

# **Community Input Report**

**Prepared for the  
Stamford Planning Board**

S T A M F O R D  
**MASTER PLAN**  
**2002**

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The City of Stamford Land Use Bureau  
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## Background

This report presents the written products generated in connection with community input into the proposed Master Plan for the City of Stamford, Connecticut. Master planning is as much about process as it is about product. After all, a master plan is only as effective as the willingness of constituents to advocate and support its goals and principles.

Stamford last prepared a comprehensive Master Plan in 1977; updated it in 1984; and supplemented it in a series of plan addenda and amendments for Downtown and other neighborhoods.

In the years since, the original Plan's fears about diminishing affordable housing and growing traffic congestion have been vastly exceeded. The city is grappling with the remaining development potential allowed under present zoning and enabled by prospective market forces. New types of development provide fresh opportunities and challenges. Residents continue to focus on quality of life issues, which are at once the same and yet ever-changing.

Most important, the passage of nearly twenty years has meant that a new body politic must be heard from. The Master Plan, to retain its meaning and weight, must reflect the priorities and passions of its contemporaries.

## Consensus Building

In regard to the last factor, the Planning Board authorized a Master Plan process that facilitated the active participation of all of the citizen stakeholders, thereby informing "top down" technical expertise with "bottom up" consensus building.

The Plan has not followed the traditional outreach model in which the recommendations and documents are prepared by the Planning Board with the help of staff or consultants, and then vetted in public hearings. Rather, the Plan began with and was monitored by citizen/civic/business participants, and then reviewed and revised by the Planning Board and its staff.

To date:

- **Neighborhood workshops:** The Plan was initiated with one citywide workshop and then another five public workshops, held in the neighborhoods. Draft neighborhood recommendations were later reviewed and revised in six more brainstorming sessions, also held in the neighborhoods. Draft citywide recommendations were reviewed in three more neighborhood workshops. There was an extensive review and analysis of previous grassroots planning efforts, notably including the Plan for the Waterside and South

End Neighborhoods (1997) and the West Side Plan (2000). Additional workshops/meetings were held with the full civic and business community, the Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Special Services District's board and committee, the Glenbrook and Springdale communities, and others.

- **Youth:** Students in several schools participated in design and planning charrettes, organized by the Regional Plan Association and Land Use Bureau staff.
- **Surveys:** Quinnipiac College conducted a random telephone survey of several hundred residents, under the supervision of the Regional Plan Association. Another survey of Stamford residents conducted by the Connecticut Policy and Economic Council, and a survey of Stamford businesses prepared by the Chamber of Commerce were considered.
- **Publicly-distributed products:** The Master Plan policy report was summarized in a briefer report, that was made available to the public via the City's web site, with an invitation for comment. The Master Plan, along with the half-dozen background reports on which it is based, was made available both at the Government Center (in the Land Use Bureau) and in the Public Library. The Master Plan was summarized in a PowerPoint presentation, used in three neighborhood workshops, joint meetings of the Board of Representatives and other City boards, and additional meetings.
- **Advisory groups:** All along, the Plan was reviewed, in an iterative process, by a Master Plan advisory Committee comprised of representatives of neighborhood, civic, citywide and business groups, in addition to representatives of the Planning, Zoning and other boards. A list of the participants in the Advisory Committee is provided below: Additional input was provided by the Mayor's Affordable Housing Task Force.

After the Planning Board has had its own chance to review and revise the draft Master Plan, it will at last, in its semi-final form, be subject to a public hearing.

### Organization of the Master Plan and This Report

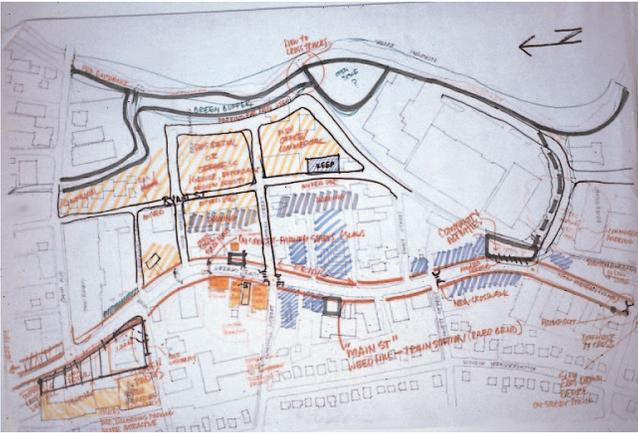
The Master Plan consists of a number of documents.

The key document is the Citywide Policies Report. It is intended that this document—along with the land use map—will be adopted as the official Master Plan, incorporating all or most of the other documents by reference. Closely related to this report is a Summary Report that is briefer in text and more graphic in format, thus making it more accessible to the public. Both reports are organized around these four goals:

- Preserving the city's social and economic diversity
- Protecting the beauty of the city's natural and built environments
- Enhancing the quality of life of Stamford's varied neighborhoods
- Promoting the vitality of the city's Downtown

**Table 1.**  
**Master Plan Advisory Committee,**  
**1999-2001**

Jack Condlin	Chamber of Commerce
Sandra Goldstein	DSSD
Donald Sherer	Board of Representatives
Patrick White	Board of Representatives
Mary Lou Rinaldi	Board of Finance
Elaine Grunberger	ECOS
Ralph Loomis	Stamford Partnership
Richard Schuster	St. Luke's Life Works
Jeanne Franklin	Stamford Senior Center
Gail Evans	Stamford Health System
Philip McKain	CTE
Jane V. Soltis	Coalition on Basic Human Rights
Renee Kahn	Historic Neighborhood Preservation Program
Jackie Heftman	Zoning Board
Juliana Sciola	Stamford Cultural Development Corp.
Joseph McGee	SACIA
Carl Lupinacci	South End Neighborhood Revitalization Zone
Jose Lagares	Parent-Teacher Council of Stamford
Geri Guzinski	We Can
Madison Smith	NAACP
Martha Burns	West Side Action Movement
Bill Ries	North Stamford Association
Elinor Goodman	Coalition of Neighborhood Associations
Marilyn Trefry	Springdale Neighborhood Association
Rick Nichols	Shippin Point Association
Mary Franco	GE Capital
John Maddocks	UBS Warburg
David Anderson	Stamford Partnership



A companion report will present neighborhood-specific plans. Over time, it is expected that these neighborhood plans will be officially adopted as part of the Master Plan; this could, however, await further outreach to the neighborhoods, with subsequent review and revisions by the Planning Board. In the Plan—as well as the workshops—the neighborhoods were grouped as follows (see Map 1):

- Downtown
- Cove, East Side, Shippan
- West Side, Waterside, South End
- North Stamford
- Turn of River, Westover, Newfield
- Glenbrook, Springdale, Belltown

Another four companion reports present a Growth Management Study and address the major concerns raised by the Planning Board and community. They summarize the bulk of the research conducted in connection with the Master Plan. These four studies are as follows:

- Economic development
- Urban design
- Traffic and transit
- Affordable housing

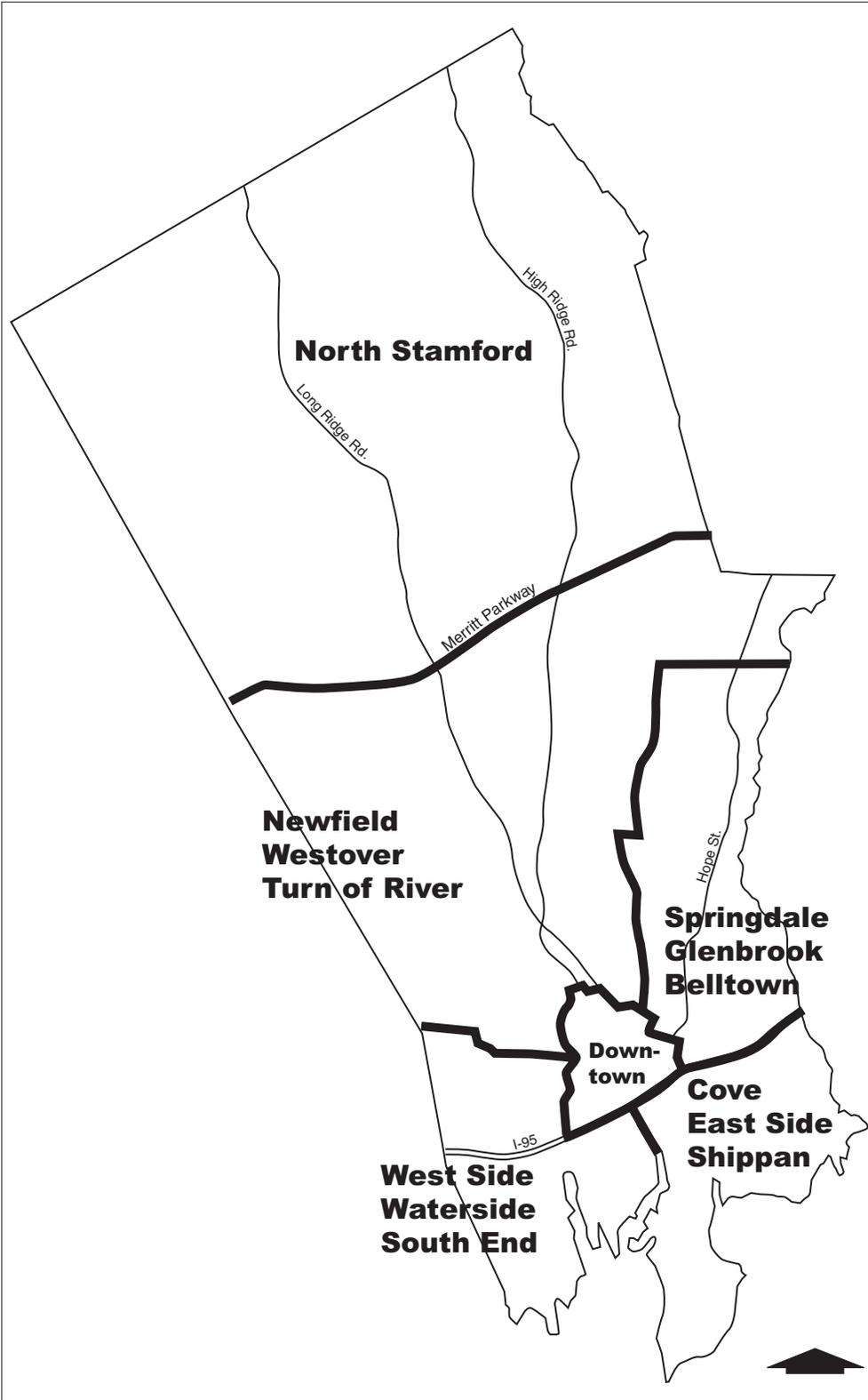
The final background document is this Community Input Report. The community outreach element spanned two years and, as itemized above, was exhaustive in its range and depth. This report provides only highlights from that process. Specifically:

- Chapter 1 provides a compilation of comments from the six initial citywide and neighborhood **workshops**.
- Chapter 2 presents the results of the **student outreach** element conducted in the city's public schools
- Chapter 3 presents the results of **residents' survey** prepared by Quinnipiac College
- Chapter 4 reproduces the **articles** prepared by the 0in connection with the Master Plan.

## Conclusion

The Planning Board is, under the City Charter, the final decision-maker with regard to the Master Plan. It will then be up to the Zoning Board to turn the Plan's recommendations into zoning rules and regulations. The Board of Representatives and City agencies will be called upon to direct funds and carry out actions consistent with the Plan. Institutional, private and not-for-profit entities—the Water Company, Board of Education,

### Neighborhood Groupings Map



etc.—can be encouraged to comply with the Plan.

But ultimately, the Plan's success is dependent on the enthusiastic response and abiding interest of the city's residents, civic leaders and business leaders. In a city as large, complex and dynamic as Stamford, grassroots planning is a prerequisite to drafting a Master Plan that prevails. Thus, this report helps to document the vast effort to make this plan respond to the priorities of the resident, civic and business communities, and to build consensus between those communities.



# 2 Community Workshops



## Overview

Altogether, twenty workshops were conducted, in addition to the roughly twenty work sessions with the Master Plan Advisory Committee and Mayor's Affordable Housing Task Force. Seventeen of the workshops provided the opportunity to focus on neighborhood issues. (The exceptions were the start-up citywide forum and the affordable housing summit.) Sixteen of the workshops were open to the public and widely advertised, with special invitations sent to all of the known civic groups in the neighborhoods. (The exceptions were the two DSSD workshops and the affordable housing summit.)

The twenty workshops are listed on the next page; their varying purposes are also described.

The list of issues and assets generated in the first seven workshops is summarized in this chapter. The issues/assets are organized around the planning topics listed below. Within the listing for each topic area, the comments are further sorted by neighborhood.

- Zoning and density (general)
- Zoning enforcement
- Urban design (general)
- Corridor design
- Historic preservation
- Housing (general)
- Affordable housing
- Transit
- Roadways, parking
- Pedestrians, traffic calming
- Parks and recreation
- Retail, cultural, entertainment
- Offices, hospitality
- Industry
- Environment
- Schools, community facilities, city services
- The Master Plan process itself

It is important to note that all twenty workshops were well-attended, with an average of something like 75 people per meeting. This assured that a wide cross-section of people and viewpoints was heard from. The meetings spanned several years. This meant that the highly controversial issues of the moment were eventually absorbed within a long-range view. Yet about half or more of the people at each meeting had attended earlier meetings. This provided continuity in the dialogue. Finally, The Advocate provided news coverage for a number of meetings. These articles are presented in the last chapter of this report.

**Table 2. Community Workshops & Work Sessions**

February 9, 1999	Start-up citywide forum
March 25, 1999	North Stamford neighborhood workshop
April 9, 1999	Westover/Turn of River/Newfield neighborhood workshop
May 5, 1999	Springdale/Glenbrook/Belltown neighborhood workshop
May 19, 1999	Cove East Side/Shippan neighborhood workshop
June 8, 1999	Downtown neighborhood workshop
July 13, 1999	Board of Representatives Committees

The purpose of these seven meetings was to arrive at a list of issues particular to each neighborhood; to identify neighborhood assets to be protected; and to discover issues and assets that cut across neighborhood boundaries. Meetings were not held in the South End/Waterside and West Side neighborhoods, to respect recent or concurrent neighborhood-based planning efforts.

February 17, 2000	North Stamford workshop
March 2, 2000	Westover/Turn of River/Newfield workshop
March 9, 2000	Cove East Side/Shippan workshop
March 23, 2000	Springdale/Glenbrook/Belltown workshop
March 11, 2000	Community Design Workshop (Springdale/Glenbrook)
June 7, 2000	Downtown workshop
June 7, 2000	Downtown Special Services District workshop
September 14, 2000	South End/Waterside/West Side workshop

This charrette was conducted by the Regional Plan Association, as a case study for "Main Street" revitalization and transit-friendly design in the city.

May 17, 2001	Affordable Housing Summit
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The purpose of the Summit was to discuss the draft recommendations of the Affordable Housing Task Force.

October 11, 2001	Downtown, South End workshop
October 15, 2001	North Stamford, Westover, Turn of River, Newfield, and West Side workshop
October 25, 2001	Springdale, Glenbrook, Belltown, Cove East Side, and Shippan workshop

The purpose of these meetings was to discuss the citywide Master Plan recommendations, but in small enough groups to allow further discussion of neighborhood plans and issues.

November 8, 2001	Planning Board, Zoning Board, Board of Representatives
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The purpose of this workshop was to present the plan in full, as a transition to its official review by the Planning Board.

Finally, it is important to repeat that these twenty workshops are in addition to the roughly dozen meetings held with a Master Plan Advisory Committee drawing from the city's civic, neighborhood and business communities, and another roughly half-dozen meetings held with the Mayor's Affordable Housing Task Force.

