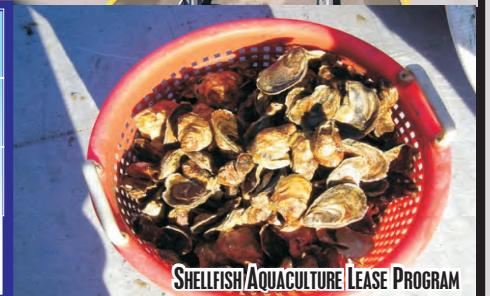
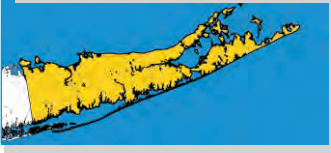


ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SUFFOLK COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

February 2009



SUFFOLK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

Suffolk County New York

SUFFOLK COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT

TO THE COUNTY LEGISLATURE AND THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

February 2009

Suffolk County Department of Planning

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Steve Levy
County Executive

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Babylon

Constantine Kontokosta, P.E., AICP, LEED AP ~ **VICE CHAIR**
Village Under 5,000 Population

Adrienne Esposito ~ **SECRETARY**
Village Over 5,000 Population

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Brookhaven

Joseph Potter
East Hampton

John W. Caracciolo
Huntington

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Islip

Vincent Taldone
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Edward J. Pruitt – In Memoriam

Edward J. Pruitt served with dedication and distinction on the Suffolk County Planning Commission from December 2005 to August 2008. As Vice Chairman of the Commission in 2008, he helped lead the effort to improve government efficiency while re-focusing the Commission on matters of county-wide significance. As a member of the Commission, Ed played a critical role in the Commission's deliberations by asking tough questions, providing wise counsel and ensuring that the Commission's judgments were consistent.

The members of the Suffolk County Planning Commission are saddened by the passing of our friend and colleague, Edward J. Pruitt. The Suffolk County Planning Commission acknowledges and thanks Edward J. Pruitt for his contributions to the people of Suffolk County.

Table of Contents

Preface	7
I. Planning Commission Overview	9
II. 2008 Goals and Accomplishments	9
III. Planning Commission Referral Statistics	10
IV. Suffolk County Demographic Data	11
V. Planning Commission Polices and Guidelines	23

PREFACE

The Suffolk County Planning Commission is required to make an annual report to the County Executive and the County Legislature which must contain a report on the activities of the Commission and “a survey of conditions in the county.” (Administrative Code, Sec. A14-6)

The Commission is pleased to report that 2008 was a productive year in which the Commission re-focused its efforts on providing regional leadership with regard to newly identified county-wide land use priorities. However, the year was tinged with sadness as a result of the untimely death of our Vice Chairman Ed Pruitt who, with Chairman David Calone and Secretary Adrienne Esposito, was first elected as an officer of the Commission in early 2008.

As discussed in Section II of this Annual Report, one of the major accomplishments of the Commission in 2008 was the adoption for the first time in 10 years of a new set of development standards in the Commission Guidebook. The purpose of these standards is to convey land use values and ensure consistency in Commission decisions. The Guidebook identified several key areas where local land use decisions implicate critical county-wide priorities such as energy efficiency, affordable housing and public safety. The Guidebook’s new general policy statements, created in consultation with experts and local stakeholders, are included in Section V of this Annual Report.

Another major accomplishment was the proposal of an intermunicipal agreement which would reduce the required number of referrals by towns and villages to the Commission by approximately 75%. The purpose of this change is to reduce administrative effort by local municipalities, to streamline the application process for developers and – in combination with the newly adopted “regional significance” standard for determining which referrals the Commission will hear – to allow the Commission and the County Planning Department to focus their efforts on reviewing the most significant proposed developments and on regional planning efforts.

Consistent with this regional focus, in 2009 the Commission intends to launch a Suffolk County Comprehensive Plan initiative and to work with Suffolk’s 42 municipalities to address key county-wide land use concerns. Suffolk has not had a full master plan update in three decades and the Commission looks forward to working with government leaders and stakeholders to sketch a vision for Suffolk’s future. The Commission also intends to produce a “how-to guide” to advise municipalities on creating master plans. The Commission is also in the process of launching four new municipal taskforces which will promulgate best practices and model codes in four critical land use areas with regional impact: energy and environment, housing, public safety and smart growth and accessibility. The purpose of these task forces will be to provide policy tools so that towns and villages can more easily pursue strategies to address these county-wide needs. The Commission anticipates using its 2009 Annual Report to measure the progress being made across Suffolk with respect to these critical county-wide land-use priorities.

As Section III indicates, the Commission received 2,167 referrals in 2008 which was a decrease of 11% compared to the 2,437 referrals that the Commission received in 2007. Most telling, however, is the fact that subdivision referrals dropped by 50% percent from 141 in 2007 to 74 in 2008.

Section IV of this Annual Report reports on the “conditions” in Suffolk County. As indicated, Suffolk remains one of the best places to live in the United States, but citizens endure a very high cost of living to be here. Among the chilling statistics in Section IV is the finding that the 1,668 new units authorized by building permits in Suffolk in 2008 was the lowest number since records started being kept in 1950 and the finding that Suffolk’s unemployment jumped by more than 50% in 2008 to 7.3%. The negative news is tempered by the conclusion that Suffolk’s young adult “brain drain” may be reversing as a result of the “baby boom echo” generation starting to come of age.

For instance, between 2000 and 2007, Suffolk witnessed a 23% increase in the number of people 20 to 24 years old.

The Commission would particularly like to thank the County Planning Department staff for all of their hard work throughout the year. The Commission would not have been able to accomplish its goals or perform its duties without their invaluable assistance. The Commission would also like to recognize its previous officers – Chairman John Caracciolo, Vice Chairwoman Linda Holmes, and Secretary Charla Bolton – for their several years of service as Commission officers which concluded in early 2008.

As the governmental entity that touches development throughout Suffolk, the Commission looks forward to providing a vision for the county’s future through a Suffolk County Comprehensive Plan, to developing best practices and model codes to help municipalities pursue policies to address critical county-wide land-use needs, and to annually measuring the progress made across Suffolk in addressing those priorities.



David L. Calone
Chairman
Suffolk County Planning Commission

I. PLANNING COMMISSION OVERVIEW

The core role of the Suffolk County Planning Commission under state and county law is to identify and promote county-wide land use values and planning priorities. The Commission principally is required to promulgate these values and priorities through the adoption of a Suffolk County Comprehensive Plan. The Commission also is charged with issuing an annual report to the County Legislature and the County Executive on the status of the County with respect to these values and priorities. Finally, the Commission has the authority to make formal recommendations to local municipalities about land use and planning policies and to reject or condition individual site plan applications, subdivision applications and local comprehensive plans within its jurisdiction. While the towns and villages are the ultimate arbiters of land use and may by a supermajority vote override the Commission's requirements, the Commission is the body that formally applies regional considerations to individual development projects in Suffolk County.

The Suffolk County Planning Commission is comprised of 15 members who are nominated to four year terms by the County Executive and are confirmed by the County Legislature. Of the 15 Commission members, one represents each of the ten towns in Suffolk, one represents villages with population under 5000, one represents villages with population over 5000 and there are three at large representatives. In 2005, the County Executive and the County Legislature enacted a law to change the composition of the Commission to ensure that its members also represent a variety of backgrounds including law, business, real estate, labor, the environment and transportation and to prohibit members from simultaneously serving as officers in political parties.

The Suffolk County Planning Department serves as staff to the Suffolk County Planning Commission.

During 2008, the Commission's officers were:

Chairman	David L. Calone (Town of Babylon)
Vice Chairman	Edward J. Pruitt (Town of Brookhaven)
Secretary	Adrienne Esposito (Villages over 5,000)

II. 2008 GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Suffolk County Planning Commission established four (4) goals for 2008 including:

- reformulating the Commission Guidebook to provide clear, updated standards for Commission decision-making
- streamlining and focusing the referral process in order

to maximize both Commission and Planning Department staff time

- improving outreach and communication with the public and interested stakeholders
- filling the remaining vacancies on the Commission

The Suffolk County Planning Commission Guidebook

In order to better advise municipalities and developers of the Planning Commission's policies and procedures, for the first time in a decade, the Planning Commission completed a comprehensive revision of the substantive guidelines which it applies to individual development projects and zone changes. The revised guidelines identified affordable housing, energy efficiency and public safety as county-wide land use priorities and established new county-wide standards in those areas. The Commission's new general policy statements are included as Section V of this Annual Report.

Streamlining and Focusing the Referral Process

The Commission approved the establishment of an inter-municipal agreement (IMA) with towns and villages in order to reduce the volume of referrals. The proposal would eliminate the need for towns and villages to refer applications relating to developments whose impacts are localized by virtue of their size, their location or the land use issues raised. This process of streamlining the review of referral items is anticipated to be finalized in 2009 and is expected to reduce the volume of referrals by as much as seventy-five percent (75%). By early 2009, a number of towns and villages already had agreed to the IMA.

In addition, the Commission established standards for "regionally significant" projects. These standards have helped to minimize the volume of referrals that are actually presented to the Commission members for adjudication. This has allowed both the staff and the Commission to spend more time on matters which are of regional significance and less time on matters of local concern.

Outreach and Communication

The Commission's effort to better inform the public of Commission activities has resulted in improvements to the Commission's website and better communication between the Commission and Referral agencies. The new website includes the Commission agendas, minutes, a new jurisdictional map and Commissioner biographies.

In addition, the Commission's outreach efforts included inviting experts from a variety of disciplines who are working on issues critical to the future of Suffolk County to present to the Commission on their priorities. The Commission received updates from the following leaders:

Thomas Spota, Suffolk County District Attorney
 Phil Cardinale, Town of Riverhead, Supervisor
 Joe Gergela, Long Island Farm Bureau
 Michael Deering, Vice President, Long Island Power Authority
 Neal Lewis, Neighborhood Network

Commission Members

Today, fourteen (14) of the fifteen (15) members of the Commission have been appointed with only one (1) vacancy remaining due to the recent resignation of a town representative. The only missing “skill set” as required by County Law (Administrative Code Sec. C14-4) is a representative from a labor organization.

Additional accomplishments in 2009 include:

- ◆ **The Sunrise Highway Corridor Study** – The Sunrise Highway Corridor Study was completed with the assistance of the Towns of Brookhaven and Islip along with the participation of both State and County agencies. The report provides an overview of the study area – 13 miles of the highway corridor extending through 14 communities and accounting for 10% of the County’s population and jobs. The report notes the importance of the highway as a regional transportation asset that is critical to the future mobility of Suffolk County. The report was prepared at the direction of the County Executive and represents an excellent example of regional cooperation.
- ◆ **Completion of Report on County Demographic, Economic and Development Trends** – The Department completed an overview of demographic, economic and development trends of the County that provides important information for both public planning and private business investment.
- ◆ **Completion of Affordable Housing Program Summary of Towns within Suffolk County** – As a part of the update to the Commission’s Guidebook, the Department completed a summary of all affordable housing programs legislated in the ten Towns of the County.
- ◆ **Heartland Town Center Tour** - The redevelopment of the former Pilgrim State Hospital Property represents the largest development project in Suffolk County’s history involving 9,130 residential units, 4.2 million square feet of office space and over 1,000,000 square feet of retail space. The Commission led a tour for County officials and the media in October 2008.
- ◆ **Fall Municipal Training Program** – Along with the APA, the Commission organized and hosted the Suffolk Planning Federation’s annual fall training. For the first time, Commission members served as speakers and moderators of the various training courses. Over 175 people – the most in memory - attended the program.

