

## *INTRODUCTION*

A Plan of Development, frequently referred to as a Master Plan, may seem like an ominous document. Here, in one place, are goals and policies that address every important development issue Norwalk will face during the next ten years. How can this be? Who can predict the future with such certainty?

Because the Plan of Development deals with the future, there will always be an element of uncertainty. The degree of uncertainty is minimized by our ability to make projections based upon studies of the physical, social, economic and governmental conditions and trends in Norwalk and the region. The Plan reflects the current thinking of Norwalk's needs, wants and desires. The Commission and its staff have done their utmost to ensure that the data that has gone into this Plan is accurate and up to date.

Because the Plan of Development deals with the future, it must be flexible enough to adapt to unforeseen conditions. It is a working document. By law and by logic, the Plan is a guide. It is an advisory document designed to promote with the greatest efficiency and economy the coordinated development of Norwalk and the general welfare and prosperity of our population.

It is the comprehensive nature of planning that sets it apart from zoning. Zoning is concerned primarily with the use of property. The ultimate objective of zoning is to confine certain classes of buildings and uses to designated districts. The Plan of Development does not control the Zoning Commission in its enactment of zoning regulations.

The Plan of Development contains the goals and policies of the Planning Commission, based upon their knowledge and experience as well as the valuable citizen input they received during the planning process. The goals describe in broad terms the conditions or end result we intend to achieve. The policies which follow each goal are more specific actions that are designed to realize a goal.

The benefits of a Plan of Development are many. It integrates specific area plans such as the Coastal Area Management Plan, the Master Plan of Parks and Open Space, the Norwalk Business District Management Plan, etc. into a comprehensive document. It provides a framework for making short and long term decisions on a broad range of matters, including schools, roads, housing, water supply, etc. It recommends the most desirable use of scarce resources. The Plan is an educational document that enables people to learn more about their neighborhood and their city. Finally, it demonstrates our commitment to develop our community in a planned and coordinated manner for the benefit of all.

Even though the Plan of Development is advisory, its preparation is mandatory. Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires the Planning Commission "to prepare, adopt and amend a Plan of Development." In 1988, this section was amended to require that the Plan of Development be reviewed and updated at least once every ten years. Norwalk's last comprehensive Plan of Development was adopted in March 1973. In the ensuing seventeen years Norwalk has experienced tremendous physical growth and social change that has rendered the 1973 Plan obsolete.

Finally, the adoption of this Plan marks the end of the planning process and the beginning of its implementation. The benefits of this Plan, like any plan, will only be realized if it is successfully implemented. Successful implementation depends upon the cooperation and leadership of Norwalk's neighborhood associations, business community and civic organizations working together with municipal boards and agencies to turn the Plan into reality.

### ***LOOKING AHEAD***

What will Norwalk be like in the year 2000? This Plan of Development articulates a vision that will guide Norwalk into the twenty-first century. It foresees gradual change that will strengthen our economy, improve the quality of life and enhance the character of Norwalk and its neighborhoods.

The following general statements summarize what Norwalk will be like in the year 2000:

-The overall pattern of development remains substantially the same; residential neighborhoods experience little change; most new development is located in the Norwalk and South Norwalk downtown's and along Routes 1 and 7; large scale development is limited to the downtown's and to the vicinity of Main Ave., north of the Merritt Parkway; specific areas are set aside for manufacturing uses.

-Total population has grown from approximately 80,000 to 84,000; the elderly population, 65 years of age and older, has increased significantly; household size has declined from 2.57 to 2.45 persons per household; the number of households has increased from 31,000 to 34,000; the number of school age children has increased by almost 10 percent.

-Awareness and concern for the environment has heightened; recycling has reduce solid waste disposal by 25 percent; increased spending on the sewer system and contamination abatement has improved water quality; regulatory changes have improved protection of inland and tidal wetlands.

-The number of jobs in Norwalk has grown from 52,000 to almost 62,000; manufacturing is declining as a percentage of total employment but remains the single largest component of Norwalk's economy; the majority of new jobs are in the service sector; demand for skilled workers is high; unemployment remains low.

-The number of housing units has increased from 33,000 to 36,000; the majority of new units are of multifamily construction, primarily studios and 1 bedrooms; most new housing units are built in commercial areas and in the Norwalk and South Norwalk downtown's; demand for low and moderate cost housing remains high; surrounding towns have expanded housing opportunities for low and moderate income families.

-The bulk of infrastructure expenditures are devoted to the maintenance of existing systems; upgrading of the sewage treatment plant is of the highest priority; new Route 7 to Danbury is

near completion; selective street and intersection improvements increase roadway capacity and improve traffic flow and safety; three new parking garages are added to the Norwalk and South Norwalk downtown's.

-Increased automobile use and increased commuter traffic exceed highway capacity along certain routes during certain times of the day; traffic management measures increase use of car pools, van pools and mass transit; rail service and ridership is increased; the redevelopment of the South Norwalk Railroad Station is complete; two new stations are added to the Danbury Line.

-No public schools are closed; no new schools or additions are needed; The number of daycare facilities increase; demand for social service, health and human care programs remain high; prevention and enforcement measures has abated illegal drug abuse; cultural and tourism attractions increase in importance and in attendance; preservation measures protect many historic buildings and districts.

-An array of park improvements broaden recreational opportunities in response to demand; a new State Heritage Park and waterfront esplanade improve public access to the Norwalk River and Harbor; almost all open space is owned by public agency or a land trust; innovative ways are used to preserve the few remaining parcels in private ownership.

-Norwalk is more attractive; architectural guidelines focus greater attention on urban design and site planning; the display of public art is greatly increased; Norwalk is becoming known as a "City of Trees."

-The vision of Norwalk described above is not our destiny. It is the deliberate goals and policies of this Plan of Development that set Norwalk's future course. Realization of the Plan rests in the hands of the people of Norwalk.

### ***REGIONAL SETTING***

Norwalk is located in Fairfield County, on the north shore of Long Island Sound, 40 miles northeast of New York City, and 15 miles west of Bridgeport. It is the sixth largest city in the State of Connecticut. Norwalk has a land area of 22.5 square miles (14,400 acres) and has 22 miles of waterfront. The city is located at longitude 73 degrees 25' west and latitude 41 degrees 8' north.

Norwalk is strategically situated within the northeast corridor and has excellent auto and truck access via I-95, U.S. Route 7, and the Merritt Parkway. Metro-North railroad provides frequent passenger service to New York City and New Haven, with connections to points beyond.

Norwalk is part of the South Western Planning Region which includes the municipalities of Greenwich, Stamford, Darien, New Canaan, Wilton, Westport and Weston. The population of the region in 1990 is approximately 336,000.

Norwalk's Metropolitan Statistical Area includes the towns of Wilton, Westport and Weston. These four municipalities also comprise the Norwalk Labor Market.

## ***HISTORY***

The recorded history of Norwalk began 350 years ago when, in 1640, Roger Ludlow purchased the land between the Norwalk and Saugatuck Rivers and a day's walk inland from Long Island Sound from the Indians. Norwalk was first settled in 1651, when thirty families located near Fitch Street in East Norwalk. Subsequent settlements occurred at "The Bridge" (Wall St./Main St.), at "Old Well" (South Norwalk) and on the banks of the Five Mile River (Rowayton) This settlement pattern led to a stronger identity with one's own community than with the town as a whole. The early economy was primarily agriculture and fishing, although small manufacturers of clocks, watches, nails, pottery and hats also existed.

Norwalk grew slowly during the eighteenth century and increased in importance as a seaport. The Revolutionary War brought disaster when, in July, 1779 British General William Tyron and his troops raided Norwalk and burned many homes, churches and businesses. Recovery from this destruction was slow. Many families who lost their homes migrated to the "Firelands" and founded what is now Norwalk, Ohio.

Immigration, the railroad, and the industrial revolution brought growth and prosperity to Norwalk in the nineteenth century. Beginning with a population of 5,000 in 1800, Norwalk grew to 20,000 by the end of the century. Industries such as hatting, pumps and builder's hardware located along the Norwalk River. As trade with New York City grew, many industries concentrated in South Norwalk adjacent to Norwalk Harbor and the railroad station. By 1870, "Old Well" became incorporated as the City of South Norwalk. In 1893, the City of Norwalk was incorporated.

The twentieth century brought rapid growth and change to Norwalk. In 1913, the Cities of Norwalk and South Norwalk, together with East Norwalk were consolidated into one. The respective parts of the city became Taxing Districts. Many older industries closed or moved away and were replaced by light industries, primarily in electronics, defense and high technology.

Interstate highway construction of the Merritt Parkway in 1938, the Connecticut Thruway (I-95) in 1956 and U.S. Route 7 between 1970 and 1990 improved regional access. They also reinforced the division of Norwalk into neighborhoods.

Residential subdivisions in the 1950's and 1960's converted farmland into single family lots in the Cranbury, Silvermine and West Norwalk areas. Retail shopping centers and office buildings sprang up along Routes 1 and 7.