## Zoning and Density

### Start-Up

1. How do we reconcile static zoning with dynamic, changing city?
2. Commercial owners are not cooperating with Scalzi Park residential neighborhood.
3. How do we control growth?
4. Downtown is overbuilt.
5. The beautiful neighborhoods adjacent to downtown are the ones most pressured by development.
6. The East Side is getting highly dense so that development doesn't happen in places like Long Ridge Road

### Downtown

1. Growth is always thought of as good, but that's not necessarily good. Will people still want to live here if we keep growing? After the infill sites are developed, does more growth make sense? Perhaps at that point we should start focusing on quality of life and preserving open space.
2. You can't force urbanization on businesses that want to go to the suburbs. That is, you can't "urbanize" a city. Take White Plains, for example. They have been unable to hold on to the people working there.
3. It is critical that we look at the different uses in various parts of downtown. For example, entertainment in Columbus Park would not work in other parts of downtown. It is also important, however, that you don't micro-manage when applying the zoning power.
4. The core will stagnate or fall apart if development is allowed to happen in Stamford's other cores. This is a major strategic issue.
5. The Downtown scale must remain, and will remain because of some of what we're doing with the amenity bonuses, but intensity of development must remain, too. To ensure the latter, you need to be strong about what other areas allow in terms of development.
6. Stamford has sold its soul in terms of scale. We must stop this auto-oriented mentality that cars must move quicker.

### **North Stamford**

1. We are concerned about increased density.
2. There is a value to the whole city to maintain North Stamford as a place where people want to live.
3. We would rather keep the devil we know in terms of non-conforming uses (heavy applause) rather than make these uses conforming in conjunction with making them more attractive. In Stamford, the zoning code doesn't matter. A developer could just get some fancy lawyer. Therefore, you can't give the City or the developers any opportunities. The government doesn't think of us as part of Stamford – it's the attitude that "they can pay for themselves."
4. Land use consultants do not have to be licensed in Connecticut, so they're not responsible to anyone. A developer wanted to put a light at Chimney Corners – he had no authority to do that, but the zoning board and the zoning board of appeals agreed to it, anyway.
5. How about incentives to put future development downtown rather than up here?
6. Downtown is overbuilt.

### **Shippan/Cove/East Side**

1. As for the potential density of development in the Elm Street area, what can the Master Plan say about limiting that?
2. Where is all of the development activity coming from? Development is being done by people from other states.
3. We do not want any development in the Cove! It's the last place left in Stamford that's still homey!
4. You say that there will be growth, and that we need to channel it – well, we don't want growth! You say that the 'consumer' requested this development – when did the customer do this?
5. Who asked for the redevelopment of our community? Shouldn't that be up to the community itself? It's in our rights to be asked before we have to give our taxes for development we don't want.
6. How do we change something that's already on the ground?

7. The question is, where are you going to stop the expansion? What's done is done : you're not going to change what's already there.
8. We can talk about traffic, but it all starts with development. We want severe limits. We don't want the Harbor Plaza's, the Collins' developments, we're sick of that.

### **Springdale/Glenbrook/Belltown**

1. The character of this community, the result of mixed uses and good design (e.g., 3 or 4 stories rather than 7), must be maintained. Residential might be non-conforming, but it is essential to our sense of this being a village.

### **Westover/Turn of River/Newfield**

1. North Stamford community member: We are concerned about all of Stamford. The Planning Board, Zoning Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals are still allowing the Master Plan to be nibbled at. What about a moratorium on zoning amendments while the Master Plan process is going on? The Planning Board and Zoning Board give too many exceptions and so they have no credibility.
2. Zoning Board member : We are very stringent. We are respectful of neighborhoods, we do listen and we do care, we are not push-overs, we've turned down many applications on Long Ridge and High Ridge.
3. Stamford is very NIMBY (not in my back yard). Every neighborhood thinks it is different and unique, and so shouldn't get the future development. But none of the neighborhoods care if the development goes somewhere else.
4. Expansion must stop somewhere. We've outgrown ourselves.
5. The development of downtown is the no.1 priority because it is important to the city's survival.
6. Developers want to blow the zoning away, and they have the money to do it. It's not fair. With the CUC proposal on Long Ridge, we had to work so hard to get it dropped. Developers don't go to Greenwich for their corporate headquarters; they come here. That happens for a reason.

## **Zoning Enforcement**

### **Start-Up**

1. Enforce the zoning code consistently—the U. Conn building has been allowed to go out to the sidewalk while the Swiss Bank building had to obey setbacks

2. Separate out noxious, industrial uses from residential areas

### **North Stamford**

1. The City seems to have no power to enforce the zoning code or penalize those who violate it. We just want some consistency.
2. We want to make sure that the integrity of the zoning code is maintained and the quality of life maintained.
3. Non-conforming commercial uses: Why would we want to legalize what is out of step? Then, anything could happen!
4. Someone bought a house at Brookdale Road and High Ridge Road and made it a nursery. He lives on the property, and also operates a home business there. He was able to do this by registering the property as a farm. This is a flagrant "Up Yours!" to the zoning code.

### **Shippan/Cove/East Side**

1. Zoning infractions are "not a priority", according to the City.
2. The zoning code is so ambiguous, no one can understand it, it's a lawyer's dream.

### **Start-Up**

1. Green space is needed in downtown.
2. Keep Stamford beautiful.
3. There need to be design standards for downtown. Right now there is a lot of ugly signage. We need someone to draw up aesthetic guidelines, and they have to be institutionalized.
4. There is a very embarrassing lack of consistency of downtown architecture, with the exception of Atlantic Street with its historic New England character.
5. Downtown should be made beautiful.

### **Downtown**

1. There is a trend toward big footprints, with retail, office and housing.
2. As for the high rises downtown, the wind tunnel effect is not so bad. Plus, high rises pro-

### **Urban Design (General)**

vide great views.

3. Assets: Bedford Street has a charm. It has trees, and you can relate to it. Compare this to the coldness of the Town Center.

### **North Stamford**

1. On the clear-cutting of trees, there is no City policy. Maybe there should be.
2. The idea of “village districts” should be explored.
3. How about zoning to prevent McMansions, like in Darien? Maybe a sliding scale whereby bigger houses must have greater setbacks, although this is hard to codify. Greenwich went to a FAR maximum on top of a setback requirement. Maybe both should be legislated, along with a design review board.
4. New houses in North Stamford are going for at least \$600,000, so soon houses will be torn down or expanded and there is a real danger to that.
5. McMansions (big houses completely out of scale with small lot sizes) are not that much of a problem yet.
6. There are commercial vehicles all over the residential neighborhoods, e.g., on High Ridge Road. They don’t use their garages like they are supposed to; rather, they leave their vans outside for the purposes of advertising. In Darien, commercial vehicles must go in garages. It’s the same sort of commercial creep as the signs on people’s front lawns.
7. It is important to address setback rules so that privacy can be maintained.
8. How about a design review board?
9. How about a new requirement to remove all of the square footage on your lot that you can’t build out from the maximum coverage calculation?
10. The North Stamford Association is anxious about maintaining the balance between property rights and community attractiveness.
11. Inappropriate siting of communication towers creates an eyesore.
12. There are no trees or nice signs off the I-95 exit ramps, no beauty or charm, e.g., Washington Boulevard.



13. The President of the North Stamford Association says that there is a consensus that we originally moved out here for the rural surroundings. Somehow, with no change in zoning, it has become too dense and crowded, with increased traffic and less private open space

### **Shippan/Cove/East Side**

1. Strengths : There's lots of private open space and front lawns, not condos that take up entire lot. The trees go to the lot lines.
2. We also have nice big trees. The ZBA cuts into rightful setbacks. We asked them to enforce zoning, but developers get away with anything. That's what the 1991 Plan is all about.
3. We don't want any more office buildings on the water, e.g., Donnelly Marketing. They are completely out of scale. The water is our asset. We don't want to look at offices.
4. How many trees are replanted when land is torn up? My wife likes your concrete, but I like trees. I don't want to be suffocated. Rich people have air conditioning, but I want oxygen.

### **Springdale/Glenbrook/Belltown**

1. We want to preserve and improve existing open space, i.e., Springdale Park, and add more open space. We want to be kept informed about proposals for micro-wave radio towers in the community.
2. How will communication towers be dealt with in the Master Plan?

### **Westover/Turn of River/Newfield**

1. As for the townhouses across from Stamford High School (collective gasp), you won't want to look at them in 5 years --they don't fit in. The zoning must be made to ensure architectural integrity, e.g., area must be all brick or all wood.
1. We are interested in design guidelines, e.g., pitched roofs, trees in front, plate windows.
1. The Stillwater Association likes the idea of certain corporations to cover their parking garages with greenery and vines. It looks more like a village that way.
1. The Stamford Baptist Church at Janice Road wanted a school and antenna, and the residents were never informed.

## Corridor Design

### Start-Up

1. Look at the gateways, the poor character of West Main Street vs. Greenwich Avenue — West Main should surround park.
2. Also, need beautification of on/off ramps, signage.
3. The railroad bridges need to be beautified.

### Downtown

1. Planners must remember that when they are planning corridors with these great vistas, there are possible disadvantages having to do with light and microclimate.

### North Stamford

1. Stone walls are broken down by the winters and need maintenance. The City should provide an incentive (e.g., tax breaks) to property owners to take care of them. We also need to be careful that these stones are not carted away and used for new houses.
2. The biggest eyesore is the power, phone and cable TV lines. Can't they go underground?!
3. We are concerned about power lines on Long Ridge Road.
4. The problem is that State permission is needed to beautify rotaries off the Ridge Roads. There is, of course, the Stamford Tree Foundation, which has planted 5,000 trees around the city.
5. The State controls the Ridge Roads (the City has no say), and the State makes them unsightly, which spreads like a cancer in that nearby property owners don't want to make their areas nicer if it looks bad so nearby.
6. Washington Boulevard is ugly and needs beautification.
7. We don't want I-95-style street lights in the residential areas; we want street lights designed by the neighborhood.
8. Is it possible to put utilities (electrical, water, sewer) underground? The transfer station at Scofieldtown Road and Sunset Road, with all of the dumping, is an eyesore. And how about the dumping of tires and cans around the Laurel Reservoir? Can the utilities be held accountable for that?
9. There are so many signs on Farms Road for the cross-town commuting traffic from

Greenwich, and it is a real blight on the landscape.

### **Shippan/Cove/East Side**

1. Shippan Avenue used to have tree-lined canopies, but we're losing them because the trees are dying. We're trying to bring the canopies back, but the City won't let us because of the overhead wires. What about putting the electricity lines underground? Or now, you can even retrieve this stuff without wires. Maybe it's time to address this.
2. Shippan is beautiful. The drive in is getting nicer.
3. Everyone is being very negative and parochial, but there are issues that unite the entire area – corridors, access, how do you want corridor to look? How about some more positive recommendations?
4. We need to address streetscapes, sidewalks and street lights. The City has neglected these things, and it takes away from the neighborhood. We need to make the pedestrian atmosphere more friendly.
5. The entrances to and exits from the neighborhood, as they go under the highway, have to be modernized or else they'll become choke points, e.g., trucks going to and from Clairol. Neighbors have to live with this. Any further commercial expansion would be an insult to them.

### **Springdale/Glenbrook/Belltown**

1. Camp and Hope are ugly, look like dumps, especially the back of the skating rink. Streetscape improvements are needed.
2. What is the status of the idea of widening Glenbrook Road as it goes into Darien? At the Glenbrook – Courtland intersection, all of the trees were cut down by the City and it looks like a dump.
3. There needs to be standards in Springdale for new businesses coming in. There needs to be an overall plan to make the neighborhood more attractive, i.e., landscaping, signage.
4. The railroad trestle on Hamilton Avenue looks really ugly. Why do we need a billboard there?

### **Westover/Turn of River/Newfield**

1. In order to beautify downtown roads, they've narrowed them (e.g., Summer coming into Main, Broad at the Library)—we want to drive faster but at the same time we're narrowing the roads!

## Historic Preservation

### Start-Up

1. Historic village districts, state commission vs. local regs ; historic village designations in Dolson Place? Along Long Ridge? The Yale & Towne Lofts? Shippan?

### Downtown

1. The older buildings are more than just old. They have a wonderful human scale. If you notice, all of the fun things in downtown Stamford (e.g., the restaurants) are in the little buildings.
2. The old buildings add a certain coziness.

### North Stamford

1. Old Long Ridge Road is a historic village district with design review team that reviews any development and guides styles. It is the only such road in all of Stamford.
2. Many people here feel strongly about historic preservation -- we've lost so many old buildings because the pro-development forces are so strong.

### Westover/Turn of River/Newfield

1. Preserve historic buildings, maybe with some sort of tax incentives.

## Housing (General)

### Start-Up

1. Mill River housing near the Downtown is ideal.

### Downtown

1. I don't understand why, but it seems that all new housing is rentals, and the problem is that that sort of housing is temporary.
2. Stamford's downtown core has unusually good connections to the residential neighborhoods, which is particularly important given the drop in owner-occupiers that we are seeing.
3. How do we get more home ownership downtown? That's obviously preferred, because people then care more, although it must be said that Stamford has done a great job with cleanliness. Yet home ownership would still improve things because it would bring in small shops (e.g., bike shops) for those who don't want to deal with the mall. Store owners would be more comfortable with a population which is sure to be there for the long term.
4. There is a great range of downtown housing, including affordable units. This range sup-

ports other things that happen. Downtown housing is served by good schools, which is unusual for Connecticut.

### **North Stamford**

1. It is important to address setback rules so that privacy can be maintained.
2. New houses in North Stamford are shoe-horned in every which way, yet more stringent setback requirements would make half of them non-conforming.
3. How about a new requirement to remove all of the square footage on your lot that you can't build out from the maximum coverage calculation?

### **Shippan/Cove/East Side**

1. How do you determine the number of dwelling units permitted per acre? Increased density should go north, not here.
2. Clusters without a Planned Design concept has been a disaster, and the Planning Board has generally made them better.
3. There should be a moratorium in Cove on condos and apartment buildings. They cause more traffic and increase density, and it's only because the Planning Board is lax. Why should we be affected negatively by Stamford's need for affordable housing?
4. We've already gone through these processes, and we've made amendments. We have many working couples who need cars and spaces to park them in. So, there's inadequate parking, and the pressure spills out to the on-street spaces. We need 2 spaces per dwelling unit, but no change was made. We have a similar parking problem downtown because there's no garages, and when I went to the City about there being only 350 spaces in the Park Square West development, I had foisted upon me an arrogant, dismissive, discourteous man named Ed Steinberg who told me that nothing would be done. Now, he agrees with the need for some 500 spaces, but it's taken him 2 years to figure it out. We need people who will listen.
5. As for the potential density of development in the Elm Street area, what can the Master Plan say about limiting that?
6. Strengths: We're close to I-95 and New York City, the water, downtown, etc. It's wonderful for commuters.

### **Springdale/Glenbrook/Belltown**

1. There are, it must be said, some nice condos (e.g., at Union and Hope), and I'd rather



have a condo than a house with a floor added on.

2. Spokesperson for Springfield Neighborhood Association: We want our single-family neighborhoods preserved.

### **Westover/Turn of River/Newfield**

1. The High Ridge corridor, from Merriman Road to Bulls Head, has significant commercial creep, as evidenced by shingles on front lawns. This makes the houses behind them more vulnerable.
2. It should be noted, when talking about maintaining the residential character of Long Ridge and High Ridge, that no one in the audience lives there, and no one wants to live there.
3. Castlewood/Three Lakes neighborhood : Piper Hill should stay residential. The non-conforming use at Crystal Rock should become residential. There should be no increase in intensity of use there.
4. What gives developers the right to come in and get zoning changes for multi-family condos? Why should we have to be vigilant about what seems like a black-and-white rule?

## **Affordable Housing**

### **Start-Up**

1. Concern about gentrification in the South End, Waterside and the West End, we need to lock in some affordable housing
2. Build more affordable housing near downtown and have more on-street parking

### **Downtown**

1. Blacks are moving out of downtown to Bridgeport. They're getting kicked out of Greenwich Avenue and 26 Main Street. You can't find a black community four streets big in Stamford. There's not one black nightclub downtown, and minorities are still the majority in the public schools but the numbers of African Americans are dropping.

### **North Stamford**

1. Who says we have to have affordable housing? We can't be everything to everybody! Remember, North Stamford pays very high taxes as a percentage of what it gets back.

### **Shippan/Cove/East Side**

1. You say that shoehorning of multi-family buildings creates affordable housing. But people here want to see their neighborhoods preserved, and they will be compromised by

affordable units. They do not see this as a good trade-off.

2. Where are the poor going to go when the projects are taken down? I don't make \$60,000.
3. How is affordable housing defined? Studios in Stamford start at \$1,000. Affordable housing in Stamford does not exist.
4. You said that backyard structures and basement apartments create affordable units, but they are illegal!

