

2003 Update of the
Nassau County Comprehensive Plan
January 12, 2004

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INTRODUCTION

As the first mature suburban county in the United States and home to over 1.3 million residents, Nassau County currently faces development challenges that growing counties throughout the nation will likely face in years to come. The degree to which the County successfully handles these challenges will go a long way in determining the future economic health of the area and the quality of life of its residents and businesses. The time is ripe for Nassau County to make sound and timely public policy decisions to protect its natural environment and ensure the County's economic vitality.

Current development conditions in the County are, of course, a result of the region's growth history. Although Nassau County can trace its development to colonial times, the majority of its growth occurred during the period of national suburban expansion following World War II. Land use and development patterns were influenced and fostered by a number of factors, including the construction of bridges and tunnels from New York City, the Long Island Railroad, the construction of major roadways such as the Long Island Expressway and the pursuit of the American Dream, homeownership. This infrastructure, coupled with the availability of inexpensive farmland for residential subdivisions, led to explosive growth in the Post-WWII years.

Without the benefit of comprehensive planning, many areas of Nassau County swiftly transformed from farmland to fully developed neighborhoods. In fact, thirty-five percent of all residential development in the history of Nassau County occurred during the 1950s. As communities grew, so did the desire for local control and "suburban serenity." This inherently separatist approach to building and maintaining infrastructure and providing services resulted in a conglomeration of independent local governing entities making decisions in isolation with little ability to communicate with one another.

Fifty years have passed since Levittown sprouted from the potato fields of the Hempstead Plains, for better or worse creating a blueprint for national suburban development in the mid 20th century. As we begin the 21st century, however, this development trend has left Nassau County with very little room for future growth. The County in many ways is a victim of its own success and is faced with the challenge of managing its growth within the limits of its infrastructure. The network of separate decision-making entities makes building consensus to solve problems difficult and implementing solutions nearly impossible.

Recently, Nassau County has embraced comprehensive planning as a critical tool for moving forward. Charter amendments adopted in 1995 required the Nassau County Planning Commission to adopt a comprehensive master plan for the development of the entire area. Recognizing that comprehensive planning requires an understanding of a variety of topics, ranging from natural resources to land use to transportation, the Charter directs the Planning Commission to address a wide range of issues and to study and address these issues as often as the public interest requires.

Coincidentally, problems of unchecked suburban growth have received a tremendous amount of attention around the country in recent years. Public frustration with traffic congestion, limited housing options and disappearing open space, to name only a few of the issues, have led to many creative proposals and solutions. Concepts of "sustainable development" and "Smart Growth" merit attention in Nassau County.

This Update to the 1998 Nassau County Comprehensive Plan is a working document, intended to provide a status report on issues identified in 1998 and to spur additional progress and reform.

The Planning Commission has adopted it in the context of several intensive planning initiatives that are already underway, including a Major Investment Study of the Nassau Hub and a series of thirty-five community meetings that County Executive Thomas R. Suozzi is conducting to discuss the County's Economic Development Plan. The Planning Commission looks forward to additional public meetings and outreach to inform and shape its policies and reports.

As these and other planning initiatives proceed, the strategies and information developed from them will be reviewed and incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission is committed to these ongoing efforts to ensure that the best and most practical planning tools are made part of a comprehensive and continual planning process that will serve as a roadmap for positive growth.

PART 1: PRELIMINARY SOCIOECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Comprehensive planning requires an understanding of the socioeconomic and demographic profile of the County. This section provides a preliminary summary of relevant data and analysis and is intended as a backdrop for the County's ongoing planning initiatives. Where applicable, this section compares elements of Nassau County's socioeconomic and demographic makeup with that of New York State, other counties, metropolitan statistical areas and the nation as a whole. In addition, this section briefly describes existing transportation and energy infrastructure as well as services and recreational opportunities available in the County.

Overview

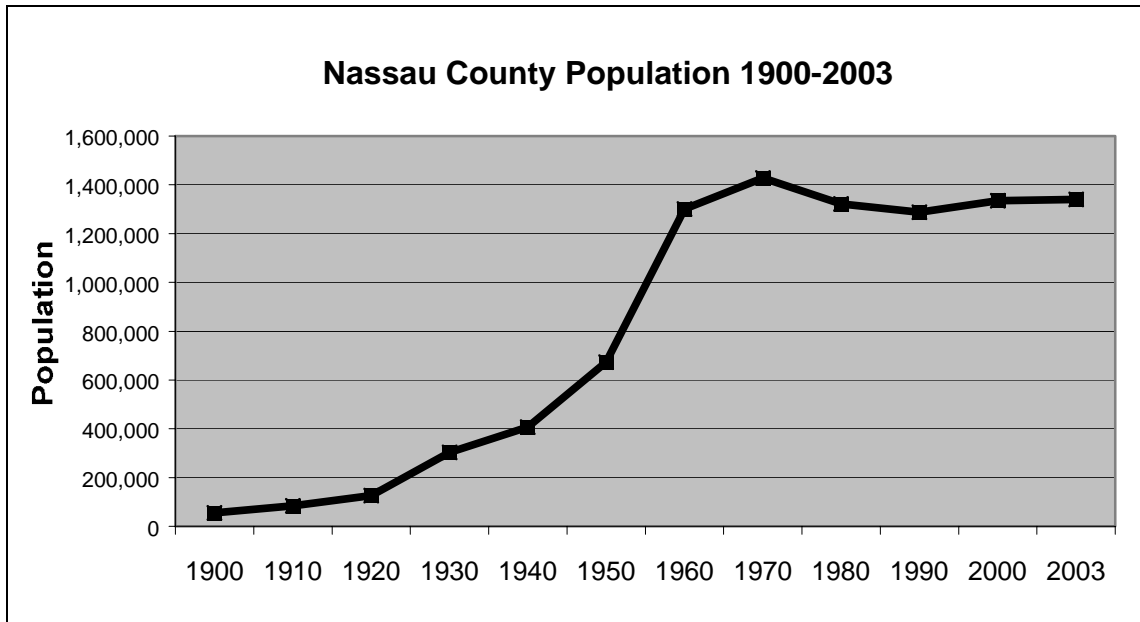
Officially established in 1899, Nassau County (County) is the site of some of New York State's earliest colonial settlements, some of which date back to the 1640's. With a total land area of 287 square miles and a population of over 1.3 million people, the County is bordered to the west by the New York City borough of Queens, to the east by Suffolk County, to the north by Long Island Sound and to the south by the Atlantic Ocean (see Figure 1). Together, the northern and southern boundaries of the County comprise nearly 188 miles of scenic coastline. The County includes 3 towns, 2 cities and 64 incorporated villages, 56 school districts and various special districts that provide fire protection, water supply and other services. Land uses within the County are predominantly single-family residential, commercial and industrial.

Population

The County has experienced two major growth periods over the past 100 years (see Figure 1 and Table 1). The first occurred in the 1920's as part of the New York area's initial suburban expansion which saw the County's population increase by over 140 percent from 126,120 to 303,053 residents. The County's second major growth period occurred during the 1950's following the passing of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act ("G.I. Bill") and the end of World War II, both of which led to a dramatic increase in single home ownership for returning veterans and their families. No place was this more evident than in the development of Levittown in Nassau County in the late 1940s early 1950s. Between 1950 and 1960 the County's population virtually doubled, from 672,765 to 1.3 million residents, and reached a peak of approximately 1,428,800 residents in 1970. By 1990, the County's population had decreased by ten percent to 1,287,300 residents. In 2000, the County population had increased by 3.6 percent to approximately 1,334,544 residents and continued to increase slightly through 2003. The population distribution of the County's towns and cities are as follows: Town of Hempstead (755,924), Town of North Hempstead (222,611), Town of Oyster Bay (293,925), City of Long Beach (35,426), City of Glen Cove (26,622).

As Nassau County moves firmly into the 21st Century, several trends are clearly evident; there are increasingly fewer opportunities for development and growth, the cost of purchasing a home is becoming increasingly prohibitive for working people and County residents are aging. As a result of the region's development over the last four decades, the County's population density has risen by 4 percent from 4,489 to 4,655 persons per square mile. Residents over 75 years of age are the fastest growing segment of the population, increasing by 125 percent from 42,100 in 1970 to 94,880 in 2000.

**FIGURE 1: NASSAU COUNTY
POPULATION 1900-2003**



**TABLE 1: NASSAU COUNTY
POPULATION 1900-2003**

Year	Population	Number Change	Change from Previous Decade (%)
2003	1,340,289	5,745	.40
2000	1,334,544	47,196	3.67
1990	1,287,348	-34,234	-2.59
1980	1,321,582	-106,498	-7.46
1970	1,428,080	127,909	9.84
1960	1,300,171	627,406	93.26
1950	672,765	266,017	65.4
1940	406,748	103,695	34.22
1930	303,053	176,933	140.29
1920	126,120	42,190	50.27
1910	83,930	28,482	51.37
1900	55,448	-	-

Source: U.S. Census, Long Island Power Authority

Demographics

Table 2 compares key County demographic and socioeconomic indicators with those of New York State and the United States as a whole. Almost 80 percent of the County's residents are white while Blacks and Hispanics each comprise approximately 10 percent of the population. Approximately five percent of County residents are Asian. While the County has a significantly smaller minority population than New York State and the United States as a whole, it has a larger minority population than Suffolk County.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Nassau County's household median income (2000) of \$72,030 is significantly higher than those of Suffolk County (\$65,288), New York State (\$43,393) and United States as whole (\$41,994). Moreover, the County (5.2) has a smaller percentage of households below poverty level than Suffolk County (5.6) New York State (13.9) and the nation (11.8). Tables 3 and 4 breakdown relevant income information for each of the County's cities and towns by median household income and per capita income respectively. While the median income indicates the distribution among the County's households, per capita income measures the aggregate income by total population of the area. As indicated in Table 3 and 4, North Hempstead and Oyster Bay are the only communities with a median household income and per capita income higher than Nassau County median.

**TABLE 2:
NASSAU COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS BY COMPARISON**

Area	Race (%)					Median Household Income	Households Below Poverty (%)
	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic*	Other		
Nassau	79.3	10.1	4.7	10	3.6	\$72,030	5.2
Suffolk	84.5	6.9	2.4	10.5	3.7	\$65,288	5.6
New York State	67.9	15.9	5.5	15.1	7.1	\$43,393	13.9
U.S.	75.1	12.3	3.6	12.5	5.5	\$41,994	11.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
*In some cases the Hispanic category includes other races.

**TABLE 3:
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY CITY OR TOWN**

Town or City	1979	1989	1999	2003*
Glen Cove City	\$22,500	\$42,982	\$55,503	\$62,025
Hempstead Town	\$25,183	\$52,286	\$69,083	\$77,200
Long Beach City	\$16,308	\$41,495	\$56,289	\$62,903
North Hempstead	\$28,620	\$60,320	\$81,039	\$90,561
Oyster Bay Town	\$28,301	\$59,286	\$78,839	\$88,103
Nassau County	\$26,091	\$54,283	\$72,030	\$80,494

Source: Suffolk County Planning Department
*Estimate

**TABLE 4:
PER CAPITA INCOME NASSAU COUNTY**

Town or City	1979	1989	1999	2003*
Glen Cove City	\$9,305	\$21,787	\$26,627	\$29,756
Hempstead Town	\$9,186	\$20,955	\$28,153	\$31,461
Long Beach City	\$8,285	\$20,993	\$31,069	\$34,720
North Hempstead	\$12,896	\$30,621	\$41,621	\$46,511
Oyster Bay Town	\$10,030	\$24,449	\$35,895	\$40,113
Nassau County	\$9,963	\$23,352	\$32,151	\$35,929
Source: Suffolk County Planning Department				
*Estimate				

Effective Buying Income

The County has the highest median household effective buying income (“EBI”) of any county in New York State and ranks second only to Putnam County for households with an EBI above \$50,000. EBI is defined as income less personal tax and non-tax payments and is often referred to as “disposable” or “after-tax” income. Table 5 compares median household EBI income and percentage of households by EBI group data in Nassau County with Suffolk, New York City and New York State. Almost 60 percent of Nassau County households have an EBI of \$50,000 or more, while approximately 14 percent have an EBI of less than \$35,000.

