



City of Norwalk

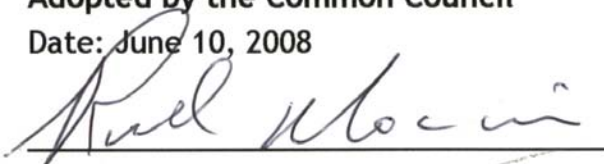
Plan of Conservation & Development

Adopted by the Planning Commission

Date: June 10, 2008

Adopted by the Common Council

Date: June 10, 2008

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Moccia", written over a horizontal line.

Signed by Mayor Moccia

Date: June 18, 2008

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Plan of Conservation & Development City of Norwalk

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Introduction

A Vision for the Future

Norwalk begins its third century and the third millennium much transformed from its previous half century. Over the last two decades, Norwalk has witnessed dramatic increases in office and retail space. This new development was driven by a desire to escape the congestion of the I-95 corridor by moving eastward, the same forces that gave rise to new business centers in Stamford and other cities along the Connecticut coastline, providing alternatives for businesses leaving Manhattan.

The trends of the last ten years suggest a more radical shift in population demographics that will position Norwalk as an important regional center. After two decades of substantial employment growth, Norwalk is now seeing a great demand for urban housing in the commercial areas along the harbor and in the Wall Street area. This trend began with the early revitalization of the SoNo historic area, which capitalized on the qualities of historic warehouse buildings with close proximity to the waterfront in South Norwalk. These trends will continue, and as Norwalk improves its natural and man-made environments, it stands to gain still more new residents that will bring prosperity and vibrancy to the city.

Norwalk's assets, including its good schools, strong neighborhoods, and a beautiful natural harbor must be preserved. The harbor, streams, beaches, islands, and marshlands are fragile resources that are the foundation of the city's unique appeal. Preservation of these is essential to attracting new residents and businesses. Surprisingly, in the twenty-first century many Norwalk industries still depend upon these natural resources (shellfishing, for example), which bring vitality to the waterfront and add local character to seafood and restaurant businesses. Norwalk's maritime businesses—and its recreation—are still intractably tied to the navigability and overall health of its harbor.

In growth lies the opportunity to fund the preservation and enhancement of both natural and man-made assets that will contribute to Norwalk's enduring quality of life. By directing new development to appropriate locations, the city can still offer places for new residents. With proper planning, dense, mixed-use development in existing transportation corridors and improved public transit can effectively accommodate new population growth, without adversely impacting existing neighborhoods and natural resources. Locating new businesses adjacent to transit corridors will greatly increase the likelihood of public transportation options in the future. Lower vehicle use will translate into less environmental impact, less traffic impacts, and greater health into the future.

Beyond channeling growth, the City must also continue to provide and improve upon the services and amenities that bolster all of Norwalk's diverse households. As Norwalk's population

CITY OF NORWALK



Introduction

comprises increasing numbers of new immigrant households as well as more citizens entering their retirement years, public resources will have to adapt to a changing set of needs.

The following document outlines the steps necessary to achieve a sustainable future for the city. Each of the plan's six sections must, of necessity, address specific planning goals according to subject matter. But it must be understood that many issues cannot be so easily separated into neat boxes. For example, much of our current understanding of the environment demonstrates the interconnectedness of seemingly disparate issues: water quality is intricately tied to land-use patterns and transportation policy. Similarly, we cannot easily consider our open space strategy distinct from our recreational desires. Nevertheless, categories there must be, although this document attempts to tie together as many causes as make rational sense, hoping to spur many new conversations, collaborations, and innovative actions that will position Norwalk as an attractive, equitable, vibrant community for many years to come.

Planning Process

This update to the Plan of Conservation and Development (last adopted in 1990) comes on the heels of a series of district and neighborhood plans, which have been generated over more than a decade. For those areas of Norwalk that are experiencing a great deal of change—such as the Wall Street area, the Mid-Harbor, South Norwalk, the West Avenue corridor, and the Westport-North-Main corridors—professionally produced district plans were conducted with citizen input. These have been complemented by individual neighborhood plans, which have been created by citizen groups for each of Norwalk’s many residential areas. Many volunteers brought their energy, time, and talents to these important grassroots planning efforts.

Beyond synthesizing these new district and neighborhood plans, this process has involved updating the concepts included in the previous plan from 1990. The consultant team conducted interviews with department heads, to solicit input regarding future plans and important ongoing challenges. These conversations were also used to request information regarding upcoming staffing, capital, and budget projections for the next ten years. (Department heads were asked to verify that they are using the population projections included in the appendix to this document, and have agreed that their own estimates are in line with these numbers.)

The overall process for updating the plan includes:

- Gathering plans and documents
- Interviews with department heads and others
- Multiple meetings with Planning Commissioners to present information, analysis, outlines, and draft documents, and to receive their feedback
- Three public hearings
- Approvals by the Planning Commission and the Common Council

A draft of this update was referred to the South Western Regional Planning Agency (SWPRA) for their comments, and was found to be consistent with their plan.

A. Balanced Economic Growth

SECTION CONTENTS

- A.1 General
- A.2 Housing
- A.3 Office
- A.4 Retail
- A.5 Industrial
- A.6 Redevelopment

Norwalk has always offered advantages to—and gained the affections of—those who work, visit, or make a home here. In recent years, the city has emerged on an even broader regional stage, as a particularly desirable location for residents and businesses within the busy Interstate 95 corridor of southwestern Connecticut. With convenient rail transit, strong and diverse neighborhoods, a beautiful harbor on the Sound, and significant attractions, the city has experienced dramatic rises in housing prices.

Since 2000, prices have increased at an annual rate of 16% and 17% for owner-occupied and rental housing, respectively, making affordability an increasing concern. Norwalk is almost fully built-out: there are few “greenfields” left. Thus, to accommodate growth—one of the keys to maintaining Norwalk’s renewed vitality—redevelopment and infill will be required.

Balancing Uses

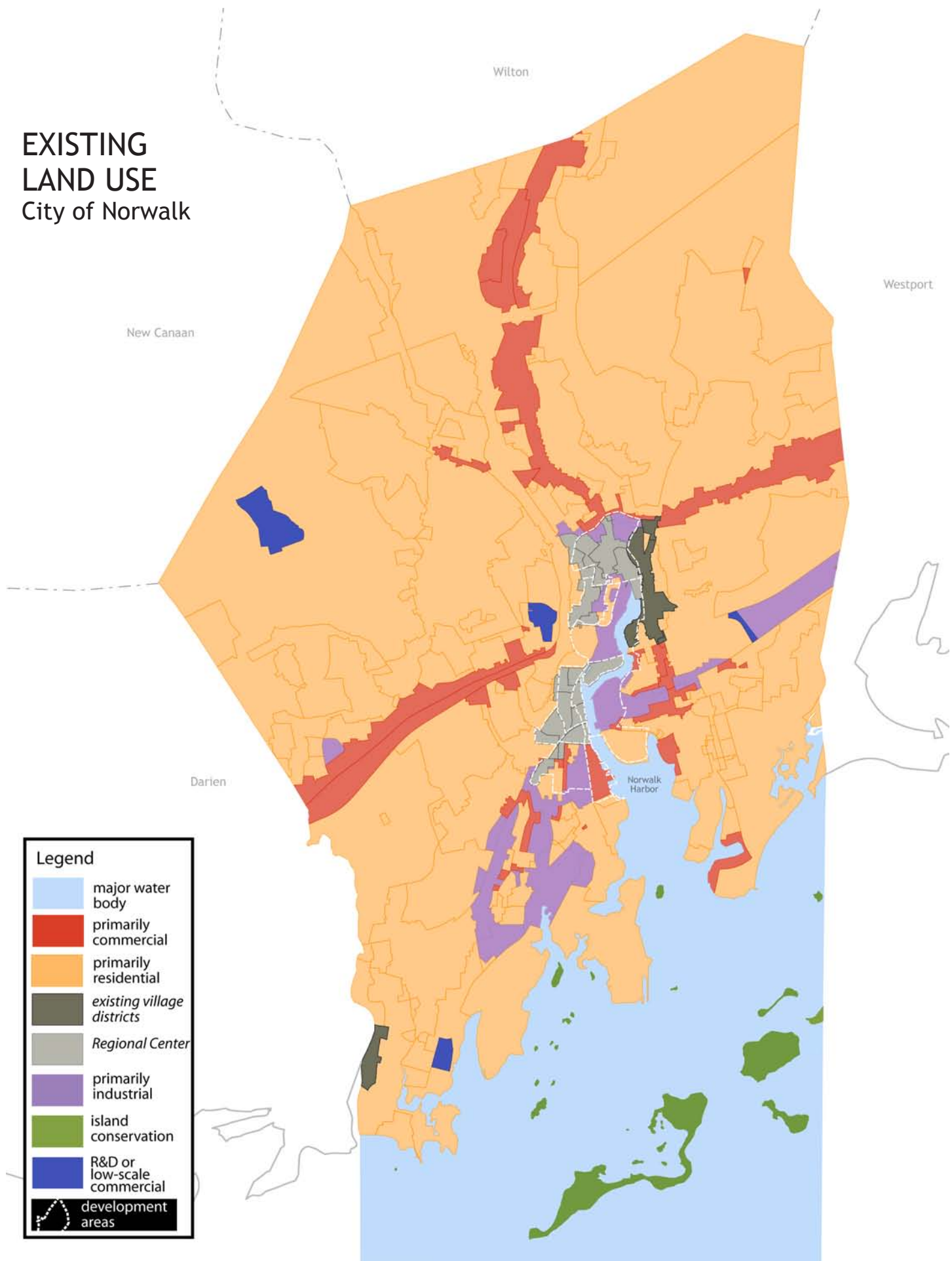
In the past, the City has successfully avoided the problems associated with single-use districts—such as “bedroom” communities and office parks. These problems can include greater traffic congestion, undue tax burdens on select sectors, and overdependence on particular industries. Future redevelopment planning should identify underperforming sites that detract from their surrounding districts, and which can accommodate and benefit from growth. Additionally, by placing new growth near transit centers, increased congestion and other potential consequences of new development can be minimized. Compact development patterns, sensitively designed and based on transit centers, should include efforts to preserve open spaces and other public areas.

Balancing Opportunities

Balance also means being diverse—economically, racially, by age, and in many other ways—a characteristic valued by current Norwalk residents. A sustainable economy supports a mix of industries—from shellfish to software—requiring a diverse housing stock that doesn’t “price out” the very workers on whom these industries depend. Recent research suggests that “the condominium is out of reach of all but the top 30% of households in Norwalk while the single family home is beyond the reach of all but the top 9%.” A commitment to housing affordability means embracing compact, neighborhood-conscious, transit-based development.

Housing for lower- and moderate-income “workforce” households should be dispersed throughout the city in forms appropriate to the neighborhood/district. Advocacy for equally distributed workforce housing throughout Fairfield County should be pursued through the regional “watchdog,” the South Western Regional Planning Agency (SWRPA), to ensure surrounding localities are doing their “fair share.” In 2004, Norwalk built over 40% of Fairfield County’s multifamily structures containing five or more units.

EXISTING LAND USE City of Norwalk



A. Balanced Economic Growth

A.1. GENERAL



Industry shares the Norwalk River with stretches of natural shoreline, like the one in the foreground of the above photo.



The vibrant retail and restaurant district of Washington Street is a regional draw for Norwalk.

A.1.1 Promote balanced growth in Norwalk

- A.1.1.1 Seek private investment within the community
- A.1.1.2 Encourage diversity in commerce and industry
- A.1.1.3 Coordinate capital budget expenditures with new development
- A.1.1.4 Preserve and enhance the character of Norwalk
- A.1.1.5 Protect property values
- A.1.1.6 Protect residential neighborhoods from incompatible development
- A.1.1.7 Encourage a balance between new jobs and housing opportunities
- A.1.1.8 Encourage a balance between development and protection of the natural environment
- A.1.1.9 Encourage development that seeks to provide maximum returns to the City in the Grand List tax revenue consistent with public purpose

A.1.2 Support and expand economic development initiatives to achieve the goals of this plan and to ensure economic benefits and responsibilities are shared among all residents

- A.1.2.1 Maintain a skilled labor force to meet the needs of local employers by creating a partnership among local industry, public and nonprofit agencies, educational institutions, and redevelopment
- A.1.2.2 Encourage improved public transportation, before and after school programs, child care facilities, and job placement services
- A.1.2.3 Allow a wide range of housing opportunities to ensure that the housing needs of all segments of the labor force are met
- A.1.2.4 Encourage diverse job opportunities for various employment sectors within Norwalk
- A.1.2.5 Improve and maintain essential infrastructure to retain and attract desirable businesses
- A.1.2.6 Support programs that promote tourism in Norwalk and legislation that provides sufficient funding for the Coastal Fairfield County Convention and Visitor Bureau
- A.1.2.7 Protect water-dependent uses and encourage additional uses in appropriate locations along the waterfront that maximize public enjoyment of the harbor
- A.1.2.8 Support tax incentives, grants and state and federal programs, such as the Connecticut Enterprise Zone Act, which encourage investment in Norwalk
- A.1.2.9 Expand capital and financial resources accessible to existing and start-up businesses for property development
- A.1.2.10 Encourage business community sponsorship of activities and improvements
- A.1.2.11 Work with our State Representatives toward property tax reforms
- A.1.2.12 Consider the use of "service districts" or in specific locations for implementing improvements and managing services

A. Balanced Economic Growth

A.2.1 Provide for the creation and continuation of diverse housing opportunities

- A.2.1.1 Encourage quality housing for a variety of tenures, family sizes, incomes, the senior population, and persons with special needs
- A.2.1.2 Pursue mixed-income development when renovating, rebuilding, or developing new public housing units
- A.2.1.3 Provide funding to repurchase expiring affordable housing or existing units when they become available
- A.2.1.4 Continue to provide budget funding to redevelop the West Avenue, Reed Putnam, and Wall Street areas with new housing and mixed-use developments
- A.2.1.5 Require a minimum of ten percent (10%) affordable units in all developments over 20 units, as per the Workforce Housing ordinance
- A.2.1.6 Encourage at least 15 percent of housing in the West Avenue, Reed Putnam, and Wall Street areas to be affordable to families with incomes at or below the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority's income limits
- A.2.1.7 Dedicate a portion of funds raised from the fee-in-lieu provision of the Workforce ordinance to efforts by other housing providers to create mixed-income communities
- A.2.1.8 Support the efforts of the Norwalk Housing Authority to develop new affordable and mixed-income housing and add existing expiring units should they become available
- A.2.1.9 Continue to support public and private efforts to provide emergency shelter and transitional housing to Norwalk's homeless families and individuals
- A.2.1.10 Provide additional supportive housing units to meet the needs of residents requiring both housing and mental health services
- A.2.1.11 Ensure that temporary shelters serve as emergency and transitional housing for citizens of Norwalk
- A.2.1.12 Encourage deed restrictions on accessory apartments and other means to preserve a greater number of affordable units in perpetuity
- A.2.1.13 Provide solutions to the problem of expiring affordability
- A.2.1.14 Routinely monitor performance of the City's Workforce Housing measures to gauge compliance and effectiveness
- A.2.1.15 Routinely evaluate the requirements of the City's Workforce Housing measures in order to best reflect up-to-date market conditions and changes in demand among Norwalk households

A.2.2 Rehabilitate Norwalk's existing inventory of public, private, and non-profit housing

- A.2.2.1 Assist senior residents in remaining in their homes by promoting the use of accessory apartments, property tax relief, and other available programs
- A.2.2.2 Increase the amount of housing units for Norwalk seniors by providing scoring enhancements (such as allowing extra points on affordable housing applications) to existing residents
- A.2.2.3 Improve enforcement of zoning, building, and health codes to protect the public from unsafe and unsanitary housing conditions

A.2. HOUSING



Washington Village on South Water Street was built in the 1940s.

