

## CHAPTER 1.0: INTRODUCTION AND VISION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Stamford ~~is~~, a coastal community, is Connecticut's third-largest city, with a population of 125,109. The City has grown by more than 5,000 residents since its last Master Plan was published in 2002, and it surpassed the population of Hartford for the first time in 2012. Stamford is one of the State's leading employment centers and boasts a diverse economy employing nearly 75,000 workers. While there are approximately 9,000 fewer jobs in the City today than in 2002, Stamford is rebounding from the Great Recession. Over the next 15 years, the City is expected to recover a portion of its job losses, adding 5,255 new jobs. Stamford's leading growth sectors include retail, accommodation and food services, information services and healthcare services and education. Growth in these sectors is translating into demand for retail and restaurants, high-tech office space; classroom and vocational training space; and high-quality, well- located commercial space.

While employment declined significantly over the past decade, Stamford has seen unprecedented residential development, with 9,000 new units completed or in construction, mainly Downtown and in the South End. The vast majority of new residential development has been higher-density rental housing, consistent with regional and national trends. This housing has brought new vitality to the transit-served Downtown and South End neighborhoods, further bolstering retail and restaurant uses. East and west of Downtown there has been significant progress in neighborhood revitalization, with the successful redevelopment of public housing sites into mixed-income communities in the West Side, and new investment in the East Side with the implementation of the Urban Transitway. Over the past decade, progress also has been made in expanding Stamford's open space network and making the Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods greener. The Mill River Park is a spectacular new addition to Downtown, and plans to construct a continuous greenway along the river from Scalzi Park to Kosciuszko Park are advancing through a series of park and pathway construction projects. In residential neighborhoods, preservation of community character and quality-of-life remains an important priority. And citywide, Stamford continues to demonstrate its commitment to preserving and enhancing its affordable housing stock with required one-for-one replacement of affordable housing units.

While these trends are expected to continue, Stamford's ability to capture growth and enhance the vitality of the Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods will be dependent on the City's ability to address crucial circulation and mobility needs. Making it easier to get to and around Stamford is essential to the City's economic future. Traffic congestion on 1-95 and the Merritt Parkway and system failures on Metro-North's New Haven line are compromising Stamford's ability to attract economic growth and capture regional demand for entertainment and culture. At the same time, within the City, roadway and transit improvements and new pedestrian and bicycle connections are needed to effectively get people where they need to go and enhance Stamford's vitality as an appealing, pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly city. Creating attractive and functional streetscapes with integrated circulation networks that serve all users will be essential to attracting new businesses and enhancing residential quality-of-life.

## 1.2 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

In determining how to build on Stamford's strengths and develop a vision for its future, the City reached out to a variety of residents, business owners, community organizations and other stakeholders through a dynamic community engagement process. Development of the plan was led by the City's Land Use Bureau in collaboration with a Steering Committee composed of representatives from the Planning Board, Zoning Board, Board of Representatives and the City's Economic Development Department. Over the course of the master planning process, the City hosted three citywide public workshops to gain input on the vision and goals for the plan and to test ideas with the community. A series of neighborhood meetings were also held to discuss issues particular to each neighborhood. Information gathered during these sessions was critical to developing the Master Plan vision described in Section 1.3 below. In addition to these in-person meetings, the City created a website to share information with the community and obtain feedback on goals, policy recommendations and implementation strategies. Summaries of the workshops are found in the Appendix.

## 1.3 MASTER PLAN VISION

The vision for Stamford's future that emerged through the planning process is captured in six central themes. These themes inform the chapters of the Master Plan, which tell the story of where Stamford is today, where it wants to be 10 years from now and how it will get there.