TABLE 5: NASSAU COUNTY EFFECTIVE BUYING INCOME

Area	Total EBI 2003	Median HH EBI Income	% of HHs by EBI Group		
			\$20K-34.9K	\$35-49.9K	\$50K+
Nassau County	33,157,415	\$56,731	13.8	16.6	57.7
Suffolk County	39,431,075	\$52,593	15.6	18.7	53.2
New York City	178,433,744	\$35,625	20.8	17.2	33.8
New York State	354,786,009	\$37,077	21.7	18.6	34.9
Source: <i>Sales and Marketing Management</i> 2003					

**TABLE 6
TOP SIX PMSA MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD EFFECTIVE BUYING INCOME**

1	San Jose	\$62,725
2	Bridgeport – Stamford – Norwalk – Danbury	56,020
3	San Francisco	55,536
4	Middlesex – Somerset – Hunterdon	54,967
5	Nassau-Suffolk	54,492
6	Washington	52,362
	U.S. Median	\$38,035
SOURCE: <i>Sales and Marketing Management</i> , “2003 Survey of Buying Power”		

As evidence of the high EBI of County households, the Nassau-Suffolk PMSA had the nation’s highest number of households (39,500) with incomes above \$150,000 for a *non-urban population* and ranked 11th overall in the nation (see Table 7). According to the 2000 Census, 30,612 or seven percent of County households earn more than \$150,000. By comparison, 2.9 percent of households in New York State and 2.1 percent of households in the nation earn more than \$150,000.

**TABLE 7:
NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH
EFFECTIVE BUYING INCOME ABOVE \$150,000**

Rank		Number of Households (000's Omitted)
1	New York	114.7
2	Chicago	89.5
3	Los Angeles – Long Beach	80.1
4	Washington	71.1
5	Boston – Lawrence – Lowell – Brockton	52.9
6	Dallas	47.2
7	San Francisco	46.8
8	Houston	43.5
9	Philadelphia	42.9
10	Atlanta	42.7
11	Nassau – Suffolk	39.5
12	San Jose	36.7
13	Detroit	35.3
14	Seattle – Bellevue – Everett	35.2
15	Orange County, California	33.3
	US Total	2,078.0
SOURCE: <i>Sales and Marketing Management</i> “2003 Survey of Buying Power and Media Markets.”		

Consumer Price Index

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) represents changes in prices of all goods and services purchased for consumption by households over time and is often used to gauge levels of inflation. CPI includes user fees such as water and sewer service and sales and excise taxes paid by the consumer, but does not include income taxes and investment items such as stocks, bonds, and life insurance. Annual totals and increases in the CPI for both the New York-Northern New Jersey – Long Island, NY-NJ-CT-PA Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA) and U.S. cities between the years 1994 and 2004 are shown in Table 8.

As indicated by the table, prices in the CMSA rose by 3 percent over the past year, the second largest yearly percentage increase in the last ten years and the third consecutive year in which the CPI for the region increased. By comparison, prices rose by 2.2 percent in U.S. cities in 2003, which represented the first increase in CPI in three years.

**TABLE 8:
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX 1994-2003**

Year	U.S City Average (1,000s)	Percentage Change	NY-NJ-CT-PA CMSA (1,000s)	Percentage Change
2003	184	2.2%	197.8	3.0%
2002	179.9	1.6%	191.9	2.5%
2001	177.1	2.8%	187.1	2.5%
2000	172.2	3.3%	182.5	3.0%
1999	166.6	2.2%	177	1.9%
1998	163	1.5%	173.6	1.6%
1997	160.5	2.2%	170.8	2.3%
1996	156.9	2.9%	166.9	2.8%
1995	152.4	2.8%	162.2	2.5%
1994	148.2	-	158.2	-

Source: U.S. Department of Labor; Bureau of Labor Statistics

Retail Opportunities in Nassau County

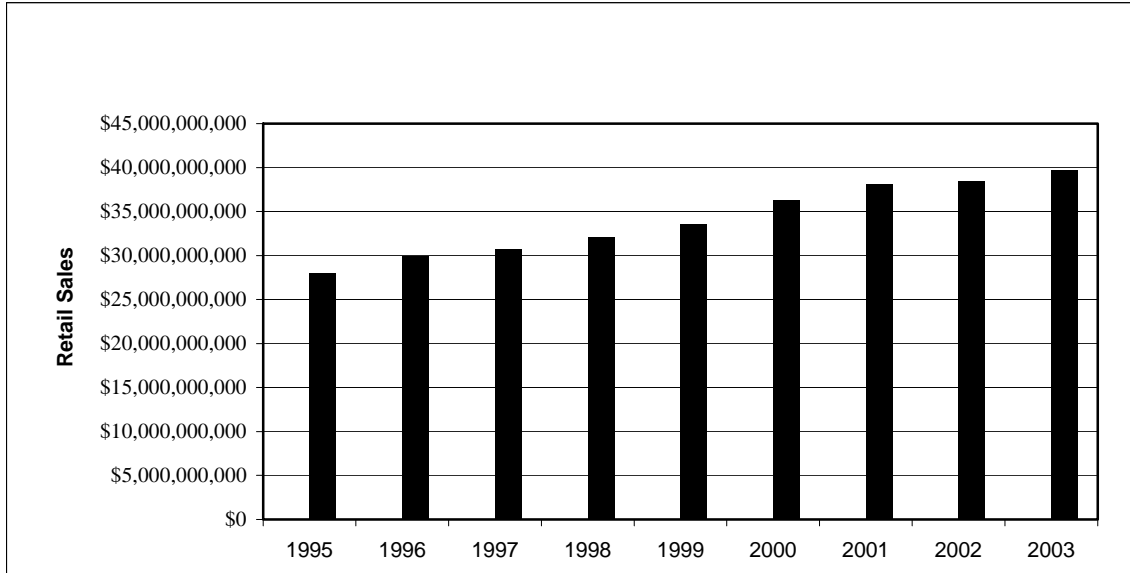
The County is served by six major regional shopping centers: Broadway Mall in Hicksville, Roosevelt Field in Garden City, Green Acres Mall in Valley Stream, Bay Harbor Mall in Lawrence, Sunrise Mall in Massapequa and the Simon Mall at the Source in Westbury. According to the International Council of Shopping Centers, a global trade association of the shopping center industry, these regional malls feature a total of 6,889,934 square feet of gross leaseable area (GLA). The median income of consumers within a 10-mile radius of these regional centers is \$95,174.

With its wide array of designer boutique shops, specialty department stores such as Barneys, Brooks Brothers, Giorgio Armani, Ralph Lauren and Prada and jewelers such as Tiffany & Co., Cartier and Van Cleef & Arpels, the Americana Mall in Manhasset offers retail opportunities comparable to those in Manhattan. Other major retailers available in the County include Saks Fifth Avenue, Bloomingdales, Lord & Taylor, Nordstrom’s, Macy’s, Fortunoff’s, Sears, JC Penney, Marshalls, Old Navy, Kohl’s and Target. The County boasts a wide range of nationally recognized retailers that provide goods and services that include home furnishing stores, supermarkets and gourmet food markets, electronics and bookstores.

Retail Sales and Business Activity

As a region, the total retail sales in the Nassau-Suffolk PMSA have increased significantly each year since the mid-1990’s (see Figure 2 and Table 9). Since 1999, total annual retail sales in the PMSA have increased by 37 percent. In three of the past four years, however, Suffolk County has outranked Nassau County in taxable sales and tax revenue (see Figure 3 and Table 10). In 2003, according to the latest data available from the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance, Nassau County’s taxable sales *decreased* by 6.3 percent while Suffolk County’s increased by 13.4 percent.

**FIGURE 2: TOTAL RETAIL SALES ACTIVITY
NASSAU AND SUFFOLK COUNTIES COMBINED 1995-2003**

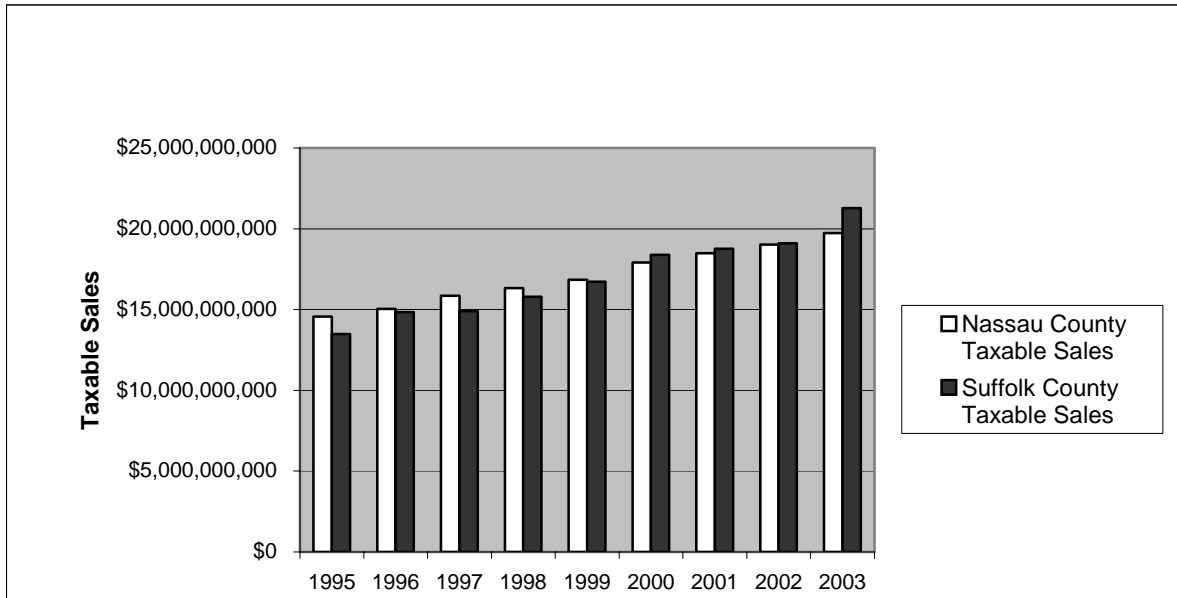


**TABLE 9: TOTAL RETAIL SALES
ACTIVITY IN NASSAU
AND SUFFOLK COUNTIES
1994-2000**

Fiscal Year	Taxable Sales	% Change from Previous Year
2003	\$39,774,325,200	3.3%
2002	\$38,497,560,965	1.0%
2001	\$38,124,571,212	5.0%
2000	\$36,292,707,604	8.1%
1999	\$33,570,128,093	4.4%
1998	\$32,140,297,593	4.6%
1997	\$30,715,329,662	2.5%
1996	\$29,962,593,681	6.8%
1995	\$28,056,093,365	-

Source: New York State Department of Taxation and Finance, Office of Tax Policy Analysis

**FIGURE 3: NASSAU AND SUFFOLK COUNTY:
TAXABLE SALES 1995-2003**



**TABLE 10: NASSAU-SUFFOLK ANNUAL
TAX REVENUE AND TAXABLE SALES
1995-2003**

Fiscal Year	Nassau			Suffolk		
	Tax Revenue	Taxable Sales	Change From Previous Year	Tax Revenue	Taxable Sales	Change From Previous Year
2003	\$785,844,875	\$18,490,467,647	-6.3%	\$904,563,946	\$21,283,857,553	13.4%
2002	\$838,763,204	\$19,735,604,800	3.8%	\$797,383,137	\$18,761,956,165	-1.8%
2001	\$808,277,759	\$19,018,300,212	6.2%	\$764,250,840	\$19,106,271,000	4.0%
2000	\$761,302,718	\$17,913,005,129	6.3%	\$735,188,099	\$18,379,702,475	9.9%
1999	\$716,197,374	\$16,851,702,918	3.1%	\$668,737,007	\$16,718,425,175	5.8%
1998	\$694,373,590	\$16,338,202,118	3.0%	\$632,083,819	\$15,802,095,475	6.4%
1997	\$674,246,070	\$15,864,613,412	5.4%	\$594,028,650	\$14,850,716,250	-0.4%
1996	\$639,569,202	\$15,048,687,106	3.2%	\$596,556,263	\$14,913,906,575	10.6%
1995	\$619,494,746	\$14,576,346,965		\$572,889,222	\$13,479,746,400	

Source: New York State Department of Taxation and Finance, Suffolk County Planning Department

Retail Trends in Comparison to Suffolk County

Table 11 compares the total retail sales in Nassau and Suffolk Counties for the years 1997 through 2000, the latest available data. As indicated in the table, prior to the selling period March to August 1998, Nassau County's retail activity exceeded that of Suffolk County. Since 1998, however, with the exception of selling period September 1998 to February 1999, retail sales activity in Suffolk County has exceeded Nassau County, specifically in the building materials, food, auto dealers and gas stations and miscellaneous categories. This trend is attributed in part to the availability of developable land in Suffolk County which has resulted in the development of commercial outlets such as the Tanger Mall in Riverhead and a high concentration of car dealerships. Retail data from 2001-2004 is currently being compiled and is not yet available.

