

# NASSAU COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



**NASSAU COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**

**DECEMBER 1998**

Thomas S. Gubala  
County Executive



Paul F. Ponesse  
Director

Nassau County Planning Commission  
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December 15, 1998

Dear Nassau County Resident:

On behalf of the Nassau County Planning Commission, I am proud to present the Nassau County Comprehensive Plan. This historical document is the first ever Comprehensive Plan to be adopted in the County's 100 year history.

The Plan provides a vision for Nassau County that focuses on the protection of its resources and on current and long range growth and development compatible with its suburban character and quality of life. The Comprehensive Plan provides overall goals, policy recommendations and implementation strategies that will guide the County into the 21st Century as well as maintain, and even enhance, its perennial rating as one the best suburban places to live in the United States.

What I am most proud of is how the Plan was constructed. The Comprehensive Plan, a two year process, incorporated a public outreach component that was unprecedented. It included numerous meetings with community interest groups, municipalities, and County and regional agencies; ten (10) public workshops, two (2) public hearings, and two (2) public opinion surveys. The general public also had the opportunity to review and comment on several support documents that were used to comprise the drafting of the Comprehensive Plan. As such, we are confident that this document represents the direction the County residents want to go in the years ahead. Looking back, the development of the Plan would not have been possible without the support, dedication and participation of the residents of Nassau County. It is certainly hoped that this interactive relationship continues as we move to achieve the Plan's future vision for Nassau County.

I thank all of you who have participated in this historic process and look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

*Paul F. Ponesse*

Paul F. Ponesse  
Director

Nassau County Planning Commission

# NASSAU COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Final 1998

## NASSAU COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION NASSAU COUNTY, NEW YORK

The **County Government Law of Nassau County** (otherwise known as the Nassau County Charter) was revised in 1994 to include various provisions, including establishment of the County Legislature. One of the provisions of the County Charter in Article XVI, Section 1604, Planning Department, states that the Nassau County Planning Commission has primary responsibility for developing and adopting a County comprehensive master plan, and updating it at least every five years:

*“...the County Planning Commission shall, no later than January first, nineteen hundred ninety-nine, prepare and adopt a comprehensive master plan for the development of the entire area of the county, which shall include studies and recommendations regarding highways and transportation, economic development, parks, public water supply, air quality, solid waste disposal, historic preservation, wastewater treatment, open space preservation, environmental conservation, future land use and availability of housing. ... Nothing herein shall be construed as limiting or diminishing the powers and authority of the several towns, cities and villages within the County to exercise, amend and enforce their own zoning and land use codes and local laws and to publish and adopt a comprehensive plan limited to such town, city or village.”*

**Nassau County Comprehensive Plan Adopted by the  
Nassau County Planning Commission on December 15, 1998**

# NASSAU COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Thomas S. Gulotta  
**Nassau County Executive**

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# *NASSAU COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN*

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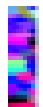
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Nassau County Comprehensive Plan* is a visionary policy document which focuses on the current and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of Nassau County. Overall, the *Comprehensive Plan* contains **22 Goals; 107 Policy Recommendations; and 332 Implementation Strategies** relevant to the subject matters of: interagency planning and coordination, land use, environmental resources, transportation, housing, the economy, culture and recreation, and community facilities and services. The policy recommendations and implementation strategies identify important issues, studies and programs, and initiatives which can be undertaken by a variety of entities (County departments and agencies, municipalities, local committees and organizations, private sector and non-profit organizations, as well as State, Federal and regional agencies).

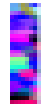
This Executive Summary is intended to provide an overview of the highlights from each of the chapters in the *Comprehensive Plan*. However, the individual chapters contain more detailed description of the issues, goals, policy recommendations and implementation strategies.



## ASSUMPTIONS

- Nassau County's population is gradually increasing after a period of decline. The County reached its greatest population level in 1970 with approximately 1,428,000 residents. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the population steadily declined until it reached a total of approximately 1,287,000 residents in 1990. However, the most recent population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that there were 1,303,231 County residents in 1995.
- The County's population is projected to gradually increase to 1,433,600 by the year 2020 — approximately a 10% increase over 25 years.

- Nassau County's population is becoming more diverse as a result of a 49.6% increase in the non-white population between 1980 and 1994. Nassau County's minority population is expected to continue its strong growth in future decades, particularly the Asian, Hispanic and African American populations.
- The number of County residents age 65 and older grew by more than 126% during the period between 1960 and 1990, and an additional 8.2% between 1990 and 1997. The fastest growing age-cohort has been the residents 85 years of age and older.
- Nassau County's population of residents 15 years of age and younger declined between 1960 and 1990. However, recent information from Federal, State and County agencies indicates that the school enrollments and the youth population have been increasing since 1990.



## **INTERAGENCY PLANNING AND COORDINATION**

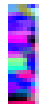
The Interagency Planning and Coordination chapter provides emphasis on the opportunities to coordinate, plan and provide services to residents in the most efficient manner.

- Some of the opportunities available for efforts between the County and individual municipalities, the County and groups of communities, and between municipalities, include: shared services; joint purchase of materials and supplies; agreements for use of equipment and facilities; technical assistance; shared costs for project planning and implementation; and shared information between communities.
- The close proximity and accessibility of Nassau County to the New York Metropolitan Region provides an ideal situation to coordinate and participate in various projects, planning initiatives, studies, conferences and seminars which often have a direct or indirect impact on the County.
- The County government can benefit from inter-departmental coordination, planning and implementation efforts.

**The overall Goal for this chapter is to facilitate and encourage intermunicipal, interagency, and regional efforts which result in the efficient provision of services, project implementation and better communication.**



- Several of the policy recommendations and implementation strategies identify ways that the County and municipal boards can work together on planning initiatives, training programs, and educational workshops/seminars; and to establish a Nassau County-Municipal Planning Federation.
- Other policy recommendations and implementation strategies focus on the County's active participation in regional projects and committees; citizen involvement in projects; and use of the County's capital improvement program to implement this *County Comprehensive Plan*.



## LAND USE

The historical land use patterns of development and existing land uses in the County, including an Existing Land Use Map, are described in the Appendices of this document. This information provides an overview of how the County developed from the colonial days to the present. The historic and existing land use information and data also provide the foundation for the Comprehensive Plan Map and concepts described in this *Comprehensive Plan*.

This chapter describes the future vision for Nassau County, including the key concepts of Centers, generalized ranges of development intensities, major transportation elements, natural resources and open space, transit-oriented development, and redevelopment of vacant or underutilized properties. The Comprehensive Plan Map and text describe an approach to how the County can evolve in a different manner while still maintaining its suburban character, protecting the critical resources and scenic beauty, improving the transportation network, providing community services, diversifying housing options, as well as enhancing the cultural and recreational activities and facilities.

There are five recommended **Generalized Ranges of Development Intensity** categories, based on floor area ratio (FAR), depicted on the Comprehensive Plan Map:

High (0.40 FAR and over); Moderate (0.20 to 0.40 FAR); Suburban (0.10 to 0.25 FAR); Low (0.05 to 0.15 FAR); and Very Low (0.05 FAR and below).

In addition, there are **five types of Centers** which have been identified:

Regional Center; Major Centers; Intermediate Centers; Local Centers; and Neighborhood Centers.

[*Note: The Land Use chapter of this County Comprehensive Plan provides a more detailed description of these concepts.*]

**The overall Goal for this chapter is to promote a balanced pattern of land use that encourages the concentration of future development in established areas with adequate infrastructure and facilities, so as to make efficient utilization of the transportation network, preserve the County's environmental and scenic resources, and revitalize the downtowns and Centers**

- Several of the policy recommendations and implementation strategies focus on informing boards and residents about the *Comprehensive Plan*; allocating infrastructure improvements which are consistent with the Plan; encouraging appropriate regulations and efforts to attract businesses to downtowns and Centers; sponsoring conferences on downtown issues, opportunities and strategies; inventorying and evaluating County property for brownfield sites; encouraging the County and others to plan for adaptive reuse and redevelopment of brownfield properties; advocating land use patterns, such as transit-oriented development, which better support transit use; and creating pedestrian linkages and jitney services between transit hubs and nearby land uses.
- Other policy recommendations and implementation strategies encourage development which minimizes environmental impacts; foster the protection of open space resources to balance impacts of land development; educate property owners about conservation options and support their efforts to preserve natural resources; and promote development plans which are compatible with available infrastructure.



## **ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES**

The topics described in the Environmental Resources chapter include critical resources, open space, water resources, air quality, scenic qualities, environmental regulations and programs, wastewater treatment, hazardous materials and recycling.

- Nassau County's environmental resources consist of the groundwater aquifers, surface and coastal waters (Atlantic Ocean, Long Island Sound and bays), vegetation, preserves and open space, fish and wildlife, and air.
- The County has experienced a dramatic decrease in vegetated areas, wildlife habitats and wetlands over the last century as a result of development and other factors.
- A variety of programs and studies are evaluating options or implementing initiatives to conserve and protect specific natural resources; reduce contamination, pesticides and stormwater pollution. However, additional efforts are needed to maintain and enhance these critical resources.

**The first major environmental Goal is to protect and preserve the County's critical natural resources, including the wetlands, aquifers, shorelines, water bodies, open space, significant vegetation and nature preserves.**

- The policy recommendations and implementation strategies identify a variety of options: prepare an inventory and assessment of the surface and groundwaters; create a dedicated Environmental Fund and open space program; utilize recharge basins for groundwater replenishment as well as passive recreational uses and natural habitats; plan and implement air quality improvement efforts; evaluate energy conservation options; strengthen the role of municipal environmental groups; support effective use of State and Federal environmental review procedures to evaluate projects and programs; and maintain the scenic resources through different initiatives (e.g., Scenic Roads Program; Scenic Drives and Bike Tour guides).

**The second major Goal is to protect the quality and quantity of the County's groundwater and surface water resources.**

- The policy recommendations and implementation strategies specify actions to be taken to reduce contamination of water bodies and stormwater runoff: initiate efforts and educate the public about federal stormwater regulations; assess pollution abatement and prevention techniques; utilize groundwater modeling to identify areas with potential impacts (e.g., excessive pumping, saltwater intrusion, VOCs); enforce regulations for underground oil tanks; promote the County's water conservation program and groundwater monitoring program; encourage coastal communities to prepare Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs; and support recommendations in the: South Shore Estuary Reserve Study, Long Island Sound Study, and Water Quality Improvement Plans for Manhasset Bay and Hempstead Harbor.

**The third major Goal is to encourage the proper operation, maintenance and improvement of the wastewater treatment plants in the County.**

- The policy recommendations and implementation strategies focus on maintaining the infrastructure and facilities at levels which comply with permits, allow uninterrupted service, and protect the public health at beaches and surface waters; replacing and upgrading equipment and procedures; and inventorying and assessing septic systems in unsewered areas, and evaluating consistent standards or management.

**The fourth Goal is to promote additional recycling of materials and support reliable options for disposal of non-recyclable solid waste.**

- The policy recommendations and implementation strategies promote solid waste reduction strategies and the use of recycled materials; establish local markets for recycled products; educate and encourage businesses, government and residents to increase amounts of recycled materials from other waste materials; coordinate and monitor solid waste legislation; and support long-term options for disposal of solid waste materials.

**The last environmental Goal is to support the timely clean-up of contaminated sites and the proper disposal of hazardous materials.**

- The policy recommendations and implementation strategies identify the need to prepare a database of hazardous waste and contaminated sites in the County; support and monitor efforts to clean-up the sites; encourage developers, communities and the County to plan for brownfield redevelopment and reuse of the sites; enforce regulations for the proper disposal of hazardous waste materials; and expand the local education and disposal programs.



## **TRANSPORTATION**

The transportation chapter describes the issues of transit service and options, travel demand management, roadway network and capacity, access management, journey to work, transit-oriented development, pedestrians, bikeways, ferry service, goods movement, and commuter rail service.

- The Long Island Bus system is an essential mode of transportation for some residents. A number of improvements to the existing bus schedules and routes are needed to better match the destinations and travel times for current and potential transit riders.
- Over the last 25 years, the number of in-commuters (185,000) to Nassau County has increased to a level almost as large as the number of out-commuters (260,000). As a result, there is a greater reliance on the automobile for commuting; peak travel hours have spread out into mid-day periods; and heavier traffic volumes occur in the east/west directions.
- Many of the roads have experienced increased traffic volumes and limited capacity improvements. However, traffic and access management initiatives (e.g., reduce curb cuts; require interconnection between parking areas; synchronize traffic signals; improve signage and landscaping) can improve access and circulation between areas.
- Travel Demand Management (e.g., staggered work hours; carpooling and vanpooling; guaranteed ride home programs for workers who arrive by carpool, bike, on foot or mass transit) is an option to reduce peak hour traffic and increase overall mobility.

**The first major Goal in this chapter is to enhance the availability and efficiency of mass transit options in order to improve air quality, reduce the number of single-occupancy vehicles, provide convenient service to residents and commuters, and reduce traffic congestion.**

- The policy recommendations and implementation strategies include a reassessment of the Long Island Bus system and recommendations for alternative more-direct routes, extended service, new north-south routes, jitney service and other options; educate commuters about mass transit options and other alternatives; market and distribute material about existing transit and commuter services; establish passenger intermodal facilities with integrated transportation services; and improve transportation and movement in the Nassau Hub area (including better pedestrian connections; linkages between land uses; landscaping etc.).

**The second major Goal is to maintain the function and improve the capacity of the roadway network to serve a variety of transportation purposes.**

- The applicable policy recommendations and implementation strategies identify ways to improve the traffic safety and flow on roads through Intelligent Transportation System techniques (e.g., message boards; traffic cameras); coordinate with State, Federal and regional transportation organizations on needed and planned improvements; encourage use of arterial and access management techniques; encourage connection between sites (e.g., remove obstacles, create driveway and pedestrian access); develop roadway guidelines for landscaping, signage and design features; strengthen enforcement of signage and landscaping requirements; and evaluate improvements for north-south travel routes.

**The third Goal is to support opportunities for alternative forms of transportation.**

- The policy recommendations and implementation strategies focus on the need to prepare a study of waterborne passenger issues; support new ferry service; prepare a comprehensive Bicycle, Pedestrian and Horseback Trail Plan inventorying the existing and potential routes, trails and paths (for commuting and recreation); evaluate roadways for new bicycle routes; coordinate efforts at all levels to make bicycle and pedestrian travel safer and improve timing of traffic signals; increase efforts to create walkways and connections between areas; encourage employers to install bike racks and other accommodations; and provide technical assistance to developers and communities about transit-oriented development.

**The fourth Goal is to develop transportation improvements which will enhance competitiveness for Nassau County's transportation, distribution, and production firms without adversely affecting local communities.**

- The policy recommendations and implementation strategies specify how intersection and traffic improvements should be made along critical goods movement routes; support efforts for freight shipment, where appropriate, as an alternative to trucks on roads; and provide information about freight consolidation and distribution centers to businesses.

**The last transportation Goal is to support safety and efficiency improvements planned for the LIRR service which are designed to benefit local residents and employees commuting to and from Nassau County.**

- The policy recommendations and implementation strategies include support for the east side connection between the LIRR Mainline and Grand Central Terminal in Manhattan; encourage priority be given to a third operational track on the LIRR Mainline; and support plans and funding for the rail line grade-crossing elimination projects.



## HOUSING

The housing chapter describes issues relating to housing supply, diversification of housing, homeownership and rental housing opportunities, housing data and market trends.

- The availability of desirable housing is a significant factor for Nassau County in attracting and retaining a population of business leaders and different types of employees, civic and community volunteers, single persons, families of all ages, and other residents.
- A constrained housing supply and continuing demand have resulted in increasing housing prices in many parts of the County. In addition, there are exceptionally low vacancy and turnover rates within Nassau County.
- Similarly, the small rental housing supply and high rental demand have resulted in higher prices and limited rental options in some areas.

- A broader, more diverse range of housing opportunities is needed to accommodate the smaller households, senior citizens, single parents with children, single persons, and families with various housing needs and desires.

**The first major housing Goal is to encourage a diversified housing supply that consists of new residential construction, preservation and improvement of the existing stock, and reuse of vacant or underutilized buildings.**

- Several of the policy recommendations and implementation strategies focus on housing quality — improving existing older housing through rehabilitation; reducing overcrowded substandard housing through code enforcement; and reusing vacant or underused properties.
- Several of the policy recommendations and implementation strategies address housing location — encouraging housing to be located in downtowns, Centers and areas which are close to services, shopping and transportation connections.

**The second major Goal is to provide greater rental and homeownership opportunities for County residents.**

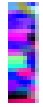
- The policy recommendations and implementation strategies address increasing opportunities for homeownership through first time homebuyer programs and services; and supporting additional rental opportunities to serve different needs and income levels of young singles, small families, senior citizens and other residents.

**The last Goal is to identify obstacles to housing access in the County and efforts to make changes, as well as opportunities to better understand housing market conditions and trends.**

- The policy recommendation and implementation strategies deal with improving the County's understanding of housing market trends, conditions and data; enhancing



interdepartmental exchange of information; and making effective use of the County's new Geographic Information System (GIS).



## ECONOMY

The Economy chapter addresses the County's economic base; business growth and diversification; downtowns and Centers; tourism and waterfront development; as well as training and education of the workforce.

- Nassau County benefits from the income-generating capabilities of its educated and skilled workforce, employment base, quality-of-life, and access to the tremendous business and personal purchasing power in the New York Metropolitan Region.
- The overall level of employment in the County has been fluctuating around a fairly level trend and is expected to move slightly upward. Employment and economic activity in business and personal services is growing, especially in health and social services. In contrast, the defense and aerospace manufacturing industries, which were the mainstay of basic industry in Nassau and Suffolk Counties, have declined.
- The economic welfare of the County and its residents is connected not only to the business and employment activity in Nassau County, but also to income earned elsewhere by resident commuters.

**The first major Goal is to strengthen the County's economy by encouraging economic development activities which will provide jobs, increase the tax base, ensure a stable land use pattern, and diversify the County's employment sectors.**

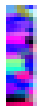
- The policy recommendations and implementation strategies focus on promoting the competitive advantages of the County to a diverse mixture of prospective businesses; fostering entrepreneurs and growth of existing businesses; reviewing the costs of doing business; encouraging tourism-related businesses and facilities; and supporting waterfront revitalization efforts.

**The second major Goal is to support efforts to provide training and education which will produce skills required for the present and future labor force.**

- The applicable policy recommendations and implementation strategies focus on enhancing the skills and training of employees (current and prospective) by creating partnerships with businesses and schools; and providing technical and training assistance for local businesses.

**The third major Goal is to support initiatives which are targeted at strengthening and improving the County's downtowns and Centers.**

- The policy recommendations and implementation strategies focus on reinforcing the downtowns and Centers through additional housing, mixed use development, and physical improvements; identifying market potentials and financial assistance; and coordinating efforts with economic development agencies.



## **CULTURE AND RECREATION**

The Culture and Recreation chapter describes the County's cultural attractions, programs and museums; historic resources; parks, preserves and trails; and recreational facilities.

- Nassau County contains a variety of cultural events and programs which are intended to enhance the cultural experience of residents and tourists in an educational and/or entertaining manner.
- The County has numerous parks, ballfields, beaches, playgrounds, recreational areas, golf courses, preserves and open space which provide passive and active recreational activities as well as environmental education opportunities.
- There are many historic resources in the County which have retained their historic significance, architectural characteristics, and archaeological connections to historic events. Some of these properties have been designated as local landmarks, listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places, or designated as National Historic Landmarks.

**The first major Goal is to support and enhance the cultural facilities, services, programs and events in the County to improve the quality of life and encourage tourism.**

- The policy recommendations and implementation strategies focus on working with various cultural, business groups and tour operators on promotion, marketing, public education, and coordination; supporting new ventures, such as cultural community centers; and building on the close proximity to the cultural and entertainment industries in New York City.

**The second major Goal is to support the preservation of historic resources as key attributes to the quality of life and historic evolution of the region.**

- The policy recommendations and implementation strategies relevant to historic resources identify opportunities to sponsor educational forums; apply for funding through State programs; prepare a comprehensive database and mapping of all the historic properties; and encourage use of the historic information by decisionmakers, developers and residents.

**The third major Goal is to provide sufficient parks, preserves, and recreational facilities to serve the current residents and growing segments of the population.**

- The policy recommendations and implementation strategies include developing a Systems Planning Framework for the County parks and recreational facilities; maintaining and improving the facilities, especially in underserved areas; expanding the adopt-a-park program and business sponsorships; providing structured programs for youths and senior citizens; creating local “pocket” parks with funding from various sources; establishing scenic lookouts; maintaining the character of the Nassau-Suffolk Greenbelt Trail; and providing improved public access to the beaches and shorelines.
- Another key recommendation and strategy is to prepare a comprehensive Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Horseback Trail plan for the County (existing and potential trails, bicycle routes, greenway connections, and paths).



## COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The community facilities which serve some of the most basic and important needs of residents include schools, libraries, hospitals and health care facilities, child care centers, and social service facilities. The Community Facilities and Services chapter covered the topics of education, public facilities, health care services, social services and child care, as well as community facilities and services database.

- The resources vary from one school district to another in the County but they all strive to ensure that school children receive the best quality education possible, learn in a safe environment, and receive the necessary tools to succeed in the highly competitive future workforce.
- The hospitals and health maintenance organizations in the County are striving to provide quality care to the public. However, the type, amount and location of medical facilities and services may not be adequate to serve the County's existing and growing population. There may also be restrictions on access to the health care facilities and services for some residents.
- A variety of County agencies and departments, as well as local, state and non-profit organizations, provide an assortment of social service programs and activities. Yet, many residents do not fully utilize the services or are unaware of these opportunities.
- Child care services is a very important issue for many working families and single parent households, especially since there are issues relating to child care access, and transportation services.

**The overall Goal for this chapter is to assure that there is an adequate system of public and private community facilities, as well as educational and social services to support current and future residents of Nassau County.**

- The policy recommendations and implementation strategies regarding education identify the need to advocate educational programs which are responsive to challenges of the 21st Century; explore options to increase computer equipment and services in the schools; and expand efforts to establish school-to-work partnerships.

- The policy recommendations and implementation strategies applicable to public facilities focus on expanding the access to public buildings and recreational areas for meetings, public recreation, and other community activities; encouraging reduced fee structures; and supporting joint-use agreements between municipalities and school districts.
- The policy recommendations and implementation strategies for health care services cover monitoring the amount, quality and distribution of services; encouraging facilities to locate near transit services and in areas with targeted needs; and supporting research of factors associated with increased types of cancer.
- The policy recommendations and implementation strategies relating to social services and child care identify ways to better inform residents about services and programs; encourage businesses, the County and other employers to provide access to child care services; sponsor a forum on child care issues; and create a database of community facilities and other factors.

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The Project Overview and Introduction chapters which follow this Executive Summary provide a description of the Comprehensive Plan process, public involvement, as well as the County's attributes, physical setting, regional location, and government structure.

Appendix A contains an overview of the County's Historic Settlement Patterns, while Appendix B describes the Existing Land Uses in Nassau County.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

The *Nassau County Comprehensive Plan* is a policy document which outlines a vision for the future of Nassau County. It focuses on protection of the County's natural resources, current and long-range growth and development which is compatible with the County's quality of life, and provides guidance to decisionmakers, residents and organizations. The Plan is comprehensive because it blends and prioritizes the various factors and issues relevant to the subject matters of: interagency planning and coordination, land use, environmental resources, transportation, housing, the economy, culture and recreation, and community facilities and services.

### A. Purpose

The *Comprehensive Plan* includes a lot of information about relevant issues, as well as a variety of goals, policy recommendations and implementation strategies to guide public and private decisionmakers. Where appropriate, the *Comprehensive Plan* identifies initiatives which the County, municipalities and other organizations can do to implement the goals and policy recommendations and help achieve the vision for Nassau County's future.

The *Comprehensive Plan*, once adopted, will be the first overall Plan for Nassau County — the Plan which was prepared in 1971 was never adopted.

### B. Role of the Nassau County Planning Commission

The County Government Law of Nassau County (otherwise known as the Nassau County Charter) was amended in 1994 to establish the County Legislature in place of the Board of Supervisors, as well as other changes to specific departments and programs. One of the provisions in the amendment of the Nassau County Charter was contained in Article XVI, Planning Department, regarding a comprehensive master plan. The Nassau County Planning Commission has primary responsibility for developing and adopting a County comprehensive master plan, and updating it at least every five years to assure that it is current.

“...the County Planning Commission shall, no later than January first, nineteen hundred ninety-nine, prepare and adopt a comprehensive master plan for the development of the entire area of the county, which shall include studies and recommendations regarding highways and transportation, economic development, parks, public water supply, air quality, solid waste disposal, historic preservation, wastewater treatment, open space preservation, environmental conservation, future land use and availability of housing.”<sup>1</sup>

The nine member Planning Commission is the policy making head of the County Planning Department (the Planning Department provides staff and technical assistance to the Commission).

### C. **Public Participation**

County residents participated in all phases of the County planning project through public workshop discussions, surveys, community outreach meetings, and focus groups. The project schedule included a series of ten Public Workshops, two Public Hearings, public opinion surveys (written and telephone), and numerous meetings with community groups, elected officials, and County and regional organizations. In addition, the public has had an opportunity to review and comment on the background documents, the *Draft Comprehensive Plan*, and the *Proposed Comprehensive Plan*.

Public outreach efforts included newspaper articles (local newspapers, Newsday and the New York Times); public announcements and interviews on local radio and television stations; distribution of documents; as well as mailings to residents, municipalities, elected officials, County departments and agencies, civic groups and various organizations. Input from the public was an important part of the planning project. The interest and involvement of County residents, elected officials, and various organizations provided a broader perspective on issues and recommendations — which resulted in the *Comprehensive Plan* being more thorough and relevant to current and future conditions, issues and projects.

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<sup>1</sup> Local Law No. 11 – 1994, amendment of the County Government Law of Nassau County (otherwise known as the Nassau County Charter), September 1994, page 11-1994-50.

## **D. Background Documents**

Several major tasks were completed during the process of developing the *Nassau County Comprehensive Plan*. These tasks helped compile the necessary data and information about various topics, issues and opportunities, as well as public opinion, which were used to prepare the background documents and establish the framework for the *Comprehensive Plan*.

- **Inventory and Analysis Document**

The first task that was completed for the planning project was the *Inventory and Analysis* document. This document evaluated the significant factors which have historically impacted and are currently affecting Nassau County, Long Island and the New York Metropolitan Region. The *Inventory and Analysis* document contains a wide range of data and information regarding the topics of: demographics, housing, land use, environmental resources, transportation, the economy, culture and recreation, and community facilities.

Information in the *Inventory and Analysis* document was derived from an array of reports and data (local, regional, County, State and Federal sources); input from organizations involved in applicable projects and efforts throughout Nassau County, Long Island and the New York Metropolitan Region; along with analysis by the project consultants.

- **Public Opinion Surveys**

Two surveys were completed for the planning project: a telephone survey of a random sample of County residents and a written survey. The analysis for both of the surveys is contained in the *Public Opinion Survey Analysis* document.

The telephone survey, which was statistically significant, questioned a random sample of residents about the County's services, attitudes towards development and expansion, prioritization of future improvements and demographics. The telephone survey was conducted in June 1997 by a professional survey firm.



The written public opinion survey was prepared for the *Comprehensive Plan* as a means of soliciting more public input on specific topics and issues. The written surveys were distributed at the June 1997 Public Workshops and given to residents upon request. It provided an opportunity in the planning process for the public to identify their responses to detailed questions. However, the written survey was not intended to be statistically significant.

- **Issues and Opportunities**

The *Issues and Opportunities* document was the third task completed for the project. The document was a synthesis of information gathered, observations made, and analysis prepared by the project consultants, with input from the Nassau County Planning Department and Nassau County Planning Commission. The opportunities are areas in which actions can be taken or improvements made to address the issues which have been identified. The topics covered in the *Issues and Opportunities* document are the same as the *Inventory and Analysis* document.

Another area which was included in the *Issues and Opportunities* document is input from the public about issues which they felt were of importance to the County and their community. Public comments were received at the four Public Workshops held in June 1997. At the Public Workshops, small group discussions covered the strengths, weaknesses, issues and opportunities for housing, environmental resources, transportation, the economy, and culture and recreation. The public comments regarding issues and opportunities are summarized at the end of each relevant section in the *Issues and Opportunities* document.

- **Goals, Policy Recommendations and Implementation Strategies**

The *Goals and Policy Recommendations* evolved out of information and analysis prepared for the previous project documents: *Inventory and Analysis*; *Issues and Opportunities*; and *Public Opinion Survey Analysis*. Public input from the various community meetings and Public Workshops, held in connection with the *County Comprehensive Plan* project, was also incorporated into the material. The *Goals and Policy Recommendations* were presented and discussed at the January 1998 Public Workshops. Then, the *Goals and Policy Recommendations* were revised in response to the public input.

The subsequent project task, preparation of the *Implementation Strategies*, supported the *Goals and Policy Recommendations*. The *Implementation Strategies* provided another level of detail by describing strategies for implementing the goals and policy recommendations within each topic area and specifying key groups, where appropriate, which should be actively involved in the initiatives. The goals, policy recommendations and implementation strategies formed the basis for the *Nassau County Comprehensive Plan*.

#### **E. Distribution**

All of the background documents, the *Draft Comprehensive Plan*, and the *Proposed Comprehensive Plan* were distributed to the following groups and places: the Mayor and Supervisor of each municipality; County departments and agencies; County, State and Federal legislators; community and civic groups; business organizations; regional, State and Federal agencies; and all of the libraries in Nassau County.

Copies of all the documents (along with the Fact Sheet and Project Schedule) were also handed out at the Public Workshops and the numerous community outreach meetings. In addition, press releases were sent out to the media announcing availability of the documents for review. Comments which were received from these organizations, elected officials and the public were incorporated into preparation of the draft and final versions of the *Nassau County Comprehensive Plan*.

## INTRODUCTION

The Regional Plan Association's report entitled *The Future of Nassau County* (March 1969) included the following statement about Nassau County:

“Considering the shock to its culture and environment of doubling a population of over 600,000 in the 1950's, Nassau has retained much of its charm of earlier days. The North Shore has managed to keep most of its former character. Living on the great plain and along the South Shore is still geared to informal open living and outdoor recreation. The soft salt air still sweeps in from the Ocean, and Jones Beach belongs to the people of Nassau because they are nearest to it and can get there first and most often.”<sup>1</sup>

That description of Nassau County is still essentially accurate. While Nassau County is predominantly suburban in character, it contains a balance of residential, commercial and industrial development as well as recreational facilities and open space. It also contains a rich mixture of cultural and historic resources, economic opportunities, educational facilities, community services, transportation connections and scenic beauty.

Nassau County occupies a 298 square mile area on Long Island (the largest island on the East Coast), and is located between Suffolk County, (the eastern border) and New York City's Queens County (the western border). The Long Island Sound and the Atlantic Ocean form the northern and southern borders with 188 miles of scenic shoreline.

Nassau County is directly linked to the New York Metropolitan Region (refer to Figure 1, Regional Location).<sup>2</sup> This proximity and connection by highways and rail lines has provided Nassau County with significant opportunities relating to its employment, labor force, business opportunities, population growth, travel options, housing, culture and recreation. Nassau County's connection to the rest of the New York Metropolitan Region is reflected in this *Comprehensive Plan*.

<sup>1</sup> *The Future of Nassau County*, Regional Plan Association in cooperation with the Metropolitan Regional Council, the Nassau County Planning Commission and the Nassau-Suffolk Regional Planning Board, March 1969, page 1.

<sup>2</sup> The New York Metropolitan Region includes Long Island, New York City, the lower Hudson Valley counties, and certain areas in northern New Jersey and southern Connecticut.



*The shorelines and water resources from the Long Island Sound and Atlantic Ocean form the picturesque northern and southern borders of Nassau County.*

Nassau County, with over 1.3 million residents, is the fifth most populated county in New York State while comprising the third smallest in land area. It is also the most densely populated county (over 4,000 people per square mile) in the State, outside of the counties in New York City.

## **Physical Characteristics**

The surface topography of Nassau County is defined by two easterly running glacial moraines which form ridges the length of Long Island. The ridges along the north shore were formed by glacial deposits and are characterized by irregular topography and drainage channels that empty out into deep bays. The Town of North Hempstead and part of the Town of Oyster Bay are dominated by a ridge, with the highest elevation in the County at 378 feet above sea level occurring in the Village of East Hills.

The rolling hills in the northern portion of the County flatten out to a broad glacial outwash plain in the southern part of the County. The center area of Nassau County is

characterized by the plain which gradually tilts southward. Extensive tidal and marsh areas, barrier beaches, and sand dunes are located along the Atlantic Ocean coastline.

The surface of bedrock in Nassau County ranges from 200 feet below sea level in the northwest and slants southeasterly to 1,700 feet below sea level. A permeable stratified drift, or outwash deposited by meltwater streams, covers most of the County's surface.

Long Island has a moderate climate due to a combination of its proximity to the ocean and its low altitude. The average annual temperature is 52.8 degrees. The total annual precipitation is approximately 42 inches.

## **Government**

The County Executive is the chief elected official of County government. The County Executive's duties and responsibilities include: preparation of the County Budget; overall administration of County government; appointment of the Commissioners and Directors of the County departments and agencies; oversight of the numerous programs and services offered by the County; as well as interaction and coordination with other elected officials, agencies and organizations at the municipal, County, State and Federal levels.

The County Legislature is an elected body of 19 legislators representing legislative districts throughout the County. The County Legislature has specific duties and responsibilities and works with the County Executive on the budget, programs, legislation, and other matters. The County Legislature was established in 1994 as a replacement to the Board of Supervisors.

At the local level, Nassau County consists of three towns: Hempstead, Oyster Bay, and North Hempstead; two cities: Glen Cove and Long Beach; and sixty-four incorporated villages. In addition, there are a variety of communities which are "unincorporated," meaning they are not self-governed villages or cities, but are part of one of the three towns (refer to Figure 2, Municipalities).

The Village of Mineola is the County Seat. Mineola is centrally located in Nassau County and contains a concentration of County office buildings, court facilities and other public uses.

## **Planning Commission**

The Nassau County Planning Commission is comprised of nine members, representing different parts of the County, who are appointed by the County Executive. The Planning Commission is responsible, under Sections 239 l and m of the New York State General Municipal Law to review zoning and planning actions referred by local boards — to insure coordination of such actions and planning efforts among the municipalities, with a focus on County-wide considerations.

The Planning Commission also has authority to review subdivisions in the unincorporated areas of the three towns, and to review subdivisions in the incorporated areas which are located within 300 feet of the boundaries of two municipalities. One other primary responsibility of the Commission is preparation and adoption of this *Comprehensive Plan*, as well as updating it every five years.

The County Planning Department provides staff to the Planning Commission for review of referrals and preparation of reports and plans, including this *Comprehensive Plan*. The Planning Department is also responsible for: annual survey of building activity; census analysis; transportation and planning projects; participation in the capital budget process and historic preservation reviews; public information requests; assistance to municipal boards; and participation in various committees and organizations, such as: the County Executive's Open Space Committee, the County Soil and Water Conservation District, State and regional transportation committees, and the Long Island Regional Planning Board.