Norwalk adopted zoning 1929. This action, more than any other, has shaped the current development pattern of Norwalk. A Planning Commission was appointed in 1947. In October, 1955, a devastating flood caused millions of dollars of property damage to the Wall-Main area. The destruction led to a large-scale urban renewal project in the Norwalk business district.

Today, Norwalk has a population of approximately 80,000 and an employment base of 52,000. Its economy is strong and diverse. Downtown revitalization, the Maritime Center and new City Hall has created a renewed spirit in Norwalk and the promise of a bright future.

Throughout its history, Norwalk has been influenced by its proximity to New York City, its attractive setting on Long Island Sound and its residents' strong sense of identity with their neighborhoods. These same factors will continue to influence Norwalk's future.

### ***PLANNING PROCESS***

The Planning Commission started work on a new Plan of Development shortly after being appointed in May, 1988. The Plan was prepared under the direction of the Land Use Committee of the Planning Commission. The Committee's work began with a review of existing plans. These included the 1973 Master Plan, the Coastal Area Management Plan, the Reed Putnam Urban Renewal Plan, the Norwalk Business District Management Plan, the South Norwalk Revitalization Plan, the Routes 1 and 7 Master Plan and the Master Plan of Parks and Open Space. Much of the work that went into the preparation of these plans was used in the new Plan of Development.

The Committee then met with municipal departments that have an important roll in the planning and development of Norwalk. Representatives of the Zoning Commission, the Zoning Board of Appeals, Department of Public Works, Redevelopment Agency, Board of Education, Fire Department, Conservation Commission and the Department of Recreation, Parks and Building Management each shared their department's current and future plans with the Committee. The Committee also met with the Director of the South Western Regional Planning Agency to learn of regional plans and trends.

After the Land Use Committee familiarized itself with current plans and conditions, the Planning Commission formally announced in September, 1988 that a new Plan of Development would be prepared for the entire City of Norwalk. The Commission set forth a five phase planning process as follows:

#### ***PHASE I - DATA COLLECTION/BASE STUDIES***

This phase was used to comply thorough, accurate and up-to-date information for the major components of the Plan. During this phased the Land Use Committee held twenty meetings with neighborhood associations, the business community, and civic organizations, including two workshops open to the general public. This initial phase was used to introduce the planning process, to solicit ideas, problems and recommendations and, most importantly, to invite active community participation.

#### ***PHASE II - DATA ANALYSIS***

Phase II was used to study the raw data collected in Phase I and to prepare preliminary goals and policies. The Land Use Committee presented its preliminary goals and policies at a series of ten

roundtables. At each roundtable members of the public were invited to discuss a specific subject area of the Plan (housing, transportation, etc.) and to recommend changes and clarifications.

### ***PHASE III - DRAFT PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT***

The Land Use Committee spent this phase revising the preliminary goals and policies based upon the input from Phase II. The revised goals and policies, together with the factual data, were incorporated into a Draft Plan of Development.

### ***PHASE IV - PUBLIC REVIEW***

This phase was devoted to obtaining public comment, pro and con, on the Draft Plan of Development and to invite recommendations. Two meetings were held to solicit public comment. Revisions to the Draft were considered by the land Use Committee and made as appropriate.

### ***PHASE V - FORMAL ADOPTION***

Revisions to the Plan of Development were finalized during this phase and the Plan was presented for formal adoption. Three public hearings were held on the Plan; two by the Planning Commission and one by the Common Council. The Plan of Development must be adopted by the Planning Commission and one by the Common Council and signed by the Mayor before it becomes official.

The Planning Commission has made public participation a keystone of the planning process. More than thirty-five meetings and hearings, open to the public, were held. Public input has not only improved the content of the Plan of Development, but has also increased the likelihood that it will be successfully implemented.

## ***POPULATION***

The size and composition of Norwalk's population are key factors that underlie all major planning decisions. The better we can project demographic change, the better we can anticipate and plan for its implications. Our policies for schools, housing, health care, transportation, economic base, etc. are all dependent upon future population trends.

Norwalk has a current population of approximately 80,000. Our population has remained relatively stable for the last twenty years. This is in marked contrast to the dramatic growth Norwalk experienced between 1950 and 1970 when the population increased by almost 39,000. Norwalk's past population trends are similar to the patterns experienced by comparable cities in New England and particularly reflect the trends experienced in the southwest region of Connecticut.

By the year 2000, Norwalk will have a population of approximately 84,000. This projection is based upon a decline in number of births, a stable mortality rate and a modest increase in the migration. While Norwalk will experience only modest population growth during the next decade, the demographic make-up of the population will change significantly. Household size will become smaller: from 2.57 to 2.45 persons per household; the number of the households will increase from 31,000 to 34,000; the median age will increase from 35 to 38 and the number of childbearing women (age 15-44) will decline from 18,650 to 17,250.

The demographic changes affecting the three major components of the population - school age children, the labor force and the elderly - deserve a closer look.

### ***SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN***

The number of school age children ages 5 through 19 years is projected to increase from 14,711 in 1990 to 16,110 in 2000. This represents an increase of an additional 1,400 school age children between 1990 and 2000, or a 9.5 percent increase.

Public school enrollment peaked in Norwalk in 1970 with a total of 17,843 children. Since then, enrollment has declined. This trend directly correlates to the number of births to Norwalk residents which peaked in 1969, steadily decreased to 1978 and then rose gradually to 1990. A slight decline in resident births is projected through the year 2000.

The number of births and the number of school age children directly affects enrollment in the Norwalk School system. School facilities planning is essential to adjust classroom needs to changes in enrollment at the different grade levels.

### ***LABOR FORCE***

The number of persons within the labor force years, ages 20 through 64, are expected to remain relatively stable to the year 2000. Sixty-one percent of the total population was within this age category in 1980; it is projected that 60 percent of the population will be within the labor force years in the year 2000.

While the size of the labor force will remain relatively unchanged, the number of jobs in Norwalk is expected to rise significantly.

The number of person's aged 20 through 64 in 1990 is 49,767, while the projected number of jobs in Norwalk is 52,664. (Conn DOT, Series 15, July, 1988). By 2000, the number of jobs is projected to grow to 61,970, while the number of person's aged 20 through 64 is projected to increase to only 50,726 persons. (Ibid)

The disparity between the resident labor force relative to jobs will place greater pressure upon the transportation corridors as more persons will commute into Norwalk. In 1980, nearly two-thirds of all jobs in Norwalk were held by Norwalk residents. In 1990, less than on-half of all jobs in Norwalk are held by Norwalk residents. (SWRPA, May 1987)

In 1990, there are 4,794 persons aged 15 through 19. It is projected that this cohort will increase to 5,487 in the year 2000. The increase in this younger cohort means that there will be more inexperienced workers entering the work force through the year 2000.

### ***ELDERLY***

The greatest demographic change is projected to occur among the elderly population, persons 65 years of age and older. In 1980, this group comprised 10.8 percent of Norwalk's population. The elderly population grew to 13.2 percent in 1990 and is projected to increase to 14.8 percent of the population by 2000. This change is equal to a 47 percent increase in elderly persons from 1980 to 2000.

The group aged 65 through 74 years is expected to increase from 5,197 persons in 1980 to 6,647 in 1990 and to 7,114 in 2000. The overall change is equal to a 37 percent increase in persons 65 through 74 years of age between 1980 and 2000.

The fastest growing segment of the elderly population are persons aged 75 and older. This group comprised 4.1 percent of the total population in 1980. It is projected that this will increase to 6.3 Percent or 5,280 persons by the year 2000. The overall change amounts to a 64 percent increase in persons 75 years of age and older between 1980 and 2000.

The large increase in the number of elderly persons is attributable to historical demographic trends and increased life expectancy. Planning for the social and economic needs of the elderly including housing, transportation, health care and recreation, must take place now in order to meet the increased demand that is projected.

### ***GOALS & POLICIES CITY WIDE***

Norwalk is a small city that will continue to be characterized by its quiet residential neighborhoods, its magnificent waterfront, and its ethnic and economic diversity. Norwalk is rated one of the twenty best cities in the country by national publications. Future ratings will depend upon how well Norwalk meets new challenges and responds to new opportunities.

The Plan of Development shapes the kind of city Norwalk will become. It provides a framework for dealing with change. While change is not always welcome, it is inevitable. By preparing for change now, we can better plan the continued revitalization and orderly growth of Norwalk.

The Plan of Development is primarily a management plan. Few wholly new initiatives are called for. The majority of the Plan's goals and policies seek to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of existing facilities and programs. The Plan also seeks to capitalize upon our assets and to make better use of our limited resources.

Finally, the Plan of Development is a comprehensive document. The Plan consists of the text contained in this document, another document entitled "Addendum" and a map entitled "Proposed Zoning/Areas of Change." It includes goals and policies that address needs in ten different areas. Because of its broad scope, the Plan does not go into detail within each area.



Rather, the Plan emphasizes the most important needs within each area and how they are interrelated. For example, housing policies affect economic policies, which affect transportation policies and so on. Each area must be considered within the context of the entire plan.

***Goal***

Promote the balanced growth of Norwalk to maintain the economic vitality of the city and retain the character of its neighborhoods.