**TABLE 11:
RETAIL SALES IN NASSAU AND
SUFFOLK COUNTIES BY CATEGORY
1997-2000**

*Industry	Selling Period (Figures in \$1,000s.)						Percent Change '97-'00
	3/97 - 8/97	9/97 - 2/98	3/98 - 8/98	9/98 - 2/99	3/99 - 8/99	9/99 - 2/00	
NC-Building Materials	341,552	296,493	358,389	319,267	397,870	344,515	0.87%
	507,616	446,816	573,067	496,903	644,685	555,110	9.36%
NC-General Merchandise	760,987	914,332	877,699	798,059	823,958	963,362	26.59%
	539,332	630,037	621,833	645,048	604,518	747,718	38.64%
NC-Food	311,898	291,203	322,896	326,666	332,720	336,923	8.02%
	383,874	346,373	404,953	392,562	410,629	400,686	4.38%
NC-Auto Dealers, Gas Stations	1,274,186	1,204,664	1,350,026	1,214,056	1,486,633	1,391,074	9.17%
	1,377,164	1,319,051	1,561,663	1,378,182	1,750,774	1,635,512	18.76%
NC-Apparel	525,715	592,058	583,694	580,863	602,070	658,824	25.32%
	332,234	364,491	382,822	374,929	427,081	425,929	28.20%
NC-Furniture	395,952	468,411	450,751	497,332	516,870	567,009	43.20%
	320,769	365,548	370,595	400,546	448,857	486,845	51.77%
NC-Eating and Drinking	581,134	569,661	626,498	593,415	646,177	618,518	6.43%
	521,259	455,967	560,574	487,312	599,079	514,997	-1.20%
NC-Miscellaneous Retail	836,566	976,703	846,301	952,148	884,547	1,028,277	22.92%
	893,370	1,037,046	947,597	1,058,144	1,035,601	1,230,832	37.77%
NC-Retail Trade Total	5,027,990	5,313,525	5,416,254	5,281,806	5,690,845	5,908,502	17.51%
	4,875,618	4,965,329	5,423,104	5,233,626	5,921,224	5,997,629	23.01%

Source: Office of Nassau County Executive Research for Budget and Finance
 *Nassau County figures in gray, Suffolk County figures in white

The retail tax rate in Nassau County is 8.75 percent. The retail sales revenue from all County retail vendors is sent to the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance. Table 12 shows the distribution of the total sales tax revenue collected by New York State from the County by industry for the period from 1997 through 2000, the latest available statistics. The County sales tax base increased by 14 percent between 1997 and 2000. In the industry sector the largest percentage increases occurred in the "services to tangible personal property used in production" category (42.2), followed by administrative/support (36.6), health care (26.8) and accommodation and food services (19.8). The largest percentage decrease in retail sales occurred in the "unclassified by industry" category (20.8), manufacturing (13.5) and utilities (12.9 percent, excluding residential energy). Retail trade led all categories in total annual sales with \$5,122,775 in 2000.

**TABLE 12: NASSAU COUNTY
ANNUAL RETAIL SALES TAX BASE TOTALS
BY INDUSTRY**
(In \$1000s)

Industry	1997	2000	Change
Utilities (excluding residential energy)	\$246,314	\$214,656	-12.9%
Utilities (residential energy only)	\$19,108	\$17,463	-8.6%
Construction	\$111,019	\$124,847	12.5%
Manufacturing	\$179,065	\$154,964	-13.5%
Wholesale Trade	\$524,353	\$606,011	15.6%
Retail Trade	\$4,416,792	\$5,122,775	16.0%
Information	\$500,021	\$552,502	10.5%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical	\$86,996	\$100,413	15.4%
Administrative/Support Services	\$152,726	\$208,577	36.6%
Health Care	\$8,272	\$10,489	26.8%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	\$117,195	\$130,971	11.8%
Accommodation and Food Services	\$580,897	\$696,052	19.8%
Other Services	\$201,002	\$204,886	1.9%
Agriculture, Mining, Transportation, Education, Government, & Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	\$360,347	\$422,174	17.2%
Services to Tangible Personal Property used in Production	\$3,703	\$5,376	45.2%
Unclassified by Industry	\$41,109	\$32,573	-20.8%
Total	\$7,548,918	\$8,604,730*	14.0%
SOURCE: New York State Department of Taxation and Finance; Office of Tax Policy Analysis, Taxable Sales and Purchases. Nassau County Department of Planning * Excludes Local Sales of Clothing (single selling period data available only).			

Employment

According to the latest figures available from New York State Department of Labor, Nassau County has a workforce of approximately 718,500 employees. The current unemployment rate of 3.9 percent shows a slight decline from the 4.1 percent recorded in 2002. Table 13 compares the employment and unemployment rates for the County with adjoining municipalities, the State, and the United States. 2003 marked the eighth consecutive year in which the County's unemployment rate was less than Suffolk County (4.4 percent), New York City (8.4 percent), New York State (6.3) and the United States as a whole (6 percent).

**TABLE 13: NON-FARM ANNUAL AVERAGE
EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT 1994-2003**

Year	Nassau County		Suffolk County		New York City		New York State		United States	
	Employment	Unemp-Rate	Employment	Unemployment Rate	Employment	Unemployment Rate	Employment	Unemployment Rate	Employment	Unemployment Rate
2003	718.5	3.9	733.2	4.4	3,375	8.4	9,315	6.3	137,736	6.0
2002	683.3	4.1	724.8	4.4	3,433	7.9	9,345	6.1	136,485	5.8
2001	674.1	3.1	711.9	3.5	3,433	6.0	9,113	4.9	136,933	4.7
2000	677.7	2.7	707.0	3.2	3,516	5.7	9,179	4.6	136,891	4.0
1999	699.2	3.0	704.4	3.6	3,351	6.7	9,104	5.2	133,488	4.2
1998	696.4	2.9	697.7	3.5	3,292	8.0	9,090	5.6	131,463	4.5
1997	6934	3.5	686.7	4.3	3,188	9.4	9,025	6.4	129,558	4.9
1996	679.3	3.8	667.2	4.6	3,086	8.8	8,777	6.2	126,708	5.4
1995	675.6	4.5	655.3	5.4	3,004	8.2	8,639	6.3	124,900	5.6
1994	676.5	5.1	651.0	6.2	2,990	8.7	8,685	6.9	123,060	6.1

SOURCES: New York State Department of Labor; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Key Employment Trends

As indicated in Table 14, the annual average employment in non-farm jobs by industry for the years 1996 through 2003 in the Nassau-Suffolk PMSA remains high. Industries that achieved their highest level of employment in the past eight years include: education and health services, leisure and hospitality and government. Eighty-eight percent of jobs within the PMSA are in service producing industries. Within the goods producing category, manufacturing jobs have decreased by 4.2 percent over the last year and by 16.6 percent since reaching a peak in 1999. Meanwhile, jobs within the natural resources, construction and mining industries have increased by 44 percent since 1996.

Within the service producing industries, the leisure and hospitality and educational and health service sectors showed respective increases of 3 percent over the past year. Moreover, since 1996, the leisure and hospitality sector has seen a 21.5 percent increase in jobs while during the same period the education and health service and professional and business workforce has increased by 18.6 percent and 15.6 percent respectively. While jobs within the financial industries have remained relatively constant throughout the last several years, the information industries have shown job declines in each of the last two years.

After reaching a peak of over 273,000 in 2000, jobs in the trade, transportation and utilities sector have decreased by 2.7 percent over the last three years. Jobs within the financial and information industries have remained constant throughout the last several years.

**TABLE 14: ANNUAL AVERAGE
NASSAU-SUFFOLK EMPLOYMENT
NON-FARM, BY BUSINESS SECTOR
1996-2003**

(000's omitted)

Nassau-Suffolk Employment by Industry	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Goods Producing								
Natural Resources Construction & Mining	44.6	47.5	51.4	57.5	61.0	62.4	64.3	64.2
Manufacturing	101.2	101.5	103.6	105.7	105.5	98.9	92.1	88.2
Total Employment Goods-Producing	146.1	149.8	155.0	163.2	166.5	161.2	156.4	152.5
Service Producing								
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	255.1	260.6	264.0	267.1	273.1	271.9	267.5	270.3
Financial Activities	80.0	80.3	81.0	85.5	84.2	81.4	82.0	83.0
Information	26.9	28.4	30.0	30.7	31.8	32.9	32.5	29.1
Educational and Health Services	162.9	164.7	170.3	175.6	178.5	180.9	187.5	193.2
Leisure & Hospitality	76.4	77.8	79.2	82.8	86.0	88.8	90.1	92.8
Other Services	43.4	44.5	46.0	50.8	52.1	49.7	50.1	50.8
Professional & Business Services	131.5	136.4	140.9	148.7	155.6	157.7	153.1	152.0
Government	178.9	178.7	182.1	185.7	190.2	194.1	196.3	198.9
Total Service Producing	955.0	971.3	993.4	1,027.0	1,051.5	1,057.4	1,059.1	1,070.2
Total Non-Farm	1,101.1	1,121.0	1,148.4	1,190.2	1,218.0	1,218.6	1,215.5	1,222.2
Source: New York State Department of Labor, Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.								

The percentage of jobs within each category remains fairly consistent with national figures. Table 15 compares the employment sectors in the Nassau-Suffolk PMSA to the national employment rates by industry. Nationwide, 18 percent of jobs were in the goods producing sector compared to 12 percent of the County's PMSA. In addition, the County PMSA has fewer jobs within the trade, transportation and utility and manufacturing industries and more jobs in assorted services.

**TABLE 15: PERCENT OF NON-FARM EMPLOYMENT
BY BUSINESS SECTOR 2003**

Business Sector	Nassau-Suffolk PMSA (%)	United States (%)
Goods Producing		
Natural Resources*, Construction & Mining	5	5
Manufacturing	7	13
Total Production of Goods	12	18
Service Providing* or Service Producing**		
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	22	28
Financial Activities* or Finance, Insurance & Real Estate**	7	6
Assorted Services	42	31
Government	16	16
Total Production of Services	88	82
<small>SOURCES: New York State Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Nassau-Suffolk PMSA **United States</small>		

Major Nassau County Employers and Key Employer Trends

Consistent with recent job growth in the educational and health services and leisure and hospitality industries, the County's largest employer, with a work force of approximately 30,000, is the North Shore-Long Island Jewish Health System based in Great Neck (see Table 16). Four of the top employers in the County are the communication firms Cablevision and Verizon, the energy company KeySpan and the defense technology firm Northrop Grumman Integrated Systems.