# Nassau County Comprehensive Planning Project

## Regional Location



May 1998

### Nassau County Planning Commission

Lloyd Smallwood, Chairman  
Ronald Kadis, Vice Chairman  
Joann E. Adams  
Gerald Bambrick  
Paul T. Bolkovitch

Farvren C. Choops  
Constance Paschillo  
Henry Hedley  
John Ritter, Jr.  
Paul P. Finerman - Director of Planning

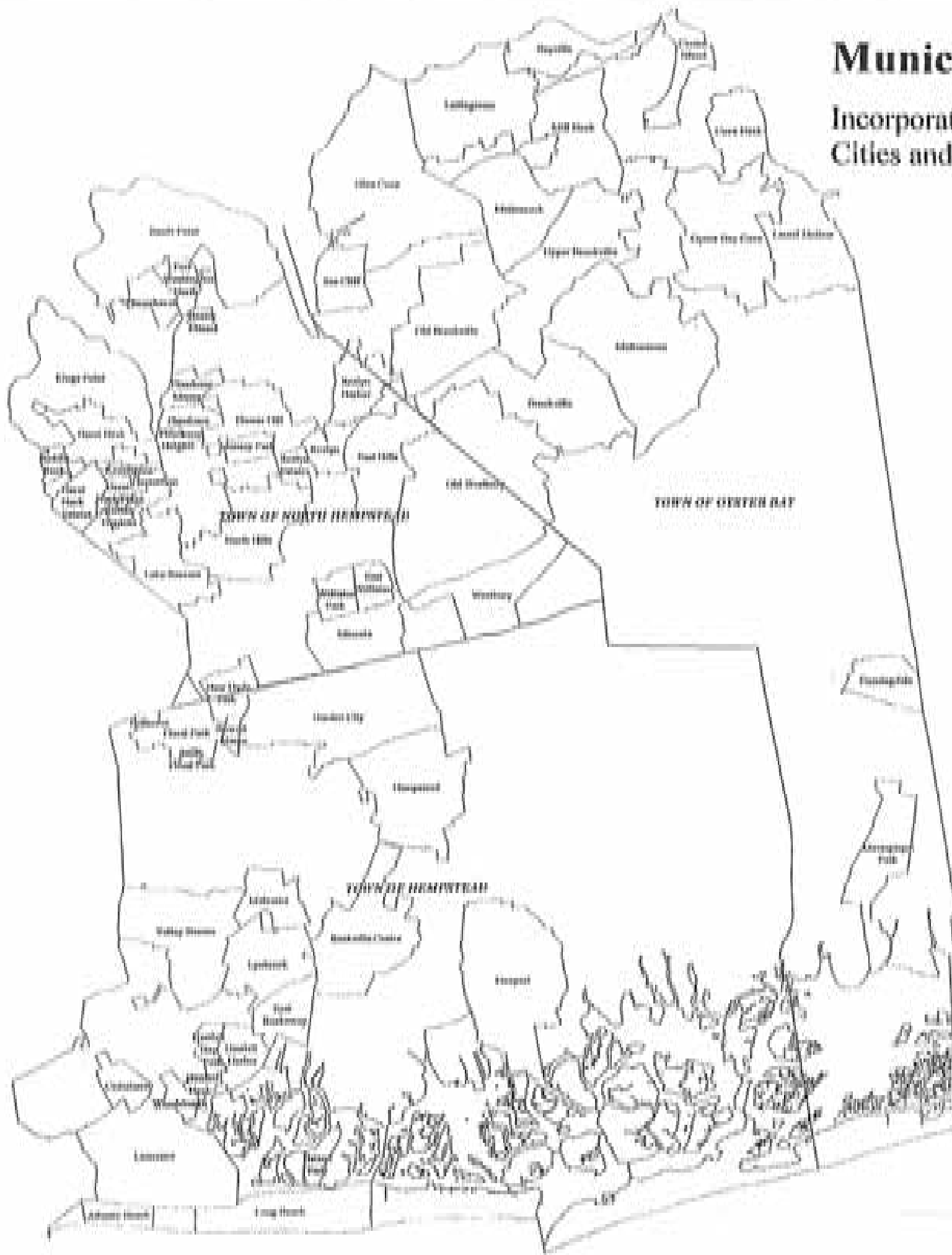
Thomas E. Galante - County Executive

Prepared by:  
Frederick P. Clark Associates, Inc.  
Thomas Conover & Associates, Inc.  
Dwight and Bartholomew  
Peter G. Eschbacher, AICP  
Planning Corporation  
Eyes & Ryan PC, Inc.  
Wilbur Smith Associates  
Waltz Consulting Services

Figure 1

# Nassau County Comprehensive Planning Project

**Municipalities**  
 Incorporated Villages,  
 Cities and Towns



Base Map Copyright, 1991, County of Nassau, N.Y.



May 1998

## Nassau County Planning Commission

Lloyd Smallwood, Chairman  
 Ronald Kadin, Vice Chairman  
 John R. Adams  
 Gerard Bambrick  
 Paul T. Butkercit  
 Thomas S. Gulotta - County Executive

Parveen C. Chopra  
 Constance Puschillo  
 Henry Holley  
 John Ritter, Jr.  
 Paul F. Pomassa - Director of Planning

Prepared by:  
 Frederick P. Clark Associates, Inc.  
 Thomas Consonanti & Associates, Inc.  
 Dywicki and Bartholucci  
 Peter Q. Eachweiler, AICP  
 Planning Corporation  
 Ryan & Ryan PR, Inc.  
 Wilbur Smith Associates  
 Walsh Consulting Services

Figure 2



## ASSUMPTIONS

The *Comprehensive Plan* for Nassau County is based on historic demographic trends and data. It is also based on a number of assumptions about the County's current and future population, and the applicable impacts on other areas, such as land use, housing, the economy, culture and recreation, transportation, and community services.

### Population

In 1990, Nassau County's population was approximately 1,287,000 residents, according to the United States Census Bureau (refer to Table 1). This represents a modest decline in population of 2.6% from the previous decade.

**Table A-1: Population by Nassau County Towns and Cities, 1940-1990**

	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990
Town of Hempstead	259,318	432,506	740,738	801,592	738,517	725,639
Town of North Hempstead	83,385	142,613	219,088	235,007	218,624	211,393
Town of Oyster Bay	42,594	66,930	290,055	333,342	305,750	292,657
City of Glen Cove	12,415	15,130	23,817	25,770	24,618	24,149
City of Long Beach	9,036	15,586	26,473	33,127	34,073	33,510
<b>NASSAU COUNTY</b>	<b>406,748</b>	<b>672,765</b>	<b>1,300,171</b>	<b>1,428,838</b>	<b>1,321,582</b>	<b>1,287,348</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The County's strongest period of population growth was between 1950 and 1960 when its population increased by over 93%. During the following decade, the population growth slowed considerably. Nassau County reached its highest population total in 1970 with approximately 1,428,000 residents. Then, during the 1970s and 1980s, Nassau County's population growth trend was reversed — declining by 7.5% and 2.6% respectively.

### Race and Hispanic Origin

Nassau County's population is becoming increasingly diverse. According to 1994 estimates by the United States Census Bureau, Nassau County is approximately 86.6% White, 8.6% Black, 3.1% Asian and Pacific Islander, and 0.1% American Indian or

Eskimo. Of the towns and cities, the Town of Hempstead has the greatest percentage of Non-white population at 16.6%.

**Table A-2: Nassau County Population by Race by Town and City, 1990**

	Total	White	Black	Amer. Indian, Eskimo	Asian and Pacific Islander	Other Race
Town of Hempstead	725,639	605,481	87,644	1,121	17,477	13,916
Town of North Hempstead	211,393	182,710	13,922	200	11,831	2,730
Town of Oyster Bay	292,657	277,046	5,009	196	8,612	1,794
Glen Cove City	24,149	20,719	1,883	32	820	695
Long Beach City	33,510	29,163	2,599	93	559	1,096
<b>NASSAU COUNTY</b>	<b>1,287,348</b>	<b>1,115,119</b>	<b>111,057</b>	<b>1,642</b>	<b>39,299</b>	<b>20,231</b>

Source: Nassau County Planning Commission, *Total Population and Minority Population in Nassau County, 1990 Census*

Between 1970 and 1994, the Non-white population in the County grew by 140.3% while the White population declined by 16.9%. The largest percentage increase in population growth occurred within the Asian and Pacific Islander category, which grew by over 171% during the 1980s. Black (African American) population increased in all of the towns and cities — with the exception of the City of Long Beach which posted a 21.1% (694 people) decline between 1980 and 1990. County-wide, the Black population increased by 22.4% during the 1980s.

**Table A-3: Nassau County Population by Race and Hispanic Origin, 1960-1994**

	1960	1970	1980	1990	1994
All Races	1,300,171	1,428,838	1,321,582	1,287,348	1,302,427
White	1,258,039	1,355,754	1,204,208	1,115,119	1,126,784
Black	39,350	65,679	90,743	111,057	123,855
Amer. Indian, Eskimo & Aleut	N/A	N/A	892	1,642	1,845
Asian and Pacific Islander	N/A	N/A	14,472	39,299	49,943
Other Race	2,782	6,647	11,267	20,231	N/A
Hispanic (All Races) <sup>1</sup>	N/A	N/A	43,286	77,386	92,799

Source: U.S. Census Bureau  
N/A: Data Not Available

<sup>1</sup> The U.S. Census Bureau does not consider persons of Hispanic origin to be a racial category in the Census data. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

## Age

Another significant characteristic of Nassau County is that the population is getting older. Between 1970 and 1990, Nassau County's median age has increased from 31 years to 37 years (refer to Table 4). This increase is due in large part to an increase in its oldest residents. During the time period between 1960 and 1990, the number of residents age 65 and older grew by 126%. More recent figures from the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that the number of residents age 65 and older is continuing to increase — in 1997, it is estimated that there were 197,917 residents age 65 and older (an 8.2% increase from 1990).

Nassau County's fastest growing age-cohort over the past 35 years has been those residents 85 years of age and older.

**Table A-4: Nassau County Population by Age Cohort, 1960-1990**

Age Cohorts (Years)	1960		1970		1980		1990		Percent Change 1960-1990
	No. of Persons	Percent of Total	No. of Persons	Percent of Total	No. of Persons	Percent of Total	No. of Persons	Percent of Total	
<b>NASSAU COUNTY</b>									
0-4	144,257	11.1	98,105	6.9	68,878	5.2	78,852	6.1	-45.3
5-9	158,775	12.2	137,474	9.6	80,991	6.1	75,850	5.9	-52.2
10-14	139,812	10.8	163,042	11.4	108,854	8.2	77,427	6.0	-44.6
15-19	82,132	6.3	146,708	10.3	127,698	9.7	82,465	6.4	0.4
20-24	47,490	3.7	89,154	6.2	108,519	8.2	94,220	7.3	98.4
25-29	62,315	4.8	67,649	4.7	90,751	6.9	99,449	7.7	59.6
30-34	101,151	7.8	68,241	4.8	90,924	6.9	103,176	8.0	2.0
35-39	121,648	9.4	84,173	5.9	80,644	6.1	100,574	7.8	-17.3
40-44	109,290	8.4	111,290	7.8	73,373	5.6	96,999	7.5	-11.2
45-49	88,238	6.8	117,499	8.2	80,767	6.1	79,784	6.2	-9.6
50-54	68,386	5.3	100,021	7.0	98,833	7.5	68,857	5.4	0.7
55-59	53,139	4.1	76,648	5.4	97,311	7.4	70,175	5.5	32.1
60-64	42,691	3.3	55,894	3.9	73,643	5.6	76,621	6.0	79.5
65-69	33,312	2.6	39,038	2.7	50,533	3.8	67,645	5.3	103.1
70-74	23,911	1.8	31,044	2.2	35,168	2.7	47,682	3.7	99.4
75-79	13,429	1.0	21,536	1.5	24,618	1.9	31,712	2.5	136.1
80-84	6,635	0.5	12,928	0.9	17,073	1.3	19,427	1.5	192.8
85+	3,560	0.3	7,636	0.5	13,004	1.0	16,433	1.3	361.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,300,171</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,428,080</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,321,582</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,287,348</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>-1.0</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Despite population declines in every census since 1960, recent data indicates that the number of children in the 15 and under age cohort is increasing in the County. According to 1994 estimates for the County prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau, there were more than 247,000 children in the 15 and younger age group. This represents an increase from the 1990 total of approximately 232,000.

However, the 1994 estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau show an increase in the 15 and under age cohort — between 1990 and 1994, this age cohort increased by 15,197. In addition, recent information from the New York State Department of Education and the Nassau County Youth Board depict an overall increase in school enrollments and the youth population in Nassau County.

## **Assumptions**

The assumptions used for this *Comprehensive Plan* consist of the following:

- Nassau County's population is gradually increasing after a period of decline. The County reached its greatest population level in 1970 with approximately 1,428,000 residents. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the population steadily declined until it reached a total of approximately 1,287,000 residents in 1990. However, the most recent population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that there were 1,303,231 County residents in 1995.
- The projected population levels will gradually increase over the next 25 years, reaching a similar level to the 1970 population peak.<sup>2</sup> According to forecasting information from the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council, Nassau County's population is projected to increase to 1,433,600 by the year 2020 — approximately a 10% increase over 25 years.

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<sup>2</sup> Additional information and data about these subject matters is provided in the *Inventory and Analysis* and the *Issues and Opportunities* documents prepared for this County Comprehensive Plan.

- Nassau County's population is becoming increasingly diverse. Between 1980 and 1994, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that the non-white population in the County grew by 49.6%, while the white population declined by 6.4%. The largest percentage increase in population growth occurred within the Asian and Pacific Islander category, with an increase of 245% in this period. The second fastest growing category was persons of Hispanic origin which increased by 114%, followed by a slower pace of 36% for the African American residents in Nassau County.
- Nassau County's minority population is expected to continue its strong growth in future decades. The County's change in racial composition is expected to mirror the Long Island sub-area of the New York Metropolitan Region — by the year 2020, the Asian population on Long Island is forecast to increase by approximately 623%. In addition, the Hispanic population is forecast to increase by 222%, while the African American population is expected to increase approximately 49%.
- The population of Nassau County is getting older. Between 1970 and 1990, Nassau County's median age increased from 31 years to 37 years.
- The number of County residents age 65 and older grew by more than 126% during the period between 1960 and 1990. The fastest growing age-cohort over the past 35 years has been those 85 years of age and older.
- Nassau County's population of residents 15 years of age and younger declined by more than 47% between 1960 and 1990. However, the 1994 estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau show an increase in the 15 and under age cohort — between 1990 and 1994, this age cohort increased by 15,197. In addition, recent information from the New York State Department of Education depicts an overall increase in school enrollments in Nassau County.
- Population projections prepared by the Nassau County Youth Board indicate that the youth population (0-20 years of age) has increased by 10,908 since 1990. The Youth Board also projects that the County's youth population will increase by an additional 2,030 by the year 2000.

# **I. INTERAGENCY PLANNING AND COORDINATION**

Nassau County and the 69 incorporated municipalities have specific authority to provide services, programs and activities to local residents. Yet, there are opportunities to coordinate, plan and provide these services and programs in the most efficient manner. Some of the opportunities available for efforts between the County and individual municipalities, the County and groups of communities, and between municipalities, include: shared services; joint purchase of materials and supplies; agreements for use of equipment and facilities; technical assistance; and shared costs for project planning and implementation. Inter-municipal and County-municipal coordination can also inspire elected officials, boards and committees to share information and ideas, support what other communities are doing, and learn from similar experiences.

The close proximity and accessibility of Nassau County to New York City, Suffolk County and the rest of the New York Metropolitan Region provides an ideal situation to coordinate and participate in various efforts. There are numerous projects, planning initiatives, studies, conferences and seminars taking place in the region which often have a direct or indirect impact on Nassau County. This regional connection provides an opportunity for the County to be actively involved so that its interests and policies are considered and incorporated into these projects. It also allows the County staff and residents to enhance their understanding about what is happening with the various Federal, State, County, regional and local agencies and organizations.

In terms of the County government, there are opportunities and potential benefits which can result from interdepartmental coordination, planning and implementation efforts. Nassau County is involved with a wide array of projects and initiatives, some of which involve several County departments and agencies, other organizations, and non-profit groups. Coordination of responsibilities among the different departments, agencies and organizations could result in more efficient and/or streamlined planning and decisionmaking. In addition, County staff can benefit from interacting on important issues, sharing ideas, and staying informed about activities of other County departments and agencies.

**Goal: Facilitate and encourage inter-municipal, interagency, and regional efforts which result in the efficient provision of services, implementation of projects, and better communication between organizations**

### **I.1 Policy Recommendation:**

Identify opportunities for inter-municipal cooperation, shared services, and joint planning initiatives which will benefit local residents.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County Planning Department should establish an on-going communication network between their staff and municipal planners and Planning Board members in each municipality.
- (2) The County Planning Department should continue to review its inventory of municipal planning and zoning documents, and obtain current copies for the documents that are outdated or not in the inventory. The County Planning Department and municipalities should:
  - Determine the consistency of municipal planning policies with the goals, policy recommendations and implementation strategies in this *Comprehensive Plan*.
  - Promote cross-acceptance of planning policy documents with municipalities.
  - Determine those areas in each municipality where action for Plan implementation is solely municipal, County, or joint efforts.
  - Develop action programs for County and County-municipal Plan implementation. Utilize the County's capital program, where appropriate, on a unilateral or cost-sharing basis.

- (3) The County should explore the opportunity to create a Nassau County-Municipal Planning Federation, which would provide a forum for the exchange of information and ideas between County agencies involved in planning and programming activities; municipal planning and zoning boards; environmental and design review boards; and other interested agencies and organizations. The Planning Federation would organize workshops, seminars and events on specific topics, as well as provide technical assistance to board members.
- (4) The Nassau County-Municipal Planning Federation, once established, should coordinate resources and planning initiatives with the Nassau County GIS Users Group and other organizations.

## **I.2 Policy Recommendation:**

Foster greater communication between Nassau County Departments and municipalities to provide better coordination, improve understanding, and maximize the efficient use of resources.

### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County, municipalities, State and regional agencies should come to agreement on a common methodology to be used to collect and record data on existing land use and environmental conditions, future plans, area-wide projects, demography, and similar matters.
- (2) The County, with input from municipalities and regional groups (e.g., Long Island Regional Planning Board, New York Metropolitan Transportation Council), should provide a central data repository for planning and land use development information, and publicize the data effectively on a regular basis, with widespread distribution.
- (3) The County should assist municipalities to compile digital records of their zoning maps and codes; subdivisions; and maps. The digital records should be incorporated into the County's GIS system.
- (4) The County should prepare and distribute Guides and newsletters to municipalities and other interested groups to inform them about activities, meetings and programs. The County-Municipal Planning Federation, once established, can assist with distribution of material to



municipal officials, civic and business groups, interested residents, land use professionals, and private sector developers.

- (5) The County and municipalities should evaluate opportunities to share services; jointly purchase materials and supplies; establish agreements for use of equipment and facilities; and provide technical assistance.
- (6) The County and municipal leaders should explore innovative ways, such as, through a “suggestion box” program or incentive awards, in which government services and programs can be shared for greater efficiency.
- (7) The County and public relations specialists can publicize these efforts to attract public attention and to generate support.
- (8) The County’s interdepartmental committees, such as the County Integrated Services Planning Committee (with representatives from the County Departments of Social Services; Health; Senior Citizen Affairs; Youth Board; Drug and Alcohol Addiction; Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities; and Probation) should coordinate their efforts with the appropriate public, private and non-profit organizations to maximize services provided to residents.

### **I.3 Policy Recommendation:**

Provide seminars and training opportunities for County and municipal planning and zoning board members.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The educational institutions in Nassau County, the County Planning Department, and municipal planners should coordinate efforts to evaluate the training curricula being used for planning and zoning board members in other parts of New York State. The next step would be to organize and sponsor appropriate training programs and workshops for the planning and zoning board members. [Note: the County-Municipal Planning Federation, once established, should be the organization to organize, promote and coordinate the training programs and workshops.]

- (2) Municipalities should recommend that newly appointed planning and zoning board members attend training and educational sessions.

#### **I.4 Policy Recommendation:**

Encourage the County's active participation in regional projects and implementation efforts.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County and citizen activists should ensure that they are represented on, and actively participate in, regional planning committees and organizations.
- (2) The County Planning Commission and elected officials should make sure that regional agencies are aware of and incorporate, where appropriate, the policy recommendations and strategies in this *Nassau County Comprehensive Plan*.

#### **I.5 Policy Recommendation:**

Support planning and programming initiatives which strengthen the role of Nassau County and Long Island in the New York Metropolitan Region.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County and interested residents should participate on various regional planning committees and organizations, such as the Regional Plan Association, New York Metropolitan Transportation Council, New York State Department of Transportation (LITP 2000), Long Island Sound and Coastal committees.
- (2) The County Planning Commission and elected officials should inform County residents about the importance of regional planning and programming initiatives.
- (3) The County, Village Officials Association and other organizations should cooperate to establish a centralized clearinghouse for information on these projects and activities.

- (4) The County and municipalities should utilize the resources, simulation models and other technical capabilities of the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council to help analyze regional and local issues, and/or potential impacts of large projects.

## **I.6 Policy Recommendation:**

Strengthen opportunities for citizen awareness and involvement in the implementation of this *Comprehensive Plan*, as well as other County and regional projects.

### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County Planning Commission and Planning staff should consider whether more outreach efforts are needed regarding the *Comprehensive Plan* and other planning initiatives. One possibility is to organize a speaker's bureau program utilizing Planning Commission members.
- (2) The County Planning Commission and other County Departments should continue to publicize and implement, where appropriate, the recommendations of this *Comprehensive Plan*. County officials should set an example to local communities by supporting projects and development proposals that are consistent with this *Nassau County Comprehensive Plan*, and speaking out against those which are not.

## **I.7 Policy Recommendation:**

Develop multi-year capital improvement programming, particularly for programs and public investments that will implement and reinforce the goals and policy recommendations of this *Comprehensive Plan*.

### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County should continue to encourage the effective improvement of the new capital programming process in Nassau County.
- (2) The County Planning Commission should utilize its position on the County's Capital Program Committee to assure that the needs and recommendations of this *Comprehensive Plan* are duly emphasized.

- (3) The County departments and programming committees should explore opportunities where the County capital budget can be used to support municipal plans and improvements that reinforce and implement this *Nassau County Comprehensive Plan* (e.g., housing infrastructure needs, joint open space acquisition; environmental programs).

## II. LAND USE

The *Nassau County Comprehensive Plan* is intended to be a generalized policy guide for the overall future growth and development of the County and at the same time to be supportive of local land use planning and decisionmaking. The vision for the future of Nassau County is one with appropriate development which is compatible with its suburban character, natural resources and infrastructure; a strong economy with employment opportunities and services; housing and homeownership options; diverse cultural and recreational facilities; and sufficient community services and facilities.

The vision for Nassau County's future is reflected in the Comprehensive Plan Map as well as the concepts, goals, policy recommendations and implementation strategies described in the previous chapter on Interagency Planning and Coordination, this Land Use chapter and the subsequent chapters on Environmental Resources, Transportation, Housing, The Economy, Culture and Recreation, and Community Facilities and Services.

### A. Comprehensive Plan Map

The Comprehensive Plan Map depicts the major elements of Nassau County's transportation system, its existing open spaces, the locations of Community Centers and the general ranges of recommended development intensities throughout the County<sup>1</sup>. The Comprehensive Plan Map is based upon a generalized pattern of development intensities rather than upon specific land uses, since land use classifications are more appropriately made as a part of the municipal planning and zoning processes.

#### 1. *Generalized Intensities*

The general ranges of development intensities are expressed in terms of floor area ratio (FAR). FAR is obtained by dividing the total floor area on a lot by the total lot area. For example, a building with a total floor area (on all floors) of 10,000 square feet on a 40,000 square-foot lot would have an FAR of 0.25.

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<sup>1</sup>. The description and map of Existing Land Uses is contained in Appendix B of this Comprehensive Plan document.

The five recommended intensity ranges are as follows:

<u>Category</u>	<u>General Range of Development Intensity (FAR)</u>
• <b>High</b>	0.40 FAR and over
• <b>Moderate</b>	0.20 to 0.40 FAR
• <b>Suburban</b>	0.10 to 0.25 FAR
• <b>Low</b>	0.05 to 0.15 FAR
• <b>Very Low</b>	0.05 FAR and below

*[Note: The FAR ranges have been designed to overlap. This reflects the fact that they are intended only to represent general ranges of relative development intensity rather than fixed and specific numerical standards. The overlapping is also in recognition of the wide variation in existing development intensities and zoning in these areas.]*

The Comprehensive Plan Map is intended to serve as a general guide for future development patterns in Nassau County. For the most part, the Map proposes that higher intensity development be generally located in areas which currently have a more dense or suburbanized character and contain adequate infrastructure — especially where such areas have access to mass transit, major roads, public sanitary sewers and water supply. Conversely, lower intensity development is recommended for those areas of the County which presently have a low or very low density character and more limited infrastructure capacity. Nevertheless, the Comprehensive Plan Map is not merely a duplication of existing development patterns and intensities. It is also future-oriented and recommends higher densities in areas where such densities would be supportive of municipal planning policies and planned infrastructure investment, and where redevelopment is appropriate. Higher density designations do not, however, necessarily either anticipate or recommend the redevelopment of existing single-family residential areas for other purposes.

The basic premise of this approach is that encouraging such a development pattern will help to rejuvenate and strengthen the County's downtowns and Centers while at the same time protect groundwater quality and supply, preserve critical open space and environmental resources in less intensely developed areas, and more efficiently utilize the transportation network. Essentially, the goals, policy recommendations and implementation strategies which form the basis of this *County Comprehensive Plan* are intended to

reinforce the recommended development patterns as illustrated on the Comprehensive Plan Map.

## 2. *Centers*

The concept of Centers is an integral component of this *Comprehensive Plan* since it focuses attention on restoring the vitality and maintaining the diversity of uses in the downtowns. There are a variety of policy recommendations and implementation strategies in this *Comprehensive Plan* regarding the future of the Centers. There is also further discussion of the Centers in the Economy chapter of this document.

The Centers were identified for this *Comprehensive Plan* after evaluating different factors, such as: the mixture of residential, commercial, institutional, and community uses; the intensity of concentrated development; transportation access; public uses and facilities; and the visual character. The Centers are depicted on the Comprehensive Plan Map.

There are five different types of Centers which can be found in Nassau County. The following description provides an overview of the types of Centers:

- **Neighborhood Center**

The smallest type of community center. Neighborhood Centers contain a small area of retail activity and services which are convenient for the adjacent residential “neighborhoods.” The retail stores are typically one-story buildings located on one or two blocks. The housing is low-rise and often less dense than in other types of Centers.

- **Local Center**

The second category of Centers includes more well-defined downtowns, containing a mixture of land uses and public facilities. Commercial businesses are more extensive than in Neighborhood Centers. There are also more professional offices and service establishments, some of which are located on floors above the commercial uses. Local Centers usually have access to the LIRR commuter rail and/or bus service.

- **Intermediate Center**

This type of Center contains the mixture of uses, public facilities and transportation services found in the Local Centers but at a larger scale. Intermediate Centers have more diversity in housing types, are the primary commercial area for a larger base of residents, and have organized public spaces. These Centers are serviced by sanitary sewers and other infrastructure which can accommodate more dense development. Some of the Intermediate Centers include vacant and underutilized spaces and/or waterfront parcels which have the potential for redevelopment.

- **Major Center**

The Major Centers contain major employment sites and larger scale office, residential, commercial, and public/semi-public activities. In addition, Major Centers have access to primary roadways, railroad and bus service, as well as intermodal transportation facilities. Mineola is an example of a Major Center. It is the seat of County government and the justice system which draws employees and residents from all parts of Nassau County, and outside of the County.

- **Regional Center**

The only proposed Regional Center is the Nassau Hub, located in the central core of the County. This area has a concentration of uses (educational, commercial and recreation) which attract people from within and outside of Nassau County. There is potential for traffic and pedestrian improvements, as well as more development in the Nassau Hub, including proposed plans for entertainment, cultural and recreational activities as well as housing. A critical component of the Nassau Hub is transit service and the integration of new development with existing uses and services in the area.

*[Note: Nassau Hub, as defined in the Nassau Hub Study, is the area bounded by Old Country Road, Hempstead Turnpike, Clinton Road and Merrick Avenue. The High Range of Development Intensity depicted on the Comprehensive Plan Map does not necessarily coincide with these Hub boundaries.]*





*Carle Place (top) is an example of a Neighborhood Center, Malverne (left) is an example of a Local Center, and Great Neck (right) is an example of an Intermediate Center.*

### **3. Methodology**

An interpretation of the County's existing development intensity was derived from information provided in the Nassau County Geographic Information System (GIS). The GIS data includes the lot area and building floor area, as recorded by the Nassau County Tax Assessor, for many of the over 410,000 parcels in the County. This information is specifically linked to parcel centroids.<sup>2</sup> To determine the existing intensity, a floor area ratio (FAR) analysis of the County was performed as follows.





<sup>2</sup> The term "parcel centroid" refers to a point that is at the geographic center of each parcel in the County.

- The County was divided up into a grid consisting of squares measuring 1,000 by 1,000 feet. Each parcel centroid was then classified into one of the approximately 7,000 squares.
- The average FAR was calculated for each square based on the sum of all of the building floor area divided by all of the lot area of all of the parcel centroids within each square.
- Ranges of FAR were then established which resulted in a map depicting the average FAR for each of the 7,000 squares comprising Nassau County. This map provided the primary basis for the generalized delineation and classification of the development intensity categories identified on the Comprehensive Plan Map.

# Nassau County Comprehensive Planning Project

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MAP

### GENERALIZED DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY - 2020

-  High
-  Moderate
-  Low
-  Very Low

Note: A description of the Generalized Development Intensity Categories is located in the text of the Comprehensive Plan.

-  Planning Open Space

-  Center



Base Map Copyright 1993, County of Nassau, N.Y.



November 1998

## Nassau County Planning Commission

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Figure 3

## **B. Natural Resources and Open Space**

The natural resources and open space areas in Nassau County enhance the overall quality of life. The components of open space are often defined differently by each community, based on the natural resources considered to be of importance to the local residents. For this County *Comprehensive Plan*, open space consists of areas with significant environmental features, permanently protected natural resources and properties which are not intensively developed for residential, commercial, industrial or institutional uses (e.g., properties which are not totally built out and have some undeveloped land). Open space areas may be classified differently in the County Tax Assessor's data (categories within the classifications for: recreation and entertainment; and wild, conservation lands and public parks) but they all help complement and balance the residential and nonresidential development throughout Nassau County.

The open space resources shown on the Existing Land Use Map and Comprehensive Plan Map were compiled from a variety of sources: the Nassau County Geographic Information System; Nassau County Tax Assessor's parcel centroid classifications; the 1981 land use inventory prepared by the Long Island Regional Planning Board;<sup>3</sup> 1994 aerial photographs of the County; commercially available maps; and a 1998 field survey of parts of the County.

Open space contributes to the environmental, social, recreational, and economic vitality of the County. Environmentally, open space provides groundwater protection; wetland, surface and marine habitats for various plants and animal species; and natural buffers between developed areas. Open space also provides opportunities for outdoor recreation and educational activities, social gatherings, and relief from the tensions of every day life.

Parks, golf courses, waterfronts and beaches can help attract tourists and maintain economic investment in the community. In addition, open space can cost less to service than residential, commercial and industrial uses.

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<sup>3</sup> Long Island Regional Planning Board, *Land Use 1981- Quantification and Analysis of Land Use for Nassau and Suffolk Counties*, 1982.

The Open Space areas depicted on the Comprehensive Plan Map and the Existing Land Use Map contribute to the quality of life in Nassau County by adding much needed diversity to a predominantly suburban landscape. The open space areas include: County, State, Federal and municipal parks; golf courses; nature preserves; parkway and interstate road right-of-ways; beaches; marinas; and estuaries. There are also other areas with open space elements, such as: schools which are classified as institutional and community uses but which typically have ballfields and recreational facilities as well as components of undeveloped land; and the residential parcels classified as “estates” by the Nassau County Tax Assessor’s office.<sup>4</sup> These areas contribute to the County’s open space system, but may not be permanently preserved as open space.

The Open Space category on the Comprehensive Plan Map may understate the amount of open space in the County since it does not include the wetlands, recharge basins, and large, privately-owned vacant land or underdeveloped parcels. A parcel by parcel inventory of the remaining open space areas needs to be prepared, utilizing specific criteria and analysis, to develop a comprehensive database of open space resources in the County.

*[Note: The County’s natural resources are described in more detail in the Environmental Resources chapter, and the Inventory and Analysis document prepared for this Comprehensive Plan.]*



*Landscaping and vegetated buffers incorporate open space elements and enhance the visual appearance of developed sites.*

<sup>4</sup> The Nassau County Tax Assessor’s office classifies estates as luxurious residences and auxiliary buildings containing at least five acres of land.

### C. Redevelopment

One of the concepts included in this *Comprehensive Plan* which may not be reflected on the Comprehensive Plan Map is the potential for redevelopment or reuse of vacant and underutilized parcels. Since many communities in the County are primarily built-out, one of the opportunities to create new housing and mixed uses is in the redevelopment of vacant or underutilized parcels. Redevelopment is a concept which refers to taking a property with existing buildings and/or other infrastructure, which is vacant, underused or unimproved, and developing new uses and activities on the site.

In Nassau County, there are a variety of sites which have significant redevelopment potential. In 1991, the County Planning Commission prepared a report on potential redevelopment areas in Nassau County, including: the Roosevelt Raceway Area; Levittown Study Area; Hicksville Study Area/West John Street-Duffy Avenue; Belmont Racetrack; Port Washington North; Stewart Avenue; Nassau Crossroads International Plaza; Mineola/Latham Brothers; and Brush



*This property in the City of Glen Cove is a vacant site which is available for redevelopment.*

Hollow Road in Westbury. Other sites not evaluated in the study which have current reuse proposals or potential for future redevelopment consist of: the Cerro Wire property in the Town of Oyster Bay; the Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum property in Uniondale, Town of Hempstead; the Lockheed Martin (Sperry) parcel in the Village of Lake Success and the Town of North Hempstead; the Navy parcel (currently being transferred to the County) and the Northrop Grumman property in Bethpage, Town of Oyster Bay; the waterfront redevelopment area in the City of Glen Cove; and the Port Washington sand pits in the Town of North Hempstead.

In addition to these sites, there are thousands of other vacant or underutilized parcels in the County, of various sizes, which have the potential for reuse and redevelopment (refer to Appendix B, Existing Land Use).

One type of redevelopment which has gained a significant amount of interest recently involves “brownfield” sites. Brownfield is a term assigned to properties which are vacant or underutilized and contain some form of contamination which places a perceived barrier on their potential for reuse or redevelopment. Often these parcels are former industrial, manufacturing, or commercial sites with service or locational amenities, such as centralized utilities, highway access and possibly waterfront access.

Brownfield redevelopment is a concept that typically has support at the local, County, State and regional levels as a way to connect environmental clean-up of properties with economic development efforts. State and Federal environmental and economic development agencies have initiated funding and technical assistance programs to help expedite the planning for reuse, clean-up and redevelopment of brownfield sites.<sup>5</sup>

In Nassau County, one of the brownfield redevelopment projects currently underway is located in Glen Cove and is part of the City’s overall revitalization plans for the waterfront area.

#### **D. Transit-Oriented Development**

Another concept which is not depicted on the Comprehensive Plan Map but is an important aspect of this Comprehensive Plan is Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). This is a land use development option which is being promoted and implemented by transportation, land use and economic development professionals around the nation as an alternative to the automobile-dependent, more dispersed land use development pattern. The concept of TOD incorporates a mixture of land uses around a transit stop with pedestrian amenities, open space and convenient access by foot, bicycle or alternative transit mode. TOD typically occurs within a quarter-mile radius of a rail or bus station. The design and configuration of the buildings and development area combined with the mixture of uses (residential, commercial, office, public and community, recreation and open spaces) pedestrian design features and activities provide an overall atmosphere which encourages pedestrian activity and transit usage.

The primary objective of TOD is to directly connect land uses with transit services, convenient shopping, services and access to housing and employment sites. There are often more housing options and types of

<sup>5</sup> *The Brownfields Primer*, Environmental Business Association of New York State, Inc. and NYS Brownfields Redevelopment Task Force, 1997.

residential development, along with a strong mixture of retail and services in TODs.<sup>6</sup>

**Goal: Promote a balanced pattern of land use that encourages the concentration of future development in established areas with adequate infrastructure and facilities, so as to make efficient utilization of the transportation network, preserve the County's environmental and scenic resources, and revitalize existing downtowns and Centers.**

## II.1 Policy Recommendation:

Define a future land use plan for Nassau County that is based on the established downtowns and Centers, preferred development patterns, existing and proposed transportation systems, and environmental features in the County.

### Implementation Strategies:

- (1) The County should allocate funding for infrastructure improvements which are consistent with, and supportive of, the overall land use plan for Nassau County.
- (2) The County Planning Commission should incorporate elements of the land use plan, as appropriate, into their subdivision, site plan and zoning reviews of proposed projects.
- (3) The County Department of Planning and Planning Commission should prepare and distribute a technical memo or newsletter article to inform local boards and residents about the *County Comprehensive Plan*, and encourage communities to integrate this approach into their decisionmaking process.

<sup>6</sup> There are a variety of useful publications on TOD, such as the ones by the Center for Livable Communities, which provide technical assistance and case study information.



## II.2 Policy Recommendation:

Encourage appropriate municipal development regulations and design guidelines aimed at attracting new businesses and community facilities, and revitalizing the downtowns, Centers and economic focal points.

### Implementation Strategies:

- (1) The County should work with local communities to prepare guidelines about design issues intended to improve the visual character and convenience of downtowns and Centers. The guidelines, adapted to each community, can be a useful resource to illustrate design concepts, define architectural terms, specify dimensions for certain features, and provide a visual indication of what is considered to be compatible with each downtown and Center.

*[Note: improvements to the visual quality of roadways is addressed in Policy Recommendation IV.9 of the Transportation chapter.]*

- (2) The County Planning Department should inventory existing zoning codes to identify model provisions which could be adopted by municipalities seeking to permit mixed land uses, including housing, in downtowns.
- (3) The County and municipalities should sponsor a conference and/or workshop meetings focused on downtown issues, opportunities and strategies for creating niche markets, business recruitment, and funding sources available for capital improvements. The conference or workshop meetings should include representatives from agencies such as the New York Main Street Alliance, Project for Public Spaces, Empire State Development Corporation, as well as County and local business groups.

