/ADA card, the applications for which are available at the Downers Grove Township office. Register before you ride. Call 630-719-6670 or visit 4340 Prince Street, Downers Grove.

Darien Park District Senior Programs - The Darien Park District offers many programs for Senior Citizens that provide an opportunity for social interaction, motivation, mental stimulation and recreational fun. For more information on any of our classes, please call the Park District office at (630) 968-6400. More information: <https://www.darienparks.com/programs/senior/>.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS FOR SENIORS

Darien Park District	630-968-6400
Dial a Ride	630-719-6670
Downers Grove Twp Senior Center	630-719-6670
Downers Grove Twp Tax Assessor	630-719-6630
Indian Prairie Public Library	630-887-8760

WHEN WILL MY STREET BE PLOWED?

The City of Darien follows a priority-based system for plowing streets:

1. High traffic arterial streets are plowed first, and if necessary, reploved until they are safe and passable.
2. Lower traffic collector streets are plowed.
3. When both arterial and collector streets are safe and passable, the plows begin work on residential streets and cul-de-sacs.

Please remember:

- It takes approximately four hours to plow all of the city's streets once.
- Plainfield Road, Cass Avenue and 75th street are DuPage County roads and are not plowed by the City of Darien.
- In order to plow streets efficiently, there is no parking on City streets during a winter event where snow or ice exceeds one inch.

During plowing operations, the City's priority is getting snow off the streets to allow movement of traffic. Unfortunately, during the plowing process, snow will be pushed onto curbs and driveways. As a result, snow banks become higher and driveways can become filled with snow, an unavoidable process. Please do not push snow out onto the roadway or approach a snow plow to prevent snow from being pushed into the driveway. Both of these actions are dangerous. If possible, residents are encouraged to shovel several times throughout a heavy snow period to prevent snow-filled driveways. Your patience and cooperation are appreciated.



Learn More. <https://darien.il.us/city-services/municipal-services/snow-plowing-procedure>.



1702 Plainfield Road, Darien, IL 60561
630-852-5000 • www.darien.il.us

CITY HALL HOURS:

Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

CITY OFFICIALS:

Joe Marchese, Mayor • 630-353-8108 • jmarchese@darienil.gov

Bryon Vana, City Administrator • 630-353-8114 • bvana@darienil.gov

Dan Gombac, Dir. of Municipal Services/Community Development • 630-353-8106 • dgombac@darienil.gov

Check out the
**COMMUNITY
CALENDAR**
www.darien.il.us



IMPORTANT NUMBERS

DARIEN POLICE DEPARTMENT

1710 Plainfield Road, Darien, IL 60561

Administrative/Non-Emergency Phone Number – 630-971-3999

CALL 911 FOR ANY TYPE OF POLICE RESPONSE (including NON-EMERGENCY calls)

NOTE: If calling 911 for police service from a cell phone, tell the operator that you need the Darien Police. This will help the police respond more efficiently.

UTILITIES

ComEd	1-800-EDISON1
Nicor.....	888-642-6748
Comcast.....	866-594-1234
DuPage County Water (payment/billing).....	630-985-2905
LRS (Garbage).....	844-633-3577

IMPORTANT DATES	DEC 9 Final Week of Yard Waste/ Organics Collection	DEC 24 & 25 Christmas Eve & Christmas Day City offices closed; refuse collection delayed	JAN 1 New Year's Day City offices closed; refuse collection delayed
JAN 6 Citizen of the Year Nominations Due	JAN 6-17 Christmas Tree Collection	JAN 20 Martin Luther King Jr. Day	FEB 17 Presidents Day City offices closed; no impact to refuse collection

GO EASY ON THE SALT

According to the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, road salt can help with icy roads, but it can also harm our waterways. Road salts travel from sidewalks and roads and eventually enter our waterways where wildlife can be harmed. Using too much salt can also corrode vehicles, hurt animal paws, damage concrete and kill plants.

Follow these tips when salting:

- **Shovel first.** Salt should only be used after the snow is removed and only in areas needed for safety.
- **Size matters.** More salt does not mean more melting. A 12-ounce coffee mug of salt should be enough for a 20-foot driveway or 10 sidewalk squares (250 square feet).
- **Spread.** Distribute salt evenly. Clumped salt is wasted salt!
- **Sweep.** If salt is leftover on the ground after the ice melts, then too much salt was used. Sweep up leftover salt to keep it out of local rivers and streams.
- **Switch.** Untreated salt stops working if the temperature is below 15 degrees. When temperatures drop that low, switch to sand for traction or choose a different deicer formulated for colder temperatures.

DUPAGE COUNTY WARMING CENTERS

Winter weather is here. If you lose your heat unexpectedly, several agencies throughout DuPage County serve as temporary Warming Centers. Call 2-1-1 or visit <https://211dupage.gov/> to find a warming center near you. Availability may change at some locations, so call ahead to verify space.

STAY CONNECTED

The City of Darien uses a variety of communication tools to provide timely and important information to the public. This includes the Direct Connect weekly e-newsletter, Facebook, Twitter, and NextDoor.

- Sign up for Direct Connect at <https://bit.ly/DarienDirectConnect>
- Get Emergency Text Alerts <https://bit.ly/darien-emergency-alerts>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CityofDarien/>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/CityofDarien>