III. Suffolk County Planning Commission Regulatory Review Statistics

The Regulatory Review Unit of the Suffolk County Department of Planning is responsible for the processing of all referral items from the 10 Towns and 32 Villages in Suffolk County. The Unit

completed the review of 2,167 referral items during 2008. A summary of the referral matters is provided below:

**Applications Referred to the
Suffolk County Planning Commission – 2008**

Zoning Referrals	Applications
Amendments	137
Change of Zone	39
Expedited Review	54
Master Plans	3
Moratoriums	10
Site Plan Applications	308
Special Permit Applications	72
Variances	1,470
Total Zoning Referrals	2093
Subdivision Referrals	
Major Subdivisions	18
Minor Subdivisions	56
Total Subdivision Referrals	74
TOTAL REFERRALS	2,167

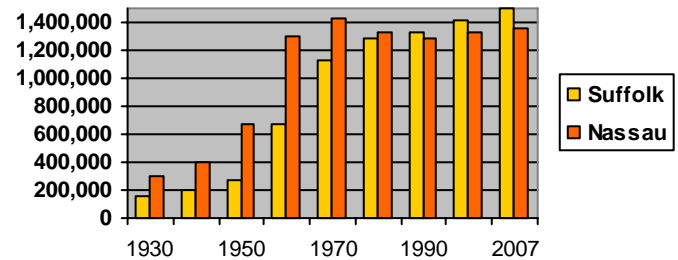
By comparison, in 2007, the Commission received 2,297 zoning referrals and 141 subdivision referrals for a total of 2,437 referrals.

IV. Demographic, Economic, and Development Trends

Suffolk County, New York

Prepared by the Suffolk County Planning Department
Updated November 2008

Population



The first European settlers arrived in Suffolk County in 1640 and the County was established in 1683 as one of the ten original counties in New York State. Suffolk is a suburban county located on Long Island east of New York City and is bordered on the west by Nassau County. Suffolk County's land area totals 911 square miles, and the County is 86 miles long and 15 miles wide. With shores on both the Atlantic Ocean and the Long Island Sound, Suffolk County's shoreline totals 986 miles.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Sperling's Best Places rates metropolitan areas on various quality of life categories. In 2005, Nassau-Suffolk was ranked the 19th best place to live, of 331 metro areas in the nation. In 2007, Nassau-Suffolk was ranked by *Sperling* as the 33rd most secure (in health, prosperity, safety and security) metropolitan area out of 379 areas nationwide. In addition, Nassau-Suffolk was ranked by *Sperling* as the third least stressful place to live in 2004.

However, a 2006 *Sperling* study of best places for seniors to live indicated that Nassau-Suffolk ranked 48th out of the 50 largest metropolitan areas. Also, *Sperling* reported that Suffolk County's 2007 cost of living was 38% higher than the national average, with housing costs 60% higher than the national average.

Nassau-Suffolk has the second-lowest overall crime rate in the nation, thanks to extremely low violent and property crime rates. A 2007 study by *Forbes* magazine ranked Long Island 6th best in culture & leisure (out of the 200 largest metropolitan regions), 18th best in colleges, and 32nd in educational attainment. However, the region ranked 194th of 200 in cost of living, 170th in cost of doing business, and 141st in job growth.

POPULATION

Total Population

In 1790, the first U. S. Census showed that Suffolk County had more people than Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx and Staten Island combined. By 1915, Nassau County surpassed Suffolk County in population. After World War II, Suffolk County developed rapidly, especially in the 20 years between 1950 and 1970. During that time, Suffolk's population quadrupled, increasing by 851,000. In 1986 Suffolk County passed Nassau County in population and remains higher than Nassau in population.

Today, the population of Suffolk County continues to grow slowly. The Long Island Power Authority (LIPA) estimated that Suffolk County's population in 2007 was 1,504,947. This figure represents an increase of 6.0% since 2000, after increases of 7% in the 1990s and 3% in the 1980s. Suffolk County's population is the largest of any county in New York State outside of New York City. Only Brooklyn, Queens and Manhattan have more people. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Suffolk County ranks 23rd in population out of all 3,141 counties in the United States, and is larger in population than 12 U. S. states. Its slow population growth is expected to continue.

Population Density

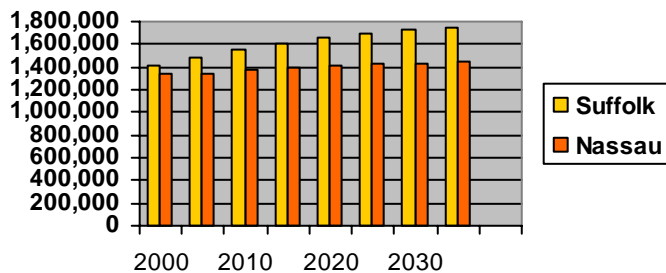
Based on 2007 population estimates prepared by the Long Island Power Authority (LIPA), Suffolk County's population density was 1,652 persons per square mile. Yet Suffolk's ten towns vary greatly in population size and density. The five western towns, Huntington, Babylon, Smithtown, Islip, and Brookhaven, contain 91% of the County's population but just 62% of its land area. The 2007 population density in western Suffolk was 2,417 persons per square mile, while in eastern Suffolk the density was just 405 persons per square mile. Of the ten towns that comprise Suffolk County, the largest in population is Brookhaven at 489,000 and the smallest is Shelter Island with 2,500 residents in 2007.

Although Suffolk has more people than Nassau County, Suffolk is only about one-third as densely populated as Nassau. Population density in Suffolk County (1,652 persons per square mile) is lower than the density in Nassau County (4,725 persons per square mile), Westchester County (2,198), Rockland County (1,702), Queens County (20,783), and Manhattan (70,595).

Population Projections

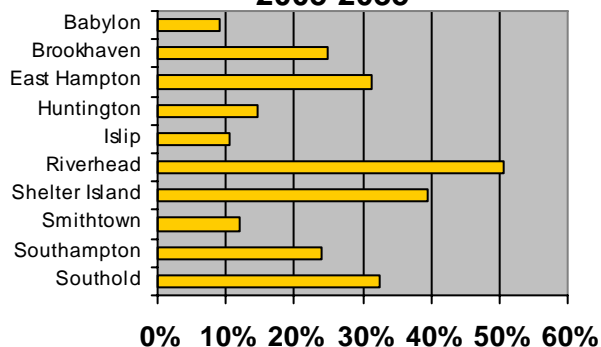
Suffolk County's population is projected to continue to increase slowly for the next 25 years. Between 2005 and 2035, Suffolk County's population is projected to increase by 18%. Of Suffolk's ten towns, the Town of Riverhead is expected to increase by the largest percentage between 2005 and 2035, followed in order by the Towns of Shelter Island, Southold, East Hampton, Brookhaven, and Southampton. The largest numerical increase is expected in the Town of Brookhaven (118,000).

Projected Population



Saturation population is the population which can be expected if all available land were to be developed according to existing zoning. It is estimated that Suffolk County’s saturation population will be 1.8 million persons, and this population figure may be approached at around the year 2040. The saturation population figure represents about a 20% increase over the 2005 population figure for the County.

Projected Population Increase 2005-2035



Suffolk County’s projected saturation population has declined significantly in recent decades. In 1962, the saturation population was projected to be 3.4 million people in Suffolk County. Due to zoning changes, land preservation efforts and lower average household sizes, a much lower saturation population is now expected.

AGE OF THE POPULATION

The median age of the County’s population in 2006 was 38.3 years (up from 36.5 years in 2000). Suffolk County’s population continues to age along with the rest of the country, and has a slightly higher median age compared to the State’s median of 37.4 and the national median of 36.4, but lower than Nassau County’s median age of 40.7. The median age of Suffolk residents was just 33.5 in 1990, 29.9 in 1980 and 26.4 in 1970.

Pre-School and School-Age Population

Because of changing birth rates, the pre-school (age 0-4)

population in Suffolk County continues to change. This population declined by 22% in the 1970s as birth rates declined, and then climbed by 6% in the 1980s and by 8% in the 1990s as birth rates increased from the “baby boom echo.” Since 2000, however, birth rates have declined slightly. The population aged 0-4 in Suffolk County decreased by 8,260 or 8% between 2000 and 2007.

The school-age population in Suffolk County is now declining slowly. The number of children aged 5-17 decreased by 1% or 3,100 between 2000 and 2007. Suffolk County’s public school enrollment declined more than one-third from a peak of 331,000 in 1976 to 214,000 in 1990. These declines led to the closing of over 70 schools in Suffolk County. As the population age 5-17 increased by 36,000 or 15% in the 1990s, public school enrollment in Suffolk County increased every year between 1991 and 2004, but has decreased each year since 2004 and is projected to continue to slowly decrease. Public school enrollment as of 2007 was 254,000 in Suffolk County, far below the 300,000+ levels of the 1970s.

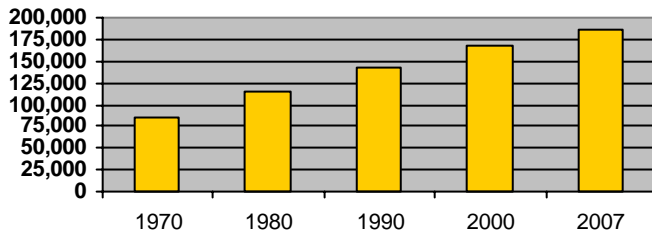
Young Adult Population

The population aged 20-34 is an important group to analyze because this population represents our young workers. The population in this age group in Suffolk County was 249,000 in 2007, a decrease of 7% from the 2000 figure, which was 19% lower than the 1990 figure. It is expected that the population in this age group will begin to increase as the “baby boom echo” population enters this age group. This change has already begun to happen; the population age 20-24 increased by 23% between 2000 and 2007. Many of these age group population shifts are influenced by social factors at the time when these people were born. In this case, many of the people in the age 20-34 group in 1990 were baby boomers who aged out of this group by 2000, replaced in 2000 by baby “busters” who are smaller in number.

Senior Citizen Population

Persons aged 65 and over are a fast-growing segment of Suffolk County’s population. In 2007, there were 185,000 persons aged 65 and over in Suffolk, comprising 13% of the population. In 1990, seniors aged 65 and over represented 11% of the population, up from 9% in 1980 and 8% in 1970. Between 2000 and 2007, the number aged 65 and over increased by 11% after increasing by 18% in the 1990s, by 22% in the 1980s and by 35% in the 1970s.