*Additional implementation strategies regarding downtowns are included in the Transportation, Housing, Economy, and Culture and Recreation chapters.*

### **II.3 Policy Recommendation:**

Support the adaptive re-use of vacant commercial and industrial properties, along with the related infrastructure, to meet the needs of businesses and other land uses while resulting in positive community benefits from redevelopment and “brownfield” remediation.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County Planning Department, in conjunction with the Long Island Regional Planning Board should inventory and evaluate County-owned properties to determine if any are brownfield sites, as classified by Federal and State agencies. If there are any brownfield sites, the Department should prepare a study to evaluate possible reuses, the market feasibility of redevelopment, and the opportunity to provide public access and uses.
- (2) The County and municipalities should work with developers to encourage the reuse or redevelopment of these brownfield sites for new purposes, and to achieve possible benefits, such as the clean-up of contaminated sites; new land use activities; job and tax generation; and improved quality of life for the community.
- (3) Municipalities should be encouraged to evaluate their zoning codes to ensure that adaptive reuse of vacant commercial and industrial properties is permitted, and if necessary, amend the regulations to facilitate the redevelopment of these sites.
- (4) The County Planning Department and LIRPB should provide information about adaptive reuse and brownfield redevelopment to developers and interested property owners.
- (5) The County Departments of Planning and of Commerce and Industry should help promote funding sources for brownfield remediation and development, as well as initial reuse planning, that are available through the United States Environmental Protection Agency, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation.

### **II.4 Policy Recommendation:**

Advocate land use patterns and development densities which better support mass transit use and minimize traffic congestion on County roadways.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) Municipalities should be encouraged to evaluate their zoning codes to determine whether the areas around train stations and bus stops/centers are zoned for densities and uses appropriate to accomplish the goals of transit-oriented development design. Features which help encourage transit use and pedestrian activities are: a mixture of land uses with supportive commercial uses around transit stations; continuous sidewalks and safe crosswalks; comfortable and safe places to wait for transit services; buffering from street traffic; shade trees; and street-oriented buildings.
- (2) The County Planning Department's Division of Transportation should prepare guidelines on Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) techniques to assist interested municipalities and developers. The guidelines should identify the economic, social and environmental benefits of building near transit nodes; mixed land use, pedestrian and transit design principles; and possible implementation tools.

**II.5 Policy Recommendation:**

Create linkages between transit hubs and nearby land development to encourage transit use.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County should work with MTA Long Island Bus, MTA LIRR and the City of Long Beach Transit to establish jitney service for the areas surrounding train stations and bus routes. The jitney service should be actively promoted as an alternative to driving to and paying for parking at the train stations.
- (2) The County and municipalities should evaluate streets and residential areas near transit services to make sure that there are sufficient sidewalks and pedestrian connections to transit hubs. If there are gaps in the pedestrian walkways needed for easy connections, funding

sources, such as Community Development Block Grants, should be used for the improvements.

## **II.6 Policy Recommendation:**

Encourage land uses that minimize impacts to the County's natural resources, particularly the surface waters, coastal areas, groundwater recharge basins, wildlife habitats, and other critical environmental areas.

### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County and municipalities should, through their respective development review powers, promote appropriate development by limiting permitted densities in environmentally sensitive areas, limiting impervious surface coverage, minimizing land disturbance, requiring landscaping and revegetation, and protecting important habitat areas.
- (2) Municipalities should evaluate their zoning codes to determine whether older manufacturing and industrial zoning districts, especially along waterfronts, should be replaced with more appropriate zoning provisions.
- (3) Municipalities should continue to use the State Environmental Quality Review Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act for projects with federal funding or activities, during project reviews as an effective tool to ensure that development activities are respectful of and compatible with environmentally sensitive areas.

## **II.7 Policy Recommendation:**

Foster the protection and preservation of open space to counterbalance the impact of land development.

### **Implementation Strategy:**

- (1) The County and municipalities should preserve, and where appropriate, restore as much open space as possible in order to provide a balance to residential and non-residential development, protect critical natural resources, and generally enhance the quality of life in Nassau County.

## II.8 Policy Recommendation:

Support efforts by property owners to protect or preserve critical natural resources within estates and large parcels that are planned for development or subdivision.

### Implementation Strategies:

- (1) Municipal planning boards, local conservation groups and the County Planning Commission should continue to work with owners of estates and other large parcels during the early phases of the development planning process to design subdivisions and/or site plans that preserve as much open space as possible and protect critical resources, while at the same time accommodating the owner's reasonable economic interests in land development.
- (2) Environmental organizations, such as land trusts and the Nature Conservancy, should work with property owners to inform them about options, such as conservation easements, which can provide tax benefits while permanently protecting land from future development.
- (3) Municipalities and property owners should consider the use of cluster development and/or conservation subdivision techniques as alternatives to the standard subdivision design, and as a means of protecting critical resources, where these techniques are appropriate.
- (4) The County Planning Department, with input from environmental organizations, should prepare a report on environmentally sound and sustainable development techniques which describes alternative land use approaches for minimizing environmental (short and long term) impacts.

*Additional recommendations and implementation strategies regarding the environment and open space are included in the Environmental Resources chapter.*

## **II.9 Policy Recommendation:**

Promote development plans which are compatible with the capacities of, or mitigate potential impacts on, the infrastructure, roadways and services.

### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) Municipalities should work with developers to design land use projects which meet the existing and/or programmed capacity of the water and sewer systems in the County, as well as other infrastructure, adjacent roadways, and services.
- (2) Municipalities should evaluate their master plans, zoning codes, and subdivision regulations to determine whether their provisions and policies accurately reflect the community's current approach to land development.

### III. ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Environmental resources in Nassau County consist of the water sources (groundwater, surface, coastal); vegetation; open space; fish and wildlife; and air. From a public water supply perspective, the quality of the drinking water delivered to County residents by the various public/private water suppliers satisfies all Federal, State and local standards and is available in sufficient quantity to meet demand. Protection of the County's groundwater supply from various point and non-point pollution sources is required to ensure both future supply and to maintain the excellent quality of the groundwater.

Marine surface waters surrounding Nassau County include: Little Neck Bay, Manhasset Bay, Hempstead Harbor, Oyster Bay and Cold Spring Harbor on the North Shore and the Hempstead Bay complex on the South Shore Bay. The north shore bays are connected or mixed with waters of the Long Island Sound while the south shore bays mix with waters of the Atlantic Ocean.



*Surface waters are critical natural resources as well as pleasurable attractions for residents and visitors.*

Long Island Sound is bounded by Connecticut on the north, New York City and Westchester County on the west and Long Island on the south. The Sound is an estuary in which salt water from the ocean mixes with fresh water from rivers, streams, and the land. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has identified four main areas of concern regarding the Sound from its *Long Island Sound Study, component of the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (1994 Summary Report)*: nitrogen levels, toxic substances, pathogens and floatable debris.

In terms of the other natural resources, Nassau County has experienced a dramatic decrease in vegetated areas, wildlife habitats, and wetlands over the last century as a

result of the amount of development activity. However, many of Nassau County's significant vegetation and wildlife areas which remain are protected as publicly or privately-owned parks, preserves and parkways, while other significant vegetation and habitat areas are held in private ownership and may not be protected.

Nassau County contains various freshwater and tidal wetlands which provide benefits such as: water quality maintenance and protection; sediment trapping; chemical detoxification; nutrient removal; flood protection; shoreline stabilization; wildlife and fisheries habitat; recreational opportunities; as well as educational and aesthetic values. Protection and regulation of wetlands occurs at the Federal, State, and local levels.

New York's State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) Act gives authority to local agencies to designate specific geographic areas as "Critical Environmental Areas" (CEA). Once an area has completed the process for designation as a CEA, the potential impacts of proposed projects on the environmental characteristics of the CEA must be determined by the relevant approval or permit agencies.

In Nassau County, the only County designated CEAs are the "Special Groundwater Protection Areas" (SGPAs) — the Oyster Bay SGPA, and the North Hills SGPA. The Town of Oyster Bay has designated a number of CEAs, as indicated in the Oyster Bay Code. There are no locally designated CEAs in the Towns of Hempstead and North Hempstead.

The County's deep recharge zones have been identified, as well as SGPAs for the large, undeveloped or minimally developed areas within the deep recharge zones. The SGPAs consist of areas which are unsewered and where development should be minimized or carefully managed to protect the quantity and quality of the water recharging the aquifer system.

*More detailed information about wetlands and other natural resources is contained in the Inventory and Analysis and Issues and Opportunities documents prepared for this County Comprehensive Plan.*

#### **A. Critical Resources**

A number of rare and significant vegetation species exist in the County. The New York Natural Heritage Program has identified three significant plant communities in Nassau County: Hempstead Plains Grassland, Brackish Interdunal Swales, and an Oak-Tulip Tree Forest. The Natural Heritage Program also maintains a database of rare plants and animals native to the State — there are 119 records of these species in Nassau County.



In addition to the County's important plant species, there are a variety of significant fish and wildlife habitats. The New York Department of State has designated 19 Significant Fish and Wildlife Habitats in Nassau County.



*This pond in the Village of Roslyn park is one of the ponds in Nassau County which is primarily dependent on groundwater for its freshwater input.*

The County's surface water bodies (ponds, lakes, streams, freshwater wetlands and estuaries) are primarily dependent on groundwater for their freshwater input. The streams require groundwater to maintain their natural flows. Historically, the water table, which was higher than current levels, provided approximately 90% of all the streamflow.

As a result of development, the amount of water supply withdrawal, and sanitary sewers there has been a permanent lowering of the water table, and a resultant decrease in the baseflow of many streams. There have also been reduced water levels in many of the lakes, ponds and freshwater wetlands. Due to the lack of continuous baseflow along most of their length, most of the south shore streams can no longer sustain fish populations.

It is anticipated that without enhancing streamflow, the south shore will continue to lose freshwater wetlands, and the use of ponds and streams. Some of the methods available to improve the baseflow and water levels include: stormwater detention; stream maintenance; check dams; pond deepening and widening; recirculation of water in ponds; and shallow well pumpage.

There have been recent efforts initiated regarding water conservation measures. In 1987, Nassau County adopted a water conservation ordinance, in response to stresses on the groundwater system. Similarly, each of the water suppliers (public and private) adopted rules and regulations to promote water conservation, including restrictions on lawn sprinkling during certain times, and increased rates for higher usage. In addition, the County developed a multifaceted water conservation program which is still active.

A key component of the program is public education — including an agreement with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Nassau County to conduct educational programs in the schools. Over the last 11 years, this education effort has consisted of: the development and implementation of a school curriculum on water conservation issues; educational pamphlets; workshops and seminars; a Speaker's Bureau; water week; a telephone water helpline; and water audits of businesses and facilities in the County. The County also installed "The Water Story" trailer at Eisenhower Park.

The individual water suppliers and the County have distributed water conservation kits to homeowners. In addition, State and Federal legislation requires that all new plumbing fixtures have water conservation features.



*The baseflow of some streams have been lowered due to a number of factors.*

Groundwater recharge areas provide all of the County's water supply. Therefore, the recharge areas and SGPAs require special efforts and regulations to protect the quality of the groundwater recharge projects being conducted by the County Department of Public Works, such as the *Nassau*

*County 1998 Groundwater Study*, indicate that deep groundwater recharge zones currently cover almost all of the surface land area in the County.

Air quality in Nassau County is an important issue which affects all residents and workers. Air quality is regulated by the NYSDEC and the USEPA. The Nassau County Department of Health works cooperatively with the NYSDEC to monitor conditions and implement corrective action programs which will help improve air quality from local sources of contamination.

*A description of open space resources is included in the Land Use chapter of this Comprehensive Plan.*

According to the federal Clean Air Act, the USEPA is required to establish National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for acceptable air quality levels. Areas around the nation where pollutant levels exceed established standards are classified as “non-attainment areas.”

Nassau County is considered to be part of the New York Metropolitan Area for regulation and monitoring of air quality standards. The long term data from air quality monitoring stations in the New York Metropolitan Area help to recognize trends in air quality, and define where improvements are needed.

In addition to the NAAQS, the NYSDEC developed standards for total suspended particulates and hydrocarbons. NYSDEC also monitors the following air pollutants: carbon monoxide, ozone, sulfur dioxide, sulfates, nitrogen dioxide and nitrates, particulate matter, lead, and trace metals; and compares the levels to standards. Levels of some or all of these contaminants are measured in Nassau County at the following monitoring stations:

**Table III-1: Air Quality Monitoring Stations In Nassau County**

Monitoring Station	Constituents Measured
Glen Cove	TP; S/N
Eisenhower Park	AD; SO; CO; NO <sub>x</sub> ; PM; S/N
Hempstead	TP
Roslyn Heights	PM
Oyster Bay	TP

Source: New York State Department of Conservation, 1996

Notes: TP = total suspended particulates; S/N = sulfates/nitrates; SO = sulfur dioxide; AD = acid deposition; PM = inhalable particulates; CO = carbon monoxide; NO<sub>x</sub> = Nitric Oxide, Nitrogen Dioxide

While air quality has been generally improving over time, certain pollutants are still exceeding national standards, based on recent ambient air quality testing. The New York Metropolitan Area has been identified as a non-attainment area for carbon monoxide and ozone. However, the area has experienced only one exceedance for carbon monoxide in the past four years.

The NYSDEC recommends that additional controls be implemented in order to further reduce carbon monoxide levels, such as: reduction in fossil fuel emissions from vehicles and other sources (e.g., the Low Vehicle Emission Program); reduction in vehicle miles traveled through the employee commute option and transit ridership; use of reformulated gasoline; and use of oxygenated fuels during the winter months. Similarly, ozone levels could be reduced by implementing more stringent controls of VOC emissions and controls of precursors of ozone through use of clean fuels.

In terms of environmental oversight and coordination, the framework for several committees and boards were established by legislation previously adopted by the County Executive and County Legislature. In the County's Administrative Code, three local laws were incorporated, with a description of the legislative intent, powers and duties for:

- **Environmental Management Council (EMC)** — The primary focus of the EMC is to work with local communities and environmental organizations so that a unified effort can be made to protect, preserve, and enhance the natural resources, as well as to educate residents and visitors about important issues. [The County EMC has not been activated.]
- **Nassau County Water Resources Board** — The primary intent of the Water Resources Board is to act as a liaison between the County and all other water suppliers, and to evaluate supplemental water supply sources. [The Water Resources Board was formed but has not met in a few years.]
- **Nassau County Recycling Board** — The primary purpose of the Recycling Board is to develop, assist, coordinate and promote recycling efforts at all levels of government and the private sector in an effort to help with solid waste management. [The County Recycling Board has not been activated.]

*Additional information about air quality is contained in the Inventory and Analysis document and the State Air Quality Report by the NYSDEC.*

**Goal: Protect and preserve the County's critical natural resources, including the wetlands, aquifers, shorelines, water bodies, open space, significant vegetation and nature preserves.**

### III.1 Policy Recommendation:

Evaluate options for improving the protection of stream corridors, wetlands and other surface waters, and groundwater resources.

#### Implementation Strategies:

- (1) The County Departments of Planning, Public Works and Health should coordinate and expand their water monitoring efforts to prepare an inventory and assessment report regarding the existing conditions of the County's stream corridors, wetlands, other surface water bodies and groundwaters. This initiative should also be coordinated with municipalities, the Long Island Water Conference, the State Departments of Health and Environmental Conservation, and environmental groups. The report should also include:
  - The degree to which public uses are being achieved or impaired, and whether the applicable water quality standards are being met;
  - Identification of the activities that are preventing the attainment of beneficial public uses and applicable water quality standards; and
  - Description of the actions or programs underway or needed to ensure attainment of water quality standards.
- (2) The County Planning Department should update its *Natural Resources Inventory* report with new data from local, State and Federal sources, as well as mapping information from the County's Geographic Information System. The updated inventory report should be accompanied by a booklet, for distribution to local communities, which describes how to address development issues in environmentally sensitive areas.
- (3) The County and municipalities should evaluate whether additional areas should be classified as Critical Environmental Areas (CEAs), such as areas overlying the public water supply, based on the *Nassau County 1998 Groundwater Study*, the updated *Natural Resources Inventory*,

public input and other factors. The County and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation should help guide elected officials through the process of designating and approving CEAs.

- (4) The County should continue to work with the United States Environmental Protection Agency, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, New York Department of State (Coastal Resources) and community groups on the current streams and wetlands management programs in order to develop appropriate restoration plans and specific actions. Priority should be given to streams and surface waters that have significant ecological, environmental, recreational, and aesthetic value.

*More specific details are included in the Nassau County 1998 Groundwater Study, prepared for the County Department of Public Works.*

### **III.2 Policy Recommendation:**

Utilize the recharge basins for storm drainage and groundwater supply replenishment while accommodating passive recreational uses and open space.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County Departments of Public Works, Planning, and Recreation and Parks should prepare guidelines which describe criteria and methods for utilizing recharge basins for open space and passive recreational uses without impacting their capability to replenish the groundwater supply and accommodate storm drainage. The guidelines should then be made available to the owners of recharge basins and local residents.
- (2) The County and interested environmental groups should collaborate to prepare and maintain a Homepage for the Internet which provides information about recharge basins, describes their benefits, and outlines appropriate passive recreation uses. The Homepage can also provide: information on other environmental issues; directories of environmental organizations and contacts; and provide links to other Internet addresses, such as the Nassau County Homepage.

### **III.3 Policy Recommendation:**

Support options which promote the permanent preservation of open space, whether by direct or regulatory action.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) Environmental organizations and land trusts should work with property owners to inform them about options, such as conservation easements, which can provide tax benefits while permanently protecting the land from future development.
- (2) Municipalities should consider incorporating provisions into their subdivision and zoning regulations which will encourage the permanent protection of open space and natural resources within development plans, such as clustering; conservation subdivisions; environmental resource overlay zones; transfer of development rights (TDR)<sup>1</sup>; and other open space standards.
- (3) The County and municipalities should explore ways to involve the business sector in environmental preservation efforts, such as corporate sponsorship, business donations, and public-private partnerships.
- (4) The County should evaluate the open space and environmental resource value of County-owned property before it is considered to be sold.

### **III.4 Policy Recommendation:**

Establish an Environmental Fund to protect, preserve and acquire open space and natural resources in the County.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County should establish an Environmental Fund with a dedicated funding source which can be used to acquire and protect environmental resources in Nassau County.

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<sup>1</sup> Provisions for transfer of development rights are contained in §20-f of City Law, §261-a of Town Law, and §7-701 of Village Law.

(2) The County should continue to support the open space advisory committee in its efforts to evaluate options for preserving, protecting and acquiring open space resources in the County. The committee's representation should be expanded to include environmental organizations, local residents, civic groups, and municipal representatives. In addition, the committee's role and responsibilities should be expanded to:

- Identify an overall **open space program** for the County, with a variety of viable methods for the protection, preservation and/or acquisition of different types of open space, such as: parks, preserves, trails (walking, biking and horseback), wetland buffers, woods, waterfront sites/access, utility easements, rails-to-trails, parcels and projects on the *State Open Space Conservation Plan*.

The open space program should identify the key public and private organizations which have the legal authority and financial capabilities for undertaking the efforts;

- Investigate the various open space funding options, including State and Federal programs;
- In assessing the funding options for the new Environmental Fund, evaluate their economic impacts and significance on the County taxpayers;
- Establish criteria for ranking properties;
- Provide recommendations for immediate and long-term actions;
- Identify specific open space and environmental protection actions and initiatives which can be funded through the new Environmental Fund;
- Inform residents about conservation easements and other preservation techniques; and
- Coordinate efforts with land trusts, non-profit environmental organizations and foundations, and owners of large properties.



In addition, the program should identify opportunities to gain support and involvement from businesses, non-profit organizations, land trusts, environmental groups, sports clubs (e.g., fishing, hunting), recreational groups (e.g., hiking, biking, horseback riding), and civic groups.

- (3) The County and municipalities should make use of the environmental data in the County's Geographic Information System and the Open Space component of the Comprehensive Plan Map, as well as recommendations of the County Open Space Committee, in their decisionmaking regarding properties targeted for protection, preservation and/or acquisition, as well as for any proposed sale of public property.

### **III.5 Policy Recommendation:**

Inform developers and communities how to plan for development that minimizes environmental impacts while utilizing available infrastructure and satisfying the needs of specific land uses.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County Planning Department, with input from environmental organizations, should prepare a report on environmentally sound and sustainable development which describes alternative land use approaches for minimizing environmental (short and long-term) impacts. The report should be used as a reference tool by planners, engineers, architects, and developers, as well as by municipal, County, and State agencies for review of proposed development projects, and support for sustainable development techniques.
- (3) The County should continue to participate in regional and national organizations focused on environmentally sound and sustainable development.

*The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has a number of community grant programs with funding available for eligible projects relating to sustainable development; brownfields; environmental education; pollution prevention incentives; solid waste management assistance; and other matters.*

**III.6 Policy Recommendation:**

Coordinate planning and implementation efforts with regional, State and Federal organizations to improve air quality in the New York Metropolitan Region.

**Implementation Strategy:**

- (1) County officials and various staff members (County Executive's office, Departments of Planning and Health) should continue to actively participate in regional planning and regulatory programs focused on air quality issues in the region.
- (2) The County should work with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and State Department of Environmental Conservation to evaluate the need and opportunities to install new air quality monitoring stations at appropriate locations in Nassau County which would be used to provide additional data and identify problem areas.
- (3) The County, businesses and residents should evaluate the appropriateness of energy conservation options to reduce fossil fuel emissions and other pollutants which impact air quality conditions.

**III.7 Policy Recommendation:**

Promote coordination between the various non-profit, public, and private environmental groups to maximize efforts focused on preserving, protecting and maintaining the County's natural resources, and informing the public.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County Planning Department should continue to work with local environmental groups and municipalities to coordinate and improve the overall effectiveness of their efforts to preserve the County's critical resources and to inform residents about environmental issues.
- (2) The County Departments of Planning and Recreation and Parks should maintain a register of environmental and civic groups, non-profits, and other organizations in the County, with appropriate contacts and a

description of their interests and/or services. The register should be used for outreach efforts and notification regarding various environmental and planning projects, meetings, and County initiatives.

### **III.8 Policy Recommendation:**

Strengthen the role of municipal environmental advisory committees, and utilize the appropriate County entity to plan and coordinate the environmental studies and protection activities in Nassau County.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County and municipalities should enhance the role of Conservation Advisory Committees (CACs) and municipal environmental groups in the review of projects, research and analysis of issues, and contributions to relevant County initiatives.
- (2) The County should continue to support municipal environmental advisory committees and inter-municipal groups in their efforts to address environmental issues in the County.
- (3) Nassau County should evaluate what the appropriate County entity is to coordinate environmental studies, activities and environmental planning initiatives (e.g., Environmental Management Council). This entity should include members of CACs and environmental groups in order to share their professional knowledge and experiences in their communities, and to focus on specific issues.

### **III.9 Policy Recommendation:**

Support effective use of the State and Federal environmental review procedures to evaluate projects and protect the County's environment.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County Planning Commission should continue to utilize the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) process in its review of proposed municipal and County projects.

- (2) The County and municipalities should comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and other applicable Federal regulations, for the review of projects when federal funding or programs are involved.
- (3) The County should establish educational workshops and training programs for municipal boards covering the SEQR legislation and board responsibilities in the SEQR process.

*[Note: The County-Municipal Planning Federation recommended in the Interagency Planning and Coordination chapter could provide these sessions, along with guest speakers.]*

### **III.10 Policy Recommendation:**

Develop detailed environmental information, to be maintained in the County's Geographic Information System, so that it is readily available for use in evaluating development proposals and in monitoring environmental trends.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County should continue to utilize its Geographic Information System (GIS) to compile and store additional environmental data and maps related to surface and groundwater conditions, including the County Health Department's "Source Water Information Management System." The information can be used to prepare the County water quality inventory and assessment report, as described in the implementation strategies for Policy Recommendation III.1 in this chapter, as well as other projects.
- (2) The County should encourage the use of the GIS database by County departments and agencies, as well as municipalities, developers and local residents for research, analysis, project reviews and assistance in their decisionmaking. In addition, the County GIS office should assist County departments and agencies, as well as municipalities to incorporate data, maps and information into the GIS system.

### **III.11 Policy Recommendation:**

Maintain the scenic qualities of the County's natural resources for the enjoyment of residents and visitors.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) Municipalities and the County should explore use of the State's Scenic Roads Program (administered through the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation) to designate roads and viewsheds as scenic resources. The Scenic Roads Program provides technical assistance to communities and residents regarding the process of inventorying, evaluating and designating scenic resources.
- (2) The County should encourage efforts to prepare guidebooks with "Scenic Drives" and "Bike Tours" of various parts of the County which would incorporate historic, scenic, recreational and other attractions. The publications should be promoted throughout the region, on the Internet, and other marketing efforts, and should be distributed upon request to non-residents, as well as to chambers, public agencies, private businesses and residents.

*[Note: the issue of improvements to the visual quality of roadways is addressed in Policy Recommendation IV.9 of the Transportation chapter.]*

### **B. Water Resources**

- *Groundwater*

The process by which water is transferred from the sea to the land and back to the sea is referred to as the "hydrologic cycle." In Nassau County, the hydrologic cycle returns some water directly to the Atlantic Ocean and Long Island Sound through stormwater runoff and stream flows. The hydrologic cycle also recharges the groundwater system, eventually discharging back to the Atlantic Ocean and Long Island Sound as underflow.

Nassau County is underlain by consolidated bedrock above which is a wedge of gravel, sand, silt and clay sediments that store groundwater and form a complex system of three aquifers: Upper Glacial, Magothy and Lloyd

aquifers. As groundwater is withdrawn for water supply, new water (primarily from precipitation) continuously recharges the aquifers.

Water flow into the County's groundwater system exceeds water supply projections on a County-wide basis as detailed in the *Nassau County 1998 Groundwater Study*, prepared for the County Department of Public Works. However, this study also indicates that the groundwater system is complex and there are specific areas where withdrawal of groundwater for water supply has caused localized environmental impacts, such as: saltwater intrusion, contaminants and loss of stream flow.

The groundwater elevations are monitored on a routine basis to determine trends which may be associated with: pumping rates of water supply wells; fluctuations in climatic conditions; and other activities, such as installation of sewers and recharge by stormwater basins.

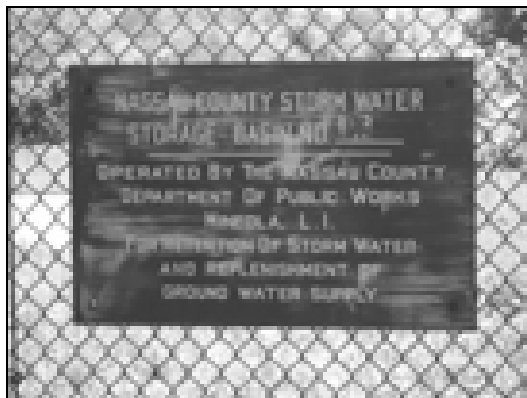
The most significant groundwater quality concerns in the County are volatile organic chemicals and nitrates, which account for the majority of public water supply well closings and treatment requirements. There are also other contaminants, such as petroleum products and pesticides, which have not significantly impacted the public water supply but are of continued public concern. In order to monitor and protect the water quality, Nassau County maintains an observation well network where samples of the groundwater are tested. This monitoring well network provides an early warning system for groundwater quality problems.

In 1995, the Nassau County Pesticide Policy was established to address the overuse and misuse of pesticides which can affect surface and groundwaters as well as the health of County residents and visitors. Two committees were established to promote the concept of Integrated Pest Management (IPM):

- **Nassau County Pesticide Advisory Committee** (appointed by the County Executive) — The committee focuses on public education; distribution of IPM material; establishing IPM practices for County property; and coordinating IPM as it relates to implementation of the County Pesticide Policy. The committee includes representatives from the County Health Department and other departments, businesses, residents and Cornell Cooperative Extension.

- **Nassau County IPM Guidance Committee** (established by the County Health Department) — The committee is coordinating the implementation of IPM for County owned properties.

In addition, the County has a program which has been in place over 10 years for the replacement of underground oil and chemical tanks as well as flammable and combustible liquids<sup>2</sup>. This program consists of the registration, testing and replacement (if necessary) of all underground storage tanks at County facilities and other properties owned by the County. The County, State and Federal regulations applicable to the County's program must also be complied with by all private and public facilities.



*Storm water storage basins and drainage pipes affect the water flow into the groundwater system.*

- ***Surface Water***

The surface waters on the north and south shores are impacted by many of the same contaminants. One form of contaminants are pathogens, which enter the surface waters, often from streams and stormwater runoff, in the form of untreated or improperly treated human sewage and animal waste. Pathogens cause a number of problems, including closure of beaches and shellfish beds, and hazards to human health.

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<sup>2</sup> The program for replacement of underground oil and chemical tanks is administered by the County Health Department, pursuant to Article XI of the Nassau County Public Health Ordinance. The removal of flammable and combustible liquids is administered by the County Fire Marshall pursuant to Article III of the Nassau County Fire Prevention Ordinance.

Toxic substances can contaminate the surface waters, similarly to the groundwater, and cause adverse impacts to the health of the environment and humans. These substances have resulted in several major problems: the sediments of some bays and harbors are contaminated; and health advisories with warnings about eating too much fish from the Long Island Sound.

Coastal waters are also impacted by flutable debris, which is the term for trash that floats in the water or is washed up on the shoreline. The main sources of flutable debris are stormwater discharges, combined sewer overflows, boats, and littering on the beaches and shorelines.

Another problem for the surface water is the low level of dissolved oxygen, which is referred to as “hypoxia.” Large portions of the Long Island Sound are impaired for fish and shellfish due to hypoxia — primarily caused by an excessive amount of nitrogen in the water, which stimulates the growth of algae that settles to the bottom, decomposes and uses most of the dissolved oxygen. Direct point discharges, which are mostly due to wastewater treatment plants, and non-point discharges, such as stormwater runoff, result in the greatest quantities of nitrogen to the Long Island Sound.



*Coastal areas provide many opportunities for enjoyment but are also impacted by human activities.*

- ***Coastal Areas***

The coastal areas and shorelines are a valuable natural, scenic, recreational and economic asset for Nassau County. The coastlines along the Atlantic Ocean and Long Island Sound in Nassau County, as well as all of the other coastlines in New York State, are regulated by the New York Department of State — authorized as the Coastal Management Agency which reviews,



approves or objects to Federal, State and local actions affecting the coastal areas, including their habitats and natural resources.

At the local level, communities can prepare Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs (LWRPs) to plan for and coordinate projects and activities within the waterfront areas. The LWRPs are intended to be comprehensive plans which identify the community's approach to the appropriate utilization and protection of water resources, redevelopment or reuse of sites, public access, harbor and stormwater management, and other issues connected to the waterfronts. Once the LWRPs are approved by the community and the New York Department of State, they provide a mechanism to guide various activities and projects, and serve to coordinate actions by State, Federal, regional and local agencies relevant to the waterfront areas. In Nassau County, several communities are in the process of preparing LWRPs for their waterfront areas.

- ***Long Island Sound Study***

The Long Island Sound Study (LISS) began in 1985 to conduct research, monitor conditions and assess water quality of the Long Island Sound. The LISS participants included representatives from the United States Environmental Protection Agency, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, Interstate Sanitation Commission, State University of New York at Stony Brook, University of Connecticut, New York City Department of Environmental Protection, Citizens Advisory Committee and residents.

In 1994, the project resulted in completion of the *Long Island Sound Study component of the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan*. The Plan identified priority problems affecting the Sound and specified recommendations for actions to: improve water quality; protect habitat and living resources; educate and involve the public in protection of the resource; improve the long-term understanding of how to monitor progress and redirect management efforts. The Plan identified six areas which merit special attention: hypoxia; toxic contamination; pathogen contamination; floatable debris; the impact of these problems and habitat degradation on the health of living resources; and land use and development resulting in habitat loss and degradation of water quality in the Sound.

*[Note: The Long Island Sound Study was funded as part of a national estuary program so that the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the states*

*of Connecticut and New York could jointly evaluate conditions and prepare recommendations regarding the Long Island Sound.]*

- ***Hempstead Harbor Water Quality Improvement Plan***

The Hempstead Harbor Water Quality Improvement Plan (Plan) was recently completed in May 1998 under the direction of the Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee (comprised of representatives from Nassau County, the Towns of Hempstead and Oyster Bay, City of Glen Cove, and the Villages of Flower Hill, Roslyn, Roslyn Harbor, Sea Cliff and Sands Point).

The Plan was developed by the committee over a two year period. It includes a description of the characteristics of the Hempstead Harbor, its watershed and 12 subwatersheds with respect to land uses, topography, geology and soils, wetlands, groundwater, important habitats and recreational activities. In addition, the Plan also contains an evaluation of the water quality conditions, non-point source pollutant loading analysis, and review of the applicable regulatory and policy programs. The Plan also includes recommendations focused on controlling non-point source pollution, such as: fertilizer and pesticide management; septic management; stormwater controls; and land use planning.

- ***Manhasset Bay Water Quality Improvement Plan***

The Manhasset Bay Water Quality Improvement Plan (Plan) is currently being prepared under the direction of the Manhasset Bay Protection Committee (comprised of members from Nassau County, the Town of North Hempstead, and the Villages of Baxter Estates, Great Neck, Kensington, Kings Point, Manorhaven, Plandome, Plandome Heights, Plandome Manor, Port Washington North, Sands Point and Thomaston).

The Plan, which is expected to be completed by early 1999, will include a description of the characteristics of the Manhasset Bay, its watershed and subwatersheds with respect to land uses, geology and soils, topography, water depth, groundwater, along with point and non-point discharges. It will include a water quality assessment, an evaluation of non-point source and stormwater impacts and a review of regulations affecting water quality. Once completed, the Plan will incorporate recommendations involving Best Management Practices (BMP), as well as recommendations for water quality improvement and wetlands preservation projects around the Manhasset Bay and the numerous ponds and creeks.

- ***South Shore Estuary Reserve Council***

A regional initiative has been undertaken by the South Shore Estuary Reserve Council for the 80 mile south shore estuary area from New York City to the Village of Southampton in Suffolk County. Recently, the South Shore Estuary Reserve Council issued an interim *Comprehensive Management Plan* (March 1998) which includes recommendations for: pollution mitigation; maintaining a balance between preserving the natural resources and promoting recreation, tourism and water-dependent businesses; protecting existing business and residential investments; revitalizing shellfish resources and other habitats; enhancing public use and enjoyment; and supporting public education and citizen stewardship of the estuary reserve.

*[Note: The South Shore Estuary Reserve Council was created from 1993 State legislation to oversee preparation of a Comprehensive Management Plan for the South Shore Estuary Reserve. The Council and its two advisory committees include representatives from Nassau and Suffolk Counties, municipalities, State and Federal agencies, commercial and sports fishermen, environmental organizations and local residents.]*

**Goal: Protect the quality and quantity of Nassau County's groundwater and surface water resources.**

### **III.12 Policy Recommendation:**

Enforce and expand regulations to reduce contamination of water bodies and stormwater runoff from non-point sources.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The appropriate County, State and Federal regulatory agencies should continue to enforce existing environmental regulations, and determine whether the regulations should be expanded, regarding contamination of water bodies and stormwater runoff from non-point sources.
- (2) The County Departments of Public Works and Planning (with assistance from the County's Environmental Management Council, once established, and other groups) should continue to assess the impacts of the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency's proposed Phase II

stormwater regulations on controlling stormwater pollution to the County's streams, lakes, bays and estuaries, and the control measures that are likely to result from the proposed regulations.

- (3) The County should utilize its GIS system to map and compile data on the surface water discharge outflow pipes in Nassau County.
- (4) The County and U. S. Environmental Protection Agency should initiate efforts to educate residents and businesses about stormwater pollution from point and non-point sources; prevention and control measures; and related issues.
- (5) The County and municipalities should consider preserving or setting aside areas along shorelines, bays, and waterfronts to accommodate future stormwater control measures and structures.
- (6) The County should continue to assess new stormwater pollution abatement techniques. Funding for demonstration projects may be available through the State's Environmental Protection Fund and Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act.
- (7) The County, State and Federal regulatory agencies should evaluate the appropriateness of a pollution prevention program for underground storage tanks.
- (8) The County and State regulatory agencies should continue to enforce existing standards as well as the replacement programs for underground oil and chemical tanks, as well as tanks with flammable and combustible liquids.
- (9) The County should maintain the system of storm water recharge basins to ensure: sufficient recharge of runoff; provide for plantings and landscaping that enhances the function of the basins and potentially create wildlife habitats; and evaluate the feasibility of using volunteer groups to keep the basins clean of debris (e.g., Adopt-a-Basin).
- (10) The County should enforce regulations in the SGPAs and evaluate the appropriateness of expanding the regulations to cover other deep recharge areas in the County in order to protect the public water supply.

**III.13 Policy Recommendation:**

Promote the use of the County's groundwater monitoring programs and computer model to identify specific groundwater locations which may be impacted by contaminants and/or by saltwater intrusion from the Atlantic Ocean and Long Island Sound; and promote the County's water conservation program to protect the quantity of water supply.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County should continue to perform groundwater testing throughout Nassau County and expand the observation well system in areas where potential contamination or saltwater intrusion exists.
- (2) The County and appropriate regulatory agencies, in coordination with the U.S. Geological Service, should continue to utilize the County's groundwater computer model to identify specific locations where there may be potential environmental impacts from excessive pumping, saltwater intrusion, contamination of aquifers and streams (e.g., contaminants such as volatile organic chemicals, pesticides, and/or nitrogen from unsewered areas) and to consider these environmental matters when determining where new public supply wells should be located. Information from the computer model regarding water quality and/or quantity should be shared with all appropriate regulatory agencies.
- (3) The County and all water districts should continue to implement water conservation programs. The programs should also be actively promoted through public service announcements; distribution of brochures and informational materials (including information on wellhead protection initiatives and watershed protection concepts); as well as educational efforts with the schools, businesses and community groups.