A. Balanced Economic Growth



Attractive houses at a regular setback form an attractive street edge in South Norwalk.

- A.2.2.4 Encourage private housing rehabilitation through the use of the Phased Increased Assessment Program, low interest loans, free paint, weatherization and security enhancement grants, and other municipal programs targeted to residents and owners of low-and moderate-income housing
- A.2.2.5 Maximize the number of affordable units available in the Norwalk Housing Authority inventory, within current resources, to address the shortage of affordable housing for all eligible populations
- A.2.2.6 Encourage the expansion of the number of affordable housing units through innovative methods such as incentive programs

A.2.3 Promote homeownership

- A.2.3.1 Provide homeownership education to the community and increase down payment assistance funding availability
- A.2.3.2 Support state and local programs that increase opportunities for first time homebuyers

A.2.4 Use publicly owned land to provide long-term affordability

- A.2.4.1 Consider mixed-income housing on publicly-owned land on Day Street near Ryan Park in South Norwalk at density levels of 1 unit per 2,000 square feet of lot area
- A.2.4.2 Continue to provide capital budget funds to the Housing Sites Development Agency for the acquisition and improvement of sites for affordable rental and ownership housing
- A.2.4.3 Continue to support Norwalk's local, state and congressional representatives in securing state and federal housing funds and/or excess properties for public and nonprofit housing projects

A.2.5 Increase public awareness of issues around the need for affordable and workforce housing

- A.2.5.1 Direct the South Western Regional Planning Agency to elicit greater regional cooperation in solving the housing crisis

A.3. OFFICE

A.3.1 Encourage office development in appropriate locations

- A.3.1.1 Direct office development to areas near mass transit (rail, bus, public and corporate shuttles, and other modes) to help minimize the need for adapting the capacity of infrastructure systems
- A.3.1.2 Strengthen the revitalization of the West Avenue, Wall Street, and Reed Putnam areas by encouraging mixed-use development (i.e. offices, stores, services, restaurants and theaters together with housing, parks and cultural facilities).
- A.3.1.3 Continue clustering large-scale development where shuttle systems and other Traffic Demand Management programs can be implemented

A.4. RETAIL

A.4.1 Expand the retail sector

- A.4.1.1 Encourage retail activity in the West Avenue/Wall Street and Reed Putnam areas and place emphasis on pedestrian-oriented environment

A. Balanced Economic Growth

- A.4.1.2 Encourage subsequent retail and service sector growth along Routes 1 and 7 where the infrastructure system can adequately support development; place emphasis on pedestrian-oriented environment
- A.4.1.3 Encourage the location of a neighborhood market in South Norwalk and a new supermarket on Westport Avenue
- A.4.1.4 Preserve the character of neighborhood businesses and neighborhood businesses districts
- A.4.1.5 Maintain diversity in the SoNo retail mix
- A.4.1.6 Encourage Harbor-oriented retail/visitor development within walking distance of the Maritime Aquarium and SoNo

A.5.1 Implement recommendations of the Industrial Zones Committee report

- A.5.1.1 Update Restricted Industrial Zones, Industrial 1 Zones, and Industrial 2 Zones, to allow on a case-by-case basis certain types of office and multifamily residential uses, to reflect current economic trends in Norwalk provided they are compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods

A.6.1 Modify redevelopment plans in response to updated market studies and other recent findings

- A.6.1.1 Modify plans for Reed-Putnam Parcels 1, 2, and 4 as amended
- A.6.1.2 Modify South Main Street Improvement Area II according to proposed amendment

A.6.2 Advance current redevelopment plans

- A.6.2.1 Assist in assembling development parcels to leverage new, private sector development using all the powers available to the City but being judicious in the deployment of eminent domain and being sure that all rights and protections afforded to the affected property owner are properly conveyed.
- A.6.2.2 Additional Redevelopment Plan Areas should be considered by the Redevelopment Agency and the Common Council for the Main Avenue Area.

A.6.3 Explore opportunities to designate additional redevelopment areas as a means to achieve plan goals

- A.6.3.1 Consider redevelopment of industrial property north of Muller Ave and west of the Danbury branch line
- A.6.3.2 Explore obstacles and opportunities for redevelopment at Elinco and explore linkage with aforementioned Muller Ave site
- A.6.3.3 Explore opportunities for redevelopment in the area south of SoNo up to the border with Rowayton
- A.6.3.4 Identify parcels suitable for redevelopment while encouraging compatibility with neighborhoods and sensitivity to environmental areas in proximity to Norwalk Harbor

A.5. INDUSTRIAL

A.6. REDEVELOPMENT



Water-dependent uses should be protected along the Norwalk River.

B. Environment & Infrastructure

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- B.2** Coastal Waterways
- B.3** Inland Waterways
- B.4** Aquifers
- B.5** Sanitary Sewers
- B.6** Solid Waste
- B.7** Hazardous Materials
- B.8** Sustainability
- B.9** Air Quality
- B.10** Other Utilities

Underground aquifers and other water-related features—including the Five Mile, Silvermine, and Norwalk rivers as well as Long Island Sound—form the recharge area and drainage system of Norwalk’s natural environment. While correlated man-made networks of water mains, sewers, and storm drains extend this system, it is ultimately the larger natural environment that limits what can be sustained. In this section, environment and infrastructure have been combined, to reflect this important interdependence.

Turning to Natural Solutions

Intensive land use—characterized by impermeable surfaces such as roofs and paved areas—together with the continuing loss of wetlands—nature’s “sponge”—has strained the capacity of our streams, rivers, and harbors to provide natural drainage and absorb runoff. As a result, flooding due to compromised storm drainage is a rising concern in certain areas. In addition, increased erosion, siltation, and damage to riparian environments are the results of rapid development outpacing the city’s natural carrying capacity. In past practice, rivers and streams were diverted into pipes, riprapped, or lined in concrete, a practice called channelization which actually raises the velocity and height of flood flow.

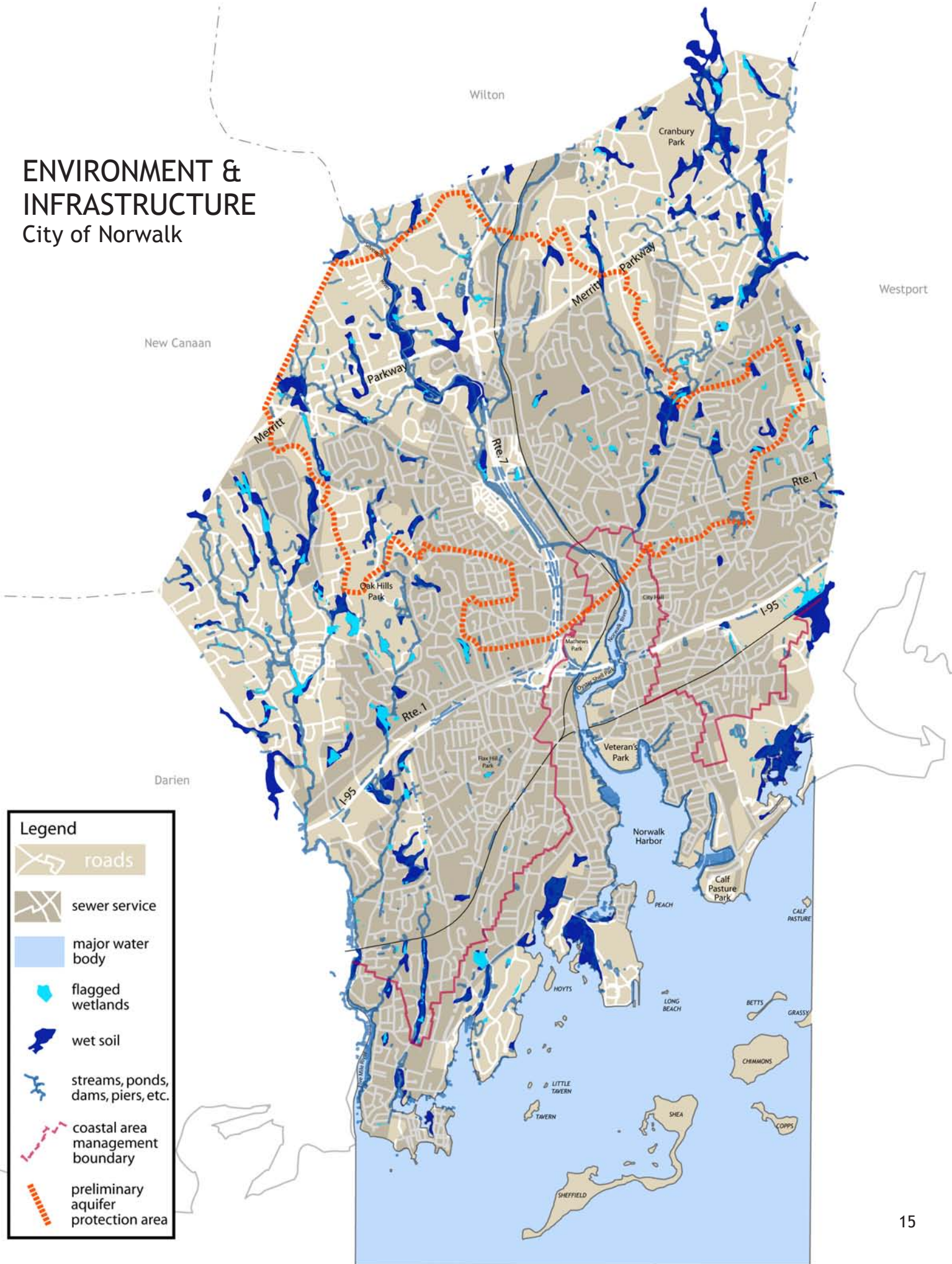
Today, sustainable alternatives—wetland banks, marsh reconstruction, conservation, permeable surfaces, etc.—can replace practices that force natural systems to change in support of additional development. This modern sensitivity to the importance of the natural environment is reflected in the goals and policies of this plan. Riparian areas are now recognized as valued scenic resources, significant factors in controlling runoff and floodwater, protectors of public and private water supplies, and providers of habitats for necessary biodiversity. New development patterns and regulatory practices can help reduce impacts on these important natural systems. (For instance, future aquifer protection standards will require limitations to allowed land uses in mapped aquifer recharge areas, and attention should be given to limiting the use of fertilizers and pesticides that wash into our watercourses and eventually into Long Island Sound.)

Energy Conservation & Waste Reduction

Related to new directions for recharge and drainage are the municipal needs to reduce waste and produce energy, two seemingly separate concerns. Simple reductions in waste through expanded recycling programs and reduction of energy use through cogeneration—the most efficient use of fuel—are strategies that are gaining worldwide attention. Energy-efficient “green” buildings and fixtures, solar lights and parking meters, reuse of recycled materials, and alternative fuels can all help reduce global warming. Furthermore, the development of local generating capacity and the practice of energy conservation can decrease dependence on the power grid and provide a level of autonomy. If the Millbrae Water Pollution Plant in California can generate electricity from biogas derived from a daily delivery of 3,000 gallons of kitchen grease, it is not outside expectation that someday Norwalk could achieve a similar solution. Waste can be harnessed to produce energy. Lastly, local reduction efforts can have a significant impact on energy consumption and cost, and have been mandated by city governments around the country.

ENVIRONMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

City of Norwalk



B. Environment & Infrastructure

B.1. GENERAL



Interstate 95 traverses the Norwalk River.

B.1.1 Protect the city's environment and natural resources for current and future generations

- B.1.1.1 Conduct an ongoing assessment of City infrastructure capacity and determine its ability to accommodate development projections and plans
- B.1.1.2 Encourage new development around transit access, and allow new development which does not exceed the capacity of infrastructure systems (roads, sewers, water, etc)
- B.1.1.3 Limit new development where infrastructure cannot be expanded
- B.1.1.4 Require new development to expand infrastructure capacity where needed
- B.1.1.5 Update the mapping and evaluations of inland and tidal wetlands by the Conservation Commission and the Department of Environmental Protection as soon as possible and provide Capital Budget funding
- B.1.1.6 Encourage restoration of degraded intertidal resources
- B.1.1.7 Maintain up-to-date mapping resources in the City

B.1.2 Protect public health and safety

- B.1.2.1 Develop, maintain, and evaluate a Natural Resources Inventory including an update to the inland and tidal wetland maps, indicating areas with severe or considerable natural constraints to development (steep slopes, excessively poorly drained or excessively well-drained soils, 100-year floodway areas)
- B.1.2.2 Support watershed-wide water quality initiatives
- B.1.2.3 Reduce point- and non-point-source pollution
- B.1.2.4 Implementation of "all feasible measures" for improving and maintaining water quality
- B.1.2.5 Continue monitoring the water quality of Norwalk Harbor and perform water quality studies at storm outlets to assess the environmental impact of this pollution source
- B.1.2.6 Encourage organic land care practices in parks and open space

B.2. COASTAL WATERWAYS



A natural shoreline at the mouth of the Norwalk Harbor.