Population Age 65 and Over, Suffolk County



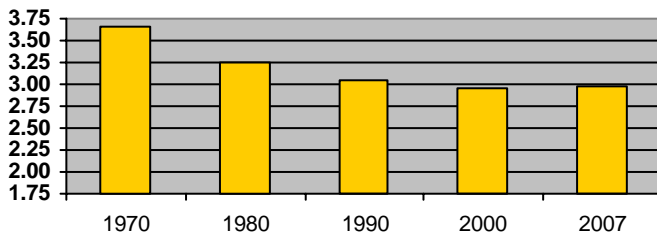
The 2000 census revealed that 35,000 or 22% of the County’s senior citizens live alone, and that 25% of Suffolk County households contain a senior citizen. These figures are even more striking in the five eastern Suffolk towns: 18% of the population is aged 65 or over and 33% of all households contain a senior citizen.

There are 165 multi-family housing complexes dedicated for seniors in Suffolk County. Suffolk contains approximately 25,000 units of senior-dedicated housing units in condos, apartments, and co-ops. There are fewer such units (10,000) in Nassau County.

HOUSEHOLD SIZE

The average household size in Suffolk County has decreased significantly in recent decades. As of 2007, the average household size was 2.97 persons per household. The average household size in Suffolk peaked at 3.74 in 1967. Household sizes declined significantly in the 1970s and averaged 3.04 by 1990. In 2000 the average Suffolk County household size was 2.96 people, and began to very slowly increase earlier this decade. A stable or very slowly increasing household size is expected in the coming years.

Household Size, Suffolk County



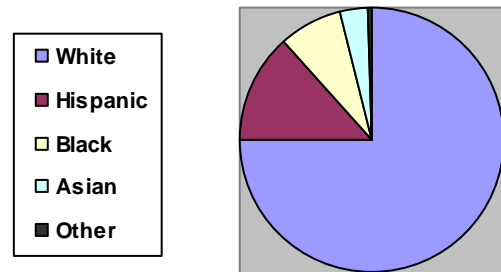
New housing developments tend to contain younger families and larger household sizes. As an area’s residents and housing mature, household sizes tend to decline, causing the total population to decline. This is especially true as development approaches saturation conditions and little new housing is built. Eventually, larger numbers of young households replace the older households and the household size stops declining or increases slightly, which is happening now.

RACE AND ETHNICITY

Suffolk County’s population is mostly White and in 2007, non-Hispanic Whites made up 75% of the population. Hispanics are now the largest minority group in Suffolk and numbered 193,000 or 13% of the population in 2007. Blacks numbered 114,000 or 8% of the total and there were 49,000 Asians comprising 3% of the population. An additional 1% of the population was of two or more races.

Suffolk County continues to become more racially diverse. Between 1990 and 2000, the non-Hispanic White population declined by 1%, while the Black population rose 19%, the Hispanic population increased by 70%, and the Asian population grew by 52%. Between 2000 and 2007, the Hispanic population increased by the largest raw number, but the fastest growing group in percentage terms was Asian, whose population increased by 34% between 2000 and 2007 in Suffolk County. These trends are expected to continue.

Suffolk County Population by Race and Hispanic Origin, 2007



As of the 2000 U. S. census, three ancestry groups dominate Long Island’s population. Suffolk County has more persons of Italian ancestry than any county in the United States. Italians make up 29% of the County’s population, Irish persons comprise 23% and Germans make up 17% of the population. There are more people of Irish and German descent on Long Island than in all of New York City.

Of Suffolk County’s Hispanic population, one-third were Puerto Rican, based on 2000 census data. The next largest Hispanic groups were Salvadoran, followed by Dominican, Colombian, Mexican, and Ecuadorian. Half of Suffolk County residents who spoke Spanish also speak English very well, based on 2000 census data.

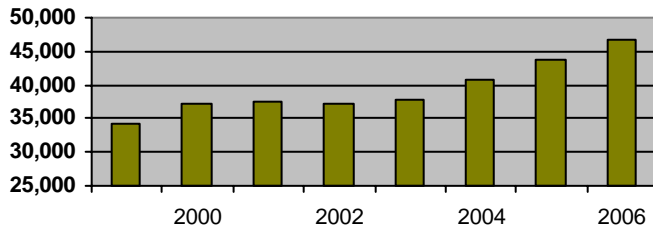
INCOME

Personal and Per Capita Income

Total personal income of Suffolk residents was \$68.2 billion in 2006, ranking 5th of all counties in New York State. The County’s 2006 per capita personal income was \$46,830, ranking 6th in New York State. Suffolk’s per capita income was 28% higher than the national average of \$36,714. Of the 3,141 counties in the United States, Suffolk’s per capita income ranked

83rd highest in 2006, in the top 3% of all counties.

Per Capita Income, Suffolk County



82% of the housing units in Suffolk County are owner-occupied.

Household Income

Suffolk County’s 2006 median household income was \$76,847, ranking in the top 1% of all counties. Suffolk’s median household income figure was 59% higher than the median household income in the nation as a whole. Suffolk’s average wage per job in 2006 of \$45,783 ranked in the top 4% of all counties in the country.

Poverty

Suffolk County’s poverty rate (the percentage of people living under the poverty level) remains low. However, in 2007 there were still 71,000 people in Suffolk County living in poverty, 5% of the population, according to the U. S. Census Bureau. This figure is based on a poverty income threshold which was \$20,650 for a family of four in 2007 and \$10,210 for an individual. This means that a one-person household earning \$11,000 in Suffolk County is considered to be living above the poverty level. In a relatively high cost area such as Suffolk County, poverty can be easily understated because the thresholds are based on a national standard.

In Suffolk County, the poverty rate for children was higher than for all persons. In 2007, more than 20,000 or 5.9% of persons under age 18 in Suffolk County lived in poverty as defined by the Census Bureau.

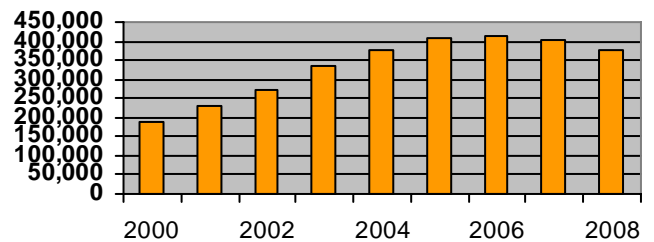
HOUSING

Suffolk County contains more than 500,000 housing units and nearly 500,000 households. Long Island has a very high percentage of owner-occupied housing units. As of 2007, 82% of Suffolk County’s occupied housing units were occupied by their owners, far above the nationwide figure of 67%. Long Island also has one of the lowest housing vacancy rates in the country. The homeowner vacancy rate in Suffolk was 1.2% in 2007, indicating a healthy market, but the vacancy rate in rented housing units was higher, at 6.0%.

Housing Prices

After several years of dramatic price increases, Suffolk County housing prices began to decrease in 2007. Home prices in Suffolk County increased by about 10-20% each year between 2000 and 2005. In 2006, the market began to soften and home prices rose by about 3%. Home prices were flat overall through most of 2007.

Median Home Selling Price, Suffolk County



As of September 2008, the median selling price of a home in Suffolk County was \$376,000, a 7% decline from September 2007. The overall decline has been about 10% from the peak prices of 2006. Home prices will likely continue to be reduced modestly for the next several months as the new reality of credit availability and more realistic housing prices become the norm. Suffolk County’s home values are expected to remain high relative to national figures. Suffolk County home prices in 2008 remain about 90% higher than the national median.

Housing Sales and Construction

Housing sales have slowed considerably in Suffolk County. In 2007, there were 9,638 homes sold in Suffolk County, a level last seen in the mid-1990s after the last housing slump. In comparison, in 2005, 13,201 homes were sold in Suffolk County, a record high number. The number of homes sold in Suffolk County in 2008 is running 19% below the number sold in the same period in 2007.

The number of building permits issued for new housing in

Suffolk County has also declined significantly. In 2007, there were 2,126 new housing units authorized by building permit in Suffolk County, the fewest number in any year since records began in 1950. The 2007 figure was 17% lower than the 2006 figure and 52% lower than in 2002. Through September 2008, the number of new housing unit permits is down another 19% from this point in 2007. Not only is the housing market slumping, but the amount of vacant land available for future development is becoming more limited.



In 2007 more than 2,000 new homes were built in Suffolk County.

The value of new residential construction in Suffolk hit an all-time high of \$1.15 billion in 2005, but declined by 37% in 2006 and by another 12% in 2007 to \$640 million, similar to the level in 1998 before the housing market started heating up. The value of construction of new homes between January and September 2008 is 14% lower than it was in the same period in 2007.

Rental Housing

Housing rents have remained fairly steady in recent years. A Suffolk County Planning Department analysis of apartments for rent in *Newsday* showed that in early 2008 in Suffolk County the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment was \$1,107, a slight increase of 9% over the 2002 figure (as home sale prices increased 59% in that period) but 42% higher than the 1999 figure. An average two bedroom apartment rented for \$1,469 in 2008, up 11% since 2002. In a 2000 U.S. census ranking of median gross rent paid, Suffolk County ranked 11th highest among all counties in the nation.

After relatively little rental apartment construction in the 1980s, construction of apartment complexes for seniors and non-seniors has increased substantially in recent years. In the 1980s, nearly 1,700 units of market rate senior apartments were constructed in Suffolk County, and 2,800 units were constructed in the 1990s. Already since 2000, more than 3,800 senior citizen apartment units have been built. Non-senior apartment construction has increased just as dramatically. In the 1980s in Suffolk, 885 market rate apartment units were built, followed by 2,500 units in the 1990s and 3,200 units already since 2000. Many of these new complexes charge rents in excess of \$1,500 for a one-bedroom apartment.



A rental apartment complex in Suffolk County.

ECONOMY

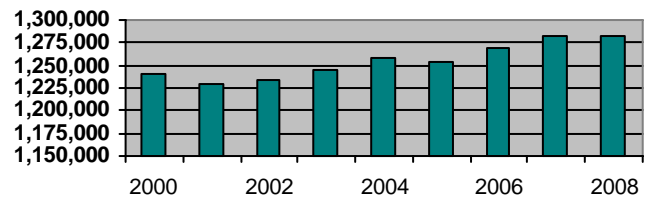
Long Island has a large and diverse economy. Its gross metropolitan product, the total output of goods and services produced, was estimated to be \$137 billion in 2007. This figure would place Nassau-Suffolk in the top 20 metropolitan areas in the U.S., and is approximately the same size as the economies of Algeria, Kuwait, and Ukraine.

Employment

Suffolk County continues to experience stable economic conditions. In October 2008, Suffolk County had 756,400 employed residents. This is a decrease of 1,200 (0.2%) from October 2007, which was the highest figure for any October. The County's labor force growth has remained flat for the past several months.

Employment growth in the Nassau-Suffolk region has turned slightly negative in an unfavorable national economic climate. Total non-farm employment in October 2008 was 1.283 million, an increase of just 300 jobs since October 2007. Non-government employment declined by 2,800 in the period.

Employment in the Nassau-Suffolk Region



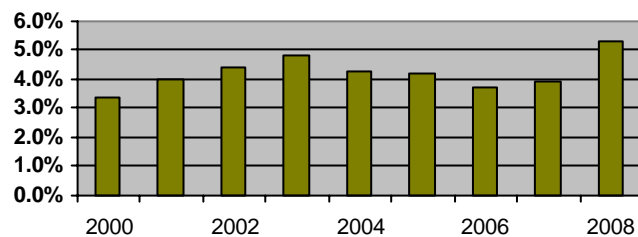
There was employment growth in a few categories. The largest employment growth in the past year occurred in educational and health services (an increase of 3,600 jobs, or 1.7%) and government (an increase of 3,100 or 1.5%, primarily in local school districts). The largest job losses occurred in manufacturing (-2,200 or -2.6%) and financial activities (-1,900 or -2.4%).