**III.14 Policy Recommendation:**

Encourage coastal communities to prepare Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs and pursue the implementation of their recommendations for the coastal zones.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) Coastal municipalities should work closely with the County Planning Department, New York Department of State's Division of Coastal Resources, Federal Office of Coastal Resources, local businesses and residents, as well as waterfront property owners to develop Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs (LWRPs). The LWRPs will provide comprehensive plans which identify the community's approach to the appropriate utilization and protection of water resources, redevelopment of sites, public access, harbor and stormwater management, and other issues connected to the waterfronts.
- (2) The New York Department of State's Division of Coastal Resources should conduct outreach efforts to inform elected officials and residents about the benefits associated with adopted LWRPs. The State should also provide examples of other communities that have benefited financially from implementing components of their LWRPs, through programs such as the State's Environmental Protection Fund and Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act.
- (3) The New York Department of State's Division of Coastal Resources, County, local communities, and/or environmental groups should sponsor a seminar or conference to address the importance of protecting waterfront areas while exploring opportunities for redevelopment and tourism business development. The County and State economic development agencies, tourism industry, local officials, prospective developers, investors, and realtors should be included in this effort.

### III.15 Policy Recommendation:

Support initiatives identified in the Long Island Sound Study and South Shore Estuary studies which protect the public health and restore beneficial use of these water bodies.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County should implement a program for assessing water quality (through water sampling and monitoring) in the coastal bays, beaches and estuaries to determine the conditions and impacts on beneficial uses of water resources. Wherever possible, the economic consequences of impaired uses, benefits of maintaining public usage, and the public health risks versus the environmental threats should be identified.
- (2) The County should work with local communities, the South Shore Estuary Reserve Council and other environmental groups to carry out initiatives identified in the final *South Shore Estuary Reserve Comprehensive Plan*.
- (3) The County should work with municipalities, residents, the Long Island Sound Study Management Conference, and other groups to carry out initiatives in the *LISS Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan* which protect the public health and restore beneficial use of the Sound.
- (4) The County should support recommendations from the *Hempstead Harbor Water Quality Improvement Plan* and *Manhasset Bay Water Quality Improvement Plan* which address protection of ground and surface waters, water quality improvement initiatives, and integrated management of the water resources.

### C. **Wastewater Treatment**

Sanitary sewers and wastewater treatment plants were constructed in the County between the 1950s and mid-1980s. Currently, over 90% of the County's population is served by sanitary sewers (refer to Figure 4, Sewered and Unsewered Areas). Wastewater generated within the County is treated by 14 wastewater treatment plants, which range in size of treatment from approximately 1 million gallons per day to over 72 million gallons per day.

Approximately 10% of the County's population have on-site subsurface disposal systems (septic tanks and cesspools). The areas with subsurface disposal systems are primarily located along the north shore in portions of the

Great Neck and Manhasset/Port Washington peninsulas and most of the northern portion of the Town of Oyster Bay, excluding the City of Glen Cove and the hamlet of Oyster Bay. Some of the areas are fully developed, while other areas consist of primarily low density land uses.

*The Inventory and Analysis document, prepared for this County Comprehensive Plan, provides a more detailed description of the sewered and non-sewered areas.*

Non-sewered developed sites in coastal areas of the County may affect the Federal and State bacteriological standards for beaches. In lieu of centrally sewerage these areas, septic tank maintenance and replacement of aging systems is an alternative to protect coastal waters.

In addition, if household hazardous waste materials and non-biodegradable compounds are disposed of in subsurface disposal systems, they will pass right through to the groundwater since these materials are not removed.

All wastewater treatment facilities in the County are currently designed to meet Federal, State and local treatment standards for at least secondary treatment. Depending on the specific treatment plant and age of the facilities' infrastructure, improvements should be constantly evaluated for the treatment plants, sewer systems and pump stations.



*A view of Nassau County's Cedar Creek Water Pollution Control Facility.*



# Nassau County Comprehensive Planning Project

## Sewered and Unsewered Areas

Source: Nassau County 1997  
Draft Groundwater Study



1 2 3 4 Miles

Base Map Copyright 1990 County of Nassau, FL



May 1998

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Figure 4

**Goal: Encourage the proper operation, maintenance and improvement of the wastewater treatment plants in Nassau County.**

### **III.16 Policy Recommendation:**

Maintain the operation of wastewater treatment facilities at levels which comply with permit requirements; which allow uninterrupted sewer service, transport and treatment without disturbances; and which provide protection of the public health at beaches, shellfish beds and surface waters.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County, municipal and other owners of the wastewater treatment facilities should optimize their operations through adequate funding to support staffing requirements, proper maintenance, and necessary improvements.
- (2) Wastewater treatment facility owners should continue to conduct ongoing/routine studies to evaluate options for improving their services and minimizing impacts on communities. The studies should also evaluate whether the discharge permit requirements are being complied with for that facility.
- (3) The County and appropriate regulatory agencies should continue to utilize the County's groundwater and/or surface water monitoring efforts to identify specific locations where there may be potential environmental impacts and contamination of groundwater aquifers, streams or surface waters. If the monitoring identifies violations of standards or possible public health threats caused by on-site septic systems, the County and/or local sewer districts should evaluate the feasibility of providing public sewers or on-site wastewater treatment to these areas.

### **III.17 Policy Recommendation:**

Encourage the continued replacement and modernization of wastewater treatment infrastructure and facilities in an efficient manner.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) Owners of the wastewater treatment plants should provide adequate funding to support routine replacement and modernization programs for the infrastructure and sewer collection facilities.
- (2) Owners of the wastewater treatment plants should evaluate new procedures and equipment that becomes available on the market for its appropriateness in operating their facilities in the most efficient manner.
- (3) The County should conduct an inventory and assessment of the septic systems and cesspools in the County. As part of the assessment, the County should evaluate whether a special management district should be recommended; and/or whether an ordinance should be prepared with consistent maintenance criteria and standards.

### **D. Waste Materials**

- *Solid Waste*

Solid waste management in the County is currently the responsibility of the following five municipalities: Town of Hempstead, Town of Oyster Bay, Town of North Hempstead, City of Glen Cove and City of Long Beach. All landfills in Nassau County have been closed due to compliance with New York State regulations. In the Town of Hempstead, a waste-to-energy facility, operated by the American Ref-Fuel company, processes the non-recyclable portion of the solid waste. The City of Long Beach has a short-term contract with the American Ref-Fuel company, while the Towns of Oyster Bay and North Hempstead and the City of Glen Cove are having their non-recyclable solid waste hauled off Long Island for disposal. Recycling efforts have been implemented across Nassau County which have significantly reduced the amount of solid waste to be disposed.

In many cases, the states around the nation which have required closure of sanitary landfills for the disposal of solid waste have become net “exporters” to other states. This has resulted in proposed legislation in Congress to restrict the transport of solid wastes between states. However, existing interstate commerce laws have prevented much of this legislation from going forward.

Some states have adopted legislation with “grandfather clauses” which allows existing contracts to continue but which restricts additional solid waste contracts from being implemented.

If the laws or regulations are modified, the cost of disposal outside of Nassau County would most likely increase. Presently, it is less expensive to ship the solid waste off Long Island than to build resource recovery facilities or incinerators in Nassau County.

- ***Recycling***

There has been an increase in recycling programs in the County and across the nation for such items as plastic bottles, glass, metal cans, newspapers, and leaf composting. These recycling programs are so successful that the products made from the recycled materials cannot economically keep up with the inventory. Hence, the quantity of materials being recycled often exceeds the number of products which can be created and marketed from the materials. Once there is an overabundance of recycled materials on the market, the available storage space for these materials can be used up, which then requires either additional storage space or disposal of the recycled materials.

- ***Hazardous Waste Sites/Materials***

During the period from the late 1940s through the mid 1970s, volatile organic chemicals (VOCs) were widely used by industrial and commercial establishments as well as homeowners. These chemicals are typically found in common solvents, degreasers and petroleum products. In the mid 1970s, groundwater supplies were found to contain VOCs, which generally enter the groundwater from spills, leaking tanks, leaching pools or dry wells, and concerns were raised because a number of the VOCs are considered to be probable carcinogens.

As a result of various actions which were implemented in Nassau County, including public education, the relative significance of the VOC sources has decreased. However, the average household in unsewered areas can be a significant contributant to the relatively low-level VOC contamination in the groundwater and aquifers.

There are a number of vacant or actively used sites in the County which contain hazardous waste material. The contamination has often been the result of manufacturing, industrial or commercial activities which resulted in contaminants seeping into the soil and groundwater. Since many of the contaminants are hazardous, these areas are referred to as hazardous waste sites.

**Goal: Promote additional recycling of materials and support reliable options for disposal of non-recyclable solid waste.**

### **III.18 Policy Recommendation:**

Promote solid waste reduction strategies and the use of recycled materials by businesses and government, and establish markets for recycled products on Long Island.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, County Planning Department, municipalities and environmental groups should provide guidelines and material to the County and municipalities to inform them, and advocate the use of recycled materials in their daily operations. The information should also identify local producers of recyclable materials and products.
- (2) The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation should identify methods, especially for businesses, to increase the amounts of materials that can be separated for recycling from other waste materials in order to maximize the overall volume of materials being recycled in the County.
- (3) The County and State agencies should promote options for residents and businesses to reduce the amount of solid waste generated which has to be disposed of within or out of the County.

**III.19 Policy Recommendation:**

Coordinate community efforts, monitor legislation regarding plans for disposal of solid waste, and encourage reliable long-term options for disposal of non-recyclable solid waste.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County should support efforts of the three towns and two cities to identify feasible long-term options for disposal of solid waste materials.
- (2) The County, three towns and two cities should actively monitor the Federal legislation being considered which will affect the options for inter-state transportation of non-recyclable solid waste.

**Goal: Support the timely clean-up of contaminated sites and the proper disposal of hazardous materials.**

**III.20 Policy Recommendation:**

Support efforts by State, Federal and local agencies to coordinate, monitor, and fund the remediation of hazardous waste sites in Nassau County.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County should prepare a data file in its GIS system which identifies all hazardous waste sites in the County. The database should also identify the status of the sites in terms of study, clean up, or action, and the parties responsible for each site.
- (2) The County Departments of Health and Public Works, and the County GIS office should coordinate with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, U. S. Environmental Protection Agency

and local officials to continually update the database and monitor the progress of related activities for the hazardous waste sites.

- (3) The County should coordinate with the State's plans, programs and inspectors to identify hazardous waste spills or contamination early on, evaluate environmental impacts, and to prevent spills, where possible. Efforts should also be made to identify the sources of contamination.
- (4) The County and municipalities should support efforts to fund the remediation of hazardous waste sites in order to limit potential contamination and impacts on adjacent neighborhoods, whether through the applicable private owners or public funding, such as the Federal Superfund Program. In addition, the remediation efforts should be connected with brownfield planning and redevelopment efforts.

### **III.21 Policy Recommendation:**

Encourage the adaptive reuse and/or redevelopment of brownfield sites in Nassau County.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County and municipalities should work with developers, and provide them the necessary information, to encourage the reuse or redevelopment of brownfield sites for new purposes, and to achieve possible benefits, such as: the clean-up of contaminated sites; new land use activities; job and tax generation; and improved quality of life for the community.
- (2) Municipalities should be encouraged to evaluate their zoning codes to ensure that adaptive reuse of vacant commercial and industrial properties is permitted, and if necessary, amend the regulations to facilitate the redevelopment of these sites.
- (3) The County Departments of Planning and of Commerce and Industry should help promote funding sources for brownfield remediation and development, as well as initial reuse planning, that are available through the United States Environmental Protection Agency, New York State

Department of Environmental Conservation, and New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation.

*[Note: the topic of brownfields is described more in the Land Use chapter.]*

### **III.22 Policy Recommendation:**

Enforce applicable regulations for the proper disposal of hazardous materials.

#### **Implementation Strategy:**

- (1) The County and State regulatory agencies should collaborate to produce guidelines which identify appropriate disposal methods for various household hazardous waste materials, and provide lists of special pick-up/drop-off services and events.

### **III.23 Policy Recommendation:**

Expand initiatives to educate residents and businesses about hazardous substances in products, and encourage communities to sponsor additional disposal programs.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County should cooperate with State and Federal regulatory agencies to prepare brochures and public education information regarding proper disposal practices for hazardous waste material. This information should be provided to residents, businesses, schools, libraries and other public buildings.
- (2) Municipalities should continue to schedule, and possibly expand the number of disposal programs, such as “S.T.O.P.” (Stop Throwing Out Pollutants), so that residents have appropriate locations to take their household hazardous waste materials.
- (3) Municipalities, civic groups and environmental organizations should encourage residents to consider the use of alternative household products which do not contain chemicals or hazardous materials in order to reduce the amount of hazardous material generated in the County.



- (4) The County should incorporate information regarding proper disposal methods for hazardous waste materials, and other relevant information, on the environmental Homepage described in the implementation strategies for Policy Recommendation III.2 in this chapter.

## IV. TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is a vital component of normal daily activities. It is the transportation network of highways, rail lines, mass transit, airports, ferry service, and bicycle/pedestrian trails which allows people to travel to employment sites, schools, services, shopping and other destinations.

For more than two generations, one of the attractions of the suburban lifestyle has been the ease and flexibility offered by the automobile. In Nassau County, the parkways and automobile access spurred the post-World War II suburban boom which shaped the County's pattern of land use. The shopping centers, office and industrial parks, and recreational areas in the County were all designed to incorporate convenience for the automobile-user. Roosevelt Field, one of the nation's first shopping centers, established the standards for automobile access and site design which were utilized by similar developments across the nation.

Today, the limitations of this automobile-dependent land use pattern are all too clear. Anyone who commutes on the Long Island Expressway (LIE) can observe the increasing congestion that has occurred over the years — especially since the LIE is the County's only limited-access east-west route for commercial traffic. Many other roadways in Nassau County have also experienced traffic increases in the last two decades.

Commuter rail service, provided by the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR), continues to be critical for the County's economic well being. It allows commuters to reach employment sites in Manhattan and surrounding counties. The train service can also provide an alternative to the congested roadways for a growing segment of people traveling within Nassau and Suffolk Counties.

According to the 1990 Census data, 12.3% of all County resident work-travel is made by commuter rail — most of them destined for Manhattan. Overall, the percentage of the County's workforce commuting to Manhattan, and the distribution of riders between LIRR branches have remained relatively constant since the mid-1960s.

Long Island Bus (LI Bus), a subsidiary of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), has a fleet of large buses and shuttle buses which transport approximately 25 million passengers per year, or about 90,000 one-way trips per weekday. [*Note: LI Bus has experienced an increase in ridership over the past several years.*] Although less than 3% of resident work trips in the County are made by bus, the LI Bus system

provides an essential mode of transportation for residents that do not have access to a private vehicle. According to the LI Bus' 1995 *Long Island Bus Systems Analysis*, more than 80% of LI Bus ridership consists of individuals who are "transit dependent" for the particular trip they are making by bus.

The City of Long Beach operates its own bus system. A main focus of the bus system is to provide convenient access to the LIRR train station and surrounding area, which also contains the largest shopping center in the city. Peak hour scheduling is coordinated with LIRR schedules, and Long Beach Transit passengers can transfer to LI Bus routes.

The communities of Hempstead, Garden City, Freeport and Inwood have the greatest share of work trips made by bus for all County employment concentrations. These areas also have a larger proportion of reverse commutation by New York City residents traveling to jobs in Nassau County.



*Residents waiting for buses to reach various destinations in the County.*

The LI Bus system also provides access to subway stations in Jamaica and Flushing, Queens, for the limited number of County residents who rely on this bus-to-subway trip. Bus-to-subway riders account for 20% of the total LI Bus ridership. There are also bus-to-rail transfers at some of the LIRR stations in Nassau County, including ones in Freeport, Great Neck, Hempstead, Hicksville, Lynbrook and Port Washington.

The new Metrocard Program, which was initiated by the MTA, provides easier access between the LI Bus, LIRR and subways throughout New York City and Long Island. In addition, the Metrocard Program allows free transfers between connections on the LI Bus and New York City subways and buses.

#### **A. Transit Options**

Many employment sites, educational institutions, health care and child care facilities, shopping and recreation locations are not readily accessible to existing or potential riders using the LI Bus network. For example, even when transit service is provided at or near a work site, the routes may require

one or more transfers to get to the employment site from the worker's home. This creates a large time differential when comparing an automobile trip and a mass transit trip between the same two points — which discourages some potential riders from commuting by bus. In addition, a majority of senior citizens are unable to take advantage of the fixed bus routes due to the inaccessibility of many bus stops — a jitney service may be more appropriate for senior citizens.

However, the Nassau County/LI Bus Able-Ride Program provides special transportation services for residents who are unable to access the fixed bus routes. This service currently provides 500 trips each weekday. In the beginning of 1999, LI Bus will be expanding the Able-Ride service by approximately 25% to cover other parts of the County.

Another important factor which affects the usage of the LI Bus service by commuters is the limited evening schedule (refer to Table IV-1). A large number of residents indicated, through public opinion surveys and public meetings held in connection with this *Comprehensive Plan*, that they are interested in using the buses and jitney service to get to work, health care facilities, college/universities, child care centers, services and/or other locations if: (1) The schedules were extended (especially during the evening and weekend hours); (2) The routes were more direct and better matched to major destinations; and/or (3) There were more connections between transit modes.

The existing design and inconvenience of many suburban work sites can also discourage the use of mass transit. In many cases, large parking areas surrounding suburban office complexes force transit commuters to walk long distances to reach bus stops. Also, many bus stops do not have shelters for weather-protection.

- *Travel Demand Management*

Travel Demand Management (TDM) is a term which covers a wide array of strategies used to reduce peak hour traffic congestion and increase overall mobility. In Nassau County, the most popular TDM strategies for employers to implement have been assistance with carpool matching and guaranteed ride home for employees who get to work by carpool, bicycle, walking or transit.

One regional and three local transportation management organizations serve commuters in the County. The Long Island Transportation Management is a regional non-profit organization which provides TDM services to commuters and employers in the County, including: computerized ridematching for people interested in carpooling and vanpooling; transit information; guaranteed ride home programs; ridematching newsletter; and employer trip reduction programs. The Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) in Nassau County which coordinate TDM activities are: (1) County Seat TMA, serving the Government Center and surrounding area in Mineola and Garden City; and (2) Nassau Business Corridor TMA, serving the Roosevelt Field and Mitchel Field areas (a major initiative was development of the Nassau Hub Shuttle bus route).

- *Passenger Intermodal Facilities*

When more than one form of transportation is needed to reach a destination, there should be “seamless connections” between the modes and minimal inconvenience. A new method to provide seamless connections, which has begun to be implemented in communities across the nation, is a passenger intermodal transportation facility — a centralized facility which provides easy access to different transportation services (e.g., automobile, train, local bus, regional bus, jitneys, airport service, ferries, and taxis). The schedules and services are also coordinated to provide efficient connections for commuters and travelers.

In Nassau County, a passenger intermodal transportation facility was recently opened by the MTA at the train station in the Village of Hempstead. The facility provides access to LIRR, LI Bus, and other public and private transportation services. In 1999, MTA and LI Bus will be constructing passenger intermodal transportation facilities at the LIRR train stations in Hicksville and Mineola.

Table IV-1: Long Island Bus Routes Ranked by Weekday Ridership

Route Number	From	To	Primary Travel Corridor(s)	Avg. Daily Weekday Ridership	PM, HR, hrs. Headstart/No-Fares Svc.	Weekday Hours of Operation
N-1	Hempstead	Jamaica	Hempstead Tpk.	10,583	1 min. Sat/Bus	24 hr. service
N-4044	Proppert	Merrick	Proppert Ave./Conventish St.	8,125	8 min. Sat/Bus	8:15 a.m. - 12:45 a.m.
N-13	Long Beach	Bassett Field	Long Beach Rd./Woodfield Av.	7,081	10 min. Sat/Bus	8:20 a.m. - 12:30 a.m.
N-4	Proppert	Jamaica	Merrick Rd.	6,965	6 min. Sat/Bus	8:30 a.m. - 2:17 a.m.
N-1094-71-N-72	Multi-Modal/Multi-Modality Bus	Hempstead	Hempstead Tpk.	5,600	12 min. Sat/Bus	8:17 a.m. - 12:53 a.m.
N-22	Hicksville	Jamaica	Hicksville Ave./Prospect Ave.	3,903	7 min. Sat/Bus	8:30 a.m. - 12:10 a.m.
N-1672	Far Rockaway	Hempstead	Brooklynpark/Prospect Ave.	3,500	10 min. Sat/Bus	8:20 a.m. - 12:05 a.m.
N-208-31	Hicksville/Glen Cove	Brooklyn	Southern Blvd.	3,081	10 min. Sat/Bus	8:30 a.m. - 11:15 p.m.
N-24	Bassett Field	Jamaica	Archie Tpk.	3,181	10 min. Sat/Bus	8:30 a.m. - 11:15 p.m.
N-4849	Hicksville	Hempstead	Front St./Carroll Ave.	2,990	15 min. Sat/Bus	8:45 a.m. - 10:02 p.m.
N-16	Baldwin	Bassett Field	Hempstead Ave.	2,670	15 min. Sat/Bus	8:22 a.m. - 9:50 p.m.
N-33	Westbury	Hempstead	Merrick Ave./Woodbury Blvd.	2,175	15 min. Sat/Bus	8:20 a.m. - 10:42 a.m.
N-25	Great Neck	Lynbrook	New Hyde Pk. Rd./Prospect Ave.	2,320	10 min. Sat/Bus	8:30 a.m. - 9:27 p.m.
N-208-79	Flushing/Walton Mall	Merrick	Old Country Rd.	1,855	25 min. Sat/Bus	6:00 a.m. - 10:14 p.m.
N-23	Port Washington	Hicksville	Pl. Wash. Blvd./Willis Ave.	1,871	30 min. Sat/Bus	8:28 a.m. - 11:13 p.m.
N-2423	Amyville	Hempstead	Jamaica Ave.	1,838	23 min. Sat	1:20 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
N-27	Glen Cove	Hempstead	Glenn Cove Rd./Brooklyn Rd.	1,770	40 min. Sat	8:35 a.m. - 8:21 p.m.
N-19	Babylon	Proppert	Merrick Rd.	1,821	25 min. Sat/Bus	8:15 a.m. - 8:25 p.m.
N-1	Forest Park	Great Neck Mall	Elmont Rd./Elmont Ave.	1,503	12 min. Sat/Bus	6:00 a.m. - 8:46 p.m.
N-37	Baldwin Rd.	Hempstead	Grand Ave.	1,420	25 min. Sat	8:45 a.m. - 8:44 p.m.
N-58	Long Beach	Great Neck	Middle Neck Rd.	1,640	20 min. Sat/Bus	8:37 a.m. - 12:25 a.m.
N-25	Long Beach	Far Rockaway	Park Street	822	20 min. Sat/Bus	6:20 a.m. - 9:40 p.m.
N-1047	Baldwin	Hempstead	Belmont Rd./Front St.	750	16 min. - No Wheel Svc.	8:11 a.m. - 7:37 p.m.
N-208-81	Swains Mall	Hicksville	Broadway/Elmont Avenue	710	20 min. Sat	8:30 a.m. - 8:48 p.m.
N-36	Proppert	Lynbrook	Elmont Ave./Elmont Ave.	675	20 min. Sat	8:07 a.m. - 8:01 p.m.
N-45	Belmont	Nassau County Col.	Washington Ave./Lindale Ave.	668	20 min. Sat	7:10 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
N-2374	Wamingh	Hicksville	Wamingh Ave./Jamaica Ave.	625	20 min. Sat	8:35 a.m. - 9:10 p.m.
N-67	South Proppert	Proppert LIBE Bus	Loop	490	20 min. - No Wheel Svc	6:00 a.m. - 8:05 p.m.
N-31	Merrick	Bassett Field	Merrick Ave.	345	43 min. Sat	6:53 a.m. - 12:25 p.m.
N-2	Floral Park	Green Acres Mall	Merrick Ave./Rockaway Ferry	340	20 min. Sat	6:13 a.m. - 7:20 p.m.
N-50	Belmont	Hicksville	Belmont Ave./Neckbridge Rd.	328	10 min. - No Wheel Svc	6:50 a.m. - 8:11 p.m.
N-14	Rockville Cx.	Rockville Cx. Station	Loop	271	33 min. Sat	8:00 a.m. - 8:28 p.m.
N-3	Franklin Sq.	Green Acres Mall	Franklin Ave.	215	20 min. Sat	8:20 a.m. - 7:05 p.m.
N-27	Great Neck	Great Neck Station	Loop	220	20 min. - No Wheel Svc	6:44 a.m. - 7:48 p.m.
N-17	Rockville Cx.	Hempstead	N. Village Ave.	180	45 min. - Peak hrs. only	6:45 a.m. - 9:45 p.m.
N-26	North Shore Hospital	Lake Success	Community Dr./Lakewood Rd.	145	25 min. - Peak hrs. only	7:07 a.m. - 8:20 p.m.
N-28	Brooklyn	Knights M. Ind. Park	Main Street	130	25 min. - Peak hrs. only	6:30 a.m. - 6:15 p.m.
N-208-93	Merrick (B), ALBAH Plaza (B), Bassett Field Mall	Bassett Field Mall	Loop	268	20 min. Multi-modality evening	8:00 a.m. - 1:41 p.m.
N-49	Farmingdale LIBE Station	Merrick/Boomer 110	Loop	123	20 min. - No Wheel Svc	7:00 a.m. - 1:48 p.m.
N-81	Rockville Cx.	IFK Airport	Merrick Rd.	119	60 min. Sat/Bus	1:00 a.m. - 11:17 p.m.
N-44	Hicksville LIBE Station	Woodbury Office Pk.	Woodbury Road	118	20 min. - No Wheel Svc	6:55 a.m. - 8:23 p.m.

Source: MTA Long Island Bus

**Goal:** Enhance the availability and efficiency of mass transit options in order to improve air quality, reduce the number of single-occupancy vehicles, provide convenient service to residents and commuters, and reduce traffic congestion.

#### **IV.1 Policy Recommendation:**

Evaluate the County's existing bus routes and schedules, then specify recommendations for alternative routes, extended service, and other options to better match the needs of residents and workers with their destinations.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County should continue to work with LI Bus to reassess its system of bus routes, transit vehicles, ridership, equipment needs, fare recovery ratio, and maximum headway policies throughout Nassau County. This assessment, with extensive input from existing and potential transit users, and affected communities along proposed routes, should focus on **improvements** to better match services, schedules and bus routes with employment centers, health care facilities, child care centers, educational institutions, off-peak destinations, downtowns and Centers. The assessment of the system should identify new, or improvements to existing, north-south bus routes, which can more efficiently move people to/from north and south destinations in the County.
- (2) LI Bus should consider changing its time frame for preparation of the system overview studies from a ten-year cycle to a shorter timeframe so that more frequent assessment can be done to serve the changing requirements of employees, residents and visitors.
- (3) LI Bus should conduct more frequent ridership surveys to evaluate new or improved service opportunities and to determine ridership satisfaction with the bus system.
- (4) LI Bus should better coordinate the schedules for buses which stop at train stations with the LIRR schedules in order to provide improved connections for mass transit users.

- (5) The County should improve public transportation to intra-County and regional destinations by providing new buses, additional bus routes, and integrated bus-rail service.
- (6) LI Bus, Long Island Transportation Management and the Transportation Management Associations should advertise and promote all schedule changes and improvements to transit services through a variety of methods (e.g., public service announcements; advertisements; postings at libraries, public buildings and employment sites; and the internet).

## **IV.2 Policy Recommendation:**

Educate commuters and residents about mass transit alternatives which will reduce the number of single-occupancy vehicles and vehicle miles traveled to potentially improve air quality from reduced emissions.

### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) Outreach efforts should be conducted by, and coordinated between, the County and transportation management organizations to encourage employer participation in educating employees about mass transit alternatives.
- (2) Periodic surveys of employers and employees should be performed to gather information and public input about commuting options other than the single-occupancy vehicle.
- (3) The County should inform residents about commuting alternatives through public service announcements, programs on radio and government access cable channels, and through the County's Homepage on the Internet.
- (4) LI Bus and the transportation management organizations should distribute the bus and train schedules more widely throughout the County. The County should have copies of the schedules and maps readily available at all County buildings, parks and facilities.



### IV.3 Policy Recommendation:

Support initiatives by the transportation management organizations to educate commuters and promote options to reduce traffic congestion in the region.

#### Implementation Strategies:

- (1) The County should continue to assist the transportation management organizations' efforts to promote and implement options to reduce traffic congestion, and be a "role model" for private businesses. The County, where feasible, should offer employees transportation options such as carpool ridematching, guaranteed ride home, flex-time, staggered work schedules and telecommuting, which can help reduce peak hour roadway congestion.

*The Commute Alternatives Program is administered by the County Planning Department.*

- (2) The transportation management organizations and the County should continue to co-sponsor educational workshops or meetings with business groups and chambers of commerce to inform employers and employees about transportation options.

### IV.4 Policy Recommendation:

Identify opportunities to establish **passenger** intermodal transportation facilities in areas where residents and commuters would benefit from access to a centralized facility with easy connections between transportation services (e.g., automobile, train, local bus, regional bus, jitneys, airport service, ferries, and taxis).

#### Implementation Strategies:

- (1) State, Federal, County, and/or local investment in **passenger** intermodal transportation facilities would be most appropriate within various Centers, identified on the Comprehensive Plan Map, which contain higher densities of population and employment. Policy decisions and investments should be consistent with municipal land use and transportation plans.



*The new passenger intermodal facility in the Village of Hempstead provides access to various transportation services.*

- (2) The County and local residents should support **passenger** intermodal facilities, such as the new transportation center in the Village of Hempstead, as a means of providing centralized facilities with seamless connections to a variety of transportation services.

#### **IV.5 Policy Recommendation:**

Support initiatives to improve transportation in the Nassau Hub area, including the development of new mass transit services, pedestrian improvements, and provision of better transportation linkages between different land uses.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County and other organizations involved with redevelopment of the Hub area should assist LI Bus to promote and market available transit services, such as the Nassau Hub Shuttle bus service provided during the midday and evening peak hours, as a means of decreasing the existing and projected roadway congestion within the Hub area.

- (2) The County and local businesses should help support the operation of the Nassau Hub Shuttle bus service through outreach, possible corporate sponsorship, and funding assistance.
- (3) The County should evaluate the effectiveness of alternative transit services within the Hub area, including a fixed-guideway transit system.
- (4) The County, Town and Village of Hempstead, and other decisionmakers should ensure that any new transit service proposed or planned for the Hub area be coordinated with existing transportation services and be connected to the passenger intermodal center in the Village of Hempstead.
- (5) The County, local communities, developers and businesses in the Hub should use a variety of improvement and funding programs to create better pedestrian connections, linkages between land uses (e.g., office buildings, commercial areas, colleges, residential areas), and activities occurring at different times of the day and evening. Improvements within the Hub should be designed to create a better pedestrian environment; the most appropriate reuse of parcels and in-fill development; and landscaping which better defines various areas and helps to create a more human scale and visual appeal.
- (6) The County, municipalities and developers should identify uses and activities which can provide in-fill or reuse of parcels in the Hub and which are consistent with efforts to strengthen existing downtowns of adjacent communities.

*The Nassau Hub Shuttle buses were purchased by the County and the Nassau Business Corridor TMA is funding the operating costs.*

## IV.6 Policy Recommendation:

Support fare and transfer policies, incentives, and innovative promotions to encourage mass transit use, and which integrate the Long Island Bus service with the Long Island Rail Road and other regional transit services.

### Implementation Strategy:

- (1) The State and County, working with transit operators, transportation departments, and elected officials, should provide sufficient financial support to LI Bus and LIRR to ensure that fare integration through current Metrocard and Uniticket discount fare programs will be continued.

## B. Roadway Network

The motor vehicle is the predominant transportation mode in Nassau County, with approximately 86% of the intra-county work force commuting by car. Drivers, which primarily travel alone, often encounter numerous impediments to getting around the County by vehicle, such as: traffic congestion; indirect roadway connections (e.g., north-south connections); multiple and close access points onto roads; and restricted turning movements.

- *Roadway Capacity*

Roadway capacity deficiencies have been identified by the State Department of Transportation for 18 major roads in Nassau County — 14 north-south roads and 4 east-west roads (refer to Table IV-2). These arterials have generally been over-developed with strip shopping centers and other land uses, resulting in higher traffic volumes and congestion. It is not surprising that in public opinion surveys conducted for this *Comprehensive Plan*, reducing traffic congestion ranked as a high priority for County residents.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the telephone public opinion survey conducted by Fact Finders, Inc. for this *Nassau County Comprehensive Plan*, 74.2% of people surveyed ranked “Reducing traffic congestion” as a high priority transportation issue.

**Table IV-2: Peak Hour Capacity Deficiency Ranking Of County Corridor/Roadways**

Road	Corridor	Community	Existing Volume to Capacity Ratio <sup>2</sup>	Existing Deficiency in Vehicles <sup>3</sup>
<b>North/South Corridors</b>				
Post Ave.	Meadowbrook	Westbury	2.42	84
Glen Cove Rd.	Mineola	Glen Cove	2.18	710
Broadway	Queens	Woodmere	1.95	572
Willis Ave.	Mineola	Albertson	1.76	456
Central Ave.	Westbury	Valley Stream	1.63	377
Jackson Ave.	Seaford/Oyster Bay	Syosset	1.57	344
Fletcher Ave.	Western	Valley Stream	1.48	290
Woodbury Rd.	Seaford/Oyster Bay	Woodbury	1.23	136
Nassau Blvd.	Mineola	Garden City	1.15	177
Merrick Ave.	Meadowbrook	N. Merrick	1.15	90
Corona Ave.	Western	Valley Stream	1.13	75
Roslyn Rd.	Mineola	E. Williston	1.13	75
Ocean Ave.	Western	Malverne	1.08	92
Lakeville Rd.	Western	Lake Success	1.04	49
<b>East/West Corridors</b>				
Old Country Rd.	Central	Westbury	1.44	532
Old Country Rd.	Expressway	Old Bethpage	1.43	510
Merrick Rd.	Sunrise	Merrick	1.36	429
Merrick Rd.	Sunrise	Seaford	1.31	367

Source: Peak Hour Capacity Deficiency Ranking of County Corridor/Roadway Screenlines, prepared by the Nassau County Planning Commission, 1992.

<sup>2</sup> **Existing Volume to Capacity Ratio** — A comparison of the peak hour traffic volume for a section of roadway with the calculated capacity of the same section of roadway shows the volume to capacity ratio. For example, 1.23 indicates that a roadway is actually operating 23% over its capacity. A roadway with a ratio of less than 1.00 would indicate a reserve capacity is available.

<sup>3</sup> **Existing Deficiency In Vehicles** — The number of vehicles shown represents the level of traffic currently on the roadway that is beyond the calculated capacity for that roadway.

There are a number of “critical traffic corridors” in the County, which were identified by the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC) and Nassau County, in the report *Critical Issues, Critical Choices, A Mobility Plan for the New York Region Through the Year 2015*. The corridors are:

- Long Island Expressway (Interstate 495)
- Hempstead Turnpike (New York State Route 24)
- Sunrise Highway (New York State Route 27)
- Jericho Turnpike (New York State Route 25)
- Parkway System (Northern State Pkwy, Southern State Pkwy, Loop Pkwy, Meadowbrook State Pkwy, Ocean Pkwy, Wantagh State Pkwy)

These critical traffic corridors serve as major connections throughout the County and consist of major arterials and limited-access highways and expressways. In addition, the Seaford-Oyster Bay Expressway is an important traffic corridor.

According to data collected for roadways in Nassau County between 1978 and 1995, traffic volume has increased an average of 21% on the Long Island Expressway, Northern and Southern State Parkways, Sunrise Highway, Jericho Turnpike, Northern Boulevard and Old Country Road. In general, traffic volume on these roads increased less in the eastern portion of the County than in the western portion.

In addition to the increased traffic volumes on roadways, some of the factors which contribute to traffic congestion and traffic conflicts in the County are: (1) overdevelopment and multiple access points along the limited number of primary roadways; (2) inadequate traffic circulation in densely developed areas (e.g., turning movements and access points); and (3) high percentage of single-occupancy drivers (*approximately 85% of vehicles traveling during peak travel times contain only the driver*). Essentially, the existing levels of congestion on the major roadways can create stressful driving conditions; increase travel times; impact air quality; and often delay response times for emergency vehicles.

- *Access Management*

The concept of access management has evolved into an important tool for addressing many of the land use-transportation conflicts occurring on arterials and major roadways. Access management focuses on the conflicts between through traffic and local traffic generated by development activities along

roadways. In Nassau County, some of the components used to reduce conflict points are: medians between opposing travel lanes; appropriate spacing of intersections and driveways; developing feeder roads and connections between sites and parking lots; synchronizing traffic lights for more efficient traffic flow; alternative site access other than an arterial driveway; and controlling right and left turning movements into/from roadways.