B.2.1 Manage, protect, and restore coastal resources of the Harbor, recognizing their interconnectedness with the Long Island Sound system

- B.2.1.1 Preserve, enhance, and restore all salt meadows
- B.2.1.2 Study the potential to add additional boat slips along the Norwalk River

B.2.2 Support the continuation of the shellfishing industry

- B.2.2.1 Support non-polluting water-dependent uses, including a commercial fishermen's wharf in Norwalk Harbor south of the Stroffolino Bridge
- B.2.2.2 Avoid acute and cumulative adverse impacts on shellfish resources and on opportunities for harvesting them

B. Environment & Infrastructure

B.2.3 Implement the goals and policies of the Coastal Management Act, the Coastal Area Management Plan for Norwalk, and the Norwalk Harbor Management Plan

- B.2.3.1 Adopt by reference the Norwalk Municipal Coastal Area Management Plan in this new Plan of Conservation and Development
- B.2.3.2 Adopt by reference the 2007 Norwalk Harbor Management Plan in this new Plan of Conservation and Development

B.3.1 Prevent flooding and the threat to health welfare and property

- B.3.1.1 Continue to encourage best management practices, including innovative Low-Impact Development (LID) practices, for managing stormwater runoff
- B.3.1.2 Adopt new regulations of DEP on stormwater retention including the use of rain gardens
- B.3.1.3 Continue to provide capital budget funds for drainage projects to solve drainage problems
- B.3.1.4 Prevent industrial wastes and effluent generated from septic and sanitary systems from going into the city's storm drainage system
- B.3.1.5 Use and maintain natural drainage and wetland areas in lieu of structures to the greatest extent possible; protect natural flood storage areas; utilize Department of Environmental Protection "Primary Treatment Practices"
- B.3.1.6 Require use of dry wells, slotted pipes, and innovative technologies for all new construction as a means of ground-water recharge, and encourage roadway and parking design that minimizes the use of impervious surfaces wherever possible
- B.3.1.7 Encourage acquisition of wetlands beneficial to the City
- B.3.1.8 Maintain the Federal Flood Insurance Program which provides insurance for property owners in flood hazard areas, but encourage development (especially higher density) to be located outside flood-prone areas wherever possible, including increased setbacks to account for sea level rise
- B.3.1.9 Continue to support the Federal Emergency Management Agency's policy of restricting development within floodways

B.3.2 Continue a policy of no net loss of wetlands and enact mitigation measures for the disturbance of wetlands, including the restoration of wetlands along the Norwalk River; wetlands should be maintained to ensure no adverse impacts on private property

- B.3.2.1 Enhance existing publicly owned shorelines by removing invasive weeds, replanting with native plants, and reconstructing wetland areas where possible

B.3. INLAND WATERWAYS



Residential development has occurred in various places around the Mid-Harbor in recent years, although natural shorelines remain.

B. Environment & Infrastructure

B.3.3 Encourage all efforts to avoid or reduce siltation in Harbor

- B.3.3.1 Adopt a systematic maintenance program for existing catch basins and encourage other sediment trapping techniques to prevent the transport of silt, sediments, and road pollutants into the aquatic environment
- B.3.3.2 Control runoff from construction sites, roadways, and bridges
- B.3.3.3 Reduce the impact of I-95 drainage to Harbor
- B.3.3.4 Support regulations for waterfront property owners to maintain shorelines and prevent materials and debris from entering the harbor
- B.3.3.5 Prohibit disposal of debris in the harbor and its tributaries
- B.3.3.6 Continue to minimize storm water runoff from new development by ensuring compliance with the Department of Public Works Storm Drainage Manual

B.4. AQUIFERS

B.4.1 Implement a local aquifer protection program

- B.4.1.1 Encourage the Department of Environmental Protection to provide a detailed map of aquifer recharge areas—including the Kellogg-Deering site—by 2008
- B.4.1.2 Modify the Zoning Regulations and Map as needed to conform to the State-mandated Aquifer Protection Regulations, which are being developed on a local level by the Norwalk Aquifer Protection Agency
- B.4.1.3 Support continued remedial action by the United States Environmental Protection Agency for the Kellogg-Deering Wellfield Superfund Site, to protect the wellfield from further contamination
- B.4.1.4 Protect the Betts Pond Brook, Five Mile River, Silvermine River, Norwalk River, and other aquifers to guarantee quality groundwater for future generations
- B.4.1.5 Require conservation measures to ensure public sector water usage (building department, public works, parks and rec., etc.) does not exceed safe yield standards

B.5. SANITARY SEWERS

B.5.1 Continue providing wastewater collection services in a cost-effective manner while meeting or exceeding environmental regulations

- B.5.1.1 Extend sanitary sewers only where septic systems are not viable and where current sanitary facilities are not adequate
- B.5.1.2 Continue upgrading the sewage treatment plant
- B.5.1.3 Encourage a plan and funding to inspect and repair the storm system and detect illegal connections and provide a cost-benefit analysis
- B.5.1.4 Urge Water Pollution Control Authority to consider a plan to provide pricing relief to large water-dependent businesses
- B.5.1.5 Require that all properties with sewers available connect to those sewers
- B.5.1.6 Continue programs to rehabilitate the existing sanitary sewer network including trunk lines, interceptors, force mains and pump stations, and provide capital funding

B. Environment & Infrastructure

- B.5.1.7 Require sanitary pump-out facilities at marinas, consider enforcement penalties, and require boater education, to increase usage of pump out facilities and promote the proper use of holding tanks and pump out facilities
- B.5.1.8 Develop and negotiate an Interlocal Agreement with the Town of Westport
- B.5.1.9 Implement a development connection fee program to support long-term capital upgrades of the plant and collection system
- B.5.1.10 Apply for Clean Water Funding for all eligible capital improvement projects
- B.5.1.11 Develop an industrial pretreatment program in accordance with State regulations to improve collection system performance and offset operating costs
- B.5.1.12 Develop an asset management plan for the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA). Such a plan should provide DPW, the Finance Department, and the Common Council with quantifiable data to assess the ongoing effectiveness of the WPCA on a cost-benefit basis within appropriately established review cycles

B.5.2 Study potential for bio-fuel generation at the treatment plant

B.6.1 Implement a citywide solid waste management program that ensures long term stability in costs

- B.6.1.1 Achieve a minimum of 25 percent reduction in the solid waste stream by 2015
- B.6.1.2 Increase the number of annual household hazardous waste disposal days from two to four.
- B.6.1.3 Evaluate the feasibility of using rail or barge for the shipping of solid waste to resource recovery or other appropriate points
- B.6.1.4 Implement the recommendations of the upcoming study regarding the future use of the transfer station

B.6.2 Increase participation and expand materials included in recycling programs, to reduce solid waste generation

- B.6.2.1 All events held in Norwalk on City property must provide for recyclable collection
- B.6.2.2 Require contractors to set up recycling bins at job sites
- B.6.2.3 Encourage and promote all recycling programs that encompass materials not presently covered by current programs, including non-municipal enterprises
- B.6.2.4 Require all municipal buildings and community programs to participate in recycling programs
- B.6.2.5 The City should identify possible composting sites
- B.6.2.6 The Board of Education should incorporate into its curriculum the environmental advantages of recycling



Upcoming planning will examine options for the future use of the transfer station.

B.6. SOLID WASTE

B. Environment & Infrastructure

B.7. HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

B.7.1 Ensure proper handling and disposal of hazardous materials

- B.7.1.1 Encourage the implementation of remedial measures at sites contaminated with hazardous wastes as identified in the state's January 2000 inventory
- B.7.1.2 Continue to educate public on proper disposal ("Flows to Sound")
- B.7.1.3 Support all appropriate measures to avoid fuel and chemical spills in or near the harbor
- B.7.1.4 Provide immediate response to fuel and chemical spills
- B.7.1.5 Implement a program for the legal disposal of hazardous materials by residents on a regular basis

B.8. SUSTAINABILITY

B.8.1 Adopt programs which promote resource conservation and discourage waste

- B.8.1.1 Establish clearly defined municipal goals related to sustainable design and energy efficiency for new construction projects over ten thousand square feet, and develop related municipal incentives that encourage the implementation of these goals and objectives for approval by the Common Council
- B.8.1.2 Encourage the use of recycled materials for construction, paving, and other areas where economically feasible
- B.8.1.3 Encourage the use of energy efficient fixtures and appliances
- B.8.1.4 Encourage the development and use of alternative energy resources such as wind, solar, and others within projects over one hundred thousand square feet by establishing a related municipal tax incentive policy that advances the development of these renewable energy systems.

B.9. AIR QUALITY

B.9.1 Achieve the Clean Air Act ambient air quality standards

- B.9.1.1 The Office of Corporation Counsel shall explore the potential powers available to the City to sanction businesses or property owners within the City who have been ordered to remediate environmental conditions on their property or take corrective actions regarding emissions but have failed to do so
- B.9.1.1 Support construction of Route 7 from Norwalk to Danbury to reduce air pollution caused by traffic congestion
- B.9.1.2 Continue to fund the citywide tree planting and maintenance program
- B.9.1.3 Support the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's implementation plans to achieve ambient air quality standards

B.10.1 Require public utilities to meet present and future demand

B.10. OTHER UTILITIES

- B.10.1.1 Encourage the under-grounding of electric, cable television, and telephone lines to minimize service disruptions due to inclement weather and to improve the appearance of Norwalk
- B.10.1.2 Support the adequate provision of natural gas and the expansion of natural gas transmission lines as needed
- B.10.1.3 Support the Long Range Water Supply Plans of the First and Second Water Districts, to meet the future water supply needs of Norwalk
- B.10.1.4 Plan for proper location of cell towers
- B.10.1.5 Encourage the study of alternative systems for delivering inexpensive and reliable power to Norwalk residents

C. Open Space & Recreation Systems

SECTION CONTENTS

- C.1** General
- C.2** Land Conservation
- C.3** Recreation
- C.4** Trails & Bikeways

Open spaces, parks, and recreational areas should be viewed as components of a connected system, not as isolated features. People are increasingly attracted to walking trails, bike paths, linear parks, and natural corridors—signs of a kinetic, outdoors-oriented, 21st century lifestyle. The natural links between ecosystems—wildlife corridors, aquifers and wetlands, relationships of food chains, etc.—provide a model for integrated relationships between open space and user-friendly passive and active recreation. The combination of Open Space and Recreation in this report underlines the importance of an overall approach to both providing and connecting these diverse resources.

Community Connections

The pattern of parks, conservation lands, riparian corridors, shorelines and watersheds of Norwalk Harbor and Long Island Sound has the potential to be both continuous and connected. Providing linkages—trails, paths, bike routes, channels, etc.—would better integrate communities and neighborhoods with one another, provide public access to water views and enjoyment of water-dependent uses on the Sound, promote health benefits derived from exercise and strengthen a sense of connectedness and shared purpose among all residents of the City.

Innovating Management

Due to limited resources, management of open space and recreation for multiple users requires new and innovative approaches. For instance, Norwalk Harbor is both an economic engine and a dynamic recreational resource. Therefore the Norwalk Harbor and Harbor Islands require natural resource protection as wildlife sanctuaries while simultaneously offering leisure-related activities for residents. The very diversity of resources and their permitted uses demands varied approaches to successful, integrated open space and recreational management. In addition, community and school facilities such as swimming pools and ice rinks can be viewed and managed as shared resources, to provide more beneficial use to the wider public.

New Inventory

The City of Norwalk now exceeds its benchmark of 12 acres of open space per 1000 residents. However, with a growing population and a variety of proposed development plans, the need and opportunity exists to provide incentives for new inventory through privately funded and managed open spaces. Introducing plazas and public parks in redevelopment areas and evolving downtown districts redirects the addition of open space inventory to the heart of Norwalk, and will be instrumental to the success of these new or revitalized destinations.

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION SYSTEMS

City of Norwalk



C. Open Space & Recreation Systems

C.1. GENERAL



A bench at Veterans Park has a terrific view overlooking the harbor.

C.1.1 Maintain, improve, and increase water access for the public

- C.1.1.1 Encourage public walkways as part of developments along the Norwalk and Five Mile Rivers and their harbors, consistent with Connecticut Coastal Management Act water-dependent use criteria
- C.1.1.2 Provide capital budget funding to fill in “gaps” in the Riveredge Park and Bikeway along the Norwalk River
- C.1.1.3 Improve certain street ends for public access to the waterfront and provide capital budget funding
- C.1.1.4 Develop a plan for public and visual access to the river
- C.1.1.5 Provide additional public space along Norwalk River in the next 10 years; provide open spaces leading to the Norwalk River
- C.1.1.6 Fill in the missing segment of the waterfront trail behind the Maritime Aquarium, linking the entrance of that facility and Oyster Shell Park with SoNo
- C.1.1.7 Ensure public access areas to the waterfront are for the general public and not limited to particular groups or individuals
- C.1.1.8 Support facilities and pedestrian connectivity for boats that encourage public and visitor use in a fair manner and consistent with goals regarding the environment and navigation issues

C.1.2 Preserve and enhance public views of coastal waters

C.1.3 Provide and maintain an attractive open space system for the enjoyment of all residents

- C.1.3.1 Support additional water-dependent uses in Veterans Memorial Park
- C.1.3.2 Set a high standard for the maintenance and security of all parks and continue to fund preventive maintenance
- C.1.3.3 Encourage Parks & Recreation to prepare a new Cranbury Park Master Plan to maximize open space, improve enforcement, and implement and conduct a resource inventory
- C.1.3.4 Maintain a standard of twelve acres of parkland per one thousand people as a guideline for acquiring parkland and identify new lands for park acquisition to meet this objective
- C.1.3.5 Dedicate park and recreation usage fees to acquisition and improvement of parks and recreation facilities and public space
- C.1.3.6 Continue to provide equipment and facilities, which encourage better utilization of neighborhood parks
- C.1.3.7 Review undedicated parks and dedicate selected ones
- C.1.3.8 Ensure sensitive lighting of public property so as not to adversely affect surrounding private owners
- C.1.3.9 New lighting fixtures that are installed on public property or owned by the City shall comply with reasonable guidelines regarding their energy efficiency and shall appropriately diffuse their illumination downward to the maximum extent possible
- C.1.3.10 Incorporate squares, plazas, and greens into redevelopment and areas of new residential growth

C. Open Space & Recreation Systems

- C.1.3.11 Implement the recommendations of the Mathews Park Master Plan
- C.1.3.12 Support the State Heritage Park, including the recommendations of the Oyster Shell Park Master Plan
- C.1.3.13 Identify areas that lack local public open space (e.g., Spring Hill/Hospital Zone) and work to establish parks in those locations)

C.2.1 Preserve open space for natural resource management and to preserve neighborhood character

- C.2.1.1 Evaluate and protect coastal and other fragile natural resources
- C.2.1.2 Pursue protection of riparian buffers along the Norwalk River, Five Mile River, and Silvermine River through purchase, donation, or conservation easement of land abutting these rivers
- C.2.1.3 Encourage the preservation of undeveloped lands within the 100-year flood zone with the use of Open Space purchase, donation or conservation easement
- C.2.1.4 Commit to stewardship of City-owned wooded areas, natural areas, and environmentally sensitive areas
- C.2.1.5 Encourage the preservation of already-protected open space, and encourage the protection of existing “transitory” open space (land that functions as open space but is not formally protected from development) within these environmentally sensitive areas
- C.2.1.6 Encourage protection of existing Open Space within the Kellogg-Deering site
- C.2.1.7 Recommend modification of land use regulations, with assistance from the Conservation Commission, to consistently meet the goals of the Open Space Plan and the Plan of Conservation and Development
- C.2.1.8 Encourage private landowners to establish conservation easements for protecting wetlands and open space (e.g., Dolce Norwalk Center)

C.2.2 Provide diverse landscapes that offer outdoor recreation

- C.2.2.1 Develop and adopt management or stewardship plans for open space lands to ensure on-going maintenance, with cooperation of the Dept. of Rec & Parks
- C.2.2.2 Encourage opportunities for local schools at all grade levels to educate children within the public nature preserve
- C.2.2.3 Encourage additional public access points to the Norwalk harbor and Long Island Sound for small non-motorized boats to further promote water-based recreation
- C.2.2.4 Protect existing passive recreation areas from improvements that would diminish their natural character

C.2. LAND CONSERVATION



Parks can incorporate features that facilitate learning as well as recreation and passive enjoyment.