TABLE 16: MAJOR NASSAU COUNTY COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYERS

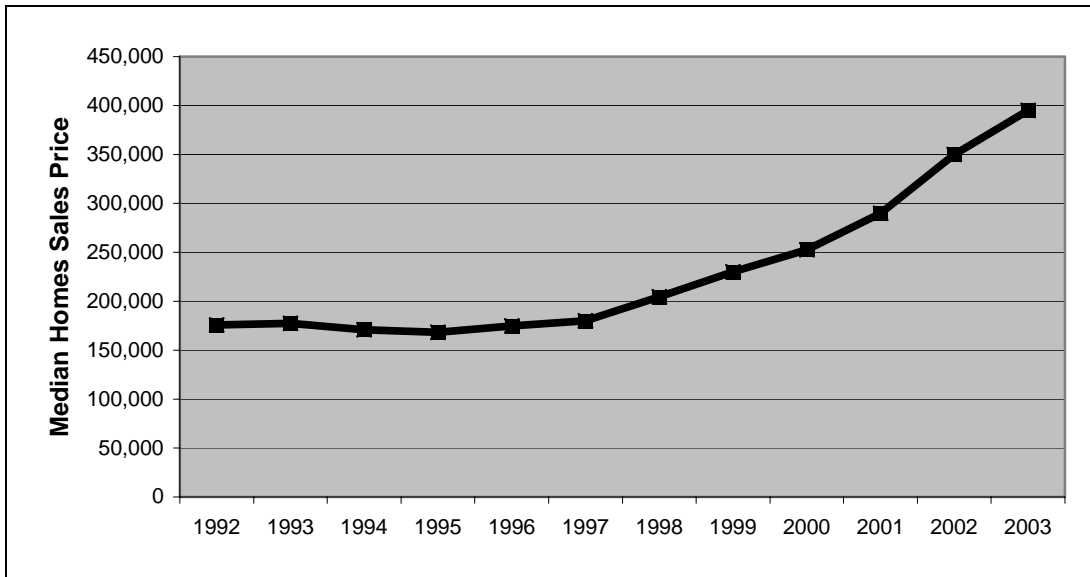
Employer	Type	Approx. no. Employees*
North Shore-Long Island Jewish Health System	Health Care	30,000*
Diocese of Rockville Centre	Religious Instruction	17,500
Cablevision Systems	Entertainment/ Telecommunications	6,567
Verizon Communications	Communications	5,500
King Kullen Grocery Co.	Food Retailing	4,800*
Keyspan Corporation	Utility	4,418
Hofstra University	Institutional	2,470
Northrop Grumman Integrated Systems	Technology	1,800
Fortunoff Fine Jewelry	Jewelry/Home Furnishings	1,350
Griffon Corporation	Manufacturing	1,200
<small>SOURCES: Long Island Business News "2004 Book of Lists", Long Island Business Association. *Company headquarters are located in the County, number may include employees who work outside of the County.</small>		

Housing

Residential Sales and Building Construction

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the number of housing units in the County increased by three percent from 446,292 in 1990 to 458,151 in 2000. The County (80 percent) has a higher percentage of owner-occupied units than the State (66 percent) and the nation (53 percent) as a whole. In light of these statistics, increasing housing prices and sales have become two of the County's strongest economic indicators over the last several years. Median home prices have increased by over 56 percent since 2000 and 13 percent over the past year (see Figure 4 and Table 17). In 2003, the County reached a historic high for annual median sales price (\$395,000) and marked the second consecutive year in which over 8,600 houses were sold. Nassau County trails only Suffolk County in number of houses sold in all of New York States and ranks third behind Westchester and Kings Counties in median home sales price.

**FIGURE 4: MEDIAN HOME SALES PRICE
IN NASSAU COUNTY 1992-2003**



**TABLE 17: NASSAU COUNTY
HOME SALES 1992-2003**

Year	Median Sales Price	Annual Sales (\$000)	No. of Homes Sold
2003	\$395,000	N/a	8,646
2002	350,000	\$3,722,598	8,654
2001	290,000	2,422,686	7,545
2000	252,500	1,994,682	7,002
1999	230,000	1,916,307	7,389
1998	204,500	1,892,255	8,199
1997	180,000	1,641,168	7,835
1996	175,000	1,485,489	7,319
1995	168,300	1,359,012	6,795
1994	171,000	1,450,242	7,125
1993	177,500	1,200,374	5,887
1992	175,800	1,144,927	5,721
SOURCE: The October 2001 LIPA Annual Business Fact Book, 1992-2000; Multiple Listing Service of Long Island Inc., 2001-2004.			

In the past year, new residential construction activity in the County increased by approximately 5 percent (47 units) from 985 to 1,032. Table 18 shows the value of new construction by type and number of dwelling units authorized by type for the years 1992-2003. In 2003, the County issued the most building permits (1,032) since 2000. The value of the construction permits issued for this period is unavailable. Table 19 shows the breakdown by housing unity type of the building permits issued in Nassau County during the period from 1992 through 2003.

**TABLE 18:
NEW RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY,
NASSAU COUNTY 1992-2003**

Year	Value of New Residential Construction (000's omitted)	No. of New Dwelling Units By Building Permit
2003	N/a	1,032
2002	\$ 222,722	985
2001	229,464	989
2000	266,259	1,506
1999	199,433	1,151
1998	189,668	1,021
1997	188,345	1,372
1996	156,547	976
1995	104,002	860
1994	109,032	753
1993	99,188	794
1992	73,323	511
SOURCE: US Census Bureau; Long Island Regional Planning Board.		

**TABLE 19:
NUMBER OF NEW RESIDENTIAL HOUSING UNITS
AUTHORIZED BY BUILDING PERMIT, BY SIZE CATEGORY
NASSAU COUNTY 1999-2003**

Year	1 Family	2 Family	3-4 Family	5 + Family	Total
2003	663	36	0	333	1,032
2002	740	30	3	212	985
2001	688	32	4	265	989
2000	753	142	6	605	1,506
1999	730	50	3	368	1,151
1998	770	34	4	213	1,021
1997	925	42	34	371	1,372
1996	623	52	0	301	976
1995	734	60	0	66	860
1994	587	54	4	108	753
1993	534	68	0	192	794
1992	479	32	0	0	511

SOURCE: US Census Bureau; Long Island Regional Planning Board

Construction Activity

Table 20 shows the breakdown of construction activity in the County for residential, business, industrial and public building construction from the years 1992 through 2001, the latest available figures. While overall building growth showed a 17 percent decrease from 2000 totals, 2001 continued a trend of robust construction activity in the County which began in 1995. 2001 ranked third over the past ten years for most numbers of building permits issued for all construction and reached peaks in the construction of public and industrial buildings.

**TABLE 20: CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY
FOR ALL CATEGORIES 1992-2001**

Year	Single- Family Dwellings	Other Housing Units*	Business Buildings	Industrial Buildings	Public Buildings	Total Buildings
2001	614	884	30	21	16	1,565
2000	790	1,009	58	21	9	1,887
1999	639	540	34	8	16	1,237
1998	746	563	42	5	13	1,369
1997	860	862	56	14	7	1,799
1996	518	498	36	7	4	1,063
1995	552	401	70	4	8	1,035
1994	522	208	35	9	11	785
1993	490	351	59	0	4	904
1992	413	184	40	6	5	648
Totals	6,144	5,500	460	95	93	12,292

Source: Nassau County Planning Commission

*Other housing units include two-family, multi-family dwellings and conversions.

Table 21 lists the number of building permits issued for Class 4 property in the County for the years 1992 through 2002, the estimated dollar value on these permits and the assessed value added to the County tax rolls. Class 4 property includes commercial, industrial, institutional buildings and vacant land. As indicated in the table, there was a 14.7 percent decrease in the number of permits received for these categories from 2001 to 2002 and a 17.2 percent decrease in estimated value or \$50.9 million dollars.

TABLE 21: NUMBER OF PERMITS RECEIVED AND ESTIMATED VALUE ON PERMITS

	Number of Permits Received	Estimated Dollar Value on Permit	Assessed value added to Roll
2002	2,730	\$283,999,027	Not available
2001	3,201	\$343,166,830	9,227,310
2000	3,444	\$355,868,375	9,089,650
1999	3,549	\$388,590,248	9,699,030
1998	3,405	\$344,316,996	10,696,690
1997	3,857	\$315,961,972	11,010,085
1996	3,156	\$256,497,726	17,441,210
1995	3,263	\$297,169,504	18,466,825
1994	3,208	\$186,225,660	Not readily available
1993	3,222	\$187,076,912	Not readily available
1992	3,063	\$208,361,232	Not readily available
Source: Nassau County Planning Commission.			

Commercial and Industrial Space and Building Activity

Despite a sluggish national economy, the County continued to show stability in commercial and industrial building inventory and activity. According to the latest available inventory, the County has 214 office buildings comprising a total of approximately 22.3 million square feet. Table 21 shows the total office space inventory for the County for the first quarter of 2003. Due in most part to the return of sublet space to the market and direct space in central Nassau County, *available space* increased by approximately 20 percent over the previous year to 2.3 million square feet. Accordingly, the vacancy rate rose from 8.4 percent to 10.3 percent over the last year. In addition, 110,000 square feet of new construction has occurred at the time of the publication of this document. The County contains 57 and 158 buildings in the Class A and Class B categories respectively. Class A buildings show a 13.6 percent availability rate while Class B buildings show 7.7 percent. While no new construction occurred during 2003 for Class B buildings, the aforementioned 110,000 square feet of new construction occurred in the Class A category.

**TABLE 21:
Nassau County
Office Space Inventory**

Total Inventory (Sq. Ft)	22.30 million
Number of Buildings	214
Availability Rate (%)	10.3%
Available Space (Sq. Ft.)	2.30 million
Office Space Absorption During Year (Sq. Ft.)	-73,000
Source: Insignia/ESG, Inc, Long Island Power Authority	

Table 22 shows the amount of square footage available in the County for the years 1996 through 2001. After three consecutive years of net loss (1997-1999), the County's inventory of industrial space doubled in 2000 and added 906,417 million square feet in 2001.

Table 22
Available Industrial Space
Nassau County

Year	Industrial Square Footage	Change from Previous Year (%)
2001	6,476,704	16.27
2000	5,570,287	50.03
1999	3,712,765	-45.22
1998	6,778,001	-12.50
1997	7,746,305	-21.97
1996	9,927,494	-
Source: Greiner-Maltz Company, Inc Long Island Power Authority		

Transportation

Public Transportation

MTA Long Island Bus (MTALIB), a subsidiary of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), is the County's principal public surface transit provider and the third largest suburban bus system in the United States. Operating a network 54 routes, the MTALIB provides transit service for most of the County as well as parts of eastern Queens and western Suffolk County. The density of MTALIB's route network conforms to the development pattern of the County.

MTALIB operates approximately 336 fixed route buses and 81 para-transit vehicles, including service across the Queens-Nassau line to subway and bus stations in Flushing, Far Rockaway and Jamaica. MTALIB has an average ridership of 105,000 passengers each weekday and serves 96 communities, 46 Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) stations, most area colleges and universities, as well as employment centers and shopping malls. The total MTALIB estimated budget for 2003 is \$98.9 million, of which approximately 38 percent, or \$37.8 million, is derived from passenger fares and other revenue.

The estimated cost to the County and the State of operating MTALIB during 2003 was approximately \$42 million. The County's share of the cost was approximately \$8.3 million; the State's share was approximately \$33.7 million. Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) provides train service for the entire County. With an annual ridership of 85 million, the LIRR is the busiest railroad in North America. Over 60 percent of the LIRR's passenger trips originate in the County. On weekdays, about 70 percent of the system's passenger trips occur during morning and evening peak travel periods. The LIRR provides service on 9 branches: Port Washington, Oyster Bay, West Hempstead, Hempstead, Long Beach, Far Rockaway, Port Jefferson, Ronkonkoma and Babylon. These branches provide service through the County to eastern destinations in Suffolk County and western destinations of Penn Station in Manhattan, Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn, as well as Jamaica and Hunters Point/Long Island City in Queens.

LIRR's approximately \$4.6 billion dollars capital improvement program has helped facilitate the rehabilitation of Penn Station, renovations at Jamaica and Flatbush Avenue, and the continual maintenance of replacing tracks, ties, and switches and renovations underway at numerous

stations. The LIRR has a fleet of M-1, M-3 and M-7 electric cars, along with bi-level coaches, which operate with diesel and dual-mode locomotives. In the County, the railroad is completely electrified, except for the Oyster Bay Branch east of East Williston. Currently, the LIRR is contracted to expand its fleet of electric cars with the goal of phasing all M-7 into service by 2008.

The County highway system consists of over 4,000 miles of paved roads that include parkways, highways, major arteries, collector streets and local streets, which are operated and maintained by different levels of government. The eight major east-west roadways that provide direct through service to New York City and Suffolk County include: Northern Boulevard, Long Island Expressway, Northern State Parkway, Jericho Turnpike, Hempstead Turnpike, Southern State Parkway, Sunrise Highway, and Merrick Road.

Air Transit

The County is located within close proximity to John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) and LaGuardia Airport (LaGuardia), both located in Queens County, and to Islip Long Island MacArthur Airport (Islip), located in nearby Suffolk County. JFK and LaGuardia are easily accessible to County residents by all major east-west roadways as well as airport shuttle and express bus service. JFK is also accessible by Long Island Bus, which provides routes through many County towns. The Air Train service, a light rail system connecting Jamaica Station in Queens to JFK, began operating in December 2003. Islip Airport is accessible by the Long Island Expressway and Southern State Parkway as well as the LIRR.