Between 1993 and 2000, 168,900 jobs were added on Long Island. In 2001 and 2002, employment growth turned slightly negative. Modest job growth took place in 2003 through 2007 when a total of 48,000 jobs were added in Nassau-Suffolk.

After significant manufacturing job losses in the late 1980s and early 1990s, employment in Nassau-Suffolk’s manufacturing sector stabilized somewhat in the late 1990s, and then began to decline moderately in 2001. Employment in durable goods manufacturing declined 21% between 1998 and 2003 from 67,200 to 53,100 jobs, and the figure was another 7% lower (49,100) by October 2008.

Since 2003, employment in defense-related industries has increased on Long Island due to higher military spending. Defense contract awards to Suffolk firms in 2006 totaled \$570 million, up 44% over the 2001 figure but still lower than the 1990 figure.

**Suffolk Unemployment Rate
(October of each year)**



Inflation remains moderate in the region, but it has increased slightly. The consumer price index for the New York metropolitan area increased by less than 4% in each of years 1992 through 2007. Inflation for 2007 was 2.8%, and inflation has been running at 4.3% in 2008 through October.



Symbol Technologies is a large local employer.

The employment base on Long Island has become more diversified in the past ten years. The loss of defense jobs in the 1980s and 1990s hurt the Long Island economy but allowed the economy to become less dependent on one industry. Long Island can now depend on several growth sectors, including health, educational and social services, tourism, the arts, and several emerging technologies, notably bioscience technology. Long Island’s bioscience research community is expected to continue to expand, and the major players are Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, SUNY Stony Brook, Brookhaven National Lab, and the North Shore Health System.

Unemployment and Inflation

The unemployment rate in the County was 5.0% in October 2008, remaining lower than the rate in New York State as a whole and the United States, but significantly higher than it was a year earlier (3.6%). Suffolk County’s unemployment rate has been rising since mid-2007. In October 2008 there were 40,100 unemployed Suffolk residents, 12,000 more than the number unemployed in October 2007 and the highest number of unemployed residents in September since 1993. Suffolk’s 5.0% unemployment rate in September 2008 was higher than any September unemployment rate since 1995. Yet Suffolk County’s unemployment rate remains lower than the rate in New York State (5.5%) and the United States (6.5%) but higher than in Nassau County (4.8%).

Major Employers

In 2007, 36 private employers each had more than 2,000 workers on Long Island. These employers cover a wide range of industries, including health care, telecommunications, banking, educational institutions, and department stores. The North Shore Health System, a network of 14 hospitals and other health care centers, is Nassau-Suffolk’s largest employer, has 31,000 employees. Catholic Health Services employs 14,000 in Nassau-Suffolk. The Winthrop Health System (hospitals), Stop & Shop supermarkets, the Long Island Railroad, and Cablevision (telecommunications) each employ more than 6,000 on Long Island. The next largest employers are Adecco (staffing services), Verizon (telecommunications), Waldbaums supermarkets, Pathmark supermarkets, the Diocese of Rockville Centre, King Kullen supermarkets, Home Depot, Federated Department Stores, KeySpan (utility), and CVS, each of which employ between 4,000 and 6,000 in Nassau-Suffolk. Other companies employing at least 2,000 in Nassau-Suffolk include Long Island University, UPS, *Newsday*, JPMorgan Chase, Citigroup, NBTY (manufacturer of vitamins and supplements) Estee Lauder (manufacturer of cosmetics) and Northrop Grumman (defense contractor).

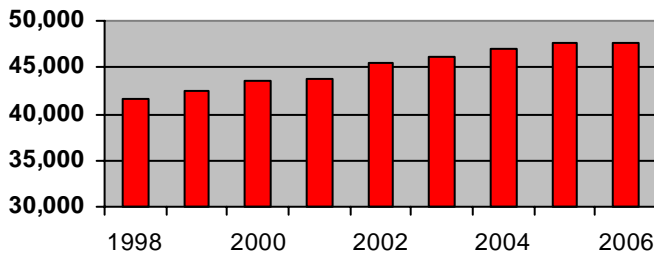
Large government employers in Nassau-Suffolk include 127 school districts which together employ 85,000 people (as of July 2008), state government which employs 25,000, and federal government which employs 18,000 (including 9,000 postal workers). Suffolk County government employs 11,000 people.



Suffolk County has over 47,000 businesses.

The number of businesses located in Suffolk County continues to rise. Of all counties in the U. S., Suffolk County ranked 13th in the number of business establishments in 2006. There were more than 47,000 business establishments with payroll in 2006 in Suffolk, an all-time high and a 9% increase since 2001. The largest numbers of businesses are in the retail trade category; followed by “professional, scientific & technical services,” and construction. Sixty-three percent of Suffolk’s businesses employ fewer than 5 persons, and 78% of businesses in Suffolk employ fewer than 10 persons. In addition, in 2006 Suffolk County had more than 118,000 “non-employer” firms, mostly self-employed individuals operating very small unincorporated businesses. The number of these businesses has grown 13% since 2002.

**Number of Businesses With Payroll
Suffolk County**



Suffolk County contains 17 communities which each contained more than 10,000 private sector jobs in 2006, according to the U. S. Census Bureau. Employment in these areas is high because of concentrations of office, industrial, or institutional development. The largest employment centers in Suffolk County are Melville, Hauppauge, and Farmingdale, which each contain more than 30,000 jobs. Melville alone has 63,000 jobs.

Tourism and Recreation

Suffolk County is a large tourist market. Eastern Suffolk County is a major tourist and second-home destination, with one of the largest concentrations of second homes of any county in the United States. There are approximately 37,000 second homes in eastern Suffolk, which draw approximately 150,000 part-time residents with large purchasing power to the area during summer and on weekends. Eastern Suffolk County also contains 5,800 lodging rooms, ranging from traditional motels to luxurious

boutique hotels and bed & breakfast inns. These lodging properties draw thousands of tourists to Suffolk County’s east end throughout the year, but primarily in the summer months. The population in eastern Suffolk increases by more than 200,000 persons during peak summer times due to tourism, more than doubling the year-round population.



The Montauk Lighthouse.

Suffolk County has a long golfing tradition. The County now has 84 golf courses, including 15 courses constructed since 2000. The 2004 U. S. Open was held at the Shinnecock Hills Golf Club in Southampton. In 2002 the U. S. Open was played at Bethpage State Park Golf Club in Nassau County near the border with Suffolk County and will return there again in 2009, bringing tourism-related commerce.

Suffolk County’s 6,000 seat ballpark, home to the Long Island Ducks independent league baseball team, opened in 2000 in Central Islip. Attendance at Ducks games at the park has been very high. In 2000 a new 42,000 square foot aquarium opened in Suffolk County, the Atlantis Marine World aquarium in downtown Riverhead. The aquarium attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. A hotel adjacent to the aquarium is planned. Another aquarium has been proposed as part of the redevelopment of the Pilgrim Psychiatric Hospital property in Brentwood. In 2002 SUNY Stony Brook completed its new \$25 million stadium, the largest outdoor sports arena in Suffolk County, an 8,254 seat venue that will be used for concerts and other events.

Farming

The value of agricultural production in Suffolk County is the highest of any county in New York State. As of 2002 there were 34,000 acres of farmland in the County, primarily in eastern Suffolk County. Farmland acreage in the County declined for decades after World War II as farmland was sold to residential developers. By the 1990s, farmland acreage remained fairly steady. Some farms have converted to the low labor, high value production of sod, ornamental and nursery plants, and grapes. Once famous for oysters, potatoes, and ducks, Suffolk County is becoming well-known for its quality wines.

Farming and tourism in Suffolk County are interrelated. Farmland provides an open and rural character that offers a change from the congested areas in and around New York City.

Eastern Suffolk's numerous farm stands offer fresh local produce to local residents and visitors. Several downtown areas in western Suffolk have green market programs where local produce is sold.



Agriculture is an important industry in Suffolk County.

In the 1970s, Suffolk County implemented the nation's first Farmland Preservation Program, whereby the County purchases the development rights to agricultural land for the purpose of preserving open space and working farms. Suffolk County now owns the development rights to more than 9,100 acres of farmland.

DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Office Market

Suffolk County has a substantial office market. It contains more than 24 million square feet of non-government office buildings. This figure includes 3.8 million square feet of new office space built since 2000. An additional 2.7 million square feet of office space has been proposed but is not yet built. The office market in Suffolk County remains fairly healthy and stable. According to CB Richard Ellis, the office vacancy rate in Suffolk County was 15.8% in the 3rd quarter of 2008, one point higher than the rate in the 3rd quarter of 2007. Yet this vacancy rate remains lower than the national suburban office vacancy rate. Average office rental rates have increased modestly over the past year, \$25.40 in the 3rd quarter of 2008, a 2.0% increase over the same quarter in 2007.



An office building in Melville.

The Route 110 Corridor in western Suffolk County has become the center of Long Island's business community. Melville alone has 8.7 million square feet of major office space and there are

over 1,500 acres of industrial development in Melville and East Farmingdale. In addition to being the headquarters of Newsday, the 19th largest newspaper in the United States in circulation, Melville is also home to other large corporate headquarters. These include OSI Pharmaceuticals, Sbarro, Arrow Electronics and Henry Schein, a distributor of health care products and services. Rubie's Costume is currently constructing a new 103,000 square foot headquarters office building on Route 110 at the intersection with the Long Island Expressway. Canon USA is planning to move its headquarters from Nassau County to Melville in Suffolk County. The company plans to construct a 690,000 square foot office building by 2010, where more than 1,100 employees will work.

After Melville's 8.9 million square feet of office space, the largest concentrations of private office space in Suffolk County are located in Hauppauge (3.5 million square feet), Islandia (1.9 million), Bohemia (900,000 square feet) and Ronkonkoma (800,000 square feet).

Land costs for office development have become very expensive in some areas of the County, such as Melville and Hauppauge. Some new office space has been created in these high value areas by the conversion of older industrial buildings to higher office uses. However, with the upheaval in the national banking system and financial markets in 2008, the performance of the office market into 2009 is expected to suffer.

Industrial Market

Suffolk County contains significant industrial space. According to Grubb & Ellis, there is 91 million square feet of industrial square footage in Suffolk County, nearly two-thirds of the industrial space on Long Island. Most of the space is general industrial space, but a large portion is warehouse and distribution space and a significant smaller portion is R&D/flex space. East Farmingdale contains a large amount of older industrial space. The largest concentration of industrial space in Suffolk County is located in Hauppauge. A significant industrial corridor has emerged in the Veterans Highway area near MacArthur Airport in Ronkonkoma and Bohemia. Further east, significant new industrial space continues to be developed in the Yaphank area.