C. Open Space & Recreation Systems



Flax Hill Park

C.2.3 Preserve the Norwalk Islands in their natural state and protect them from incompatible development

- C.2.3.1 Support the objectives of the national wildlife refuge designation
- C.2.3.2 Manage the publicly owned Norwalk Islands to provide for sustainable public recreation and the conservation of island resources

C.2.4 Acquire open space to meet the goals of this plan

- C.2.4.1 Encourage creative financing tools for additional funding for identification and purchase of open space
- C.2.4.2 Support the Conservation Commission's plan for open space preservation and selection
- C.2.4.3 Continue to use conservation easements, acquisition by a non-profit land trust or other means to preserve open space with valuable natural resources, such as Peach Island, Betts Pond Brook, etc.
- C.2.4.4 Designate open space parcels, per State Statute 12-107e, to encourage open space preservation via tax incentives
- C.2.4.5 Demolish the old police station for open space
- C.2.4.6 Retain unimproved open space already owned by the City (Stonecrop Road, Ponus Avenue, Comstock Hill Avenue) and provide the necessary restriction to ensure that it can never be developed
- C.2.4.7 Pursue acquisition of waterfront land and easements when opportunities arise for providing additional public access and enhance the open space system
- C.2.4.8 Maintain an Open Space Fund and consider acquisition of critical parcels as they become available
- C.2.4.9 Identify open space areas and make available tax benefits of Public Act 490 to private property owners
- C.2.4.10 Educate and encourage eligible landowners to participate in the Public Act 490 tax assessment program and to take advantage of preservation tools including conservation easements and purchase of development rights

C.3. RECREATION

C.3.1 Provide a greater diversity of recreation facilities and programs to meet the needs of all user groups, including new facilities for supervised recreation for young people

- C.3.1.1 Consider the construction of a municipal golf driving range by examining sites in which such a facility would be in keeping with the integrity of the surrounding neighborhood and its environmental conditions while recognizing the need to preserve public park open space to the greatest extent possible
- C.3.1.2 Provide a fishing pier and picnic tables at Veterans Park
- C.3.1.3 Provide additional areas/opportunities for walking

C. Open Space & Recreation Systems

- C.3.1.4 Provide an improved recreational experience to South Norwalk residents beyond that currently available at Ryan Park; refurbish Ryan Park to suit residents' needs and establish park constituency
- C.3.1.5 Examine the potential for a skating rink in the City of Norwalk by private parties to augment recreational opportunities available to residents
- C.3.1.6 Examine the potential for an indoor swimming pool in the City of Norwalk to augment recreational opportunities available to residents
- C.3.1.7 Inventory necessary public amenity upgrades at existing neighborhood parks. Public amenities such as restroom facilities, lighting, and seating areas should be deemed as necessary

C.3.2 Improve and maintain existing recreational facilities

- C.3.2.1 Expand user fees to partially defray the expense of providing recreational facilities and programs
- C.3.2.1 Increase use of school gyms for recreational programs
- C.3.2.2 Prepare and implement program for making all facilities ADA compliant
- C.3.2.3 Develop and adopt management or stewardship plans for open space lands to ensure on-going maintenance, with cooperation of the Dept. of Rec & Parks

C.4.1 Create a network of walking and bicycle trails among neighborhoods, points of interest, and opposite sides of the river and harbor

- C.4.1.1 Create a plan for bikeways linking residential areas with downtown and provide capital budget funds in Parks and Recreation budget
- C.4.1.2 Establish appropriate bike lanes on select streets
- C.4.1.3 Provide capital budget funding to fill in "gaps" in the Riveredge Park and Bikeway along the Norwalk River
- C.4.1.4 Provide funding for a pedestrian circulation system of sidewalks, new and reclaimed footpaths, and crosswalks, especially in high traffic areas
- C.4.1.5 Encourage participation in the "Become a NorWALKER" program of the Norwalk Healthy Partnership's Healthy Lifestyles Cardiovascular Project
- C.4.1.6 Add new NorWALKER routes
- C.4.1.7 Plan for footpaths and trails on park and state land, including utility easements, and institute tax incentives for trails and footpaths on private land
- C.4.1.8 Fund an extension of the Harbor trail and enhance pedestrian river crossings
- C.4.1.9 Support the construction of Route 7 Linear park
- C.4.1.10 Implement the regional trail/bikeway (the "Linear Trail") along southern edge of Merritt Parkway right-of-way



An attractive waterside promenade or boardwalk would do more than fill in a missing pedestrian link in this the important node of resident and visitor activity; it could also provide additional space for excursion or display vessels, and help mitigate the limitations of North Water Street where narrow sidewalks can be difficult for families to navigate.

C.4. TRAILS & BIKEWAYS



Ryan Park

D. Community & Cultural Facilities

SECTION CONTENTS

- D.1** General
- D.2** Public Buildings
- D.3** Schools
- D.4** Fire
- D.5** Police
- D.6** Health
- D.7** Cultural Facilities
- D.8** Library
- D.9** Other

In an effort to address the continuing need for expanding community and cultural facilities, the City committed to three major undertakings: a state-of-the-art police headquarters, a revitalized South Norwalk Library, and much needed improvements of school facilities. To finance the latter, Norwalk passed the largest bond issue for school reconstruction in its history: an investment of more than \$140 million through 2012.

At the same time, other City facilities remain in need of replacement or repair, while others have become obsolete and are no longer needed.

Distribution of Community Services

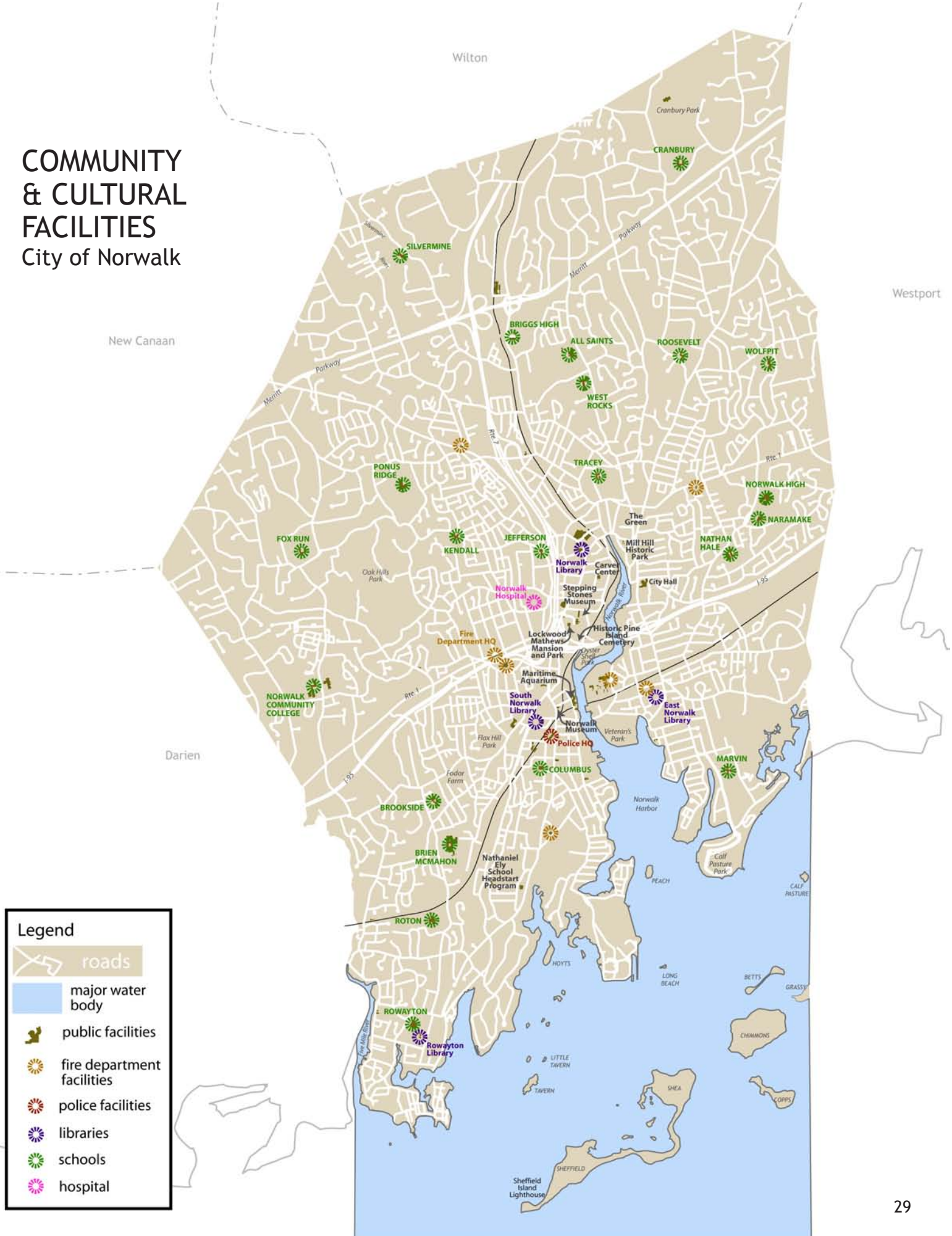
A long-range goal of the City is to better distribute services to the communities it serves. Health care facilities, rapid response emergency services, as well as cultural, library, and community centers must be located—and/or expanded—in areas that need those services.

Changing Facilities for a Changing Population

The growing ethnic and racial diversity of Norwalk's (and Connecticut's) population is creating an increased demand on quality education and social services. According to statistics for Connecticut public schools, during the 2001-2002 school year, the percentage of students speaking a non-English language in the household increased to 26.5%. Data from 2005 suggests the trend is increasing.

Many lower-income families do not have access to the facilities required to keep pace with society's ever-increasing focus on technology. At the same time, many families from all income strata require day care services, employment training, and recreational and educational programs. Libraries, schools, and community centers must find a way to help meet these needs. Partnering with the private sector on health and recreation centers can provide benefits in a supervised setting and opportunities to supplement already over-burdened public facilities.

City of Norwalk



D. Community & Cultural Facilities

D.1. GENERAL

D.1.1 Prepare for emergencies and natural disasters with an Emergency Operations Plan

- D.1.1.1 Update the City's Emergency Operations Plan to ensure that the City's Plan is consistent with that adopted by the State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security
- D.1.1.2 Coordinate emergency response activities with neighboring municipalities
- D.1.1.3 Protect the public's health, safety, and property by providing police and fire stations in strategic locations throughout Norwalk

D.2. PUBLIC BUILDINGS

D.2.1 Provide Norwalk citizens with efficient, well-kept buildings

- D.2.1.1 Maintain all public facilities at a high standard
- D.2.1.2 Continue the inspection program for evaluating the condition of City-owned buildings and implement the maintenance program for protecting the City's investment
- D.2.1.3 Encourage a timely submission of a comprehensive restoration conservation plan
- D.2.1.4 Establish Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (or "LEED," as it is commonly called)," standards for all municipal building projects to reduce energy use
- D.2.1.5 Improve all public facilities to maximize their efficiency and effectiveness and to minimize the need for capital expansion

D.2.2 Reuse or dispose of public buildings that no longer serve the community

- D.2.2.1 Inventory and evaluate surplus land and buildings for possible disposal, however, school buildings and land should be maintained and held for future needs. Encourage general reuse of all public buildings for temporary usage prior to disposing of them
- D.2.2.2 The design of all new public buildings should allow for the maximum practical level of interior floor-plate flexibility, providing the ability to convert the building to other public uses
- D.2.2.3 Demolish the old police station for additional open space at Mathews Park



Columbus School

D.3. SCHOOLS

D.3.1 Provide sufficient school facilities and programs in order to afford all citizens the opportunity to obtain a quality education

- D.3.1.1 Pursue excellence in education
- D.3.1.2 The Board of Education in consultation with the Facilities Construction Committee should provide a five-year Capital Improvement Plan for the school system and provide Capital Budget funds
- D.3.1.3 Continue to support, by legislative action and other means, quality academic, technical, and vocational training in Norwalk with emphasis on satisfying local labor needs and employment opportunities; post high school and other public and non-profit educational programs are encouraged

D. Community & Cultural Facilities

D.3.1.4 Assure the safety of our children, and others by preparing an inventory of pedestrian routes and, where needed, install new sidewalks or footpaths. Maintain all in good condition

D.3.1.5 Identify steps to provide greater security inside school buildings and on school grounds

