

MASSACHUSETTS-SUFFOLK COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

SUMMARY

MASSACHUSETTS-SUFFOLK REGIONAL PLANNING BOARD	
PARTICIPATING STAFF	
CONSULTANTS	
ADVISORY COMMITTEES	
MASSACHUSETTS	
SUFFOLK COUNTY	
SUFFOLK COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION	

INTRODUCTION



Nassau and Suffolk Counties possess a unique combination of natural resources and a rich cultural heritage. The area is characterized by its diverse topography, including rolling hills, open fields, and coastal areas. The plan is designed to guide the development of the region in a way that preserves these resources while meeting the needs of the growing population.

GOALS

- The direction of the pattern of development and the rate of growth.
- The provision of adequate housing and jobs linked by a balanced transportation system.
- The elimination of deterioration and obsolescence.
- The preservation of open space and the natural environment.

PROJECTIONS

PEOPLE AND HOMES
Approximately 2.6 million people live in Nassau and Suffolk Counties today. 1.8 million live in Nassau County and 0.8 million live in Suffolk County. By 1985, the population is projected to reach 3.3 million. The growth will be concentrated in the urban areas, particularly around the Long Island Sound and the Neck.

JOB
The number of jobs on the island must keep pace with its population. Today, there are over 700,000 jobs in the two counties. By 1985, there will be more than 1.2 million jobs. The growth in jobs will be concentrated in the service and retail sectors, particularly in the urban areas.

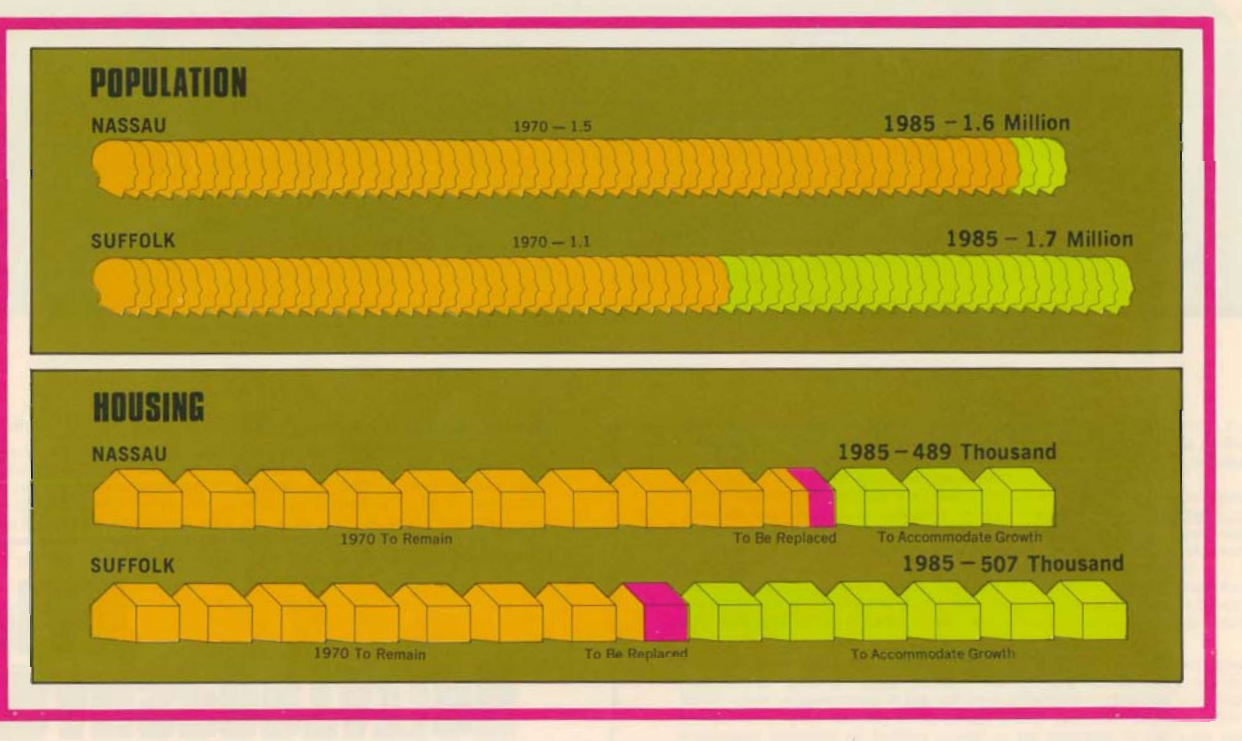
PARKS AND OPEN SPACE
Land is also needed for recreation and for conservation. Open space must be acquired in anticipation of needs. The open space required now is all that is likely to be available to serve the population in 1985, 2000, 2100 and the years beyond.