The most successful access management efforts involve plans which are developed and administered in a coordinated manner by the applicable agencies and boards involved in transportation and land use decisionmaking. As indicated by the New York State Department of Transportation, access management strategies are “most effective when they are preemptive; incorporating actions to avoid traffic and safety problems, enhance multi-modal solutions and improve opportunities for local development.”<sup>4</sup>

- *Journey to Work*

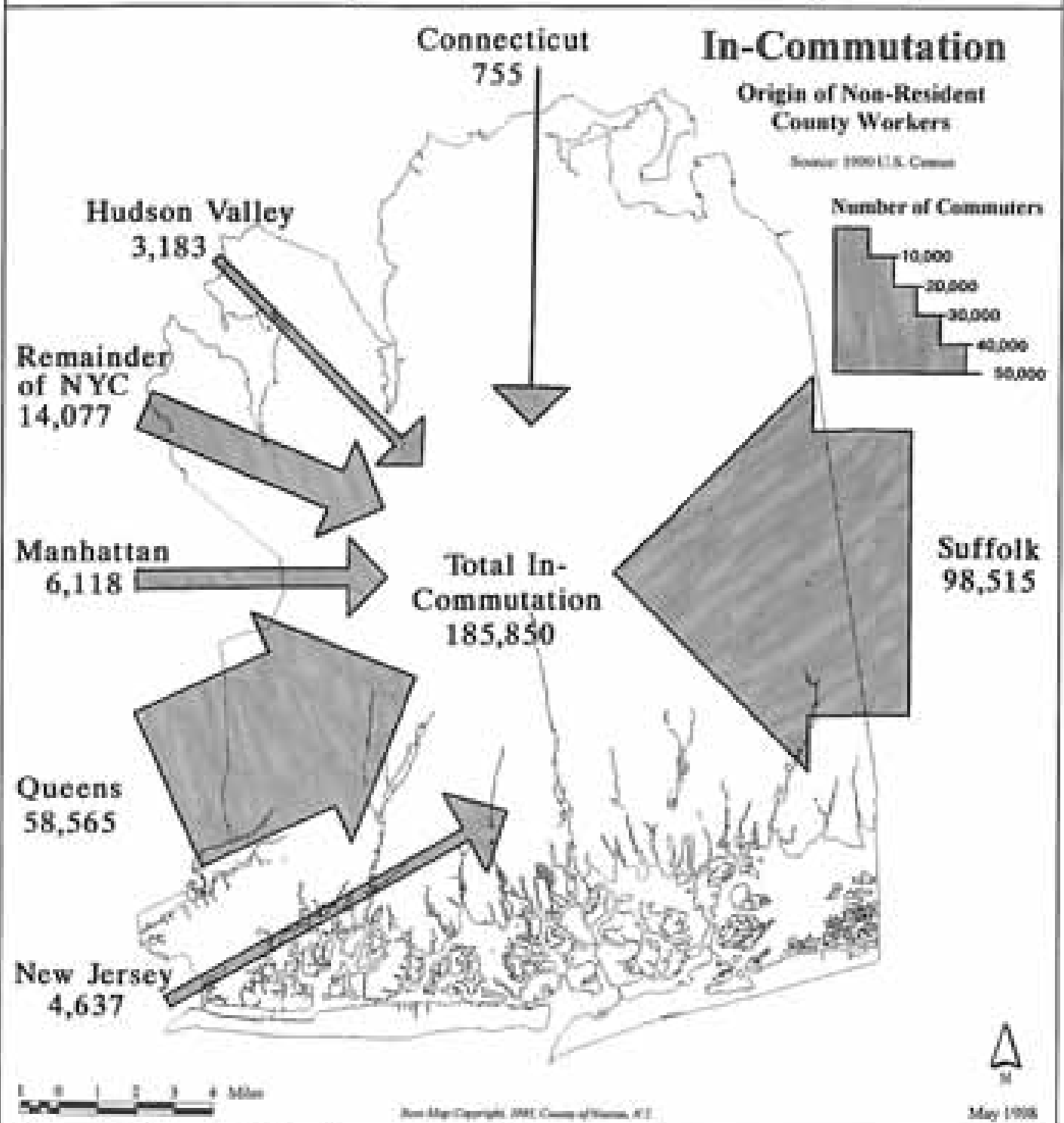
Traffic volumes during the 1960s and 1970s generally reflected heavy morning peak hour traffic in the westbound direction and heavy evening peak hour traffic eastbound. Over the last 25 years, the travel patterns have changed and the peak hours of travel are no longer as pronounced. The travel patterns are consistent with the trend of residents not only commuting to employment sites in New York City, but increasingly commuting within Nassau County and to Suffolk County.

Nassau County is a net exporter of work trips in the region. In 1990, approximately 185,850 work trips came into the County, and roughly 259,854 trips went from Nassau County to other counties in the region (refer to Figures 5 and 6). Between 1980 and 1990, the total number of commutation trips into Nassau County increased by 9.6%, while the total number of out-commutation trips increased by 4.8%.

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<sup>4</sup> *Best Practices in Arterial Management*, New York State Department of Transportation, 1996, p. 4.

# Nassau County Comprehensive Planning Project



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May 1998

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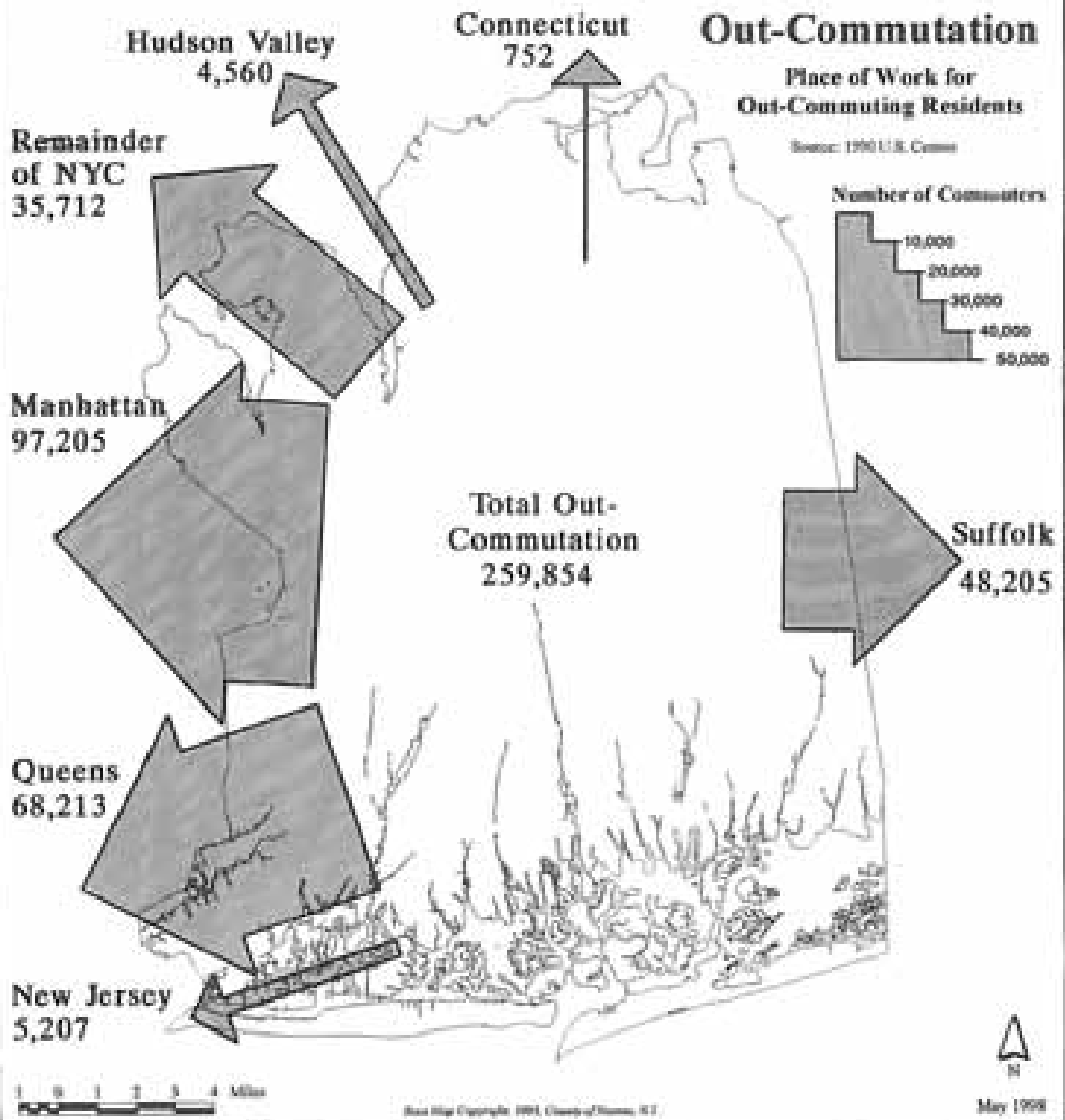
Purvina C. Chopra  
 Colette Paschella  
 Henry Holley  
 John Ritter, Jr.  
 Paul F. Ponzio - Director of Planning

Prepared by:  
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 Thomas Connors & Associates, Inc.  
 Debra and Barbara  
 Peter C. Eschowitz, AECF  
 Planning Corporation  
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 Wilbur Smith Associates  
 Wildlife Consulting Services

Figure 5



# Nassau County Comprehensive Planning Project



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 Wilbur Smith Associates  
 Urban-Crossing Services

Figure 6

The motor vehicle is the predominant transportation mode going from Nassau County to other counties in the region and work trips within the County.

It is the transportation network of roads, rail lines, mass transit, airports and ferry service that directly connects Nassau County to the rest of the New York Metropolitan Region (refer to Figures 7A and 7B, regional Transportation Network).



*Many of the roads in Nassau County have experienced increased traffic volumes over the last 20 years.*

An initiative currently being undertaken by the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) is also addressing traffic congestion and access management. NYSDOT, with input from other transportation agencies and local residents, is preparing a long range transportation plan for Long Island titled: "LITP 2000." A number of residents from Nassau and Suffolk Counties as well as representatives from various organizations have been participating in the LITP 2000 project. The LITP 2000 report should be available for review in 1999.

*Nassau County Comprehensive Planning Project*

**Regional Transportation Network  
Major Roads**

December 1998



-  Interstate Highways
-  Parkways
-  Major Roads



NOTE: Transportation data was made available by the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council for use in the Nassau County Comprehensive Planning Project

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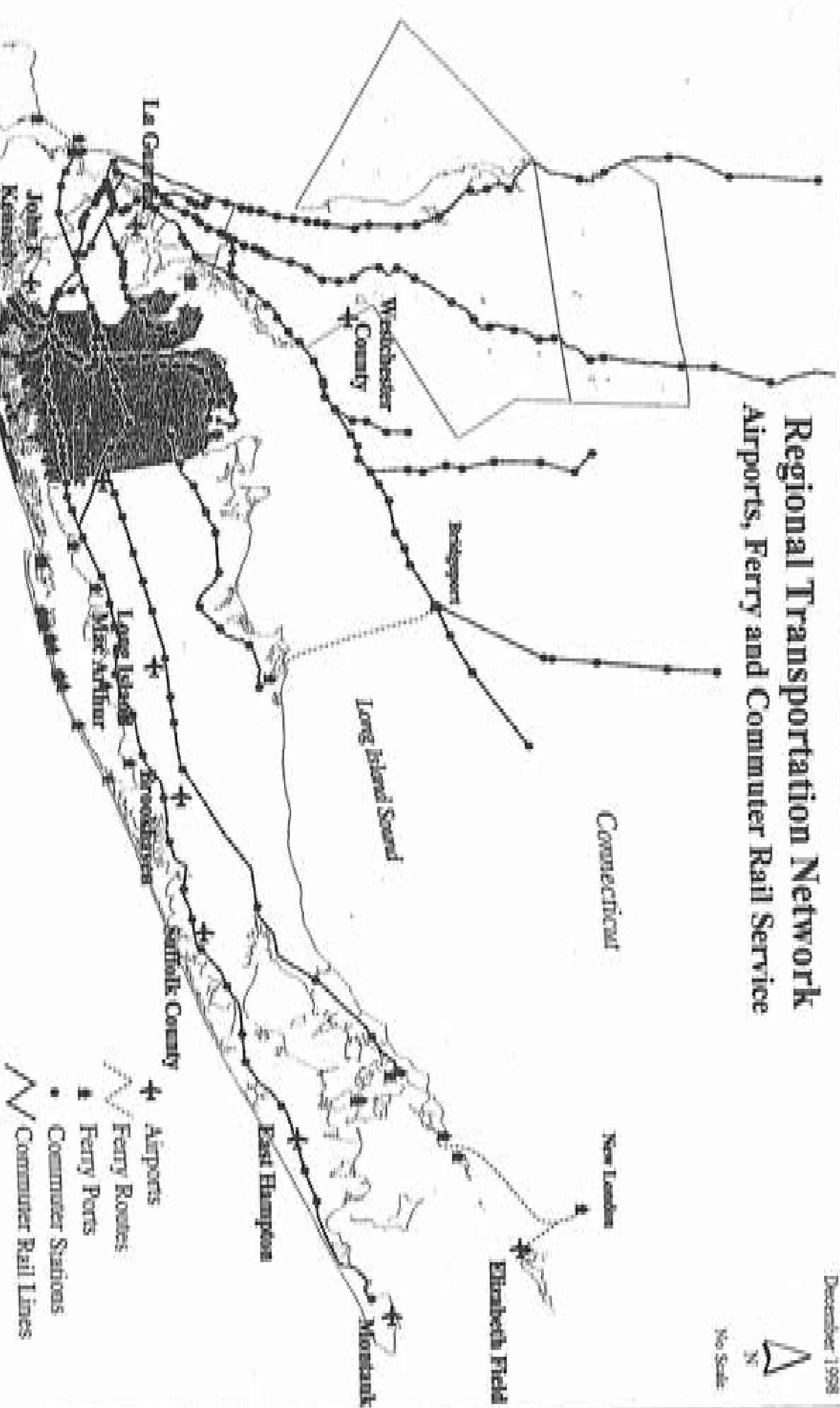
Thomas S. Gubans - County Executive

Figure 7-A

Nassau County Comprehensive Planning Project

Regional Transportation Network  
Airports, Ferry and Commuter Rail Service

December 1998



- ✚ Airports
- ~ Ferry Routes
- ▲ Ferry Ports
- Commuter Stations
- Commuter Rail Lines

NOTE: Transportation data was made available by the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council for use in the Nassau County Comprehensive Planning Project.

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Figure 7-B

**Goal: Maintain the function and improve the capacity of the roadway network to serve a variety of transportation purposes.**

#### **IV.7 Policy Recommendation:**

Improve the capacity and efficiency of the road network in order to provide better access to intra-County and regional destinations.

##### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County, State, and Federal transportation agencies should utilize Intelligent Transportation System (ITS)<sup>5</sup> techniques, such as, real time message boards, and traffic cameras, to improve safety and travel on roadways in Nassau County.
- (2) The County should coordinate efforts with local, State, and Federal agencies through the Transportation Coordinating Committee of the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC) to maximize funds appropriated for capital roadway projects, increase roadway capacity and improve traffic flow within the County.
- (3) The County, municipalities, and residents should actively participate in the LITP 2000 planning effort by NYSDOT to help identify traffic and congestion management projects for Nassau and Suffolk Counties, as well as to ensure consistency of State transportation planning initiatives and policies with the *Nassau County Comprehensive Plan*.

#### **IV.8 Policy Recommendation:**

Identify opportunities for access management in the County, such as, restricting the minimum distance between driveways; controlling the design and location of median openings and driveways; incorporating feeder roads between sites; synchronizing signals; and limiting new signalized intersections.

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<sup>5</sup> ITS refers to the technology used to gather and disseminate travel information, as well as traffic and vehicle management in an integrated manner.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County and local communities should make use of arterial management guidelines and strategies described in *Best Practices in Arterial Management*, prepared by the New York State Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations and the New York State Department of Transportation
- (2) The County and State should co-sponsor public workshop meetings in local communities to present and discuss various arterial and access management techniques and their respective benefits.
- (3) The County, State and municipalities should require that development projects with frontage on major or collector roads be designed to minimize the number of curb cuts with such roads, and create feeder roads or connections between adjacent sites. Owners of existing shopping centers should be required, wherever possible, to remove fencing and other obstacles between their sites, and to create driveway access so that vehicles will be able to travel between adjacent commercial areas without having to enter the public roadways upon which these shopping centers abut.
- (4) The County and State should periodically test the synchronization of traffic lights along major roads to improve traffic flow and implement access management policies.

**IV.9 Policy Recommendation:**

Enhance and improve the visual quality of roadways through landscaping, quality signage and design features.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County should work with communities to develop inter-municipal roadway guidelines, especially for roadways that serve as municipal boundaries. Such guidelines should be designed to encourage consistency with respect to landscaping (including the appropriate type and size of roadside trees, shrubs and other vegetation), signs, lighting, and other streetscape improvements.

- (2) The County should prepare and distribute a publication of general roadway guidelines to local municipalities as well as to developers.
- (3) The County and municipalities should enforce signage and landscaping regulations on a regular basis to maintain and improve the visual character of the roadways and developed properties in Nassau County. Enforcement of sign regulations should focus on the appropriate placement and number of permitted and temporary signs which are located on non-residential sites and along roadways. Enforcement of landscaping regulations should identify whether the required trees, shrubs, planted islands, berms and property line buffers have been installed and maintained within development projects and along street frontages; as well as in road right-of-ways after construction and improvement projects.
- (4) The County should continue to maintain its road right-of-ways through adopt-a-highway and other similar programs.
- (5) Local, State and County highway departments should evaluate the use of “integrated roadside vegetation management”<sup>6</sup> techniques to improve and restore natural, low maintenance vegetation along roadways.

#### **IV.10 Policy Recommendation:**

Support efforts to improve and expand north-south highway routes and capacities where needed and environmentally feasible.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County Departments of Public Works and Planning, and the New York State Department of Transportation should investigate the feasibility of extending the existing collector-distributor (CD) which is adjacent to the Meadowbrook State Parkway. By incorporating a CD roadway, the mainline of the Parkway would have fewer ramps and function as a limited-access roadway (which was the original purpose of the Parkway), while the CD roadway would have ramps to provide “local” access. The overall capacity of the mainline of the Parkway would significantly improve with these changes.

---

<sup>6</sup> Integrated roadside vegetation management is being used in a number of States and communities throughout the nation.

*[Note: a portion of the CD is being established adjacent to the Meadowbrook Parkway between Stewart Avenue and Old Country Road through a public-private partnership.]*

- (2) The County, State and municipalities should evaluate north/south roadways and determine which ones require capacity or efficiency improvements.

### **C. Pedestrians, Bikeways and Ferry Service**

In addition to the automobile and mass transit service, there are options available for getting around Nassau County, such as: walking, bicycling, and traveling by ferry service (for commuting and recreation).

- *Pedestrian Access*

Pedestrian access is better accommodated in areas which have sidewalks, street lighting, benches, community facilities, and retail shops facing the street, within a well defined area that is easy to walk around. Some of the communities in Nassau County have a very appealing environment for pedestrian shopping, and encourage people to walk between destinations in downtowns and Centers (rather than having to drive to all of the destinations).

However, there are many areas in the County which do not have adequate pedestrian access. Nassau County has identified pedestrian-oriented improvements as a significant element in its plans to strengthen and enhance the downtowns and Centers. Some of the projects incorporate sidewalk reconstruction; installation of benches, decorative pavement and curbing; improvement of handicapped access; street-tree planting; pedestrian safety projects; and construction of pedestrian walkways. Typically, these improvements are funded by individual towns, cities and villages, Nassau County's Environmental Beautification Program and Operation Downtown, and/or through the Federal Transportation Enhancement Program.



- *Bicycle Access*

There has been a growing interest and enthusiasm for bicycle usage (commuting and recreation) across the nation. Other counties and communities in New York have responded to this interest by constructing trails and off-road bicycle paths; designating bicycle routes along parkways and other appropriate roads; and converting abandoned railroad rights-of-ways into pedestrian/bicycle trails. In Nassau County, planning for enhanced bicycle and pedestrian access has been initiated with the County's participation in the recently released *Draft Bicycle/Pedestrian Element of the NYMTC Regional Transportation Plan*. There have also been active bicycle groups and residents who have expressed their interest in the need to establish more trails and bicycle routes in Nassau County, and the necessity to address safety issues for pedestrians and bicyclists.

- *Ferry Service*

Ferry transportation has recently become an important issue throughout the New York Metropolitan Region. Various communities, transportation and environmental agencies, and local ferry service operators have explored the option of ferries and water taxis as an alternative mode for transporting people around the region. A number of commuter and tourism ferries have been established, or are in the early planning stage, between different locations in the Hudson Valley, New York City and New Jersey.

Currently, there are no active ferry services, despite the County's location with the Long Island Sound on its northern border and the Atlantic Ocean on its southern border. However, an agreement was recently signed by the City of Glen Cove and a ferry operator to provide service to Connecticut. A ferry service proposal is also being considered in the Village of Freeport.

Ferry service may be a key ingredient in the communities' waterfront redevelopment plans by attracting tourists and providing commuter services. Potential travel routes for ferry services from Nassau County may include employment sites in New York City and Connecticut, as well as tourism destinations. Municipalities and the County will have to ensure that potential impacts and regulations are addressed for any proposed ferry service.

**Goal: Support opportunities for alternative forms of transportation.**

#### **IV.11 Policy Recommendation:**

Support new initiatives to provide ferry service, in appropriate locations, for travel between Nassau County, Connecticut, and New York locations.

##### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County should conduct a study of waterborne passenger issues (commuter and recreation) and coordinate its review with affected agencies, municipalities and private service operators.
- (2) The County should participate in efforts with the Long Island Regional Planning Board and New York Metro Chapter of the American Planning Association to evaluate issues and regulations regarding ferry service in the region, and coordinate activities with various organizations.

#### **IV.12 Policy Recommendation:**

Identify linkages that can be developed between new and existing bicycle/pedestrian trails or routes, and parks, open space, nature trails, waterfronts, downtowns and transportation facilities.

##### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County should, through the Bicycle, Pedestrian and Horseback Trail Plan described in the implementation strategy for Policy Recommendation IV.13, identify and map the existing trails, paths and routes; public parks, preserves and recreational facilities; waterfronts and beaches; and downtowns. The County should also map the areas where future connections can be made between these areas, and the overall trail network which could be developed throughout the County.

- (2) Municipalities, the County and State should evaluate their own opportunities to provide trails or walkways within public parks, recreational sites and other property. Municipalities should also work with developers to set-aside recreational easements in areas that can be connected to existing trails, parks, waterfronts and downtowns.
- (3) The County should coordinate with municipal efforts to establish bicycle/pedestrian/horseback trails or routes so that State and Federal funding can be obtained and administered through the County's capital program.

#### **IV.13 Policy Recommendation:**

Explore opportunities for the creation of bicycle, pedestrian and horseback trails, and the designation of bicycle routes along appropriate roadways.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County, with input from local bicycle, walking and equestrian clubs, should initiate a detailed study of bicycle, pedestrian and horseback issues in Nassau County. The study should result in a Bicycle, Pedestrian and Horseback Trail Plan which evaluates and maps: existing facilities, pedestrian and bicycle trails, horseback trails, and nature trails in preserves and parks; planned initiatives at the municipal and State levels; roadways where recognized standards for bicycle route design, safety and site distance can be achieved; as well as proposed trails and routes in the *Bicycle/Pedestrian Element of the NYMTC Regional Transportation Plan*. The Plan should also include maps of areas where future greenway and trail connections could be made throughout Nassau County. This effort should include surveys of bicyclists, pedestrians, sports enthusiasts, and other potential trail users.
- (2) The County, State and municipalities should evaluate roadways for their appropriateness as bicycle routes, and incorporate the necessary improvements (shoulders, markings, signage etc.) into their highway capital budgets.

**IV.14 Policy Recommendation:**

Encourage businesses to provide accommodations, such as bicycle racks and showers, to entice additional walking and bicycle usage for commuting.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County, municipalities, major employers, and shopping center management companies should provide bicycle racks at convenient, safe locations. They should also provide well-lighted walkways to allow for safe and convenient pedestrian access.
- (2) The LIRR policy for accommodating bicycles on trains, and providing additional bicycle racks at train stations should be supported and promoted throughout the County. In addition, the LI Bus and other transit services should evaluate options for accommodating bicycles on transit vehicles, as well as bike racks at bus facilities as a means of encouraging bicycle usage and reducing some of the automobile trips.

**IV.15 Policy Recommendation:**

Specify ways to make bicycle and pedestrian travel safer along roadways, and in downtowns and Centers.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County, State and municipal transportation officials should coordinate efforts to make bicycle and pedestrian travel safer, such as improving sight distance, fixing potholes in shoulders of roads, placing bicycle grates on storm sewer inlets, providing pedestrian islands in the middle of arterials with crosswalks, creating connections or pathways between developed sites, and installing appropriate signage.
- (2) Municipalities and the County should apply for potential funding which could be used towards pedestrian and bicycle safety capital improvements in downtowns and Centers. Some of the improvement projects could include: traffic calming around intersections; providing safe crosswalks and intersections; improved timing of signals to allow for pedestrian crossings; restriping or placement of other material in

crosswalks; signage, such as “Yield to Pedestrians,” “Bike Route;” installation of benches, bicycle racks, and lighting to enhance pedestrian activities; and creating buffers between bike lanes and traffic, where possible.

- (3) The County and municipalities should increase efforts to construct, and require developers to incorporate into projects, sidewalks or walkways to provide safe connections between commercial properties, between residential and commercial areas, as well as between residential areas and parks, preserves and public spaces. Wherever possible, commercial property owners should be encouraged to eliminate fences and other barriers on their property which prevent pedestrian access between neighboring commercial sites.

#### **IV.16 Policy Recommendation:**

Provide technical assistance to developers and communities about transit-oriented development and planned development opportunities where live\work relationships can lessen traffic generation, and encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County should actively support Transit-Oriented Development as a means of promoting efficient land use development, creating opportunities for direct transit services and other benefits.
- (2) The County Planning Department’s Division of Transportation, through its Urban Planning Work Program, should prepare guidelines on Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) techniques to assist interested municipalities, developers and residents. The guidelines should identify the economic, social and environmental benefits of building near transit nodes; the land use, pedestrian and transit design principles; and potential implementation tools.

*The issues of TOD and transit-land use connections are also described in the Land Use chapter of this Comprehensive Plan.*

- (3) The County and State should support efforts to develop new park and ride lots which encourage carpooling and/or use of mass transit services.

#### **D. Goods Movement**

The movement of goods and products in Nassau County occurs by trucks, rail freight or barges. The modes of transportation used for moving goods and freight have changed over the years as the County's economy shifted to one substantially oriented to service and information industries, rather than the production of manufactured goods. Trucks have become the predominant transportation mode for goods movement in Nassau County and the New York Metropolitan Region, while rail freight and barges are less utilized by businesses and shipping companies.<sup>7</sup>

The typical shipments inbound to businesses in the County consist of consumer products and other items destined for local wholesalers and retailers, rather than raw materials for manufacturing. With the exception of municipal garbage and recyclables there is no significant outbound movement of goods from Nassau County. This factor increases the cost of shipments to/from Long Island as compared to the rest of the northeastern states.

Since truck shipments are so significant, various trucking firms maintain terminals in Nassau County to facilitate local delivery of goods and to consolidate outbound shipments, including: United Parcel Service in Uniondale; Federal Express in Garden City ; APA Transport Corporation in Old Bethpage; Yellow Freight Systems in Plainview; Roadway Express in Syosset; ABF Freight in Hicksville; and Keyco in Glen Cove.

The primary route for truck shipments into or out of Nassau and Suffolk Counties is the Long Island Expressway. Other major east-west arterials utilized by trucks are: Jericho Turnpike, Old Country Road, Northern Boulevard, and Sunrise Highway. For north-south movements, the Seaford-Oyster Bay Expressway serves the eastern portion of the County, and Glen Cove Road serves the central portion. In the western part of the County, Long Beach Road, Peninsula Boulevard, Nassau Boulevard and Franklin Avenue serve as truck routes. A major constraint in moving goods to

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<sup>7</sup> Air cargo services are available at the John F. Kennedy airport in Queens.

businesses in the central portion of the County is the State's restriction of commercial vehicles on all parkways.<sup>8</sup>

The movement of goods by rail freight service is now operated by the New York & Atlantic Railway Co. (NY&A), which acquired a 20-year lease of the LIRR freight rights and freight-related assets. Operating rights to the Central Extension and Garden City freight transportation facility were specifically excluded from the transfer agreement, which was authorized by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and New York State Department of Transportation.

NY&A's current operation is not much different in volume, hours of service, or commodities from the recent LIRR freight operation. It should be noted that for every LIRR branch line, the volume of freight movement is significantly lower today than at any prior time in the system's operation. The LIRR Mainline is the primary rail freight route on Long Island, with limited service to customers on the Babylon, West Hempstead and Port Jefferson branches. NY&A does not operate any service on the Hempstead Branch or to the Garden City freight transportation facility.

The rail freight operation by NY&A provides services to customers on Long Island, in Brooklyn and in Queens. Nassau County accounts for 8.7% of NY&A's traffic, or approximately 1,050 carloads per year. NY&A's current volume of rail freight shipment is equivalent to approximately 30,000 heavy truck movements annually, or 200 per weekday.

There has been an overall decline in rail freight shipments since the 1960s, due to a number of factors. Despite this decline, there are several reasons why rail freight service remains important to County businesses and consumers:

- (1) Rail access for goods movement offers businesses in Nassau County an alternative to using congested roadways;
- (2) Rail shipment can be more economical for transporting bulk commodities and long distance shipping of produce and other food products; and
- (3) Rail freight provides service to the distribution and manufacturing sector of the County economy.

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<sup>8</sup> The restriction on commercial vehicles applies to parkways throughout New York State.

**Goal: Develop transportation improvements which will enhance competitiveness for Nassau County's transportation, distribution, and production firms without adversely affecting local communities.**

#### **IV.17 Policy Recommendation:**

Facilitate the transportation of freight within the County and region by prioritizing intersection and traffic improvements along critical goods movement routes.

##### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County and State should identify intersection and traffic improvements along important goods movement corridors as a priority within the Regional Transportation Improvement Program.
- (2) The Nassau-Suffolk Transportation Coordinating Committee of NYMTC should conduct outreach efforts to freight operators and major businesses to obtain their input about goods movement issues and road improvement projects. Input from local residents would also be helpful in the freight planning efforts.

#### **IV.18 Policy Recommendation:**

Support opportunities for freight shipment along the LIRR network, which will provide an alternative to shipping goods by trucks on roadways.

##### **Implementation Strategy:**

- (1) The County and State should continue to support freight service on the LIRR network, **other than** the Hempstead Branch and the Garden City freight transportation facility, as an important transportation mode for moving goods to and from businesses on Long Island.
- (2) The County Industrial Development Agency, County Department of Commerce and Industry, State Department of Economic Development



and community economic development agencies should incorporate information into their business promotion and retention efforts about the availability and efficiency of rail freight services as an alternative to trucking goods.

#### **IV.19 Policy Recommendation:**

Identify options for developing freight consolidation and distribution centers which will provide seamless connections between various transportation modes.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The Nassau-Suffolk Transportation Coordinating Committee of NYMTC and the County Department of Planning's Division of Transportation should schedule a conference or meetings focused on freight intermodal issues and invite the rail freight customers, shipping companies and businesses, New York & Atlantic Railway and other interested groups. These outreach efforts can also identify existing problems and opportunities to better coordinate goods movement with the freight consolidation and distribution centers in the New York Metropolitan Region — such as the freight intermodal terminals in northern New Jersey and the Harlem River Yards (currently under construction in the Bronx).
- (2) The County, State and municipal economic development and transportation organizations should provide information about the various freight consolidation and distribution centers to existing and prospective businesses.

#### **E. Commuter Rail Improvements**

The LIRR, a subsidiary of the MTA, is the nation's busiest commuter railroad. Annually LIRR transports approximately 75 million people, or 260,000 one-way riders each day. Nassau County commuters account for about 65% of the total LIRR ridership.



*LIRR train stations provide access to commuter rail service throughout the New York Metropolitan Region.*

Several improvement projects which have been planned for the LIRR system will provide benefits to County residents who use the rail service for travel to New York City, and within Long Island, and/or people who are impacted by the at-grade rail crossings in Mineola.

- *East Side Connection*

One of the projects involves a new connection for LIRR service in Manhattan. Penn Station, the last LIRR stop, is located on the west side of Manhattan and handles 78% of the total LIRR ridership. Although Penn Station provides walking access for many commuters to the Central Business District, approximately 40% of the riders have to transfer to the subway system to get to the eastern side of Manhattan.

An east side connection between the LIRR Mainline and Grand Central Terminal has been proposed by the LIRR and Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA). The connection would most likely utilize the lower level of the 63rd Street Tunnel to Grand Central Terminal.

Many current LIRR commuters would benefit from the substantial time and cost savings associated with the more direct access to employment sites. The correlation between travel times by competing modes of transportation (such as railroad and automobile), and the relative desirability of these modes is well established in transportation studies and publications prepared by various organizations. In addition, there is an opportunity to increase commuter rail ridership with the more direct service.

- *Operational Track*

The LIRR and MTA have long range plans for a third operational track to be added to the Mainline. The third track would allow greater peak-period service into and out of Long Island, and support MTA's initiative to bring LIRR service into Grand Central Terminal. In addition, the third track on the LIRR Mainline would provide flexibility for travel within Long Island and reverse-commute travel.

This proposal is included in the MTA's 20-year capital needs program.

- *At-grade Crossings*

A program to eliminate at-grade railroad crossings in Mineola has been developed through a partnership between the Federal Transit Administration, New York State Department of Transportation, MTA LIRR and Nassau County. The project will improve pedestrian safety, vehicular access, and reduce travel times around the Mineola at-grade railroad crossings.

The first phase of this project, which involves raising the tracks over Herricks Road, is nearing completion. The second phase, which involves the reconstruction of the Mineola Boulevard Bridge, has already been initiated. The third phase, which will address the remaining at-grade railroad crossings in Mineola, is currently in the design stage.



*The grade crossing project in Mineola involves raising the LIRR tracks above Herricks Road.*

**Goal:** Support safety and efficiency improvements planned for the LIRR service which are designed to benefit local residents and employees commuting to and from Nassau County.

#### **IV.20 Policy Recommendation:**

Provide support for the east side connection between the LIRR and Grand Central Terminal to help serve the needs of Nassau County commuters, and to increase rail ridership.

##### **Implementation Strategy:**

- (1) The County should support the MTA's proposed plans for establishing an east side connection in Manhattan between the LIRR Mainline and Grand Central Station. The new connection would substantially improve travel time for Long Island commuters which use the LIRR to access employment sites on the eastern side of Manhattan. The new connection may also attract more LIRR riders since there would be more direct travel options for commuters.

#### **IV.21 Policy Recommendation:**

Encourage that priority be given to funding a third operational track on the LIRR Mainline.

##### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County should support the MTA's long range plans to construct a third operational track on the LIRR Mainline, which would improve mobility and increase flexibility for intra-Island and reverse commute travel, as well as facilitate bringing LIRR service into Grand Central Station.
- (2) Nassau and Suffolk Counties should actively support efforts through the MTA capital needs program and NYMTC's transportation improvement program to develop a third operational track on the LIRR Mainline.

**IV.22 Policy Recommendation:**

Support plans and funding for the rail line grade-crossing elimination project in Mineola to improve efficiency and safety for passengers and vehicular traffic.

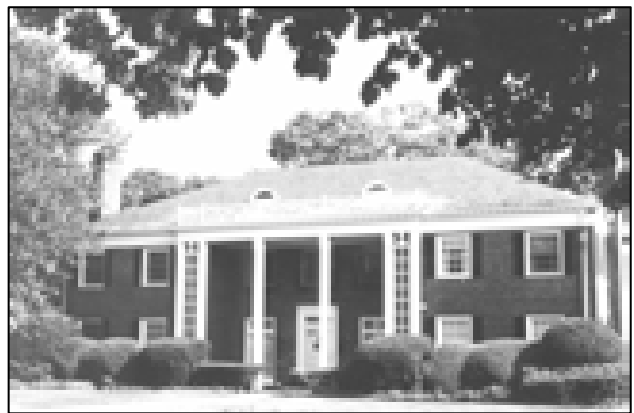
**Implementation Strategy:**

- (1) The County and local residents should support the MTA's plans to eliminate the at-grade railroad crossings in Mineola, which will result in improved vehicular and pedestrian travel and safety. The at-grade railroad crossing elimination projects should also result in improved efficiency for the LIRR service in Nassau County.

## V. HOUSING

The availability of desirable housing is a significant factor in the County's ability to attract and retain a population of business leaders, entrepreneurs, different types of workers, civic and community volunteers, single persons and families of all ages, and other residents. To serve an increasingly diverse population and maintain its economic vitality, there must be a range of housing opportunities available to County residents.

Nassau County has successfully satisfied the homeownership needs of a high proportion of its residents due to its large supply of high quality, single family housing units developed in the post-World War II years. As the 21<sup>st</sup> Century approaches, pressure on this critical resource will occur from several sources. First, the high demand for existing housing will continue, caused by factors including longer life expectancies of current residents, smaller household sizes, and in-migration of new residents. Second, much of this existing housing supply is approximately fifty years old, and some units can reasonably be expected to deteriorate in the coming years.