### **Springdale/Glenbrook/Belltown**

1. High rents increase likelihood of conversions.

### **Westover/Turn of River/Newfield**

1. A High Ridge resident: we have to treasure quarter-acre lots because that's the only thing our kids are going to be able to afford

### **Start-Up**

1. Transit in downtown: how about a monorail or a light rail?
2. CT Transit changing buses to another type of transit. It costs too much now but technologies can make it cheaper in the future.
3. How about a railroad stop in East Stamford?
4. We need a new mainline train station.
5. Make better use of New Canaan Line.

### **Downtown**

1. If more people lived downtown, people would take mass transit to work. Soon, people will have no choice because the streets will become so crowded.
2. To get workers into Stamford by mass transit, you need the upline parking, or else the corporations will start to leave. Remember that every morning, some 75,000 people have to get into Stamford from the north or east.
3. Putting future development in the core will lead to more use of mass transit and less traffic on I-95. We also want more retail and housing in the core, and that doesn't mean

### **Transit**

more traffic on I-95.

4. The Transportation Center is not pedestrian-friendly. The question is whether you would freeze your butt off walking to the station.
5. How about incentives for mass transit and for bikes, like Greenwich's TransitChek program?
6. How about a downtown "sub-node" for buses? That would be a good idea.
7. There is no way for seniors and the middle-aged in the high rises in the middle of the city to get downtown. There are no buses. The buses that run in Stamford are seen as being for the working class and the minorities. How about a jitney that connects the train, downtown and the Ridgeway shopping center? It was tried twice in the last 20 years, and it hasn't worked. No one uses it because it doesn't come frequently enough. The Transit District is currently operating the Commuter Connection, but it only runs from 6 to 9am and from 4 to 7pm. Service is limited, but it is used.

### **North Stamford**

1. What about buses on Hunting Ridge Road and Newfield Avenue? Westport has them!  
(Another resident): Yeah, but nobody uses them, and City buses do not fit on rural roads.
2. It takes close to 30 minutes to get to the train station from North Stamford. Also, you have to wait for space in the train station garage behind a New York State driver. Stamford has to take care of its own, first. There should be Stamford resident only parking at the train station.
3. The train station is appalling. It is the busiest station in Connecticut, we pay very high taxes, and it's still horrible (heavy applause).
4. The cars coming down High Ridge Road are New Yorkers who will be parking in our garage, even though there is a very long waiting list! Remember, though, the garage is a State facility; the State has control.
5. Unlike other places, the City doesn't take care of its own first, e.g., we shouldn't have to wait behind New Yorkers for the parking garage (heavy applause).
6. Look at the Old Greenwich train station: out-of-towners are not restricted, but there's so much parking that it doesn't much matter. Why can't Stamford do the same thing?

7. What about working with the region for a Park & Ride for New York-bound drivers coming from the north? But don't put it at the museum. The museum is a beautiful place, and it's not just used on the weekends.

### **Shippan/Cove/East Side**

1. Very few people in this neighborhood take the train because everything is so close, or at least that's how it was supposed to be but there's no parking. The Urban Redevelopment Commission set up shared parking – that's a lovely way to solve the problem! (sarcastic)

### **Springdale/Glenbrook/Belltown**

1. Bus usage? What's a bus?
2. There are a lot of commuters in Springdale who walk to the train. (Of the Springdale attendees, 7 or 8 use the train station.)
3. The Glenbrook station is a pit. It has spray-painting. People walk and drive to the station. They come from all over.
4. Remember, Springdale is the first train station from the north on down that you can park in. So, people come from New Canaan, New York and North Stamford, park on local streets and walk a half-mile to the station.
5. You have to park on the street because there is a waiting list. There is also a charge in the parking lot, and you always have to wait on line to pay it.
7. The reason that ridership is down here is because there's no business to attract people in. But ridership is not down in other bedroom communities, so that's not it. Well, then, we don't believe it. Or perhaps it's because now there's no price differentiation between Springdale, Glenbrook or New Canaan, so if I decide one day to get off at the nice village of New Canaan, they have no idea that I am actually from Springdale.
8. More people are using the Noroton Heights Main Line station because there are more trains there, and the New Canaan line has reduced the number of cars to only two, so it's more crowded and people don't want to get on at the "downstream" stations.
9. We don't want the New Canaan line to be made into a subway because people don't want to have to change at Stamford.

### **Westover/Turn of River/Newfield**

1. The Stillwater Association is interested in knowing which option is more economically feasible: an expansion of parking at the train station, or expansion of shuttle buses. The large buses in operation now are not utilized and do not go to many places. Perhaps workers who live in Bridgeport or the Bronx could use the shuttle buses to get home.
2. Transit is not a possibility because I have to drive 1.5 miles to the bus stop, so I might as well drive to work.

## **Roadways, Parking**

### **Start-Up**

1. All of this development and yet transportation issues have not been addressed. There is no parking and so no one is going to come.
2. There has to be a widening of Main Street or there will be no further development. Look at the gateways, the poor character of West Main Street vs. Greenwich Avenue — West Main should surround park.
3. Hope Street traffic is a problem.
4. Widen East Main Street.
5. Have more on-street parking.
6. Shorter traffic lights lead to speeding. Eliminate the No Right on Red rule.

### **Downtown**

1. I-95 and the Merritt are bad, but the circulation within Stamford is fine. Once you get on the exit ramps, North State Street and Long Ridge Road move smoothly.

### **North Stamford**

1. There is serious 18-wheeler traffic in and out of the recycling plant and the Smith House.
2. There should be direct access to the U Conn site from High Ridge Road (heavy applause). Uses that draw heavy and industrial traffic should be relocated to the State highway, and the U Conn site should be a moderate-sized middle school, not a high-density use, not a high school (because there is then more car use and more concern about nighttime use of recreational facilities).
3. New York State drivers are cutting through and speeding on the smaller roads, so it becomes scary to cross.

4. Traffic problems : Scofieldtown Road, Old Long Ridge Road to Hunting Road to Long Ridge Road (used as a shortcut), Riverbank Road, Mayapple Road to Rock Rimmon Road, Webbs Hill Road, Newfield Avenue, there are 27 signals / stop signs from North Stamford to Springdale.
5. There are no connections between Long Ridge and High Ridge, so Mayapple Road and Hunting Ridge Road become what they're not meant to be.
6. Between 7 and 9 AM and between 5 and 7 PM, there is a kamikaze run from Hunting Ridge Road onto major roads, with no lights to mediate. We need some common sense infrastructure if we are going to grow.
7. The Police should give summonses during rush hour on High Ridge and Long Ridge instead of giving tickets around schools to those holding up traffic, then New York-bound drivers will use other towns
8. There must be a plan for the timing of traffic signals.
9. It is hard for the driver to see street signs because they are too small, unlike Pound Ridge and Greenwich which have larger and more visible signs. Also, mailbox numbering should be standardized, like in Pound Ridge.
10. On the Ridge Roads, it is windy and there is a 45-mph zone, so drivers need larger signs, located maybe 100 yards before the street itself. You can't see the present signs at all at night.
11. Can the State make Scofieldtown Road a State road? The State is now evaluating the continuation of the merge onto Long Ridge north of the Merritt for another 200-500 feet.

### **Shippan/Cove/East Side**

1. Traffic increases threefold on Cove Road during the summer. You can't turn on to Cove Road from the side streets because the traffic is bumper-to-bumper. It will only get worse without a regulated entrance.
2. You're not going to take the Oak Hill Projects, you already privatized Connecticut Avenue.
3. The entrances to and exits from the neighborhood, as they go under the highway, have to be modernized or else they'll become choke points, e.g., trucks going to and from Clairol. Neighbors have to live with this. Any further commercial expansion would be an insult to them.

4. How will the Dock Street Connector work? What impact will it have?
5. East Main Street, Cove Road, Elm Street, Jefferson Street and Magee Avenue are handling the traffic. Seaside isn't handling much. Weed Avenue is bad on the weekends and the holidays. It's a speed trap in the summer. They should put bumps on the roads.
6. Lockwood is residential and not meant for traffic. Same with Soundview and Willowbrook.
7. East Main Street has the railroad trestle and the I-95 trestle, and trucks will get to the underpass, see the height and then have to make a left.



### **Springdale/Glenbrook/Belltown**

1. Hope Street simply cannot tolerate any more traffic-generating buildings. It's bumper-to-bumper as it is, with the health club / skating rink, the train station, the elementary school, the bus route, etc. Then you have these trucks, some even 18-wheelers, at Weed Hill and Hope. They use the area as a thru-street and as a destination (e.g. to the rock crusher). There are only 220 spaces at the train station, and Hope Street is our one and only road.
2. Traffic is close to capacity, especially on Saturday mornings and during school hours, and then they went and put a new post office in the area.
3. Rt. 106 must be dealt with, and such efforts should include Darien.
4. Drivers from Darien and the Merritt also use Hope Street.
5. The traffic situation is really bad opposite Springdale School.
6. The traffic on Hope Street is really bad on Saturday mornings and weekday daytimes (due to schools and trucks). It is fine on Saturday afternoons and Sundays.
7. Bad traffic on Hope Street starts south of Weed Hill, is at its worst between Weed Hill and Camp, and remains bad until you get to Church Street and the four traffic lights.
8. There are a lot of traffic conflicts at the four traffic lights.
9. Another traffic problem is that the school buses come up to the front of the school and not the back – it is really hectic.
10. The traffic is also bad on Camp Avenue. On the southbound side of Hope, as it inter-

sects with Camp, there are 2 lanes, and 1 of them is a turn lane, creating a lot of back-up. This will only get worse with the new post office.

11. Traffic is also bad on (1) Route 106, especially at the intersection with Glenbrook Road; (2) Weed Hill Road; (3) Newfield Avenue from Prospect Avenue up.
12. What is the status of the idea of widening Glenbrook Road as it goes into Darien? At the Glenbrook – Courtland intersection, all of the trees were cut down by the City and it looks like a dump.

### **Westover/Turn of River/Newfield**

1. In order to beautify downtown roads, they've narrowed them (e.g., Summer coming into Main, Broad at the Library). We want to drive faster but at the same time we're narrowing the roads!
2. Hubbard Heights neighborhood: Do not widen Stillwater Road. Keep the speed signs! Re-Pave! It is nice at Cold Spring and Stillwater Road, with the wood chips and benches – you could just sit, relax and watch the river.
3. There is a lot of east-west travel from one major artery to another by people who do not live on these blocks, e.g., drivers coming from New Canaan.
4. Both ramps at the Den Street exit on the Merritt have very fast traffic, which is particularly dangerous given the tight curves.
5. Intervale Avenue changes names in the middle and has a lot of traffic.
6. Major cross streets : Stillwater Road, Vine Road, Newfield Avenue, Newfield Drive / Intervale Avenue, Turn of River Road, Oaklawn Avenue, Commerce Hill Road, Palmers Hill Road, Westover Road, Roxbury Road, Weed Hill Avenue, Cedar Heights Road, Camp Avenue, Haig Avenue.
7. Traffic signals are poor.
8. ±3-ton trucks on Newfield Avenue and Stillwater Road.
9. People coming from cul-de-sacs can't get out onto High Ridge or Long Ridge because there are no traffic lights or white boxes, e.g., the lights are not synchronized on Vine Road and Cedar Heights Road.
10. Ridgeway is a very dangerous place because it's so difficult to maneuver or park. But

people are so motivated to shop there that they go anyway. Shoppers would rather park in the lot than in the garage. The garage has poor lighting and no police, and therefore there is a potential for crime. Some people think the shopping center is O.K. to look at, while others say it's visually unappealing.

11. Speeding up traffic and making it more efficient is not the no. 1 priority, rather traffic must be slowed down and driving made more unappealing. Put out free shuttle buses!

## **Pedestrian, Traffic Calming**

### **Start-Up**

1. More pedestrian-friendly design is needed in downtown.
2. Make commercial strips more pedestrian-friendly in downtown and at High Ridge - Merritt.
3. How about enclosed skywalks, for winter in downtown.
4. Downtown should be made walkable.

### **Downtown**

1. Stamford has sold its soul in terms of scale. We must stop this auto-oriented mentality that cars must move quicker.
2. Pedestrian spaces in downtown include Main Street, Bedford Street, Atlantic Street, Columbus Park and parts of Summer Street.
3. Walking from the train station, we would prefer to walk east on North State and then north on Atlantic. Washington Boulevard is intimidating, even with the Swiss Bank pathway, because of the scale of the buildings and speed of the cars.
4. The "bowtie" is a favorite pedestrian spot. The small park in the bowtie is also known as "Columbus Park". The bowtie would be better if Old Town Hall was alive. Pedestrians also like Atlantic Street south of Tresser Boulevard and the length of Broad Street.
5. Mall ramps are a detriment. They result in a lack of pedestrian confidence.
6. The 50-foot walkway on the north side of North State Street is a real opportunity because people want to walk up Atlantic and not Washington Boulevard.
7. DSSD: We've been trying to calm traffic and pedestrianize the intersections and the streets. The city is starting to evolve, but now people are annoyed about how slow

Bedford is. But it's nice. We'd like the same on Summer Street. Analysis shows that Broad Street is not big enough.

8. When automobile use rises, streets become wider and there has to be more parking. That needs to be tempered in Stamford. We don't want to be L.A.

### **North Stamford**

1. The traffic calming study done by Buckhurst Fish & Jacquemart was not what we had in mind; the City never gives us what we ask for!
2. North Stamford is a dangerous place for joggers and bicyclists. There are no paths, the roads are narrow and windy, and you'll get run over. How about a path around reservoir? For one thing, it wouldn't disturb homes (heavy applause). Or a bicycle path on Long Ridge?

### **Shippan/Cove/East Side**

1. Strengths: Places to walk and bicycle.
2. Because there are no sidewalks on Harbor Drive, people are jogging in the streets, and there are baby carriages in the streets.

### **Springdale/Glenbrook/Belltown**

1. There is a lot of community feeling in Springdale. We want to be able to take care of all of our needs here, but it's just not safe to walk around. At the same time, we don't want a four-lane highway like High Ridge Road.
2. Hope Street is nice because it's level, walkable, convenient, and you can get all that you need in one small area. There is a 'downtown' feel at the area near Camp.
3. Glenbrook residents: Hope and Camp is not our downtown; Church and Hope is our downtown, or downtown itself is our downtown. Church and Hope has a pizza place, a CVS, etc. It is not, however, pedestrian-friendly.
4. Glenbrook: Pedestrians and bicyclists are in danger when attempting to walk or ride eastbound on Colonial Road from the intersection of Strawberry Hill and Colonial. There is no sidewalk on the south side of Colonial, only an uneven path of dirt and grass, and this problem is exacerbated by the presence of large bushes placed just three feet from the road. A sidewalk must be installed between Strawberry Hill and Mayflower Avenue, and the Manor North condo should be required to move and remove the bushes. Those who walk to Glenbrook train station would want a sidewalk on the south side of Colonial from Strawberry Hill all the way to Hope Street.

5. Spokesperson for Springfield Neighborhood Association: We also want Rail Trail funds to be used for Hope Street improvements, i.e., new sidewalks, new street lights, new paving, correction of dangerous Camp Avenue / Hope Street intersection and dangerous Weed Hill Avenue / Hope Street intersection, correction of unsafe cross walks at elementary school.
6. There's also lots of pedestrian traffic on Hope Street, and yet intersections such as Camp and Hope are very dangerous for walkers.
7. If traffic becomes too bad, I walk – as long as I am not carrying anything heavy. But walking is dangerous – the 'walk' signs change so quickly.
8. Sidewalks are an issue all over Stamford. For example, in some places there are huge trees smack in the middle of the sidewalk. People coming from NYC are being forced into cars.
9. The quality of the sidewalks are a problem. Asphalt only works on a temporary basis, and weeds grow out of that sort of material.
10. Curbs break off and yet the City is not responsive. I don't have the time to make hundreds of calls.
11. There is an area where Courtland, Glenbrook, Hope and Rock Spring are all converging, and here everything is in walking distance but it is also very chaotic.
12. Do something about the sidewalk network at the Hope – Woodway intersection.
13. The paving replacement on the crescent-shaped road behind St. Basil's is of poor quality.
14. A big problem is that there are no cross streets between Toms and Weed Hill.