TRANSPORTATION
Long Island's residents contend with a transportation system characterized by bottlenecks and accidents on the highways, delays and cancellations on the railroad, and infrequent and inaccessible buses.

Buses are not yet an answer. Service is slow and infrequent, routes are uncoordinated, and bus stops often inconvenient. Buses attract few riders and the bus companies, if privately-owned, cannot afford to extend routes or greatly improve service without public subsidy.

The Long Island Railroad is only available for east-west travel. It is used primarily by commuters. A lot of every seven riders are workers bound for Manhattan. Even so, the railroad carries only 60 percent of all Manhattan-bound commuters.

Automobile ownership is increasing rapidly, as is the number of trips per person. If present trends continue, the total traffic in the two counties will be more than half again the present level by 1985. The volume of east-west traffic at the Nassau-Suffolk line will increase by one-third. At the Nassau-Suffolk line, the 1985 east-west traffic will equal today's traffic at the Nassau-Queens line.

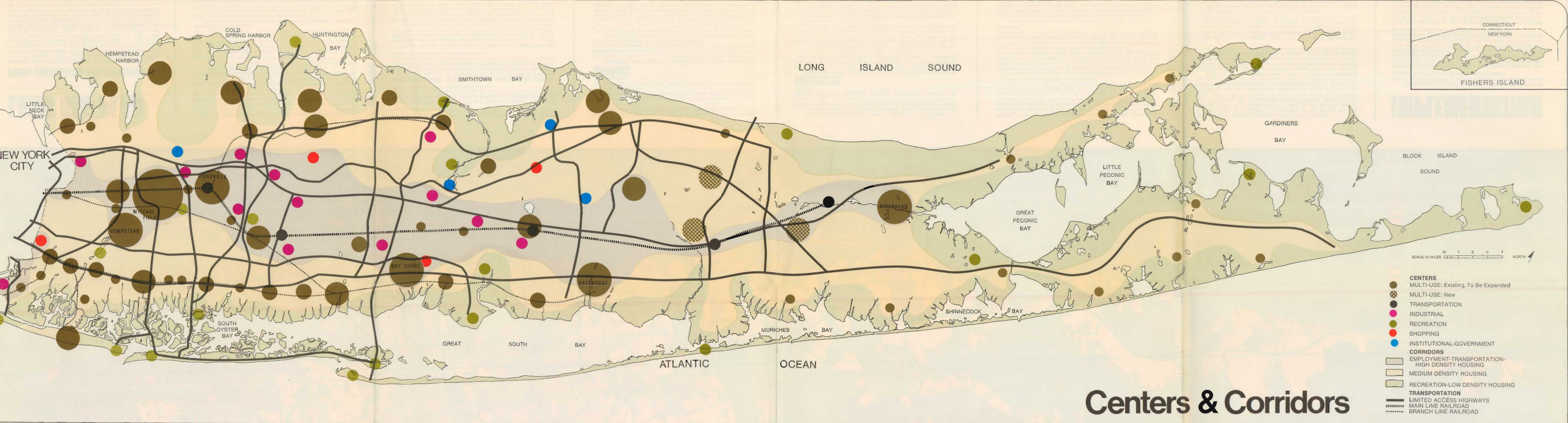


PRIORITIES

There are less than 15,000 acres of vacant land in all of Nassau County. This is only six to seven percent of the land area and is insufficient to satisfy all of the projected needs. The land use priorities below are based on a determination as to which of Nassau County's needs must be met within the county, either on vacant land or through redeveloping on under-utilized land, and which of these needs can be allowed to spill over into nearby areas of Suffolk County.

Land for apartments has been accorded the second priority in Nassau County. In fact, no residential land should be reserved to industrial, commercial, or office use unless it appears beyond a doubt that the land is unsuitable for parks or open space, or for development of multi-family units. Not all multi-family construction should take place on vacant land. Many of the new apartments should be located in the older business districts of both counties, where rebuilding at increased densities would stimulate revitalization and encourage the greater use of mass transit — but only if development is carefully planned and controlled.

If these priorities are followed, parks, conservation, and multi-family housing will preempt Nassau County's vacant land. To provide the open space and apartments needed in Nassau County will require great determination, resistance to more attractive tax status, and a willingness to permit greater apartment densities than most Nassau County communities have accepted in the past.