*Various housing styles, such as Colonial, Levittown Capes, and Multi-family, provide options for County residents.*

Nassau County's *Consolidated Strategy and Plan*, prepared by the Office of Housing and Intergovernmental Affairs (OHIA) in 1995, estimates that there are approximately 18,000 substandard units within the County Consortium (which includes all of the municipalities except the Villages of Garden City and Valley Stream) — of which 90% are estimated suitable for rehabilitation. The estimate consists of 5% of the 156,121 Consortium housing units built before 1940, and 10,500 units which were identified by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as “overcrowded.”<sup>1</sup>

A constrained existing housing supply and continuing demand have resulted in increasing sales prices, which diminishes affordability to a broad range of County residents. Recent real estate data illustrates this trend in Nassau County: between December 1995 and December 1996, the available inventory of homes for sale in the County declined from 7,775 to 6,982 units. At the same time, the median sales price in the County increased from \$168,300 to \$175,000. Strong real estate sales in 1997 further depleted the available housing inventory, and the median sales price rose to \$180,000 by the end of the year.<sup>2</sup>

A similar situation is already experienced by the renters in Nassau County. The small rental housing supply and high rental demand have resulted in rent prices which strain the resources of many tenants. According to the 1990 Census figures, 41% of all renters and 51% of senior citizen renters are “cost-burdened” – they pay more than 30% of their monthly incomes in rent. Under these circumstances, residents cannot accumulate savings towards homeownership and seniors may go without nutritious food or needed medical care. Yet, these cost burdened renters often face the possibility of eviction, which is the most common cause of homelessness.

Where household income constraints prevent homeowners from rehabilitating or maintaining their properties, deterioration can occur which contributes to a blighting effect on older neighborhoods. Similar deterioration can occur where rental property owners do not reinvest in their aging buildings. To meet these challenges, the OHIA's *Consolidated Plan and Strategy* proposes the use of funding through the Community Development Block Grant program for rehabilitation assistance in areas of older housing stock, multi-family housing and low income concentrations, with special outreach to African American and Latino households. Rehabilitation target areas are located in the Towns of Hempstead, North Hempstead and Oyster Bay, the Cities of Long Beach and Glen Cove, and the Villages of Freeport, Rockville Centre and Hempstead. The

<sup>1</sup> *Consolidated Plan and Strategy*, Nassau County, 1995 p. III-8; *CHAS Databook*, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

<sup>2</sup> Sources: Long Island Board of Realtors and the Multiple Listing Service of Long Island.

*Consolidated Plan and Strategy* also proposes substantial rehabilitation of vacant, tax-foreclosed scattered units located in the communities of Roosevelt, Freeport, Hempstead, Inwood, New Cassel and South Floral Park to prevent the need for their demolition. This rehabilitation could be accomplished with the “HOME Investment Trust Fund.”

*The HOME Investment Trust Fund is a HUD program which provides grants to participating jurisdictions for housing rehabilitation, new construction and tenant-based rental assistance. The Community Development Block Grant is also a HUD program which funds eligible housing and community development projects.*

#### **A. Diversified Housing Stock**

To maintain an adequate supply of housing to meet anticipated needs affordably, additional housing units will need to be developed and/or redeveloped in the coming years. These units will need to include not just large single family homes, but a more diverse array of housing types to fit the changing lifestyles of County residents. Among the changes will be a greater number of smaller households — including young and older singles, couples without children at home, and single-parent families, as well as the traditional two parent household with a smaller number of children than in earlier decades. In addition, an increasing proportion of seniors, living longer, are likely to have mobility or self-care limitations and need housing with access to caretakers and other supportive services, shopping and community facilities.

Lack of sufficient rental housing stock to meet demand has also resulted in illegal conversions of existing structures and overcrowding in some communities – which impacts public safety, hastens housing deterioration and can often place a burden on infrastructure.

To maintain the County’s high homeownership rate, with its positive impact on neighborhood stability and individual quality of life, the future housing stock will need to include a range of units affordable to households from a broader spectrum of income levels.



**Goal:** To better serve the County's changing population, encourage a diversified housing supply that consists of new residential construction, preservation and improvement of the existing housing stock, and reuse of vacant or underutilized buildings.

## **V.1 Policy Recommendation:**

Encourage appropriate housing to locate in areas close to shopping, community facilities, services and transportation facilities.

### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County Office of Housing and Intergovernmental Affairs (OHIA), with the assistance of local housing agencies and civic groups, should regularly update its resource inventory of community and neighborhood organizations which can act as sponsors for appropriate new housing.
- (2) The County OHIA should offer technical and financial assistance to the community and neighborhood organizations about HOME and Community Development Block Grant programs, in order to support their efforts to develop additional housing in their communities.
- (3) The County Planning Department should inventory existing zoning codes to identify model provisions which could be adopted by municipalities interested in permitting mixed land uses, including housing, in downtowns and Centers.
- (4) The County Planning Commission and municipalities should continue to encourage that housing be considered as an element of the overall development plan in the subdivision and/or rezoning of large parcels where adequate infrastructure is available.
- (5) The County OHIA should continue to administer the Operation Downtown Program, and support other efforts for downtown revitalization which incorporate appropriate housing components.
- (6) Municipalities should be encouraged to review their zoning codes to determine whether mixed uses are appropriate. Inclusion of housing and a mixture of uses in certain appropriate downtown areas may create

more day-time and night-time activity, a better sense of place, provide more affordable housing options, and contribute to a safer environment.

## **V.2 Policy Recommendation:**

Reduce the number of illegal, overcrowded housing units in the County by encouraging the enforcement of building codes and zoning regulations.

### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County should provide, through its Community Development Block Grant program, financial assistance to municipal code enforcement programs.
- (2) The County Planning Department and OHIA should work together to identify model ordinance provisions and regulatory practices which facilitate the creation of legal accessory apartments in owner occupied structures.

## **V.3 Policy Recommendation:**

Preserve the existing housing stock by fostering higher levels of building maintenance and home improvement activities for aging and substandard housing units.

### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County OHIA, through its Community Development Block Grant and HOME programs, should provide financial assistance to eligible households for housing rehabilitation activities.
- (2) The County should continue to promote the availability of these programs through the use of local media, housing organizations and non-profit groups, community outreach activities, and direct mailings to County residents.
- (3) The County OHIA, municipalities and community organizations should broaden their approaches to housing rehabilitation programs by encouraging local residents to participate in revitalization efforts for their neighborhoods, not just individual buildings.

**B. Housing Opportunities**

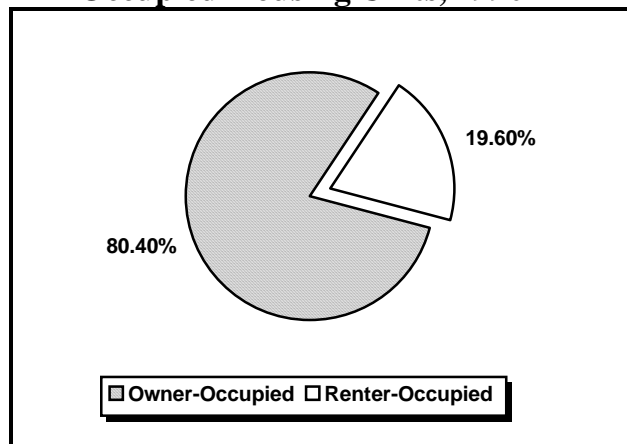
Nassau County has a strong history of providing homeownership opportunities, most notably in the post-war period. The most recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau indicates that 80.4% of the homes in Nassau County are owner occupied. Homeownership among non-white households in the County is significantly higher than elsewhere in New York State.



*Homeownership is a very strong characteristic of Nassau County.*

However, there are additional opportunities to extend the benefits of homeownership to an even greater number of County residents. For example, while 80.4% of all homes were owner occupied in 1990, only 60.4% of African American households owned their own homes. During the same timeframe, only 49.8% of Hispanic households, 78.5% of Asian households and 61.5% of American-Indian households were homeowners.

**Occupied Housing Units, 1990**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Among the difficulties in increasing homeownership opportunities, particularly for young families and minorities, are the exceptionally low vacancy and turnover rates within the County. In 1990, less than 1.2% of the year-round housing units were vacant. In addition, 41% of owner occupants had lived in their homes for more than 20 years. This low vacancy rate and

small turnover of existing housing stock limit the number of homes which are available for prospective homebuyers.

Homeownership can occur with different types of real estate: single-family detached, duplexes, multi-family, townhouses, condominiums, and cooperative units.

Housing programs which target assistance to first time homebuyers are helpful, but their success will be limited unless additional housing stock is constructed or redeveloped. This additional housing stock should also include rental units suitable for senior citizens, single residents and other small households — not only to improve the “cost burden” on renters, but to give older homeowners the opportunity to reduce their housing and maintenance costs by finding rental units in their community, or elsewhere in the County. The availability of increased rental housing units will help to improve the low turnover in the existing single family homes, and enable new homeowners with growing families or needs to occupy suitably sized housing units.

**Goal: Provide greater rental and homeownership opportunities for County residents.**

#### **V.4 Policy Recommendation:**

Increase opportunities for homeownership, and public awareness of existing homebuyer programs, especially for first-time homebuyers of all incomes.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County OHIA should continue and expand its existing program of down-payment assistance to income eligible first time homebuyers.
- (2) The County should promote the availability of this program within the real estate and financial lending communities, as well as to the general public.
- (3) The County OHIA and Budget Office should evaluate the feasibility of a tax abatement program for income-eligible first-time homebuyers which phases in full taxation over an extended time period, such as three to five years.

- (4) The County should provide, through its HOME and Community Development Block Grant programs, financial assistance to developers and non-profit sponsors to create new homeownership opportunities for income eligible first time homebuyers.
- (5) The County, together with area mortgage lenders and real estate agencies, should sponsor “Homebuyer Fairs” and related activities to provide information on homeownership opportunities within the County to a broad range of interested residents.
- (6) The County should research the feasibility of establishing additional funding sources, such as a County Housing Trust Fund or County Housing Implementation Fund, to reduce development costs of new housing serving households with incomes higher than those eligible for HOME and Community Development Block Grant programs.

## **V.5 Policy Recommendation:**

Support increased rental housing development suitable for senior citizens, and for households of various sizes and income levels, consistent with the character of Nassau County.

### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County should develop guidelines with information and criteria for creating successful senior citizen rental housing developments — including: appropriate locations, access to community services and shopping, and availability of a range of support services. The guidelines can be used by municipalities when they are considering changes to their zoning regulations, and in reviewing proposed projects, as well as by developers and sponsors of senior citizen rental projects.
- (2) The County OHIA should identify and promote models of assisted living care and other “housing-plus-services” rental developments, as well as improvements to existing apartment buildings which have large numbers of senior citizens, to serve the County’s senior citizen population.
- (3) The County should promote rental housing which will provide an option for households prior to homeownership.

- (4) The County should provide, through its HOME and Community Development Block Grant programs, assistance to developers and non-profit sponsors of new rental housing, particularly those which incorporate on-site child care facilities.
- (5) The County OHIA should support local non-profit organizations as sponsors or marketing agents to monitor tenant selection and maintenance standards, as well as to market affordable rental housing developments.
- (6) The County OHIA and other sources, should identify public-private partnership models which have been used successfully in other communities to develop rental housing.



*The senior-citizen housing development in Bethpage provides an attractive housing option within walking distance of the business district and services.*

### **C. Housing Data and Trends**

Understanding emerging trends in housing, monitoring development patterns among the County's communities and implementing housing and community development programs are current functions of staff in various County departments. The County's new Geographic Information System (GIS) significantly advances its ability to coordinate this information and to share it with municipalities for planning and programming purposes, as well as with residents and organizations for public education purposes. These resources should be refined, updated in the GIS and coordinated between the County departments to improve the County's ability to anticipate and respond to housing needs and issues.

**Goal: Identify obstacles to housing access in the County and efforts to make changes, as well as opportunities to better understand housing market conditions and trends.**

#### **V.6 Policy Recommendation:**

Improve and maintain the County's housing database of rental units, market rate housing, demolitions, and sales information to identify emerging trends and develop appropriate responses or actions.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County Planning Department should expand its annual survey of building permit activity to include monitoring of demolition permits to enhance its understanding of the net impact on housing supply.
- (2) The County Planning Department and OHIA staff should identify additional housing market supply data and resources to monitor as a means of understanding housing market issues and trends. Such data might include sales volume, inventory by housing type, geographic sub-market area and price; median sales price, and median rents.
- (3) The County Planning Department and OHIA should establish monitoring programs to collect and evaluate market data, and incorporate these elements into the County's Geographic Information System (GIS) system.

#### **V.7 Policy Recommendation:**

Promote fair housing efforts through education, outreach and technical assistance.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County should continue to support, and increase public awareness of, State and Federal fair housing laws through public education activities, particularly those targeted at the real estate and financial lending businesses.

- (2) The County OHIA should continue its work with Long Island Housing Services to ensure fair housing practices in the operation of its housing programs.

## **V.8 Policy Recommendation:**

Coordinate data and recommendations from the County's Office of Housing and Intergovernmental Affairs (OHIA), Geographic Information System (GIS), and housing organizations, to enhance understanding of housing market trends and to plan for additional housing services.

### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County Planning Department and OHIA should expand opportunities for inter-departmental coordination of data collection, research and analysis in order to strengthen the foundations for housing policy recommendations.
- (2) The County should expand its GIS system and promote its use as an effective tool for housing policy analyses by County departments and other organizations.



## VI. THE ECONOMY

Nassau County benefits from the income-generating capabilities of its educated and skilled workforce, employment base, and quality-of-life. The County also benefits from its close proximity to New York City as well as access to the tremendous business and personal purchasing power in the New York Metropolitan Region.

The volume of business activity in Nassau County and the overall income generated by employees are increasing, along with the growth in productivity which is taking place throughout the economy. However, the overall level of employment in the County has been fluctuating around a fairly level trend and is expected to move slightly upward.

Nassau County has been experiencing substantial changes in the key sectors of its economy. Employment and economic activity in business and personal services is growing, especially in health and social services. In contrast, the defense and aerospace manufacturing industries, which were the mainstays of basic industry in Nassau and Suffolk Counties, have declined — primarily impacted by national and regional cutbacks in defense and aerospace manufacturing, and an overall trend of relocating heavy manufacturing business out of the northeastern section of the nation.

The transformation of the Nassau County economy is consistent with regional and national economic trends. In essence, economic change is a requirement of an increasingly productive economy. It is also a necessity for Nassau County if it is to continue with a growing and healthy economy which provides competitive incomes and the necessary goods and services.

The economic welfare of the County and its residents is connected not only to business and employment activity in Nassau County, but also to income earned elsewhere by resident commuters. The amount of income earned outside of the County by commuters is far greater than the income earned in any individual industry operating within the County.

*A more detailed description of the economy in Nassau County and the New York Metropolitan Region is contained in the Inventory and Analysis document which was prepared for this County Comprehensive Plan.*

Nassau County is a net exporter of work trips in the region — there are more people commuting out of the County for work than into the County. However, both in- and out-commutation trips have been increasing. Therefore, the economic vitality of the County economy depends to a significant extent on its attractiveness to people who decide to live in a suburban setting and earn their income in New York City or elsewhere outside of the County. Since the income generated by resident commuters continues to be very significant, the quality of transportation options and the overall quality of life are important aspects of the County's economy.



*Employment opportunities are available at the various office buildings throughout the County.*



*A high percentage of residents commute to employment sites in New York City and Suffolk County.*

Nassau County faces the challenge of a high cost of doing business and a high cost of living. The costly business environment is a result of several factors, including: high income levels; high utility costs; location in a heavily populated regional area; and the costs associated with transportation services to/from Long Island.

The County benefits from an active economic development program — managed primarily by the County Department of Commerce and Industry, with participation from other local, regional, State, and Federal agencies. The economic development program targets the retention and expansion of existing businesses and the attraction of new businesses to Nassau County. There are also several new programs aimed at improving the downtowns and business areas in the County, such as: the Operation Downtown Program, coordinated by the County Office of Housing and Intergovernmental Affairs, and the Environmental Beautification Program, administered by the County Planning Department.

Nassau County should continue to use its resources to strengthen its attractiveness to new businesses and investors in high-wage and skilled industries. The County should continue to nurture entrepreneurs and small businesses. The attraction and retention of these businesses will help diversify the economy, strengthen and expand the employment opportunities and continue to generate wages and tax revenues.

There are a number of existing buildings and infrastructure in the County which should be redeveloped or reused to provide maximum opportunity for residents to benefit from a changing, growing, and overall prosperous economy. In addition, the County needs to plan to fully utilize opportunities made available by new commercial areas while supporting and strengthening the position of the existing downtowns and Centers in the County's future.

#### **A. Economic Base**

The economy in Nassau County has been adversely impacted by a national shifting of the economy from defense and aerospace manufacturing to production of computer and information technology (which occurred most strongly elsewhere in the nation and in the world). Nassau County must be competitive to investors in new industries in order for businesses and incomes to continue to grow.

The County will have to be marketed and promoted on the basis of its competitive advantages, such as its: skilled labor force; large consumer and business markets; location in the New York Metropolitan Region; quality of life. The County can further benefit from its extraordinary coastlines and tourism opportunities. In addition, the County should be marketed to a diverse mixture of prospective businesses in order to match the different skill levels and training of local residents.

However, despite the competitive advantages that Nassau County has to offer, there are often obstacles to getting a business to relocate or expand its operation in the County. Some of the obstacles include: the high costs of doing business; the timeframe and costs associated with application review processes; and often, the necessity to obtain approvals from a number of different boards and/or agencies. In some situations, it may be appropriate to streamline the decisionmaking process so that the applicant and community can benefit from the proposed projects.

**Goal:** Strengthen the economy in Nassau County by encouraging economic development activities which will provide jobs, increase the tax base, ensure a stable land use pattern, and diversify the County's employment sectors.

### **VI.1 Policy Recommendation:**

Promote the competitive advantages of Nassau County, in particular, its highly educated labor force, strong business and consumer markets, and location in the New York Metropolitan Region.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County Department of Commerce and Industry, County Industrial Development Agency, State Department of Economic Development, as well as County and Long Island business organizations should continue their efforts to market and promote the comparative advantages of locating in Nassau County to businesses and corporations. These efforts should be expanded, where needed, to incorporate all forms of multi-media promotion to national and international business markets.
- (2) The County Departments of Commerce and Industry and Planning, State Department of Economic Development, Long Island Association and other business groups should continue to provide comprehensive information about the County for marketing and recruitment efforts.

### **VI.2 Policy Recommendation:**

Foster the growth and expansion of businesses, and support entrepreneurship.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County and the State Department of Economic Development should continue to evaluate options for creating business incubators (generalized and/or special focused incubators) as a tool to nurture entrepreneurs and small businesses through the first few critical years.

*Business incubators often provide shared services, technical and management assistance, access to resources, and training opportunities which are essential to entrepreneurs and start-up businesses during the first several years.*

- (2) The County Department of Commerce and Industry, State Department of Economic Development, Federal Small Business Administration and other agencies, financial institutions, chambers and business groups, as well as colleges and universities should continue to coordinate their efforts to provide support and assistance to businesses interested in growth and expansion opportunities.

### **VI.3 Policy Recommendation:**

Support public and private efforts to attract new businesses to the County which will provide skilled jobs and competitive wages.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County, municipalities, and local businesses should support, and provide assistance as needed, initiatives designed to attract businesses to Nassau County which will provide a diversity of job opportunities, including skilled jobs and competitive wages.
- (2) The County, State, utility companies and other groups should provide cost-efficient incentives to attract value-added businesses to the County.
- (3) The County should establish an Industrial and Commercial Incentive Board — pursuant to Section 485-b of the New York State Real Property Tax Law — with representatives from the County, municipalities and school districts, to help retain and attract targeted businesses.
- (4) The County, State and municipalities should target their recruitment efforts to businesses that match the educational and labor force skills of area residents.

- (5) The County and local businesses should pursue opportunities to provide jobs to residents with various skill levels that are entering the workforce. These efforts will also help implement the new Federal welfare laws.
- (6) The County should evaluate the existing incentives and economic development programs to determine the effectiveness of these tools in recruiting new businesses and employment opportunities.

#### **VI.4 Policy Recommendation:**

Identify opportunities to streamline the decisionmaking process and fast-track approvals for important employment initiatives.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) Municipalities and the County should identify opportunities, where appropriate, to streamline the decisionmaking process when a project is proposed that will generate employment and tax revenues and/or other special benefits. However, streamlined decisionmaking should not disregard basic environmental and planning considerations.
- (2) Municipalities and the County should work together to prepare master plans for reuse or redevelopment of vacant or underused properties. The plans should identify the market feasibility of the proposed uses and activities and establish the framework for community support of reuse/redevelopment initiatives. Preparation of these plans can help streamline the decisionmaking process for interested developers and investors.

#### **VI.5 Policy Recommendation:**

Review the costs of doing business in Nassau County and Long Island, and identify opportunities for reducing these costs to make the economy more competitive for business activities and job growth.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County and municipal officials should form a committee to evaluate business costs and taxation issues, and prepare recommendations for improving the overall cost of doing business in Nassau County.
- (2) The County, State and local officials should continue their efforts to reduce utility costs which will benefit local businesses as well as County residents.

**VI.6 Policy Recommendation:**

Encourage tourism-related businesses, facilities and activities as a means of generating revenues for local businesses, creating job opportunities, and promoting the numerous cultural, historic and scenic resources in the County.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The Long Island Convention and Visitors Bureau's role should be enhanced as the central organization for tourism promotion, marketing and coordination in Nassau County. The Bureau should continue to work closely with local chambers and business groups, as well as cultural and arts organizations on a variety of tourism events and activities and marketing efforts.
- (2) The Long Island Convention and Visitors Bureau should continue to coordinate with tour operators, lodging establishments, and businesses to increase the amount and types of tour packages offered throughout the County.
- (3) The Long Island Railroad (LIRR) and the County should support and promote the expansion of the LIRR's tourism packages and special fares to various cultural, historic and business events and activities in the County. LI Bus and other transportation providers should offer similar special fares or tourism packages.

## VI.7 Policy Recommendation:

Support public and private efforts to maintain a strong labor force by providing quality child care and convenient transportation services for employees.

### Implementation Strategies:

- (1) Businesses, educational institutions and other major employers should be encouraged to provide access to child care services for employees. Since child care is an important issue for many employees, providing access to quality, affordable care often has a positive impact on the retention and recruitment of employees.
- (2) The County, as a major employer, should provide child care options for its employees. The County can evaluate opportunities to place child care centers in some of its buildings, or provide access to outside child care services.
- (3) Major employers and other businesses should work with Long Island Bus and Long Island Railroad to modify routes and schedules, as appropriate, to provide more accessible and convenient transportation services for employees.

*[Note: the child care issue is described further in the Community Facilities and Services chapter of this document.]*

- (4) Major employers, where feasible, should offer employees transportation options such as carpool ridematching, “guaranteed ride home” initiatives, flex-time, staggered work schedules and telecommuting, which can provide feasible alternatives for employees and help reduce peak hour roadway congestion.

*[Note: this is similar to the implementation strategy for Policy Recommendation IV.3 in the Transportation chapter.]*



## VI.8 Policy Recommendation:

Support local planning efforts for coastal areas targeted at revitalizing the waterfronts, creating public access and recreational opportunities, supporting downtown businesses, as well as providing an economic stimulus to the community and tourism activity.

### Implementation Strategies:

- (1) Coastal municipalities should work closely with the County Planning Department, New York Department of State's Division of Coastal Resources, Federal Office of Coastal Resources, local businesses and residents, as well as waterfront property owners, to develop Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs (LWRPs). The LWRPs will provide comprehensive land and water use plans which identify the community's approach to development, redevelopment, public access, and other issues related to waterfronts.

*[Note: this is similar to the implementation strategy for Policy Recommendation III.6 in the Environmental Resources chapter.]*



*A variety of tourism and water-related businesses are located in Nassau County.*

- (2) The County Planning Department and County OHIA should assist municipalities with efforts to stimulate business development and enhance their waterfronts and downtowns by targeting funding assistance to these areas, such as the County's Operation Downtown and Environmental Beautification Programs, State programs, and Community Development Block Grants.

## **VI.9 Policy Recommendation:**

Encourage businesses to locate within existing office/industrial parks, downtowns, Centers, planned developments, and shopping centers which already have available infrastructure, access, and supporting services.

### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County Department of Commerce and Industry, municipal economic development departments and other organizations involved with business recruitment and expansion initiatives should guide businesses to existing office/industrial parks, downtowns and Centers, planned development and redevelopment sites, and other areas with available infrastructure, access and supporting services.



*Many of the existing office/industrial parks and downtowns are areas where new businesses should be encouraged to locate.*

- (2) The County Planning Commission and municipal planning boards should encourage these location efforts during their development review processes.

## **B. Training and Education**

Nassau County is fortunate to have a highly educated and skilled labor force earning good incomes. There are also several widely-known institutions of higher education that continue to graduate skilled and trained students who are ready to participate in the labor force. However, the educational attainment, skills and training, and income levels are not universal for all residents.

To maximize the attraction of quality employment opportunities as well as maintain competitive wages, efforts are needed to expand the connection between the business community and educational institutions. Opportunities should be identified and utilized so that resources (e.g., equipment, materials, and technical assistance) can be provided to public schools, colleges and universities for use in delivering the education and skills which will be necessary for the future economy.

There is also a need to provide job training and assistance to people who are entering or re-entering the current job market. Some efforts are already being implemented in the County through workforce development programs and other business and educational initiatives.

**Goal: Support efforts to provide training and education which will produce skills required of the present and future labor force.**

### **VI.10 Policy Recommendation:**

Enhance the skills and job training of the local workforce so that it is capable of responding to employment opportunities.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County should create partnerships with colleges, universities, and the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) to establish coordinated, structured workforce development programs targeted at matching the skill levels of area residents with employment requirements and opportunities.
- (2) Business incubators and business assistance programs should be used to provide forums and training sessions on specific issues so that the work force can continually upgrade their skills, while staying informed about changing conditions in the labor market.
- (3) The County should continue to obtain funding through State and Federal agencies for integrated, targeted job training programs.

**VI.11 Policy Recommendation:**

Foster partnerships between schools, businesses, and government to bridge the way into the changing work environment.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County should assist with efforts to form partnerships between schools (high schools, colleges, universities and BOCES) and local businesses so that the transition into the work environment is smoother for all involved parties.
- (2) Local businesses should actively participate in the school-to-work partnerships and provide internships or apprenticeships to students in a variety of sectors of the economy.
- (3) The County, State Department of Labor and business officials should secure adequate funding for these efforts so that the partnerships and workforce development programs will continue to provide valuable training, job placement services, and coordination between schools and businesses.

**VI.12 Policy Recommendation:**

Support initiatives to provide educational, technical and training assistance which will help with the retention and expansion of local businesses.

**Implementation Strategy:**

- (1) The County Department of Commerce and Industry, State Departments of Labor and Economic Development, and other business agencies, should work closely with educational institutions to provide sufficient educational, technical and training courses, programs and support to businesses as a means of improving opportunities for business growth and expansion.

**C. Downtowns and Centers**

Over the last few decades, the increased mobility of the population and the transportation network has helped foster the development of new industrial and commercial areas, including large shopping malls, as well as increased business activity in scattered residential locations. These development activities have impacted many of the downtowns and Centers<sup>1</sup> throughout the County.

*[Note: these issues are described further in the Land Use chapter of this Comprehensive Plan.]*

Changing technologies, consumer interests, business needs, and other factors are reflected in the respective expansion and contraction of downtowns and Centers, as well as some of the strip shopping malls. Some of these areas will have to implement certain changes in order to maintain their viability and to meet consumer and business demands.

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<sup>1</sup> The Centers which have been identified for this *Comprehensive Plan* are the mixed-use areas in communities which have the factors described in the Land Use chapter. There are a number of downtowns which did not fit the criteria used for Centers but which may contain a central business district.

There are many benefits to be derived from revitalizing and strengthening the downtowns. Some of the older downtowns may need special support to strengthen their position in the economy and redefine their areas to meet current and future community needs. The chambers of commerce, business groups and community leaders in downtowns will have to evaluate their strengths, opportunities and potential competitive niche markets.



*Garden City (left) and Cedarhurst (right) are two of the downtowns in Nassau County which provide a mixture of uses and pedestrian activities within well-defined areas.*

One technique which is being implemented in some downtowns is establishment of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) — privately managed entities which provide specific services to tenants and property owners within the district. BIDs secure dedicated revenue streams which are allocated towards capital improvements and services, such as: maintenance and cleaning; security; promotion and marketing; streetscape improvements; special events; and pedestrian amenities.

A variety of BIDs have been established in communities across the nation over the last 20 years. In Nassau County, there are currently BIDs in five communities.

Overall, the downtowns and the new office and commercial areas need to attract the business activity and provide the business and personal services which are significant for the County's economy.

**Goal: Support initiatives which are targeted at strengthening and improving the County's downtowns and Centers.**

### **VI.13 Policy Recommendation:**

Reinforce downtowns and Centers by encouraging the provision of additional housing and mixed use development, pedestrian and design improvements, and other amenities which create an ambiance conducive to shopping, entertaining, working and residing in such areas.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) Municipalities should be encouraged to review their zoning codes to determine whether mixed uses are allowed in downtown zoning districts, and whether housing is permitted on floors above ground-level retail uses. Inclusion of housing and a mixture of uses in downtowns and Centers creates more day-time and night-time activity, provides a close customer base for businesses, helps to create a sense of place, provides more housing options, and tends to improve safety.
- (2) Businesses in downtowns and Centers can coordinate with cultural and community organizations, and elected officials to schedule special events, theme activities and evening entertainment which draw people into these areas and provide options for local residents.
- (3) Municipalities and the County should allocate funding for design and capital improvements which create pedestrian walkways and amenities, signage and beautification projects, improved access to downtown businesses, and transit-oriented development. Possible funding sources include the County's Operation Downtown and Environmental Beautification programs, Community Development Block Grants, and State economic development programs.

*[Note: downtown issues are also described in a number of the policy recommendations and implementation strategies in the Land Use, Transportation, and Housing chapters. In addition, downtowns are discussed in the Inventory and Analysis, Issues and Opportunities, and Public Opinion Survey Analysis documents which were prepared for this County Comprehensive Plan.]*



*The downtown improvement project in Bellmore, partially funded through the County's Operation Downtown program, installed new trees, brick pavers in the walkways, and benches.*

## **VI.14 Policy Recommendation:**

Strengthen the County's downtowns and Centers by identifying market potentials and strategies, providing financial and technical assistance, supporting special events, and coordinating marketing efforts.

### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) Business and municipal leaders should consider establishing Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in their community to target the strengths of their downtowns or Centers, and to provide specific services.
- (2) Municipalities and local businesses in downtowns and Centers should work together to assess market strengths, opportunities, and appropriate niches for specialized development of market segments. Each community should carefully evaluate existing conditions, unmet market demands for consumers and tenants, and determine whether their downtown has existing or potential niche markets.

*In Nassau County, there are currently BIDs in the communities of Cedarhurst, Glen Cove, Great Neck Plaza, Port Washington and Westbury.*



- (3) Municipalities and businesses should prepare a downtown plan for their community, if one does not exist, to address business, land use, transportation, pedestrian, design, and other issues as well as identifying recommendations aimed at revitalization and sustainability of the downtown areas.
- (4) Local businesses and municipal officials should work with the County Department of Commerce and Industry to inventory available buildings, floor space, sites, and potential redevelopment areas in downtowns and Centers, as well as suitable uses. The inventory should be made available to prospective businesses and investors.



*Commercial businesses and restaurants in the "Nautical Mile" area of Freeport draw on their connection to the Atlantic Ocean.*

## **VI.15 Policy Recommendation:**

Support the role of the Nassau Hub as the County's regional center by helping to coordinate new development activities, creating better transportation linkages and pedestrian improvements, as well as promoting business and cultural events.

### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County, Town and Village of Hempstead, State and Federal transportation agencies, business representatives and residents should coordinate efforts to implement actions which will reduce traffic congestion, increase transportation circulation and improve pedestrian movement and access within and around the Hub area.

- (2) The County, municipal officials and private investors should consider establishing a Business Improvement District or partnership for the Hub to manage the various development, design, pedestrian and transportation improvements. The BID or partnership would also provide a centralized organization to advocate for pedestrian and transportation circulation improvements, oversee development initiatives and promote activities in the Hub area.
- (3) The County, local communities, developers and businesses should use a variety of improvement and funding programs to create better pedestrian connections, linkages between land uses (e.g., office buildings, commercial areas, colleges, residential areas), and activities occurring at different times of the day and evening. Improvements within the Hub should be designed to create a better pedestrian environment, the most appropriate reuse of parcels and infill development, and landscaping which better defines various areas and helps to create a more human scale and visual appeal.
- (4) The County, municipalities and developers should identify uses and activities which can provide in-fill or reuse of parcels in the Hub and which are consistent with efforts to strengthen existing downtowns of adjacent communities.

## VII. CULTURE AND RECREATION

The quality of life for local residents and visitors is enhanced by the museums, cultural programs, historic sites and organizations, art galleries, theaters and nightclubs, parks, preserves, and recreational facilities which can be found throughout Nassau County.

A variety of cultural events, programs and facilities are located in Nassau County. These activities, which are provided by different organizations, are intended to enhance the cultural experience of residents and tourists in an educational and/or entertaining manner.

Nassau County oversees a number of the cultural events and facilities, along with some of the parks and recreational facilities, primarily through the County Office of Cultural Development and the County Department of Recreation and Parks. In addition, many of the cultural events, programs and facilities are managed by various cultural and arts agencies, non-profit organizations and community groups.

The County museums offer a variety of educational programs and exhibits, such as demonstrations of 19th Century life at the Old Bethpage Village Restoration, and archaeology/ecology programs at the preserves.



*The Nassau County Museum of Art and the African American Museum are two of the many cultural facilities which are open to the public.*

In terms of historic resources, there are 150 individual buildings and sites listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places, which are located in over 40 communities in Nassau County. Two sites are also designated as “National Historic Landmarks.”

There are also numerous other buildings and sites, both public and private, which have historic significance to the local community and/or evolution of Long Island. In addition, many of the communities in Nassau County monitor their historic buildings and sites through landmark, historic preservation or architectural review ordinances and local commissions (as described in Section B. Historic Resources of this chapter).

The rich history and culture of Nassau County are preserved through these resources so that current and future generations can be educated about important events.

Nassau County has a variety of parks and recreational facilities, which are managed by public and private groups at the local, County, State and Federal levels. There are parks, beaches, pools, marinas, golf courses, ballfields, playgrounds, bicycle and walking trails, and preserves. These resources, located in various communities throughout the County, provide passive and active recreational activities as well as environmental education opportunities.



*The stone clock tower in Roslyn is one of the historic landmarks in Nassau County.*

## **A. Cultural Attractions**

There is a wide array of cultural attractions, programs and events in Nassau County, which are managed by public, private and non-profit organizations. These resources also have potential to create local jobs, attract visitors and generate revenues for the economy. For this County *Comprehensive Plan*, culture has been defined as the museums; arts events, programs and facilities; entertainment events and facilities; and community activities.

The Nassau County Office of Cultural Development markets and promotes the cultural activities in the County, as well as organizes special events. The Office of Cultural Development acts as a liaison for the local artists, cultural organizations and residents.

Another County office which is involved with cultural activities is the Museum Division of the Nassau County Department of Recreation and Parks. This Department manages the:

- African American Museum, Village of Hempstead
- Cedarmere, Village of Roslyn Harbor
- Cradle of Aviation Museum, Uniondale/Town of Hempstead
- Garvies Point Museum and Preserve, City of Glen Cove
- Muttontown Preserve, East Norwich
- Old Bethpage Village Restoration, Old Bethpage
- Saddle Rock Grist Mill, Village of Saddle Rock
- Sands Point Preserve, Sands Point
- Tackapausha Museum and Preserve, Seaford
- Tiffany Creek Preserve, Oyster Bay
- Welwyn Preserve, City of Glen Cove

Many of the museums are managed by groups other than Nassau County. According to the Long Island Museum Association, there are 46 museums in Nassau County which showcase a variety of collections, including: the Fine Arts Museum of Long Island, the Police Museum, and the Collectors Car Museum. There are also a variety of cultural venues, such as the famous Westbury Music Fair, Long Island Philharmonic concerts, Theater at Jones Beach State Park, Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum (County owned but operated by a private management group), and the Tilles Center at C.W. Post University, which are managed by private and non-profit organizations.

The County's cultural resources will be expanded with development of the new Museum Row complex which is planned for a section of the former Mitchel Field property (located in the unincorporated community of Uniondale in the Town of Hempstead). This museum complex is intended to focus on the County's connection to the aerospace industry through a wide array of exhibit spaces, technology and cultural components — including the Cradle of Aviation, Long Island Museum of Science and Technology, Nassau County Firefighters Museum and Education Center, and the Long Island Childrens Museum (being relocated from its site in Garden City).



*Changes are taking place at the Museum Row complex, including construction of the Cradle of Aviation Museum.*

The County is also involved in several other projects, such as the recently completed Aquatic Center and the new Women's Sports Museum in Eisenhower Park.

Nassau County is located in close proximity to the numerous cultural and entertainment events and facilities in New York City. Some of the cultural organizations, such as the New York Philharmonic, offer summer programs in Nassau County. However, there is potential for new programs, joint ventures, and satellite facilities to be established between organizations based in New York City and resources or facilities which are available in Nassau County.