### A. A Regional Center

Stamford's role as Connecticut's leading city is vital to its economy and the quality-of-life of its residents. Maintaining and enhancing its place as a vibrant regional destination for *jobs*, shopping, dining and entertainment is central to its vitality. Its position as a regional center is dependent upon two key factors: (1) its ability to advance its economy, and (2) capturing job growth and moving people to and around the City. This can be accomplished by supporting a diverse economy in Stamford and by improving regional and local mobility, efforts to be guided by the following goals:

#### Support a Diverse Economy

- Retain existing corporations
- Attract new and diverse companies
- Capture job growth in expanding sectors including technology, education and healthcare
- Concentrate regional office and retail development in the Downtown
- Continue to pursue a balance of uses that promote vibrancy and economic vitality
- Enhance the Stamford Transportation Center as a welcoming gateway to the City
- Increase workforce readiness

### Improve Regional and Local Mobility

- Advocate for regional roadway and rail improvements to address traffic congestion
- Improve intra-city mobility for all modes- vehicles, mass transit, pedestrians and bicyclists

Key projects to be undertaken by the City and its partners over the course of the next 10 years in support of these goals, as discussed in this Master Plan, are as follows:

1. Market existing and create new incentives to attract small business
2. Encourage modernization of office space and allow for adaptive reuse
3. Explore the feasibility of the development of a convention center in the Downtown
4. Create a model "cradle to career" education program to educate and train the resident workforce for jobs in emerging sectors
5. Implement the City's Economic Development Plan

### **B. Growth Management**

Directing growth toward appropriate locations is key to supporting Stamford's position as a regional center, encouraging neighborhood revitalization and maintaining neighborhood character and quality-of-life. The vision for Stamford's future described in this Master Plan calls for concentrating regional office development and high-density residential uses in the Downtown, as well as promoting transit-oriented development (TOO). Encouraging compact, walkable, mixed-use development with jobs and housing in close proximity to transit will enhance the vibrancy of the Downtown, providing the density and street life necessary to its strength as a thriving retail, restaurant and entertainment district. TOO at Stamford's Springdale and Glenbrook train stations will support those neighborhoods' visions of enhancing their roles as compact, walkable communities. At the same time, directing growth to these areas will relieve development pressure on other City neighborhoods that wish to limit commercial growth and retain lower-density development, guided by the following goals:

- Concentrate regional office and retail development as well as high-density residential uses in the Downtown
- Promote transit-oriented development

Key projects to be undertaken by the City and its partners over the course of the next 10 years in support of these goals, as discussed in this Master Plan, are as follows:

1. Amend zoning to allow for redevelopment of office parks outside Downtown for mixed-use
2. Encourage reuse of vacant Downtown office space for housing
3. Allow higher-density residential development in close proximity to transit
4. Encourage neighborhood-scale commercial and mixed-use development at transit-served locations
5. Reduce parking ratios in close proximity to transit

6. Strongly advocate for inclusion in the decision making process for the State's TOD proposal at the Stamford Transportation Center to ensure that the proposed development is appropriately scaled and pedestrian-friendly

### **C. Transportation and Mobility**

Addressing regional traffic congestion and improving intra-city circulation for all *modes*, including vehicles, transit, bicycles and pedestrians, is essential to promoting economic growth in Stamford. At the same *time*, enhancing a sense of place by encouraging active street life where people can comfortably walk and bicycle, particularly in the Downtown, is essential to supporting Stamford's evolving role as a dynamic and vibrant city that attracts young professionals and jobs in emerging sectors. Achieving the vision of a robust, multi-modal transportation system that serves all users will require significant capital investments in both regional and local transportation infrastructure, guided by the following goals:

- Address regional roadway congestion and improve commuter rail
- Improve intra-city mobility for all modes