D.3.2 Expand the use of schools to better serve the community

D.3.2.1 Plan for the use of recreation facilities, auditoriums, and classrooms to serve adult education, before and after school programs, pre-kindergarten programs and other structured uses when not in use by the school system

D.3.2.2 Review the need and cost to expand the number of fields for schools' use as well as for public recreation programs

D.3.2.3 Identify additional funding for the use of school facilities by non-school entities

D.3.2.4 Promote the Center for Global Studies as a specialty Pacific Rim Resource for business

D.3.3 Continue to strengthen ties to Norwalk Community College to encourage business development, adult education, links to other colleges and universities, career preparation, and cultural programs



Center for Global Studies, a new magnet school

D.4.1 Ensure rapid emergency service deployment for all areas of Norwalk

D.4.1.1 Assess current fire stations and identify code and operational issues; Conduct a long-term maintenance plan to plan for modernization and improved maintenance

D.4.1.2 Assess the current fire stations and ensure rapid resource deployment for all areas of Norwalk

D.4.1.3 Assess times and coverage, to determine if any areas are at risk of becoming under-served

D.4.1.4 Study and recommend a new fire station in the northern section of Norwalk adjacent to Route 7

D.4.1.5 Adopt the recommendations of the Fire Study Committee regarding the Volk Station

D.4.1.6 Address the lack of hydrants in Cranbury and West Norwalk

D.4.2 Incorporate the recommendations of the Fire Department's 2006 Comprehensive Assessment

D.4. FIRE



Norwalk Police Headquarters in South Norwalk

D.5.1 Extend the reach of the Police Department throughout Norwalk

D.5.1.1 Introduce community policing as an agency-wide program for service to all areas of the city

D.5.1.2 Continue to examine and identify any substation needs as development occurs and the population grows in Norwalk

D.5. POLICE

D. Community & Cultural Facilities

D.5.2 Address traffic problems at all times of the day including increased speeding, aggression, accidents, complaints about road rage

- D.5.2.1 Conduct a comprehensive citywide traffic study
- D.5.2.2 Continue to emphasize aggressive motor vehicle enforcement with an eye towards reducing overall accident rates throughout the city and particularly at specific high accident locations
- D.5.2.3 Create and implement a traffic calming master plan

D.5.3 Continue to address concerns and target specific violations pertaining to quality of life issues

- D.5.3.1 Expand retail mix in SoNo
- D.5.3.2 Encourage the Police Department to work with and provide balanced levels of service to all sections of the City

D.6. HEALTH



Many enjoy exploring Norwalk—and getting some exercise—by sea kayak.



There are only a few places to cross the Norwalk River, so it is important for pedestrians that each one be as welcoming and comfortable as possible. In cities everywhere, people enjoy running, biking, and walking in "loops" around the edge of their waterfronts, and bridges form key links that make these loops possible.

D.6.1 Accommodate and encourage active lifestyles

- D.6.1.1 Design new development to be accessible, with sidewalks, footpaths, and bike paths, especially around schools
- D.6.1.2 Support trails and bikeways
- D.6.1.3 Expand NorWALKER routes
- D.6.1.4 Encourage health, fitness, and productivity in all members of our community
- D.6.1.5 Support the efforts of the Norwalk Public Schools and Norwalk Health Department to address childhood obesity by increasing physical activity and consumption of healthy diets for all school-aged children

D.6.2 Continue to provide high quality health care facilities and access to these facilities by all citizens

- D.6.2.1 Encourage the continued upgrading and modernization of Norwalk Hospital to meet the needs of the greater Norwalk area
- D.6.2.2 Expand, provide upgrades/improvements, and maintain Health Department facilities as well as other residential/health care facilities, including extended stay for the elderly
- D.6.2.3 Encourage complete cardiac care at Norwalk Hospital

D.6.3 Provide human care and social service facilities and programs as needed for all citizens

- D.6.3.1 Continue to encourage the provision of housing and transitional residential care for special population groups such as the elderly, the mentally ill, and physically or developmentally handicapped persons
- D.6.3.2 Continue to encourage the establishment of infant and toddler day-care facilities, as needed
- D.6.3.3 Encourage the Board of Ed and Health Department to promote education programs to warn of the hazards of drug abuse, and encourage enforcement and rehabilitation programs to help combat the sale and use of illegal drugs
- D.6.3.4 Bring needed support services to Norwalk Community Health Center's existing community health services

D. Community & Cultural Facilities

D.7.1 Strive for a connected network of cultural attractions

- D.7.1.1 Encourage and support all music, art, and cultural programs
- D.7.1.2 Support programs that will promote tourism in Norwalk
- D.7.1.3 Support the Maritime Aquarium, Stepping Stones, the Switch Tower Museum, and other city museums as educational facilities and tourist attractions
- D.7.1.4 Encourage retail/cultural development within the Reed-Putnam Design District and at the South Norwalk Intermodal Pulse Point to create a critical mass of activity with the Maritime Aquarium and the Washington Street Historic District
- D.7.1.5 Support legislation that will provide sufficient funding for the Coastal Fairfield County Convention and Visitor Bureau
- D.7.1.6 Create the voluntary position of Officer of Cultural Affairs, appointed by the Mayor, to promote the arts including the Norwalk Concert Hall and to plan for a facility for working studios and artists in residence
- D.7.1.7 Continue to support public access to Sheffield Island and generate a broader awareness of the natural and structural resources of the island, including but not limited to the lighthouse, footpaths, and beaches.
- D.7.1.8 Support the maintenance and care of Norwalk's Historic Burying Grounds
- D.7.1.9 Broaden the City's investment into cultural and historic facilities (e.g. Norwalk Concert Hall and Lockwood Mathews Mansion)

D.8.1 Establish the Norwalk Public Library as a hub of the West Avenue and Wall Street area

- D.8.1.1 Plan for and fund an expanded facility and parking area at the Library and increase safe pedestrian accessibility

D.9.1 Provide and maintain non-profit community centers which offer services to a wide segment of Norwalk residents

- D.9.1.1 Encourage the creation of neighborhood community centers

D.7. CULTURAL FACILITIES



Aerial view of cultural institutions and parks in the mid-harbor area of Norwalk

D.8. LIBRARY

D.9. OTHER

E. Transportation

SECTION CONTENTS

- E.1** General
- E.2** Transit
- E.3** Traffic Management
- E.4** Bridges
- E.5** Parking
- E.6** Other

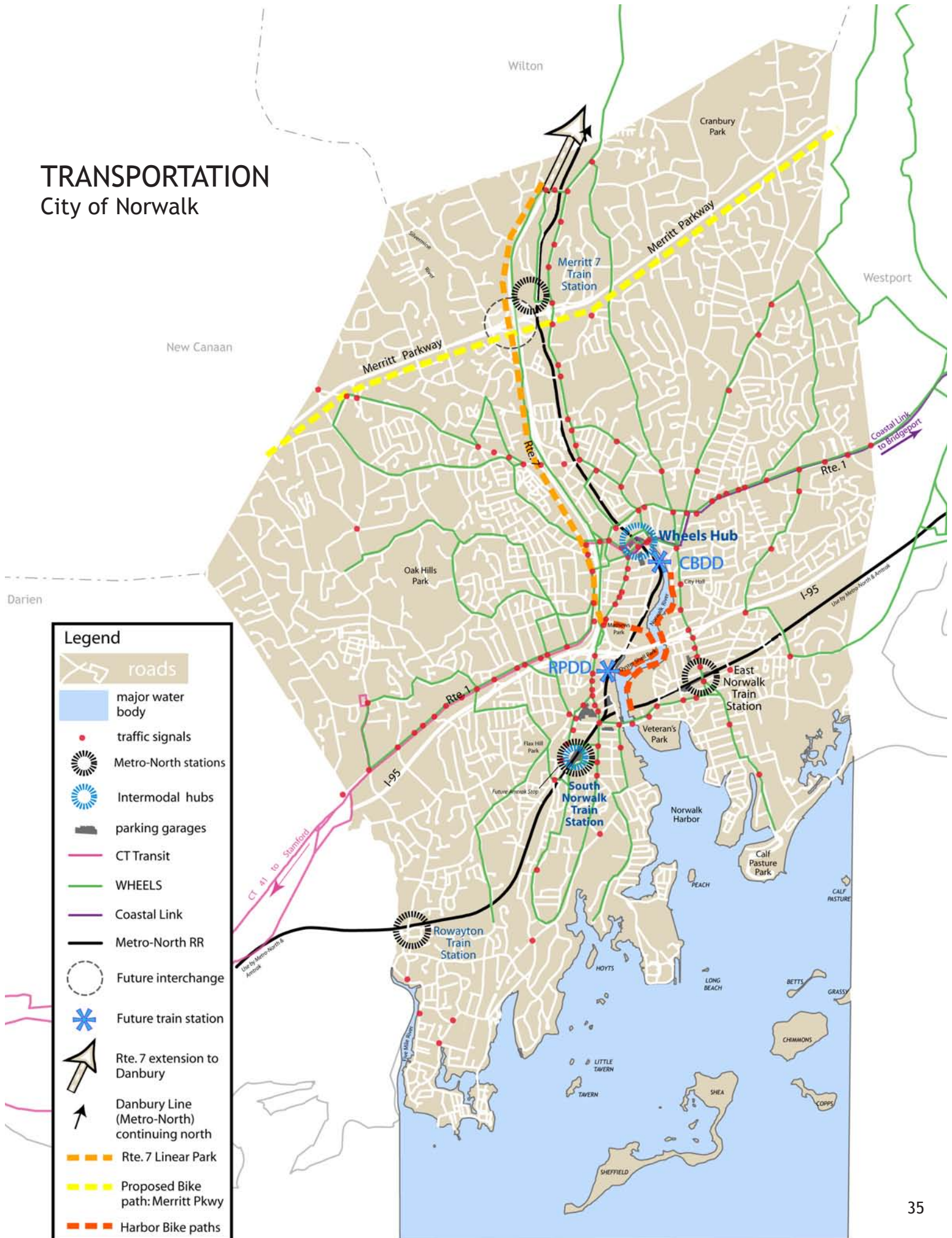
Norwalk is centered on the busiest corridor on the east coast. The main transportation lines of Interstate 95, the Merritt Parkway, and various rail, shuttle, and bus services connect residents to destinations from New York to New England. Yet today, even with the centrality of rail service and congestion on the highways, less than 10% of Norwalkers use public transportation compared to 75% of residents who drive to work alone. The dependence on the automobile can only be reduced by a combination of improved public transit and pedestrian-friendly redevelopment based on transportation hubs.

At the same time, better coordinated signalization can control congestion that, by necessity, must be accommodated on Norwalk's roadways. Improvements to traffic corridors must balance the need for increased traffic volumes with maintaining pedestrian safety and the character-giving visual qualities of historic and scenic districts and gateways. Road and bridge design should include the needs of walkers and bicyclists to reduce vehicle use, especially in congested areas. Shared parking strategies can ensure better utilization of parking lots and structures during off-peak hours.

Traffic and transportation impact the environment. The runoff from impermeable roads, parking areas, and highways contribute to sedimentation of the harbor and erosion of streams and rivers. Plantings, permeable surfaces where appropriate, and environmentally-friendly drainage systems can reduce these unwanted side effects. Street trees provide shade, beauty, and traffic calming. Norwalk continues to receive national recognition for its tree plantings. Street lighting should be context-sensitive, limited in areas of wildlife habitat, energy-efficient, and shielded to reduce glare into surrounding homes. Scenic road designations should be encouraged in rural and historic areas.

TRANSPORTATION

City of Norwalk



E. Transportation

E.1. GENERAL

E.1.1 Provide an efficient and effective system of transportation

- E.1.1.1 Support improvements to public transit and traffic management measures as the highest priorities
- E.1.1.2 Encourage coordination and linkages among all different modes of transportation
- E.1.1.3 Fund planning and design work for the implementation of an alternative public transportation system that interconnects the City's existing transportation resources including train and bus with its urban development projects
- E.1.1.4 Participate in the formulation of regional transportation planning
- E.1.1.5 Regularly maintain the Federal Navigation Project consisting of Congressionally authorized channels and anchorage areas in Norwalk Harbor, to serve commercial and recreational vessels, provide safe navigation, and ensure the continued viability of water-dependent facilities and the economic advantages of waterborne transportation

E.2. TRANSIT

E.2.1 Encourage the use of public transit by supporting convenient, reliable, and efficient transportation services

- E.2.1.1 Evaluate and adjust as necessary the Wheels bus service, Dispatch-A-Ride, shuttles and interregional services, such as the Coastal Link to Milford and the Route 7 Link to Danbury, to reflect changes in population and land use and to maximize efficiency
- E.2.1.2 Expand the hours of operation of Wheels bus service to later in the evening and on Sundays, encourage additional State and Federal funding to support such expanded service
- E.2.1.3 Continue design and construction of a new Wheels pulse point on Burnell Boulevard as part of the redevelopment of Norwalk Center
- E.2.1.4 Coordinate Wheels bus service with train arrivals and departures, including provision of reverse commute rail shuttle
- E.2.1.5 Encourage Metro-North to continue to review and adjust train schedules to meet the needs of residents and the businesses they serve
- E.2.1.6 Support increased train service and improved facilities on the Danbury Line, as recommended in a November 2004 Feasibility Study on Danbury Line Electrification by the Connecticut Department of Transportation
- E.2.1.7 Anticipate the need for two new stations on the Danbury Line as per the Reed-Putnam Urban Renewal Plan (north of the Maritime Aquarium) and on Wall Street at Commerce Street
- E.2.1.8 Provide adequate parking at train stations
- E.2.1.9 Encourage the retention of a bus/limousine terminal that serves New York metropolitan airports
- E.2.1.10 Support efforts to develop the existing CT Transit Route 41 between Stamford and Norwalk into a Bus Rapid Transit system
- E.2.1.11 Support efforts to improve service on Norwalk's busiest bus routes within the next year, which includes placing an additional bus on the 3, 9, 10, and 13 routes, thereby increasing the frequency to every 20 minutes (from every 30 minutes)



The South Norwalk Station is a major regional transportation node and a hub of activity for the South Norwalk neighborhood. An upcoming study will recommend ways to maximize the benefits of this important amenity.