Freight

Only three percent of all the freight in the downstate or “East of Hudson” New York region is shipped by rail. Freight movement on Long Island is handled almost exclusively by truck. Currently, only about one per cent of freight tonnage on LI is handled by rail, while the comparable national figure is about 15 per cent. The Long Island Expressway is the only limited access freight route on Long Island. Sunrise Highway is also an important arterial for freight movement. Both freight trucks and trains compete for space with passenger movement on roads and the Long Island Rail Road tracks. According to NYMTC, 28,784,080 tons of freight entered, moved within, and left Nassau County in 1998. Of that total, about 97 percent was transported by truck, and the remainder by water and rail.

Utility Services

Electrical service is provided to the County by the Long Island Power Authority (LIPA), which became Long Island’s non-profit electric utility in 1998. LIPA’s electric system, which serves 1.1 million customers, is operated by KeySpan, the parent company of KeySpan Energy Delivery, the largest investor-owned electric generator in New York State. KeySpan, which is the largest distributor of natural gas in the northeast United States, also provides gas distribution in the County. The incorporated villages of Freeport and Rockville Centre operate their own electrical generation plants.

LIPA is funded through legislation that requires the utility to make payments in lieu of taxes (PILOTS) to municipalities and school districts commensurate with property taxes that would have been received by each jurisdiction from the Long Island Lighting Company (LILCO), the County’s former provider of electrical service. LIPA is also required to issue PILOTS for certain New York State and local taxes which would otherwise have been imposed on LILCO. Numerous private companies in the County provide telephone service.

Health and Hospital Facilities

Nassau County hospitals provide 4,669 certified hospital beds in 13 hospitals and employ 7,688 licensed medical doctors, 1,969 dentists, 739 chiropractors, 320 podiatrists and 18,420 registered nurses. According to *AARP Modern Maturity*, the North Shore University Hospital (NSUH) in Manhasset is the highest rated hospital in the United States. The North Shore Long Island Jewish Health System is the County's largest employer (approximately 30,000), the third largest, non-profit, secular health care system in the nation and part of the largest integrated healthcare network (Modern Healthcare) in the Northeast.

Educational, Recreational and Cultural Facilities

There are various recreational, educational and cultural facilities available to County residents. Professional hockey teams perform at the Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, home of the New York Islanders (the "Islanders"). Public beaches on the Atlantic Ocean and the Long Island Sound are accessible to all. The County's public park land is maintained by various villages, cities, towns, the County, the State and the United States. The parks provide golf, tennis, ice rinks, swimming pools, and athletic fields. The County also has several institutions of higher education. These include C. W. Post College, Adelphi University, Hofstra University, New York Institute of Technology, U.S. Merchant Marine Academy and Nassau Community College. Historic sites such as Old Bethpage Village and Sagamore Hill; historical, art and natural history museums; theaters; symphony orchestras; and nature trails and preserves add to the recreational, cultural and educational activities available in the County

The County is comprised of 56 public school districts which have a total enrollment of 205,919 students as of 2002. The individual school boards and the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) are the primary managers of these school districts and provide services such as career training for high-school students and adults, special education, alternative schools, technology education, and teacher training. Educational facilities are managed by an array of public and private organizations. Many County public schools have received national recognition; a recent *Newsweek* magazine article cited 13 County high schools among the top 100 public high schools in the nation.

Revenues to support the public schools are generated primarily from real estate taxes and New York State school aid. The higher the assessed valuation of a particular district, the more the real estate property taxes can be leveraged with the state funding for the school district. Despite the national recognition many County schools have received, this system has led to disparities in educational quality between property-rich and property-poor districts

The County's non-public schools, which are located in a number of municipalities, provide education in the State Regents program as well as in special and technical programs. Over 71,000 students attend County colleges and universities, some of which are highly specialized and have garnered nationwide attention for their programs. These institutions include: Long Island University/C.W. Post College, Adelphi University, Hofstra University, New York Institute of Technology, U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, Nassau Community College, Webb Institute, Molloy College and SUNY/Old Westbury.

Cultural and Recreation Facilities

The County is well served by numerous cultural and recreational facilities. One of the most popular destinations among the County's parks and beaches is the 2,413-acre Jones Beach State Park in Wantagh. With approximately six to seven million visitors annually, Jones Beach State Park features a six-mile ocean beachfront, a two-mile boardwalk and the 11,200-seat, Tommy Hilfiger at Jones Beach Theater performing arts center which attracts world-class musical acts. There are dozens of other public beaches located along both the Atlantic Ocean and the Long

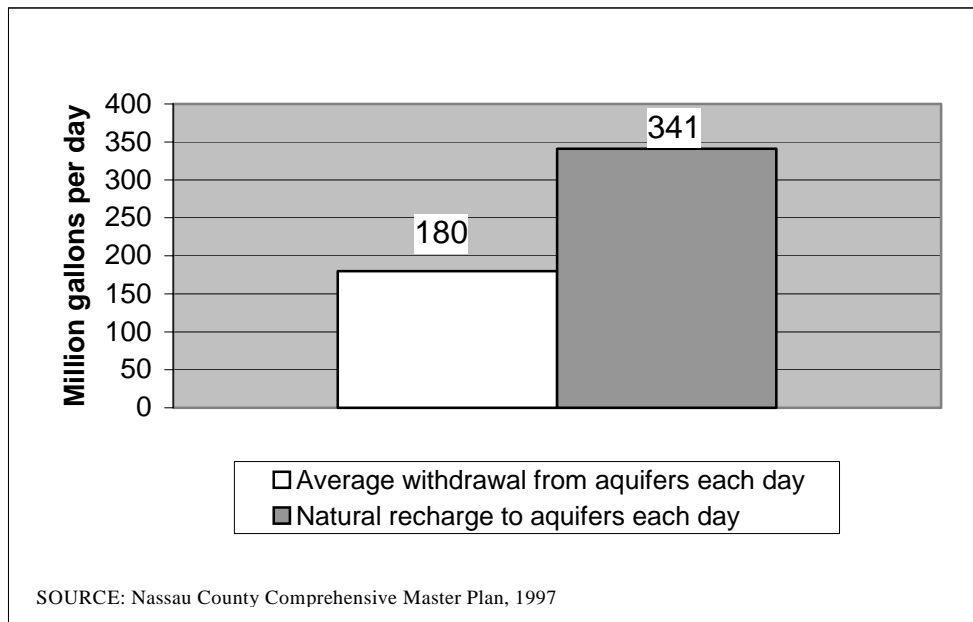
Island Sound shoreline. In addition, the County is home to the 930-acre, Eisenhower Park in the Town of Hempstead, Bethpage State Park in Farmingdale and numerous small local parks and campgrounds which offer a broad spectrum of recreational opportunities.

Water Service and Sanitary Sewer Facilities

The County contains 47 water districts which provide water service to over 90 percent of the County’s residents. Approximately 3,550 residents of the less densely populated northern sections of the County draw their water from private wells. The natural geology of Nassau County yields four aquifers located between subsurface rock strata. These aquifers serve Nassau County with fresh water and are continuously being recharged by precipitation.

According to a Long Island population study conducted by the Long Island Regional Planning Board, the population of Long Island by 2010 is expected to remain at the present level of 1.3 million people. By the same time, based on additional studies regarding projected residential, commercial and industrial daily water use, the demand of water from Long Island’s groundwater supply will be 180 million gallons per day. Recharge of the groundwater system has increased from 332 million gallons per day to 341 million gallons per day as a result stormwater recharge basins capturing stormwater for aquifer recharge. This leaves a daily recharge surplus of 153 million gallons. This recharge surplus ensures ample amounts of fresh water for the future. Figure 5 compares the groundwater recharge within County aquifers per day to the average daily withdrawal from aquifers.

FIGURE 5: COMPARISON OF NASSAU COUNTY GROUNDWATER RECHARGE AND PUBLIC WATER DEMAND



The County’s sewerage and water resource facilities are maintained and operated under a County Charter, by the Division of Sanitation and Water Supply within the Department of Public Works. The County owns and operates three sewage disposal districts and 27 sewage collection districts. Sewage disposal districts encompass the entire geographical area that is serviced by a respective County sewage treatment plant. Sewage collection districts are smaller areas within each disposal

district. The following list shows the County's sewage disposal districts and the number of sewage collection districts found within each:

- Sewage Disposal District No. 1: Coverage includes the area of Inwood. Features one collection district. Sewage disposal is processed at the Inwood Pump Station.
- Sewage Disposal District No. 2: Coverage includes an area from the New York City boundary, east to Glen Cove Road and south along the Long Island Expressway to the Atlantic shoreline. Features 11 collection districts. Sewage disposal is processed at the Bay Park Sewage Treatment Plant (Bay Park) in East Rockaway.
- Sewage Disposal District No. 3: Coverage includes an area from the eastern boundary of Disposal District No. 2, east to the Suffolk County line and south along the Long Island Expressway to the Atlantic shoreline. Features fourteen collection districts. Sewage disposal is processed at the Cedar Creek Water Pollution Control Plant (Cedar Creek) located in Wantagh.

The County owns and operates an additional sewage collection district (Lido Beach) that is not contained within a County disposal district. The sewage collected within this district is processed at the City of Long Beach's sewage treatment plant. Six villages in the County (Freeport, Garden City, Hempstead, Mineola, Rockville Centre and Roslyn) own and operate their own collection districts which discharge to the County's disposal districts. The sewage collected by these systems is discharged to and processed at one of the County-owned sewage treatment plants, either Bay Park or Cedar Creek. In addition, there are several sewage collection systems and treatment plants within the County that are operated by other governmental agencies or special districts.

PART II: NASSAU COUNTY AFTER THE 1998 PLAN

Many changes have occurred in the County since the adoption of the *Nassau County Comprehensive Plan* in December 1998. The once-robust economy fell into recession, housing prices and values rose dramatically, and public dissatisfaction with the operations of Nassau County government led to the election of a new County Executive in 2001. This section uses the issues and recommendations culled from the Plan as a reference from which to describe some of the important changes that have occurred since 1998. For ease of review, the developments described in this section are organized into the subject headings used in the 1998 Plan.

Interagency Planning and Cooperation

Nassau County Interim Finance Authority

In response to the high debt service incurred by Nassau County over the last several years and various additional fiscal budgetary challenges, Governor George Pataki and the New York State Legislature created the Nassau County Interim Finance Authority (NIFA) in June 2000. NIFA is designed to monitor and oversee the County's finances during this period of instability caused by such practices as borrowing to pay operating expenses, generating one time revenues to offset expenditures instead of pursuing opportunities to increase continuous revenue, and failing to obtain police and labor union concessions. NIFA is governed by a seven member, non-partisan Board appointed by Governor Pataki, with one member recommended by Senate Majority Leader Bruno, one by Assembly Speaker Silver, and one by State Comptroller Alan G. Hevesi. Although NIFA will be in place for the life of currently issued bonds, it is intended to have an active life limited to the period of Nassau budgetary imbalance. The active phase will end with the return of County fiscal stability. Since 2002, Nassau County bond ratings have been upgraded to Baa1, making Nassau the only County in the northeast to have its bond ratings increased twice in one year.

Bi-County Summit

In an effort to foster a partnership between Nassau and Suffolk Counties to create a strong business development climate, Nassau County Executive Thomas Suozzi and Suffolk County Executive Robert Gaffney hosted the "Economic Development Summit: The State of Long Island 2002" in December 2002. Key issues addressed at the summit included assessing the economic future of the region's technology, higher education, sustainable growth, sports, entertainment and tourism, banking and finance and workforce housing sectors. Executives from Long Island's economic development organizations, academic institutions and corporations attended and participated in two breakout sessions.

Nassau County Office of Emergency Management

The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 brought a renewed importance in assuring County-wide preparedness for emergency situations. The Nassau County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) coordinates with the County Police and Sheriff's departments and has direct and continual communication with State and Federal law enforcement agencies such as the New York State Emergency Management Office and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regarding current threat levels. Other indicators of the level of emergency preparedness the County now maintains include an increase in 24-hour patrols on both the North and South Shore by the Nassau County Police Department Marine Bureau, deployment of additional personnel from the Bureau of Special Operations to select locations in the County

where large events are held, and extensive biological weapons training by the Nassau County Department of Health.

Geographical Information Systems (GIS)

The County has made significant progress in redesigning and updating GIS capacity since publication of the 1998 Comprehensive Plan. The County has trained over eighty employees to use the newest ESRI GIS software, ArcGIS. Ten of those individuals were provided additional training in editing and creating data sets. In addition, the County has geo-spatially integrated digital ortho-photography utilizing geo-tiff images with 1-foot pixel resolution with existing GIS applications. County system data is now represented through 116 feature data classes. Currently, nineteen County departments make use of the ArcGIS system and by employing browser technology, hundreds of County employees now have easy access to GIS data.. Projections indicate that by year-end 2004, twenty-eight County departments will be utilizing ArcGIS technology.