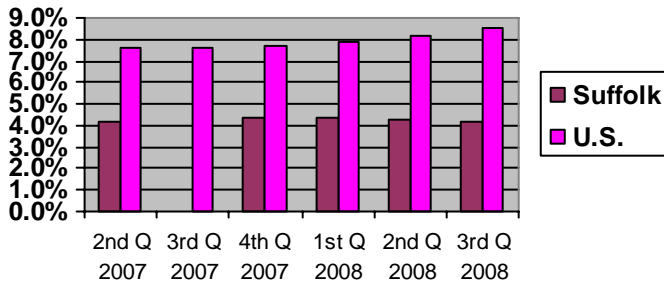


Suffolk County Contains 91 million square feet of industrial space.

The industrial market in Suffolk County remains very strong. The average asking rental rate in Suffolk County for industrial space was \$7.78 in the 3rd quarter of 2008, among the highest in the nation but significantly lower than Nassau County's rate of \$10.75. As of the 3rd quarter of 2008, the industrial vacancy rate on Long Island was 4th best in the nation and is expected to remain strong. According to Grubb & Ellis, Suffolk County's

industrial vacancy rate was 4.2% in the 3rd quarter of 2008, lower than in the third quarter of 2007. In some areas, industrial buildings have been converted to office buildings (fetching higher rents), contributing to the improving industrial vacancy rate. There is also pressure for some industrially zoned land to be developed for housing.

Industrial Vacancy Rate, Suffolk County vs. U.S.



Continued demand for industrial space has spawned significant new industrial construction in central Suffolk County, especially in the Yaphank area, where there is a New York State Empire Zone. Global Tissue plans to construct a new 175,000 square foot headquarters on 23 acres in Yaphank. Sysco Corp., the nation’s largest supplier of food for restaurants and food service facilities, plans to build a 375,000 square foot regional headquarters in Yaphank on the site of the Parr Meadows racetrack. Quality King, a distributor of pharmaceutical, health and beauty products, opened a new 580,000 square foot warehouse in Yaphank in late 2007. In addition, a \$450 million 350 megawatt gas-powered electric power plant is under construction in Yaphank and expected to come online in 2009.

The 300 acre Heartland Business Center industrial park in Brentwood opened in 1990 and is now home to 3.5 million square feet of industrial space and 3,000 workers. An adjacent 87 acre parcel has recently been opened for development and will add 1.3 million square feet of space and 1,000 jobs to the industrial park. Alcan Packaging, a company that considered moving its operation off Long Island, recently built a new 200,000 square foot building in the Heartland Business Center. The area around Long Island MacArthur Airport also continues to receive new office and light industrial construction, adding more than one million square feet of industrial space in the past few years. A 230,000 square foot building was completed at 545 Johnson Avenue in Bohemia in 2008.

A commercial and industrial real estate developer, Rechler Equity Partners, has been selected by Suffolk County to build the Hampton Business and Technology Park. This commercial and industrial center will be located at the County-owned Gabreski Airport in Westhampton and will eventually total 485,000 square foot of development on 53 acres, including a 145 room hotel.

Suffolk County plans to triple the sewage treatment capacity in the Hauppauge Industrial Park, the second largest industrial park

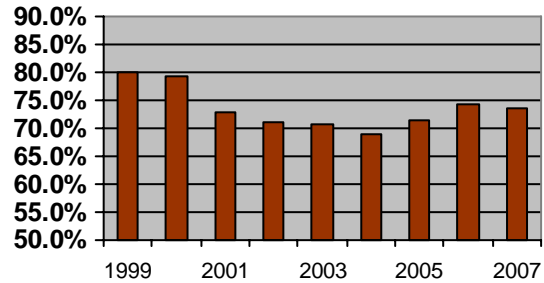
in the country. This sewage system upgrade will allow more businesses to hook up to the new system, which will have environmental advantages and will reduce costs to businesses already connected to the existing system. The upgrade also will accommodate the trend toward converting industrial space to office space.

Hotels and Motels

Suffolk County’s extensive industrial, office, and tourist markets support a large number of hotels, motels, and bed & breakfast inns. Suffolk County contains 319 hotels, motels, and inns. These lodging properties have approximately 12,200 rooms. Of those, about one-quarter are open only seasonally, half the year in the warmer months. Suffolk County’s seasonal hotels are located primarily in eastern Suffolk County, mostly in the Hamptons.

Since 2003, more than 1,500 lodging rooms have been added in Suffolk County, primarily in western Suffolk, increasing the total number of rooms by 15% in the past five years. Correspondingly, the hotel occupancy rate in western Suffolk County declined in 2002 through 2004, but occupancy rebounded to 74.3% in 2006 and held relatively steady at 73.6% in 2007, according to Island Publications.

Hotel Occupancy Rate, Western Suffolk County



Since 2007, two large Marriott-brand hotels opened in Farmingdale near republic Airport, and a Hilton Garden Inn opened in Melville/Plainview and also in Riverhead. There are at least 10 additional hotels proposed to be built in Suffolk County, which would contain several hundred rooms. In addition, the Riverhead Resorts proposal alone would eventually add 2,000 new hotel rooms.

Retail Market

Suffolk County is a major retail market, with \$30 billion in retail sales in 2007. According to *Trade Dimensions International*, Suffolk County had retail sales per household of \$60,588, ranking among the highest in the country. According to the Suffolk County Department of Planning, Suffolk County’s shopping center space totals 39.2 million square feet. This includes more than 5.3 million square feet of new shopping center space added in Suffolk County just since 2000. In

addition, Suffolk County’s traditional downtown centers contain 8 million square feet of store space.

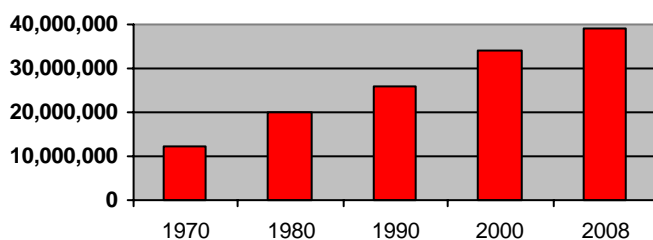
Suffolk County has three regional malls and two regional outlet shopping centers. The Tanger Outlet Center in Riverhead expanded in 1997 to become the nation’s fifth largest manufacturer’s outlet center at 777,000 square feet. The other outlet shopping center opened in 2008 in Deer Park: the 805,000 square foot Tanger Outlet Center at The Arches.

An additional 5.8 million square feet of new shopping center space is presently proposed in Suffolk County. The largest proposed shopping center on the drawing board is the 850,000 square foot Brookhaven Walk lifestyle shopping center in Yaphank.

Shopping center redevelopment and major store expansions have continued in Suffolk County. In 2006 the Smith Haven Mall in Lake Grove redeveloped a vacant department store as a \$75 million lifestyle center, an open air shopping center. A vacant portion of the Bellport Outlet Stores shopping center that was built in the 1990s was demolished and a new Home Depot was built there in 2007.

In addition to the new store in North Bellport, Home Depot built a new store in Commack in 2006. Target built new stores in Medford in 2005 and Farmingdale in 2004. Wal-Mart built new stores in Farmingdale in 2007 and Commack in 2006. Additional Wal-Mart stores have been proposed in Rocky Point, Patchogue and Riverhead. New Lowe’s stores opened in Farmingdale and Bay Shore in 2006 and in Stony Brook in 2007 and three additional new stores have been proposed. Since 2005, Stop & Shop supermarket has built three new stores, each about 70,000 square feet.

**Shopping Center Space (Sq. Ft.)
Suffolk County**



A 2005 study by the Suffolk County Department of Planning found significant improvement in the percentage of vacant stores in shopping centers and downtown business districts. In shopping centers, the percentage of stores that were vacant improved from 19% in 1996 to 12% in 2000 and 7.8% in 2005. In downtown areas, the vacancy rate improved from 11% in 1996 to 8% in 2000 and 7.6% in 2005. Many of the shopping centers in Suffolk County have been constructed or renovated in recent years. In downtown areas, revitalization efforts have contributed to the emergence of many of the County’s downtowns as vibrant centers of entertainment and dining.

Institutional Development

Suffolk County is served by 70 public school districts. The combined budget for Suffolk’s school districts for the 2008-09 school year is \$6.5 billion dollars. Public school enrollment was 254,000 in the 2007-08 school year, a 3% decline since 2004. Enrollment is now 19% higher than the low point of 1990 but 23% lower than in 1976. In recent years, major school additions have been completed in many local school districts. However, enrollment is now projected to continue to slowly decrease in the next few years.

In Suffolk County there are eight four-year colleges having a total undergraduate enrollment of approximately 33,000 students and a graduate enrollment of about 11,500 in 2006-07. Farmingdale State College has expanded in recent years and additional development is planned for the campus. In 2005 a 400-bed dormitory opened at the college and a new five year \$55 million improvement program includes a new \$29 million School of Business building. Dowling College is planning a \$16 million 87,000 square foot Student Center including a gymnasium and a new \$12.5 million outdoor athletic complex opened in early 2008. Suffolk County Community College, with more than 21,000 students and three campuses, continues to expand its facilities. In 2008 Suffolk Community College opened its 28,000 square foot Culinary Arts School building in downtown Riverhead.

The State University at Stony Brook is the largest college in Suffolk County, with 14,800 undergraduate and 7,600 graduate students in 2006. The University enrollment continues to increase and the University continues to expand its facilities. In 2005 Stony Brook University purchased the 110 acre campus of Southampton College. The University also acquired 246 acres of property in St. James in 2005 to eventually develop 10 buildings totaling 830,000 square feet, known as the Stony Brook Research and Technology Park. The first building, the 100,000 square foot Center For Excellence in Wireless Information Technology, is to be completed December 2008. Construction is underway for the next building, the Advanced Energy Research and Technology Center. The third building is expected to focus on biotechnology. In addition, \$45 million was included in New York State’s adopted 2008 budget for Stony Brook University to establish a law school.

There are 12 hospitals in Suffolk County. According to the New York State Health Department, Long Island hospitals are spending hundreds of millions of dollars on major construction projects to expand and modernize their facilities. In 2008, Stony Brook University Hospital completed a six year \$300 million hospital revitalization project, including a 150,000 square foot expansion and the renovation and expansion of its emergency, surgical and obstetrics departments. Peconic Bay Medical Center in Riverhead is undergoing a \$35 million expansion and renovation. In 2008 it completed an expansion of its emergency department and construction of a new 40,000 square foot surgical pavilion is underway, scheduled to open in 2009.

In 2007 Brookhaven National Laboratory, an atomic energy

research facility that employs 2,600 people, completed an \$81 million 94,000 square foot building funded by the U. S. Department of Energy, the Center for Functional Nanomaterials. Funding for major new additional research buildings at Brookhaven National Lab is being sought. Brookhaven National Laboratory was chosen by the U. S. Department of Energy as a potential site for the National Synchrotron Light Source II. \$65 million was allocated to the project with a projected construction cost of \$925 million. \$162.1 million was also allocated for the continuing operation of the Lab's Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider.

