

E. H. WINSTON ASSOCIATES



REVISIONS TO THE MASTER PLAN



REVISIONS TO THE PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT
(MASTER PLAN)

June, 1982

NORWALK PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

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August 10, 1982

Signed by Mayor Thomas O'Connor
August 11, 1982

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Adopted by the Planning and Zoning
Commission, June 16, 1982

Roland C. Clement, Chairman
Kenneth W. LaClair, Secretary

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Appendix

Summary of Impacts

REVISIONS TO THE MASTER PLAN

The revisions to the Master Plan consist of three parts:
(1) Goals and Objectives; (2) Proposals and Recommendations;
and (3) Master Plan Map.

Master Plan

A municipal plan of development (CGS 126-8-23) is defined by State Statutes as the Planning and Zoning Commission's "Recommendation for the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial and other purposes and for the most desirable density of population in the several parts of the municipality. The plan may contain recommendations for public improvements, streets, bridges, parks, and public buildings. It contains the policies, goals and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality."

The municipal Coastal Program is one of two major components of a comprehensive coastal management system at the local level. The intent of the Municipal Coastal Program as defined by PA 79-595 is to enable municipalities like Norwalk to engage in coordinated long range planning and management to their coastal resources. The municipal Coastal Program gives overall direction and guidance for case-by-case mandated Coastal Site Plan Review. It facilitates and adds "predictability to the review process by providing for planning based on coastal resource management, and by making municipal zoning and related ordinances consistent with long term management objectives."¹

This Master Plan represents the commitment of Norwalk to its future. It is a guiding tool, offering recommendations. It represents coastal development policy for the next 5-10 years. The plan's policies represent those of the Planning and Zoning Commission, the CAM Advisory Board, the Common Council and the Mayor.

¹ Model Municipal Coastal Program, Planning Report No. 28, the Connecticut Coastal Area Management Program. P.1.

The recommendations contained in this master plan are advisory. They are not binding. However, they do, in fact represent a consensus on Norwalk's development policy they will be consulted when a public agency is making a decision, when a private developer is planning a development and when budget decisions are contemplated.

These master plan revisions are the result of a seven stage planning process undertaken during the past 1½ years:

- I. Establishment of Citizen Advisory Board
- II. Issue Identification
- III. Information Sessions
- IV. Formulation of Goals and Objectives
- V. Identification of Opportunity Areas
- VI. Development of Draft Master Plan
- VII. Master Plan Adoption

The entire process is documented in a report entitled Norwalk Coastal Area Management Program - Draft For Discussion (Nov. 1981).

The changes in the Master Plan for Norwalk's coastal area consist of several new or modified land use designations. These would amend the Master Plan of Land Use designations which were adopted in 1973.

Nearly two-thirds of the Coastal Area's designations would remain unchanged from the 1973 Master Plan. Most of the coastal area will continue to be designated "Low Density" and "Medium Density Residential". Other land use categories which would remain unchanged from the 1973 Master Plan include: High Density Residential, Restricted Business, Business, Industrial, Research and Development, and Island Conservation.

Partially new districts proposed are the Medium Density Residential/Marine Commercial, High Density Residential/Industrial Wetland Conservation, Low Density Residential/Waterfront Club by Special Permit, and Design District.

Completely new zoning districts or concepts are the Marine Commercial, the High Density Residential High Rise Transfer Zone, and the special category for Manresa, Energy Facility.