Centers & Corridors

CORRIDORS, CLUSTERS AND CENTERS

Three concepts — corridors, clusters, and centers — are the essence of the Plan. These concepts are the guidelines against which individual projects should be judged. In deciding on the merits of a specific proposal, each community should be guided by the goals, the three concepts, and the locational criteria derived from them.

Not every new development will conform fully to the corridors, clusters, and centers concepts. In fact, even if starting today, these concepts were rigorously and absolutely followed, they would not substantially change the appearance of the western third of the island over the next fifteen years, except in the heart of some of the larger centers. Nassau County and the westernmost portion of Suffolk are already almost fully developed. About half of the new housing in Nassau will be single-family homes on scattered lots. This infilling will merely accentuate the present development pattern. But, over time, the concepts of this Plan, if followed, will accommodate necessary growth while respecting the needs of the people and their environment, and will encourage the use of mass transit by placing greater densities of housing, jobs, and shopping within walking distance of mass transit facilities.

CORRIDORS
Consider the geography of Nassau and Suffolk Counties — long, narrow, attached at one end to one of the world's major cities, surrounded everywhere else by water. Clearly, the most valuable recreation land is at the waterfront, the best location for housing is adjacent to the recreation areas. Equally clearly, the most logical location for industry and other employment is along the center spine of the island, close to its major transportation facilities. In this location, equidistant from the north and the south shores, jobs will be most accessible to residents, yet the inevitable harmful effects of industry — noise, traffic — will be minimized.

On the above map, the island is outlined in pale green, indicating shorefront recreation, conservation areas, and low-density residential development. The green border thickness at the eastern end of the island indicates the area of potential development. The concept of clustering is a simple one: new development should be clustered wherever possible. The concept of clustering is a simple one: new development should be clustered wherever possible.

Clustering also allows for the combining of townhouses and apartments with single-family detached houses while maintaining the overall original permitted density. This is important because apartments will help to ease the critical housing shortage in the two counties and to slow the rapid rise in the cost of housing. Single-family homes in established neighborhoods may become more readily available where new apartments provide for the changed needs of the present occupants of these homes. Apartments relieve the mounting cost of public services, because the cost of public utilities, fire and police protection, and roads is lower per unit for apartments than for single family dwellings. In addition, new apartments on Long Island are a tax asset to schools as they generally pay more than three times as much in taxes as the cost of educating the children from these units.

The centers concept is an extension of the concept of clustering. Centers are accessible concentrations of activity. The centers depicted on the map above are of two types: the **single use center**, exemplified by an educational institution such as Stony Brook, a government center such as at Housatonic, or a grouping of industrial establishments such as that along the Long Island Expressway in Plainville; and the **multi-use center** containing a variety of land uses and activities, such as those proposed for Mitchell Field and for the revitalized downtowns along the major east-west transportation routes. These multi-use centers can be large or small (those proposed range from a regional center at Mitchell Field to a local center in Southold) but in every instance they include housing and shopping, and in the case of all but the local centers, they also include other activities and facilities — employment, education, transportation, special services and recreation — all placed in an accessible location.

Activity centers can be formed through the revitalization and expansion of an existing nucleus of the most effective tools for open space preservation at no acquisition cost to the community. Through clustering of adjoining developments and the dedication of contiguous acreage, select communities can achieve extensive open space systems. Linear parks, which can be created by judicious siting of adjoining cluster developments, can be valuable for watershed protection, hiking, horseback riding, cycling, passive recreation, preservation of spots of particular scenic beauty or ecological significance, and the articulation and delineation of communities. The Smithtown-Isle Greenbelt is an example of such a linear park.

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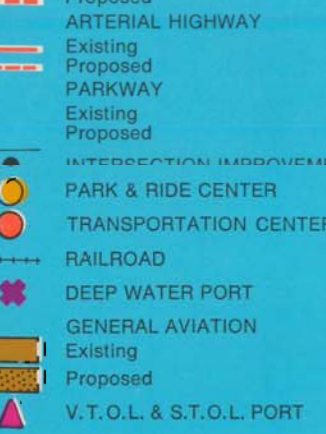
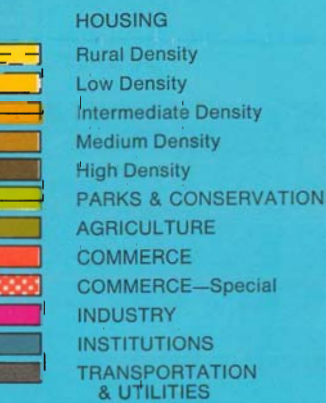
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Transportation Plan