**Goal: Support and enhance the cultural facilities, services, programs and events in the County to improve the quality of life and encourage tourism.**

### **VII.1 Policy Recommendation:**

Continue efforts to promote and support various cultural programs, services, and events in the County.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The chambers of commerce, business groups, cultural and arts organizations, economic development agencies and tourism groups should explore all opportunities to coordinate efforts and to promote the various cultural programs, events and activities in Nassau County.

- (2) The County Office of Cultural Development, Office of Minority Affairs and other County agencies should work with the cultural, arts and business organizations on promotion and marketing efforts by incorporating information about the cultural and entertainment programs, events, activities and schedules on the County's Homepage and other relevant Internet web sites.
- (3) The County, municipalities, chambers of commerce and cultural organizations should establish a process for distributing and posting schedules and information about cultural and recreational events, programs and activities in places such as: schools, post offices, libraries, government buildings, community centers, local businesses, and kiosks in downtown areas.
- (4) The Long Island Convention and Visitors Bureau and other business groups should coordinate with tour operators, lodging establishments, and businesses to increase the types and amount of tour packages offered throughout the County. Tour packages, which bring in revenues and secondary benefits to local businesses and the County, could be expanded to incorporate more of the cultural, arts and entertainment events, as well as the historic and scenic resources.

## **VII.2 Policy Recommendation:**

Support new businesses, facilities, programs and events which accommodate the needs and cultural interests of the County's residents and tourists.

### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County, municipalities and cultural and arts organizations should explore opportunities to establish "cultural community centers" which focus on the cultural traditions of the County's minority and ethnic groups. The cultural community centers could provide educational activities, art and programs regarding the various ethnic traditions and cultures.
- (2) The County, municipalities, universities and colleges, cultural groups and arts organizations should expand and/or create new locations where exhibits and special displays of art, historic and archaeological artifacts and information about the County's ethnic groups would be accessible to the public. There may also be appropriate places where museums can

be established to permanently display and educate the public on the history and traditions of Native Americans and other groups, similar to the African American Museum (which is managed by the Division of Museum Services of the County Recreation and Parks Department).

- (3) The County Office of Cultural Development should continue to promote the cultural diversity of Nassau County by programming activities such as the International Heritage Festival.
- (4) The New York Department of State's Division of Coastal Resources, local business groups and chambers should provide outreach to prospective developers and investors, entrepreneurs, tour operators, and the County and State economic development agencies regarding opportunities for tourism- and water-related business development, and waterfront redevelopment projects, which are compatible with protecting the critical natural resources along the coastlines.
- (5) The chambers of commerce, business groups, and cultural and arts organizations should consider options to develop new services and facilities, or support efforts to attract new businesses, which accommodate the changing needs and interests of County residents.



*The marinas in Nassau County, such as this one in the City of Glen Cove, offer appealing recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.*



**VII.3 Policy Recommendation:**

Enhance the opportunities for cultural programs and facilities that build on the County's close proximity to the cultural and entertainment industries in New York City.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The Nassau Council of Chambers of Commerce, County Office of Cultural Affairs, Long Island and State cultural organizations, and arts groups should sponsor a forum focusing on the strengths and opportunities available to local businesses, arts and entertainment facilities, and cultural organizations which build on, rather than compete with, New York City-based cultural programs and events.
- (2) The results and/or recommendations from this forum should be widely distributed and promoted so that initiatives can be implemented by interested groups and individuals.

**VII.4 Policy Recommendation:**

Identify opportunities for cultural organizations based in New York City to establish satellite facilities or programs in Nassau County.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County's business and cultural groups should contact various cultural organizations based in New York City and actively promote the opportunities to establish musical and theater programs, entertainment events, and satellite branches of museums in Nassau County.
- (2) The County, municipalities, business and cultural groups should also explore opportunities to establish off-season training, performance and residential accommodations for cultural groups and/or sports clubs.

**VII.5 Policy Recommendation:**

Actively participate in, and support initiatives regarding, the reuse and development of cultural facilities in the Nassau Hub, and other parts of the County.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County, Town and Village of Hempstead, and other organizations should continue to support initiatives which will enhance the cultural and recreational facilities available for residents and visitors, such as the Museum Row complex, Women’s Sports Hall of Fame, Aquatic Center and redevelopment of the Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum.
- (2) The County and municipalities should work closely with the private developers and property owners in the Hub area, as well as downtowns and Centers, to incorporate some of the concepts recommended in this *Comprehensive Plan* — child care services; integrated, mixed use development; housing on secondary floors of commercial buildings; community services; outdoor public spaces; and quality landscaping, signage and design features.
- (3) The County and the Town and Village of Hempstead should ensure that any new cultural and recreational facilities, other land uses, and transportation service be connected to the existing land uses and transit services in the Hub area.

**VII.6 Policy Recommendation:**

Inform local residents and visitors about the County’s recreational programs, facilities, and seasonal events.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County’s Department of Recreation and Parks, and Office of Cultural Affairs should continue to provide information about its programs, facilities and services to local residents and visitors. These agencies should continue to disseminate, and possibly expand distribution of, the Recreation and Parks “Department Guide,” Cultural Affairs “Showcase Magazine,” “Guide to Arts and Entertainment” and other publications to municipalities, schools (high schools, colleges and

universities), libraries, chambers of commerce, arts groups and cultural organizations.

- (2) The County Office of Cultural Development and County Department of Recreation and Parks should post, and continually update, information and schedules for the cultural and entertainment programs, events and activities onto the County's Homepage to inform residents about these events.
- (3) The County Department of Recreation and Parks should continue to coordinate with the National Parks Service, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and municipal parks departments to share information, schedules, and publications regarding the variety of programs, activities and events offered at the parks, preserves, recreational facilities and museums throughout Nassau County.
- (4) The County Department of Recreation and Parks and the Office of Cultural Development should explore opportunities to provide additional cultural and environmental educational programs for residents which will enhance their enjoyment and appreciation of the County's resources.

## **B. Historic Resources**

Nassau County is fortunate to have a large number of properties which have retained some or all of their historic, architectural and archaeological features. The properties consist of sites and buildings which have connection to historic events, activities, important people, and/or significant physical characteristics and design features.



*Historic resources, such as the George Washington Manor in the Village of Roslyn, identify important events and buildings in a community.*

Many of the communities in the County have adopted landmark, historic preservation or architectural review ordinances in an effort to oversee the protection and use of existing historic structures as well as the compatibility

of new development with the historic resources. The Towns of Hempstead, North Hempstead and Oyster Bay, City of Glen Cove, and Villages of East Williston, Freeport, Roslyn, Sands Point, Thomaston, Westbury and Williston Park have landmarks/historic preservation laws which are intended to focus on the designation and preservation of buildings, structures and sites with special historic and architectural significance. These communities have also established commissions or boards with specific powers and duties.

For example, the Landmarks Preservation Commission in the Town of Hempstead, which was established in 1983, has been instrumental in designating 23 sites as landmarks.

In addition, the City of Long Beach and 16 villages have architectural review ordinances which have similar purposes as the landmarks/historic preservation laws but do not address designation of properties as local landmarks. Most of these communities have active architectural review boards which provide input regarding historic resources in the land use planning and development processes.

Another method for recognizing and protecting the integrity and significance of the historic resources is to nominate the sites and buildings for designation to the State and National Registers of Historic Places. At the state level, the process is administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYSOPRHP), while the National Park Service manages the National Register process.

The NYSOPRHP inventory indicates that there are currently 150 individual buildings and sites in Nassau County listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The listing consists of private and public designated buildings in over 40 communities. Several of the public buildings on the Registers are: the Old Nassau Courthouse in Mineola; the Coe Hall/Planting Fields in Oyster Bay; and the U.S. Post Offices in Freeport, Garden City, Glen Cove, Great Neck, Hempstead, Long Beach, Mineola, Oyster Bay, and Rockville Centre.

In addition to the individual properties, there are several historic districts in Nassau County which are listed on the State and National Registers. The historic districts are concentrations of historic properties united historically and aesthetically, and include the: Main Street Historic District in Roslyn; Village Historic District in Roslyn; East Williston Village Historic District in East Williston; Valley Road Historic District in Manhasset; and the Cedarmere-Clayton Estates Historic District in Roslyn Harbor.



*Many of the historic buildings have attractive architectural details on the facades.*

The County is also fortunate to have two sites classified as National Historic Landmarks: the John Philip Sousa House in Sands Point and the Fort Massapequa Archaeological Site in Oyster Bay. Designation as National Historic Landmarks by the National Parks Service is a rare occurrence and involves a different process than the National and State Register designations.

Recently, a New York State Heritage Trail designation was proposed for a 50 mile section of Route 25A from Great Neck in Nassau County to Port Jefferson in Suffolk County — in recognition of the significant historical events and sites along this roadway. The final designation as a New York State Heritage Trail will be accompanied by funding to install appropriate signage along the trail corridor<sup>1</sup>.

There are many other sites and buildings in the County which may not be listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places, but still hold historic significance to the local community, Nassau County and the Long Island region.

Currently, there is no comprehensive database of historic resources in Nassau County — especially locally designated landmarks, buildings, and archaeological sites which are not on the State and National Registers. A comprehensive database could inventory and map the various resources by

<sup>1</sup> Officials are also exploring opportunities for Federal historic designation of the Heritage Trail.

each community. The information would be useful for residents, property owners, historical societies and decisionmakers.

The local historical societies in Nassau County offer educational programs, resources and exhibits which are valuable in preserving local and County history. The Long Island Studies Institute<sup>2</sup> is another organization which actively maintains data, photographs, publications and information on the County's historic events.

**Goal: Support the preservation of the County's historic resources as key attributes to the quality of life and historic evolution of the region.**

## **VII.7 Policy Recommendation:**

Protect the integrity of historic buildings and sites in the County, and preserve them for current and future generations.

### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) Local historical societies, the Long Island Studies Institute, Museum Division of the County Recreation and Parks Department, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and other educational groups should sponsor workshops and outreach efforts to inform residents, property owners and elected officials about the significant historic, architectural and archaeological resources in the County. The outreach efforts should also provide information about maintenance of historic properties and other technical assistance that would be helpful to residents and businesses.
- (2) The County and municipalities should apply for funding through the State's historic preservation grant programs of the Environmental Protection Fund and Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act, as well as other funding sources, for projects which will preserve, rehabilitate, and/or protect historic properties, and assist with revitalization of downtown business districts.

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<sup>2</sup> The Long Island Studies Institute is a cooperative endeavor of Hofstra University and Nassau County.

- (3) The County, State and municipal historic preservation organizations as well as local Landmarks Commissions should work with local officials and property owners to evaluate opportunities to have Historic Districts designated in communities which have concentrations of historic properties united historically or aesthetically.
- (4) The County and municipalities should consider the historic attributes and significance of buildings and properties in their review of proposed development activities and/or decisionmaking which would affect historic properties.

## **VII.8 Policy Recommendation:**

Prepare a comprehensive inventory and database of historic resources, by municipality, which can be used as a reference tool for planning and development efforts.

### **Implementation Strategies:**

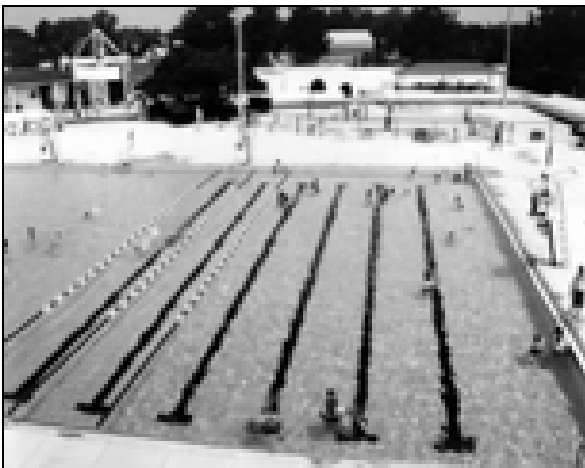
- (1) The County Planning Department and the Museum Division of the Recreation and Parks Department should work with local landmarks commissions, historical societies and the Long Island Studies Institute to inventory the historic buildings and properties in the County. The inventory should consist of a centralized database, possibly included in the County's Geographic Information System, with detailed information, photographs and mapping of the resources.
- (2) The County should make copies of the historic resource inventory and map available to each of the towns, villages and cities. The information should then be made available to the local landmarks commissions, historical societies, municipalities, developers, residents and other interested groups.
- (3) Local historical societies should use the database to assist property owners with the process of applying for designation to the State and National Registers of Historic Places, as well as other available preservation techniques.

- (4) Residents, local Landmarks Commissions and Architectural Review Boards, civic groups, business organizations, developers, investors and elected officials should use the historic inventory and maps to evaluate the historic, architectural and/or archaeological significance of buildings and sites in their communities. The information can then support initiatives to restore, protect and revitalize these resources as valuable assets to the community.

### C. Parks, Recreation and Preserves

A variety of parks and recreational options are available in Nassau County, ranging from active league sports to passive nature trails and preserves. The parks and recreational areas are owned and managed by a multitude of public sector and private organizations at the local, county, state and federal levels.

At the County level, the parks and recreational facilities are managed by the Nassau County Department of Recreation and Parks. The County facilities consist of parks, beaches, playgrounds, recreational equipment and golf courses, preserves and open space. The Department of Recreation and Parks carries out specific duties necessary to maintain and administer the large inventory of parks, recreational facilities, museums and preserves.



*The parks have various recreational facilities for public enjoyment, such as pools and play equipment.*

- *Parks and Recreation*



The County parks, varying in size and types of permitted activities, are located in a number of communities. The largest one is Eisenhower Park with 930 acres, while the smallest is Centennial Park which contains only 2 acres. Diverse activities are permitted at the various park facilities, providing many choices for local residents. The location, size and recreational activities permitted at the various County parks are outlined in Table VII-1.

A recent feature for Nassau County is the “Adopt-A-Park” program, which is managed by the County Department of Recreation and Parks. The program matches volunteers and community groups with specific parks and preserves in an effort to keep the facilities clean and maintained.



*Eisenhower Park contains a variety of ballfields, golf courses, picnic areas and trails.*

In addition to the County parks and preserves, there are seven state parks and one federal park: Bethpage State Park; Freeport Boat Launching; Hempstead Lake State Park; Jones Beach State Park; Massapequa State Park; Planting Field Arboretum; Valley Stream State Park; and Sagamore Hill National Historic Site.

There are also numerous town, village and city parks and recreational sites located in Nassau County (identified as Open Space and Recreation on the Existing Land Use Map).



**Table VII-1: Nassau County Parks and Preserves**

<b>Parks</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Activities</b>
Battle Row Campground	Claremont Rd., Old Bethpage	44.1	C
Bay Park	First Ave., East Rockaway	96	BF, BB, BF, BL, F, G, DP, PG, P, RS, S, T
Cantiague Park	West John St., Hicksville	115.9	BB, B, BF, CG, G, DP, MG, IS, PG, P, SB, T
Cedar Creek Park	Off Merrick Rd., Seaford	259	AD, BB, B, BF, CG, HW, P, RS, S, T
Centennial Park	Centennial Ave. and Babylon Turnpike, Roosevelt	2	BB, PG, CG, T
Christopher Morley Park	Searington Rd., Roslyn - North Hills	98.4 (incl. preserve)	BB, C, CG, G, DP, HW, IS, PG, P, S, SB, T
Cow Meadow Park	South Main St., Freeport	150 (incl. preserve)	BB, BF, CG, F, HW, P, T
Eisenhower Park	Hempstead Turn., East Meadow	930	A, BB, B, BF, CG, F, G, DP, MG, HW, P, PG, S
Grant Park	Broadway and Sheridan Ave., Hewlett	34.8	BB, CG, F, IS, PG, P, RS, S
Hempstead Harbor Beach	West Shore Rd., Port Washington	290	AD, BB, CG, F, PG, P, SB
Inwood Park	Bayview Avenue, Inwood	16.1	BB, BL, CG, F, P, RS
Mitchell Athletic Complex	Charles Lindberg Blvd., Uniondale	67	BF, TF
Nassau Beach Park	Lido Blvd., Lido	121.3	BB, C, CG, F, P, SB
North Woodmere Park	Branch Blvd. and Hungry Harbor Rd., North Woodmere	150	BB, B, BF, CG, F, G, DP, PG, P, S, SB
Roosevelt Park	Washington Ave., Roosevelt	27	BB, B, CG, F, PG, P
Wantagh Park	South of Merrick Rd. off Wantagh Parkway, Wantagh	111.3	BF, B, BL, CG, F, PG, P, SB
Whitney Pond Park	Northern Blvd. and Community Drive, Manhasset	24	BB, CG, F, PG, P, SB

AD — Aerodrome  
A — Amphitheater/Perf. Arts  
BF — Ballfields  
BB — Basketball Courts  
S/B — Swimming/Beaches  
B — Bicycle Paths  
BL — Boat Launch

C — Camping  
CG — Court Games  
F — Fishing  
G — Golf Courses  
DP — Driving Range/Practice  
MG — Miniature Golf  
HW — Hiking/Walking

IS — Ice Skating  
P — Picnic Areas  
PG — Playgrounds  
RS — Roller Skating  
S — Sledding/Skiing  
T — Tennis  
TF — Track and Field

<b>Preserves</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Features</b>
Bailey Arboretum	Bayville Rd & Feeks Ln, Lattingtown	42	Estate house; nature center
Brookside Preserve	Brookside Ave., Freeport	22	Bird sanctuary; nature trails; licensed to South Shore Audubon Society
Cedarmere	Bryant Avenue, Roslyn Harbor	7	Estate house; nature trails
Christopher Morley Preserve	Searingtown Rd., Roslyn - North Hills	30	Nature trails; preserve
Cow Meadow Preserve	South Main St., Freeport	150 (includes park)	Wildlife and wetlands preserve
Garvies Point Preserve	Barry Drive, Glen Cove	62.3	Museum; nature tails
Manetto Hills Preserve	Plainview Rd., Plainview	145	Nature preserve; permit only
Muttontown Preserve	Muttowntown Lane, East Norwich	549.9	Estate house; woods; ponds; walking and horseback trails
Sands Point Preserve	95 Middleneck Rd., Sands Point	216 (includes park)	Estate house; nature preserve
Stillwell Park and Preserve	South Woods Rd., Woodbury	287	Nature preserve; walking, hiking and horseback trails
Tackapausha Preserve	Washington Ave., Seaford	77.4	Museum; wildlife sanctuary; trails
Tiffany Creek Preserve	Sandy Hill Rd., Oyster Bay	197	Wetlands sanctuary; nature trails
Welwyn Preserve	Crescent Beach Rd., Glen Cove	204.3	Estate house; nature sanctuary; trails

<b>Passive Parks and Preserves*</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Features</b>
Baxter Pond Park	Central Ave. and Shore Road., Port Washington	5.4 (3.6 ac. water)	Fishing; Ice Skating; Walking; Benches
Cammans Pond Park	Lindermere Blvd., Merrick	7.8 (5.2 ac. water)	Wildlife Sanctuary; Fishing
Elder Fields	200 Port Washington Blvd., Manhasset	4.0	Nature Preserve
Manhasset Valley Park	East Shore Rd. and Northern Blvd., Manhasset	26.6 (8.8 ac. water)	Playground; Ballfields; Picnic Benches
Massapequa Preserve*	Merrick Rd., Massapequa	423 (84 ac. water)	Bicycle Path; Walking; Hiking; Fishing
Merrick Preserve	Sunrise Highway and Merrick Rd.	24.5 (4 ac. water)	Nature Walks; Special Programs for Groups
Milburn Creek Park	Merrick Rd/Atlantic Ave., Baldwin	24.3	Wildlife Sanctuary; Boat Ramp

<b>Passive Parks and Preserves (cont.)*</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Features</b>
Mill Neck Creek Park and Preserve	Bayville Ave., Bayville	56.9 (incl. wetlands)	Saltwater Wetlands; Preserve
Plandome Park	W/S of the Railroad Tracks, Plandome Heights	4.5 (1 ac. water)	Nature Center; Paths; Benches
Silver Point Park	Atlantic Beach	119.6	(Leased to Sun & Surf Beach Club)
Stannard's Brook Park	Charlton Ave. and Charles St., Port Washington	3.0 (1 ac. water)	Nature Paths; Benches
Tanglewood Park and Preserve	One Tanglewood Road, Lynbrook/ Lakeview	11.4 (1 ac. water)	Permit Only For Organized Groups
William Cullen Bryant Preserve	One Museum Drive, Roslyn Harbor	141 (1 ac. water)	Nassau County Museum of Art (Privately Managed); Nature Preserve

Source: Nassau County Department of Recreation and Parks. Prepared by Frederick P. Clark Associates, Inc.

**\*Notes:**

1. The passive parks and preserves are unmanned by County Parks staff but are open to the public.
2. Additional information about these parks and preserves can be obtained from the Nassau County Department of Recreation and Parks. Information about Town, City or Village parks and facilities can be obtained from local municipalities.
3. The Nassau-Suffolk Greenbelt Trail traverses a 20 mile corridor from Massapequa (partially located in the Massapequa Preserve and Stillwell Preserve) to the Long Island Sound in Cold Spring Harbor. The Nassau-Suffolk Greenbelt Trail is the County's only "National Recreation Trail;" protected by the United States Department of the Interior as part of the National Trails System.

- *Preserves*

Nassau County contains a variety of nature preserves and open space areas. People are allowed to participate in passive recreational activities and educational programs while enjoying the natural resources at the preserves.

The preserves which are owned and managed by the County consist of: Bailey Arboretum, Brookside Preserve, Cedarmere, Christopher Morley Preserve, Cow Meadow Park and Preserve, Garvies Point Preserve, Manetto Hills Preserve, Muttontown Preserve, Sands Point Preserve, Stillwell Park and Preserve, Tackapausha Preserve, Tiffany Creek Preserve, and Welwyn Preserve. There are also 13 “passive parks and preserves” which are owned by the County and are available for public use, but which are unmanned by parks staff.

A significant asset for County residents and visitors is the Nassau-Suffolk Greenbelt Trail, partially located in the Massapequa Preserve and the Stillwell Park and Preserve. The Long Island Greenbelt Trail Conference<sup>3</sup> maintains the Nassau-Suffolk Greenbelt Trail as a unique, environmentally diverse and continuous trail — traversing 20 miles from Massapequa in the southern part of the County to the Long Island Sound in Cold Spring Harbor. This is the County’s only trail to be awarded “National Recreation Trail” status by the United States Department of the Interior as part of the National Trail System.

### **Parks Planning**

The Parks Systems Planning Framework is a new approach to obtaining the appropriate types and amounts of parks, recreational facilities, trails and open spaces that residents and users want in their community and county. The Systems Planning Framework was developed by the National Recreation and Parks Association and the American Academy for Park and Recreation

Administration (and task force) as a new approach to the well-known and utilized standards for recreation, park and open space planning<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> The Long Island Greenbelt Trail Conference is a 3,000 member non-profit organization which maintains hiking trails and open space in Nassau and Suffolk Counties, including: the Long Island Greenbelt, Nassau-Suffolk Greenbelt, Pine Barrens Trail, Paumanok Path, and Seashore Trail.

<sup>4</sup> The National Recreation and Parks Association has replaced their Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines with this new Systems Planning Framework which allows communities to establish their own level of service guidelines.

The systems planning approach focuses on creating a comprehensive and inter-connected system of parks, recreational facilities, open spaces, trails (pedestrian, bicycle and horseback) and pathways that: responds to locally-based needs, values and conditions; citizen input; provides an appealing and harmonious environment; and protects the integrity of the surrounding natural resources.<sup>5</sup>



*A tranquil setting in one of the parks offers an ideal location for reading and relaxing.*

**Goal:** Provide sufficient parks, preserves, and recreational facilities to serve the current residents and growing segments of the County's population.

## VII.9 Policy Recommendation:

Develop a "Systems Planning Framework" for the County parks and recreational facilities which inventories and maps existing resources, identifies the level of service needed for different uses, and incorporates community participation.

### Implementation Strategies:

- (1) The County Recreation and Parks Department and municipal parks departments should consider adopting the systems planning framework as a new approach to determining levels of services to provide, and the

<sup>5</sup> James D. Mertes, Ph.D., CLP and James R. Hall, CLP, *Park, Recreation Open Space and Greenway Guidelines*, National Recreation and Park Association, 1996, p.16

appropriate number and types of parks, recreational facilities and open space resources needed on a municipal and County-wide bases.

- (2) The County Recreation and Parks Department and municipal parks departments should, with extensive community input and creative planning, identify opportunities to share services, and to provide new or expanded services and parks to meet the County's changing demographics and needs of park and recreational users.
- (3) The County Recreation and Parks Department should consider, where appropriate, allowing new uses at the preserves and parks, such as permitting canoeing and kayaking on the lakes and ponds, and pedestrian and/or horseback trails.

#### **VII.10 Policy Recommendation:**

Maintain and enhance the parks, preserves, and recreational facilities in the County for the benefit of all residents, with special consideration to underserved communities, and to support tourism.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County Recreation and Parks Department should give priority to parks projects which will enhance or expand the services and facilities at overcrowded parks and communities which may be underserved. Outreach efforts should be made to these communities to receive input from residents regarding needed improvements or services.
- (2) The County Recreation and Parks Department should consider expanding its "Adopt-A-Park" program to include more volunteers, civic groups and businesses to supplement the Department's maintenance capabilities for the parks, preserves and trails. Municipalities should consider implementing similar adopt-a-park programs for their public parks and recreational facilities.
- (3) The County and municipalities should explore options, in addition to the adopt-a-park program, where businesses and residents can become more involved with the maintenance and services offered at the parks, recreational facilities and preserves, such as: volunteering for a day to assist parks staff with specific improvement projects; or corporate partnerships.



- (4) Communities should identify opportunities to create small “pocket” parks and greenspaces in downtowns and Centers as a means of maintaining or expanding the public open space and park areas. Funding for these efforts should be applied for through the State’s Environmental Protection Fund, Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act, the County’s Environmental Beautification Program, the Trust for Public Land’s “Green Cities Initiative,” private foundations and other sources, as well as using volunteer labor.
- (5) The County and municipalities should explore opportunities to establish partnerships with the colleges, universities and other schools, as well as land trusts to expand public access to the recreational facilities, parks and open space areas.

### **VII.11 Policy Recommendation:**

Prepare an inventory of the bicycle and pedestrian trails, horseback trails, routes and paths in the County and identify opportunities to establish linkages and greenways.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County, with input from local bicycle clubs, hiking and walking groups, equestrian clubs and municipalities, should initiate a detailed study of bicycle and pedestrian issues in Nassau County. The study should result in a Bicycle, Pedestrian and Horseback Trail Plan which evaluates and maps: existing facilities, pedestrian, hiking and bicycle trails, horseback trails, and nature trails in preserves and parks; planned initiatives at the municipal and State levels; roadways where recognized standards for bicycle route design, safety and site distance can be achieved; as well as proposed trails and routes in the *Bicycle/Pedestrian Element of the NYMTC Regional Transportation Plan*. This effort should include citizen involvement and surveys of bicyclists, walkers, sports enthusiasts, and other potential trail users.

*[Note: this is similar to the implementation strategy for Policy Recommendation IV.13 in the Transportation chapter.]*

- (2) The County’s new Bicycle, Pedestrian and Horseback Trail Plan should also identify and map the existing pedestrian and hiking trails, horseback

trails, paths and bicycle routes; public parks, preserves, and recreational facilities. The Plan should include maps of areas where future greenway and trail connections could be made throughout Nassau County.

- (3) Municipalities, the County and State should evaluate opportunities to provide trails or walkways within public parks, recreational sites and other public properties.
- (4) The County should coordinate with municipal efforts to establish and maintain bicycle/pedestrian trails or routes so that State and Federal funding can be obtained and administered through the County's capital program.
- (5) The County, municipalities and residents should support efforts of the Long Island Greenbelt Trail Conference to maintain the Nassau-Suffolk Greenbelt Trail as a unique, environmentally diverse and forested trail corridor. Efforts should also be focused on preserving the 20 mile trail from being fragmented or drastically altered.

#### **VII.12 Policy Recommendation:**

Encourage the provision of improved public access to beaches and shorelines, where possible and appropriate, by establishing trails, scenic lookouts, pedestrian and bicycle connections, and parking areas.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County's new Bicycle, Pedestrian and Horseback Trail Plan, as described in the previous Policy Recommendation, should identify and map the existing and potential pedestrian trails, horseback trails, paths and bicycle routes which provide access to the waterfronts and beaches, downtowns, and cultural facilities. The County, State and municipalities should then secure funding through Federal and State programs to create new trails and public access, as appropriate.
- (2) The County, State and municipal transportation departments, with input from local residents, should evaluate opportunities to create "scenic lookouts" along some of the roadways in Nassau County. The scenic lookouts would provide locations where tourists and residents can enjoy views of the Long Island Sound, Atlantic Ocean, waterfronts, and other significant attractions. The scenic lookouts should then be incorporated

into the appropriate transportation planning and capital programming efforts.

### **VII.13 Policy Recommendation:**

Identify opportunities to provide structured recreational activities and programs for young residents and senior citizens throughout the County.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County's Youth Board and the Human Services Planning Committee, municipal youth boards, community groups and other



*Boardwalks along the south shore provide scenic views of the Atlantic Ocean and beaches.*

service providers should coordinate their efforts and explore all opportunities to plan, secure funding, and initiate structured programs for young residents in the County.

- (2) The public schools and recreational facilities, County and municipal parks, trails (bicycle, pedestrian and horseback), and governmental buildings should be utilized more frequently for structured youth programs, sports leagues and other activities.

*[Note: this issue is also described in the implementation strategies for Policy Recommendation VIII.2 in the Community Facilities and Services chapter.]*

- (3) The County's Youth Board and the Human Services Planning Committee should sponsor a conference or workshop to address common issues related to youth programs. The conference or workshop should include representatives of the youth and social service providers, school officials, funding agencies, parks and recreation departments and other people involved with youth activities.
- (4) The County, State and municipal agencies and organizations that provide services to senior citizens should coordinate efforts with the parks and recreation departments to develop structured programs and activities, specifically targeted to the needs and interests of senior citizens, at the various parks, preserves and community facilities.

#### **VII.14 Policy Recommendation:**

Encourage developers to incorporate permanent open space as an integral part of development projects, and where possible, provide pedestrian and trail connections to adjacent areas.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) Municipalities should also work with developers to set-aside recreational easements, where appropriate, in areas that can be connected to existing public trails, parks, waterfronts and downtowns.
- (2) The County and other decisionmakers should work with prospective developers interested in redeveloping vacant commercial and industrial property to incorporate open space areas and trails or paths into their development plans.

## VIII. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The facilities which serve some of the most basic and important needs of residents are often referred to as “community facilities.” They include schools, libraries, hospitals and health care facilities, child care centers, and social service facilities. Although the types and number of facilities vary, all of the municipalities in Nassau County have community facilities which provide valuable services to the local residents.



*Schools and libraries are considered important facilities and services.*

The educational facilities in Nassau County are managed by a variety of public and private organizations. Overall, the educational services offered are excellent, starting with the pre-school level and continuing up to the post-graduate programs.

There are 56 public school districts in the County, ranging in size and enrollment. The public school districts operate pre-school, elementary, junior high and senior high schools. The public schools are managed primarily by the local School Boards and the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) of Nassau County. In 1996, BOCES served approximately 184,000 pupils in the 56 school districts.

In addition to the public schools, there is an array of 30 non-public high schools operating in the County. The non-public high schools, located in a number of municipalities, provide education in the State Regents program as well as special and technical programs. The high schools are complemented by 106 non-public elementary, junior high and special schools.

While the resources vary from one school district to another, there are usually common goals — to ensure that school children receive the best quality education possible, that students learn in a safe environment, and receive the necessary tools to succeed in the highly competitive future workforce. However, as technology evolves and the economy changes, new skills and training will be required for the future workforce. While local businesses have adapted to new technological innovations, schools have traditionally been hesitant to alter their traditional curriculum. At the same time, school resources continue to be stretched and residents are hard-pressed to absorb the burden of tax increases to ensure schools receive additional resources necessary to prepare students for the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The colleges and universities located in Nassau County offer two, three and four year programs in a variety of areas. In addition to the 13 colleges and universities, there are several professional schools — Hofstra University School of Law, the New York College of Osteopathic Medicine of NYIT, and the United States Merchant Marine Academy. Residents also have easy access to various colleges, universities, professional and technical schools in Suffolk County and the New York Metropolitan Region.

There are 58 public libraries which serve all the communities in Nassau County. The libraries offer services to residents, students, business groups, civic organizations and other users. Libraries provide these users with access to books and publications as well as databases and on-line computer services. There are also a number of academic libraries which permit on-site public use — such as the library at Hofstra University, which has a vast holding of publications and special collections.

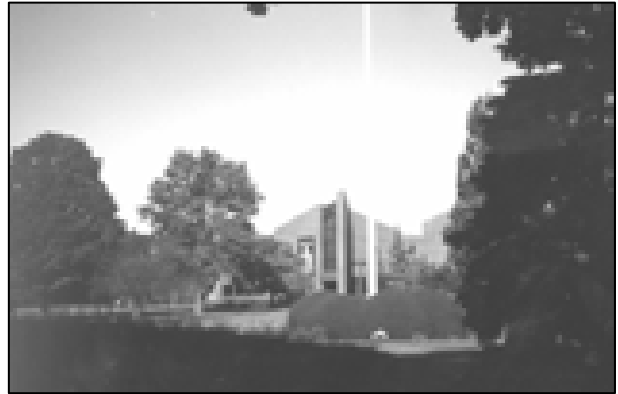
In terms of health care services, Nassau County has 14 general hospitals and various health-related facilities. The only facility managed by the County is the Nassau County Medical Center in East Meadow. In contrast, the North Shore Health System administers health services at five hospitals in Nassau County and several others in Suffolk County.

A critical component of the health care system is the network of skilled health care workers. In 1994, there were 75,276 employees in the health care sector of the County's economy (an 82% increase over the figure of 41,369 employees in 1984).

Health care and social services are provided by a variety of agencies and organizations, including the County Departments of Social Services; Health; Senior Citizen Affairs; Youth Board; Drug and Alcohol Addiction; Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities; and Probation. These departments, as well as other agencies and organizations administer and provide numerous health, social and community programs and services, although some residents are not fully aware of them.

The structured programs for young residents, which are currently offered by various organizations, may be insufficient to meet the needs of the existing and projected future youth population. In addition, there is a lack of structured programs for senior citizens, including the frail elderly and persons with dementia, to meet the needs of current and projected residents age 65 and over.

Although there are many community facilities located throughout the County, health care services, access to and availability of community meeting space, structured programs and activities, and social services are areas which require on-going planning, coordination and public input to address the needs of residents.



*The colleges and universities in Nassau County offer a variety of two, three and four year programs.*

**Goal:** Assure that there is an adequate system of public and private community facilities as well as educational and social services to support current and future residents of Nassau County.

### **A. Education**

In 1996, Nassau County had approximately 184,000 pupils enrolled in the 56 public school districts. The public school districts range in size and enrollment. Similarly, according to information from the New York State Education Department, the total State aid (1995-6 school year) in Nassau County ranged from \$1.03 million in the New Hyde Park School District to \$26.3 million in the Hempstead School District. The total expenditure per pupil ranged from \$8,267 in the Valley Stream School District to \$16,527 in the Manhasset School District.

The total school revenues for the public schools are generated primarily from real estate taxes and New York State school aid. In some school districts, the revenues are not sufficient to address the educational needs of students. Since real estate taxes are the primary funding source for school revenues, the school districts which have a large number of tax-exempt properties, such as public facilities and non-profit organizations/buildings, limit the districts' ability to raise sufficient funds without passing the cost onto the property owners. At the same time, schools require additional resources to address special education and equipment needs.

Educators and parents recognize that the public school districts have strong curriculum programs. However, some curriculum programs may not be flexible or innovative enough to address future employment skills and educational requirements.

There is a need for strong relationships between schools and local business organizations. By forming partnerships between students and businesses, both groups can benefit from understanding what resources, skills and training will be required for the current and future labor force. Several partnerships between schools and businesses have already been formed in the County to focus on the issues and benefits which can be achieved through these initiatives, such as: the Southeastern Nassau Work Force Preparation System Consortium, and the Nassau County School-to-Career Partnership. Assistance for school-to-work partnerships is available from the New York School-to-Work Advisory Council and the State Departments of Education and Labor.

*Nassau County recently retained a consultant to evaluate the existing relationship and potential partnerships between public schools and local businesses.*

### **VIII.1 Policy Recommendation:**

Advocate the continued provision of quality education to students, by the public and private sectors, and support changes in school programs and curriculum which respond to the challenges of the 21st Century.



**Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) School Boards should re-examine and supplement the current school curricula, as appropriate, with innovative changes to address future employment trends.
- (2) School districts should explore all options, including corporate donations and sponsorships, to provide every school with computer equipment and access to the Internet. Equipping schools with this technology will allow students to take advantage of computer technology and research opportunities.
- (3) The County and local School-to-Career Partnerships should continue to foster cooperation between schools, businesses, major institutions and higher educational institutions.

*[Note: this issue is also discussed in the implementation strategies for Policy Recommendation VI.11 in the Economy chapter of this Comprehensive Plan.]*

- (4) The County should identify additional funding sources for school districts which have a significant number of tax exempt real properties (public property, institutions, etc.) and which require more funds to address the educational needs of disadvantaged students.