Other Major Development Activity

Suffolk County contains several areas that are current and future engines of growth and development. In 2002, a 460 acre surplus portion of the Pilgrim State Psychiatric Center in Brentwood was sold by New York State to a developer, and a \$4 billion mixed-use community has been proposed for the site at the intersection of the Long Island Expressway and the Sagtikos Parkway. As proposed, the site will eventually be developed in stages, with 1,000,000 square feet of upscale lifestyle retail, 9,000 units of multi-story rental housing, 3,000,000 square feet of office space, a hotel, a cultural center and an aquarium. Environmental impact studies prepared for this major development proposal are currently under review by the Town of Islip.

The area which formerly contained the Central Islip Psychiatric Center continues to undergo major redevelopment. Suffolk County's 500,000 square foot Cohalan County Court Complex was completed in 1996 and the \$212 million 822,000 square foot federal courthouse opened in 2000. In 2006 Touro Law School completed a new \$35 million 200,000 square foot law school building adjacent to the courthouses. In 2000 a \$16 million ballpark opened in Central Islip on the site, home to the Long Island Ducks baseball team. An old hospital building was renovated into a 175,000 square foot office building, and more than 1,000 units of rental and owner-occupied housing have been built on the former psychiatric hospital property, and more units are under construction and planned. A new hotel and new restaurants are also proposed.

The Route 58 corridor in Riverhead continues to be developed into a major commercial center. The Tanger Outlet Center on Route 58 was built in 1994 and expanded in 1997 to approximately 800,000 square feet, making it one of the nation's largest outlet shopping centers. The 395,000 square foot Riverhead Centre shopping center opened in 2002 on Route 58. In total there is more than 2 million square feet of retail space on Route 58 in Riverhead, and an additional 1.1 million square feet of retail has been proposed there. An 89 room Holiday Inn Express opened on Route 58 in 2005, a 114 room Hilton Garden Inn opened in 2008, and a 140 room Marriott Residence Inn is proposed.

Calverton Airport in the Town of Riverhead, formerly owned by the U. S. Navy and used by Grumman Corporation to test aircraft, continues to be redeveloped. Many of the former Grumman buildings are being reused for various commercial and light industrial purposes. In addition, substantial new development has been proposed for the area immediately

surrounding the runways, known as Enterprise Park at Calverton (EPCAL). There is a proposal for 3.8 million square feet of new office and industrial space on 550 available acres. On another 755 acres zoned for recreation uses, developers have proposed a \$2.1 billion project called Riverhead Resorts, with 2,000 hotel rooms and 2,200 time share units in eight hotel properties featuring various forms of outdoor and indoor recreation and entertainment.

In Yaphank, in addition to the power plant and industrial construction underway, proposals have been received to develop County-owned land in Yaphank, including substantial affordable housing units on 110 acres and industrial development on 80 acres. It is expected that the selection of a developer will be announced shortly.

TRANSPORTATION

Roads

Traffic congestion is a problem in Suffolk County that has increasingly worsened during the last 25 years. The number of registered vehicles continues to increase faster than population. As of 2007 there were 1.2 million registered vehicles and 1.1 million licensed drivers in Suffolk County. There are now 2.44 vehicles for every household in Suffolk County.

New York State had planned to begin reconstruction in 2009 of portions of three arterial highways to improve safety and traffic flow: Route 110, Route 112, and Route 347. However, state budget shortfalls may delay some of these improvements. The New York State Department of Transportation also plans to construct an \$85 million inter-modal truck/rail depot on 105 acres on the former grounds of Pilgrim State Hospital in Brentwood. This facility would receive freight by rail and then transfer the goods to trucks for local transport. The aim is to transport more goods by freight and less by truck, since presently only 1% of the goods delivered to Long Island arrive by rail, compared to the national average of 15%. Another inter-modal site is already under construction in Yaphank south of the Long Island Expressway.

Mass Transit

Suffolk County is served by an extensive commuter rail system, the Long Island Railroad (LIRR), which is controlled by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. The LIRR is the largest commuter rail system in the country. There are 41 Long Island Railroad stations in Suffolk County. The Long Island Railroad received \$2.6 billion in funding from the U. S. Department of Transportation for its East Side Access project. The overall \$6.3 billion project will connect the Long Island Railroad's main line to Grand Central Station in Manhattan. The project has begun construction and will provide a direct and faster trip between Long Island and east Midtown Manhattan. The expected completion date is 2013.

The Long Island Railroad plans to study the prospect of re-opening the Republic train station near Route 110 in East Farmingdale, which could lead to a 1.2 million square feet of additional development in the area.

Because the population and major employment centers in Suffolk County are dispersed, it is difficult to effectively serve the population with mass transit. Consequently, as of 2007, 80% of employed Suffolk residents drove alone to work. However, Suffolk County has a bus system and bus rider ship has increased in recent years.

Airports

Suffolk County has five active airports. The vast majority of Suffolk County's passenger traffic takes place at Long Island MacArthur Airport in Ronkonkoma, Long Island's only airport with scheduled service. MacArthur, owned and operated by the Town of Islip, serves 2.3 million passengers annually. MacArthur airport is served by Southwest Airlines and US Airways. Southwest recently completed a \$55 million terminal project at MacArthur that added four new gates. Construction has begun on a new \$25 million air traffic control tower that will replace the original tower that was built when the airport opened in 1962. The new tower will be fully operational in 2010.

V. Suffolk County Planning Commission Policies and Guidelines

Pursuant to New York State General Municipal Law (GML) and the Suffolk County Code, the fundamental purpose of the referral process is to “to bring pertinent inter-community and county-wide planning, zoning, site plan and subdivision considerations to the attention of neighboring municipalities and agencies having jurisdiction.”

Through the referral process, the Suffolk County Planning Commission ensures that local municipalities are made aware of whether particular applications are or are not consistent with county-wide needs and goals. The Commission also promotes county-wide policies through the provision of educational and training opportunities to local municipalities, civics and land use practitioners; the promotion of regionalization and inter-governmental cooperation, the analysis of regionally significant land use issues, and the provision of research and technical services to towns and villages.

Land use policies at the various levels of government are intended to promote the rational use of land while reflecting a variety of community concerns. Local municipalities have the primary responsibility for ensuring that details associated with individual sites are adequately and properly addressed. The County is primarily concerned with regional land use considerations such as sustainability, affordable housing, energy efficiency, public safety, coastal zone management, economic development, and natural resource protection. While site specific standards are relevant, the primary focus of County review involves issues and projects that have inter-community and county-wide considerations.

The following policies and guidelines are intended to articulate Commission land use policies in order to better inform local municipalities and applicants, effectively guide regionally significant actions and better coordinate local responses. Central to Commission policy is the promotion of sustainability. Sustainable development is defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Doing so must integrate and balance economic, environmental and social goals (United Nations Brundtland Commission, 1987). The goal of the following section is to promote sustainable development in Suffolk County defined by the nexus of economic development, environmental health and social equity.

Commission policy is also contained in myriad land use studies, research documents and comprehensive plan documents prepared by the Department of Planning on an annual basis. The following policies and guidelines should be considered a starting point for reference purposes. It is therefore also recommended that applicants and local municipalities consult the resources of the Suffolk County Planning Department for additional guidance or visit the County website at:

4.1 Equity and Sustainability

A. General Policy Goal: *Appreciate that economic vitality, environmental quality, and social equity are mutually*

dependent and reinforcing. Utilize a concept of sustainability predicated on a commitment to social justice, equity, and fairness to guide County policy.

Sustainability recognizes the fundamental interdependence between the economy, the environment and social equity. Environmental health and economic vitality must be linked to equity and fairness for all county residents. Social equity has been defined as the need to improve the life outcomes of all citizens, and to improve the health of entire regions by making sure that everyone has fair access to the critical opportunity structures needed to succeed in life. Improved access to such opportunity structures can create positive, transformative change in communities and the region (Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity).

Commission policies recognize the interdependence between the environment, the economy and social equity. They involve not only a commitment to protecting the region’s natural resources for future generations but also a pledge to mitigate impacts associated with the poorly planned development patterns of the past. Promoting social justice through equal access to opportunities and resources is an essential component of this commitment.

B. Specific Equity and Sustainability Policies:

◆ *Promote equal access to economic, environmental and social opportunities.*

Past development practices have at times resulted in the unequal distribution of assets and opportunities. Commission policies support equal access to housing, recreation and open space and related societal opportunities for all residents across all communities.

◆ *Promote equity in the distribution of societal burdens and potential land use impacts.*

Environmental justice is based upon the premise that environmental risks, hazards, investments and benefits should be equally distributed with a lack of discrimination, whether direct or indirect, at every jurisdictional level. Environmental justice and social equity are advanced by enhancing everyone’s access to information and participation in the decision-making process.

4.2 Land Use

A. General Policy Goal: *Promote sustainable land use and development throughout the county by encouraging density, transit, and mixed uses in downtowns, hamlet centers, and areas with adequate infrastructure.*

Land use policies are sustainable when they provide all residents with equal access to economic, social and environmental opportunities. This can be accomplished by encouraging density, transit and mixed-uses in downtowns, hamlet centers and planned growth areas with adequate infrastructure. Compact, mixed-use developments help to create vibrant active communities with a sense of place and identity. They also help

to reduce vehicle miles traveled, improve air quality and preserve open space.

Removing obstacles to sustainable development patterns must also be tied to policies that discourage sprawl and the preservation of important natural resources.

It is also recommended that local land use efforts protect the region's historic and cultural resources, properly engage local residents and consider the long-term impacts associated with land use regulations, comprehensive plans and regionally significant projects in order to ensure that they are consistent with Commission policies concerning sustainable development.

Land use policies should encourage development that supports transit viability and modes of travel other than the automobile and allows for the preservation of open space and more efficient use of infrastructure.

B. Specific Land Use Policies:

- ◆ *Promote redevelopment and infill development as an alternative to continued sprawl.*

Broad zoning authority is a tool best used to shape market forces and not as license to suppress them. Development policies should direct development to where it is warranted as well as to discourage it from where it is not warranted. To properly harness market forces, it is recommended that redevelopment be promoted as an alternative to continued sprawl. Redevelopment better protects existing hamlet centers, downtowns and existing commercial nodes through reinvestment; it minimizes sprawl, helps to preserve open space, protects historic and cultural resources and reduces the number of vehicle miles traveled. In addition, redevelopment can be used as an economic engine to address the negative aspects of suburbia – sprawl, commercial blight and a lack of community identity.

- ◆ *Encourage a mixture of land uses within communities and individual developments, particularly in hamlet centers and areas near transportation facilities.*

It is the intent of the Suffolk County Planning Commission to promote policies that properly guide development to where it is warranted and to discourage the poorly planned chaotic land use patterns of the past. It is recommended that land use policies promote a mixture of land uses within existing hamlet centers and in close proximity to transportation facilities. Compact mixed-use development helps to enhance community identity and community character, minimize traffic and improve air quality. Downtowns and hamlet centers also serve as valuable economic engines for the economy including the region's tourist economy.

In addition to encouraging development in downtowns and transportation centers it is also the intent of the Commission to discourage development outside of designated growth zones. It is recommended that "strip commercial" zoning patterns, which are evidenced throughout the region, be reconsidered in order to better encourage development in designated growth zones and to

minimize the potential for additional sprawl.

Decisions concerning the siting of capital improvements, the development of sewer treatment facilities and increases in density should also be consistent with the concept of promoting development only where it is warranted and discouraging development where it is not warranted.