Goals and Objectives

A. Land Use and Economic Base

- Goal 1: Maintain a wide variety of land uses
- Goal 2: Improve Storage Areas For Water Borne Commerce
- Goal 3: Re-emphasize Commercial Port
- Goal 4: Emphasize Waterbased Industries
- Goal 5: Support Commercial Fishing

B. Water Quality, Coastal Resources

- Goal 1: Protect & Upgrade Water Quality
- Goal 2: Protect Natural Coastal Resources

C. Parks/Open Space, Waterbased Recreation, Public Access

- Goal 1: Develop Management Plan For Waterfront Parks
- Goal 2: Manage & Expand Public & Coastal Area Open Space
- Goal 3: Secure Establishment of Private Coastal Area
Open Space Reserves
- Goal 4: Improve Public Access to Norwalk's Coastline
- Goal 5: Promote & Manage Waterbased Recreation
- Goal 6: Endorse Plans For Maritime Center

D. Shoreline Appearance, Urban Design, Historic Preservation

- Goal 1: Protect Unique Visual Resources
- Goal 2: Protect Coastal Landmarks



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"Progress has been made as the Rowayton Land Use Group and the property owners have a good relationship. The study group does not want to put anyone out of business. The group is concerned with the preservation of marine uses along the river . . . Rowayton is a popular place to live, it has land and resources which are attractive to developers, and it has a limited area of one square mile . . . As a result of this popularity, Rowayton is subjected to traffic problems, over development and congestion".

Richard Miner, March 30, 1981

"The CAM advisory committee should examine each area - what is the best use, fullest use possible so that marinas can be maintained? Consider dual use-office-apartment combined with marinas".

Lee Hartog, March 30, 1981

We should consider mixing commercial property/use within marina areas. Planning and zoning should not force property owners to maintain marinas until there are public facilities.

Lee Hartog, April 27, 1981

"An oil spill up river would be less disastrous and easier to confine and clean than would be a spill in the outer harbor. Also, if the oil tanks were moved to South Norwalk, there would be more truck traffic on small streets. Costs of shipping bulk materials by water transportation are cheaper."

Maurice Devine, July 21, 1981

"Portland (Me) is a good example of a city transformed by private and public initiative. There are some really significant changes which effect whole areas, bringing in attractive shops and walk-ways."

Ben Detroy, July 28, 1981

A. LAND USE AND THE ECONOMIC BASE

Goal I Maintain a wide variety of land uses on Norwalk's waterfront while preserving natural coastal resources protecting the right of public access, and encouraging appropriate new development.

Objectives

- (1) Provide economic incentives to encourage appropriate new development in specific parts of Norwalk's coastal area. Establish "priority development districts" based on existing coastal natural resources and development features. Encourage development where impacts are low. Discourage development where impacts are high.
- (2) Develop creative zoning techniques which:
 - (a) encourage a mixed use complex (offices, restaurants, shops, parks, promenades, and residences) of appropriate scale and promote public waterfront access, security at all hours, and tourism;
 - (b) establish waterfront zones dedicated primarily to water-based activities (commercial port activity, commercial fishing, marinas/boatyards, recreational boating, public access) that cannot reasonably be located inland. Zones could include marine industrial, marine commercial, and marine residential;
 - (c) explore the use of transfer of development rights permitting the sale of waterfront development rights to designated "priority development districts". The sale or transfer of development rights could produce two results: (i) reduces development in coastal/waterfront areas best suited for preservation or small scale development and (ii) increased development in those areas which can bear the pressures of large scale development.
- (3) Investigate the possibility of land banking whereby the community purchases key land parcels, reselling a portion of the land with specific development restrictions and retaining a portion of the land for a specific community purpose. During the period of removal from the market, when the land is "banked", the value of the land may appreciate allowing the community to retain a portion of the land tract at little or no cost. Proceeds from the resale of the banked land can be used to purchase other key parcels at a later date.