**B. Public Facilities**

Many of the public buildings in Nassau County, such as school properties (indoor and outdoor space), are underused during evenings and weekends. Residents regard the unused space as an opportunity to provide educational, community and recreational space for residents of all ages.

There are also a number of community groups and non-profit organizations in the County which lack indoor and outdoor meeting places. Currently, when space is made available in some public buildings, the fee structure is often prohibitive for many residents, civic groups and non-profit organizations.

Municipalities across the nation are beginning to recognize the opportunity to utilize public buildings and recreational sites for multiple purposes and are creating joint-use agreements to address the relevant issues. Other municipalities, which also recognize the opportunity that public facilities and

sites offer the community, are designing public buildings to serve multiple purposes and different users.

During the public meetings held throughout the planning process for this Comprehensive Planning Project, residents indicated that there is tremendous need to develop new community meeting spaces, make schools and public buildings available after regular school hours for community events, and increase the amount of indoor and outdoor recreational sites. Other residents expressed their concerns that the youth population have limited recreational options and not enough structured programs, while some of the recreation facilities close too early. In Nassau County, there are a variety of public buildings and recreational sites which could serve multiple purposes.

## **VIII.2 Policy Recommendation:**

Expand the accessibility of public facilities by encouraging that public buildings and recreational sites be made available to community groups and organizations after regular school hours.

### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County and School Boards should seek opportunities to increase funding to convert schools and public buildings to multi-use facilities.
- (2) School Districts should continue, and expand opportunities, to provide space for community meetings and activities.
- (3) School Boards should analyze their current fee structures for after-hours use of the buildings and recreational equipment to broaden the number of groups that have access to the facilities.
- (4) The County should encourage joint-use agreements, where appropriate, to be developed between local municipalities and school districts to make school facilities available for recreational and community use.

*There are examples of these joint-use agreements which have been implemented by other communities to permit non-school use of public facilities and recreational equipment.*

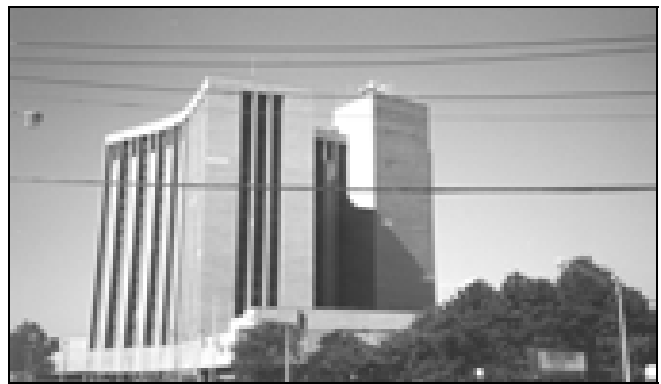
### C. Health Care Services

One of the most important issues to County residents is the availability of quality health care. The hospitals and health maintenance organizations are striving to provide this quality care to the public.

The Nassau County Health Department provides a variety of health care and environmental services which focus on: assurance of access to personal health services; regulation of the environment to prevent health hazards; health education and promotion for disease prevention; and acquisition and assessment of key health data. The Health Department coordinates with the County Mental Health Department, State Health Department and other health care providers in carrying out its programs and services. Two efforts by the County Health Department which incorporate public input, needs and issues into its programs are the “Community Health Assessment” and the “Public Health Priority Partnership Initiative.”

There are 14 general care hospitals in the County, equipped with advanced medical technology and 4,4743 beds. In addition to the hospitals, a variety of health maintenance organizations, special care facilities and medical support services are available to local residents.

While there appears to be an adequate number of hospitals and health care facilities, the type, amount and location of medical facilities and services may not be adequate to serve the County’s existing and growing population. There may also be restrictions on access to the health care facilities and services for some residents.



*The Nassau County Medical Center is a health-care facility located in East Meadow.*



*The North Shore University Hospital and Biomedical Science Research Center are an important part of the County’s health care system.*

The restricted access can often be a result of the following factors: some facilities are not accessible by mass transit; some senior citizens and physically-challenged people have limited mobility to travel to services and facilities; health care providers often have strict criteria for transporting patients to the clinics and hospitals; and the hours of operations are not always convenient to residents.

The patterns and concentrations of health problems is an important issue. Health statistics are compiled by various agencies and departments but are not currently centralized at the County level. In addition, the data is often collected differently, which makes it difficult to identify patterns, and is often not mapped so that concentrations of health-related problems can be as easily identified using conventional data collection methods. However, several County departments are currently working with the County Geographic Information Systems (GIS) office to incorporate their data into the GIS database and generate applicable maps.

### **VIII.3 Policy Recommendation:**

Monitor the amount, quality and distribution of health care services, and identify opportunities for improvements, to assure convenient and sufficient levels of service for County residents.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County should provide a central data bank that identifies the locations, level and type of services and areas that may be underserved by health care services.
- (2) The County Health Department should work with the State Health Department, County Integrated Services Planning Committee and the health care industry to monitor the availability of all types of health care services; to identify improvement opportunities, such as expanded hours of operation during the evenings and weekends; and to monitor impacts on the delivery of health care services which may occur with the on-going consolidations and mergers of health care providers.
- (3) The County and municipalities should support the need for further research of the factors and connections associated with the increased levels of various types of cancer.

- (4) The County should explore opportunities for additional funding sources to support and expand health care planning efforts and the health care network.
- (5) The County and State Health Departments should encourage that health care facilities be located near mass transit and in underserved communities.
- (6) The Long Island Bus and health care providers should continue to provide and supplement transportation services to health care centers, particularly for senior citizens.

#### **D. Social Services and Child Care**

The Nassau County Departments of Social Services, Drug and Alcohol Addiction, Mental Health, Health, Probation, Senior Citizen Affairs and Youth Board, along with other social service providers<sup>1</sup> have developed an assortment of programs and activities to benefit County residents. Unfortunately, some residents are unaware of these opportunities. The County and social service providers should take more advantage of various communication tools and other outreach techniques to inform residents. Hence, programs designed to assist residents could be more fully utilized.

The County Integrated Services Planning Committee (with representatives from the County Departments of Social Services; Health; Senior Citizen Affairs; Youth Board; Drug and Alcohol Addiction; Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities; and Probation) has been coordinating efforts to respond to various health, social and community service issues (e.g., health care; poverty; homelessness; illiteracy; mental health problems; youth and senior citizen services; and concerns of families and caregivers). The committee has been meeting on a regular basis and is currently in the process of preparing an integrated, unified services plan (as required by the State) which will incorporate public input on social and health care needs, improvements and new services.

*[Note: many of these issues were beyond the scope of this Comprehensive Plan.]*

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<sup>1</sup> Social services include a variety of programs which provide financial, educational and technical assistance, and support to eligible children, families and adults.

There has been a growing need for child care services in Nassau County and throughout the nation. Child care continues to be a fundamental need for many working families and single parent households. The availability, accessibility and affordability of child care services are issues that have to be dealt with by many County residents.



*Access to child care services is an important issue for many County residents.*

In some cases, parents are looking for more child care options, such as: services at or near their places of employment; facilities near the LIRR train stations and LI Bus routes; affordable, quality care; and/or facilities with extended hours to match employment and commuting schedules. There are a variety of different issues (e.g., financing, liability, insurance, training, site locations etc.) and opportunities which are being considered by child care providers, and organizations, such as the Child Care Council of Nassau County. The issue of child care is also getting attention at the State and Federal levels.

#### **VIII.4 Policy Recommendation:**

Provide social services adequate to meet current and future needs of residents, including child care and senior citizen services.

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) Social service providers, together with the County Integrated Services Planning Committee municipalities, should continue to actively inform residents through outreach efforts about the various social services that

exist and proposed improvements, especially for senior citizens and parents with child care needs.

- (2) The County and municipalities should continue to support the use of cable TV channels to promote social services and events available to residents, especially the young residents and senior citizens.
- (3) Businesses, educational institutions and other major employers should be encouraged to provide access to child care services for employees. Since child care is an important issue for many employees, providing access to quality child care often has a positive impact on the retention and recruitment of employees.
- (4) The County, as a major employer, should provide child care options for its employees. The County can evaluate opportunities to place child care centers in some of its buildings, or provide access to outside child care services.

*[Note: this is similar to the strategies for Policy Recommendation VI.7 in the Economy chapter.]*

- (5) The County, Child Care Council of Nassau County and the Coalition for Child Care of Nassau County should sponsor a conference, and on-going dialog, on child care issues and opportunities. The conference should include representatives from: various child care providers; social service agencies; colleges, universities and other facilities which address training and educational programs; businesses; decisionmakers involved in land use issues; County Legislature's Commission on Child Care and other interested residents.
- (6) Municipalities should determine whether child care facilities can be accommodated in appropriate locations. The County Planning Commission should encourage developers to include child care facilities or access to services in their commercial/office development proposals.
- (7) The County and other health care service providers, along with senior citizen service organizations and child care providers should identify options to address the need for eldercare support services — including: adult day care services; counseling assistance; and flexible child care schedules for caregivers.

- (8) The County and other health care providers should site or relocate facilities in areas that are close to the population to be served.
- (9) The County Integrated Service Planning Committee should continue to identify opportunities to improve services and programs to address various social and health care needs of residents through its integrated planning and public outreach efforts.

#### **E. Community Facilities and Services Database**

While there are a number of community facilities and services throughout the County, there is not a comprehensive database of services and community service providers. A map depicting the distribution of services throughout the County also does not exist. This type of a comprehensive database would benefit the various agencies and committees as well as local residents. In addition, the County would gain a better understanding of the types of services offered in different areas; the distribution of various services; and the connections to other services offered in Queens and Suffolk Counties. The database would assist the County in identifying locations which are not adequately served by community facilities and services.

Since social service providers have direct access to responding to the needs of residents, the County could use the comprehensive database and directory publication to interact with the social service organizations.

A *Community Resource Database* is currently being developed by the Middle Country Public Library in Suffolk County. The database will contain information on the health and human service agencies and organizations in Suffolk and Nassau Counties, as well as the types of services and material available to the public.

Locating social services and health care facilities is a complicated issue which requires a number of factors, including site availability and appropriate zoning provisions. One important criteria is often overlooked — the proximity of a proposed facility to the population or special needs group to be served. Since many residents will only travel a certain distance to utilize the services, the location of facilities in relationship to the targeted market is crucial. For example, if a new recreation center was being considered, the most appropriate location would be in an area with a high concentration of young residents, as well as adults and senior citizens, which would use the facility and services.



**VIII.5 Policy Recommendation:**

Monitor the location of community facilities in Nassau County and the types of services provided to accommodate needs of the current and future population.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- (1) The County Planning Department, other County departments, and social service providers should coordinate with the Middle Country Public Library to create a database that lists all community facilities in Nassau County. Information in the database should include location, contact person, type of services offered, years in operation, number of clients served, available publications and funding sources (from private, public, and other sources). The database should be updated annually and made available to the public.
- (2) The Nassau County Planning Department, along with input from other County departments and agencies, should use a Geographic Information System (GIS) to map the concentration of youth, senior citizens and other population groups to analyze the relationship of target populations to the facilities intended to serve them.
- (3) The County should work closely with municipalities and service providers to survey and identify areas with needs for specific community services and programs (e.g., senior services; youth programs and centers; child care services; public meeting space; and/or recreational sites). The County and municipalities should encourage that new developments (through the use of incentives) provide appropriate space where these identified community needs could be offered.

## APPENDIX A — HISTORIC SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

The first settlers of Long Island were Native Americans, including the Matinecocks, Rockaways, Merokes and Marsapeaque tribes. The legacy of these Native American groups is prevalent in the names of many Long Island villages, streets and water bodies. The Native American groups inhabited the region exclusively until the year 1609 when Henry Hudson landed at Coney Island. Soon after, various Dutch and British navigators explored the New York region, thus marking the beginning of European settlements on Long Island.

The history of Nassau County can be defined by three major settlement patterns. The first settlement phase occurred after the initial Europeans settled on Long Island, through to the County's official separation from Queens County. This settlement pattern took place with a period of suburbanization around the turn of the Century. The third major development pattern is highlighted by the period of population growth and development following the end of World War II, through most of the 1950s and 1960s.

- **Nassau County Established**

In 1640, the Dutch began to expand their control of Manhattan (New Amsterdam) to parts of Long Island. In the process, a small group of settlers from New England who attempted to settle in Oyster Bay were forced to move farther eastward, where they eventually established the Town of Southampton. By 1643, another group of New Englanders crossed the Long Island Sound from Connecticut and settled in the Town of Hempstead. They purchased a tract of land from several Native American groups. The land extended from the Long Island Sound to the Atlantic Ocean. Hempstead soon grew from the original 50 families to over 100. Meanwhile, new settlements were beginning to take place in Oyster Bay.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nassau County Planning Commission, *Data Book*, 1985, pages 163-164.

In 1683, Long Island was divided into three counties — Kings, Queens and Suffolk. Queens County included western part of the Island as well as the towns of Hempstead and Oyster Bay.<sup>2</sup> Although Long Island remained relatively rural throughout most of the 1700s, this began to change in the 1800s as New York City experienced an influx of immigrant population and development. While the eastern part of Queens County remained primarily agricultural with an abundance of dairy farming, New York City, Brooklyn and western Queens developed as urban centers.

As a result of growing differences between the densely populated towns of western Queens and the three rural towns of Hempstead, North Hempstead and Oyster Bay, local residents initiated a movement to create a separate county from New York City. After two unsuccessful attempts, Nassau County was officially established on January 1, 1899 — encompassing the three towns of Hempstead, North Hempstead and Oyster Bay.

- **Suburbanization**

One of the most significant factors which influenced the growth of Nassau County and Long Island was the introduction of the railroad. By 1865, railroad tracks were already established through the central portion of Long Island as well as along the northern and southern shore lines. By the early 1900s, the Long Island Railroad had proliferated throughout Long Island and quickly became the primary means of transportation to New York City. In 1911, the railroad completed direct rail service to the Pennsylvania (Penn) Station in Manhattan. The result of these advances in rail travel are best exemplified by the extraordinary growth in the number of commuters between Long Island and New York City. In 1900, approximately 55,500 commuters used the rail line. By 1930, that number had reached over 303,000.<sup>3</sup>

Not surprisingly, many communities such as Port Washington, Rockville Centre and Freeport located along rail lines and train stations grew rapidly with the increased commuter population and local businesses. The passenger rail service also contributed to the increase in tourism, especially among waterfront

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pages 163-64.

<sup>3</sup> Smits, Edward J. *Nassau Suburbia, U.S.A.* Friends of Nassau County Museum, 1974, pages 155-56.

communities — attracting many city dwellers escaping to picturesque suburban towns and coastal areas for retreats and vacations.

Throughout the early 20th Century Nassau County remained a predominantly rural, agricultural community. Many of the residents along the County's south shore made their living from fishing and harvesting clams and oysters in the Atlantic Ocean. By contrast, prominent, wealthy New Yorkers chose the north shore communities of Long Island as locations for their luxurious country estates. While this trend faded with the onset of the Great Depression of 1929, it has left a legacy of elegant architecture and open space which is still evident throughout most of the north shore communities.

Other significant factors which contributed to the development of Nassau County were aviation, aircraft manufacture and shipbuilding. Pioneering efforts in aviation took place at several airfields in Nassau County in the early part of the twentieth century — including Charles A. Lindberg's famous non-stop trans-Atlantic flight to Paris in 1927.<sup>4</sup> During the Second World War, the County became a significant manufacturer of aircraft and guidance equipment used in the war. Mitchel Field became the center of military aviation while Roosevelt Field was the center of civilian flights.

Shipbuilding was initiated in Nassau County during the colonial era for the whaling and fishing industries as well as water transportation. As the manufacture of ships evolved over the years, the large shipbuilding companies relocated to other parts of the nation which had concentrations of steel and coal. However, there are coastal communities in Nassau County where construction, repair and sales of smaller boats are still active businesses.

- **Post World War II**

Perhaps the most significant surge of population and development in Nassau County occurred after World War II. After the war, veterans returned home and sought safe, affordable, pleasant communities in which to raise their families. New housing developments began to proliferate throughout Nassau County at an astounding rate. An advertisement published in *Newsday* on May 7, 1947 offered

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<sup>4</sup> Nassau County Planning Commission, *Databook*, 1985, page 168.

2,000 homes for \$60 a month in a new development called “Levittown,” located on the Hempstead Plains where potatoes had previously grown. By the end of the month, more than 6,500 veterans had filed applications for the new housing units and the floodgates were opened for the population wave that changed Nassau County, almost overnight, from a farming community into the nation’s first and largest suburb.<sup>5</sup> Levittown is generally regarded as the prototype of affordable suburban housing during this era.

By the mid-1950s, Nassau County held the distinction of having the largest population and being the fastest-growing suburban county in the nation. The local and County focus was primarily on keeping up with the new housing, infrastructure and service demands of a large and growing population.

*The Existing Land Use chapter in Appendix B contains a description of land use development activities from the 1960s to the present.*

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<sup>5</sup> Smits, Edward J., *Nassau Suburbia, U.S.A.* Friends of Nassau County Museum, 1974, page 189.

## **APPENDIX B — EXISTING LAND USE**

Nassau County contains a wide variety of land uses and densities. Generally, the north shore communities consist of low density residential uses, supplemented by small-scale commercial and office uses — typically located in villages. In contrast, the central and southern portions of the County tend to be more diverse both in terms of types and densities of land uses.

The distinction in the way the County's land use pattern has developed is attributable to several factors. One factor is the manner in which different parts of the County were settled (refer to the description in Appendix A, Historic Settlement Patterns). Several other factors contributed to the general differentiation in land use between the north and south shores, such as: the substantial differences in topography; the level of transportation access; the availability of public utilities and physical infrastructure; and the implementation of stricter land use regulations in the north shore communities.

The construction of east-west oriented roads and parkways during the 1920-1940s made much of Nassau County accessible by automobile. Many new land uses were oriented towards automobile access, and land use developments which did not need the density of uses required by other modes of transportation. The availability and construction of centralized water and sewer services enabled an intensification of land use development throughout the central and southern portion of the County — including office parks, industrial uses and other higher density commercial uses. Most of the north shore communities relied upon (and continue to rely on) wells and septic systems which were not able to support high concentrations of land use development.

Since the late 1950s, building activity has slowed considerably. The County's current land use arrangement largely reflects the development pattern of its past. Many of the north shore communities continue to maintain strict zoning and land use regulations which limit land use densities. These areas also continue to lack centralized sewer systems which can support more intensive development. The central and southern portions of the County have an established roadway and infrastructure system which continue to support a greater intensification of land uses.

### A. Land Use Classifications

The Existing Land Use Map, Figure 8, identifies existing land uses in Nassau County. It is based on a variety of current and historical data sources including, but not limited to, land area data compiled by the Nassau County Tax Assessor (1997) and ARCVIEW GIS shapefile data prepared by Frederick P. Clark Associates, Inc. (1998). Table B-1 provides an estimate of the land area by land use category as shown on the existing land use map.

**TABLE B-1  
LAND AREA BY LAND USE CATEGORY**

<b>LAND USE CATEGORY</b>	<b>ACRES</b>	<b>PERCENT OF TOTAL</b>
<b>Residential</b>	<b>100,100</b>	<b>55%</b>
Estates (Single-Family - 1 D.U./5 or more acres) and Low Density Residential (Single-Family - 1 D.U./acre or less)	21,100	11%
Medium Density Residential (Single- and Two-Family - 2-10 D.U.'s/acre)	73,100	40%
High Density Residential ( 11 or more D.U.'s/acre and Multi-Family)	5,900	3%
<b>Commercial</b>	<b>9,900</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Industrial</b>	<b>2,200</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Institutional/Community Service/Utility</b>	<b>19,300</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>Undeveloped Land</b>	<b>15,000</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Open Space/Recreation</b>	<b>37,200</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>NASSAU COUNTY TOTAL</b>	<b>183,700</b>	<b>100%</b>

Notes:

1. Certain percentages have been slightly adjusted to compensate for the rounding of acreage figures.
2. The Nassau County Tax Assessor's office defines estates as luxurious residences and auxiliary buildings containing at least 5 acres of land.

The following provides a more complete description of various land use categories within the County.

- **Residential**

Residential development is the predominant land use in Nassau County. In 1997, approximately 87% of the 410,000 tax parcels were classified as residential, having an aggregate land area of approximately 100,100 acres or 55% of the total land area in the County. Historically, residential land use has been among the most active in terms of building permit activity. According to building permit data, single-family and other dwellings constitute the vast majority of all permits issued since 1946. The period between the mid-1940s to the late 1950s represents the greatest level of residential permit activity and not surprisingly corresponds to the County's peak period of population growth.

The number of residential building permits issued between 1960 and 1990 fluctuated in conjunction with the decline and leveling off of the County's population. The fluctuations in building permit activity were also connected to the business cycles of the economy. Typically, during periods of economic recession, building permit activity declines, while during periods of economic growth, building permit levels increase. Another factor which impacted the amount of building permits was the limited availability of land in parts of the County. It should be noted that the issuance of a building permit does not always result in the construction of a building; however building permit data is considered among the most reliable gauge of development activity.

The last few years have shown a steady pace of building permit activity in the County as developers attempted to meet the housing demands created by declining household size, other demographic changes, and the recent period of economic expansion.

Single-family homes represent the most dominant housing type within the overall residential land use category, followed by two-family and multi-family housing units. In 1997, the Nassau County Tax Assessor's office classified approximately 81% of all parcels in the County as single-family residential dwellings, 5.1% of all parcels as two-family dwellings and less than 1% of all parcels as three-family or multi-family dwellings.



The density range of residential units varies throughout the County. As shown in Table B-1, approximately 21,100 acres in the County are classified as estates (1 dwelling unit per 5 acres) and low density residential (1 dwelling unit per acre). Most of these lower density areas are located within the northern half of the County. Approximately 73,100 acres in the County consists of residential lands with a density of between 2 to 10 dwelling units per acre. These residential uses are generally located within the central and southern half of the County. The highest residential density category totals approximately 5,900 acres and is generally located within the County's Centers and downtowns, although there are some high density townhouse and condominium developments located outside of the Centers. This high density category includes both multi-family properties and those properties having a density of 11 or more dwelling units per acre.

- **Commercial**

Commercial properties consist of a variety of land uses including, but not limited to, hotels and motels, offices, retail, services, commercial recreational facilities and offices. According to the 1997 County Tax Assessor's data, approximately 4% of the total parcels in the County were classified as commercial uses, excluding commercial uses with a residential component, such as apartments. These parcels represent approximately 9,900 acres of the total land area in the County.

Commercial development in Nassau County, as in many other suburban areas, has evolved considerably over the past several decades. Prior to the mid-1950s, it was primarily located in fairly well-defined Central Business Districts (CBDs). However, as the automobile began to dominate as the primary mode of transportation, commercial land uses responded accordingly by locating along the County's major roadways in strip developments. In addition to the automobile, the explosion of single-family housing throughout the County following World War II was often located on inexpensive farmland away from the established CBDs. In order to meet consumer needs in the new developments, shopping centers and other automobile-related commerce followed the movement of people to more outlying areas, drawing some of the economic vitality away from the previously vigorous CBDs.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Long Island Regional Planning Board, *Long Island Master Plan*, Commercial Development Analysis, 1991.

### *Retail Uses and Retail Centers*

Recent nationwide trends in retail development have resulted in the proliferation of “big box” retailers and “power strip centers” as well as expansion of the County’s regional shopping centers. These trends lead to advocate large-scale retail developments which serve large market areas. Since households in Nassau County have higher than average disposable incomes, market research generally supports the need for and sustainability of such additional retail development. However, the space demands and roadway access necessary for these large-scale retail facilities often restrict them from locating in established CBDs. Overall, many of the County’s CBDs and downtowns continue to evolve with changes in the nature and scale of office, retail and other commercial uses.

### *Office Uses*

The construction of large-scale office developments is a phenomena that reflects the County’s continuing transition from a residential suburb of New York City to a suburban employment center. According to the Commercial Development Analysis prepared by the Long Island Regional Planning Board, over 27,000,000 square feet of office space existed in Nassau County in 1991. A majority of this office space was located within just several clusters or corridors including: Mitchel Field/Roosevelt Field; Town of Oyster Bay/Long Island Expressway; Lake Success/New Hyde Park; Mineola/Garden City; Great Neck Peninsula; and Village of Hempstead. A significantly smaller proportion of the office space is located outside these clusters or corridors and can be found in smaller concentrations in the Villages of Rockville Center, and Valley Stream; City of Glen Cove; and the unincorporated areas of Bethpage and Port Washington.

The amount of available office space in the County has outpaced recent demands. Nassau County had an office vacancy rate of 13.5% in 1996. This was down from a 1990 vacancy rate of 17.9%, which followed a period of substantial office construction in the late 1980s. Growth in the office market during this period is reflected in the increase in building permit activity for office buildings. In addition, the economic recession experienced in the early 1990s resulted in a significant decline in office construction and increased vacancies.

The land area in the County which is devoted to office uses is expected to increase somewhat in the future. The growth in the County's employment, combined with the further expansion of service industries in the economy and the relocation of companies from New York City to the suburbs will continue to drive the need for new office space in the future. Demand for such office space should be modest and is not likely to increase until existing office space has been more fully utilized and vacancy rates decline.

- **Industrial**

According to the 1997 property use classifications used by the Nassau County Tax Assessor's office, approximately 1,700 out of the over 410,000 parcels in the County were designated as industrial. The Tax Assessor's office classifies properties which are used for the production and fabrication of durable and non-durable man-made goods (e.g., manufacturing, mining and quarrying) as industrial parcels. While most industrial areas are scattered throughout the County, several concentrations of industrial activity are prevalent in communities such as: Freeport, Plainview, Bethpage, New Cassel, Floral Park, Glen Cove, Mineola and Port Washington.

Despite the limited number of parcels, the County's industrial uses occupy a significant amount of land area. Approximately 2,200 acres of the total land area in the County is devoted to industrial parcels (refer to Table B-1). This is characteristic of industrial operations since they often require large land and building areas for manufacturing, warehousing and trucking operations.

The amount of industrial land area is consistent with the decline in manufacturing employment over the past few decades. According to information compiled by Greiner-Maltz (a real estate services company in Nassau County) in 1996, approximately 16% of the County's industrial square footage is under-utilized or vacant. Reuse of some of these properties is already occurring in parts of the County and is expected to continue in the future.

- **Institutional/Community Service/Utility**

The County Tax Assessor's office designates community and public service parcels as properties which are used for the well being of the community, such as: health care facilities, educational buildings and properties, cultural centers, correctional facilities, social services and governmental facilities. In 1997, there were over 5,600 parcels (or 1.4% of all parcels in the County) classified as community and public service. Approximately 765 parcels (or less than 0.3% of all parcels in the County) were classified by the Tax Assessor's Office as transportation or utility.

The 1981 land use survey of Nassau County, prepared by the Long Island Regional Planning Board (LIRPB), designated these community service parcels as institutional uses. According to the survey, approximately 10,800 acres of the County's land area is devoted to these uses. The study classified approximately 8,200 acres of the County as transportation, utility and community. At the time of the 1981 study, this land area was evenly distributed among the three towns within the County. As shown in Table B-1 the current estimate of the total land area within these land use categories remains relatively unchanged at 19,300 acres.

- **Undeveloped and Underdeveloped Land**

Nassau County is substantially developed. However, there are areas in the County which remain undeveloped or underdeveloped — some of these areas have additional development potential. In addition, there are a number of sites which can be redeveloped for new and/or expanded uses.

In 1997, the County Tax Assessor's office designated approximately 5.2% of the parcels in Nassau County as vacant land. Approximately 20,000 of the 22,000 parcels were designated as residential vacant land. It is estimated that approximately 15,000 acres are considered vacant in the County (refer to Table B-1). For tax assessment purposes, vacant land was defined as property that is not in use, in temporary use or without permanent improvement. The location of these vacant parcels are scattered throughout Nassau County — the larger vacant parcels are generally located in the northern half of the County.

The 1981 LIRPB land use survey quantified the amount of vacant land in the County. For the purposes of this study, vacant land consisted of: tidal areas, land not in use, and land containing abandoned buildings. Of the 17,000 acres of vacant land, over 10,000 acres were located in the Town of Oyster Bay.

The County's 1987 *Natural Resources Inventory*, prepared by the Nassau County Planning Commission, indicated that most of the vacant land and estates greater than five acres are located within the northeast corner of the County. Many of these properties have remaining development potential which can yield the construction of additional housing units. According to the 1987 inventory, there were over 350 estates<sup>2</sup> in Nassau County. In many of these estates, the actual dwelling unit only covers a small fraction of the building lot. Over the years, some of these properties have been subdivided to create new smaller lots that conform to local zoning regulations.

In addition to large properties and estates, other institutional uses in the County with surplus land area have additional development potential. Some of these institutional uses include colleges, such as C.W. Post, New York Institute of Technology and SUNY at Old Westbury. These colleges have undergone changes in land use to accommodate their educational needs, and in some instances, have subdivided some of the land for single-family lots. In the future, the conversion of institutional uses could continue due to increasing development pressure and the financial benefits provided to the colleges.

Although agricultural properties also have the potential to be converted to more intense uses, the current number of these properties in Nassau County is quite limited. According to the Nassau County Tax Assessor's office, only 16 parcels were classified in this land use category.

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<sup>2</sup> The Nassau County Tax Assessor's office defines estates as luxurious residences and auxiliary buildings containing at least 5 acres of land.

- **Redevelopment Areas**

There are a number of sites in Nassau County which have significant redevelopment potential. Many of the sites include former industrial properties which have surplus land due to declines in manufacturing production and employment. Other sites include dilapidated or vacant buildings which are no longer in active use and are available for redevelopment.

In 1991, the Nassau County Planning Commission conducted a study of potential redevelopment areas, which included:

- Roosevelt Raceway Area;
- Levittown Study Area;
- Hicksville Study Area/West John Street-Duffy Avenue;
- Belmont Racetrack;
- Port Washington North;
- Stewart Avenue;
- Nassau Crossroads International Plaza;
- Mineola/Latham Brothers; and
- Brush Hollow Road, Westbury.

There are other sites in the County, which were not evaluated in the study, that have current proposals or potential for redevelopment. Several of these sites include: the Cerro Wire property in the Town of Oyster Bay; the Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum property in Uniondale, Town of Hempstead; the Lockheed Martin Corp. (Sperry) parcel in the Village of Lake Success and Town of North Hempstead; the Navy parcel (currently being transferred to the County) and the Northrop Grumman property in Bethpage, Town of Oyster Bay; and the Port Washington sand pits in the Town of North Hempstead.

This listing is not totally inclusive, but it does identify a large number of significantly-sized parcels within the County which have considerable redevelopment potential. Many of these properties could result in substantial increases in development which could have significant impacts on communities within which they are located. However, the smaller parcels in the County which are vacant or underused also have the potential for future redevelopment.

Although the County is developed in many areas, there are still many opportunities for new development and redevelopment of sites and buildings.

- **Open Space and Recreation**

The open space resources which have been identified for this *Comprehensive Plan* consist of areas with significant environmental features, permanently protected natural resources and properties which are not intensively developed for residential, commercial, industrial or institutional uses. These open space resources, along with the recreational facilities, help complement and balance the residential and nonresidential development in the County.

The areas depicted as Open Space and Recreation on the Existing Land Use Map are public, semi-public and private lands — including parks; preserves; arboretums; parkway and interstate road right-of-ways; beaches; marinas; estuaries; and golf courses. The open space resources were compiled from a variety of sources: the Nassau County Geographic Information System; Nassau County Tax Assessor's parcel centroid classifications; the 1981 land use inventory prepared by the Long Island Regional Planning Board;<sup>3</sup> 1994 aerial photographs of the County; commercially available maps; and a 1998 field survey of parts of the County. It is estimated that approximately 20% (or 37,200 acres) of the total land area in the County is open space or recreation (refer to Table B-1).

The County owned open space and recreational facilities are primarily managed by the Department of Recreation and Parks. There are 40 County parks and preserves on over 5,000 acres of land with a variety of permitted activities (refer to the more detailed description in the Culture and Recreation chapter of this document). In addition to the County parks and preserves, there are numerous municipal, State and Federal parks located throughout Nassau County.

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<sup>3</sup> Long Island Regional Planning Board, *Land Use 1981- Quantification and Analysis of Land Use for Nassau and Suffolk Counties*, 1982.

An example of semi-public open space is Old Westbury Gardens, which is privately owned but is open to the public. Private open space includes some of the golf courses, which are privately owned and accessible to members.









There are also other areas with open space elements, such as schools (which are classified as institutional and community uses, but which typically have large components of undeveloped land, ballfields and recreational facilities); and the residential parcels classified as “estates” by the Nassau County Tax Assessor’s office. These areas contribute to the County’s open space system, but may not be permanently preserved as open space.

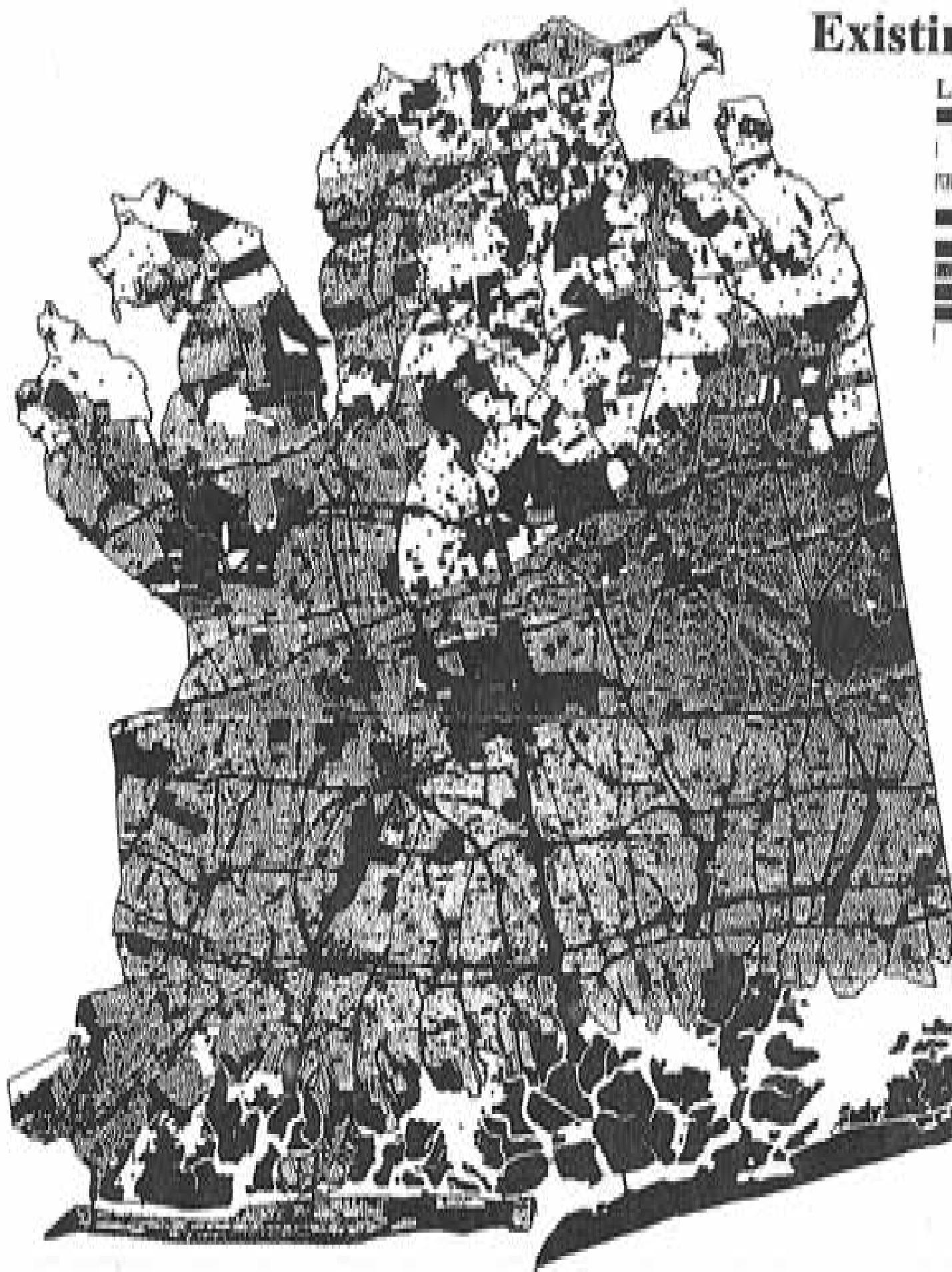


# Nassau County Comprehensive Planning Project

## Existing Land Use

### LAND USE CATEGORIES

-  Single-Family (1 to 4 units per acre maximum)
-  Low Density Residential (Single Family / 100' or more lot front)
-  Medium Density Residential (Single & Two Family / 1 to 100' lot front)
-  High Density Residential (10 or more units per acre and Multi-Family)
-  Commercial
-  Industrial
-  Institutional/Community Service/Utility
-  Open Space/Recreation
-  Undeveloped Land



0 1 2 3 4 Miles

Base Map Copyright, 1991, County of Nassau, N.Y.



November 1998

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Figure 8