Real Estate Consolidation Plan

Efficient management of County-owned real estate has been an important initiative of Nassau County since 2001. The County owns over 2,500 parcels of real estate, including buildings, sumps and vacant parcels, and for many years these assets were neglected. Nassau County has recently developed a comprehensive inventory of its holdings and a strategy for their efficient use, maintenance and/or disposition. This strategy, known as the Nassau County Real Estate Consolidation Plan, calls for the creation of five Nassau County government “campuses” to be organized around service delivery areas. The five proposed campuses are the Government Center, Health and Human Services, Public Safety, Courts and Corrections. The Consolidation Plan will streamline government offices and service delivery, and enable to County to dispose of assets it does not need. Public review of the Consolidation Plan is currently underway, and the County is continuing to prepare the necessary factual and environmental analysis to carry out the Consolidation Plan’s objectives.

Land Use and Zoning

Development Trends

Although sixty-five percent of new residential construction in the County over the past five years has been single-family housing, few Nassau County properties are available for large-scale single-family subdivisions. Most such properties exist in “estate” villages of the County’s North Shore where zoning generally ranges from two to five acres and where the Planning Commission may not have jurisdiction over subdivision regulations. Examples of larger single-family subdivisions that are currently under review by the Planning Commission include the 50-acre Underhill property in Jericho and the 148-acre Kirby Hill property in Muttontown (within 300 feet of the unincorporated area). It is the intention of the County to preserve some of the environmental features of these properties.

Historically, there have been high concentrations of multi-family development in established villages and cities such as Long Beach, Glen Cove, Hempstead, Rockville Centre, Lynbrook, Freeport, and Great Neck Plaza. Since reaching a high of 605 in 2000, however, the County has incurred a 65 percent decrease in the number of building permits issued for multi-family developments.

New Local Zoning Ordinances

Senior Housing

In an effort to promote affordable housing opportunities for seniors who are no longer able or willing to own private homes, the Town of Hempstead created and adopted the unique Golden Age Zoning district. The Golden Age zone classification promotes senior housing by permitting construction of more units per area than normally allowed. In turn, the private developer of each particular project agrees to sell the apartments at a price well below the current market value. Additionally, all apartments include property tax abatement. The Town of Oyster Bay also successfully adopted the Golden Age Residence zoning district in order to construct a 308-unit senior citizen cooperative complex in Massapequa.

In December 2003, the Town of Hempstead amended a Town building zone ordinance to include a Planned Senior Citizen Residence Community and a modification of a Planned Unit Development at Roosevelt Center located on the same property. The proposed plan involves the construction of 720 two-bedroom condominium units, located on a 51.66-acre property and the creation of an 8.64-acre public park with various recreational facilities.

In recent years, the County has actively sought to reuse larger single use properties for multi-family development such as former industrial sites and institutional properties. Much of this development has been for “golden age” multi-family properties as well. Examples of this type of development include senior housing complexes on the former sand mines in Port Washington and Port Washington North (proposed) and Massapequa Park Village, a proposed 40-rental redevelopment of a large portion of South Oaks Hospital in East Massapequa.

Downtown Revitalization

Multi-Family development has been encouraged in downtowns such as Freeport, Rockville Centre and Hempstead and on smaller scales in Farmingdale and Malverne. These developments have incorporated various “smart growth” elements such as increased pedestrian access and building within close proximity to services, shopping and public transportation. Once a run down area subject to flooding, the revitalization of the “Nautical Mile” in the Village of Freeport received a Governor's Waterfront Rediscovery Award in 2000. Additionally, the Town of North Hempstead has spearheaded downtown revitalization efforts in the Town of New Cassel by focusing on community outreach as a way to steer the Town's EPA Brownfields Pilot and the implementation of the New Cassel Vision Plan. The \$200,000 grant issued by the EPA enables New Cassel to rectify environmental contamination issues in order to facilitate downtown revitalization and development.

Subdivision Regulations

Nassau County remains the only county in New York State with jurisdiction over subdivision regulations such as the creation and movement of lot lines. County-wide subdivision jurisdiction includes unincorporated areas and incorporated areas that fall within 300 feet of an unincorporated area. There are two types of subdivision processes: full and waiver. Full subdivision process pertains to applications that involve five lots or more or that require a new road or an extension of the existing road. The Planning Commission grants a waiver of full subdivision review when the subdivision in question involves fewer than five lots and does not require a new street or street extension.

Currently, the Planning Commission is revising Subdivision Rules and Regulations, originally adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1953, to accurately reflect contemporary and

comprehensive development standards. The revisions are expected to be completed and approved by the Planning Commission in 2004.

Wireless Communication

The proliferation of wireless communication has forced many communities to grapple with cellular phone tower location issues and ordinances. Communities such as the Village of Muttontown, the Town of Oyster Bay, and Glen Cove have struggled with the dilemma of balancing the need for improved cellular phone service and addressing the potential negative environmental impacts of cell towers.

Child-Care Facilities

In response to the growing need for quality and accessible child-care services, the Oyster Bay Town Board amended the town zoning code in 2000 to permit child-care facilities in residential and commercial areas of unincorporated areas of the Town. In 2001, the Town of North Hempstead also adopted a local law that established regulations for child-care facilities. Prior to the adoption of these ordinance changes, the process for acquiring the necessary town permits for child-care facilities often took six months and day care facilities were not permitted in residential zones.

Residential and Commercial Bulk Ordinances

In February 2003, Rockville Centre, adopted amendments to various use, bulk, area, height, and permitting provisions of Urban Renewal Commercial or Light Manufacturing "A" (URCLMA) district regulations and Business A regulations. In the URCLMA district, the list of permitted uses includes professional and office buildings, community theaters, and multi-family uses. The Business A district code was amended to include drive-through window uses, multi-family uses (with ground floor non-residential use by special permit by the Planning Board) and senior care housing.

Environmental Resources

Open Space

Nassau County Open Space Plan

In a region as densely developed as Nassau County, with some of the nation's highest median land values and housing costs, protecting open space is a formidable challenge. Through public input gleaned from a series of workshops and community outreach efforts during the preparation of the 1998 *Nassau County Comprehensive Plan*, it was clear that protecting existing open space from residential and commercial development was vitally important to residents of Nassau County. This broad-based support led to the authorization by the Nassau County Legislature of the *Nassau County Open Space Plan*, which was completed in 2001. The *Open Space Plan* was a pioneering effort in addressing the preservation of open space resources in the County and was also the first strategy implemented from the *Comprehensive Plan of 1998*. The Plan provides the County's first comprehensive inventory of existing open space resources, highlights and maps significant natural resources information, offers policy recommendations, identifies possible open space protection options, techniques and funding sources and offers a summary of relevant reports. The *Open Space Plan* provides the County with an efficient and comprehensive guide with which to implement and influence policy decisions regarding the protection of open space resources.

Nassau County Open Space and Parks Advisory Committee (OSPAC)

As part of an effort to preserve, protect and maintain existing undeveloped open space in the County, the Nassau County Legislature authorized the creation of the Nassau County Open Space

and Parks Advisory (OSPAC) in June 2000. OSPAC is primarily responsible for reviewing and evaluating the County's open space, parks and areas of recreational, cultural, archeological, habitat or historic significance or of an otherwise environmentally sensitive nature. OSPAC also makes recommendations to the County Legislature on potential land purchases that are designed to protect and preserve the natural environment as well as the County's historical and scenic resources. Organizationally, OSPAC is comprised of nine appointed non-compensatory members with a collective wide range of experience in such planning fields as open space, land use planning, land conservation and habitat conservation. The Presiding Officer of the Nassau County Legislature selects four of OSPAC's members, two are selected by the Minority Leader and the County Executive selects the remaining three.

Environmental Bond Acts in North Hempstead and Oyster Bay

In 2000, voters in the Towns of Oyster Bay and North Hempstead approved bond acts to protect and preserve important environmental features. Public enthusiasm for environmental protection translated into strong victories for these referenda, demonstrating that Nassau County residents were willing to pay to protect and preserve natural features. In Oyster Bay, voters approved a \$30 million bond act known as the SEA Fund (for "Save Environmental Assets") by a 68 percent voting margin. The funding consisted of \$20 million to acquire environmentally sensitive land and \$10 million to fund improvements to existing Town parks and recreational facilities. In North Hempstead, voters approved a \$15 million Environmental Legacy Fund to protect and enhance open space and environmentally sensitive properties. Of the \$15 million, \$8 million was allocated to land acquisition, \$4 million was allocated to the enhancement of important natural features, and \$3 million was allocated to the improvement of coastal areas.

Land Trusts

The dramatic growth in property values between 1998 and 2003 has created tremendous development pressure around Nassau County, particularly on open space resources. One conservation tool, the land trust, has recently emerged as a viable means for protecting the County's remaining open space. Two notable organizations, the Nassau Land Trust, incorporated in 2001, and the North Shore Land Alliance, incorporated in 2003, have begun to facilitate open space preservation around the County. Land Trusts use land use tools such as conservation easements, which enable donors to protect property from inappropriate development while still retaining title to the land. Other techniques used by land trusts include accepting charitable donations of land and facilitating sales of land at below-market rates. The individual needs of the property owner determine the best solution in each case, as each of these tools allows the property owner to realize some type of tax or financial return.

Water Resources/Infrastructure

Hempstead Harbor and Manhasset Bay Protection Plans

In February of 2003, Governor Pataki allocated 4.5 million dollars in Environmental Grants, a portion of which helped fund the Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee and the Manhasset Bay Protection Committee. The Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee is an inter-municipal coalition aimed at restoring water quality in Hempstead Harbor for the protection of wildlife habitats and improvement of fishing and recreational opportunities. With partial funding provided by the EPA, the Committee monitors remediation and redevelopment in and around the Harbor. The Committee is also working to develop a comprehensive Hempstead Harbor-Management plan. With a focus on Manhasset Bay, the Manhasset Bay Protection Committee is another County inter-municipal coalition involved in water quality restoration and protection. The Committee will continue to implement the Manhasset Bay Water Quality Improvement Plan by

monitoring water quality and stream-bank erosion. The restoration project focuses on Stannards Brook, which releases directly into Manhasset Bay.

EPA Phase II Regulations / DPW Stormwater Plan

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Phase II regulations passed in August 2002 now require Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4's) to obtain a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit to remain in compliance. The regulations require the development of municipal stormwater management programs that aggressively prevent pollutants from entering the stormwater system. Over the past five years, upgrades at the Cedar Creek and Bay Park wastewater treatment plants have facilitated an increase in Daily Threshold Maximums and reinforced plant infrastructure. Recent upgrades at both plants include: retrofitting bulk chemical storage tanks to comply with current Federal, State and Local codes, rules and regulations, the installation of aluminum covers on aeration tanks to ensure that harmful bacteria does not escape and improvements to ventilation and odor control systems.

Pesticide Notification Law

Nassau County is one six New York State counties that has fully opted in to the Neighbor Notification Law, formally known as Chapter 285 of the Laws of 2000, with addition of Sections 33-1004 and 33-1005 to the Environmental Conservation Law. The new sections add requirements for 48 hour notice to neighbors for certain commercial lawn applications, posting of visual notification markers for most residential lawn applications, providing notice to occupants of multiple dwellings and other occupied structures, and posting of an information sign by retailers who sell general use lawn pesticides. The Neighbor Notification Law and regulation are only effective in a County, or in New York City, that has adopted a local law to "opt into" the Neighbor Notification Law in its entirety and without any changes. To date, Albany, Nassau, Rockland, Suffolk, Tompkins and Westchester Counties have "opted in" (NYSDEC).

Nassau County 1998 Groundwater Study

The *Nassau County 1998 Groundwater Study*, conducted by the Nassau County Department of Public Works, estimates that in 2010 aquifer recharge will remain greater than water demand in the County, yielding a surplus of about 161 million gallons per day. The Study also identifies groundwater issues such as saltwater intrusion and the rise of sea level and contaminants Nitrates and Volatile Organic Chemicals (VOCs) as some of the County's most pressing environmental concerns. The study indicates that nitrates are becoming much less of a problem due to improved sanitary sewers and wastewater facilities. Additionally, the study reported a steady decline in VOC's found in the groundwater due to an increase in public awareness and ongoing remediation of contaminated sites throughout the County.