- ◆ *Increases in density should be tied to the purchase and/or transfer of development rights or to a one-for-one density offset through upzoning of vacant privately owned land.*

Sustainable development patterns can best be achieved when increases in commercial and residential development densities are tied to the preservation of open space and the protection of the region's natural resources. Previous land use policies, which have lacked this critical nexus, have promoted sprawl and its associated impacts including congestion, loss of open space and the weakening of traditional downtowns and community centers. In this manner, overall densities may be managed more sustainably and public sector efforts to protect natural resources and preserve open space may be supplemented by the private sector.

Compact, identifiable hamlet centers surrounded by decreasing levels of density and open space are also consistent with historical planning principles more recently known as smart growth. Unmitigated growth, outside of designated hamlet centers and growth zones, will only undermine the long term viability of existing hamlet centers, promote sprawl and its associated impacts and increase overall development densities inconsistent with population needs and environmental capacities.

4.3 Housing

A. General Policy Goal: *Encourage sustainable communities by shaping County development regulations, programs, and policies to create energy-efficient, well-designed housing that meets the diverse needs of current and future County residents*

Suffolk County has long maintained a commitment to provide a diversity of housing types to meet the needs of its residents equitably distributed across a broad spectrum of income levels and stages of life.

Despite recent and past efforts, many challenges remain including an increasing lack of affordability within the market, homelessness, regulatory barriers to affordable housing at the local level, substandard living conditions for many immigrant populations and increasing energy costs. While some statistics are difficult to establish, estimates of 70,000 residents below the poverty line, nationally high energy costs and an estimated 165,000 unaffordable housing units in the region reflect the magnitude of the problems.

Commission policy supports programs and standards that reduce

energy demand, increase housing diversity and ensure that all residents have access to well-designed, safe housing opportunities. It is essential that each town and village, through every relevant land use decision, play a part in ensuring that all people who want to make their home in Suffolk County – from our youngest workers to our retirees – can do so.

B. Specific Housing Policies:

- ◆ *Encourage a diversity of housing types, equitably distributed across all communities, including the development of low and moderate income housing units.*

Healthy communities contain a mixture of housing types and values. Dispersion, integration and equitable distribution should therefore be the foundation of local and regional housing efforts. These policies help to both strengthen communities and prevent segregation and the creation of pockets of poverty.

Suffolk County was one of the fastest growing suburbs following WWII increasing in population from 276,129 residents in 1950 to 1,127,030 residents in 1970 – an increase of 308%. The overwhelming majority of units constructed during this period consisted of single-family detached homes. Changing demographics and household sizes have created a mismatch between the housing needs of the region’s increasingly diverse population and the homogeneous nature of the housing stock. Consideration should be given to increasing the diversity of unit types including the development of rental units, senior units and attached units to better meet the needs of the region’s population.

Meeting the needs of Suffolk County’s young families, its working people and its most vulnerable will also require inter-agency and inter-governmental cooperation. Every community must share in the responsibility of meeting Suffolk’s needs through the adoption of affordable housing programs and strategies. Removing regulatory barriers to the development of affordable housing units should be a central component of local planning efforts.

- ◆ *Housing polices must balance increases in density, the availability of infrastructure and retail services to accommodate growth and environmental constraints to growth.*

Smart growth principles and good planning support the location of increased density in close proximity to downtowns, hamlet centers and in areas with convenient access to retail and public transportation. This can help to reduce vehicle miles traveled, improve air quality and, when it is tied to policies which discourage growth outside these areas, help to preserve open space and protect environmental resources.

Increases in density must properly balance growth with the availability of critical infrastructure to accommodate increased density along with the need to protect and preserve the region’s natural resources.

In order to effectively guide future growth, local and regional

development policies must clearly identify potential growth nodes in addition to effectively discouraging growth outside of these areas.

- ◆ *Housing policies should address special needs populations and include as a goal the establishment of policies to end homelessness.*

Meeting the housing requirements of special needs populations raises challenges beyond those associated with most households. Housing polices should incorporate strategies to ensure that all residents, including special needs populations, have access to safe, affordable housing. Eliminating homelessness should also be a fundamental component of county housing policies.

4.4 Energy Efficiency

- A. General Policy Goal:** *Encourage the design and construction of energy efficient buildings to reduce air, water, and land pollution and environmental impacts from energy production and consumption.*

There is an economic self-interest as well as a moral imperative to reduce the energy our buildings consume and thus the energy that must be produced. All new buildings in Suffolk County should be energy efficient and have as minimal an environmental impact as possible.

B. Specific Energy Efficiency Policies:

- ◆ *All new residential, commercial and industrial building should be designed and constructed to reduce energy consumption and improve environmental quality.*

Maintaining a sustainable energy policy begins with a reduction in the energy consumption through conservation, increased efficiency and the development of alternative, renewable energy sources. New buildings should be designed and constructed to reduce energy demand and consumption through the incorporation of available design elements that will help to both reduce demand and improve environmental quality.

4.5 Public Safety

- A. General Policy Goal:** *New buildings and developments should incorporate general design elements that promote public safety.*

Design elements that address public safety considerations will not only help preserve Suffolk’s pleasant places but will also help improve property values and a general sense of community well-being. When incorporated into the initial design of a building or community, these measures are simple and inexpensive to implement, and can significantly deter criminal activity and enhance public safety.

B. Specific Public Safety Policies:

- ◆ *New residential, commercial and industrial buildings and developments must incorporate design elements that calm traffic, deter criminal activity, and increase public safety.*

Considerations as simple as implementing traffic calming road design features, improving outdoor lighting and increasing the visibility of neighborhood public spaces, can significantly improve public safety. However, public safety design standards may not be appropriate in all circumstances and should be balanced with the need to incorporate Smart Growth principles, Dark Skies legislation and good site design tailored to the unique characteristics of Suffolk County's diverse collection of communities.

4.6 Economic Development

A. General Policy Goal: *Support sustainable economic growth by supporting a broad range of industries and economic opportunities – from local entrepreneurs to national firms – that are linked to transit, housing, and services. Economic opportunity must be equitably distributed among the entire range of potential workers.*

Sustainability recognizes the fundamental interdependence between economic development, environmental quality and social equity. A diversified economy that supports a broad range of industries and provides a wide spectrum of opportunities equitably distributed across all income groups is essential in order to promote the long term health and sustainability of the region. Development zones and associated jobs must also be linked to necessary transit, a diversified housing stock and services including retail and related service uses.

B. Specific Economic Development Policies:

- ◆ *Encourage the creation of a range of employment opportunities for a variety of ages, education levels, and skill levels.*

Reductions in defense contracts in the 1980's exposed the fragile nature of our local economy which had become heavily dependent on the defense industry. A diversified economy helps to provide long term economic stability in addition to allowing for a more equitable distribution of jobs and opportunities in order to better meet the economic needs of the region.

- ◆ *Support local businesses and small entrepreneurial firms while recognizing the importance of national and multinational firms located in the County.*

Suffolk County's 10 towns and 32 villages are home to a wide variety of communities. This great diversity of community types provides a sense of identity for individual communities and also helps to support a wide variety of economic opportunities. Commission policy should support the creation and development of a wide variety of business interest from

local firms to national and multi-national firms to ensure a well-balanced economy with opportunities for all job seekers. Consideration should also be given to targeting Brownfields and industrial zones in close proximity to rail lines in order to help preserve remaining open spaces and reduce vehicle miles traveled.

- ◆ *Provide job assistance and education programs to better match job seekers and employers, particularly those in the most economically vulnerable groups.*

Matching job opportunities with qualified employees and job seekers is an essential component of a healthy economy. Communities should be encouraged to provide a diversity of job types equitably distributed across all communities in order to prevent the development of pockets of poverty and to ensure that limited government subsidies target the most economically vulnerable regions.

4.7 Transportation

A. General Policy Goal: *Expand sustainable transportation options – for commercial, commuter, and recreational travel – by providing greater public transit alternatives and creating a diverse, multi-modal transportation system that links jobs, housing, shopping, and recreation and reduces dependence on single-occupant motor vehicles.*

Development patterns in Suffolk County, established during the post WW II suburban boom, were dominated by sprawling subdivisions, the expansion of the region's highways and a lack of investment in public transit. These limitations, together with fiscal constraints, pose significant challenges towards the development of a sustainable transportation system for Suffolk County.

In order to move forward, policies and investments must promote a wider array of public transit options that better link jobs, housing, shopping and recreational opportunities while reducing dependence on single-occupant motor vehicles.

A central goal of transportation policy should involve a reduction in vehicle miles traveled in order to improve air quality and reduce the region's dependence on fossil fuels. Mixed-use developments that incorporate multi-modal transportation solutions and improved connectivity between public transit, jobs and retail services should also be incorporated as a component of the region's transportation plan. Reduced parking requirements for sites in downtown locations or where there is convenient access to public transportation can be a simple and effective method of encouraging more sustainable development patterns.

B. Specific Transportation Policies:

- ◆ *Transportation management solutions are preferred to the continued expansion of infrastructure capacity.*

Future growth should be balanced with the ability of the transportation infrastructure to accommodate anticipated traffic volumes. Increases in development densities must be evaluated based upon their impact to the transportation network and anticipated capital programming. Enhancements to public transportation infrastructure and alternative transportation modes such as bikeways, enhanced bus service, park-and-ride lots and expanded pedestrian connections should also be considered as an alternative to expanded travel capacity along regional roadway systems.

- ◆ *Infrastructure expansion, when appropriate, should be targeted to downtown centers, transportation nodes and designated growth zones.*

Consistent with other Commission land use policies, transportation planning efforts should also direct development to where it is most appropriate. Infrastructure improvements that facilitate development outside of designated growth zones should be discouraged. Poorly placed improvements promote sprawl, increase maintenance costs and perpetuate the chaotic land use patterns of the past. Capital programming should be in harmony with regional land use policies in order to most effectively encourage well-planned rational development patterns.

- ◆ *Promote inter-agency and inter-municipal cooperation including the development of uniform design standards.*

One of the contributing factors associated with the region's poorly planned development patterns of the past was a lack of inter-agency and inter-municipal coordination. Improved coordination between and among municipalities and agencies is essential in order to effectively address existing and future regional land use concerns that cross multiple municipal boundaries.

Future cooperation can be accomplished through joint land use and transportation planning studies, through the development and adoption of inter-municipal agreements and through coordinated review processes during the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process. In addition, consideration should be given to the development of uniform design standards between and among local municipalities. Uniform landscaping, signage, setback and infrastructure standards can improve safety, aesthetics and the functioning of regional transportation systems.

- ◆ *Encourage cumulative traffic impact analysis.*

The cumulative impacts associated with development should be considered. Individually, development proposals will result in direct impacts on the surrounding road network. However, cumulatively, multiple development proposals can have broad impacts beyond the local roadway network resulting in impacts to the regional transportation system. The preparation and analysis of cumulative traffic impact studies can better address the broad spectrum of impacts associated with development proposals.

- ◆ *Promote the development of alternative funding mechanisms.*

After all reasonable measures have been utilized to reduce trip generation, there may remain a need to expand infrastructure capacity, enhance safety or provide other operational improvements. The financial responsibility for implementing required improvements should be shared by those who cause or control the development. Financing partnerships and transportation improvement districts should be considered in order to equitably share costs among development interests.