- (4) Endorse the rehabilitation and improvement of existing transportation corridors and facilities as the primary means of transportation in the coastal area.
 - (a) endorse the improvement of Conrail passenger service to Norwalk, a community offering unique water-based recreational and cultural activities (Oyster Festival, In-water Boat Show, Maritime Center, harbor cruises);
 - (b) improve Norwalk's train station facilities (i) encouraging the development of adjacent mixed-use facilities (restaurants, shops) in South Norwalk and (ii) similar but appropriately scaled facilities in East Norwalk;
 - (c) coordinate operation of Norwalk's "Wheels" bus system to provide good service to coastal facilities (Calf Pasture Beach, Maritime Center, Washington Street Historic District, Lockwood House, Lockwood-Mathews Mansion) and supplement train service;
 - (d) examine the traffic circulation and parking situation in the city's commercial areas (Wall Street, Rowayton Avenue, Cove Avenue) to determine how congestion problems can be ameliorated.
 - (e) encourage expansion of rail freight service to Norwalk to supplement existing water and truck transport systems;
 - (f) encourage relocation of the Ann Street railyard to an inland site.
- (5) Support National and State efforts to control and prohibit air pollution.
- (6) Encourage Federal and State agencies to balance the need for adequate and reliable public utility services at the lowest reasonable cost to consumers with the need to protect the environment and ecology of the State and to minimize damage to scenic, historic, and recreational values as provided by the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS 16-50g).
- (7) Simplify the building and zoning approval process by eliminating repetitive or unnecessary zoning regulations and reorganizing the numerous existing review and approval processes into a two step process (e.g. preliminary/conceptual review and final review).

"There is no problem in Norwalk's dredging because it is a commercial experience. Only the environmentalists cause problems. There was a 10 year delay in dredging because of conservationists. Would dredging stop if the commercial port were centralized at Manresa?

Wm. Hopkins, July 21, 1981

"We want dredging to continue. Write it in the charter."

James Gardella, July 21, 1981

"We are looking at the long range effects of port activity and the optimum use of the waterfront. We must look at all the possibilities and incorporate our ideas in the Master Plan to assist Norwalk in the Future."

Roland Clement, July 21, 1981

"Fishermen in Norwalk would love to see a municipal pier. It should be situated so that it does not disturb the rest of the waterfront. Development costs are too high for the fishermen to build the pier themselves and no adequate space is available. Fishermen must pay commercial prices to moor boats. If a fishing pier were established, people could buy fish right off the boat."

Chris Stapelfeldt, July 21, 1981

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Goal II Improve storage areas for water-borne commercial products.

Objectives

- (1) Require that any new commercial storage facilities (petroleum, sand/gravel, asphalt) be established outside the coastal boundary or abut existing coastal storage facilities south of the Norwalk River bridges (Straffolino and railroad). Facilities could be connected to land and water transport vehicles by pipeline.

Encourage the retention of Norwalk's petroleum, sand/gravel, and asphalt storage facilities at their present locations to maintain the commercial waterfront of the harbor and to ensure continued dredging of the Federal channel.

- (3) Support the development of improved roadway access to storage areas.
- (4) Identify areas within easy access of the main navigation channel to provide centralized offloading south of the bridges or offshore.
- (5) Design into the storage program provisions to accommodate new bulk cargos such as coal.
- (6) Investigate construction of a regional pipeline for oil transport to supplement existing transport systems (water, truck, rail) which carry fuel to Norwalk.

Goal III Reemphasize the role of Norwalk Harbor as a commercial port in western Long Island Sound.

Objectives

- (1) Seek cooperation from the Army Corps of Engineers and other federal agencies to ensure that Norwalk's navigation channels are maintained.

- (2) Coordinate commercial port activities with the Harbor Master, State regulatory agencies, and the Army Corps of Engineers. Consider establishing a local Port Authority as provided under Connecticut statutes (CGS, Sec. 7 (29a-329f)).

Goal IV Emphasize the role of Norwalk as a seaport community serving as the operational base for several water-based industries.