## **Parks and Recreation**

### **Downtown**

1. The parks in downtown are Columbus Park, Latham Park and Veteran's Park, as well as the People's Park.
2. The Mill River Corridor would be a great green space for the tremendous concentration of buildings downtown. The parks now are small. Latham is not really used. We need more green space with more housing.

3. The Mill River Corridor plan will take 26 Main Street down. The plan's proponents don't even use or care about the Mill River now. No one uses the basketball courts except kids from the neighborhood. Why, then, do they want this plan? It's in our community, it's for the West Side and Waterside communities. We live there. It's our park. We don't go up to North Stamford and use their parks.
4. Response : the Corridor plan might take some of those buildings down, but the residents will get something much nicer. Besides, those buildings that they are taking down aren't too old, so the tenants aren't that attached to them. And it won't happen that quickly. We're not using the park now, but that's because it's nasty and there's nothing there. I'm going to have kids soon, and I'm going to want to take them to a nice park. Besides, the West Side is for the plan.
5. DSSD: Other downtown spaces include Veterans Park, but while there is a lot of foot traffic in and out of Saks, it is not a place where people want to sit and talk. We've tried midday concerts there and they haven't worked. In general, nothing really draws people from Stamford in to the parks; they'll only come if they're "forced", e.g., a concert.

### **North Stamford**

1. Young people moving to Stamford complain about the lack of bike trails.
2. Parks, such as Dorothy Heroy Park, are left open at night, people go in and set off fire-crackers at 4 AM. Heroy should be closed at night – it's a pitiful park, anyway.
3. Open space must be preserved, especially along the reservoir. Maybe there should be a bond issue to purchase the rights to those properties right now. Another option is to upzone to 4-6 acres so we can preserve the character of what's left (Heavy applause). In terms of a suggestion for a surtax on house sales over a certain price that can be used to purchase open space, our taxes are already high, and furthermore, such a solution is not equitable because those who will benefit from the parks will not be the ones paying for it. But whatever happens in terms of open space, we don't want the State to get involved.
4. We have a real need for real open space without paths, just with wildlife and animals
5. There is a community garden on the southwest corner of Scofieldtown Road and Rock Rimmon Road next to the Smith House, and it is very unsightly. Furthermore, there is no parking so people park on Rock Rimmon Road.
6. Use 20 acres of the U Conn site for a greenbelt to the Arboretum. The Mayor is on record as supporting a greenway via land swaps, but that idea seems to have fallen by

the wayside. In terms of the privacy issue, acquire land near major roads so that it can be accessed without disturbance to the people who live there.

7. The City is targeting the Smith House and the nature center for expansion.
8. There are no community schools or parks for young people in North Stamford, we are chasing young people out, we have nothing to offer young couples except downtown condos and private clubs. There seems to be no effort on the part of the City in this regard (heavy applause). At least put up a swing set!
9. Scofieldtown Park used to be a real park, but now everything's been developed.

### **Shippan/Cove/East Side**

1. I moved here to be near the water and get out into the open, but this Administration looks at parks as high-density activity centers. Cove Island Park used to be geared toward pedestrians : people would come in and just enjoy it. We don't need badminton nets. There are all of these signs telling us what to do besides just enjoying the park.
2. There is a parking problem at Cove Island Park, but that's an enforcement issue. I am angered by how they put gates up to keep out vandals, but the solution is not to wall us off but to catch the criminals! If there are out-of-staters taking advantage of the park, the solution is to catch them, not to charge us more!
3. For some reason, the Mayor wants it packed, but a park is not a place to feel pressure, it should be for walking around and enjoying natural beauty.
4. Cove Island Park is becoming too crowded.
5. Cove Island Park has become a park for not only out-of-towners but out-of-staters as well.

### **Springdale/Glenbrook/Belltown**

1. We want the parks geared to passive use. We don't want space fenced off for ballparks.
2. What is Drotar Park? We call it the Little League Park.
3. Drotar is a great park, although it needs to be spruced up. Also, there are condos around there, and the people who live in them use the park to walk their animals. This litters the park.
4. This community needs parks – all I see are trucks and potholes. Wouldn't it be great if

the site for the new post office was made into a park instead? Traffic is so bad already, and there are so many depressing buildings.

5. Sleepy Hollow Park is not a park – it is an inland wetlands. Stark is a park, but it's not a good playground. Edward Hunt is a pit, it is very neglected, poorly maintained. Stamford High School is not really used, except, maybe, for track walkers. Stark needs to be cleaned up. There is a little bit of green next to Largo Drive at the Springdale train station, but it is used for parking.
6. How about some programming at the Little League Park?
7. There is erosion on Stamford's side of the Noroton River.
8. The basketball court in the area of the DPW property was shut because it was getting professional basketball players who would play until late at night, and also because there were no bathrooms. There was an article three years ago which said there would be a park in that area, but it hasn't happened.

### **Westover/Turn of River/Newfield**

1. There are not enough recreational areas. Parents would take their kids to the U Conn site but it is far away for a lot of people.
2. We need a Scalzi Park north of Bulls Head, perhaps on one of the two parcels on Turn Of River Road. The damage has already been done up there; we just don't want it to get worse.

### **Start-Up**

1. Revise zoning to keep the artist colonies in the South End.
2. North Stamford is completely isolated, knows nothing about downtown, there needs to be cultural opportunities north of the Merritt.
3. More art galleries wanted.
4. No more businesses should be allowed around High Ridge Road. R-10 zoning should be maintained, so as to avoid traffic nightmare.

### **Downtown**

1. We need an after-dinner crowd for café, desert, art, etc.

## **Retail, Cultural, Entertainment**

2. There is a huge nightclub scene in downtown from Thursday to Saturday. There is a late scene; it doesn't start until 10 or 11. The garages used to be empty after 5, but now after 10, you can't get a spot. There are a half dozen nightclubs now.
3. Basic retail, e.g., nice gifts, browsing, ice cream, are all going to the mall. Restaurants, entertainment and business services have taken their place. It's no longer balanced.
4. A nice thing about downtown is that the retail doesn't just look like any other commercial strip.
5. The mall killed a lot of merchants, but it also raised the standard and brought a lot of people downtown so that they're now comfortable coming down here. They know to come back for the entertainment. However, people usually don't combine the mall with anything else because the mall is just too big an experience.
6. Big-box and chains are the trends in retail. We hope that Forest City can bring in those shoppers going to the mall. This is especially possible if the street is made nice. You do have the college there now.
7. How about a grocery store downtown? Or a one-stop department store like Caldor's? Where do I buy my toaster? Or my chair cushion? It is a bad trend not to have this. Caldor's was important for people who do not drive, and there are many such people in the West Side. Also, how about a national chain drug store like CVS?
8. Churches bring people downtown. The restaurants at 2 PM on Sunday are still a mob – the ones, that is, that are open then. Some restaurants still don't get it. There are Protestant, Catholic, Baptist and Congregationalist churches downtown. There are no synagogues downtown.
9. Summer Street north of Broad is a disaster waiting to happen. What is the concept there -- Irish bars?
10. There is a lack of integration of people in participatory events, e.g., festivals, outdoor markets, etc. We need to find some way to get people outside buildings. There is a lot of potential for this, but right now there's nothing that interesting in the downtown to get them out. Another obstacle is that all of the density is on one side of town, and since people will only walk 9 minutes away for their lunch break, they'll go to the mall, not Bedford Street, which is where we need them to go.
11. DSSD: Other outdoor events in downtown : 1) farmers market in Columbus Park; 2) a sculpture exhibit of 35 of the world's best works, strategically placed throughout down-

town; 3) a chef's festival; 4) Alive at 5 in Columbus Park, where bands play – this is so that corporate types will get out of their buildings and stay for an evening in downtown; 5) an outdoor movie festival in Latham Park; 6) a green grocer's market; and 7) a balloon parade the Sunday before Thanksgiving, which is the largest in the country next to the Macy's parade – it draws some 250,000 people.

12. Assets: Downtown businesses work together under leadership of the DSSD.
13. Summer Street north of Broad is a disaster waiting to happen. What is the concept there -- Irish bars?
14. There is a total lack of space for local artists and performers.
15. If we were to have a parade, it would start at Summer and Hoyt, march down Summer, take a left on Broad, a right on Atlantic, and continue on down to Tresser Boulevard.

### **North Stamford**

1. If Lord and Taylor had been put where Caldor was, Broad Street would have remained Madison Avenue-ish.

### **Shippan/Cove/East Side**

1. We don't need more mini-malls. I want small businesses who know me.
2. We use Grade A for supermarket shopping and daily errands. We go to Main Street, Darien, Noroton, Myrtle – there's no neighborhood shopping street, but it's all in the neighborhood. The neighborhood supports a number of places. A lot of them are between the Elm/Cove/Shippan intersection and Clairol. What do you want us to go to?
3. You can't park once and go to five places. No one has shared parking. This area has evolved from territories and it hasn't changed since.
4. We didn't have a say when Macy's came in and told the City to change the ramp so we'd have to see them. We don't have the money, and they do. They get what they want, and then they leave, like GTE and Champion. Then, we're stuck with the mess.
5. We don't want commercial on Magee Avenue.

### **Springdale/Glenbrook/Belltown**

1. We're self-contained, and we love it. There's everything that you would need.
2. Hope Street is nice because it's level, walkable, convenient, and you can get all that you

need in one small area. There is a 'downtown' feel at the area near Camp.

3. Very few people shop at Grand Union – something's happening there. Lots shop at Newfield Green, some at the IGA.
4. Glenbrook residents : Hope and Camp is not our downtown; Church and Hope is our downtown, or downtown itself is our downtown. Church and Hope has a pizza place, a CVS, etc. It is not, however, pedestrian-friendly. There should not be rights on red into the Stark School. You have to press the button forever to get the 'walk' sign to come on. You shouldn't even need to press it.
5. Spokesperson for Springfield Neighborhood Association: Hope Street. is as saturated as it can get. We want to maintain existing businesses but restrict future high-traffic businesses in the immediate area.
6. There needs to be standards in Springdale for new businesses coming in. There needs to be an overall plan to make the neighborhood more attractive, i.e. landscaping, signage.

### **Westover/Turn of River/Newfield**

1. Ridgeway is a very dangerous place because it's so difficult to maneuver or park. But people are so motivated to shop there that they go anyway. Shoppers would rather park in the lot than in the garage. The garage has poor lighting and no police, and therefore there is a potential for crime. Some people think the shopping center is O.K. to look at, while others say it's visually unappealing.
2. The City did a poor job of writing up the CN regulations on High Ridge. The retail does not blend in at all. There is no village atmosphere. There are all sorts of illegal signage and alternate uses. In the residential areas, there are special exceptions, renters, and group homes. This is the fault of the Planning Board, Zoning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals. There was no comprehensive planning on High Ridge. We want it to stay as residential as possible, with an amortization clause to a more village-type atmosphere. If there is constant commercial nibbling of the Master Plan, what is the point of having one? (heavy applause).
3. There is also commercial creep up Roxbury Road, with a senior center, a water tower, etc., and we're tired of fighting.
4. We want the old Library site on High Ridge to return to residential use, but there are plans to make it commercial.

## Offices, Hospitality

### Start-Up

1. Large suburban office space on Long Ridge is bad.
2. How will the Plan handle the inevitable boom and bust of commercial office space?

### Downtown

1. How can the city grow when 3 spaces per 1,000 sf of office space are needed next to the train station? You need to ratchet that down. I don't believe the realtors : studies show usage of 2 per 1,000 sf, and I think we should try that.
2. Land zoned for industrial use in Stamford also allows commercial development. The Master Plan should not. We must promote commercial growth in the downtown, not in the industrial areas, unless the commercial uses are ancillary to the industrial. We must get the zoning board to pass the appropriate regulations. Right now, some 2-3 million square feet of office space can be built in industrial areas. Furthermore, industrial uses provide a balance that we need. From our point of view, the Robert Martin office park is flex.
3. I thought the second tier of development was going to be around the Dock Street Connector, and I thought that development would take the form of small-scale offices, e.g., electronics, movie studios, etc. All of these studies are going on, and people are getting asked about their opinions with the expectation that the process will deliver, and now we seem to be rethinking everything, so I'm confused. I, for one, didn't hear everyone agreeing with David [Anderson] about the linear extension of the CBD along Summer Street.
4. The siting of future hotels can save downtown. Hotels are such assets because they are synergistic uses. The ones in downtown now are on the fringes.

### Shippan/Cove/East Side

1. How many here have had businesses that had to move because the Mayor didn't keep things nice for business (e.g. parking)?

### Westover/Turn of River/Newfield

1. There is concern about further expansion of corporate parks – greater FAR and more parking would be ugly and increase traffic. Brighton Gardens and Mediplex happened very sneakily – they are ugly and add traffic.
2. If another office park is built, people will start using Stillwater Road instead of Long Ridge Road.

## Industry

### Start-Up

1. How about water-oriented job opportunities?
2. We need manufacturing jobs for the uneducated.

### Downtown

1. Separate our noxious, industrial uses from residential areas.

### Shippan/Cove /East Side

1. When Harbor Plaza was built, 7 boatyards and a restaurant were taken out. God isn't making any more water, and Stamford Harbor is used as an exchange for boats because it has moorings. We should refurbish those boatyards and draw in the boaters. That's a real sleeper.
2. In 20 years time, what will happen to Clairol? Will it become residential or remain commercial? Can we make sure that some is set aside for open space, with design guidelines for landscaping? The next use might even involve more trucks.
3. The bus company is trying to expand the bus barn on Elm Street to Myrtle Street. They're adding 30 more buses.

### Springdale/Glenbrook/Belltown

1. Industrial zoning should be kept in order to enhance diversity.
2. Spokesperson for Riverbend Centre: We suggest a new "technology zone", which would be reflective of the unique communications and infrastructure needs of the high technology, business, office, R & D users which locate here. We would like the Planning Board to schedule a meeting devoted specifically to this issue.
3. Spokesperson for Springfield Neighborhood Association: We suggest that present blend of industrial and commercial businesses be maintained but that no other industrial businesses be added.
4. The industry along Hamilton Avenue is unkempt, it is not a pleasant neighborhood. We could be like Portland, Oregon but no one gives a damn.
5. The rock crushing plant is difficult to deal with, but the reality is that that battle has been fought and lost.
6. The industrial areas in Springdale are fairly well-behaved. The worry about the rock crushing plant is that it is a huge space which could turn into anything in the next 20

years. It could even turn into something that is worse.

7. Having industry next to the tracks is ugly. The area below the Cortland Avenue bridge is very rusted, there are rusted trucks. Is there a way to further buffer that area or clean it up?

### **Start-Up**

1. How about making the Mill River navigable by canoe?
2. Sewer smell in summer months anywhere south of I-95 on Magee Street.
3. Open space will recharge areas and improve quality of life.
4. How are you going to handle the matter of contamination? Lots of properties in the South End cannot even be developed, and there is concern because developers have been released for liability, so what will happen to the people who will be there in the future?
5. Separate out noxious, industrial uses from residential areas

### **Downtown**

1. Planners must remember that when they are planning corridors with these great vistas, there are possible disadvantages having to do with light and microclimate.

### **North Stamford**

1. The composting plant was a dump site for chemicals and ultimately caught on fire, so it had to be capped. The City needs to make sure that it is cleaned up before it is used again.
2. There is no "Conservation Commission" – the Environmental Protection Board is only concerned with wetlands
3. The communication towers have potentially serious health effects. The illegal antennas are not going through the Board of Health, and they do not have sufficient setbacks – again, it's a question of City enforcement.
4. North Stamford's biggest mistake was to allow one-acre zoning because even one acre is too little to be able to both drink the water and go to the bathroom.
5. There can be no increase in density because septic tanks and artesian wells would not

## **Environment**

be able to fit on the same property.