***Policies***

Improve Norwalk's economic base by seeking private investment within the community; encouraged diversity in commerce and industry; coordinate capital budget expenditures with commercial and industrial development.

-Promote safe, affordable, quality housing for all segments of the community; ensure that temporary shelters serve as emergency or transitional housing only for citizens of Norwalk.

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

-Utilize the Plan of Development for Norwalk to establish municipal priorities and undertake long-term financial planning.

-Provide an efficient and effective system of transportation; improve traffic flow and safety; improve rail and bus services.

-Improve recreational facilities; provide programs to serve the varied segments of our population.

-Improve the appearance of Norwalk and the image of the entire city by emphasizing quality design of all public and private facilities.

-Maintain all public facilities at a high standard; implement systematic programs for their repair and maintenance.

-Improve the management of all public facilities to maximize their efficiency and effectiveness and to minimize the need for capital expansion.

-Continue to actively seek and listen to public participation in the preparation of future plans for the city or any part thereof; hold at least one public meeting per year to solicit public input.

***Goal***

Maintain efficient and responsive city government.

***Policy***

-Implement a continuing program to evaluate city activities and programs to be assured that the city benefits from an efficient government operation; ensure appropriate competition for contracted services.

-Implement a continuing capital budget management program, including a plan of debt reduction.

***Goal***

Modify specific area plans to conform with the Plan of Development.

***Policy***

-Upon the adoption of the Plan of Development, review and modify as necessary, specific area plans to agree with the goals and policies of the Plan of Development.

***Goal***

Protect public health, safety and welfare by encouraging education, enforcement, rehabilitation and other available means to eliminate the sale and use of illegal drugs in Norwalk which threatens the structure of our society.

***Policy***

-Support the Mayor's Alcohol and Drug Abuse Task Force in their efforts to prepare, adopt and implement a comprehensive program to combat alcohol and drug abuse.

***LAND USE AND ZONING***

The land use pattern of Norwalk was established long ago. Rivers, topography and transportation routes shaped the early development of Norwalk. Since 1929, zoning has regulated the development of the residential, commercial and industrial areas of the city. Originally, Norwalk was divided into eight zones. As the city grew and became more urbanized, zoning became more sophisticated. Today, there are twenty-three different zoning classifications.

There will continue to be growth and land use changes in the future. These changes will not occur in all areas of the city. Norwalk's residential neighborhoods have almost reached the maximum development potential allowed under existing zoning and few vacant or underutilized parcels remain. These areas will not change measurably in the future.

The majority of future development will occur within commercial areas, primarily along Routes 1 and 7 and the Norwalk and South Norwalk downtowns. These areas have not reached the maximum development potential allowed under existing zoning. Many parcels are underutilized and available for redevelopment.

It is within this context that the land use and zoning policies of this Plan are made. The Plan seeks to manage the type, location and amount of new development according to many different and often competing objectives. No one land use or zoning objective overrides all others. A balance is sought which allows reasonable growth. The text of reasonableness is measured by how well the different objectives are met.

The following land use and zoning criteria were used by the Planning Commission to prepare the Proposed Zoning/Areas of Change map which accompanies the Plan of Development.

## ***OVERALL***

- Allow for the future needs of Norwalk to be met as identified in this Plan (i.e. housing, economic growth, community facilities, etc.).
  
- Allow new development which does not exceed the capacity of infrastructure systems (i.e. roads, sewers, water, etc.); require new development to expand infrastructure capacity where needed; limit new development where this cannot be done.
  
- Preserve and enhance the character of Norwalk.
  
- Protect the environment.
  
- Preserve property values.
  
- Provide stability in land use and zoning.
  
- Preserve historically and architecturally significant buildings, where economically feasible.
  
- Establish design guidelines that improve the appearance of residential, commercial and industrial areas.
  
- Encourage the use of mass transit.
  
- Provide a guide to the Zoning Commission in their review of the zoning regulations and map.
  
- Use streets, the railroad, natural features or property lines as boundaries between different land uses.
  
- Minimize the number of nonconforming uses.
  
- Establish and maintain an effective program of zoning enforcement; support the adoption of state legislation to strengthen the enforcement powers of zoning officers.
  
- Minimize variance requests to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

## ***RESIDENTIAL***

- Preserve the character of residential neighborhoods by:
  - preventing encroachment from incompatible land uses
  - minimizing traffic impacts from surrounding uses
  
- Increase protection of residential uses which abut commercial or industrial uses by strengthening requirements for landscaped buffers so as to minimize adverse effects from light, noise, visibility, etc.

-Provide for additional housing opportunities to meet the needs of Norwalk's changing population and to balance economic growth.

### ***COMMERCIAL***

-Strengthen the revitalization of the Norwalk and South Norwalk downtowns by encouraging mixed-use development (i.e. offices, stores, services, restaurants and theaters together with housing, parks and cultural facilities).

-Restrict large-scale development to the Norwalk and South Norwalk downtowns and to the vicinity of Main Avenue, immediately north of the Merritt Parkway; exclude large-scale commercial development elsewhere.

-Retain the character of existing neighborhood commercial centers and limit uses within the Neighborhood Business zone to those which serve a neighborhood need.

-Maintain the portion of East Avenue zoned Restricted Business primarily for small-scale professional offices.

-Strengthen requirements for landscaped buffers where commercial uses abut residential uses so as to minimize adverse effects from light, noise, visibility, etc.

### ***INDUSTRIAL***

-Protect industrial areas from encroachment by non-industrial uses.

-Amend industrial zones to enumerate permitted uses and review height and bulk regulations for potential impact upon the infrastructure and the community.

-Review parking and loading requirements and amend as appropriate to reflect current parking demand.

-Strengthen requirements for landscaped buffers where industrial uses abut residential uses so as to minimize adverse effects from light, noise, visibility, etc.

-Allow fuel storage of 20,000 gallons or more only by special permit and establish criteria for the protection of public safety.

-Amend the Restricted Industrial zone to permit a building height of 4 stories and 55 feet and to permit the erection of a testing tower to a height of 100 feet.

### ***MISCELLANEOUS***

-Encourage water-dependent uses in appropriate locations along the waterfront.

-Establish performance standards for landscaping, traffic mitigation and environmental impacts.

-Establish waste disposal and recycling standards for buildings and uses subject to special permit and site plan review; require new development to submit waste disposal plans prior to allowing land use.

-Establish standards for land uses which use hazardous materials or generate hazardous waste.

-Establish minimum zoning standards for the number, type and size of trees required of new development.

-Encourage the study of requiring the installation of automatic sprinkler systems in residential structures of three (3) or more units or buildings of five thousand (5,000) square feet or greater to increase public safety from fire.

### ***ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES***

Concern for the environment can no longer be an afterthought of development. If we are to rid our environment of polluted water, fouled air and contaminated soil we must clean up our past mistakes and address the environmental consequences of development before it happens. Short-sighted development policies will only lead to long-term problems. Sinking houses, contaminated well water and closed shellfish beds are examples here in Norwalk that "you can't fool Mother Nature". Environmental costs can be put off, but cannot be avoided.

A city which protects its environment need not sacrifice its economic vitality. Places with clean air, water and soil are healthy to live in and healthy to do business in. Development potential in Norwalk must be balanced by its impact upon the environment and the capacity of the ecosystem to sustain and absorb it.

Although increased funding will be necessary to clean our environment, the greater need will be to bring about a change in public attitudes and habits. Water conservation, recycling, proper disposal of hazardous waste and the use of public transportation can improve the environment, but only if individuals and businesses choose to change their current practices. Increased educational and awareness programs are a prerequisite if people are to understand the environmental implications of their actions.

### ***INLAND AND TIDAL WETLANDS***

#### **Inland Wetlands**

Inland wetlands were once regarded as worthless swamps, suitable only for filling. Despite the fact that many wetlands were filled in Norwalk, a large number of wetlands, watercourses and ponds remain. These areas are an interrelated web of nature essential to an adequate supply of surface and underground water, to the recharge of groundwater, to control flooding and erosion, and to provide habitat to many forms of animal, aquatic and plant life. The Conservation Commission has regulated activities affecting wetlands since 1974.

#### **Tidal Wetlands**

Years of waterfront development have resulted in the filling of hundreds of acres of tidal wetlands and mudflats in Norwalk. Veteran's Park, Calf Pasture and much of South Norwalk

were all once tidal marshes. Tidal wetlands support unique plant and animal life. This inter-tidal zone begins the food chain for larger fish and wildlife. The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection has regulated activities affecting tidal wetlands since 1969.

### ***Goal***

Protect and restore inland and tidal wetlands

### ***Policies***

- Establish a policy of no net loss of wetlands and enact mitigation measures for the disturbance of wetlands.
  
- Establish a fifty-foot minimum setback from wetlands to prevent encroachment upon them; vary the minimum setback only where undue hardship or practical difficulty can be demonstrated.
  
- Encourage conservation developments which minimize the disturbance of wetland areas.
  
- Amend zoning regulations to reduce the permitted density of development on parcels which contain wetlands.
  
- Update the mapping and evaluations of inland and tidal wetlands by the Conservation Commission and the Department of Environmental Protection as soon as possible.
  
