

# A Vision for New Rochelle

*Plan for Revitalizing the City Park Neighborhood*

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## **2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Fifth Avenue or City Park area of New Rochelle became the subject of national attention earlier this year when community residents organized to stop the demolition of this mixed-use neighborhood and subsequent construction of a 308,000 square foot IKEA furniture store. A local group, the New Rochelle Citizens' Committee, enlisted the expertise of Columbia University to assess the proposed store's impact and produce alternative development plans for the neighborhood if big-box was found not to be the best solution. Two weeks into the project, IKEA announced it would not build a store in New Rochelle. Although the company cited the prohibitive costs of necessary traffic infrastructure, it is likely that strong community opposition was also a consideration.

The Studio's proposal for the future of City Park expanded the initial study area to encompass a larger area within both New Rochelle and Mamaroneck. This change incorporated adjacent areas that lie within the natural boundaries of the neighborhood. A study of existing conditions included planning history, neighborhood character, demographics, land use, building conditions, political conditions, housing issues, and an in-depth look at the industrial and manufacturing base of the area. A participatory planning model was used to survey residents and businesses and engage their participation in the plans for their neighborhood. Neighborhood meetings were held periodically to assess the progress of the studio. Included in the dialogue were the residents of the MacLeay Apartments, a subsidized, three-building apartment complex on Fifth Avenue.

The proposal also contains an assessment of the tax structure of New Rochelle and its impact on planning and development. New Rochelle's budget has been suffering from the effects of a cap on property tax assessments imposed by the New York State legislature in exchange for an increase in the sales tax rate. The City then began to focus on generating revenue from new sales tax sources. The proposed IKEA store would have generated a substantial new revenue stream for the city of New Rochelle. The costs to the City Park neighborhood and the region, however, would have been significant, including a loss of hundreds of high paying industrial jobs, and a decrease in the quality of life for surrounding residential neighborhoods.

The Studio has concluded that the preservation and reinforcement of the neighborhood's industrial base is the most desirable goal for any development plan at City Park. The studio has analyzed the City Park area in the context of the trends in manufacturing and light industrial activities in New York City, Westchester County and the State of New York, including spatial resource issues, wages and multiplier effects.

The proposal includes the exploration of many tools to encourage strong industrial growth, including the formation of a non-profit Local Development Corporation led by neighborhood businesses and residents. Other tools include marketing, and the adoption of a cooperative planning and development approach with surrounding municipalities.

In addition to industrial enhancement, the proposal highlights several other areas for improvement at City Park. Traffic mitigation and infrastructure changes are necessary for safety and increased accessibility. Re-zoning will manage future growth and permit the expansion of the industrial base. The proposed zoning will also allow for small retail establishments along the Fifth Avenue streetfront, primarily for local use.

Finally, the proposal seeks to encourage New Rochelle's recent efforts to recreate a strong retail base in downtown New Rochelle by recommending design guidelines and new initiatives, including the creation of a historic district. The proposal also includes a framework for a possible redesign of Echo Bay, now the site of the city's maintenance yard.

The Studio maintains a website with reports, studies, graphs, charts, analyses, maps and related materials about the New Rochelle Project at:

**[www.columbia.edu/itc/architecture/bass/newrochelle/index.html](http://www.columbia.edu/itc/architecture/bass/newrochelle/index.html)**

### **3. INTRODUCTION**

This report is the product of a one-semester studio class of twelve first-year graduate students pursuing Master of Science degrees in urban planning at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation. The studio, which began in January 2001 and was led by Richard Bass of Herrick, Feinstein LLP, set out to evaluate a proposal for building an IKEA furniture store in the City Park neighborhood of New Rochelle in Westchester County, New York. Our goal at the outset was to either approve IKEA's plan, improve the plan, or propose an alternative. Three weeks into our studio, IKEA's withdrawal of its proposal moved use straight to the latter option.