E.2.2 Create an enhanced intermodal station at the South Norwalk Station

- E.2.2.1 Perform an intermodal feasibility study
- E.2.2.2 Redevelop the east side of the station into an efficient mini Pulse Point and multi modal center for trains and buses serving South Norwalk
- E.2.2.3 Plan for active around-the-clock uses at the South Norwalk Station
- E.2.2.4 Ensure a quality public environment at the South Norwalk Station
- E.2.2.5 Consider designating a redevelopment area at the South Norwalk Station to help achieve goals for transit enhancements and transit-oriented development here

E.3.1 Provide a safe and efficient vehicular transportation system

- E.3.1.1 Continue to encourage major employers to prepare and implement traffic management plans (detailing use of flextime, vanpools, etc.)
- E.3.1.2 Support Police Department efforts to improve traffic safety by increasing enforcement measures to curtail traffic infractions (i.e. speeding, running stop signs, driving while intoxicated, etc.)
- E.3.1.3 Expand computerized traffic signal coordination to expedite traffic flow
- E.3.1.4 Continue to improve traffic flow and implement the traffic safety and accident reduction program in all areas, making priority improvements at high accident locations
- E.3.1.5 Improve the performance of roadways and pedestrian facilities in central Norwalk by reducing vehicle demand during peak hours
- E.3.1.6 Improve the safety of schoolchildren in parking areas and public ways around school facilities
- E.3.1.7 Establish appropriate bike lanes on select streets
- E.3.1.8 Improve coordination between Department of Public Works and Department of Transportation during road construction and include an evaluation of traffic calming measures
- E.3.1.9 Identify streets for traffic calming and provide capital budget funds
- E.3.1.10 Implement the recommendations of the Central Norwalk Transportation & Pedestrian Master Plan
- E.3.1.11 Implement the recommendations of the Westport-North-Main Corridor Study

E.3.2 Preserve the character of residential neighborhoods by minimizing traffic impacts from surrounding uses

- E.3.2.1 Investigate the creation of a one-way street system in some neighborhoods and identify methods other than speed humps to slow traffic
- E.3.2.2 Maintain vehicular connections within neighborhoods surrounding the Harbor and protect those neighborhoods from regional and truck traffic
- E.3.2.3 Provide special design treatments at key intersections and gateways to enhance and reinforce surroundings
- E.3.2.4 Manage truck traffic and reduce truck traffic through residential areas

E.3. TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT



The Mid-Harbor plan identified the need for improving safety at the intersection of Water Street, the Stroffolino Bridge, and Washington Street, where there are many pedestrians visiting cultural and retail attractions.



The Norwalk River is a scenic resources near Wall Street.

E. Transportation



In Richmond, Virginia, a suspended pedestrian bridge extends over the James River, connecting two public recreation areas and providing dramatic views of the city.



"Limited access" refers to a roadway which permits access via entrance and exit ramps, and prohibits driveways and other encroachments. I-95 is an example of a road with limited access.

E.4. BRIDGES

E.3.3 Maintain vehicular and pedestrian ways continuously and at a high level

- E.3.3.1 Adopt a workable repair and maintenance program for sidewalks and footpaths, and provide capital budget funds
- E.3.3.2 Improve coordination between Department of Public Works and Department of Transportation during road construction to better accommodate walkers and bikers
- E.3.3.3 Continue to implement the Road Evaluation and Pavement Management program by providing Capital Budget and Operating Budget funds for the 4R Paving Program (rehabilitation, recycling, repaving, and reconstruction)
- E.3.3.4 Encourage the Connecticut Department of Transportation to improve maintenance of state-owned roads and bridges within Norwalk
- E.3.3.5 Require the Department of Public Works to provide a plan for the evaluation and repair of roads
- E.3.3.6 Preserve and enhance the pedestrian experience on Main Street

E.3.4 Complete planned roadway construction projects

- E.3.4.1 Support the completion of limited access Route 7 by 2015
- E.3.4.2 Support the Transportation Improvement Program projects
- E.3.4.3 Encourage the Connecticut Department of Transportation to reconstruct Route 1 from Exit 14 to Westport to a four lane arterial with left turn lanes at major intersections; begin with Cross Street and North Avenue to Westport Avenue, by 2016
- E.3.4.4 Include improvements at traffic signals and certain intersections during the Route 1 widening project and consideration of additional left-hand turn lanes
- E.3.4.5 Require all road repairs to be completed in a timely manner and in an acceptable fashion

E.4.1 Maintain a system of bridges to facilitate safe and efficient vehicular and pedestrian movement

- E.4.1.1 Maintain a local bridge inspection and rehabilitation replacement program
- E.4.1.2 Support Capital Budget requests for local bridge maintenance program and the use of the State and Federal "Local Bridge Revolving Funds"
- E.4.1.3 Minimize impact upon neighborhoods and develop designs that are sensitive to the community when replacing bridges
- E.4.1.4 Bridges and roadways over navigable waterways should be maintained, operated, repaired, built to avoid or reduce potential for any significant adverse impacts on navigation, safety, environmental quality
- E.4.1.5 Monitor work on bridge crossings for avoidance/reduction of impacts on water quality

E.4.2 Incorporate pedestrian convenience and safety at all bridges and overpasses

E.5.1 Support economic growth in the city with appropriate parking strategies

- E.5.1.1 Expand the public parking supply, including the building of new parking garages in Norwalk's downtowns including Main and High Streets, Isaac's Street (mixed-use), Webster Street, Washington Street, and on public land off Water Street in South Norwalk
- E.5.1.2 Require parking garage designs that blend in with the surrounding area
- E.5.1.3 Encourage centralized parking in the Norwalk and South Norwalk downtowns which allows shared parking by uses with complementary demands in both daytime and evenings
- E.5.1.4 Provide adequate parking at train stations; encourage new uses to share the current parking supply
- E.5.1.5 Continue to survey the parking provided for existing buildings and uses to evaluate the adequacy of existing parking standards
- E.5.1.6 Support continued use of fee-in-lieu of parking in the Wall Street area and in South Norwalk

E.5.2 Continue providing an organized approach to parking management

- E.5.2.1 Provide a safe, clean, and convenient parking experience
- E.5.2.2 Fund a third-party audit of the Parking Authority systems and operations every four years. Create a citywide, market-based pricing system for both on-street and off-street public parking spaces using a fee structure that is based on Fairfield County data. Increase customer convenience associated with the use of the City's parking spaces including the establishment a progressive validation system
- E.5.2.3 Economically encourage long-term durations in off-street garages and surface parking
- E.5.2.4 Economically promote short-term durations (and discourage long-term durations) in on-street spaces to support retail uses
- E.5.2.5 Employ non-punitive strategies to encourage desired parking durations
- E.5.2.6 Make on-street parking convenient; design and convey regulations so that they are easy to understand
- E.5.2.7 Maintain convenient on-street parking payment requirements and keep pace with technological advancements

E.6.1 Encourage appropriate home occupations as a means to reduce commuter traffic

E.5. PARKING

E.6. OTHER

F. Governance, Zoning, and Urban Design

SECTION CONTENTS

- F.1** General
- F.2** Zoning
- F.3** Planning
- F.4** Urban Design
- F.5** Historic Preservation
- F.6** Enforcement
- F.7** Other

Norwalk has distinctive neighborhoods—urban, suburban, and even rural—three rivers, two downtowns, and a picturesque working harbor with built and natural shorelines. These are the characteristic features of the city, and all of them have value.

Zoning and Aesthetics

By law, the City of Norwalk has the ability to create and enforce zoning that oversees use, site coverage, and massing of new development; however, it has less control over the aesthetic issues which arise with some regularity and continue to concern its citizens. While the State of Connecticut protects individual property rights and by inference, the design of structures on those properties, a few mechanisms under State law do allow the City to identify qualified areas for increased design scrutiny and protection. The ability to designate Village Districts, Design Districts, and Local Historic Districts provides an important tool for preservation of distinctive scenic or historic resources. In turn, these designated areas attract tourism, demonstrate the value of character, and often provide a window into the past.

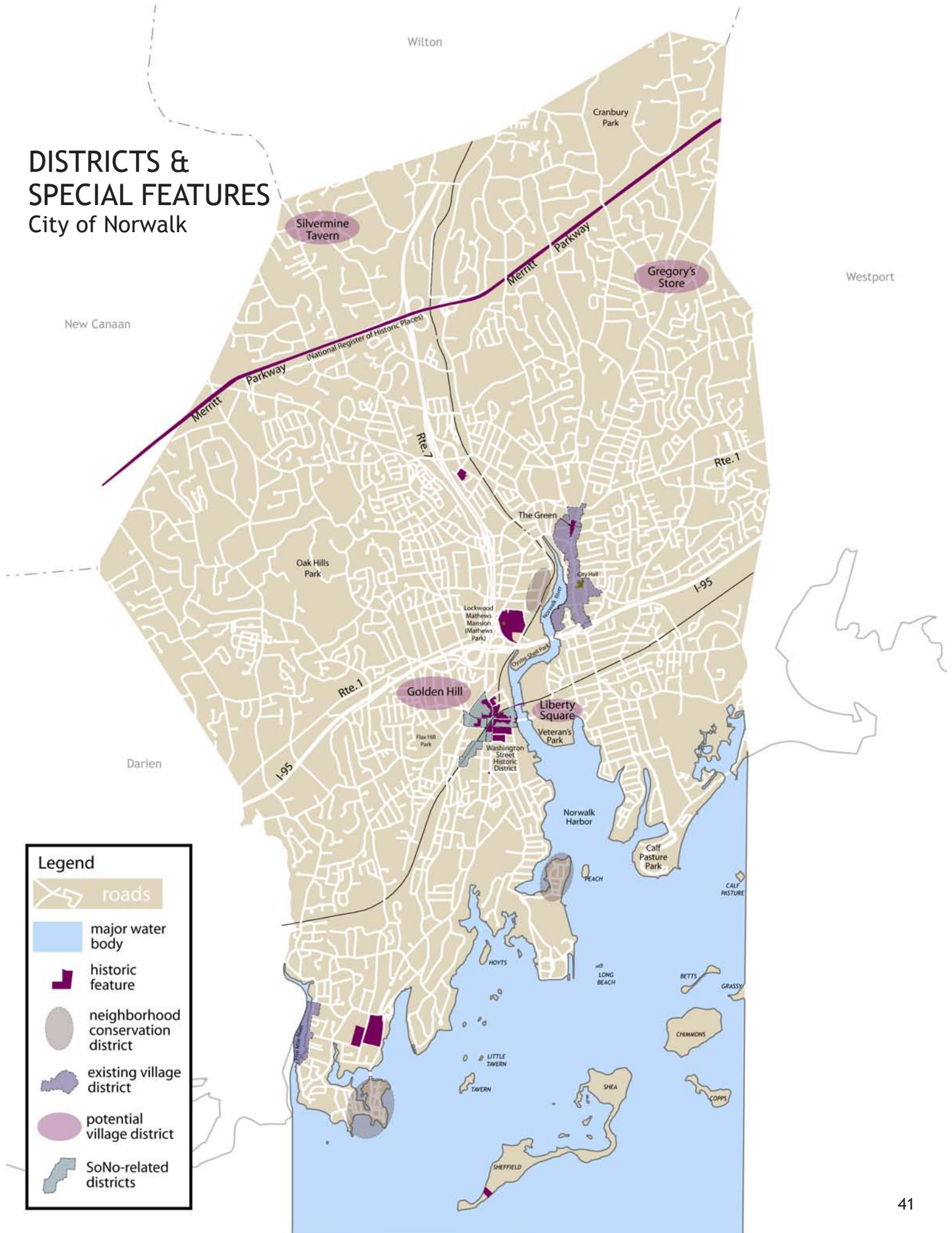
Good Planning Requires Diverse, Ongoing Input

The City should continue to seek wide citizen participation in planning and governance. Volunteer, neighborhood-based planning efforts should continue for residential communities, with sufficient support from the City to ensure that voices are heard. Other districts, identified as business corridors, major gateways, industrial zones, etc.—which are likely to see major transformation due to strong and ongoing market trends—must be studied by professionals. However, inclusion of the public in the formative stages of the planning process should be encouraged. In addition, the City of Norwalk must preserve its waterfront and encourage water-dependent uses and natural habitats while reviewing appropriate development. Ongoing housing studies should inform planners on the measures needed for balancing the housing supply with the city's employment needs.

Regulations and Incentives

Rules and regulations are only as good as the enforcement provided. The proper penalties for abuses and violations of water quality, habitat destruction, and illegal demolition of historically significant structures need to be reviewed, addressed, and implemented. At the same time, appropriate incentives must be established to encourage compliance and compensate responsible actions that would otherwise unfairly burden individual property owners. Regulatory formulas such as those used to govern workforce housing should be re-evaluated every two to three years. Programs should be flexible, to respond to market changes and shifts in the needs of Norwalk's diverse and changing households.