- Encourage the increase of local and state penalties for wetland violators to discourage illegal activities.
  
- Improve enforcement of erosion and sedimentation control regulations.

## ***COASTAL AREA***

### **Norwalk Harbor/Waterfront**

Norwalk's harbor and its extensive waterfront are unique treasures. The harbor is a highly productive estuarine ecosystem that provides habitat for many diverse biological communities. It is also home to a large recreational boating community. The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection rates the water quality of the inner Norwalk Harbor as SC/SB. This rating means the water quality is not suitable for bathing and has only limited suitability for fishing. The outer harbor is rated SA. This rating means the water is suitable for all seawater uses, except for restrictions after heavy rains. Much of the waterfront is developed and used for residential, recreational, commercial and industrial purposes. Development within 1,000± feet of the shoreline is regulated by the Coastal Management Act, adopted by the State in 1979. The 1982 Coastal Area Management Plan for Norwalk has served as the basis for establishing the following coastal area goals and policies.

### ***Goal***

Implement the goals and policies of the Coastal Management Act and the Coastal Area Management Plan for Norwalk.

### ***Policies***

-Evaluate and protect coastal and other fragile natural resources by securing conservation easements as part of development of a property.

-Increase public access to the waterfront by the following methods:

Encourage public walkways as part of developments along the Norwalk and Five Mile Rivers and their harbors

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-provide capital budget funding to fill in "gaps" in the Riveredge Park and Bikeway along the Norwalk River

-improve street ends for public access to the waterfront

-preserve and enhance public views of coastal waters

-implement the Harbor Management Plan.

-Continue upgrading the sewage treatment plant; continue separation of combined sanitary and storm sewers; limit extension of the sanitary sewer system solely to areas where septic systems are not viable.

-Require sanitary pump out facilities at marinas or implement alternatives including:

-designate no discharge areas

-expand boater's education to increase usage of pump out facilities

-promote the proper use of holding tanks and pump out facilities; enforce state regulations for the disposal of waste on boats

-Regulate the use of boats as year-round dwellings.

-Reestablish an environmental data base by monitoring the water quality of Norwalk Harbor and perform a study of water quality at storm outlets to assess the environmental impact of this pollution source.

-Create regulations for waterfront property owners to maintain and clean up shorelines to prevent materials and debris from entering the harbor.

### **Islands**

The Norwalk Islands are a unique wildlife habitat that provide a home and nesting area for many shore birds. In 1986, the federal government purchased Chimmon and Sheffield Islands and

designated them the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge. The Norwalk Seaport Association is restoring Sheffield Island Lighthouse, a national historic building.

***Goal***

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

***Policies***

-Retain the Island Conservation zone designation, however amend to establish criteria which addresses the environmental impact of waterfront clubs on the islands.

-Develop an educational program and provide controlled access to Shea, Chimmon, and Sheffield Islands.

-Support the objectives of the national wildlife refuge designation.

**Shellfish**

Norwalk Harbor supports one of the largest concentrations of shellfish in the northeast. The shellfishing industry and economy. Recreational shellfishing is also a popular pastime.

***Goal***

Improve the quality of coastal waters and encourage water-dependent uses along the waterfront so as to enable a continuation of shellfishing.

***Policies***

-Support the Marine Commercial zone that was adopted April, 1988.

-Support a commercial fishermen's and transient boat dock in Norwalk Harbor south of the Stroffolino Bridge.

-Improve enforcement of erosion and sedimentation control regulations.

**FLOOD HAZARDS**

Flooding of our rivers and coastal areas can result in loss of life and destruction of property and natural resources. The floods of 1938 and 1955 are but distant reminders of how devastating these disasters can be. Forecasters predict that a major flood will hit the northeast sometime in the near future.

***Goal***

Prevent loss of life and minimize property damage during periods of flooding.

***Policies***

-Maintain the Federal Flood Insurance Program to provide insurance for property owners in flood hazard areas.



-Minimize storm water runoff from new development by ensuring compliance with the Department of Public Works Storm Drainage Manual.

-Continue to support the Federal Emergency Management Agency's policy of restricting development within floodways.

## **AQUIFERS**

An aquifer is stored groundwater that is contained in underground consolidated rocks or unconsolidated gravel and sands. Groundwater is released to the surface through wells and springs or by seepage into lakes, rivers, and wetlands.

The Norwalk River Aquifer has been a source of public water supply for many years. The Kellogg-Deering Wellfield, located within this aquifer, currently has an average yield of 4 million gallons per day. A water treatment system has been in place at the well since 1981 following the discovery of chemical contamination from nearby land uses. The United States Environmental Protection Agency has proposed remedial action to protect the wellfield from further contamination. The well is on line and continues to meet drinking water standards. On average, 20 percent of the water supplied to First District Water Company customers is derived from this aquifer. Approximately 60 percent of Norwalk residents are customers of the First District and hence are dependent upon this water source.

### ***Goal***

Protect the quality of the groundwater system that supports the public water supply and private wells.

### ***Policies***

-Implement a local aquifer protection program which will result in:

-support of the immediate and continued remedial action by the United State Environmental Protection Agency for the Kellogg-Deering Wellfield Superfund Site to protect the wellfield from further contamination

-protection of the Betts Pond Brook, Five Mile River, and other aquifers to guarantee quality groundwater for future generations

-a detailed map of aquifer recharge areas by 1992

-evaluation of potential groundwater systems to determine the feasibility of implementing protection standards which will insure the quality of future water supplies

-zoning regulations for mapped recharge areas with a concentration on the existing wellfield's recharge area. The regulations will limit land uses in such areas to those compatible with aquifer protection standards.

-Encourage conservation measures to insure our public water usage does not exceed safe yield standards.

## **POLLUTANTS**

### **Air Quality**

Pursuant to the federal Clean Air Act, Connecticut has adopted ambient air quality standards for six air pollutants; total suspended particulates, sulfur dioxide, ozone, nitrogen dioxide,, carbon monoxide and lead. Primary and secondary standards are set to protect public health, plants and animals and to prevent economic damage. Ozone levels in Connecticut and Norwalk frequently violate air quality standards. Regional and interstate solutions must be found to improve air quality. However, Norwalk should do what it can to assist.

#### ***Goal***

Achieve the Clean Air Act ambient air quality standards.

#### ***Policies***

-Support the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's implementation plans to achieve ambient air quality standards.

-Support construction of new Route 7 from Norwalk to Danbury to reduce air pollution caused by traffic congestion.

-Encourage a city wide tree planting program.

### **Noise/Light**

Excessive noise and light emissions adversely effect public health and are a nuisance to affected residents.

#### ***Goal***

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

#### ***Policies***

-Enforce the noise ordinance by providing the Police Department with the necessary training to measure sources of noise.

-Encourage landscaping and earthen berms as an alternative to noise barriers along I-95 and new Route 7.

-Amend the city code to restrict temporary uses, such as carnivals in residence zones, and to strengthen enforcement measures of both noise and light pollution.

-Amend zoning regulations to control the impact of site lighting on neighboring properties. Evaluate all city-owned sites to mitigate adverse impact from light.

### **Solid Waste**

Connecticut passed a mandatory recycling law in 1987 that prohibits glass bottles, cans and newspapers from being disposed of at landfills or resource recovery facilities. The goal of the

legislation is to reduce Connecticut's solid waste stream by 25 percent. Norwalk generated 90,000 tons of solid waste last year (1989). Virtually all of the waste (99%) is sent to a resource recovery plant in Bridgeport. The other 1 percent, primarily newspaper, is recycled.

### ***Goal***

Implement a city wide solid waste management program that achieves a minimum of 25 percent reduction in the solid waste stream by 1991.

### ***Policies***

- Establish a recycling program by June, 1990
  
- Encourage proper disposal of solid waste by establishing regulations that allow processing of Norwalk's solid wastes (i.e. junkyards, intermediate processing center, transfer station composting and recycling center.
  
- Locate a solid waste processing center and transfer station for Norwalk near major transportation routes to minimize disturbance to residential neighborhoods.
  
- Actively pursue a regional solution to solid waste disposal by planning for a regional intermediate processing center.
  
- Control illegal dumping by increasing enforcement, increasing fines for violations and providing bulk waste pickup twice a year.
  
- Encourage the use of biodegradable and recyclable materials and packaging; including diapers.
  
- Evaluate the feasibility of using rail or barge for the shipping of solid waste to resource recovery or other appropriate points.
  
- Encourage the use of recycled materials for construction, paving and other high volume uses, where technically and economically feasible.

### **Hazardous Materials**

In accordance with state law, the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection compiled an inventory of toxic and hazardous waste disposal sites in the state. Of 567 sites listed, sixteen are located in Norwalk. Improper disposal of hazardous materials contaminates soil and ground water and risks the public health.

### ***Goal***

Protect public health and the environment by the proper handling and disposal of hazardous materials.

### ***Policies***

- Complete final closure of the former landfill site along the Norwalk River as per Department of Environmental Protection regulations.

-Encourage the implementation of remedial measures at sites contaminated with hazardous wastes as identified in the state's January, 1987 inventory.