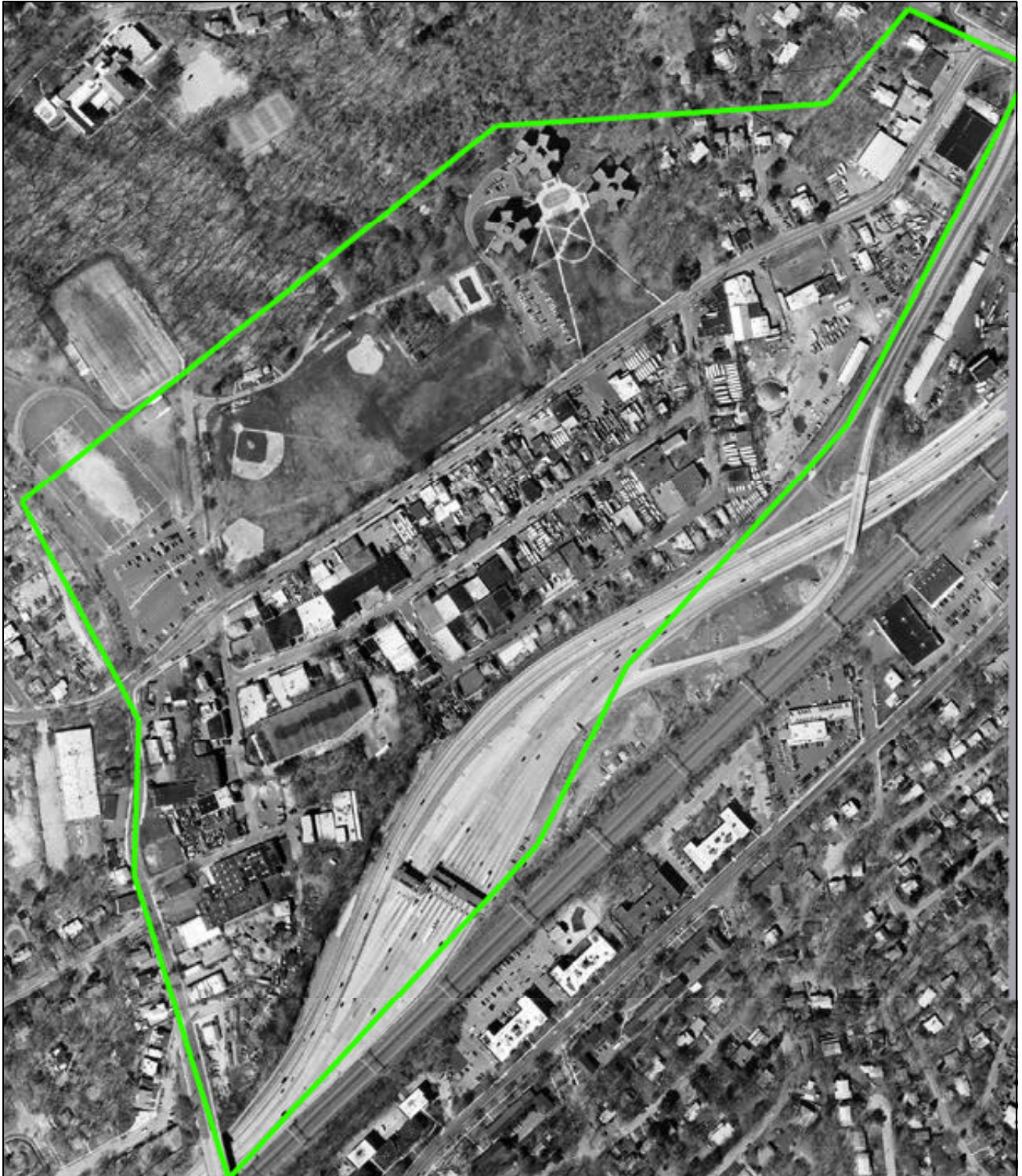
In formulating a vision to replace that of a 308,000 square foot furniture store, we interviewed neighborhood residents and business owners as well as city, county, and state officials; performed land use and business surveys of the area; examined social, economic, and demographic data at the city and county level; and analyzed the economic impacts of retail and industrial land uses on the region's economy.

In our analyses, we expanded our study area from IKEA's proposed redevelopment area, which was roughly bounded by Fifth Avenue on the north, I-95 (the Thruway) on the south, Portman Avenue on the west, and the Mamaroneck town line on the east. The broader region we chose to study, encompassing the organic boundaries of the neighborhood, was defined by the northern boundary of City Park and the MacLeay Apartments property on the north, I-95 on the south, Potter Avenue on the west, and Madison Avenue in the Town of Mamaroneck on the east. At Madison Avenue, Fifth Avenue ends, and the City Park area's main through route bends to approach downtown Larchmont and the neighborhood's only Thruway entrance (see map on opposite page

Our study area represents the neighborhood as it is defined organically by related uses and "edges" such as the Thruway. The area is zoned M-1 and consists primarily of light industrial uses, though residences coexist comfortably with industrial businesses. Just north of the industrial section of the study area are City Park and the MacLeay Apartments, a residential complex constructed as public housing in 1949. Although MacLeay is now privately owned, many of its tenants receive government rent subsidies.

