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After a great 2007, Windsor begins new year focused on how to make the future even better

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Last year was a very, very good year for development in Windsor. From its border with Bradley International Airport on the north to its border with the city of Hartford on the south, this I-91 corridor community experienced an unprecedented level of activity. At one point, over 2.6 million s/f of new construction was underway as companies invested more than \$500 million in new office, distribution, retail and hotel facilities.

In October, ING cut the ribbon on its new corporate headquarters and began moving more than 2,000 employees to the Day Hill Rd. area. This 475,000 s/f facility, reportedly the largest single-occupant office building constructed in the Hartford area in the last twenty years, was completed just eighteen months after ING applied for site plan approval.

Earlier in the year, Travelers opened its Claim University on Lamberton Rd. This state of the art facility will train more than 8,500 insurance claim agents from across the country. Other openings and ribbon cuttings were celebrated by the Morris Companies, Walter Surface Technologies, Marcone, Europa Sports Products, Price Chopper, and Buffalo Wild Wings.

Meanwhile, work continues on several major projects. The \$250 million Walgreens Northeast Region Distribution Center in New England Tradeport is in the final stages of construction and will be ready for operations later this year. While construction of its lab and office space is still underway, the Emhart Glass research and development facility on Great Pond Dr. has already fired up its pilot glass furnace. The Hyatt Summerfield Suites on Corporate Dr. is well on its way to completion. Finally, the 450,000 s/f Hartford Life office project on Day Hill Rd. in the Griffin Office Center is well on its way for completion by late summer.

New projects pending for 2008 include a 350,000 s/f warehouse for William B. Meyer on Great Pond Dr. The first phase of Millbrook Greens, a 232 unit residential redevelopment of a local golf course, is also expected to begin this spring.

Partly in response to the level of development activity and partly in anticipation of other significant developments, Windsor has begun a number of key transportation and land use planning efforts. A working group has been established with the Chamber of Commerce, local employers, the transit and rideshare agencies to manage transportation demand in the area. This group is now working with the regional planning agency on a study to enhance transit service throughout the corporate area.

The regional planning agency is also leading the towns of Windsor and Bloomfield through a highway corridor improvement study of Rte. 305 from I-91 to Rte. 189. The study area includes more than eight square miles of commercial/industrial zoned land of which some 3,500 acres remains undeveloped.

Windsor's Planning Commission has just begun an update of the Day Hill Corporate Area section of

the Plan of Conservation and Development. This is in response to a number of factors. Ten year development assumptions made in 2004 have nearly been exceeded. The 600-acre Combustion Engineering site is now entering the final phase of remediation and will soon be ready for redevelopment. The arrival of nearly 4,000 new employees has created a demand for additional services. The Plan update is expected to evaluate the potential for the inclusion of more mixed-use developments in the area.

Windsor Center will be the focus for a transit station area planning effort. The existing Amtrak service will be enhanced over the next five years with the addition of the Springfield-New Haven Commuter Rail service. To prepare for this, the state recently authorized funds for a transit-oriented development pilot project. The town will be working with regional and state agencies on a planning process to identify and capture the development potential created by this opportunity. There is good reason to believe this given the success of the just completed First Town Square condominium project adjacent to the train station on Mechanic St.

So, after a great 2007, Windsor begins the New Year focused on how to make the future even better through planning. This has been the formula for Windsor's success since it was founded 375 years ago.

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