Objectives

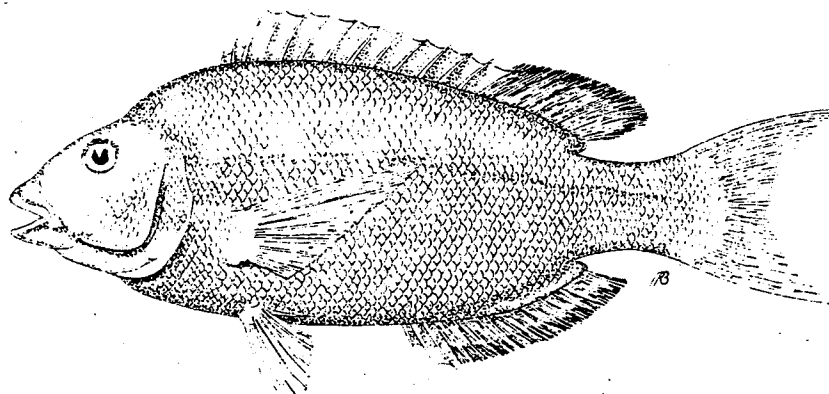
- (1) Encourage tourism along Norwalk's waterfront by ensuring public access to the waterfront, coordinating tours to the historic waterfront sites (Maritime Center, Washington Street) and preserving South Norwalk's seaport heritage.
- (2) Coordinate tours of Norwalk's commercial fisheries facilities and the Norwalk Islands to ensure public access to the waterfront and public knowledge of this unique industry.

Goal V Support the stabilization of Norwalk's commercial fisheries industry (mollusks, finfish, lobsters).

Objectives

- (1) Assist private industries by seeking development funds to encourage the establishment and expansion of the fisheries industry in Norwalk Harbor and the Five Mile River Harbor.
- (2) Provide economic incentives to stimulate expansion of the local employment base and land-based support facilities, securing Norwalk's position as a leading fishing community.
- (3) Seek greater Federal and State support for the valuable fisheries resources of Long Island Sound. Encourage the development of aquaculture in Norwalk Harbor including the use of heated waters from Connecticut Light and Power Company's Manresa facility. Encourage the private sector to continue researching and developing new fisheries techniques.
- (4) Encourage the expansion of the shellfisheries industry including the reuse of existing historic industry buildings as part of a mixed use complex with public waterfront access.

- (5) Establish a municipal fishing center for commercial fishing boats which could include a wharf, processing facility, and retail/wholesale markets. Take immediate steps to identify funding sources and areas suitable for development as a commercial fishing center (eg. south of the Norwalk River bridges, accessible to vessels at any tide, subject to the least threat of oil spill hazards).
- (6) Coordinate the commercial fleet's use of Norwalk's waters with the Harbor Master, state regulatory agencies, and the Army Corps of Engineers.
- (7) Coordinate efforts to stabilize the commercial industry with the Connecticut Commercial Fishermen's Association and private fisheries companies (eg. Tallmadge Brothers).
- (8) Explore the recruitment of support industries (eg. processing facilities, offices) to Norwalk to increase the industry's economic base.
- (9) Assist the industry in developing adequate land-based support facilities.



Scup

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Water quality has improved 60 percent in the past decade. The Shellfish Commission has opened additional areas for hand digging and hope to expand the area. Pollution which occurs in the northern reaches of the river is less serious since most industries are cleaning up. There are a variety of waterfront activities which the City hopes to promote.

Tom Brigante, April 27, 1981

"When an area is dredged, it never comes back to life . . . The banks are full of life but the channels that are dredged are dead. Roton Point dock was dredged 50 years ago and is still dead."

Norman Bloom, August 4, 1981

"Why is the problem in the upper harbor? Consider what is coming down the River."

Diane Lauricella, August 4, 1981

"Many companies are involved with the Pollution Abatement Program. Today no one wants to pollute. However, 20 or 30 years ago, there was an improper understanding of how much a river could tolerate. As a result rivers were overloaded-the harbor was developed with tank farms. It is a difficult topic with economic ramifications . . . we must manage our problems with hazardous wastes and solid wastes with a "cradle to the grave" management system.

Dick King, August 4, 1981

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B. WATER QUALITY AND NATURAL COASTAL RESOURCE PRESERVATION

Goal I Protect and where possible upgrade the quality of Norwalk's water.