We found that the needs of the community and the region as a whole can best be met by the reinforcement of light industrial activity in this area. Not only will this retain and create relatively high-paying jobs for residents of New Rochelle and the City Park neighborhood, but it will also help to meet a strong demand for light industrial space in Westchester County.

## Aerial Photograph of Expanded Study Area



#### **4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## **5. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND EXISTING CONDITIONS**

New Rochelle's location on Westchester's Long Island Sound shore places it within one of the state's wealthiest counties. According to 1995 estimates from the United States Census Bureau, Westchester has New York's fourth-highest median income, at \$53,043. Only Putnam, Nassau, and Rockland, also New York City suburbs, and all much smaller in size than Westchester's 443 square miles, has a greater median income.

### **5.1.1 WESTCHESTER COUNTY: HISTORY**

As shown in the map at left, Westchester County borders, on its south, the New York City borough of the Bronx. According to historian Frank E. Sanchis, this location at New York City's doorstep has "always put it in the center of activity

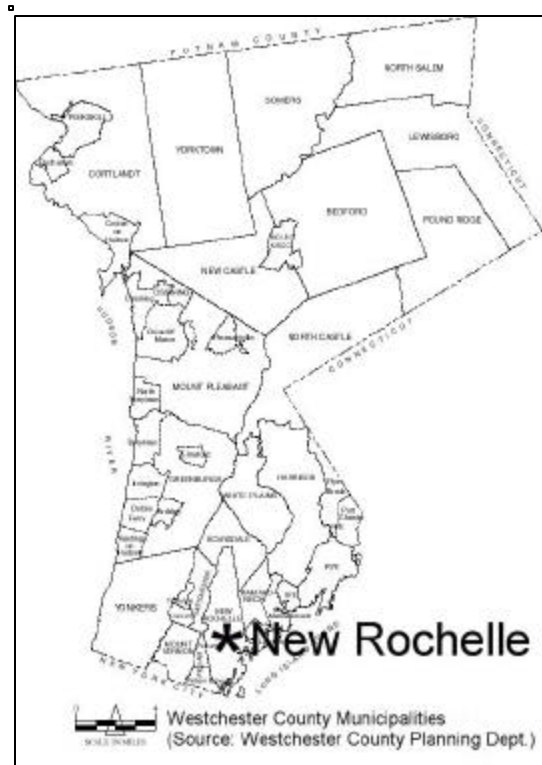


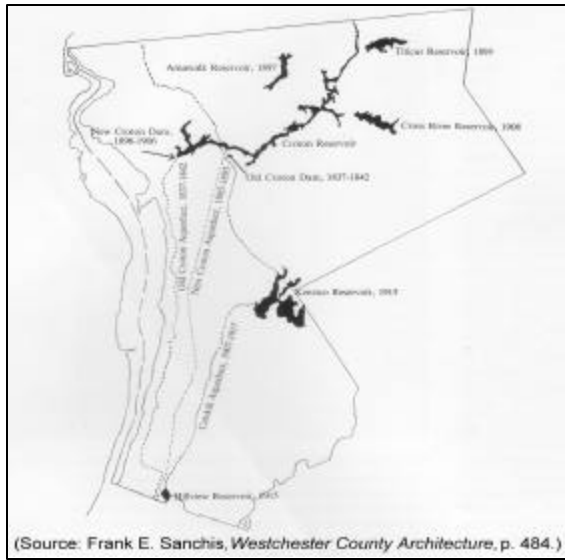
relative to the balance of the nation." Indeed, Westchester's development has

historically been fueled by its proximity to what has been, since 1820, America's largest city. Before the days of railroads or highways, Westchester had the trade routes of the Hudson River and Long Island Sound. In the 18th century, the primitive post roads to Albany and Boston were cut through Westchester's rolling, wooded hills.

