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Resource Type:	Policy Statements and Planning Documents
State:	New York
Jurisdiction Type:	County
Municipality:	Nassau
Year (adopted, written, etc.):	2010
Community Type - applicable to:	Urban; Suburban
Title:	Nassau County Master Plan
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Abstract

Nassau County's development through the 20th century gave rise to sprawling suburban developments that necessitated the automobile and extensive roadway development. Nassau's County's 2010 Master Plan projected expected land use expansion over the next few decades based on current land use trends and population growth to discover an unsustainable trajectory. If this growth is dispersed throughout the county consistent with current land use trends, it is expected that traffic congestion, energy consumption and carbon emissions will continue to grow at current rates corresponding to population growth. Dispersed development will not support investments in transit, will require investments in infrastructure and services, and will continue to consume natural resources and capital.

To mitigate the increased carbon footprint they will have due to increased population, Nassau plans to concentrate growth in downtown centers to alleviate other parts of the county from out-of-scale development – particularly of single-family homes that would increase vehicular traffic. This also includes concentrating investment into underutilized commercial corridors i.e. strip-malls. The county also plans on focusing on transit-oriented development to create a walkable environment with public transportation alternatives to further reduce the county's impact on climate change.

Reversing the trends of suburban sprawl by concentrating growth in downtowns/centers, underutilized commercial areas, and within planned redevelopment areas will reduce the impacts associated with growth, such as traffic congestion, energy consumption, and carbon emissions. At the same time, the rational concentration of growth will help to foster neighborhood revitalization, healthy and walkable communities, as well as establish the new paradigm for an economically and environmentally sustainable future.

Resource

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POLICY 3: PROTECT AND MAINTAIN ECONOMICALLY VIABLE COMMERCIAL LAND USES AND RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS BY DIRECTING FUTURE DEVELOPMENT TO TARGETED GROWTH AREAS

The 2010 Nassau County Master Plan is a centers-oriented plan. The key to the plan is that changes are recommended only in certain areas where they make sense: where a shift in course from the status quo will help Nassau become a stronger suburban community. The central idea of the plan is that Nassau should spur economic development by strengthening downtowns, revitalizing underutilized commercial properties, and redeveloping brownfields, while preserving the qualities of suburban life that residents love by protecting Nassau's environmental, scenic and historic resources.

As shown in Figure 3-1 "Existing Land Uses", land uses in Nassau are generally separated into single-use districts. Residential development is the predominant use in the County and accounts for nearly sixty percent of Nassau's total land area. Commercial development, which accounts for approximately five percent of land area, is concentrated primarily along the County's arterial roadways in malls and strip malls. Industrial uses, which represent approximately two percent of total land area, are generally concentrated in the center and southern portions of the County near rail lines. Institutional uses, which are generally tax exempt, constitute over ten percent of the County's total land area and are scattered throughout the County. Open spaces, including parks and recreation, conservation land and agriculture, represent approximately 17 percent of the County's land area.

If the current trend of dispersed development based on uncoordinated land use decision making throughout the county continues, Nassau's potential for a sustainable future may be in serious jeopardy. Unprotected open space areas, which account for approximately 6,000 acres across the County, down from 15,000 acres in 1997³, will remain vulnerable to development and the potential of underutilized land in downtowns, along strip malls, and on brownfield sites may not be realized.

According to NYMTC forecasts, Nassau County is expected to gain 19.2 million square feet of non residential development and 21.4 million square feet of residential development over the next twenty years. If this growth is dispersed throughout the county consistent with current land use trends, it is expected that traffic congestion, energy consumption and carbon emissions will continue to grow at current rates corresponding to population growth. Dispersed development will not support investments in transit, will require investments in infrastructure and services, and will continue to consume natural resources and capital. Projected future development to 2030 under a dispersed growth scenario (continuation of historic and current land use trends) is shown on the maps below (Figure 3-3). This growth scenario is based on distribution of total projected future growth in the County to census tracts based on NYMTC's projections for household and employment growth.

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Revering the trends of suburban sprawl by concentrating growth in downtowns/centers, underutilized commercial areas, and within planned redevelopment areas will reduce the impacts associated with growth, such as traffic congestion, energy consumption, and carbon emissions. At the same time, the rational concentration of growth will help to foster neighborhood revitalization, healthy and walkable communities, as well as establish the new paradigm for an economically and environmentally sustainable future.

Nassau County, New York's Master Plan can be found here:
<https://www.nassaucountyny.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1193>