EPA Cap on Nitrogen Emissions from Water Treatment Plants on the North Shore

The ongoing Long Island Sound Study, which is funded by the Environmental Protection Agency, confirmed that high levels of nitrogen are directly linked to low levels of dissolved oxygen in the Long Island Sound. In 2001, in the light of these findings, the EPA established a "Total Maximum Daily Load" (TMDL) for nitrogen emissions into the Long Island Sound by water treatment plant outflows. Upon completion of Phases 1 and 2 in 2001, the plan requires water treatment plants to reduce nitrogen to 1990 levels through low-cost water treatment plant improvements. Phase 3 calls for a 58.5 percent cut in nitrogen contamination by New York and Connecticut sources.

Local Waterfront Revitalization Program

Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs (LRWPs) are locally prepared, comprehensive land and water use plans designed to address a particular community's waterfront issues and concerns and to protect coastal resources. Since 1995, The New York Department of State's Division of Coastal Resources has administered Environmental Protection Fund grants to local governments for the preparation and implementation of LWRPs. All grants are awarded on a 50-50 matching basis between the local community and the State. In 1998, the Villages of Bayville, Freeport, Roslyn Harbor and Sea Cliff, the City of Glen Cove, and the Towns of Hempstead, North Hempstead and Oyster Bay received funds to develop respective LWRPs. Additional research is needed to determine more recent recipients.

Open Space Acquisition Fund

In May 2003, the Nassau County Legislature unanimously amended the County Charter to require the County to set aside five percent of the moneys received from the sale of County-owned real property to be used for the acquisition, rehabilitation and maintenance of open space. At the time of adoption, legislators estimated that the Open Space Fund could provide as much as \$1 million dollars for the preservation of open space resources. The Open Space Fund is eligible to receive grants from federal or state agencies, as well as private donations. Fines and penalties for environmental violations issued by County departments will also be placed into the Open Space Fund.

Preservation of the Underhill Property

Preserving the 96-acre Underhill property in Jericho has been a priority for government officials, county residents and non-profit preservation organizations for the past several years. Maintaining the property as open space will provide valuable area for recharge of the local groundwater supply. Since its purchase by the development company Tilles Investment Company in the early 1980s, the property has been subject to several zoning changes, development plans as well as litigation and settlement agreements.

In October of 2003, a Memorandum of Understanding was drafted and entered into by the Tilles Investment company, the Town of Oyster Bay, the County of Nassau, The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the adjacent property owners, William and Ellen Doremus. The Memorandum, in effect, divided the Underhill property into two lots. The first parcel, containing 31 acres received Final subdivision approval from the Nassau County Planning Commission on December 18th 2003 will allow the construction of 103 single-family homes along with a community activity center. The remaining 50 acres is to be purchased from Tilles and will be further divided between the State, County and Town. The State will receive 25 acres for the sum of \$7.5 million. The County will receive approximately 16.66 acres for the sum of \$5 million. The final 8.33 acres is then schedule to be purchased by the Town of Oyster Bay for \$2.5 million. The 50 acres, purchased simultaneously by the State, County and Town will be managed under an agreement between each municipality and will be used as a passive preserve. In addition, the owner of the adjacent property will donate the development rights to their 20 acres of land to a local land trust. The preservation of this property and the 50 acres by the State, County and Town will add unique and historic open space to the County's existing inventory and provide a valuable groundwater recharge area.

Brownfields

The clean-up and reuse of brownfields has become a priority for Nassau County. The proliferation of brownfields has prevented needed commercial and residential construction in downtown locations. The County's efforts will be facilitated by a \$1.2 million grant awarded by the EPA in June. The County will apply \$200,000 of the award for brownfield assessment in Hempstead Village and Roosevelt, two communities with disproportionately large numbers of

brownfields. The remaining one million dollars will be used to establish a revolving loan fund to assist with the clean up and reuse of brownfields County-wide.

Adoption of New York State Brownfields Law

In October 2003, Governor George Pataki signed the New York State Superfund Refinancing and Brownfield Cleanup Act. This long-awaited legislation established a statutory cleanup program for hazardous waste and petroleum-contaminated sites within New York State, and created a number of incentives to speed the cleanup and reuse of brownfields. A key component of the law is limited liability release for purchasers and developers of brownfields who use “due care” and “good faith” to carry out a negotiated Brownfield Cleanup Agreement. Furthermore, the law provides tax credits not only for dollars spent on cleanup, but also for funds invested in the redevelopment of the contaminated sites. Funding in the form of grants is provided to eligible municipalities and not-for-profit corporations for site and area-wide planning, and for site remediation. Finally, the law allows for remedial action to be based upon a site's future land use - - generally unrestricted, commercial, or industrial. Three generic tables of contaminant-specific remedial action objectives based on these possible uses will be established to serve as a guide for cleanup levels.

Glen Cove Brownfields Pilot Program

With funding provided through an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Assessment Pilot and Showcase Community grant, Glen Cove successfully completed the cleanup and redevelopment of one of eight brownfield sites as part of the City's Waterfront Redevelopment Project. Through the Pilot, the City was able to leverage approximately \$20 million in grants and technical assistance from various government entities. Upon completion, the revitalization of Glen Cove's brownfields is expected to generate approximately \$200 million in annual sales, \$10 million in taxes and 1,700 new jobs upon completion.

Transportation

MTA Long Island Bus CNG Fleet

In 2004, MTA Long Island Bus' fixed-route fleet is scheduled to become 100 percent Compressed Natural Gas (CNG.) The last of MTA Long Island Bus' fixed-route diesel fleet will be taken out of service when the 1991 diesel buses are replaced with new CNG vehicles. MTA Long Island Bus is the largest CNG bus fleet in the nation outside California. MTA Long Island Bus' Capital Plan anticipates the purchase of CNG-fueled paratransit buses over the next few years, which will mark the next phase of Long Island Bus's ambitious CNG program.

MTA Long Island Rail Road Capital Projects

In 1999, MTA Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) replaced its entire diesel fleet. The original diesel fleet had been acquired from the Pennsylvania Railroad close to 50 years ago. The new diesel fleet consists of bi-level coaches along with diesel and dual-mode (diesel/electric) locomotives. The new coaches also feature voice annunciator technology along with LED screens to inform riders of upcoming station stops. This new diesel fleet operates throughout the Long Island Rail Road's diesel territory, including the Oyster Bay Branch, Port Jefferson Branch, Greenport Branch, and Montauk Branch. The LIRR purchased a limited number of dual-mode locomotives, which have been distributed across its diesel territory. Dual-mode locomotives are able to operate into Pennsylvania Station, allowing (for the first time) a one-seat ride from diesel territory into Manhattan.

Beginning in the second half of 2002, the Long Island Rail Road began the operation of the new M-7 electric cars. M-7 cars are being phased in through 2008 and will replace the M-1 cars,

which are over 35 years old. The new M-7 cars provide for a significantly smoother operation and travel much greater distances between failures. The M-7 cars are now in operation on all electric service branches: Port Washington, Hempstead, West Hempstead, Huntington, Ronkonkoma, Babylon, Long Beach, and Far Rockaway.

Mineola Intermodal Facility

In light of the “Mineola Area Revitalization Study” released in February 2002, the MTA Long Island Rail Road (LIRR), in cooperation with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), plans are underway to construct an intermodal center in the Village of Mineola, adjacent to the LIRR Mineola Station. The Mineola Intermodal Center will include a four-level parking garage/intermodal center including bus bays with connectors to the Mineola Station platforms. Site work will also include resurfacing of access roads, new sidewalks, curb cuts and landscaping. The Draft Environmental Assessment was released in July 2002.

Long Island Expressway (LIE) Capacity Improvement Plan

In 1990, the New York State Legislature voted to implement the Long Island Expressway Corridor Capacity Improvement Plan. The Plan calls for the construction of a High Occupancy Vehicle Lane (HOV) along a 41-mile section of the LIE from exit 30 (Cross Island Parkway) in eastern Queens County, to exit 64 (New York State Route 112) in Suffolk County. The first 12-mile segment between exits 49 and 57 opened in 1994. Currently, there are 2 portions under construction in Nassau County. It is expected that total construction on the portions between exits 32 and 40 will be completed by the end of November 2004.

Long Island Sound Waterborne Transportation Plan

Established in February 2002, the Long Island Sound Waterborne Transportation Plan identifies sites for potential ferry services, possible routes and expanded ferry services. Sponsored by the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC), Southwest Connecticut Regional Planning Agency (SWRPA), and the Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency (CBRPA), it is anticipated that the plan will identify the City of Glen Cove as the preferred site to implement ferry services in Nassau County. Currently, the plan is in its final stages though no conclusions have been officially released

Reauthorization of the Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)

The federal legislation of the landmark Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) authorized federal funding for highway safety, transit and other surface transportation projects for a six-year period. ISTEA, signed into law by President Clinton in December 1991, expired in September 1997. The reauthorization of ISTEA in 1998, the Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), continues to foster a more efficient and flexible transportation system by emphasizing projects such as intermodal transportation. It is anticipated that its reauthorization, Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act of 2003 (SAFETEA or TEA-3), will continue along this path. Although TEA-21 expired on September 30, 2003, legislation was passed to provide for a short-term extension until February 29, 2004.

Freight

In 1997, the New York and Atlantic Railway began operation of a privatized concession to run freight trains on lines owned by the Long Island Rail Road. The first year's freight volume was 9,500 carloads. By 2002, it had reached nearly 14,000 carloads. The comparable figure for 2003 is expected to exceed 15,000 carloads.

There are two major projects currently under study that, if implemented, are likely to affect freight movement on Long Island significantly. The first is the Pilgrim Intermodal Freight Transportation Center Yard, proposed for 130 acres of the former Pilgrim State Hospital. The second project is the Cross Harbor Rail Freight Tunnel, a proposed five mile connection between New Jersey and Brooklyn that is projected to create a substantial truck to rail diversion within the region.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure

The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) is currently overseeing the development of a new plan, the Long Island Non-Motorized Transportation Study (LINMITS). LINMITS will serve as the Long Island pedestrian and bicycle component of the next New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC) regional plan. A representative of the County serves on the LINMITS Technical Advisory Committee. LINMITS will address both policy issues and implementation strategies for the development of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. The plan is scheduled for completion in late 2004.

Since 2001, the New York Department of Transportation has awarded grants for traffic calming projects under its Local Safe Streets and Traffic Calming (LSSTC) program. Traffic calming helps support the concept of “sharing the street” by permitting increased, safer usage by pedestrians and cyclists. Earlier this year, Nassau County received a \$270,000 grant for Phase I of a traffic calming project on Nassau Road in Roosevelt. Construction will begin in spring 2004.

The Transportation Enhancements Program (TEP) is a federal program that provides funding for a range of non-traditional transportation projects, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities, historic preservation, beautification, archeological planning and research, control and removal of outdoor advertising, and provision of tourist information and welcome centers. TEP applications are rated and ranked by a NYMTC working group. A representative of the Nassau County Planning Department serves on the working group at each biennial funding round. In 2002, the City of Glen Cove and the Village of Sea Cliff were awarded funding for projects.

Downtown Inventory

The Nassau County Planning Commission is currently developing an inventory of the transportation services and amenities in several Nassau County central business districts. The inventory of each downtown will include the number of short and long-term parking spaces, meters and restrictions, traffic signals, bus service and usage, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Able-Ride

MTA LI Bus developed its Able-Ride program in response to the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As mandated by the ADA, Able-Ride service must be available within a ¾ mile of fixed route bus service. Able-Ride provides paratransit service to individuals with disabilities who cannot use the regular bus service. Each potential customer must undergo an application and certification process. Riders receive curb-to-curb service in specially designed and equipped vehicles to and from any destination in the County for a one-way fare of \$3.50. About 7,000 active customers use the service. Able-Ride’s average weekday service is about 1,000 trips per day.

Nassau Hub Study

The Nassau Hub, located near the central Nassau County communities of Mineola, Carle Place, Uniondale, Garden City and Hempstead, is the economic center of the County. Within its three square miles, the Hub features approximately 15 million square feet of commercial and office

space and generates \$50 billion in annual revenue. It is the Hub's high concentration of retail and commercial space and sports and entertainment destinations that has contributed to the sharp increase in traffic over the years of growth and development. Projections indicate that traffic in the Hub area will increase by 36 percent, from 480,000 weekday trips to 650,000, in the next 10 years. The transportation and land use strategies culled from the Hub Study are expected to shape one of the most important planning decisions in the history of Nassau County.