Objectives

- (1) Establish an annual program to separate combined storm and sanitary sewers in accordance with the Facilities Plan Update for Sewerage System (1979) since Federal and State Clean Water funds are presently unavailable.
- (2) Acquire or protect through fee-simple acquisition or conservation easements critical parcels of tidal marsh and near-shore vegetation. Easements should be of sufficient width to ensure that these resource areas function effectively and have adequate planting to slow runoff. Reestablish vegetation where possible.
- (3) Mitigate adverse impacts of industrial land uses which are immediately adjacent to tidal wetland and coastal waters by requiring through coastal site plan review the relocation of stored hazardous and toxic substances as far from the coastline as possible, placement of all such substances in containment dikes, and the use of drainage structures to capture and retain such substances before they reach coastal waters.
- (4) Monitor water quality at State and local levels to ensure the achievement of "SB" water classification throughout Norwalk's harbor waters. When possible, redefine water quality zones in Norwalk Harbor . . .
 - to ensure that habitats for juvenile and adult finfish and shellfish are protected,
 - to ensure that existing swimming areas are maintained and that new areas are opened,
 - to ensure that existing fishable areas are maintained and that new areas are opened,
 - to ensure that the aesthetic and physical quality of existing boating areas are maintained and that areas of poor quality are improved.

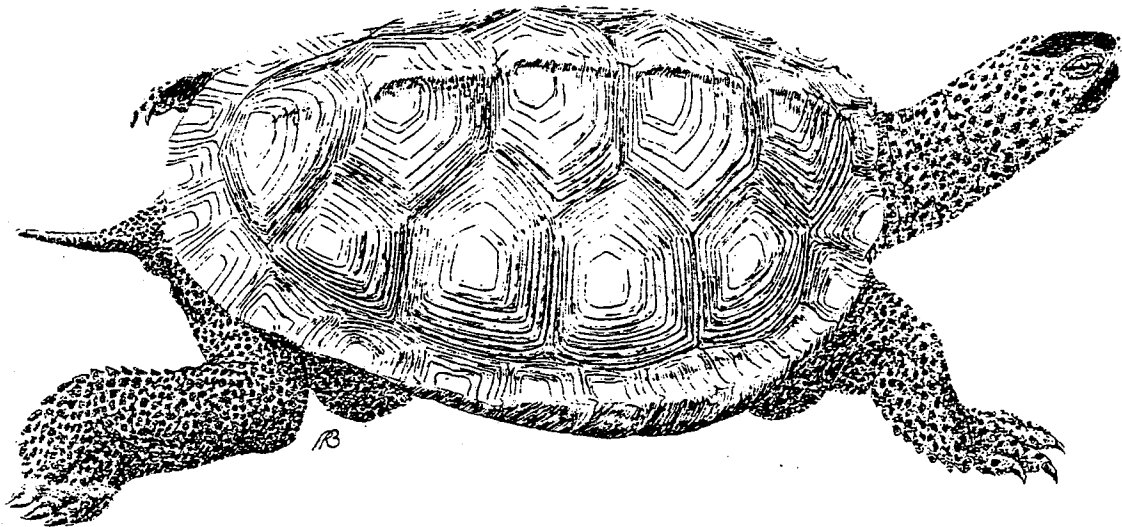
- (5) Coordinate the monitoring and enforcement of Federal, State, and local water quality laws by the formation of a local Coastal Water Quality Committee made up of representatives from the Norwalk Health Department, Marine Police, Department of Public Works, Conservation Commission, Norwalk Pollution Abatement Committee and others from appropriate State and Federal agencies.
- (6) Establish a public education program to disseminate information about the implications of clean water and water pollution control as related to marine and human communities.
- (7) Protect and enhance freshwater wetlands and water courses especially the Norwalk River, Five Mile River, Betts Pond Brook, Farm Creek, and Roton Brook which flow into Long Island Sound and thus effect/impact natural coastal resources by requiring minimum setbacks, erosion and sedimentation controls, and vegetative buffering.
- (8) Establish an aquifer protection program in accordance with recommendations in SWRPA's Guide to Ground Water & Aquifer Protection-Norwalk (July 1980).

Goal II Protect the natural coastal resources as unique biological areas which serve as habitats for plant and animal life.