- ◆ *Improve access management standards.*

Access management refers to the design of motor vehicle access to individual parcels along a roadway. The layout, location and number of access points can significantly affect both the capacity and safety of the roadway. The greater the number of access points, the greater the number of potential conflict points and the greater the risk for the individual driver. Some of the region's least safe roadways are also characterized by the greatest number of curb cuts and conflict points.

Local policies should incorporate improved access management standards including minimization of access points, the establishment of cross easement agreements and limits to the development of additional commercial sprawl.

- ◆ *Promote connectivity between developments in order to improve both pedestrian and vehicular access and circulation consistent with smart growth principles.*

Smart growth principles and good planning practice encourage multiple pedestrian and vehicular connections between existing and proposed developments. Increased connectivity or access between developments reduces trip lengths, facilitates emergency access and most equitably distributes traffic among multiple roadways.

4.8 Environment

A. General Policy Goal: *Protect, preserve, and restore critical natural resources to maintain a healthy and diverse ecosystem for present and future generations. Promote biodiversity, limit greenhouse gases, and improve water and air quality by requiring energy efficiency in design, construction, land use, and industry.*

The protection of our natural resources and the maintenance of healthy and diverse ecosystems are not inconsistent with the need to provide housing or the need to maintain a healthy economy. To the contrary, our local marine, agricultural and tourist economies are dependent upon these resources. Similarly, the health of our economy is dependent upon the ability to provide a diversity of housing types for workers and the value of our communities is dependent upon the protection of our natural resources and the preservation of critical open spaces. The interrelatedness of the environment, the economy

and social equity is at the core of sustainability.

The protection of environmentally sensitive lands and natural, historic and cultural resources, properly balanced with the identification of nodes where growth is warranted is essential to the long term sustainability of the region. Equally essential is the establishment of policies which ensure that development nodes and environmental benefits, such as open space and recreational opportunities, are equitably distributed throughout the region.

Compact, mixed-use developments that reduce vehicle miles traveled and energy usage, combined with energy efficient design can help to protect our remaining critical open spaces, historic and cultural resources, improve air quality, reduce storm water related impacts and create vibrant communities with a diversity of housing choices.

B. Specific Environmental Policies:

◆ *Promote development where it is warranted in downtowns, hamlet centers, adjacent to transportation and retail services and discourage development where it is not warranted within coastal zones, environmentally sensitive areas such as the Pine Barrens, unique ecological habitats and designated open spaces.*

Poorly planned chaotic growth minimizes property values and potential tax revenues and adversely impacts quality of life and community character. Zoning policies must clearly articulate those areas worthy of preservation and protection while at the same time identifying those areas where growth is warranted. Clear zoning polices ought to be combined with capital programming in order to ensure that identified growth zones also contain the necessary infrastructure to accommodate growth such as sewers, retail services and transportation improvements.

◆ *Preserve the region's natural resources including, but not limited to, groundwater, surface waters, tidal and fresh water wetlands, dunes, steep slopes, bluffs and Pine Barren regions.*

Suffolk County is home to a rich array of habitats from coastal bluffs to fresh and tidal wetlands, and from our bays, ocean and estuaries to our Pine Barrens regions. Protecting and preserving these areas is critical in order to minimize future impacts associated with development and to promote the long-term sustainability of our region through bio-diversity and eco-system based management.

Long Island has been designated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a sole source aquifer, which means that all of the island's fresh water is received from groundwater. New York State law designates seven Special Groundwater Protection Areas (SGPA's) in Suffolk County, which warrant protection in order to preserve the quantity and quality of water in the aquifer. Our diverse collection of wetland communities, bays, estuaries, tributaries and river systems are also essential to the health of our environment. In addition, these areas are critical to the health and viability of our local economies

including farming, tourism and our diverse collection of marine industries. Protecting steep slopes and coastal bluffs also helps to reduce erosion and sediment run-off – important goals of both state and local stormwater management programs.

◆ *Preserve open space, farmland and environmentally sensitive land through acquisition, transfer of development rights (TDR), purchase of development rights (PDR) and clustering.*

Suffolk County has been a national leader in the preservation of open space and farmland. As the supply of land continues to shrink, the preservation of land will become increasingly dependent upon the ability of the County, local municipalities and private sector partners to target crucial open space and farmland tracts and to utilize transfer of development rights programs and clustering in order to augment publicly funded acquisition programs.

Standard subdivisions, which perpetuate sprawl, should be discouraged. Clustered subdivisions and conservation subdivisions, which limit development to a portion of the entire property while preserving the remainder for open space, should be encouraged.

◆ *The preservation of agricultural uses through the purchase of development rights and other related preservation tools should be tied to the establishment of "best management practices" in order to reduce the potential for impacts related to fertilizer, herbicide and pesticide use.*

Suffolk County has been a leader in the preservation of agricultural lands since the establishment of the first purchase of development rights program thirty years ago. Multiple levels of government, including New York State and local municipalities here in Suffolk, support these efforts due to Suffolk's rich history of farming, the scenic and open space benefits associated with agriculture and the economic benefits associated with farming in Suffolk County.

Protecting the long term sustainability of the region also requires that these preservation efforts provide a rational nexus with the establishment of best management practices in order to insure that the region's natural resources, particularly groundwater, are properly protected.

◆ *Development densities should be limited by environmental capacities. Growth must occur sustainably in order to protect our environmental resources for the future.*

There are several factors that limit the amount of development that may occur within the region. Chief among these is the capacity of our environmental resources to accommodate growth. In order to preserve the region's environmental resources for future generations it is essential that land use regulations properly balance development densities with the capacity of the environment to accommodate growth.

- ◆ *Promote access to the coastal zone and the preservation of water dependent uses.*

Suffolk County's maritime history is tied to the public's right to access the coastal zone and the preservation of those uses dependent upon the shoreline and associated water body for survival. Access to the coast preserves the public's right to enjoy the many recreational aspects of the coastal zone. In addition, the preservation of water dependent uses within the coastal zone promotes the region's tourist and maritime economies.

- ◆ *Promote environmental stewardship through education.*

Compliance with environmental regulations, impact prevention and environmental stewardship are dependent upon an informed and educated citizenry. County and local efforts to protect the environment and to preserve its natural resources should include educational programs to encourage compliance, prevent potential impacts and facilitate environmental stewardship.

- ◆ *Promote pollution prevention over remediation.*

The most cost effective manner to protect the region's natural resources is to prevent pollution before it occurs. Mitigating the impacts associated with poorly planned development patterns is less effective and more costly than pollution prevention. Efforts should focus on the creation of appropriate development regulations in order to prevent pollution and impacts to the environment before they occur.

- ◆ *Promote environmental remediation and enhancement in addition to mitigation associated with development proposals.*

In order to insure the long term sustainability of the region's environmental resources, development standards and environmental regulations should promote the enhancement of existing natural resources and the removal of poorly planned development patterns in addition to the mitigation of impacts associated with future development. Consideration should be given to eco-system based management in addition to the protection of the quality and quantity of the region's drinking water supply.

4.9 Design

A. General Policy Goal: *Encourage high-quality and innovative design which incorporates universal design principles to positively shape the built environment for living, working, and playing. Sustainable design, which incorporates universal design principles, ensures that the built environment facilitates function, creates an identity of place, provides equal access to all members of society and strengthens a sense of community.*

Suffolk County is home to a diverse collection of communities including traditional pedestrian-oriented downtowns,

exclusively residential villages and sprawling suburban neighborhoods dominated by strip commercial development.

Future design policies must protect the region's collection of successful and vibrant pedestrian-oriented downtowns and enhance those areas impacted by sprawl, congestion and a lack of community character.

B. Specific Design Policies:

- ◆ *Encourage flexibility of design in order to promote a mixture of uses in order to minimize traffic, encourage pedestrian activity and create a sense of place.*

Standard zoning codes which promote the separation of land uses often prevent the development of vibrant mixed-use communities resulting in suburban sprawl, increased vehicles miles traveled, reduced air quality and a loss of open space. In addition to incorporating design principles that are consistent with the local vernacular, local codes should be streamlined in order to remove obstacles to sustainable development patterns. Streamlined review procedures and expedited permit processes in areas identified for growth should also be considered.

- ◆ *Utilize green infrastructure to minimize community and environmental impacts and reduce both private and public development costs.*

Increased reliance on renewable energy sources, stormwater retention and reuse and the greater use of recycled materials are simple, effective means of minimizing environmental impacts associated with development and reducing energy usage. The utilization of green infrastructure can also help to reduce the region's collective carbon footprint and reduce the impacts associated with global warming.

- ◆ *Promote energy efficient site plan and subdivision design which encourages compact development and clustering to minimize energy use, encourage open space preservation and the efficient use of infrastructure.*

Design principles which discourage sprawl and encourage compact development can help to minimize sprawl, preserve open space and reduce energy consumption. These steps can also promote the more efficient use of infrastructure and increase the viability of public transit.

- ◆ *Incorporate "universal design" features into building codes in order to ensure that Suffolk County is equally accessible to all members of the community.*

Universal design principles are intended to improve access to homes, businesses and all development types for all members of the community including those with disabilities and seniors. Low cost modifications to design and construction standards can be a simple and effective method for improving the quality of life for a broad spectrum of community members. Building code and construction standards that incorporate such features as no-step entrances, first floor bedrooms, first floor bathrooms

and improved internal accessibility can dramatically improve the quality of life for a variety of individuals.

4.10 Cooperation

A. General Policy Goal: *The sustainability of the County is inextricably tied to its broader regional, national, and global context. The County recognizes the importance and need for cooperation and coordination among and between County agencies, local municipalities, and neighboring jurisdictions including New York City.*

The long term sustainability of Suffolk County is dependent upon the ability to successfully address a variety of regionally significant issues such as groundwater protection, affordable housing, transportation management, energy supply and cost, public safety, economic development and open space preservation to name just a few. To be successful, Suffolk County must not only promote the coordination of local efforts among and between its 10 towns and 32 villages but it must also recognize its role within the greater metropolitan region. Promoting better horizontal and vertical integration of planning and land use decision-making is an essential component of this effort.

The Suffolk County Planning commission must fulfill its statutory responsibility to advise local municipalities on county-wide land use priorities.

B. Specific Cooperation Policies:

◆ *Promote regionalization.*

Local land use policies which impact county-wide and regional land use issues including, but not limited to, affordable housing, energy efficiency, public safety, open space preservation and economic development should be consistent with county standards and broader regional plans in order to ensure an equitable distribution of the costs and benefits associated with development.

◆ *Encourage the use of inter-municipal agreements and inter-agency and inter-governmental cooperation.*

Local land use efforts can more effectively address regional land use issues when they are coordinated with adjoining and related municipal entities. The development of joint land use studies between and among municipalities and other levels of government should be encouraged. Inter-municipal agreements also provide an important opportunity to combine efforts and to share responsibilities and authorities in order to more effectively address regional concerns. The promulgation of model codes relating to county-wide land use priorities can also encourage a coordinated effort to address critical county-wide needs.

Suffolk County Department of Planning as of July 2008

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