### **Shippan/Cove/East Side**

1. Drainage on Elm Street entrance?
2. Flooding on Shippan Avenue / Magee Avenue?

### **Springdale/Glenbrook/Belltown**

1. There is erosion on Stamford's side of the Noroton River.
2. Glenbrook has no garbage cans.

### **Westover/Turn of River/Newfield**

1. We are concerned about the expansion of impervious surfaces along floodplains. What will happen when it floods? The terrible floods in the '30's and '50's would have flooded the churches and corporations standing in Stamford today.
2. The Environmental Protection Board seems to think it is O.K. to nip away a little bit at available open space – a pool here, a porch there – they even chip away at floodplains and wetlands.
3. You can smell exhaust from the buses on Turn of River Road – I have to pull my kids into the house when the buses come in the afternoon. This problem has gotten worse over the past 15 years.
4. We need more open spaces for the 21st Century. There are very few in downtown or in the residential areas. A certain percentage of land must set aside as open space. Also, land along the rivers has to be kept open in order to handle runoff and flooding.
5. The Levine site (a.k.a. Meadowpark) is a wetland and should be protected.

## **Schools, Community Facilities, City Services**

### **North Stamford**

1. The U Conn property in northeast Stamford - will it be open space or a high school?
2. How about a community center for the U Conn site, like the Silver Mine Arts Center in Norwalk, which would offer adult education and enrichment programs? (Heavy applause) But you might get a different response on that idea from younger people, who are severely under-represented at this meeting.

3. North Stamford is afraid that the City will bungle our vision for, say, an Arts Center—how do we keep such decisions in the neighborhood's control?

### **Shippan/Cove/East Side**

1. There are 2 schools in this community, but my daughter has to be bused to Springdale for elementary school so that everything is integrated.
2. Strengths: We have decent services, i.e. parks, garbage collection, street cleaning.

### **Springdale/Glenbrook/Belltown**

1. At Springdale School, cars drive onto the grass and use it as a parking lot. Can there be some sort of dividing line, perhaps a bumper rail, to prevent this?
2. The library has reduced its hours and is as a result very crowded on Saturday morning. We don't want to go to the Turn of River library. We are intensely loyal to our library. It is a community gathering place. As for a new building, we would have to talk about that first.
3. The Glenbrook Community Center is utilized. It is beautiful but not well-maintained, and the parking is not regulated.
4. What is the benefit of the new post office? We already have one. The reason we're getting it is so that Darien can get its mail. Does the new post office comply with the zoning regulations? It was fought, but the fact is that the Federal Government could and was going to do whatever it wanted, e.g. it doesn't have to comply with local zoning, and so we just tried to do the best with a bad situation and get whatever amenities we could.
5. Newfield Avenue: Stop the non-residential development! The Baptist Church that was just built is too large for the property. It doesn't fit in and is not appropriate.

### **Westover/Turn of River/Newfield**

1. It takes one hour for the SUV's leaving the King's School in the morning (after dropping off their kids) to pile out onto Newfield Avenue. Why can't these kids be put on school buses? No one uses the school buses anymore, they're empty. Parents are mortified because of the violence. They are afraid of kidnapping, and also, the drivers are mad! There are all sorts of things happening on those buses, i.e. pornography, French kissing, punching, and the drivers don't monitor the kids. So kids are refusing to take the buses.



## **Crime and Quality of Life**

### **Start-Up**

1. On the West Side, abandoned buildings are causing crime, yet property owners refuse to sell or maintain, they are just absentee landlords waiting for the price to go up.

### **Downtown**

1. We want to save our downtown. No one knows where Norwalk's downtown is anymore. Any great city needs a core, with housing density, office, and retail; it has to be pedestrian-friendly, culturally acceptable, etc.
2. Downtown is relatively safe, and people feel safe.

### **North Stamford**

1. We could be just as good as Darien, Greenwich or New Canaan.

### **Shippan/Cove/East Side**

1. Strengths: Cove is a neighborhood.

### **Springdale/Glenbrook/Belltown**

1. We're self-contained, and we love it. There's everything that you would need.
2. The area in Glenbrook around Edward Hunt has a lot of condos whose owners are concerned about idle youth, especially during the summer. The Youth Division has to be involved. Right now, there are a large number of young kids roaming around the projects, and I've even heard gunfire. It is very intimidating. We want to engage the youth.
3. There is no crime issue in Springdale; one of its strengths is that it is a safe area.

### **Westover/Turn of River/Newfield**

1. What are the common spaces that belong to everyone? (1) Bulls Head (laugh); (2) High Ridge shopping areas. (3) The loss of Mianus Park was one of the greatest tragedies – you aren't allowed to walk there anymore because it's been chained off. (4) We only go to the schools to vote. (5) Scalzi Park is a community resource, but it is packed and overutilized. (6) As for downtown, there isn't much shopping there – everyone shops in the mall, at Ridgeway or on High Ridge.
2. This broad swath of land includes some really distinctive neighborhoods with their own particular problems, and so it is hard to deal with them as one.

## Master Plan Process

### Downtown

1. If you look closely at the block-by-block analysis in the Master Plan addendum, you will notice that nuances are key at this point.
2. I must say that you, the consultants, have an excellent process here.

### North Stamford

1. We would like to see this process deal with where the Master Plan and the current zoning are not in sync.
2. There is a concern about continuity with the previous Master Plan.
3. You should have a meeting on a Saturday morning for younger couples. They are a large part of North Stamford now, and if their needs are not met, they will not stay.

### Shippan/Cove/East Side

1. The Planning Board should have called people together before you guys were brought in. Don't just walk in—knock first!
2. It's all a conspiracy—where are you from? Who hired you? Our neighborhood is under attack here.
3. Who establishes a Master Plan? If it's the Planning Board, we should be addressing the Planning Board. It's not useful to have an out-of-towner on this, not right now.
4. Where does our input stop, and where do we no longer have a say? How often can we evaluate the job being done?

### Springdale/Glenbrook/Belltown

1. Springdale Neighborhood head: We think of Springdale as a cohesive unit. It is defined by a zip code—06907. How much confidence can we have in you if you have already divided us in two by including North Springdale in another community? There are 800 some odd people in our organization, and yet they do not all live within the boundaries you have outlined on the map up there.
2. Glenbrook Road and Main Street is really part of downtown, not this community.
3. It is time to put land use issues on a Website.
4. What about sending the community a list of your ideas before your next meeting with us, so that we have some time to think about them before coming?

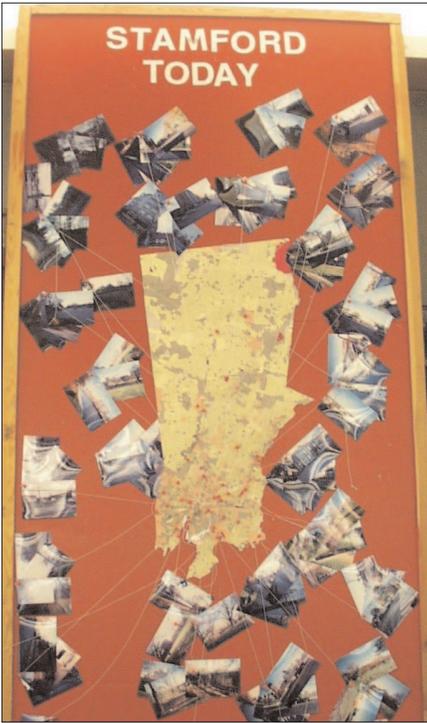


**Westover/Turn of River/Newfield**

- 1. Swan's 1926 Master Plan was a beautiful plan.
- 2. A resident from Newfield compliments everyone on demeanor during this meeting. There has been a very positive give and take (heavy applause).



# 3 Student Outreach



This chapter was prepared by the City of Stamford Land Use Bureau.

## Overview

History shows that youth are consistently underrepresented in most community outreach efforts. Yet the young people of Stamford will inherit the city and be affected by the implications of the Master Plan over the next twenty years. With this in mind, the Planning Board decided to develop an initiative to incorporate the city's youth into the Master Planning process, with the full endorsement of the School Board and administration.

The initiative's primary objectives were to

- Stimulate the City's young people to think about their future
- Ensure that their opinions are considered as part of the Master Planning process
- Develop in young people an interest and awareness of issues affecting their City
- Develop, through this interest, a sense of involvement and commitment regarding the future of Stamford; and
- Better enable our youth to participate competently and responsibly in the governance of their city and nation.

The Planning Oriented School Program was initiated in the summer of 1999. A number of possible projects were identified by the staff of the Land Use Bureau working with Rob Lane of the Regional Plan Association. The intention was not to create a new curriculum, but to redirect, where appropriate, the existing curriculum to complement the planning process. Initially a number of projects directed to different grade levels were selected. They were further refined after meetings with teachers and administrators.

Since no funds were initially allocated by the City, efforts were made to attract outside funding. This proved more difficult than expected. However, with partial funding from the Stamford Land Use Bureau, augmented by contributions from the private sector, the project was able to proceed, and a part-time program facilitator was hired for the first year.

One of the initial enthusiastic supporters of the project was Dr. Pauline Rauh, newly retired Principal of Roxbury School. She agreed to put in countless hours of volunteer time helping to coordinate and facilitate the program. As the project moved forward, a number of other individuals, representing the planning and legal professions, government, non-profits and neighborhoods also made invaluable contributions.

Initial meetings and presentations were held with the School Superintendent and Board of Education to explain the program. A subsequent presentation was made at the monthly school principals' meeting to both explain the program and obtain feedback. The Superintendent's office followed up with the school principals, and two elementary schools, one middle school and one high school agreed to participate on a pilot basis. Subsequent

meetings were held with the principals and selected staff of the four schools to begin the process of selecting and refining the projects. After the design of the projects was finalized, historical and statistical information and the necessary maps were prepared. During the course of the program follow-up meetings were held between the staff facilitator, volunteer facilitator and teachers.

Projects were developed at four schools with over 200 students participating, as follows:

- Elementary students studied Stamford, the city, its buildings and streets, thus becoming knowledgeable about their community.
- A team at the middle school developed a survey, distributed the survey to over 600 students and assembled the results into a PowerPoint presentation for the Planning Board.
- A high school economics class conducted an in-depth review of a potential development site in the City and came up with alternative use plans.
- Having completed the projects, the students presented their issues and recommendations to the Planning Board at a series of well-attended public meetings.

During the course of this program, students toured their school neighborhoods and other representative neighborhoods of the city. While studying the neighborhoods, students learned about history, geography, science and art. They practiced skills in reading, writing, arithmetic, communications, art and technology. They learned about many of the issues and challenges which face our cities.

The program went beyond the mere appreciation of the built environment and led students into advocacy efforts. The preparation and presentation of their projects also helped to bring parents, educators and representatives of the community at large into the process. The students became aware of the issues which foster a more livable city. This experience should help guide them as they become the decision-makers and the neighborhood and city leaders of the future.

The program's unique capability to fit into the existing curriculum of social studies, language arts, science, math and fine arts demonstrated its interdisciplinary quality. An added benefit of the program is "project-based learning," also called "authentic assessment," which provides students with a real-world context for developing and using academic skills. Project-based learning imparts achievement by engaging students with hands-on applications of what they learn in the classroom.

While the projects differed in nature, scope and level of sophistication, based on the grade level of the students involved, common concerns and ideas emerged. These ideas were both thought-provoking and well considered. The students' responses confirmed two things: (1) that their concerns are universal, and (2) that we can learn much from our young people.



The third group considered the site from the City or government viewpoint. One teacher, who is a member of the Board of Representatives, assisted the group. They met with various city officials and a representative of a local non-profit organization.

The students made their presentations to the Planning Board in May. The first group decided to present their own point of view instead of representing the owners. They came up with a plan that they believed would benefit everyone. A student began by saying that Stamford is “boring” because there is not much for kids to do at night. The group suggested that 10 acres of the 36-acre site be a mixed-use, open-air market similar to Quincy Market in Boston. The plan would incorporate recreation facilities and be surrounded by park. The recreation facilities would include a carousel, bumper cars, an arcade, a batting cage, and a mini-golf course. The students currently travel to Greenwich or Norwalk to do things at night and cannot understand why Stamford does not offer the same amenities. They said several times that they dislike the Stamford Town Center because it is a “fortress.” In contrast, their plan for an open-air market that is surrounded by a park would have something for everyone. Family-owned shops would benefit Stamford residents, create jobs, provide needed services to neighborhood residents, and generate sales taxes for the city. The recreational facilities would serve all age groups, and because the site is easily accessible from Interstate 95, it would attract tourists.



In their report to the Planning Board, the second group said that residents are anxious for local access to a supermarket because the West Side is a neighborhood where many people do not have cars. Residents would also like to see more housing, more recreation opportunities and places for community togetherness. Since results of the survey showed that 81 percent of respondents want more housing, the students proposed a 900-unit, low- to middle-income housing complex with a grocery store and a drug store all geared to walking. They designated 15 acres for housing, 5 acres for a park, 5 acres for the stores, and 2 acres for parking. At the presentation, it was pointed out that for a low- to middle-income project to be feasible, it would either have to be subsidized or developed at a high density. The group was praised for designing a solution on a pedestrian scale that would help bring back a sense of community.



The third group suggested that the property be developed for as many uses as possible. Most of the property (25-27 acres) would be comprised of an 800-unit mixed-income housing complex. Incorporating different income levels would attract a variety of people to the area and satisfy the need for more affordable housing in Stamford. They set aside 2 to 3 acres for a pharmacy, small grocery store, and a restaurant—services that would satisfy the essential needs of the residents without compromising the commercial interests downtown. In the center of the property, 5 acres of community green space would have walkways, a

park, a playground, and tennis courts. The students were asked what they thought the impact of their plan would be on the school system. One student replied that if the housing problem is addressed, then the school system would simply have to adjust to it.

A fourth presentation was made by a group composed of students originally from the three groups. They made a model and a computer drawing of a technology park with 700,000 square feet of office space in four 4-story buildings. The tenants they envisioned included Internet-based companies, biotechnology companies, and start-up technology firms. They pointed out that Priceline, an internet company, was moving out of Stamford because of a lack of space for growing high-tech firms, but that they might have stayed if such a facility existed. In their plan more than half of the property would be green space, making it aesthetically pleasing to those working at the site as well as neighborhood residents. A technology park would not only help to diversify business opportunities in Stamford and create jobs, it would also pose less of an environmental risk than other industrial uses. No zoning changes would be necessary, and therefore development by new owners could probably take place sooner than some of the other proposals. The Land Use Bureau chief pointed out that citizens in general want office buildings to remain downtown, while a proposal for a “technology park” on this site might be viewed more favorably. He suggested that it is often important to use the “right” words in a public hearing setting.

At the conclusion to the presentations, the Planning Board Chairman and Land Use Bureau Chief congratulated all of the students on their presentations and assured them this was not just a hypothetical exercise; that their proposals could influence what is actually done on the site. The chairman acknowledged that the problems identified by the students were “pressing needs the city has,” and he assured them that the Planning Board would take their suggestions seriously.

**Post-project teacher interview:**

How do you think the project benefited your students?

It helped them with their presentation skills and helped them understand the process of government. As they focused on the concerns of the neighborhood residents, they started to think about their own neighborhood. They now understand the complexity of decision-making, and have developed civic awareness.

Were you to repeat the project with your students, how would you do things differently?

We really started the project during the second semester, and we should have gotten going with it during the first semester. Next time, I might have them negotiate with each other and come up with a consensus. I might also make sure that they do some aspect of their work within their own neighborhood. Only one student was from the neighborhood we studied, and she got very interested and involved. I like to see that level of engagement in the other

students. I also think that I would like to see them make a high-tech presentation to the Planning Board, perhaps using PowerPoint. [The students used overheads, handouts, and one group made a model.]

Did the project get the attention of the parents and therefore interest them in the master plan process?

In some cases—a few attended the presentation. Next time I might send information home to make parents more aware of the project.

Did the project add significantly to your workload?

Yes it did, and it added to my anxiety level too. But I am going to do it again next year.

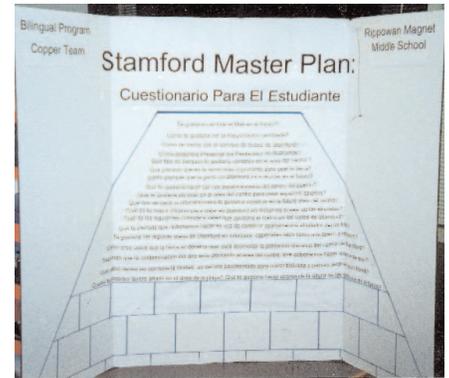
### Middle School Projects

After planners explained the program to the principal, the team teachers met and decided to use the Master Plan as the real-world basis for projects in their classes. Since the program complemented the curriculum, it was incorporated into the life science, reading, math, technology, language arts, and bilingual classes during the entire school year. One-half of the seventh grade at Rippowam Magnet Middle School (86 students) participated in the program.