DISTRICTS & SPECIAL FEATURES City of Norwalk



Legend

- roads
- major water body
- historic feature
- neighborhood conservation district
- existing village district
- potential village district
- SoNo-related districts

F. Governance, Zoning, and Urban Design

F.1. GENERAL

F.1.1 Maintain efficient and responsive city government

- F.1.1.1 Implement a continuing program to evaluate City activities and programs, to ensure Norwalkers benefit from an efficient government operation
- F.1.1.2 Ensure appropriate competition for contracted services
- F.1.1.3 Implement a continuing capital budget management program, including a plan of debt reduction
- F.1.1.4 Complete the consolidation and digitalization of all City of Norwalk databases (including mapping) within 2 years of adopting this Plan
- F.1.1.5 Utilize the Plan of Conservation and Development for Norwalk to establish municipal priorities and undertake long-term financial planning
- F.1.1.6 Allow for the future needs of Norwalk to be met as identified in this Plan (i.e. housing, economic growth, community facilities, etc.)
- F.1.1.7 Provide an implementation strategy for all elements of the Plan; assign accountability for individual Plan elements

F.2. ZONING

F.2.1 Examine and modify existing zoning where necessary to achieve the goals of this plan

- F.2.1.1 Create new Village Districts, Conservation Districts, and Historic Districts where appropriate
- F.2.1.2 Provide stability in land use and zoning
- F.2.1.3 Review all anomalies and spot zones to conform to regulations, and to encourage reasonable uses
- F.2.1.4 Provide a guide to the Zoning Commission in their review of the zoning regulations and map
- F.2.1.5 Use streets, the railroad, natural features or property lines as boundaries between different land uses
- F.2.1.6 Minimize the number of nonconforming uses
- F.2.1.7 Minimize variance requests to the Zoning Board of Appeals
- F.2.1.8 Amend zoning to remove barriers to development types that fulfill planning goals on South Main Street

F.2.2 Preserve and enhance the character of residential neighborhoods

- F.2.2.1 Modify zoning regulations to control height and bulk of single family residences (height, setbacks, coverage)
- F.2.2.2 Limit the social programs and businesses allowed in residential zones
- F.2.2.3 Maintain requirements for landscaped buffers where commercial uses abut residential uses
- F.2.2.4 Retain the portion of East Avenue zoned East Avenue Village District and maintain it primarily for small-scale professional offices
- F.2.2.5 Minimize impact of businesses on adjoining residence zones through a lighting ordinance
- F.2.2.6 Promote scenic road designations

F. Governance, Zoning, and Urban Design

F.3.1 Modify specific area plans to conform to the Plan of Conservation and Development

- F.3.1.1 Review specific area plans and modify as necessary for agreement with the goals and policies of this Plan of Conservation and Development

F.3.2 Conduct new planning studies where necessary to further the goals of this plan

- F.3.2.1 Conduct an intermodal study for South Norwalk Station; explore creation of a redevelopment area
- F.3.2.2 Develop and maintain a comprehensive Natural Resources Inventory map and list for the City
- F.3.2.3 Create and implement a Historic Preservation Plan to encourage retention and rehabilitation of architecturally and historically important structures and districts
- F.3.2.4 Revisit planning goals for the Webster Block
- F.3.2.5 Encourage Parks & Recreation to prepare a new Cranbury Park Master Plan
- F.3.2.6 Conduct a comprehensive citywide traffic study
- F.3.2.7 Develop a plan for public and visual access to the river
- F.3.2.8 Update the plan of parks and open space within 2 years of adopting this Plan, and include public participation and specific master plans for major parks

F.3.3 Maintain public participation in planning

- F.3.3.1 Continue to actively seek and listen to public participation in the preparation of future plans for the city or any part thereof
- F.3.3.2 Continue to encourage the participation of a greater number of residents in future planning including attendance at public meetings

F.4.1 Strengthen the character of neighborhoods and commercial areas and improve the quality of architectural design

- F.4.1.1 Encourage the Chamber of Commerce to continue their annual awards program for the best architectural design of the year which will increase public recognition of quality building design
- F.4.1.2 Maintain requirements for landscaping to improve appearance from the street and provide for effective maintenance
- F.4.1.3 Create an ordinance to require the demolition or rehabilitation of abandoned or burned-out structures within a certain period of time after fire or code inspections have been completed
- F.4.1.4 Continue to review and improve sign regulations
- F.4.1.5 Maintain & expand Village Districts to preserve the character of the districts, to improve the design of buildings and their relationship to the streetscape, and to protect resources of historical and architectural significance; establish Village Districts in Cranbury (Gregory's Store), Golden Hill (Cedar Street area), Silvermine Tavern area, and Liberty Square area

F.3. PLANNING



Buildings that have the effect of "walling off" the waterfront should not be permitted. The design of buildings can retain public views and access to the water on the property and maintain an appropriate massing and scale according to existing buildings in the area.

F.4. URBAN DESIGN



Context-sensitive design in new buildings and rehabilitation of existing structures are keys to preserving neighborhood character in Norwalk.

F. Governance, Zoning, and Urban Design

- F.4.1.6 Encourage context-sensitive design by requiring consistent setbacks and providing bonuses for desired architectural features (such as porches, bay windows, and pergolas)
- F.4.1.7 Establish design guidelines that improve the appearance of residential, commercial, and industrial areas
- F.4.1.8 Protect harborside neighborhoods from inappropriate development and preserve views and water access
- F.4.1.9 Create an engaging urban landscape and architectural setting in the Wall Street area through the adoption and implementation of Wall Street planning, as amended
- F.4.1.10 Create an engaging urban landscape and architectural setting in the West Avenue area through the adoption and implementation of West Avenue planning, as amended

F.4.2 Design streets for people as well as vehicles

- F.4.2.1 Enhance pedestrian experience to support related economic revitalization and encourage transit use
- F.4.2.2 Provide special design treatments at key intersections and gateways to enhance and reinforce surroundings
- F.4.2.3 Upgrade sidewalks along major roads
- F.4.2.4 Limit the number of driveways in future developments along Main Ave and Westport Ave
- F.4.2.5 Promote sidewalk cafes

F.4.3 Improve the appearance of public plazas, streets, and rights-of-way

- F.4.3.1 Implement a program to clean-up city streets and reduce trash and garbage
- F.4.3.2 Continue to encourage the designation of scenic roads
- F.4.3.3 Improve the design of city street signs and public signs
- F.4.3.4 Consider a percent-for-art ordinance to promote the display of works of art in public places and as amenities in large commercial projects
- F.4.3.5 Continue to promote volunteer beautification efforts, such as Clean & Green's Adopt-A-Spot Programs, neighborhood clean-ups and tree plantings and continue to support these efforts with an annual awards program
- F.4.3.6 Improve the appearance of public plazas and streets by continuing to support capital budget funding for street improvements; particularly the West Avenue/Wall Street and Reed Putnam areas

F.4.4 "Green" Norwalk through proper care and preservation of trees

- F.4.4.1 Continue to fund the citywide tree planting and maintenance program
- F.4.4.2 Assess condition of trees and work with Norwalk Clean and Green and the Norwalk Tree Alliance in this effort
- F.4.4.3 Replace diseased trees, plant new trees, and improve street tree maintenance
- F.4.4.4 Encourage the preservation of trees on private property
- F.4.4.5 Implement recommendations of Tree Advisory Committee

F. Governance, Zoning, and Urban Design

F.4.5 Enhance primary gateways

- F.4.5.1 Redesign, restructure, and continuously update the electronic gateway to Norwalk, i.e. the City website www.norwalkct.org
- F.4.5.2 Identify and redesign all other gateways into Norwalk
- F.4.5.3 Provide special design treatments at key intersections and gateways to enhance and reinforce surroundings
- F.4.5.4 Keep Norwalk clean and green

F.5.1 Designate, preserve, and re-use historic and architecturally significant landmarks, structures, and districts where economically feasible

- F.5.1.1 Improve the appearance of Norwalk and retain the character of the city by emphasizing historic preservation and quality design of all public and private facilities
- F.5.1.2 Support to create and implement a Historic Preservation Plan including an inventory of historic buildings
- F.5.1.3 When a building is added to the National Register of Historic places, the notice should be added to the Norwalk Land Records by the applicant
- F.5.1.4 Use historic preservation as a tool for economic revitalization and to promote tourism
- F.5.1.5 Establish local historic districts in South Norwalk Washington Street area, in the area surrounding the Norwalk Green and in the Silvermine area, and consider additional district designation based upon historical and architectural significance
- F.5.1.6 Support private preservation and rehabilitation efforts and adaptive reuse of historic structures
- F.5.1.7 Encourage the dedication of facade easements as a means to preserve the exterior facades of privately owned historic structures
- F.5.1.8 Continue to provide funding in the Historic Commission's capital budget to maintain and rehabilitate public historic structures
- F.5.1.9 Continue to promote public awareness of historic properties by posting plaques upon historically significant structures
- F.5.1.10 Evaluate regulations to give incentive to the retention and reuse of historically significant buildings that are listed in the local or state register of historic places
- F.5.1.11 Preserve architectural qualities of South Main Street and Washington Street

F.5. HISTORIC PRESERVATION



The Silvermine Inn and Tavern is an historic landmark as well as a dining and tourist destination in Norwalk.

F.6.1 Improve enforcement of zoning, building, and health codes

- F.6.1.1 Establish and maintain an effective program of zoning enforcement
- F.6.1.2 Support the adoption of state legislation to strengthen the enforcement powers of zoning officers

F.6. ENFORCEMENT

F. Governance, Zoning, and Urban Design

- F.6.1.3 Establish a City Land Bank Program that is utilized for the purpose of reserving land for future community use. Specific uses to be considered by the fund would include future school sites, parks, greenways, open space, community and cultural centers, and other governmental uses including libraries and central maintenance facilities. In addition, the fund could be used to acquire land designated for economic development activities determined to be essential to the long-term well-being of the community
- F.6.1.4 Encourage the increase of local and state penalties for wetland violators
- F.6.1.5 Increase enforcement and fines for illegal discharges into sewer lines
- F.6.1.6 Increase fines for violations of the City's demolition ordinance
- F.6.1.7 Ensure proper storage and disposal of garbage in retail and restaurant areas in all commercial areas

F.7. OTHER

F.7.1 Encourage the amendment of State Statute 12-107e

- F.7.1.1 Procure for municipalities the right of first refusal for parcels designated as open space by the city
- F.7.1.2 Require that designated open space be maintained for a minimum period of time where property owners have obtained an open space classification for tax purposes
- F.7.1.3 Require the payment of abated taxes if the property is developed

F.7.2 Improve the standards for light pollution to maintain the health and quality of life our residents enjoy

- F.7.2.1 Require screening (cut-off) of street lights
- F.7.2.2 Create design standards for all street lights which are appropriate for the neighborhood
- F.7.2.3 Evaluate all City-owned sites to mitigate adverse impact from light
- F.7.2.4 Minimize impact of businesses on adjoining residence zones through a lighting ordinance

F. Governance, Zoning, and Urban Design

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Implementation

This update to the Plan of Conservation and Development is intended to guide future decisions in the City. Implementation requires the continued collaborative efforts of many parties, both in various levels of government as well as in the private sector. What follows is a list of priorities according to probable time frames; these represent goals and will be subject to financial and other limitations.

SHORT-TERM

1-2 years

- Continue to provide budget funding to redevelop the West Avenue, Wall Street, and Reed Putnam areas with new housing and mixed-use developments (*A.2.1.3, page 11*)
- Update Restricted Industrial Zones, Industrial 1 Zones, and Industrial 2 Zones, to allow on a case-by-case basis certain types of office and multifamily residential uses, to reflect current economic trends in Norwalk (*A.5.1.1, page 13*)
- Update the mapping and evaluations of inland and tidal wetlands by the Conservation Commission and the Department of Environmental Protection as soon as possible and provide Capital Budget funding (*B.1.1.5, page 16*)
- Maintain up-to-date mapping resources in the City (*B.1.1.7, page 16*)
- Develop, maintain, and evaluate a Natural Resources Inventory including an update to the inland and tidal wetland maps, indicating areas with severe or considerable natural constraints to development (steep slopes, excessively poorly drained or excessively well-drained soils, 100-year floodway areas) (*B.1.2.1, page 16*)
- Provide a fishing pier and picnic tables at Veterans Park (*C.3.1.2, page 26*)
- Implement the recommendations of the upcoming study regarding the future use of the transfer station (*B.6.1.4, page 19*)
- Encourage a timely submission of a comprehensive restoration conservation plan (*D.2.1.3, page 30*)
- Expand retail mix in SoNo (*D.5.3.1, page 32*)
- Encourage complete cardiac care at Norwalk Hospital (*D.6.2.3, page 32*)
- Continue to encourage the participation of a greater number of residents in future planning including attendance at public meetings (*F.3.3.2, page 43*)
- Identify and re-design all gateways into Norwalk (*F.4.5.1, page 45*)
- Complete the consolidation and digitalization of all City of Norwalk databases (including mapping) within 2 years of adopting this Plan (*F.1.1.4, page 42*)

MID-TERM

3-5 years

- Continue to provide budget funding to redevelop the West Avenue and Reed Putnam areas with new housing and mixed-use developments (*A.2.1.3, page 11*)

- Provide an improved recreational experience to South Norwalk residents beyond that currently available at Ryan Park; refurbish Ryan Park to suit residents' needs and establish park constituency (*C.3.1.4, page 26*)
- Establish Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (or "LEED," as it is commonly called)," standards for all municipal building projects to reduce energy use (*D.2.1.4, page 30*)
- Assess the current fire stations and ensure rapid resource deployment for all areas of Norwalk (*D.4.1.2, page 31*)
- Continue to identify and re-design all gateways into Norwalk (*F.4.5.1, page 45*)
- Continue working toward completion of the consolidation and digitalization of all City of Norwalk databases (including mapping) (*F.1.1.4, page 42*)

LONG-TERM

6-10 years

- Anticipate the need for two new stations on the Danbury Line as per the Reed-Putnam Urban Renewal Plan (north of the Maritime Aquarium) and on Wall Street at Commerce Street (*E.2.1.7, page 36*)

ONGOING

Throughout the 10-year period

- Improve enforcement of zoning, building, and health codes to protect the public from unsafe and unsanitary housing conditions (*A.2.2.2, page 11*)
- Continue to provide capital budget funds to the Housing Sites Development Agency for the acquisition and improvement of sites for affordable rental and ownership housing (*A.2.4.2, page 12*)
- Incorporate squares and greens into redevelopment and areas of new residential growth (*C.1.3.12, page 25*)
- Identify areas that lack local public open space (i.e., Spring Hill/Hospital Zone) and work to establish parks in those locations (*C.1.3.9, page 24*)
- Provide sufficient school facilities and programs in order to afford all citizens the opportunity to obtain a quality education (*D.3.1, page 30*)
- Pursue excellence in education (*D.3.1.1, page 30*)
- Ensure rapid emergency service deployment for all areas of Norwalk (*D.4.1, page 31*)
- Support improvements to public transit and traffic management measures as the highest priorities (*E.1.1.1, page 36*)
- Create new Village Districts, Conservation Districts, and Historic Districts where appropriate (*F.2.1.1, page 42*)
- Continue to encourage the participation of a greater number of residents in future planning including attendance at public meetings (*F.3.3.2, page 43*)

Implementation

Estimated Budget

The following analysis of costs includes “order of magnitude” estimates for many of the aforementioned priorities.