While investments in regional roadways and rail are not within Stamford's direct control, if the City is to realize its vision for the future, it must be a vocal advocate for improvements to the regional road and rail systems that bring people to the City. Traffic congestion on I-95 and the Merritt Parkway is crippling and hampers Stamford's ability to attract investment. System failures and capacity issues on Metro-North's New Haven line and the lack of coordinated and efficient transit service between the Stamford Transportation Center and the City's employment centers discourage transit use, which exacerbates traffic congestion on regional roadways. Over the course of the next 10 years, it will be essential for Stamford to partner with like-minded organizations, including the Regional Plan Association (RPA), the Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WCCOG, the successor agency to the South Western Regional Planning Agency as of December 31, 2014) and the Business Council of Fairfield County, to lobby for State and Federal funding for the following priority capital investments, which are vital to address these pressing issues:

- Bring Metro-North's New Haven line into state of good repair
- Reduce travel times between NYC, Stamford, New Haven and Hartford
- Build a fourth lane on I-95, which should serve as a high-occupancy vehicle (HOV)/bus lane

At the same time, the City must make investments in its internal transportation infrastructure to make it easier, more efficient and more pleasant for people to get around within Stamford. This will require improvements to roadways and transit as well as pedestrian and bicycle circulation. Key projects to be undertaken by the City and its partners over the course of the next 10 years in support of these goals, as discussed in this Master Plan, are as follows:

1. Widen underpasses below the railroad tracks that connect Downtown and the South End to improve vehicular and pedestrian circulation

2. Improve vehicular circulation along Atlantic Street and West Main Street
3. Implement park and ride from the Merritt Parkway to Downtown
4. Improve bus service to address crosstown travel needs
5. Upgrade the Stamford Transportation Center building to serve as an attractive gateway to the city
6. Implement coordinated shuttle service between the Stamford Transportation Center and employment centers
7. Improve trolley service between Downtown and the South End to connect with other key travel nodes Downtown
8. Ease traffic congestion and improve pedestrian and bicycle mobility along Long Ridge and High Ridge Roads
9. Redesign Tresser Boulevard as a more pedestrian-friendly roadway
10. Adopt a Complete Streets policy
11. Create bicycle routes in appropriate locations Downtown and in adjacent neighborhoods
12. Make Downtown more pedestrian-friendly by enhancing sidewalks, streetscapes, wayfinding signage and overall pedestrian connectivity

#### **D. Downtown and South End**

Downtown plays a pivotal role in defining the vision for Stamford's future. Downtown is the heart of the city and its primary activity center, supported by the Stamford Transportation Center and serving all City residents as well as workers and visitors from around the region. Supporting and enhancing Downtown as an active and vibrant local and regional destination is essential to attracting and retaining its dynamic and growing population of new residents and the entertainment, culture and jobs in emerging sectors that are bringing them to Stamford. Key to this strategy is directing growth in office and regional retail and higher-density housing to the Downtown.

At the same time, over the course of the past decade, the South End, located immediately south of Downtown and adjacent to the Stamford Transportation Center, has emerged as a dynamic and growing neighborhood with substantial new, high-density residential development and related commercial uses. With its waterfront location and proximity to regional rail and Downtown, the South End has attracted significant new investment. Over the next 10 years, the South End will continue to evolve in its new role as a neighborhood that is increasingly attracting young professionals, while also seeking to retain long-standing residents and preserving the character of existing residential streets. As this occurs, it will be increasingly important for the Downtown and the South End to cultivate a symbiotic relationship, capitalizing on the synergies between them in order to maximize the potential of both neighborhoods, guided by the following goals:

- Maintain and augment Downtown's standing as a regional center
- Improve connectivity among Downtown, the South End, the Stamford Transportation Center and adjacent neighborhoods

- Promote quality urban design and enhance streetscapes
- Encourage revitalization of existing residential streets in the South End

Key projects to be undertaken by the City over the course of the next 10 years in support of these goals, as discussed in this Master Plan, are as follows:

1. Concentrate regional office, retail and entertainment uses and high-density residential development in the Downtown
2. Explore the feasibility of the development of a convention center in the Downtown
3. Encourage the redevelopment of vacant Downtown office space for housing
4. Promote a regional arts and entertainment Downtown
5. Improve pedestrian connectivity within Downtown and between Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods, including the South End
6. Encourage quality urban design Downtown and in the South End that relates well to streets and people
7. Implement streetscape improvements Downtown and in the South End to enhance walkability within and between these neighborhoods and to enhance sense of place
8. Complete the Mill River Greenway from Scalzi Park Downtown to Kosciuszko Park in the South End
9. Establish strong guidelines for the Historic Preservation Advisory Commission to protect historic landmarks and districts
10. Revitalize existing residential streets in the South End
11. Maintain and enhance public access to the South End waterfront including implementation of a plan to restore a full service boatyard and marina in the South End.

#### **E. Community Character**

Maintaining community character and preserving and enhancing quality-of-life in Stamford's neighborhoods is central to the vision for the future of the City. Preserving and enhancing Stamford's low-density residential areas and revitalizing higher-density neighborhoods is key to maintaining community character and encouraging growth in locations that have the necessary infrastructure and capacity to support growth. To this end, this Master Plan calls for a balanced approach to neighborhood preservation, revitalization and growth in support of the following goals:

- Maintain existing single-family zoning and discourage expansion of additional commercial activity in low-density residential areas
- Concentrate commercial, office and mixed-use development Downtown and in transit-served locations
- Balance new development with preservation of existing residential communities
- Preserve existing and create new affordable housing
- Preserve historic buildings and districts
- Preserve and enhance parks, open space and the natural environment

Key projects to be undertaken by the City over the course of the next 10 years in support of these goals, as discussed in this Master Plan, are as follows:

1. Create a neighborhood revitalization-focused fee-in-lieu program for meeting affordable housing requirements for new development
2. Continue one-for-one replacement policy for public housing
3. Promote neighborhood stabilization and enhance management of Stamford's Below Market Rate (BMR) program
4. Enhance inclusionary zoning incentives
5. Encourage relocation of industrial uses to non-residential areas
6. Continue to revitalize public housing sites with mixed-income development
7. Establish strong guidelines for the Historic Preservation Advisory Commission to protect historically significant buildings and districts
8. Preserve and expand neighborhood open space by pursuing open space acquisitions, open space dedication and open space easements

#### **F. A Sustainable Future**

Over the past decade and particularly in the last few years as large-scale storms have increasingly affected the City's coastline, there has been a growing awareness of the importance of planning for a more sustainable future. Addressing contributing factors to climate change and enhancing Stamford's capacity to protect itself against, prepare for and recover from weather events has become a central component of how the City envisions and plans for its future. In 2010, Stamford adopted a Sustainability Amendment to the 2002 Master Plan, which provided a coordinated set of objectives and policies to enhance its progress in sustainability. An important objective of the Amendment was to promote interdisciplinary, coordinated action among the public-, private- and non-profit sectors, as well as between the City and other municipalities in the region and State to address issues beyond Stamford's local control, such as regional transportation improvements and watershed management. This Master Plan builds on that work, calling for a more sustainable future for Stamford through enhancement of open space, waterfront areas and environmental protection; encouragement of context-sensitive development; and enhancement of resiliency as expressed in the following goals:

- Connect open space and waterfront areas
- Protect and enhance public access to the waterfront
- Protect natural areas, water quality and coastal resources
- Promote sustainable development patterns
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- [Protect and promote water dependent uses](#)

Key projects to be undertaken by the City over the course of the next 10 years in support of these goals, as discussed in this Master Plan, are as follows:

1. Complete the Mill River Greenway from Scalzi Park to Kosciuszko Park
2. Establish an east-west pedestrian and/or open space network connecting Mill River Park, Columbus Park and Veterans Park
3. Identify open space protection priorities and work with public and private partners to protect and acquire priority open spaces
4. Encourage sustainable building design
5. Prepare a watershed management plan
6. Adjust zoning regulations to address flood risk in coastal areas
7. Improve efficiency and resiliency of municipal infrastructure
8. Promote, enhance and encourage waterfront access through the development of additional boating facilities