-Implement a hazardous waste disposal program that will include education of our citizens and provide regular household hazardous waste collection days (including automobile wastes).

### ***ECONOMIC BASE***

The greatest change Norwalk will experience during the next ten years will be to its economic base. Businesses will expand or contract, move in or move out; some will close and some will remain unchanged. This dynamic change has existed throughout Norwalk's history. To a certain extent Norwalk's future economy can be projected based upon past local and regional trends. It is far more difficult to predict how and to what extent Norwalk's economy will be influenced by national or world events (depression, world war, oil embargo), advances in technology (computer aided design and manufacturing, robotics), and changes in fashion (corsets, hats). Because Norwalk's economy is dynamic and only partially predictable, planning policies must provide adequate flexibility to adapt to change.

The business and industries that comprise Norwalk's economic base provide the employment and income upon which our economy depends. In addition, they pay taxes which support governmental services, provide goods and services which meet our needs, and contribute financial and other support to numerous community and cultural organizations.

Norwalk's present economy is strong and diverse. Employment in Norwalk stands at 52,000, an all-time high. Unemployment has averaged 3.3 percent or less from 1986-1989. Median family income is above \$57,000 per year. All these factors point to a bright economic outlook.

The number of jobs in Norwalk grew by about 17,000 between 1970 and 1990, from 35,000 to 52,000. This dramatic growth has been coupled with a shift from manufacturing to non-manufacturing jobs. In 1970, almost one-half of the jobs in Norwalk were manufacturing. By 1990, manufacturing comprised about one-third of Norwalk's employment base. This shift from manufacturing to service sector employment reflects regional and national trends. Of note, however, is the fact that the absolute number of manufacturing jobs in Norwalk has remained relatively constant for the last twenty years.

The growth of employment in the service sector corresponds with new development during the past decade. Approximately 4 million square feet of office space was constructed in the 1980's putting Norwalk's current office inventory above 5 million square feet. At the same time, approximately 400,000 square feet of retail space was added.

Tourism is a small but growing segment of Norwalk's economy. The opening of the Maritime Center in 1988, the addition of two new hotels and plans for others has broadened the economic base of the city.

Local plans and initiatives have also strengthened the local economy. In 1982, much of South Norwalk was designated an Urban Enterprise Zone. This designation provides tax incentives and other benefits to encourage investment within the area. The Norwalk Business District Management Plan, adopted in 1986, proposes mixed-use development and public improvements to spur the revitalization of Norwalk Center. Within South Norwalk, the Reed Putnam Urban Renewal Plan, adopted in 1982, will redevelop 65 acres of land strategically located along the Norwalk River, south of I-95. Combined, these efforts have helped maintain Norwalk's economic vitality.

The support services upon which our economy depends will be crucial to Norwalk's future economic well being. The number of jobs in Norwalk is projected to grow faster than the size of the labor force. This will place greater pressure upon employers to attract and retain a quality work force. There will be an increased emphasis upon employee benefits such as day-care and nontraditional work hours, improving transportation, and providing low and moderate cost housing.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### ***Goal***

Maintain a diverse local economy to ensure that the opportunities, benefits, and responsibilities of the economic system are shared fully by all Norwalk citizens.

### ***Policies***

-Ensure a skilled labor force to meet the needs of local employers by creating a partnership among local industry, public and not-for-profit agencies and educational institutions. This includes college level, high school, and other specialized job training programs, including those for the unemployed.

-Provide and maintain essential infrastructure to retain and attract desirable businesses.

-Promote access to job opportunities for all citizens by encouraging improved public transportation, before and after school programs, child care facilities, and job placement services.

-Create a Mayor's Committee on Economic Development, composed of business and civic leaders, to prepare and implement programs designed to maintain and strengthen a favorable economic climate. Work with state, municipal and other organizations to maximize the effectiveness of this effort.

-Support programs that will promote tourism in Norwalk; support legislation that will provide sufficient funding for the Yankee Heritage Tourism District.

-Support the goals of the Norwalk Business District Management Plan to stimulate the revitalization of downtown Norwalk.

-Provide zoning that allows a wide range of housing opportunities to ensure that the housing needs of all segments of the labor force are met.

-Maintain diverse job opportunities by planning for the growth of various employment sectors within Norwalk.

-Support tax incentives, grants and state and federal programs, such as the Connecticut Enterprise Zone Act, which encourage investment in Norwalk.

-Explore the feasibility of adopting a national enterprise zone, if beneficial to Norwalk.

-Monitor Norwalk's tax structure to assure that business pays a fair share of the cost of municipal services.

-Encourage business community sponsorship of activities and underwriting improvements that enrich Norwalk and the lives of its residents (i.e. concerts, historical buildings, "Clean and Green", educational support, Norwalk Hospital and other social service and cultural organizations, etc.).

## **OFFICE**

### ***Goal***

-Encourage office development, within the capacity of infrastructure systems, to expand employment opportunities.

### ***Policies***

-Restrict large-scale office development to the Norwalk and South Norwalk downtowns and to the vicinity of Main Avenue, immediately north of the Merritt Parkway; exclude large-scale commercial development elsewhere.

## **RETAIL/SERVICE**

### ***Goal***

Expand economic growth in the retail and service sectors to capture a larger share of the regional market and to maximize employment opportunities.

### ***Policies***

-Strengthen retail activity in Norwalk Center and South Norwalk and place emphasis on people-oriented uses.

-Direct retail and service sector growth along Routes 1 and 7 where the infrastructure system can adequately support development.

-Encourage the location of a new supermarket in South Norwalk.

-Expand the parking supply in Norwalk's downtowns.

## **INDUSTRIAL**

### ***Goal***

Maintain an industrial base within Norwalk which provides a diversity of employment opportunities.

### ***Policies***

-Enact land use and zoning policies which provide for the location and expansion of industrial uses in appropriately zoned areas.

-Promote industrial development within the Enterprise Zone and within the Water Street Industrial Development Project.

## **HOUSING**

Housing, especially the lack of low cost housing, is one of the most critical planning issues facing Norwalk and the region, today and in the future. This is true despite the apparent glut of housing units currently available for sale.

The housing crisis is not caused by population growth. Rather, a decline in household size from 2.73 persons per household in 1980 to 2.57 persons per household in 1990 and an increase in the number of households are the greatest factors affecting housing demand. Additional demand stems from a sharp increase in employment in Norwalk and the region.

This increased demand has driven up the cost of housing by 180 percent, from \$98,000 for a single family house in 1980 to an estimated \$275,000 in 1990. During this same period, median family income has risen only 125 percent, from \$25,500 to an estimated \$57,400. The implications of this disparity are great: many families that choose to live in Norwalk must spend more than 30 percent of their income for housing; many other families must either commute long distances to find housing they can afford; forsake living and working here and move elsewhere; live in sub-standard housing or in overcrowded conditions; work two or more jobs to meet housing payments; continue to rent instead of own; or, left with no alternative, go homeless.

Moreover, the housing crisis affects the make-up of our society and economy. As housing prices escalate, Norwalk becomes more affluent and more homogenous. Much of our ethnic and racial diversity will be lost. Families that cannot afford market rate rents will place increased demand on public housing. Low paying jobs will be difficult to fill. Firms will have to pay higher wages to attract workers which will affect their ability to compete in the marketplace.

Increases in the housing supply have, in part, met the increased demand. Norwalk has a total housing supply of more than 33,000 units. An average of 400 units per year were added between 1980 and 1990. By the year 2000, the housing supply is projected to increase to 36,000 units.

The majority of new units have been multifamily construction. Land available for single family houses is scarce and expensive. In recent years, more than 720 units of rental housing have been converted to condominiums. Condominiums are also expensive (average \$180,000 for a two bedroom unit, 1989), but they are much more affordable than single family houses.

Norwalk has neither the resources nor the responsibility to solve the region's housing problems. Norwalk already provides more than 2,900 units of low and moderate cost housing. In addition, Norwalk has the highest population density in the region.

However, Norwalk must make its best effort to provide and expand housing opportunities for people of all ages, incomes and races. We must take measures to protect and maintain our existing housing supply. Additional housing will be needed as the number of household's increase and employment in Norwalk grows. Housing the elderly, the handicapped, low and moderate income families and the homeless will continue to be our most critical challenge.

***Goal***

Provide quality rental housing, elderly housing, and low and moderate income ownership housing, according to the projected needs of Norwalk residents.

***Policies***

-Direct the South Western Regional Planning Agency to elicit greater regional cooperation in solving the housing crisis with every town accepting a share of this responsibility, as soon as possible.

-Continue to provide capital budget funds to redevelop the Norwalk Center and Reed Putnam areas with new housing and mixed-use developments. Encourage at least 20 percent of such housing to be affordable to families with incomes at or below the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority's (CHFA) income limits (currently \$77,000 for a family of three or more).

-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.

-Continue to provide incentives, such as Norwalk's Moderate Income Housing Regulation, the Norwalk Housing Partnership and the Connecticut Department of Housing's corporate tax credit program to expand housing opportunities for low and moderate income families and to encourage the private development of affordable housing.