Housing

Nassau County Office of Housing and Intergovernmental Affairs

In December 2002 the Nassau County Office of Housing and Intergovernmental Affairs (OHIA) announced a new policy to guide the distribution of federal community development funds among the thirty-one members of the Community Development Block Grant ("CDBG") Consortium. OHIA met with the Consortium members and explained that the County would look most favorably on projects that furthered the objectives of the Nassau County Economic Development Plan (attract and retain high-tech, high-skilled jobs; revitalize Nassau County's traditional downtowns; clean and reuse brownfields; increase the amount of workforce and senior housing; preserve remaining open space; and promote sports, entertainment and tourism). OHIA also distributed a revised CDBG application that requires Consortium members to present a multi-year plan for community development projects. As a result of this policy change, Consortium members have produced detailed plans for community improvements, enabling OHIA to direct federal funding toward projects whose need and feasibility have been demonstrated. New Hyde Park, Mineola and Oyster Bay are notable examples of downtown revitalization efforts that have benefited from this increased focus on planning.

Illegal Housing

As housing costs and values have risen over the past five years, so has the level of importance on monitoring illegal housing and commercial code violations in Nassau County. In February 2003, the Nassau County OHIA joined with the Village of Hempstead and the Town of North Hempstead to improve enforcement of residential and commercial code regulations by providing funding to pay salaries of newly hired code enforcement officers and legal costs associated with the issuance of code violations. OHIA will transfer \$150,000 and \$50,000 in grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to the Town of North Hempstead and the Village of Hempstead respectively. Additionally, County Executive Thomas Suozzi has organized the Illegal Housing Taskforce to examine strategies for addressing illegal housing issues.

Reassessment of County Real Property

In March 2000, the Nassau County Board of Assessors adopted a resolution to conduct a comprehensive revaluation of all residential and commercial property in the County. Because litigation had determined the County's circa 1938 construction-based assessment system to be inaccurate and unfair, the Board of Assessors' resolution called for revaluation based on market value in accordance with New York State Real Property Law. The County hired a consultant, Cole-Layer-Trumble Company, to perform the revaluation. New assessments, set at 1% of the property's market value, were prepared and sent to property owners in 2002, and property owners received their first tax bills based on the new values in October 2003. The change in assessments has shifted the tax burdens among taxpayers within individual school, town, and other districts, and the ramifications of this shift are not clear at the time of the writing of this document.

Economic Development

Economic Development Plan and Community Outreach

In December 2002 Nassau County Executive Thomas R. Suozzi released a draft Economic Development Plan for Nassau County. The plan acknowledged and described the need for sustainable growth, and laid out six policy initiatives intended to accomplish that goal (see OHIA section above). The plan divides the County into thirty-five zones. Under a public outreach process that is currently underway, the Planning Department researches each zone and meets with local leaders to obtain information about the area. The County Executive then conducts a town hall style meeting in each zone where he explains the plan to the public and invites public participation. A report on the findings related to these meetings will be prepared upon their completion in 2004.

Nassau County Economic Development Corporation (NCEDC)

The Nassau County Economic Development Corporation (“NCEDC”) is a not-for-profit corporation created in 2003 to facilitate sustainable economic development projects throughout Nassau County. As a local development corporation, NCEDC’s mission is to implement the County’s economic development plan, expand the tax base, generate revenue and create jobs through the sale and redevelopment of publicly owned properties as well as to facilitate the development and redevelopment of privately-owned properties to meet these objectives. NCEDC also helps businesses navigate the maze of available economic development incentives. Working with various municipalities and local civic organizations, NCEDC strives to create the critical partnerships necessary to advance common economic goals.

Partnership at iPark

In 2003, Nassau County facilitated the BioPartners Program, a public/private partnership to attract and support biotech and life sciences companies. The Program is based at i.park, a high tech office park and incubator facility in Lake Success that is currently undergoing extensive renovation. The completed i.park facility will include 300,000 square feet of turn-key research and development space and a 10,000 square foot bioscience training center, as well as modern office amenities such as an onsite gym and cafeteria. Institutions participating in the BioPartners Program include North Shore-Long Island Jewish Health System and Research Institute, Brookhaven National Laboratory, and Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory.

Recreational and Cultural Facilities

The County is home to many high profile professional sporting events and teams. The Bethpage Golf Course, located in Bethpage State Park, hosted the 2002 U.S. Open and is scheduled to host the 2009 U.S. Open. The Belmont Racetrack, located in Elmont, is home to the Belmont Stakes, the third race in horse racing’s prestigious Triple Crown. The Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Uniondale is home to the four-time Stanley Cup Champion New York Islanders of the National Hockey League and the Arena Football Leagues’ New York Dragons. Eisenhower Park’s 80,000 square foot Swimming and Diving Center is the largest pool in the Northern Hemisphere. In terms of cultural and historic resources, Nassau County boasts eleven museums, including the new Cradle of Aviation Museum and the Long Island Children’s Museum in Garden City as well as historic sites such as Old Bethpage Village and Teddy Roosevelt’s estate at Sagamore Hill in Cove Neck.

Nassau County Sports, Entertainment and Tourism Commission (SET)

The newly established SET is responsible for marketing the County's recreational and cultural facilities as venues for regional, national and international sporting and cultural events. SET works to attract endowed funds from individuals and corporations to support the maintenance and preservation of the County's parks and recreation facilities.

Horses of a Different Color

Nassau County local horse breeders estimate that there are approximately 30,000 horses on Long Island, and Nassau County is working not only to retain its existing recreational and breeding horse farms but also to promote and expand related activities. In 2002, SET developed a program to raise awareness of Nassau County's role in the thoroughbred racing industry. The program, known as Horses of a Different Color, offered unpainted, full-sized horse sculptures to sponsors who selected a design for each sculpture that was then carried out by a Nassau county artist. The painted horses were displayed around the County during the summer of 2003, and auctioned at Belmont Park in October 2003.

Equestrian Resource Committee and Equestrian Activities

In 2003, the Nassau County Department of Parks, Recreation and Museums (NCDPRM) held two meetings of the Equestrian Resource Committee (ERC). This group was brought together by County Executive Thomas Suozzi in order to give the equestrian community in Nassau County the opportunity to voice its concerns. The primary goal of the group is to increase opportunities for equestrian related events and facilities within the County. As a result of these first meetings, the Parks Department will be releasing an "Equestrian Request for Proposals" in early 2004. The goal of the RFP is to find a group that would be interested in constructing and managing an equestrian facility on a portion of the Muttontown Preserve.

Part III: DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In light of the progress made since the release of the Comprehensive Plan of 1998 and the various trends identified in this document, the Nassau County Planning Commission has developed a set of comprehensive policy recommendations to drive its ongoing planning initiatives. The recommendations included in this section reflect both existing planning initiatives and pioneering efforts that illustrate the County's approach towards accomplishing its short and long-term planning goals.

Interagency Coordination

Nassau County should establish the Nassau County Planning Federation. The Federation will consist of representatives of the County and the three towns, two cities and sixty-four incorporated villages that comprise the County, and will sponsor educational and working sessions for elected and appointed officials as well as government professionals. The Federation will provide a forum for discussion and consensus building on County-wide planning issues and solutions, and will develop implementation strategies for planning reforms.

Land Use

The Nassau County Planning Commission should review model zoning codes and where applicable, develop new codes to promote "Smart Growth" and other techniques for managing development in the 21st Century. The Planning Commission should use the Planning Federation as a vehicle for developing and discussing these codes. Possible focus areas should include Transit-Oriented Development, Cluster Zoning, Workforce and Senior Housing, and Community Design Guidelines.

The Nassau County Planning Commission should revise Nassau County's subdivision regulations to reflect current planning practices, including connectivity, traffic calming, inclusionary zoning, walkability and conservation. The Planning Commission should work closely with the New York State and Nassau County legislatures to ensure timely adoption of the revised regulations.

Environmental Resources

Nassau County should establish an Office of Environmental Policy to facilitate environmental improvement projects and coordinate the County's response to environmental problems. The Office of Environmental Policy will apply for and administer grants related to brownfields, open space, traffic and other environmental issues, and ensure inter-agency cooperation on projects that impact the environment.

Nassau County should coordinate with the Open Space and Parks Advisory Committee ("OSPAC") and other entities to ensure that existing tools for the preservation and protection of Open Space are used effectively. The Nassau County Planning Commission should work with OSPAC to develop criteria to evaluate properties for acquisition. Nassau County should also consider amending the Open Space Fund law to permit the proceeds of any lease-back arrangement to be included in the calculation of "proceeds of sale."

Nassau County should investigate the feasibility of placing and maintaining air quality monitoring stations at select locations around Nassau County.

Nassau County should implement the proposed elements of its Stormwater Compliance Plan in accordance with EPA mandates.

Nassau County should establish the Sewer and Stormwater Finance Authority in accordance with State law.

Transportation

Upon completion of the Nassau Hub MIS, Nassau County should continue toward finalizing and implementing its recommendations for revitalizing the Hub area. Necessary actions include conducting targeted public outreach, securing state and federal funding, and beginning the EIS/NEPA process.

Nassau County should expand its role with regional planning groups such as the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC), the Long Island Regional Planning Board (LIRPB), the Regional Plan Association (RPA), and others to advance the goal of reducing vehicular congestion. Nassau County should coordinate with these organizations to develop and promote additional public transit options, such as ferries, to investigate and implement Intelligent Transportation Systems, and to make public transit more attractive to people through marketing and/or incentive programs.

Nassau County should work with the MTA and other transit providers to ensure that transit service is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the changing needs of County residents, and to increase ridership through improved coordination between providers.

Nassau County should support major transportation projects sponsored by the MTA and others that will benefit Nassau County residents, such as the Mainline Third Track, East Side Access, and the Pilgrim State Intermodal Facility.

The Nassau County Planning Commission should continue to work with the MTA to study and make recommendations on specific opportunities for enhanced commuter parking, such as the Mineola Intermodal Facility. The Planning Commission should also review the adequacy of existing facilities such as Park-n-Ride lots and parking garages near the LIRR stations, and develop specific, innovative recommendations for enhancements.

Housing

Nassau County should expand opportunities for workforce and senior housing by continuing to work with the towns, cities and villages to leverage federal dollars contained in the Community Development Block Grant, HOME and other Programs toward the rehabilitation and/or construction of housing for low- and moderate-income persons.

Economy

Nassau County should promote and support its traditional downtowns through community-based planning, public investment in infrastructure, programs to strengthen cultural and retail activities, and marketing. Nassau County should use data and feedback from the Economic Development public meetings to enhance community-based vision plans.

Nassau County should target its economic development and planning resources toward the revitalization of low-income areas where opportunities for economic growth and development have historically been overlooked. Nassau County should continue to work with local municipalities and community leaders on revitalization efforts in New Cassel, Roosevelt, Freeport, and other economically disadvantaged areas.

Nassau County should develop and adopt an energy policy to be factored into its decisions related to real estate consolidation, economic development policy, investments in technology and other

matters. The policy should address increasing energy capacity and energy conservation both within and outside of County governmental operations.

Nassau County should pursue technological solutions to current and emerging threats to quality of life, such as traffic congestion and access to government and human services. Nassau County should evaluate specific tools, such as enhanced signal coordination, traffic signal overrides for emergency and transit vehicles, and enhanced 911 systems, to enhance public safety and welfare at reduced costs whenever possible.

Nassau County should continue to support programs that improve the County's standing as a high technology business center, such as the business incubator at Briarcliff College in Bethpage and the biotechnology partnership with Cold Spring Harbor Laboratories at iPark in Lake Success, and should continue to attract and retain high-tech, high-skilled businesses through targeted incentive programs.

Culture and Recreation

Nassau County should build on recent accomplishments in attracting and promoting national sports and cultural events at County facilities. Nassau County should additionally promote its wide range of cultural, historic and retail destinations to maximize the economic strength of its tourism industry.

County Facilities

Nassau County should expedite its Real Estate Consolidation Plan as a means to reconfigure deteriorated and outdated infrastructure and County-owned assets, and to facilitate the efficient delivery of County services. Any disposition of real property made pursuant to the Real Estate Consolidation Plan should reflect the policies of the County's Economic Development Plan, including fostering high-tech businesses and developing a range of housing options in Nassau County.