#### **1.4           ACHIEVING THE VISION**

As well-stated in the 2002 Master Plan, "If Stamford is sometimes known as 'the city that works,' then the Stamford Master Plan is a set of proposals for helping it work better." The goals, policy recommendations and implementation strategies described in this Master Plan are the updated set of tools necessary to help Stamford work better in order to achieve the vision for the future described above. Once adopted by the Planning Board, this Master Plan will be used to evaluate development applications and subdivisions. It will also be used by the Zoning Board as a basis for any proposed changes to the City's Zoning Regulations and Zoning Map. Any zoning changes must be consistent with Master Plan policies and the Generalized Future Land Use Plan described in Chapter 8. In addition, the Plan will be used by the Mayor and the Board of Representatives as a tool for assessing the Planning Board's capital budget recommendations.

As discussed in the chapters of this Master Plan and summarized in Chapter 9, achieving Stamford's vision for its future will require diligent advocacy, action and funding for a variety of programs and projects.

## 1.5 HISTORY AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

*"fl city of unlimited potential... Stamford is rapidly becoming one of the great cities of America."*

— Herbert S. Swan, City Planner, 1929

### A. Historical Perspective

Stamford has been planning for its growth and development in a formal manner for more than three-quarters of a century, beginning with the City's first Master Plan, Herbert S. Swan's 1929 *Plan of a Metropolitan Suburb*. Of course, the City is officially much older, and steeped in a rich history.

To the original Native American inhabitants, the land area comprising present-day Stamford was known as Rippowam. In July 1640, two Indian chiefs, Ponus and Wascussue, signed the deed selling the Rippowam land to Captain Nathaniel Turner of the New Haven Colony. The land was subsequently renamed Stamford – meaning "Stony Ford" – after a town in Lincolnshire, England. During this time, Stamford was largely an agricultural community, where settlers grew grain, raised stock and hunted. Central to the Puritans' interest in this area were the many waterways, including the Rippowam River, where oyster beds and fisheries were plentiful. The burgeoning trade industry between mainland North America and the islands of the West Indies activated Stamford's shoreline, where waterborne vessels brought products such as grain, horses, lumber, sugar, salt, molasses and rum to New York City for export overseas. By the dawn of the 18th Century, Stamford's maritime trade industry was thriving. At century's end, Stamford was well-established as an agriculture and market town, and was home to some 4,050 inhabitants.

Stamford's growth through the 1800s was directly related to the establishment in 1848 of a rail line through the City, linking New York City and Connecticut, as well as ongoing improvements to the Post Road, including widening and re-surfacing. As a result, new industrial and residential development took hold, and the population reached nearly 11,000 residents by 1880. Stamford was incorporated as a city in 1893.

Between 1900 and 1925, Stamford's population more than doubled, reaching approximately 40,000 by the end of that period. The opening of the Merritt Parkway (named after Stamford's own Schuyler Merritt) in 1938 and, later, the construction of Interstate 95 during the 1950s (then the Connecticut Turnpike) initiated greater vehicular connectivity between Stamford and the Northeast region, and further reinforced its role as a key satellite city to New York. In 1949, the original City of Stamford was consolidated with the Town of Stamford, establishing the City's current boundaries. The City's Charter, which became effective that year, established a 40-member Board of Representatives as Stamford's legislative body, granted the mayor with the executive and administrative powers of the City and authorized a six-member Board of Finance with powers and duties related to the City's fiscal policies. This system of government was intended to provide for a clear division of responsibility in which no

single individual was responsible for the overall operation of government, and in which citizens had many opportunities to be part of the governmental process through serving on boards and commissions.