ITEM	PAGE #	SHORT-TERM*	MEDIUM-TERM*	LONG-TERM*	TOTAL*
A.2.1.3 Continue to provide budget funding to redevelop the West Avenue and Reed Putnam areas with new housing and mixed-use developments	<i>p. 11</i>	\$100/year	\$100/year	\$100/year	\$1,000
A.2.2.2 Improve enforcement of zoning, building, and health codes to protect the public from unsafe and unsanitary housing conditions	<i>p. 11</i>	\$60/year	\$60/year	\$60/year	\$600
A.2.4.2 Continue to provide capital budget funds to the Housing Sites Development Agency for the acquisition and improvement of sites for affordable rental and ownership housing	<i>p. 12</i>	\$250/year	\$250/year	\$250/year	\$2,500
B.3.1.2 Continue to provide capital budget funds for drainage projects to solve drainage problems	<i>p. 17</i>	\$1,000/ year	\$1,000/ year	\$1,000/ year	\$10,000
B.5.1.2 Continue upgrading the sewage treatment plant	<i>p. 18</i>	Water Pollution Control Authority	Water Pollution Control Authority	Water Pollution Control Authority	
B.5.1.5 Continue programs to rehabilitate the existing sanitary sewer network including trunk lines, interceptors, force mains and pump stations, and provide capital funding	<i>p. 18</i>	Water Pollution Control Authority	Water Pollution Control Authority	Water Pollution Control Authority	

Estimated Budget, continued

ITEM	PAGE #	SHORT-TERM*	MEDIUM-TERM*	LONG-TERM*	TOTAL*
B.5.1.10 Develop an industrial pretreatment program in accordance with State regulations to improve collection system performance and offset operating costs	<i>p. 18</i>	Water Pollution Control Authority	Water Pollution Control Authority	Water Pollution Control Authority	
B.9.1.2 Continue to fund the citywide tree planting and maintenance program (<i>Also F.4.4.1</i>)	<i>p. 20</i>	\$25/year	\$25/year	\$25/year	\$250
C.1.1.2 Provide capital budget funding to fill in "gaps" in the Riveredge Park and Bikeway along the Norwalk River	<i>p. 24</i>	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$3,000
C.1.1.5 Provide additional public space along Norwalk River in the next 10 years; provide open spaces leading to the Norwalk River	<i>p. 24</i>	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$300
C.1.1.6 Fill in the missing segment of the waterfront trail behind the Maritime Aquarium, linking the entrance of that facility and Oyster Shell Park with SoNo	<i>p. 24</i>	\$250			\$250

* all figures in thousands

Implementation

Estimated Budget, continued

ITEM	PAGE #	SHORT-TERM*	MEDIUM-TERM*	LONG-TERM*	TOTAL*
C.2.4.5 Demolish the old police station for open space	p. 26	\$2,000			\$2,000
C.2.4.8 Maintain an Open Space Fund and consider acquisition of critical parcels as they become available	p. 26	\$50/yr			\$150
D.1.1.1 Update the City's Emergency Operations Plan to ensure that the City's Plan is consistent with that adopted by the State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security	p. 30	\$50			\$50
E.3.3.1 Adopt a workable repair and maintenance program for sidewalks and footpaths, and provide capital budget funds	p. 38	\$50/yr	\$50/yr	\$50/yr	\$500
E.3.3.3 Continue to implement the Road Evaluation and Pavement Management program by providing Capital Budget and Operating Budget funds for the 4R Paving Program (rehabilitation, recycling, repaving, and reconstruction)	p. 38	\$1,000/yr	\$1,000/yr	\$1,000/yr	\$10,000

Estimated Budget, continued

ITEM	PAGE #	SHORT-TERM*	MEDIUM-TERM*	LONG-TERM*	TOTAL*
E.3.4.1 Support the completion of Route 7 by 2015	p. 38	Department of Transportation			
E.3.4.3 Encourage the Connecticut Department of Transportation to reconstruct Route 1 from Exit 14 to Westport to a four lane arterial with left turn lanes at major intersections; begin with Cross Street and North Avenue to Westport Avenue, by 2016	p. 38	Department of Transportation/ Private			
E.5.1.3 Encourage centralized parking in the Norwalk and South Norwalk downtowns which allows shared parking by uses with complementary demands in both daytime and evenings	p. 39	Parking Authority			
F.1.1.4 Complete the consolidation and digitalization of all City of Norwalk databases (including mapping) within 2 years of adopting this Plan	p. 42	\$300/yr	\$300/yr	\$300/yr	\$3,000
F.3.2.8 Update the plan of parks and open space within 2 years of adopting this Plan, and include public participation and specific master plans for major parks	p. 43	\$100/yr			\$300

* all figures in thousands

Appendix

I

- **Regional Setting**
- **Recent Demographic Change**

Regional Setting

Norwalk is the 6th largest city in Connecticut, spanning 23 square miles and comprising more than 84,000 residents. It is situated on the shore of the Long Island Sound, about 50 miles northeast of New York City, 30 miles southwest of New Haven, and a 75-minute drive southwest of the state capital in Hartford. Like the other communities abutting the Sound, Norwalk straddles the I-95 corridor as well as the historic, scenic Merritt Parkway; it also benefits from several rail transportation corridors, with service on Metro North and Danbury rail lines. It is home to three rivers, the Silvermine and Five-Mile as well as the largest, the Norwalk River, which flows into the city's scenic, working harbor and eventually the Sound. A series of public and private islands lie within kayaking distance from the mid-harbor, distinguishing Norwalk from its neighbors and comprising scores of moorings and marinas hosting a vibrant recreational boating culture. As a result of these varied features, Norwalk is home to an unusually diverse range of geographic and man-made settings, from beaches and salt marshes to woodlands and golf courses, and encompasses two centuries of settlement that includes neighborhoods of single-family homes, working maritime industries, corporate office parks, a chic regional retail and restaurant destination, and many others.

Recent Demographic Change*

Population Numbers

This planning process has assumed the following current and future population estimates for the City of Norwalk, which have been provided by the Connecticut Department of Transportation:

Estimate of the 2006 population: 84,401

Projection for the year 2010: 86,310 Norwalk residents

Projection for the year 2020: 88,270 Norwalk residents

Additional notable trends and observations include:

- The population has grown by about 6,000 since 1990, although a faster pace occurred between 1990 and 2000 (4,500 new residents over the decade) than what has been seen since the year 2000 (1,500 new residents by the end of 2006).
- The current population estimate is the highest level in the city's history
- The population density is approximately 3,700 residents per square mile; this is higher than Norwalk's immediate neighbors, and also higher than Stamford's (approximately 3,200 residents per square mile)

Population Characteristics

- The population is getting older on average—a national trend, as the “baby boomer” generation heads toward retirement age, which is slated to begin around 2011.
- There are several significant trends among Norwalk’s Hispanic population: the percentage of Norwalkers of Hispanic or Latino background has almost doubled from 1990 (8.9%) to 2000 (15.6%); these new residents are the “primary source of overall population growth in Norwalk.” The largest number of Hispanic or Latino immigrants are arriving from Colombia.
- Increasing numbers of public school students speak a language other than English in their homes.

Income

- Median household income in 2000 was \$59,839, representing an inflation adjusted decline of about 6%. Norwalk’s median household income is approximately 10% higher than the state median.
- Norwalk’s per capita income increased 4.5% (from \$30,402 in 1990 to \$31,781 in 2000).
- The percentage of Norwalkers living below the poverty level increased from 1990 to 2000, from 5.2% to 7.2%. The highest rates are among households headed by single women with children. Estimates for 2005 (by the America Community Survey) suggest the poverty rate has climbed almost a full additional percentage point, to 8.1%. The relatively high cost of living in Norwalk and surrounding communities place intense pressure on all families with modest incomes, including many whose incomes do not technically fall below the poverty line.
- The percentage of Norwalk households paying more than 30% of income on rent is 39.7%, which exceeds both state (36.5%) and national (36.8%) numbers.

Housing

- According to a study of housing affordability by Alan Mallach in 2006, “the condominium is out of reach of all but the top 30% of households in Norwalk, while the single-family house is beyond the means of all but the top 9% of households.” (page 4, draft paper, 2006)
- Homeownership rates for some groups trail national averages. Rates among African-American residents and Hispanic or Latino residents increased between 1990 and 2000 (to 39.2% and 28.1%, respectively). National homeownership for these demographic groups are 46.3% and 45.7%, respectively.

Commuting

- About 74.2% of Norwalk commuters drive to work alone. (The national rate is 75.7%, the state’s is 80.0%.)
- About 8.5% of Norwalk commuters take public transit. (The national rate is 5.3%, the state’s is 3.9%.)

Appendix

II

- **Summary of Plans incorporated in the 2007 Plan of Conservation and Development**

Westport-North-Main Corridor Study and Plan

This study evaluated land use, transportation, urban design, and economic development policies for the corridor consisting of Westport Avenue from the Westport town line to East Avenue; North Avenue from East Avenue to Main Street; and Main Avenue/Street from North Avenue to the Merritt Parkway. The purpose of the study was to suggest policies to alter existing development patterns within the corridor in order to promote residential development, reduce retail development, and support walking and public transit.

Wall Street*

In January 2003, the City hired the Cecil Group of Boston to update the 1986 Business District Management Plan and to recommend amendments to the 1962 Wall/Main Urban Renewal Plan, with the intention of applying updated information and planning practices to increasing the development potential of the Greater Wall Street Area. The Cecil Group identified six opportunity areas and documented ten key elements for revitalizing the area. The City subsequently drafted a Wall Street Redevelopment Plan that serves as the formal implementation document for future Wall Street initiatives. Goals include re-instating the area as the center of Norwalk's community life, fostering economic development, and creating an attractive public realm. (The Wall Street Planning Study was approved on November 1, 2003, and became effective November 7, 2003.)

South Norwalk Planning Study

This study began in 2004 and examined the portion of Norwalk bounded by Washington Street, Water Street, Concord Street, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. The study focused on four opportunity areas: a reconfiguration and enhancement of South Norwalk station as a multimodal transportation node and a catalyst for redevelopment; possible improvements to Ryan Park; changes to zoning for South Main Street to help preserve the street's character; and possible uses of a City-owned site on Day Street, where a mixed-use development could help activate the area around Ryan Park and provide needed public parking for the uses along Water Street. The affordability of area housing was a concern of study participants, and the plan recommended that medium-density housing accommodating a variety of households be sought in the area.

**Portions of these descriptions are courtesy of project descriptions included in City of Norwalk Request for Proposal documents.*

Mid-Harbor Plan*

In January 2004, the City established a Mid-Harbor Planning Committee and retained the services of Chan Krieger Sieniewicz to assist in developing a Mid-Harbor Plan. This study, adopted in 2005 and incorporated in the standing Plan of Development, analyzed both sides of the waterfront area from the Chapel Street/Daskam's Lane area to Veteran's Park and lower Water Street along the Norwalk Harbor. The plan addressed future waterfront land uses and related issues including: the potential for utilizing City-owned properties to encourage new commercial, residential, and/or mixed-use development in the area; the need to improve public access to the waterfront; and establishing viable pedestrian connections to the South Norwalk Historic District. (The Mid-Harbor Planning Study was approved on July 26, 2005, and became effective August 5, 2005.)

Appendix

III

• Sources Used in the Preparation of this Update

The material in the Appendix that can be updated annually should be updated and provided as an attachment to the Plan.

Written Materials

- Norwalk Looking Ahead: Plan of Development for the City of Norwalk 1990-2000, as amended with Village District, Wall Street, and Mid-Harbor Planning studies
- Building Zone Map with Coastal Area Management Boundary; Building Zone Regulations
- Demographic Profiles for Norwalk from 2000 US Census
- Norwalk Harbor Management Plan 1990, as revised in 1993 and 1997; Draft of 2007 Harbor Management Plan
- Multiple documents regarding development at "95/7"
- West Avenue Corridor Redevelopment Plan
- Wall Street Area Planning Study
- Summary of Proposed Amendment: Urban Renewal Plan, Washington/South Main Street Improvement Area II
- Commercial & Residential Market Analysis
- Mid-Harbor Planning Study
- Connecticut Avenue Transportation Management Study
- Webster Parking Superblock
- Industrial Zones Committee
- South Norwalk Planning Study
- Main & Westport Avenue Study
- Oyster Shell Park Master Plan
- Master Plan of Parks and Open Space
- Master Plan of Land Use for Connecticut, Westport, & Main avenues
- Master Plan of Land Use
- GIS maps from DPW (Aerial photos, topography, parcel maps, etc.) and Conservation Commission (Wetland Soils, Watercourses, etc.)
- DPW Road Standards and Designation Map
- DPW drainage standards, stormwater and sanitary sewer system information, electric and water company maps
- Coastal area management, wetlands & watercourses, & aquifer protection area maps
- Superfund site map and list
- Central Norwalk Transportation and Pedestrian Master Plan
- Neighborhood Mini Master Plans
- Planning Principles (from the Norwalk Planning Commission)
- Affordable Housing Working Paper (draft), by Alan Mallach
- Fire Department: Comprehensive Assessment of the Fire Department, and 2006 Update to the Comprehensive Assessment
- Map of potential new Village Districts
- "Bureau of Public Transportation Capital Project/Program Description" (Connecticut Department of Transportation)
- Norwalk Transit District: 10-year capital plan
- Police Department: Mission Statement, Organizational Chart, Highlights of 06-07, and Goals for 07-08; Professional Standards Multi-Year Plan

- "A Guide to Understanding Norwalk's Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Regulations" (Pamphlet)
- "Conservation Opportunities: Norwalk's Open Space Plan"
- "Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Regulations"
- Board of Education: Operating Budget Request 2006-2007; and Facilities Audit & Analysis and Priority Needs Assessment
- Norwalk Health Department: Annual Report 2004-2005; Organizational Chart; Directory of Programs and Services Brochure; Become a NorWALKER, folder and brochures
- Maps of major projects & maps of neighborhoods
- Executive Summary of Affordable Housing Task Force Study Report
- Land Use Classification Map
- City of Norwalk 2006-2007 Capital Budget
- Norwalk Housing Authority: Annual Plan FY 2007; 5-year Plan 2004
- Employment Projections (from Connecticut Department of Transportation)
- Parking: Inventory, and "Proposal for a Comprehensive managed Public Parking System"
- Water Pollution Control Authority: Operating Highlights & FY 07-08 Proposed Capital Budget Summary
- Traffic Calming Guidelines
- Maps: roadway classification, land use classification, emergency response routes
- DPW Capital & Operating Budget
- Map of Recreational Opportunities
- Demographic Profile from Human Services Council
- D Residence Zone Changes: PowerPoint, Zoning Amendment
- State Heritage Park Master Plan
- Mathews Park Master Plan

In-person Interviews

The Honorable Mayor Richard A. Moccia

Norwalk Planning Commission

Norwalk Department of Public Works

Norwalk Health Department

Norwalk Housing Authority

Norwalk Parks & Recreation

Norwalk Historical Commission

Coalition of Norwalk Neighborhood Associations

Norwalk Harbor Management Commission

Norwalk Fire Department

Norwalk Police Department

Norwalk Board of Education

Norwalk Code Enforcement

Norwalk Finance Department

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