-Maintain existing residential densities and mixed-use development incentives in the downtown areas and along commercial corridors to encourage a balance between new jobs and housing opportunities.

-Urge the continued support of Norwalk's local, state and congressional representatives in securing state and federal housing funds and/or excess properties for public and nonprofit housing projects.

-Support state and local programs that increase opportunities for first time home buyers, including CHFA's Home Mortgage Program, Norwalk's Moderate Income Housing Regulation and the State Department of Housing's Down Payment Assistance Program.

-Increase public awareness of local, state and federal housing assistance programs.

-Promote the use of manufactured homes and other approved methods of construction and technology to lower the cost of new housing.



-Encourage the construction of a diversity of housing types and sizes to meet the varied needs of the marketplace.

***Goal***

Maintain a diverse housing stock and rehabilitate Norwalk's existing inventory of public, private non-profit housing.

***Policies***

-Expand the use of tenant-management organizations to improve the condition of public housing and to oversee their maintenance and operation.

-Promote better management of public housing by ensuring that vacant units are rehabilitated promptly for new tenants; encourage and assist over-income tenants in moving to market rate housing.

-Encourage the Housing Authority to evict persons living in public housing who have been convicted of drug dealing or crimes of violence.

-Continue to encourage private housing rehabilitation through the use of the Phased Increased Assessment Program, low interest loans, free paint grants and other municipal programs targeted to older neighborhoods.

-Assist elderly residents in remaining in their homes by promoting the use of accessory apartments, reverse annuity mortgages and property tax relief.

-Support federal legislation to renew our national commitment to housing by re-authorizing Section 8 housing contracts, which provide more than 700 units of subsidized rental housing in Norwalk, and extending CHFA's ability to issue tax free bonds for their Home Mortgage Program.

-Protect residential neighborhoods from incompatible development through rezoning.

-Improve enforcement of zoning, building and health codes to protect the public from unsafe and unsanitary housing conditions.

***Goal***

Encourage housing for people with special needs, including the homeless, the mentally ill and physically and developmentally handicapped persons.

***Policies***

-Continue to support public and private efforts to provide emergency shelter to Norwalk's homeless families and individuals.

## ***INFRASTRUCTURE***

The growth and development of Norwalk has been tied to its infrastructure. Historically, the urbanized area was limited by its proximity to the Norwalk River, the railroad, trolley lines and improved streets. Postwar development brought rapid extensions of streets, sewer and water lines to outlying areas. The installation of sanitary sewers along Connecticut and Main Avenues created the opportunity for commercial development to occur there in the 1970-80's.

The infrastructure system that supports Norwalk is extensive. It includes more than 250 miles of streets, 60 bridges, 160 miles of sewers, 290 miles of water mains and municipal parking lots for more than 1,850 cars. Much of this system is more than fifty years old.

Norwalk's infrastructure supports and makes possible economic development and provides the basic services that contribute to the quality of life. It is important that this investment be maintained and improved. Future development should occur within the capacity of the infrastructure system, or should improve the infrastructure where deficiencies in capacity are found to exist.

If the system is at or above capacity, future development must be curbed, the system's capacity expanded, or both.

### **SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM**

#### ***Goal***

Provide a sewer system that protects the public health and environment.

#### ***Policies***

- Provide capital funding to accomplish the following needed improvements:
- upgrade the sewage treatment plant to meet or exceed state and federal standards by 1994
- complete the program of separating the major combined sanitary and storm sewers, to reduce the flow of storm water to the treatment plant by 1994
- continue the Department of Public Work's programs to rehabilitate the existing sanitary sewer network including trunk lines, interceptors, force mains and pump stations
- limit the extension of the sanitary sewer system solely to areas where existing sanitary facilities are not viable
- Adopt and implement a Facilities Plan for the operation and improvement of the sewage treatment plant; update the Facilities Plan periodically. A Facilities Plan is presently being drafted by the Department of Public Works.

-Increase enforcement and fines for illegal discharges into sewer lines.

## **STORM SEWER SYSTEM**

### ***Goal***

To prevent flooding and the threat to health welfare and property.

### ***Policies***

- Continue to provide Capital Budget funds for drainage projects to solve small, localized drainage problems.
  
- Adopt an on-going maintenance program for catch basins to prevent the transport of silt, sediments and road pollutants into the aquatic environment.
  
- Minimize storm water runoff from new development by ensuring compliance with the Department of Public Works Storm Drainage Manual.
  
- Prevent industrial wastes and effluent generated from septic and sanitary systems from going into the city's storm drainage system.
  
- Use natural drainage areas in lieu of structures wherever possible; maintain natural drainage systems and wetlands to the greatest extent possible.
  
- Establish minimum standards for new drainage systems to require oil separators and require an effective maintenance program.
  
- Require use of dry wells and slotted pipes for all new construction as a means of ground-water recharge.

## **ROAD SYSTEM**

### ***Goal***

Maintain a system of streets and bridges to facilitate safe and efficient vehicular movement through Norwalk.

### ***Policies***

- 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).
  
- Improve traffic flow and safety at intersections with high accident experience.
  
- Study the feasibility of creating a one-way traffic loop in the Wall Street and Burnell Boulevard area; and if practical, install by 1992; implement other traffic improvements from the Norwalk Business District Management Plan.
  
- Support the completion of new Route 7 to the Route 33 intersection by 1992 and to Danbury by 1996 and complete construction of Route 7 in its entirety by 2001.

- Construct Riverside Drive from North Water Street to I-95 and extend Hanford Place to Water Street to improve South Norwalk traffic circulation by 1993.
- Adopt a local bridge replacement program; support Capital Budget requests for local bridge maintenance and the use of the State "Local Bridge Revolving Funds" minimize impact upon neighborhoods when replacing bridges.
- Coordinate the implementation of the improvements proposed in the 1987 South Norwalk Traffic and Parking Study with area development.
- Encourage the Connecticut Department of Transportation to reconstruct Route 1 from Darien to Westport to a four lane arterial with left turn lanes at major intersections; begin with Cross Street and North Avenue.
- Encourage the Connecticut Department of Transportation to improve traffic flow and safety on Meadow St. and Woodward Ave. (Rt.136). Encourage the Department of Public Works to carry out complementary traffic flow and safety improvements, where feasible.
- Participate in the formulation of regional transportation policies to be determined by the Connecticut Department of Transportation's Southern Corridor Study. Support traffic management measures and improvements to mass transit as a first priority.
- Support the Transportation Improvement Program projects (.i.e. reconstruction of West Ave., Water St., and South Main St.).
- Encourage the Connecticut Department of Transportation to improve maintenance of state-owned roads and bridges within Norwalk.
- Adopt a repair and maintenance program for sidewalks and footpaths.
- Designate Martin Luther King Drive and West Avenue from MLK Drive to I-95 as Route 136 and redesignate the portion of Route 136 west of the intersection of MLK Drive and Wilson Avenue as Route 136A.
- Coordinate road construction throughout Norwalk to minimize traffic disruption from occurring.

## **UTILITIES (*water, gas, electric, telephone, cable*)**

### ***Goal***

Provide public utilities to meet the present and future demands of the business and residential community.

### ***Policies***

- Encourage underground electric, cable television and telephone lines to minimize service disruptions due to inclement weather and to improve the appearance of Norwalk.
- Support the adequate provision of natural gas and the expansion of natural gas transmission lines as needed, to meet projected demand within Norwalk only.
- Continue to provide an adequate supply of electricity to meet projected demand.
- Encourage the manufacture and use of energy efficient fixtures and appliances; adopt educational programs which will promote resource conservation and discourage waste.
- Encourage native forms of vegetation in landscaping to minimize water requirements.
- Support the Long Range Water Supply Plans of the First and Second Water Districts, to meet the future water supply needs of Norwalk.

### **PARKING**

#### ***Goal***

Provide and maintain municipal off-street parking facilities to minimize street congestion and other detrimental effects on adjoining land uses.

#### ***Policies***

- Survey the parking provided for existing buildings and uses to evaluate the adequacy of existing parking standards.
- Encourage centralized parking in the Norwalk and South Norwalk downtowns which allows shared parking by uses with complementary demands in both daytime and evenings.
- Support continued use of fee-in-lieu of parking in the Wall Street area and expand its use into South Norwalk.
- Build municipal parking garages when needed at: Main and High Streets., at Isaac's Street (mixed-use), and at Webster Street.
- Adopt a maintenance program for municipal parking facilities.

### ***TRANSPORTATION***

Throughout its history, the railroad, the bus system and a hierarchy of local, collector and arterial streets have served Norwalk's transportation needs. As traffic volume increased, new highway capacity was added (i.e. Connecticut Thruway, Merritt Parkway, U.S. Route 7).

In more recent years, employment and population growth and increased automobile use in Norwalk and the region, has created traffic congestion along certain routes. The problem is most

acute during the morning and evening commuting hours. For economic and environmental reasons, the ability to expand highway capacity is extremely limited.

A properly functioning transportation system is essential to the economic vitality of the community and the region. The Plan recommends a dual transportation strategy: undertake selective roadway improvements to correct deficiencies; and enact management measures to limit traffic demand and improve traffic flow. Together, these measures will maintain and improve the existing transportation system and provide additional capacity to accommodate reasonable growth.