With the steady decline of its core manufacturing and industrial base during the 1950s, Stamford, like many American cities, fell victim to economic disinvestment and urban decay, leaving swaths of its core downtown vacant and underutilized. The City's Board of Representatives responded in 1951 with the creation of a five-member Urban Redevelopment Commission which, through the 1960s, initiated a comprehensive urban renewal effort that effectively transformed much of the physical layout and design of downtown Stamford. Entire city blocks were demolished and new commercial and office buildings erected, connected by new, wider roadways – including Tresser Boulevard and Broad Street. Urban renewal efforts led directly to the construction in 1972 of One Landmark Square, which was Stamford's tallest office building for some 37 years, and to the completion in 1973 of the GTE world headquarters, which acted as a catalyst for downtown office development, as corporations looked to take advantage of a less expensive labor pool, a more favorable tax structure and lower operating costs.

During the 1980s and 1990s, several major development initiatives redefined Stamford as both a key corporate and financial center and as a retail destination. Notable developments included the headquarters buildings of UBS and RBS; Stamford Town Center Mall, and numerous retail and office uses along Summer Street. Along with this increase in office and commercial space, several residential buildings contributed to the changing face of Downtown Stamford. Since the early 1970s, the downtown has seen the construction of more than 8 million square feet of office space, 1.5 million square feet of retail space, 2,500 units of housing, several dozen restaurants, a branch of the University of Connecticut and many arts and entertainment venues.

The 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001 had a significant impact on the City and its development. Most importantly, nine Stamford residents lost their lives in the attacks. And in the aftermath, the City experienced a number of business relocations as companies sought to relocate from Manhattan or to open additional offices to create greater redundancy. This trend – together with the substantial growth of the hedge fund industry throughout much of the 2000s helped Stamford become a strong regional jobs center.

This economic growth continued through 2008 global recession and nationwide housing crisis. Despite the post-2008 economic challenges, Stamford has seen notable investments in residential development through the first decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, driven in part by the shortage of rental housing in the New York Metropolitan Area. Much of the residential growth has occurred in the Downtown and South End. And, recent U.S. Census data show that Stamford's population growth has surpassed Hartford to become Connecticut's third-largest city. As these significant changes have come to the City's growth areas, neighborhoods such as North Stamford have maintained their strong residential character and the quality-of-life that residents count on.

*Plan of a Metropolitan Suburb, 1929*

Stamford's first master plan, written by Herbert S. Swan, was accepted by the Town Plan Commission on May 20, 1926, and published in September 1929. At the time, the City and Town of Stamford had a combined population of about 40,000 and had been increasing at a rate of more than 1,000 per year. Along with continued population growth projected for the 20th Century, Swan's plan foresaw the corresponding increase in the City's residential, commercial and industrial development, cautioning that, "without a plan, there will be no guide for the execution of public and private improvements...Only through a well-considered comprehensive plan can Stamford develop into an efficient and attractive community, uniformly and economically developed in all respects..." The Swan Plan called for the creation of a citywide transportation network and the acquisition of land for open space and recreation areas along the shorelines of Long Island Sound and the Mianus and Rippowam Rivers.

*Stamford Master Plan, 1977 (updated 1984 and 1990)*

The 1977 Master Plan for Stamford was a joint effort undertaken by the Planning Board and its technical staff. The document is composed of seven component elements: Population, Housing, Economic Base, Transportation, Community Facilities, Land Use and Environment. The Plan divided the City into 10 "Planning Districts," establishing development characteristics and recommendations for each district. Community input was central to the master planning process. According to the Plan, "Neighborhood Workshop Sessions were conducted in the fall of 1975 and the input of those sessions is heavily reflected in the content of this document." Among the many policy recommendations set forth in the 1977 Plan, many remain pertinent today:

- Improve access to and through the Central Business District
- Improve public transportation to underserved markets
- Improve pedestrian circulation in high-density areas and lessen pedestrian-vehicular conflicts
- Encourage business and office development to focus on the central business district and not to decentralize
- Provide assistance and incentives to small businesses wishing to remain in the City, expand their facilities into Stamford

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- Monitor and regulate development and preservation of lands in close proximity to the City's harbors and Long Island Sound
- Encourage a full range of housing types
- Encourage educational programs to equip the Stamford labor force with basic skills and to retain unemployed workers
- Promote recreational and cultural activities in the central city to provide necessary breathing spaces and break commercial monotony.