Before the students began their projects, they needed background information on the history of land use in Stamford. The teachers were supplied with slides of maps from the Stamford Historical Society showing land use from 1800 to 1950. The Historical Society also donated a reproduction of a pictorial, “bird’s eye view” map of the city in 1883. In addition, the students were given Stamford census information from the 1960s through 1990s, and a population chart of Stamford from 1756 to 1998. The students were able to link historical land use to increases/decreases in population and to other factors described in the census data. A computer application linking the data to maps was discussed but could not be developed in time.

Assisted by the life science teacher, the students on the Black Team developed a questionnaire. With the understanding that land use is the focus of the Master Plan, the goal was to survey students in order to determine how the majority would like to see Stamford changed for the better within the next 20 years. They based their questions on topics such as open space, recreation, transportation, and the environment. The survey was used as the basis of various projects in the different classes.

After getting some background, students worked on the first version of the survey in a skill group, and edited it in a reading class. Dr. Judy Singer, the Research Director for the Board of Education, agreed to oversee the writing of the survey and some of the data processing.



The students further revised the survey with her after their preliminary effort. After a third revision, the team distributed a pilot survey to the fourth and fifth graders at Westover Elementary and the bilingual sixth, seventh and eighth grade classes at Rippowam.

Initially, the students tried to tabulate the results themselves, but they ultimately turned to Dr. Singer for help. She ran the results using Scantron, which puts the data into tables. Looking at the tables, the students were able to weed out multiple-choice answers that got no responses, and reword questions with skewed results. Ultimately, the students added open-ended questions to the survey to accommodate creative and individual responses.

Following additional revisions in both the skill group and the reading class, the students produced the final version. At the beginning of April, the survey was distributed to the 5th graders at three elementary schools and the entire student body at Rippowam. The surveys were returned by early May and a total of 675 survey responses were processed in the Scantron.

The language arts teacher had the students draw what a society should look like based on the survey results. The math teacher had students use the survey results to make graphs, while the technology teacher helped them create a Power Point presentation.

The social studies and bilingual studies classes did photographic projects about Stamford neighborhoods. Before the students began the project, they saw a slide presentation of the ecology of the Stamford coastline, including polluted sites. The teachers felt that the Stamford coast was a good starting point for considering the diverse neighborhoods of the city. Students were divided into groups of four, and each was assigned a Stamford neighborhood to photograph. The students were taken to visit the different neighborhoods during

lunch breaks and after school. Selecting a representative spot in each neighborhood, they photographed it from the north, south, east, and west. Then they made a map of Stamford with their photographs. The map was used as a point of reference for mapping, geography, history, and a discussion of the variety of cultures that coexist in the city. The language arts class did an essay on what they would like Stamford to be like in the future.

The students made a presentation to the Planning Board in June. They brought three maps illustrating past, present, and future land use. The past was represented by the large “bird’s eye view” map of Stamford in 1886 framed with current photos of the same spots indicated on the map. The neighborhood map created by the social studies and bilingual classes represented the present. Red dots were placed on a large, cutout map of Stamford to indicate the neighbor-



hoods they had photographed, and the dots were linked with a string to the corresponding photos which surrounded the map. The map of the future was a result of another planning-oriented project taken on by the students in language arts, life science, and social studies. Taking a large undeveloped parcel behind the school, each group drew a plan and then an illustration of what they imaged it would ultimately look like. Keeping the planning and zoning restrictions in mind, and considering that there are significant wetlands on the property, groups of students created housing subdivisions. It is noteworthy that the property, formerly owned by the Humane Society, has since been approved for a “cluster” development, which is very similar to the student proposals.

Eight students gave a PowerPoint presentation of the survey results. Some of their findings:

- 35 percent said the city should develop recreational opportunities along the Mill River downtown, while 1 percent favored building apartments.
- 75 percent cited cars as their main means of transportation, while the other 25 percent cited taxi, bus, or walking.
- 54 percent said they would prefer to see road median dividers with grass and trees rather than ones with dirt or concrete and street lights.
- 83 percent of students said they wanted more movies, parks, and shopping malls.

The students concluded their presentation by saying that the future of Stamford depends on the youth of today. Duane Hill, Chairman of the Planning Board, asked them whether they were optimistic or pessimistic about the future of their city. They all agreed that they were optimistic. Another Planning Board member asked what they enjoyed doing most in Stamford. Most cited going to the mall and to movies as favorite activities, and they also said that they liked going to the skating rink in Springdale and using the city’s ball fields. Did they find this an eye-opening experience, and do they now understand why things are the way they are? One girl answered that she realizes that you cannot just build a mall without planning it first. If they had it to do over, would they do the survey? All responded that they would—it was good for kids to see that places don’t come out of nowhere. What did they enjoy most about the project? Some of their answers:

- Things I want might actually be here in 20 years.
- Students can change Stamford—it will be just for us.
- I liked compiling data on the computer for the presentation.
- I liked finding out that you must plan what will go where, that you need to do background work.
- I liked taking the pictures of Stamford, and that you want to hear us express our feelings.
- I liked coming up with thoughtful questions for the survey.

Mr. Hill concluded the proceedings by saying that there should be a lot more dialogue



between adults and youth. He believes that he and his colleagues need to think creatively about how youths spend their time—kids need more than a mall.

**Post-project teacher interviews:**

How do you think the project benefited your students?

1. It was an exercise in authentic learning. Not only did it add to our textbook, it also allowed us to put “positive” pressure on results of learning.
2. Project-based learning is beneficial to students, because they get more involved. Students used skills learned in all subjects to complete this project—math (analyzing, computing percents), language arts (presentation skills), technology (using software to present information), and social studies.



Were you to repeat the project with you students, how would you do things differently?

1. Spend a lot more quality time with our art teacher, for one thing. Another would be to take more field trips to nightly meetings at the Government Center to “see” how things are done.
2. I would have liked more time to work with the data.

Did the project get the attention of the parents and therefore interest them in the master plan process?

1. Definitely, yes! We were in verbal and written communication with the parents to let them know exactly what we were proposing and how that reflects on our curricula.
2. I am not sure about this—but there were a lot of parents at the presentation!

Did the project add significantly to your workload?

1. Yes, yes, yes...But that’s what makes things happen. If it’s fun for us, it’s fun for the kids. Hard work pays off!!
2. A bit!

### Elementary School Projects

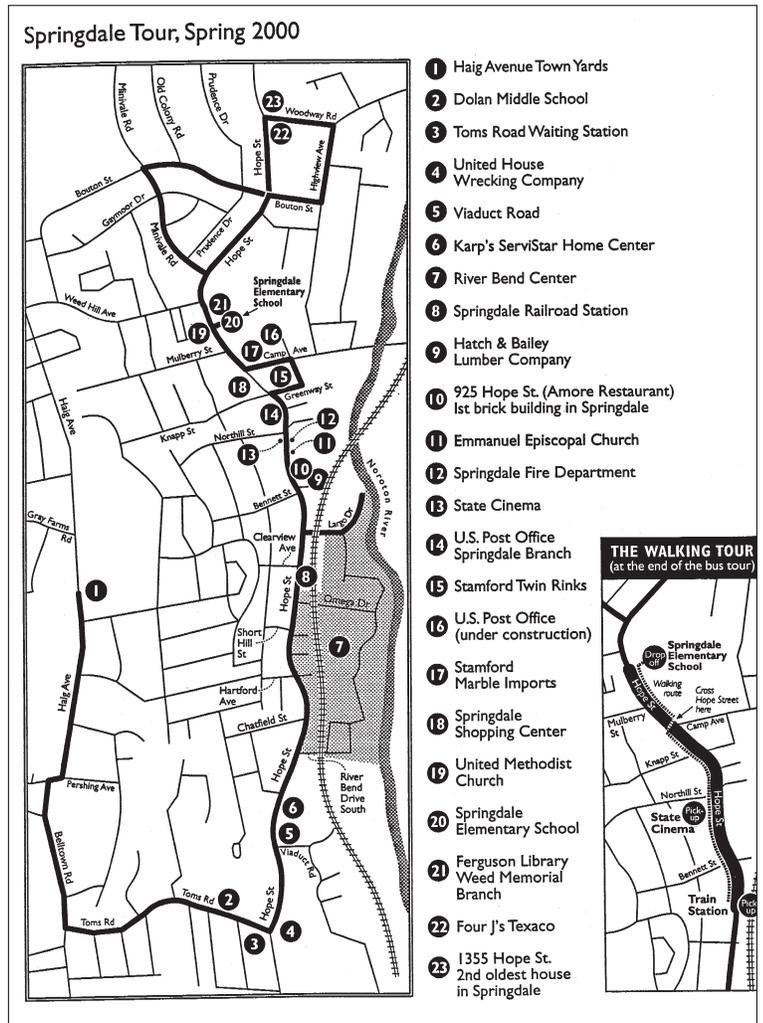
The participating schools were Roxbury Elementary, located in the Westover area, and KT Murphy Elementary, located in the Cove neighborhood. Five third grade classes from each school participated.

Once the teachers agreed to participate, and were persuaded that the project would not add significantly to their workload, it was necessary to determine what projects would make suitable connections between student lessons and the master plan. Fortunately, the former principal of Roxbury decided to assist with the project. She saw the project as a valuable introduction to citizenship and a means of instilling feelings of ownership in the kids. She also felt strongly that they should take bus tours of selected neighborhoods as a basis for understanding Stamford as a community of neighborhoods—before they could envision what they want in the future, they would have to know what is going on in Stamford now and understand a little bit about its history as well. Since city planning can be linked to history, mapping, science, statistics, immigration, and virtually any school subject, it was also felt that the project should be interdisciplinary.

In the fall, the teachers were given a packet of material to complement the bus tours. The city provided both schools with planning maps and aerial photographs of the neighborhoods to be explored.

In preparation for the bus and walking tours, the students walked around their school neighborhoods and made a list of the things that they saw. A week or so before the downtown tour, volunteer planning professionals went to the schools. They asked the kids what they had seen in their school neighborhood and then helped them organize everything into categories: i.e., amenities, commercial, nature/environment, industrial, historical, infrastructure, institutional, residential, and transportation. In order to help the children understand why planning is necessary, the children were shown how Stamford’s population has grown and requires more houses, schools, etc.

The bus tours originated from the schools with a local tour guide on board. For instance, the downtown tours were conducted by employees of the Downtown Special Services District (DSSD), while the Springdale tour was conducted by a crossing guard who had lived there all of her life. The schools toured each neighborhood in one day by splitting the students into two groups and going on back-to-back bus tours: about 50 children a tour.



The children were supplied with a script and a map that indicated the sites. The tour guides were encouraged to simply use the script as an outline and to improvise as they wished. About a week before the downtown tour, each student was given copies of historical pictures so they could see how the places that they would be visiting looked 100 years ago. Historic photos of the other neighborhoods were not available.

After completing each bus tour, the children met up with chaperones (parents who had volunteered) for a “walkabout” in the neighborhood. The chaperones helped the children with their on-the-ground assignments. For instance, KT Murphy teachers assigned groups to the different subjects. Instructed to look for things belonging in their particular category, everyone had a sign around their neck with their category written on it, and each group had a camera labeled with the category, and a clipboard with a record sheet for the chaperone to write down who took what picture. The Downtown Special Services District (DSSD) asked one of their “ambassadors” to follow the groups on the downtown walking tours to help cross the street. This turned out to be very helpful.

Roxbury students visited Downtown, Springdale, and Waterside, while KT Murphy only had time to visit Downtown and Waterside. The neighborhood tours were all conducted the same way except that the Waterside tour had the benefit of an additional feature. The Waterside tour ended with a visit to the Chester Addison Community Center located in the Southfield Village, a former public housing complex, which is being redeveloped. High school students who live there and are members of a group called the ACE (Architecture, Construction, and Engineering) Mentor Program made presentations to the third graders about the redevelopment. The ACE kids showed the children an aerial photograph of the property, plan drawings of each of the three phases of construction, and an architectural model of the future development which the children loved. They then answered questions.



On June 13, 2000, both elementary schools made presentations to the Planning Board. Early on, the teachers and students at KT Murphy had decided that since the school had no green space whatsoever, only asphalt, the students should make a case for expanding the school to include grass play areas. The children were shown aerial photos of all the other Stamford elementary schools and told that the land-to-students ratio at KT Murphy was by far the lowest of all. Thirteen students presented the issue to the Planning Board. In the past, the city had purchased property around Hart Elementary School to expand it, why not do the same for their school? They showed the Board the aerial photos with a paper cutout of the KT Murphy property placed on top for comparison. The audience was surprised by the situation, and there was quite a buzz during the presentation. They then presented a letter to the Planning Board signed by all of the students suggesting that the City purchase the homes surrounding the school to make more room for green space. The students concluded by showing the Planning Board a model they had made of KT Murphy as it might be in the future. The model included a swimming pool, a ball field, and lots of grass. The groups at KT Murphy who had each photographed and documented different kinds of land use made a big collage

with their pictures and labeled the different land uses.

The Roxbury teachers had decided in the beginning that the kids should have a good look at their city and then come up with a “top ten” list of what they would most like to see in Stamford during the next 20 years. They ultimately whittled down the list to five ideas. These five ideas were cleverly incorporated into video which was their final project. Kids from all five classes were able to participate in the production, and everyone was invited to write songs, raps, or poems relating to the Stamford Master Plan. The video is the story of a group of kids sitting around trying to work on their Stamford Master Plan project, but who end up watching TV



instead. They turn on their favorite program, but it has been interrupted by breaking news from the Stamford Master Planning Headquarters. Two reporters lead a tour through the “Stamford Master Plan Museum” and they look at a display of all the projects done by the five classes. (Scrapbooks made by Roxbury students were also on display at the presentation.) During the “commercial break,” those who have written poems or songs perform them. Some kids dance as well. Then there is “Lifestyles of the Stamford Residents,” a takeoff of Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous. The kids in this segment dressed up in costumes and talked about the benefits of living in the Roxbury, Downtown, Springdale, and Waterside neighborhoods. After another commercial break, there is the “Rosie O’Donnell Show.” Rosie appears with all of the students, and asks them to come up with ideas for the Planning Board about the Master Plan.

Five students stand up to give their ideas:

- Stamford should have community gardens in Downtown, Waterside, and other neighborhoods to make the city beautiful and bring people together. This would be good for the environment, as well.
- The beaches in Waterside should be cleaned up and made available to the public.
- There should be an indoor sports facility with Astroturf for indoor soccer.
- There should be more schools in Waterside and Downtown so that children who live there will not have to travel by bus.
- The city would be more beautiful with more park areas, and there should be one in every neighborhood.

Planning Board chairman Duane Hill exclaimed when the video was finished: “Who said plan-

ning can't be fun?" He commented that all four schools had made presentations that emphasized the need for more amenities in Stamford, and that he hoped the Planning Board would continue to hear from students in the years to come.

**Post-project teacher interviews:**

How do you think the project benefited your students?

1. I think the project allowed the children to explore their city, forcing them to notice what it has and what it needs. I also think the children noticed what they did not see and want in their city.
2. They learned a lot about Stamford and land uses. They were able to practice their cooperative skills. They learned that their ideas are important and have value to adults.
3. I think the students became much more knowledgeable about their city. Many had not been to other sections of the city and were impressed with all that Stamford has to offer. They also became acquainted with such terms as infrastructure, amenities, commercial, residential, etc. That's a pretty impressive third grade vocabulary.
4. The children had the opportunity to see areas of Stamford other than their own neighborhoods and were given the opportunity to study all components of the city.

Were you to repeat the project with your students, how would you do things differently?

1. I would repeat it if it fit into our curriculum. I may use parts of what we did next year.
2. I feel better prepared to do the project. I feel more certain of our goals and outcome.
3. Plan with second grade teachers the year before so students have background knowledge of the communities of Stamford. In third grade, they would continue to study Stamford communities and note what's there and what they feel is needed. As a final project, the class builds a model of a future community of Stamford (two teachers had this answer).
4. No changes are necessary.

Did the project get the attention of the parents and therefore interest them in the master plan process?

1. Some.
2. I'm not sure.
3. Definitely. The enthusiasm of the students was passed on to parents.
4. Some became interested, asking questions.