## **RAIL**

### ***Goal***

Support convenient and reliable rail service to satisfy the needs of commuters and to encourage greater rail ridership.

### ***Policies***

-Encourage Metro-North to continue to review and adjust train schedules to meet the needs of residents and the businesses they serve.

-Implement the redevelopment of the South Norwalk Railroad Station by 1992 with emphasis upon increased parking, greater security, and improved commuter services.

-Support increased train service and improved facilities on the Danbury Line, as recommended in a June, 1987 study by the South Western Regional Planning Agency.

-Anticipate the need for two new stations on the Danbury Line as per the Reed-Putnam Urban Renewal Plan (north of the Maritime Center) and the Norwalk Business District Management Plan (adjacent to Commerce Street).

-Retain a rail siding in Norwalk to encourage freight deliveries and shipment.

-Improve commuter parking lots at the East Norwalk and Merritt 7 Railroad Stations.

## **BUS AND DISPATCH-A-RIDE**

### ***Goal***

Support convenient, reliable, and efficient bus and Dispatch-A-Ride service.

### ***Policies***

-Evaluate and adjust as necessary the Wheels bus service to accommodate the following:

-expand the hours of operation of Wheels bus service to later in the evening and Sundays

-adjust bus routes and schedules to reflect changes in population and land use and to maximize efficiency

- construct a new Wheels pulse point as part of the redevelopment of Norwalk Center; including a location for interstate bus service
- better coordinate Wheels bus service with train arrivals and departures
- Expand dispatch-a-ride service to the elderly and disabled, where funding is available.
- Direct the South Western Regional Planning Agency to evaluate and, if feasible, encourage express commuter bus service from the Greater Bridgeport, Housatonic and Valley Regions, where rail service is impractical to Norwalk and other communities within the southwest region.
- Encourage and implement as necessary bus (trolley) service on a downtown loop (West Ave., Washington St., East Ave., and Wall St.) for use by shoppers and tourists by 1993.

## **TRAFFIC**

### ***Goal***

Provide a safe and efficient vehicular transportation system to serve the city and minimize delays.

### ***Policies***

- Form a Traffic Management Association consisting of major employers, public officials, transit providers and members of the public to encourage flextime, and to increase use of vanpools, carpools and public transportation.
- Encourage major employers to prepare and implement a traffic management plan (i.e. flextime, vanpools, etc.).
- 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.).
- Provide adequate off-street parking to enable the enable the elimination of on-street parking where it interferes with traffic flow and safety.
- Evaluate and, if necessary, recommend that the Coast Guard amend the bridge opening schedule of the Stroffolino Bridge (Rte.136) to minimize traffic disruption.
- Expand computerized traffic signal coordination to expedite traffic flow.
- Continue to implement the traffic safety and accident reduction program in all areas. Make priority improvements at high accident locations.

### ***Policies***

- Explore the need for a wharf or dock open to the public for passenger boats.
- Explore the feasibility of creating a network of bicycle routes.

-Encourage walking by providing a pedestrian circulation system of sidewalks, footpaths and crosswalks, especially in high traffic areas.

-Restrict heliports to commercial areas and exclude scheduled commercial heliports.

-Encourage the retention of a bus/limousine terminal that serves New York metropolitan airports.

### ***COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL FACILITIES***

The 80,000 residents of Norwalk depend upon a vast array of community and cultural facilities to support and enrich their lives. Schools, libraries, police and fire stations, the Norwalk Hospital and other community facilities provide essential services to the city and help make it a desirable place to live. Norwalkers also enjoy a wide diversity of museums, art galleries, musical concerts, historic landmarks, fairs and festivals that inspire, entertain or are just plain fun. In addition, they foster pride and promote a sense of community. These facilities also engage an army of volunteers who give of themselves for the benefit of others.

Our community and cultural facilities represent a multi-million dollar investment that must be properly maintained. Norwalk's single largest investment is in its school system. Twelve elementary schools, four middle schools, two high schools, one vocational high school and one Headstart Program provide educational opportunities to 9,471 students (10/89). There are seven fewer schools and 8,372 fewer students today than in 1970. Future enrollment projections indicate that no new schools will be needed through the year 2000.

Norwalk is also served by two institutions of higher learning, Norwalk Community College and Norwalk State Technical College. A new Norwalk Community College, currently under construction at the former MaGrath School site, will open in the Fall of 1991.

### **SCHOOLS**

#### ***Goal***

Provide sufficient school facilities which afford all citizens the opportunity to obtain a quality education.

#### ***Policies***

--Maintain and improve existing public schools through modernization and additions, as needed to accommodate projected school enrollments. Continue to monitor school enrollments in order to make the most efficient use of all school facilities.

-Expand the use of schools to better serve the community. Recreation facilities, auditoriums and classrooms should serve adult education, before and after school programs, pre-kindergarten programs and other structured uses when not in use by the school system.

-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.



-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.

## **HOSPITAL AND HEALTH CARE FACILITIES**

### ***Goal***

Continue to provide high quality health care facilities in the community and access to these facilities by all citizens.

### ***Policies***

-Encourage the continued upgrading and modernization of Norwalk Hospital to meet the needs of the greater Norwalk area.

-Facilitate the location of an extended health care facility at the former Honey Hill School.

-Expand residential/health care facilities for the elderly by encouraging the development of a life care facility within the southwestern region of Connecticut

## **PUBLIC BUILDINGS**

### ***Goal***

Provide Norwalk citizens with efficient, well-kept buildings and reuse or dispose of public buildings that no longer serve the community.

### ***Policies***

-Implement the disposal of surplus public buildings according to the Master Plan of Excess Schools adopted August 14, 1987.

-Initiate an inspection program to evaluate the condition of city-owned buildings and implement a maintenance program to protect the city's investment.

-Construct a new Department of Public Works garage.

-Urge the state to build a new Department of Motor Vehicles office on Main Avenue (Route 7) opposite Grist Mill Road.

## **COMMUNITY CENTERS**

### ***Goal***

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

### ***Policies***

-Amend zoning regulations to require large residential developments (over 100 units) to provide a recreational/social center to serve its residents.

-Convert the former Ben Franklin School into a multi-use community center which offers a variety of services to the residents of Norwalk by 1992.

## **EMERGENCY SERVICES AND CIVIL PREPAREDNESS**

### ***Goal***

Protect the public's health, safety, and property by providing police and fire stations in strategic locations throughout Norwalk.

### ***Policies***

-Maintain and improve existing police headquarters, fire station facilities and equipment and civil preparedness and emergency services.

-Locate a new fire station in the northern section of Norwalk adjacent to Route 7.

-Locate a new marine police base on Norwalk Harbor, south of the Stroffolino Bridge.

## **HUMAN CARE AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

### ***Goal***

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

### ***Policies***

-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.

-Continue to encourage the establishment of infant and toddler day-care facilities, as needed.

-Promote education programs to warn of the hazards of drug abuse; promote education and rehabilitation programs for drug abusers; continue to support strong penalties for the use or sale of illegal drugs.

## **CULTURAL FACILITIES**

### ***Goal***

Provide cultural attractions through a network of public and private facilities that contribute to education, tourism and the high quality of life in Norwalk.

### ***Policies***

-Encourage development within the Reed-Putnam Design District and at the South Norwalk train station to complement the Maritime Center and the Washington Street Historic District.

-Support the Maritime Center and its mission as an educational facility and tourist attraction.

-Continue to support public access to Sheffield Island Lighthouse.

-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.

-Support programs that will promote tourism in Norwalk; support legislation that will provide sufficient funding for the Yankee Heritage Tourism District.

## **HISTORIC DISTRICTS AND PRESERVATION**

### ***Goal***

Protect the historic character of Norwalk through the designation and preservation of historic landmarks, structures and districts.

### ***Policies***

-Establish local historic districts in South Norwalk Washington Street area, and in the area surrounding the Norwalk Green; consider additional district designation based upon historical and architectural significance.

-Amend zoning regulations to encourage the retention and reuse of historically significant buildings that are listed in the local or state register of historic places, if economically feasible.

-Promote private preservation efforts through local tax incentives, and other measures to encourage the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic structures; encourage the dedication of façade easements as a means to preserve the exterior facades of privately owned historic structures.

-Increase fines for violations of the city's demolition ordinance and require approval of final site plans prior to the demolition of an historic structure.

-Continue to provide funding in the Historic Commission's capital budget to maintain and rehabilitate public historic structures.

-Promote public awareness of historic properties by posting plaques upon historically significant structures.

## ***PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE***

Norwalk provides a wide range of park and recreation facilities which give people of all ages the opportunity to pursue leisure activities and enhance the quality of their lives. More than one thousand acres of publicly owned parkland is available for citywide, district and neighborhood use. Privately owned open space in Norwalk is almost gone. Remaining parcels of open space preserve and protect our natural resources, preserve the character of our neighborhoods and add to property values. It is in the best interest of the city to strengthen and expand Norwalk's park and recreational facilities and to preserve significant parcels of open space.

An Inventory of Parks and Open Space is contained in the Addendum.