The City's basic goals with regard to coastal area land use and development were first set forth in the 1984 Master Plan Coastal Addendum which mandated policies to protect and promote water-dependent uses, including water-dependent industry, promote coastal recreation and boating, maintain and enhance public access to coastal resources, protect the quality of life in shorefront residential neighborhoods, protect and restore natural coastal resources, and redevelop prominent waterfront sites in a manner that provides economic benefits while maintaining viable water-dependent uses consistent with the Connecticut General Statute 8-23. All of the goals remain pertinent.

### **2002 Master Plan**

The 2002 Master Plan, a three-year effort, was adopted by the Planning Board on October 23, 2002, and stands as the City's current Master Plan. This Plan, which includes a General Land Use Plan Map, Citywide Policies Report and Neighborhood Plans, supersedes all previous Master Plans and Master Plan Amendments. It is supplemented by three technical studies- Economic Development, Urban Design and Traffic and Transit- and a Sustainability Amendment.

Growth management principles underpin the overall vision and goals of the 2002 Master Plan. As the Plan states, "Stamford is now the flagship of regional centers- a city that has prospered not just as a satellite of Manhattan, but as an important center in its own right; a center that plays a strategic role not only in the Fairfield County economy, but also in the larger economy of the Northeast corridor."

Goals of the 2002 Master Plan include:

- Maintain and celebrate the diversity of Stamford's population and employment.
- Pursue a new "City Beautiful" movement, celebrating and enhancing the City's main corridors, greenways, waterfront, hills, historic buildings, gateways and especially the unique qualities of Stamford's neighborhoods.
- Protect and enhance the quality-of-life of the City's neighborhoods, addressing land use transitions, community resources, traffic, and environmental conditions.
- Create a vibrant, seven-days-a-week, pedestrian-friendly Downtown focused both on the Transportation Center and the historic area to its immediate north.
- Protect and promote water-dependent uses, recreation and boating....Yacht Haven – on the HELCO (Northeast Utilities) site- is one of Stamford's major waterfront assets and the city's last remaining ship service facility. It should be maintained; and its capacity, capability and integrity

should not be compromised in any redevelopment scheme for the property..."

As shown in Table 1, below, many of the policies and recommendations from the 2002 Master Plan have been implemented through regulatory changes and other City actions.

**Table 1: 2002 Master Plan Implementation Actions**

Master Plan Policy/Recommendation	Action
1) <i>Support Neighborhood Revitalization Plans</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implemented Village Commercial zoning in Springdale, Glenbrook and Stillwater Avenue</li> </ul>
2) <i>Remediate brownfields for new housing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Properties remediated in South End and Waterside</li> </ul>
3) <i>Maintain inventory of affordable housing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Charter Oak redevelopment of public housing</li> <li>Adoption of one-to-one replacement ordinance</li> </ul>
4) <i>Adopt an inclusionary zoning program</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established for all zones permitting multifamily development</li> <li>Total of 324 affordable units created in 10 years</li> <li>\$3.6 million in "fee-in-lieu" funds to support additional affordable housing</li> </ul>
5) <i>Encourage a variety of housing types</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopted regulations to encourage residential conversion of office buildings</li> <li>Several projects completed producing primarily studio and one-bedroom units</li> </ul>
6) <i>Encourage increased housing downtown and on transit corridors</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 9,000 units completed or in construction, mostly in Downtown and South End</li> </ul>
7) <i>Promote public access to the waterfront, greenways and new parks</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creation of Mill River Park</li> <li>Inclusion of public waterfront access at Harbor Point (<a href="#">although the City has been deprived of its last full service boatyard</a>)</li> <li>Efforts to extend Mill River Park north to Scalzi Park</li> </ul>