Did the project add significantly to your workload?

1. Yes. It is not part of our curriculum right now.



2. Honestly, yes!!
3. It did—only because we were “charting new waters” and didn’t know exactly what our outcome would be. This was done in addition to our regular social studies curriculum and along with a new language arts program—a lot to complete!
4. Yes—that was the drawback! It is not part of our curriculum for third grade right now.

If the project is to be repeated in the future, we will have to think about minimizing expenses to make it feasible. How necessary were the cameras?

1. I thought that the cameras were very necessary. The children were able to take ownership of the photos.
2. Very! Maybe not as many cameras, but it was important because it focused their learning and gave it purpose.
3. The cameras were beneficial, but maybe we can reduce the number of them. However, the kids loved them and took ownership because they took the pictures. They remembered things better due to the pictures.
4. Very necessary—pictures are worth 1,000 words—children excitedly recounted the trips by sharing the photographs.

**Other Comments:**

1. Next time, give the parent chaperones the script so that they can reinforce what the kids hear on the tour and can answer questions during the walkabouts.
2. Although it costs more money, it is probably preferable to have only one bus trip per day. We did two back-to-back trips in a day and found that we were squeezed for time because the school bus had to be finished by 1:40 PM to get back in time to start taking students home. Another 45 minutes to an hour would have been preferable for the tours. Also, I strongly recommend that those who plan to repeat this project begin by looking at their own school neighborhood, which is what both Roxbury and KT Murphy did. Once students look at their own neighborhood, they have an excellent basis for comparison when they begin to explore other neighborhoods.

**Conclusions**

The presentations were a tremendous hit with students and teachers, and everyone else involved. Each stage of the school program was enthusiastically covered by The Advocate, which produced a total of seven articles (see the last chapter in this report). On June 14, 2000, one of the presenters from West Hill High School, Kyle Shindler, appeared on the Don Russell Radio Show. Mr. Russell also devoted a newspaper column to the program in which he concluded, “I couldn’t help but think of how wonderful it would have been, as a student, to be included in this way in the city’s planning process.”

Planning-related programs again took place at K.T. Murphy and Roxbury Elementary



Schools in 2001. K.T. Murphy fourth graders, who as third graders had participated in the earlier program, made a PowerPoint presentation to the Planning Board on June 5, 2001. They again emphasized that Murphy has very little land and recommended that the City purchase houses adjacent to the school to expand the school property. To illustrate the need they compared the land area at Murphy to that of other elementary schools in Stamford. Using Assessor records they determined the value of the adjacent properties. They were praised for their work and encouraged to return when the Board considers the capital budget.

Also in 2001 the Planning Board hosted members of the ACE Mentor Program who presented an overview of the Southfield Village Revitalization Project. They displayed a model of Southwood Square and showed a video illustrating the development process.

The Planning Board is hopeful that the Planning Oriented School Program will continue and expand in the future. The comments received from both students and teachers suggest that those students who participated have developed an increased interest in Stamford, an understanding of the planning process, and a greater sense of empowerment.

### **The Participants**

A large number of people participated in and/or supported the Planning Oriented School Program. We wish to thank all of you for your help and support. As you read through the following list, it becomes clear that this was really a community effort. Most of all we want to thank the students and teachers who made this possible.

#### **Project Coordinator:**

Erin McKenna

#### **School Liaison:**

Pauline Rauh, former principal, Roxbury School

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Rob Lane, Regional Plan Association

Ramona Mullahey, editor, Resources: A Newsletter for People Teaching Kids about Planning

Helen Speck, Regional Plan Association

Catherine Teegarden, Learning by Design, NY program coordinator

#### **Land Use Bureau Staff:**

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**Board of Education:**

Dr. Anthony L. Mazzullo, Superintendent of Schools  
Judy Singer, Director of Research and Development

KT Murphy Elementary School

Larry Nichols, Principal;  
Michele Sabia, Program Improvement Planner;  
Teachers: Jackie Arcano, Heather Diou, Sue Hamilton, Debbie Okun, Jen Smith, Lise McCormick, Lauren Pappalardo, Rossanna Nargi, Carolyn Bush

Roxbury Elementary School

Teachers: Maureen Cacace, Melissa DeSio, Frances McQuillan, Maureen Potter, Tammy Raymer

Rippowam Magnet Middle School

Carly Melzer, Principal;  
Teachers: Patrick Alarcon, life science, John Kulish, social studies; Charles Langworth, math; Nancy Louth, reading; Betsy Nagurney, technology; Jose Rivera—bilingual studies, Carol Roberts—language arts

West Hill High School

Camille Bingham, Principal;  
Staff: Dan Mocarski, social studies department head; Joe Tarzia, foreign language department head; Patrick White, history teacher; Ben Wager, social studies intern.

**Special Thanks to:**

Architecture, Construction and Engineering (ACE) Mentor Program

Mentors: Michele Hoffman, Nellie Mann, Joanna Parsons, Richard Redniss, Shirley Ruffin, Julie Walpole, Peter Wood  
Mentor Program members: Alexandra Lorthe, Kathia Lorthe, Peter Lorthe, Syndia Lorthe, Bryan Manning, Lorenzo Manning, Marques Manning, Erica Newton, Shacocia Pratt, Eric Smith, Shawn Taylor

Eileen Argenio

Linda Baulsir, former Executive Director, Stamford Historical Society

Martha Burns, West Side Action Movement

Michael Cacace, Esq., Cacace, Tusch and Santagata

Sue Chozick, Redniss & Mead, Inc.

Jack Condlin, Stamford Chamber of Commerce

Sara Fisher, Downtown Special Services District

Sandy Goldstein, Downtown Special Services District

Sadie Green-Carter, Board of Representatives

Nigel Holmes, Explanation Graphics  
 Larry Kluetsch, Mutual Housing Association of Southwestern Connecticut  
 Joshua Lane, Curator, Stamford Historical Society  
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 William Moore, Cytec Industries, Inc.  
 Phil Palmgren  
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 Cacace, Tusch and Santagata  
 City of Stamford

**Bibliography**

**Books we used in the curricula:**

Graves, Graves, Schaubert, and Beasley. *Walk Around the Block*. Center for Understanding the Built Environment, 1992.

This is a ready-to-use curriculum to help teach children about city planning, architecture, history, mapping. It helps kids learn to “read” their neighborhood in a variety of ways and to advocate for making a difference in their community. It is written for third through seventh grades, but is adaptable for all ages. There is a Spanish version of this book as well: *Camina Alrededor de tu Cuadra*.

Simmons, Carolyn, and Barbara Miller. *Aurora: Do You Call It Home?*, Aurora, Colorado: Aurora Public Schools, 1989.

Developed as a third grade social studies unit, this is a lesson book aimed at teaching students how to look at their community in the context of the past, present and future.

**Other useful books:**

Abbau, Marcy, with Rolaine Copeland and Greta Greenberger, eds. *Architecture in Education*. Philadelphia: Foundation for Architecture, 1986.

A sourcebook of hundreds of tested activities for grades K-12. It is arranged by theme, grade level, and subject area—a real encyclopedia, well-illustrated and easy-to-use.

Eberhart, Frances, ed. *The Community as Classroom: A Teacher's Manual*. New York: The Historic Districts Press, 1996.

A collection of multidisciplinary lessons and units of study focusing on neighborhood architecture and history.

Mullahey, Ramona K. *Community as a Learning Resource*. Ramona Mullahey, 1994.

This curriculum guide is full of ideas and hands-on exercises to help educators teach about the built environment and planning. The exercises can be customized to a range of skill and age levels. A video highlights instructional resources on community planning and development. It is appropriate for grades K-12.

Race, Bruce, and Carolyn Torma. *Youth Planning Charettes: A Manual for Planners, Teachers, and Youth Advocates*. Chicago, Washington, DC: APA Planners Press, 1998.

A charette is a problem-solving activity using a real problem rather than a hypothetical one. The point is to increase understanding of the students' community. A charette is the same thing as "project-based learning." The charettes included in this book are appropriate for 5th grade through adult.

**Organizations with published materials:**

APA Planners Book Service

122 South Michigan Avenue—Suite 1600

Chicago, IL 60603

Phone: (312) 431-900; fax (312) 431-9985; [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org)

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# 4 Articles in the Local Press

One of the best features of this planning process has been the active interest of the Stamford Advocate in chronicling many of the key meetings and public debates that took place during the Master Plan process. The articles are listed below by title, in chronological order. With the exception of the first item, all of the articles are from the Stamford Advocate.

1. Erin McKenna, "In the Spotlight: City of Stamford Planning School Program 2000," Resources: APA Newsletter for People Teaching Kids about Planning, Summer 2000, Vol. 11, No. 2.
2. "The public's vision of the city's future" (August 4, 1998)
3. "City's master plan to get an overhaul" (August 31, 1998)
4. "Consultant: Master Plan's success hinges on public input" (January 4, 1999)
5. "Residents urged to help map Stamford's future" (February 8, 1999)
6. "Early master plan discussions turn toward traffic issues" (February 10, 1999)
7. "Residents' comments sought on master plan" (March 16, 1999)
8. "North Stamford residents make the case for preserving open space" (March 26, 1999)
9. "Manage city's growth?" (April 9, 1999)
10. "Residents offer wish lists for improving West Side neighborhood" (April 30, 1999)
11. "Neighborhood residents offer insight on city development" (May 6, 1999)
12. "Cove, Shippan and East Side residents speak out on master plan" (May 20, 1999)
13. "Residents question city's master plan" (May 30, 1999)
14. "Residents have say on future of city" (June 9, 1999)
15. "Residents' Master Plan ideas show a pattern" (July 6, 1999)
16. "Planning board maps out changes in city's master plan" (July 7, 1999)
17. "High Ridge residents speak out" (July 21, 1999)
18. "Consultants present master plan scenarios" (January 19, 2000)
19. "Students will have stake in city's future" (February 2, 2000)
20. "Poll: Most satisfied with Stamford" (March 5, 2000)
21. "Redesign for Glenbrook, Springdale to be studied" (March 8, 2000)
22. "Workshop offers ideas for Glenbrook, Springdale" (March 12, 2000)
23. "K.T. Murphy students to offer assistance on city's future" (March 23, 2000)
24. "Students offer bold vision for city's future" (May 31, 2000)
25. "Consultants share master plan recommendations" (June 8, 2000)
26. "Stamford students sketch out their vision for city's future" (June 14, 2000)
27. "Residents discuss city plan" (September 3, 2000)
28. "Residents voice concerns about new master plan" (September 15, 2000)
29. "Design board may be worth the effort" (December 6, 2000)
30. "Preserving the past to enrich the future" (January 7, 2002)
31. "New master plan pushes smart growth for Stamford" (January 11, 2002)
32. "Proposed master plan addresses 'home' offices" (January 20, 2002)



Prescribed below is a summary of comments made at the official public hearing on July 8, 2002 and received in writing up until that date. These have been organized according to topic.

## **General**

Expressed general support for the Master Plan.

Important to implement Master Plan.

Strategic plan needed for priorities.

## **Diversity**

How about affordable housing for teachers?

No accessory apartments.

Yes accessory apartments.

Yes accessory apartments where there is water and sewer.

City should buy brownfields.

Auto dealers represent a unique industrial use, with little floor area. Allowing 0.5 FAR is too high.

Reduce 0.5 FAR for offices in industrial district.

The 0.5 FAR limit should mention that offices must be incidental to on-site facilities.

Eliminate office as a primary use in M-L, not just M-G districts.

Long Ridge and High Ridge Road development limitations: delete second two sentences and clarify intention to limit maximum expansion of existing developed sites while still allowing development of vacant C-D zoning property.

Live/work hard to manage.

No to mixing of uses.

Limit special exception uses in low-density residential areas.

## **City Beautiful**

Yes to PDDs, design review and MODs.

Board members should be qualified professionals.

Public sector (City and State) should be held to same high standard with regard to burying overhead wires and tree planting.

Scenic Corridor controls need to be married to planning and zoning flexibility, to prevent use as anti-development tool.

Road safety barriers on City and State roads should reflect design values. As these are repaired or replaced, should be wood-faced (as along Merritt Parkway) and not industrial steel bars.

Stone walls, fences and landscaped barriers should not be allowed within public right-of-way.

Tree ordinance should not restrict homeowner's ability to remove selected trees.

Need follow-up zoning for master plan limits on commercial signage in residential areas and on trucks.

Provide public access (parking, signage) for greenways.  
 Create target ratio of open space per pupil for schools.

### **Quality of Life**

No to communication antennae in industrial areas next to residential zones.  
 Strategically and aesthetically placed cell towers should be allowed on shared basis by all.  
 Adopt impervious cover regulations to protect watershed. Vary regulations by watershed basin.  
 Existing Impervious Materials regulations need to be modified for parking, road widths, unpaved surfaces for seldom-used spaces, and other ideas that help reduce impervious surfaces.  
 The 0.5 FAR cap on offices in industrial districts, including parking, is contrary to existing and better zoning regulations. C-D zones have 0.4 and 0.35, excluding certain parking. Allowing 0.5 when below-grade parking may increase office density. Delete items 1 and 2 to make more general, i.e., "FAR for offices outside the Downtown should be lower." Parking garages are design related, not FAR related.  
 Revisit in interest of limiting development outside of downtown, and mindful of design impacts.  
 List of available industrial space in former industrial category submitted. Non-conformity hardship for industry.  
 Remove proposal to allow 25 percent increase on non-conforming uses.  
 Allow bonus density for conversion from non-conforming to conforming uses.  
 No to speed bumps.  
 How about free buses during rush hour.  
 How about double-tracking of New Canaan line.  
 Disagree with blanket reduction in density for environmentally-sensitive land. Doral Farms and Heatherwood are two maximum-density housing developments that are good examples of clustering. Sewer serves both. Present zoning allows Boards to act on case-by-case basis. System not broken.  
 Strongly support deduction of environmentally sensitive land from yield calculations.  
 Like idea of Open Space overlays. Worried that they will allow schools, museums and institutions, which are improperly described as "low impact." Remove these as permitted uses.  
 Category 17 – Open Space overlay – welcome. Except that it appears to freeze expansion of schools and other special exception uses.  
 Open Space and environmentally constrained land protections: strengthen by disallowing variances.  
 Support for open space preservation and Greenbelt.  
 Need section on protecting drinking water supply.  
 Adopt stormwater ordinance.  
 Augment discussion with regard to types of local decisions that bear on coastal water quality.

## **Downtown**

If greater spread between as-of-right and bonus is provided, as-of-right should remain at current level and bonus FAR should be increased.

As-of-right FAR should not be lowered.

Housing should not count as extra FAR.

Archstone Washington Boulevard and Parcel 38 projects exceed cap of 108 du/acre.

Including residential in FAR is counterproductive, as it reduces ability to compete with offices.

Parcel 38 -- Concerned about Category 10 cap on residential units. Remove item #5 in Section D2.3, which appears to shy away from large development such as Signature Place.  
D2.3 -- Delete item 5.

Support design controls. Also support underground wiring.

Clarify or delete: should not be aimed at displacing Faith Tabernacle Baptist Church.

Preserve historic houses and setbacks along Summer Street and Bedford Street between Second and Sixth Avenues.

Worried about neighborhood preservation if Bedford and Summer Streets and West Washington Avenue, if category is changed to Downtown Collar.

Hoyt to Ridgeway is stable now, but can absorb high-density residential growth. Clarify Collar area to make it contextual to north.

Clarify Collar area to maximize intensity near Transportation Center.

Before encouraging further dense development, Planning Board needs to hire traffic consultant to study impact.

Don't direct big-box retailers to Downtown; rather promote them in industrial districts.

How about elevated people-mover or monorail system; otherwise, how about reducing overall density.

Shared parking should be a priority at the Transportation Center. Flexible language like Section D5.4 should be amended where higher parking ratio must be shared. Let private sector help provide commuter parking.

Shared parking should be taxed less than unshared spaces.

Lobby State and Federal to solve expensive regional constraints on transportation.

## **Land Use Categories**

Categories 1 and 2: Support Conservation Subdivisions.

Define differences between clustering and conservation subdivision, or delete.

Category 3: Increase density opportunities to encourage adaptive reuse, to 25 du/acre, plus affordables (i.e., 10 percent).

Categories 3 and 5: Worried about constraints on Stamford Hospital. What about adding phrase "compatible uses or use in the public interest"?