## **PARKS**

### ***Goal***

Provide and maintain an attractive park system that gives people of all ages the opportunity to pursue leisure time interests.

### ***Policies***

- Create a State Heritage Park north of the Maritime Center.
- Complete the improvements to Ryan Park on Day Street by 1992.
- Improve the park at the corner of Washington Street and North Water Street by 1995.
- Support the construction of a new Route 7 Linear Park within the Route 7 right-of-way.
- Complete the implementation of the Riveredge Park and Bikeway along the Norwalk River by 1997.
- Support additional water-dependent uses in Veterans Memorial Park.
- Set a high standard for the maintenance and security of all parks.
- Prepare a new Cranbury Park Master Plan by 1992 to maximize open space and implement by 1997.
- Adopt a standard of twelve acres of park-land per one thousand people as a guideline for acquiring park-land.
- Encourage spaces for public use within the Norwalk and South Norwalk downtowns.
- Use park and recreation impact fees to assist with the acquisition and improvement of public spaces.

## **RECREATION**

### ***Goal***

Provide and maintain a greater diversity of recreation facilities and programs to meet the needs of user groups.

### ***Policies***

- Encourage the building of an ice skating rink by 1994.
- Encourage the building of a shooting range.
- Seek to retain in perpetuity, nine holes of the Silvermine Golf Course for public use.
- Where feasible, increase public access to the waterfront, including the Norwalk, Silvermine and Five Mile Rivers (except for single family houses).
- Expand user fees to partially defray the expense of providing recreational facilities and programs.

-Encourage the building of a municipal golf driving range by 1994.

-Provide equipment and facilities which encourage better utilization of neighborhood parks.

## **OPEN SPACE**

### ***Goal***

Acquire and maintain open space as natural areas which preserve neighborhood character and ecologically valuable land.

### ***Policies***

-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 (north of Blake Street,) etc.

-Designate open space parcels, per State Statute 12-107e, to encourage open space preservation via tax incentives.

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Encourage the amendment of State Statute 12-107e to provide municipalities the right of first refusal for parcels designated as open space by the city, and where the property owner has applied for and obtained an open space classification for tax purposes, to require that designated open space be maintained for a minimum period of time, and to require the payment of abated taxes if the property is developed.

-Require that a ninety day right of first refusal be given to the city before a parcel designated as open space by the city and classified as open space for tax purposes can be sold for development.

## ***URBAN DESIGN***

Norwalk enjoys a beautiful natural setting. Our scenic harbor and rolling landscape provide an attractive place for people to live, work and visit. This setting is affected, positively or negatively, every time a building is constructed or demolished, a street is built or rebuilt or a stand of trees is planted or cleared. In turn, these events affect the quality of our lives and influence our perception of Norwalk.

A healthy and vibrant appearance is essential if Norwalk is to maintain its economic vitality. Buildings designed within the context of their surroundings, together with street and sidewalk improvement programs can achieve this result. We seek to preserve and enhance Norwalk's unique character through the adoption of comprehensive design review procedures, urban design guidelines and aggressive code enforcement to improve the image of Norwalk.

## **COMMUNITY CHARACTER & ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN**

### ***Goal***

Strengthen the character of Norwalk's neighborhoods and commercial areas and improve the quality of architectural design.

### ***Policies***

- Create an architectural review board or equivalent to prepare advisory guidelines to improve building design and the relationship of new buildings to their surroundings.
- 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.
- Strengthen requirements for landscaping to improve appearance from the street and provide for effective maintenance.
- 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.
- Review and improve sign regulations.

## **PUBLIC PLAZAS & STREETS**

### ***Goal***

Improve the appearance of public plazas, streets and right-of-ways.

### ***Policies***

- Adopt a street tree planting program to replace diseased trees, plant new trees and improve street tree maintenance.
- Adopt a tree preservation ordinance to encourage the retention and planting of trees on private property.
- Improve the appearance of public plazas and streets by continuing to support capital budget funding for street improvements; particularly the Norwalk Center and South Norwalk downtowns.
- Consider a percent-for-art ordinance to promote the display of works of art in public places and as amenities in large commercial projects.
- Create an Art Park on West Avenue where it intersects with Route 7 and I-95 to encourage the display of sculpture and other works of art.
- Promote private beautification efforts, such as Clean & Green's Programs, neighborhood clean-ups and tree plantings and continue to support these efforts with an annual awards program.
- Enact an ordinance to require the visible display of street numbers and encourage the use of these numbers in the mailing address.

## ***IMPLEMENTATION***

The Plan of Development will guide future development decisions in the city when its goals and policies are implemented. Implementation of the Plan will require on-going support and a concerted effort among numerous agencies, both public and private. The Plan recommends a strategy with short, mid and long-term goals according to financial and other limitations. These goals set a timetable which allows the work to be planned and implemented in an orderly manner.

Many of the capital improvements recommended in the Plan will be funded by Norwalk's Capital Budget program. By local ordinance, the city adopts a five-year Capital Budget Plan. The first year of the budget plan is funded by the issuance of municipal bonds, backed by the city. Between 1980 and 1990, \$103 million of improvements were financed through the Capital Budget. It is projected that capital expenditures between 1990 and 2000 will approximate \$115 million. A portion of this amount will be reimbursed to Norwalk through state and federal grants and other sources.

### ***SHORT-TERM (1 - 2 years)***

-Provide U.S. Congressional Representatives with a list of legislative changes and funding requests recommended by the Plan. The legislative changes recommended in the Plan include:

-explore the feasibility of adopting a National Enterprise Zone Act beneficial to Norwalk

-secure funding to implement the Facilities Plan for the Norwalk Sewage Treatment Plant

-encourage private funding for the construction of low and moderate income housing for Norwalk residents

-encourage the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to acquire Peach Island as part of the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge

-Provide Norwalk's State Representatives with a list of legislative changes and funding requests recommended by the Plan. The legislative changes recommended in the Plan include:

-allow the collection of impact fees

-encourage the use of biodegradable and recyclable materials and packaging

-strengthen zoning enforcement powers of zoning officers

-provide funding for:  
Heritage Park

Route 7 Linear Park

reconstruction of the entire length of Route 1 in Norwalk

new Department of Motor Vehicles office on Main Ave.

mapping of tidal wetlands

completion of U.S. Route 7 to Route 33 in Wilton

-modify the criteria to provide sufficient funding for the Yankee Heritage Tourism District

-amend Section 12-107e (re open space) to require that cities have the right of first refusal for designated open space land and land classified as open space for tax purposes

-Work with the Mayor and the Common Council to amend the City Code to implement those portions of the Plan that need local legislative approval. Included in the local action are:

-create a Mayor's Task Force on Economic Development

-create the voluntary position of Officer of Cultural Affairs appointed by the Mayor

-consider a percent-for-art ordinance

-adopt and implement a Facilities Plan for the improvement of the Norwalk Sewage Treatment Plant

-improve enforcement and increase fines for violating ordinances including demolition permits and sewer discharge regulations

-implement a city wide hazardous waste disposal and a recycling program, including bulky waste pickup twice a year.

-encourage the use of biodegradable and recyclable materials for packaging

-provide tax incentives for preserving historic structures

-adopt an ordinance requiring the demolition or rehabilitation of abandoned and burned out buildings

-expand user fees for recreation and park uses, except for use of city beaches by Norwalk residents

-designate open spaces as per 12-107e of the Connecticut General Statutes

-dispose of excess school sites as per the Master Plan of Excess Schools, August 14, 1987



-Notify affected city agencies of the changes recommended by the Plan. Work with these agencies through the capital budget, plan review and ordinance process to implement the policies of the Plan, including

-approve a five year Capital Budget Program that includes projects on a priority basis recommended in the Plan

-amend Subdivision, Zoning and other land use regulations to implement the land use and zoning policies recommended in the Plan

**MID TERM (3 - 5 years)**

-Local ordinances are adopted in conjunction with state enabling legislation as suggested in the Plan.

-An Architectural Review Board to prepare advisory guidelines is created.

-A new fire station in north Norwalk is constructed.

-Implementation of the ten-year plan to upgrade the sewage treatment plant is commenced.

-Capital Budget is modified as necessary and plans for the next five years have commenced

-Zoning Regulations limiting uses in aquifer recharge areas are adopted.

-Ryan and North Water Street Parks and the Mast Plan for Cranbury Park are completed.

**LONG TERM (6 - 10 years)**

-The Capital Budget Program is completed.

-Norwalk Riveredge Park and Bikeway are completed.

-Heritage Park is completed.

-Public Works garage is constructed.

-Ice-Skating Rink is constructed.

-Indoor pistol range is constructed.

-Cranbury Park Plan is implemented.

-Golf driving range is constructed.

-New Route 7 to Danbury is completed.

***COST ANALYSIS***

The following cost estimates have been developed based upon the recommendations contained in this Plan. These order of magnitude estimates are a guide which will allow the proposed improvements to be scheduled and implemented on a financially sound basis. The time periods shown correspond to the following fiscal years: Short term - two years (FY91-93); Mid term - three years (FY 93-96; and Long term - five years (FY 96-2001).