Source: City of Stamford Land Use Bureau

The growth management study underlying the 2002 Master Plan envisioned three scenarios: low-growth, trend growth and high-growth. During the past 10 years, commercial and industrial development in the City has fit the low-growth scenario, largely reflecting the national economic recession. Housing development, in contrast, has fit the high-growth scenario, with Stamford building through the recession, driven in part by the shortage of rental housing in the New York Metropolitan Area. Most residential growth in the City has been focused on the Downtown and South End, with some 3,000 units of approved housing still to be built in the South End. This growth has led to significant demographic changes, as Stamford's population grew nearly 5 percent from 2000 to 2010, with particular growth in the Latino and Asian populations.

Despite the progress made since the 2002 Master Plan was adopted, a number of planning issues and challenges remain, including the need for better design guidelines and standards to enhance the vibrancy and walkability of the Downtown, implementation of improvements to the Transportation Center, completing development of the South End to achieve stated goals, [including the restoration of a full service boatyard and marina](#), and continuing to support mobility alternatives to the automobile.

**C. Regional Context**

The City of Stamford is a mid-sized city located in Fairfield County, Connecticut. Situated ~~at the mouth of the Rippowam River~~ on the north shore of Long Island Sound, the approximately 40-square-mile city is part of the federally-designated Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk Metropolitan Statistical Area (see Figure

1: Regional Location Map). Located approximately 35 miles from New York City, Stamford is also part of the Tri-State Metropolitan Region. It is bordered to the west by the Town of Greenwich, to the north by the Towns of North Castle and Pound Ridge, New York, and to the east by the Towns of New Canaan and Darien (see Figure 2: Local Context). With a population of about 124,000, Stamford is the third-largest city in Connecticut.

Three principal east-west thoroughfares connect Stamford to the New York Metropolitan Area and the New England region. Interstate 95 and U.S. Route 1 traverse the southern portion of the City, providing access to Downtown Stamford, as well as the West Side, Waterside, Cove, East Side, Glenbrook and South End neighborhoods. The Merritt Parkway crosses the northern-central portion of Stamford, providing access to the residential neighborhoods defining this area. Major north-south arterials through Stamford include Connecticut Route 104 (Long Ridge Road), Route 137 (High Ridge Road) and Route 106.

Stamford is served by three train stations on two Metro-North commuter rail lines: the New Haven Line, which provides service to New Haven and New York City, and the New Canaan Branch, a split from the New Haven Line serving the neighborhoods of Glenbrook and Springdale through to New Canaan. Additional commuter rail services with stops in Stamford include Amtrak's *Acela Express*, *Northeast Regional* and *Vermont*, and the Connecticut Department of Transportation's *Shore Line East*, which provides service between Stamford and Old Saybrook.

Stamford boasts a nearly 14 mile waterfront bordering estuary, harbor, cove and inlet areas, all of which connect with Long Island Sound. Uses along the City's shoreline are as diverse as its geography is irregular. Active industrial uses – most of which are situated along the two tidal inlets bordering the South End neighborhood – include a scrap metal recycling facility and the City's waste transfer station. Recreational resources can be enjoyed at several public waterfront parks and beaches, including Waterside, Kosciuszko, West Beach, Cummings, [Boccuzzi](#) and Cove Island Parks, while private residences and beach [and yacht](#) clubs occupy large stretches of the Cove, East Side and Shippan shorelines. Stamford's rich boating and yachting history continues to thrive, with many docks and slips found along the inner harbors. [However, this history is challenged by the lack of a full service boatyard providing facilities for the many boats that are still berthed in the Stamford Harbor Management Area as defined in the Stamford Harbor Management Plan \[See Fig 17\]](#)