Categories 7 and 8: Item 4 is impossible to prove. Dangerous language. Delete.

Categories 7 and 8: Item 5 is impossible to prove. Delete.

Category 9: 108 du/acre reasonable, except in Mill River where density is higher, and at Transportation Center, where it should be higher.

Delete final sentence and substitute "High density Residential Development is encouraged."

Category 10: Delete last sentence and encourage high-density residential without limit stated.

Category 11: Don't limit housing density.

Category 12: Why wasn't Mixed-Use overlay mapped?

Category 12: Delete item 8 as not provable.

Category 13: Why not take a positive approach and say development should compliment Downtown, with deletion of "not adversely impact" Downtown. Burden of proof cannot be on applicant.

Category 15: Lower FAR needed for auto uses.

Unhappy that as much as 50 percent of the FAR can be used for offices that are not accessory to industry; would prefer 100 percent.

Category 17: As long as placement does not preclude expansion of Special Exception uses, Open Space overlay could be a great tool.

Eliminate until such time as Conservation Subdivisions are added to zoning? Add sentence to clarify that protections are to be viewed in context of development that is later clarified. Can be used as anti-development tool.

Open Space overlay – inconsistent. Delete, certainly for category 490 land.

### **Cove-East Side, Shippan**

No sidewalk along Weed Avenue.

Traffic calming and park closing time needed at Cove Island Park.

Do not show park at 205 Magee, as office deal has not closed.

Leave industrial designation (not park and shorefront) at Harbor Watch.

Keep Myrtle Street industrial.

Keep last lots on east side of Halloween industrial.

Place East Side Fire Station at 364 Shippan Avenue into commercial category. It will soon be surplus.

Place Vincent Island in Category #2.

### **South End, Waterside, West Side**

No to residential development in South End.

No to residential designations in place of industry in Waterside.

Maximize intensity near Transportation Center.

Allow greater than 108 du/acre on Manger site. Current Transportation Center Design District yields 130 du/acre.

Keep Harbor and Manor Roads industrial.

Keep 780-784 Pacific Street industrial.

Keep Atlantic and Henry industrial.

Keep Atlantic and Garden industrial: location of excavating company.

Keep Woodland Avenue recycling facility industrial.

Zone Holy Name Athletic Club to R-5, not industry, to allow affordable housing.

Problem with split zoning for the Strand.

Allow higher density than Category 4 north of Henry Street; also allow commercial development here. Suggest Category 10 or Category 11, instead.

Keep 70-78 Atlantic industrial: location of auto repair shop.

Keep West Avenue industrial.

Keep 184 Selleck industrial.

Keep 162-174 Selleck industrial.

Keep 60 Bonner Street industrial.

Keep 330 Fairfield at Selleck industrial designation. Plans to build another industrial building.

Dorr-Oliver site: Re-designate to allow commercial as well as residential development.

31 Victory/30 Diaz Streets: zoned non-conforming. Why was border drawn short of the parcel?

### **North Stamford**

No higher density in North Stamford.

No affordable housing in North Stamford.

No accessory apartments in North Stamford.

Change “consider” to “require” protection of water quality.

Opposed to conservation subdivisions for fear that they will allow higher densities.

Recognize signs as a form of commercialization, and prohibit them except for grandfathered businesses and professional in-home offices.

“Prohibit” preferred to “discourage” expansion of currently grandfathered commercial uses.

No to parking lots or buses on Scofieldtown Road.

No to moving bus terminus to Giovanni’s Market. Keep at current Rockrimmon and Old Long Ridge Roads location.

No to transit stops.

Delete open space overlay for June Road/Riverbank Road property.

### **Turn-of-River, Westover**

Zoning enforcement to deal with commercial creep along High Ridge and Long Ridge Roads.

Permit commercial uses with residential design on east side of Long Ridge Road.

Problem with Open Space overlay for Pipers Hill.

2700 Bedford, near Bull’s Head: don’t change condos to commercial corridor category.

### **Belltown, Glenbrook, Springdale**

Support PDD and “Main Street” recommendations.

No drive-throughs in Belltown.

No changes to commercial in Belltown.

King & Low Heywood Thomas School: confused about designation for Open Space Overlay.

Does it imply residential development?

914 East Main Street, at railroad overpass: keep industrial.

Keep east side of Hope Street between Howes Avenue and Frisbie Street in Category 2.

Designate wooded parcels at Hope and Frisbie as greenspace or park.

Roll back industrial designations. Prohibit noxious industrial uses on the west side of the New Canaan train line. On Camp Avenue: change industry designation to commercial.

Stamford Hospital lies within Category 5, except for former homes on Strawberry Hill Court, which are slated for demolition under approved plan. They too should be in Category 5.

Keep 48 Union and Union industrial.

## Overview

A representative sample of Stamford residents were surveyed by Quinnipiac College, using a survey instrument designed with input from RPA, APPS, and the Land Use Bureau (see Appendix).

The key characteristics of those polled are as follows:

- Over two-thirds area homeowners.
- Almost one-third of the respondents have lived in Stamford more than 30 years, balanced by an equal share who have lived there five years or less.
- Over half of the respondents that work, work in Stamford. Only one in eight work in New York City.
- Almost nine in ten who work in Stamford use their car.

Key findings include the following:

- Satisfaction about living in Stamford is high.
- Residents like that Stamford is located in proximity to their everyday activities and the activities they value.
- They like the small-town sense of community of Stamford, its cleanliness, greenery and scenery; and they felt that things are getting better.
- They do not like traffic and congestion, or the high cost of living, particularly housing.
- A majority of Stamford residents were opposed to population growth, and if there was to be more housing, more preferred it in the downtown.
- Their opinion about office growth was mixed, as were their preferences on office location. About half would like to see it confined to the downtown.
- Most residents were satisfied with their shopping opportunities.
- Stamford residents thought traffic in the downtown was more of a problem than along the "Ridge Roads."
- Driving in within Stamford was seen as more of a problem than driving on the Merritt Parkway or I-95.
- Train users were satisfied with the service but unhappy with the parking conditions, crime and especially the appearance at the Downtown Transit Center.
- Most residents said they never used the bus, but among those that did, they were generally satisfied.

## The Poll and the Respondents:

Five hundred and fifty-four residents of Stamford were interviewed by random telephone survey from October 28th through November 2nd, 1999. The margin of error for this size survey is  $\pm 4.2$  percentage points. Over two-thirds of the interviewees were homeowners, and

76 percent held jobs. The age distribution offered a sizable sample by age, with 15 percent under 30, and 22 percent 65 years or more.

Thirty (30) percent of the respondents have lived in Stamford for 30 year or more, while 30 percent have lived there five years or less. These data reflect more stability and less mobility than the rest of the nation. Not surprisingly, the oldest age group (those 65 and older) have been residents the longest, with over two-thirds having lived in Stamford over 30 years.

Fifty-five (55) percent of the respondents who work, work in Stamford. A higher proportion of younger respondents and renters work in Stamford. Only 12 percent of the workers work in New York City. Just over 80 percent of the respondents who work travel by car. Of those working in Stamford, 5 percent use the bus and seven percent walk. Among those working outside of Stamford, 14 percent travel by train.

#### **Quality of Life:**

Satisfaction with life in Stamford is high. Five of every six respondents say they are either very or somewhat satisfied with the quality of life in Stamford, with this satisfaction rather consistent across all groups, but slightly higher among homeowners.

A long list of things that residents liked best or least were compiled based on open-ended questions. Striking among the items ranked among the best things in Stamford are the perception of its locational advantages. Fourteen percent liked the proximity to New York City, 12 percent chose the location, 7 percent chose proximity to work/school/shopping. Another 5 percent indicated that the proximity to the beach was ranked first. Put another way, what over one-third (38 percent) of the respondents liked most about Stamford is its location relative to their everyday activities or those other activities that they value. These findings were generally consistent across various stratifications, such as age, rent or own home, or whether they work in Stamford or outside.

A number of "liked best" attributes fall into a broad category of environment ranked best by 28 percent of the interviewees. These include cultural and recreational activities, clean city, greenery and open space, quiet, sense of community, small-town feel, and scenic. In a separate question, residents were asked whether they felt the environment in their neighborhood had gotten better or worse. By a 3 to 1 margin, they felt it had gotten better, not worse, and 45 percent thought it hadn't changed at all.

On the other side of the ledger, traffic was by far the least-favored attribute of living in Stamford. Twenty (20) percent named it worst, with the next attribute—cost of living—at 11 percent. Five (5) percent ranked overcrowding/congested as worst, which could in part be a surrogate for traffic. The responses to these two questions suggest that Stamford residents like where they are located, in the midst of the activities they need and value, but they are not

especially excited about the prospects of traveling to reach them. But this conclusion may be too facile. Those that like the proximity to activities may or may not be the same ones who complain most about traffic.

About one in four residents felt that the worst feature of Stamford related to costs, either of housing taxes or the cost of living in general. The environmental features of Stamford did not rank poorly for many respondents.

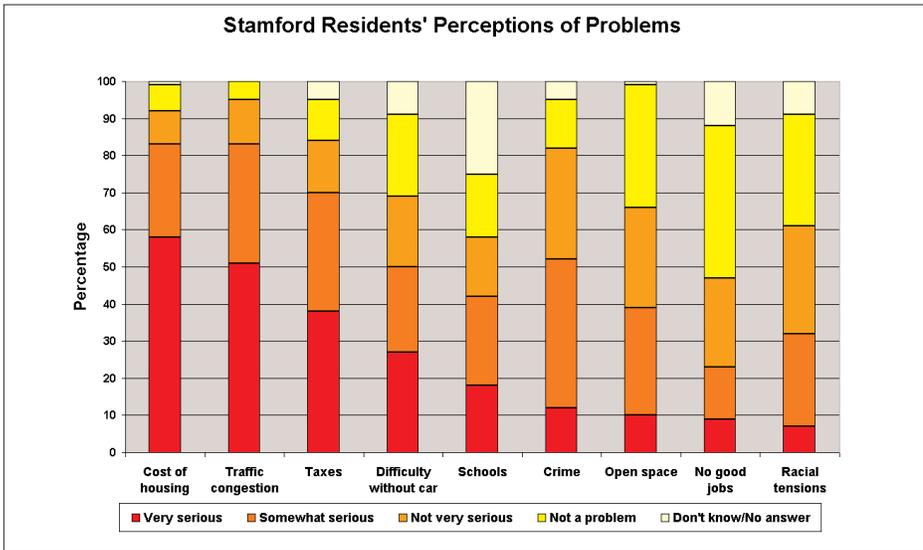
#### **Problems:**

The residents were asked about the seriousness of nine specific problem areas. Residents found the high cost of housing and traffic congestion the greatest problem areas, with the former receiving the most “very serious” votes. Chart 1 displays the information for all nine problem areas. At the other extreme, few residents found good jobs, open space and racial tensions a serious or somewhat serious problem than saw it as a not very serious problem or no problem. The response regarding open space was somewhat at odds with the comments we heard at public meetings. High state and local taxes, crime, quality of public schools, and the difficulty of getting around without a car were seen as problems (first two categories) than saw it as a minor or no problem (third and fourth categories). (See Figure 1)

There were some notable distinctions by respondent characteristics. The cost of housing was seen as a greater problem by those under 30. Traffic was seen as more of a problem by older people. Not surprisingly, local taxes were deemed very serious by more homeowners than renters. Fully one-third of homeowners thought that the difficulty of getting around without a car was a very serious problem, perhaps reflecting their housing locations, where transit or walking was unavailable or impractical. Older residents also scored this as a serious problem. Few under 30 years of age expressed concern about public schools, undoubtedly reflecting the absence of school-age children in their households. This younger age group also had less concern about crime. Good jobs was more of a concern among renters and the youngest age group. While few thought that racial tension was a very serious problem, a consistent one-quarter of residents in every stratified group thought it was somewhat serious.

#### **Growth Management:**

A somewhat mixed picture emerges. On the one hand, a majority (58 percent) of Stamford residents opposes more population growth, with homeowners and older residents more opposed than renters. On the other hand, 43 percent would like to see an increase in housing downtown, with only 15 percent in favor of a decrease and 35 percent in favor of no change. Similarly, 40 percent would like to see an increase in housing outside of the downtown, with only 12 percent in favor of a decrease. But homeowners were more ambivalent about this housing outside of the downtown.



As to future office growth, Stamford residents are also clearly conflicted, although the overall picture is one of controlled growth. One-fourth (24 percent) would like to see an increase there and a like number would not. One-half (47 percent) think no change is about right. The question is ambiguous though. Respondents may have interpreted no change as no growth. As to restricting that growth to the downtown, respondents split 50-50 among those with an opinion.

**Shopping:**

Overall, Stamford residents are satisfied with shopping opportunities here. One-third (31 percent) of the residents surveyed shop outside of Stamford for things other than groceries. On the other hand, the majority of respondents shop in the downtown. This is in keeping with the finding that a majority of Stamford residents are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the shopping available in the downtown.

In terms of grocery shopping, this seems to be pretty well distributed throughout the city. As with other growth management issues, residents are split on whether or not there should be an increase in the number of large supermarkets (39 percent favor, 7 percent oppose, 51 percent prefer no change).

**Traffic:**

Interviewees were asked about their perceptions of traffic problems, High Ridge Road, Long Ridge Road, and Downtown Stamford. The results suggest that Stamford residents view the problems of downtown Stamford traffic congestion more negatively than either of the “Ridge Roads.” Eighty-two percent viewed downtown Stamford traffic congestion as very or somewhat serious, with the equivalent percentages for High Ridge Road and Long Ridge Road

were 75 percent and 55 percent respectively. But the views of the relative seriousness of traffic congestion at these three locations must be viewed with caution. It might very well be that more Stamford residents have occasion to travel to or in the downtown than they travel on the two Ridge Roads, so they may not encounter the traffic problems on those roads, or only know them through hearsay, and thus have fewer negative reactions.

Respondents were asked which of the following present the greatest traffic difficulty: (1) getting on and off the Merritt Parkway, (2) getting on and off Interstate 95, or (3) driving within the City of Stamford. The overwhelming answer here is driving within the City of Stamford. Again, the frequency of the experience, as with the previous set of questions, probably colored the answers. In hindsight, it might have been better to probe about the frequency of use of these facilities. Also, an option about driving on the two main highways, not just getting on and off them, might have been more illuminating.

#### **Transit:**

Only eight percent of the respondents use the train often, and 25 percent not at all. Among frequent users, satisfaction was very high: 63 percent said they were very satisfied. But they also had the highest percentage of dissatisfied at 17 percent, with relatively few “somewhat satisfied” responses. In contrast, the “sometimes” users tended to shy away from the extremes, tallying “somewhat satisfied” more often.

A series of questions probed the features of train service that were found satisfactory, including parking conditions, appearance and safety at the Downtown Transit Center, and frequency of service and cost of the train. Among frequent users of the train, the conditions at the Downtown Transit Center were deemed largely unsatisfactory. Nearly half (46 percent) were either very or somewhat dissatisfied with parking conditions; 45 percent rated safety a concern; and a stinging 65 percent found its appearance wanting, almost half being very dissatisfied with its appearance. Those who used the train less frequently tended to be more dissatisfied with the Center’s parking conditions and safety, but less concerned about its appearance.

In sharp contrast, the train’s service frequency was found satisfactory by over 90 percent of the frequent users; less-frequent users found the service frequency satisfactory too, but tended to fall in the “somewhat satisfied” more than “very satisfied” category, probably because they travel more in the off-peak. The cost of the train service did not receive as overwhelming high marks. Still, about 65 percent of the users were satisfied with the cost.

Over 70 percent of Stamford residents indicated that they never use the bus. Only six percent use it often. Renters were more than twice as likely to be frequent bus users, probably because they are less likely to own a car and more likely to live in higher-density areas, where bus service operates. Those who work in Stamford were much more likely to use a bus, but still only eight percent of the Stamford workers living in Stamford used a bus often.

A series of questions probed the degree of satisfaction with bus service, including overall quality, destinations served, frequency of service, and cost. Among frequent users, 50 percent or more were very satisfied with all these attributes of bus service. Seventy-two percent were very satisfied with the cost of the service. No attribute had as much as ten percent of the respondents dissatisfied.

The remainder of this report presents survey results by question.

## **Survey Results**