Objectives

- (1) Protect unique natural coastal resources by securing conservation easements or through fee simple acquisition. Easements should be sufficient width to ensure that coastal resources are not impacted by upland development. Resources which should be protected are:
 - a) tidal wetlands (designated and undesignated)
 - b) rocky shores
 - c) cobble beaches
 - d) mud flats
 - e) island archipelago
- (2) Support the protection of Norwalk's waters and marine habitat as the physical base for the commercial fisheries industries (mollusks, finfish, lobsters) and as a unique environmental and economic base in Long Island Sound through the establishment of municipal ordinances and state statutes.

- (3) Establish wetland conservation areas through zoning or transfer of development rights to protect tidal wetlands or critical islands.
- (4) Manage the Norwalk Islands to promote their use as critical habitat for native and migratory bird species for indigenous plant and animal species, and as major recreational/open space areas. Prohibit uses which will have adverse impacts on the island's natural coastal resources.



Diamondback Terrapin

As I have suggested previously, the Islands should be protected by the Federal government like the National Seashore (Cape Cod) and Fire Island. Designation by the government would protect wildlife and birdlife and would make the islands available to visitors . . . The memory of Manresa is still clear. They promised us cheap power and low taxes. Look what we have. There could have been other uses.

Bud Tulin, May 26, 1981

It is the responsibility of the City to buy land:

- 1) if land is not purchased for open space it disappears
- 2) land costs increase rapidly placing more pressure on the vacant land which remains
- 3) alternative plans should be prepared using creative concepts - deeds, easements, creative zoning . . .

Jane Egbert, May 26, 1981

Veterans Park is surrounded by water on three sides, yet has never been dedicated to water-related recreation. Ball parks do not need to be near the water. The park should be for all people to enjoy.

Bud Tulin, April 27, 1981

"There are limits to future capital budget expenditures especially in view of the plan to move into a new city hall, consequently we should not expect any significant additions to the Recreation and Parks Department capital budget for 3-4 years; however, we should move forward towards opening some private beaches".

Larry Church, February 23, 1981

"We must acquire Chimmons and Sheffield Islands"

Robert Johnson, February 23, 1981

"We need to open the shore to public access, educate the people, and preserve the waters surrounding the islands. The Maritime Center will serve as a vital education center to inform the public about the beauty of the Shoreline".

Skip Crane, February 23, 1981

"Street-end parks should be left to the discretion of neighborhood associations".

Robert Burk, February 23, 1981

PARKS/OPEN SPACE, WATERBASED RECREATION, AND PUBLIC ACCESS

Goal 1 Develop a management plan for Norwalk's coastal area parks.

Objectives

- 1) Develop a plan linking Calf Pasture Park, Shady Beach, and Taylor Farm, three municipally owned tracts on East Norwalk
- 2) Endorse the Veterans Park Master Plan as the guide to the park's future development. The plan is particularly commendable as it provides a waterfront promenade/passive recreation area, protect fragile coastal resources, and provides ample water based recreation opportunities (boating and fishing).
- 3) Improve city street ends as physical and visual access points to the waterfront. Street end facilities should be designed to attract neighborhood or district use (with pedestrian or bicycle access) rather than city wide use (with motor vehicle use). Street end areas could be granted or responsibilities vested with interested neighborhood groups. These groups could create, manage, and maintain neighborhood park areas as has been done by the Marvin Beach Association in East Norwalk.
- 4) Explore creative techniques which encourage public/private management of municipal parks.
 - a) secure franchises to provide/operate boat rental sailing school, and restaurants at Calf Pasture Park, Veterans Park, and the Landfill
 - b) establish a public/private cooperative venture to operate the proposed Harbor Center at Veterans Park.
- 5) Improve existing municipally owned and managed district and neighborhood parks
 - a) Irving C. Freese Park - reorient toward the water
 - b) Mill Pond - provide walkways, benches, and appropriate planting
 - c) Woodward Avenue Park - reorient toward Village Creek wetland