When New York City's population boomed after the 1825 completion of the Erie Canal, Westchester furnished many of the city's raw and finished goods. Iron foundries were located throughout the county, and Westchester's numerous brickyards and marble quarries provided the materials for the thousands of row houses and monumental new institutional buildings spreading across Manhattan. When Newgate Prison in Greenwich Village was no longer adequate, it was replaced in 1828 by Sing Sing, "up the river" in Westchester County. When a reliable and clean source of drinking water was needed, New Yorkers looked to Westchester, where the Croton Dam was completed in 1842. Today, as the map on page 10 shows, the county is still a vital link in the New York City water supply system, even as development pressures have threatened water purity.

In the 1840s, the railroads came. In 1844, the New York and Harlem Railroad reached White Plains; the New York and Hudson River line was completed to Peekskill in 1849.





That year, the New York and New Haven opened its line through eastern Westchester. Soon thereafter, population began to shift from the northern half of Westchester to the south, clustering around railroad stations. All three railroads, which now originate from Manhattan's Grand Central Terminal, are operated by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, and are heavily used by commuters. The map below shows today's routes in Westchester.

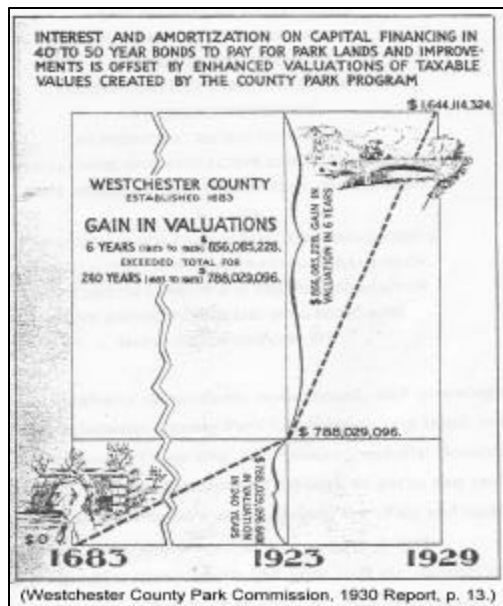
The railroads' effectiveness at stimulating development was seen in the establishment of Mount Vernon, which is located between New Rochelle and Yonkers and, like the other two, borders the Bronx on its south. Unlike

Yonkers or New Rochelle, which date back as communities to the 17th century, Mount Vernon, according to Sanchis, "was a new idea – a community of people who were economically dependent on [New York City], and who would be traveling back and forth every day – a commuter suburb." Together, in 1851, a group of skilled tradesmen affiliated with "Mechanics Mutual Protection No. 11" in New York City purchased five farms totaling 369 acres, and subdivided them according to a grid plan. The leader of the group, John Stevens, saw the endeavor as a means of improving the condition of New York's working class by freeing it from rent payments and enabling it to enter the class of property owners. Mount Vernon was incorporated as a village in 1852, and rapidly grew to become a city 40 years later.

Between 1865 and 1920, Westchester's population boomed, multiplying from about 100,000 to almost 350,000. During the 1920s, the county began channeling its growth along the routes of its new automobile parkways, which comprised, by the 1930s, the finest highway system in America. Following the 1925 completion of the Bronx River Parkway – the world's first limited-access public motor-route – Westchester built a highway system that was second to none in design and engineering, much of it funded by projected increases in real estate valuations. Development, largely consisting of single-family homes along the parkways' edges, boomed. The Saw Mill, Hutchinson River and Cross County Parkways, along with the Taconic Parkway (originally called the Bronx Parkway Extension), were begun during a period of intense parkway building before World War II, and although no longer aesthetically outstanding, they continue to funnel automobile drivers in and out of New York City.



Linked by the new highways was an equally impressive system of golf courses and lush



county parks. Among these was New Rochelle's Glen Island, taken over in 1925 by Westchester County, and famous in the 1930s for the appearance of prominent big bands at its Casino; and Playland, a model amusement park completed by Westchester County in 1927. Playland, now on the National Register of Historic Places, is still operated by county government. Amenities such as these earned Westchester a reputation as the nation's most desirable suburb.

Westchester's prosperity was underscored by the decision of many New York department stores to open branches in the county beginning in the 1930s. B. Altman opened its White Plains store in 1934; Arnold Constable followed, in New Rochelle, in 1937. Lord & Taylor completed its Eastchester store in 1949, the same year that Macy's opened in White

Plains. In 1953, General Foods started what came to be known in the 1980s as the "Edge City" trend when it became the first of many corporations to leave behind its Manhattan headquarters for a new suburban campus, in White Plains, seen at right. The section of Westchester Avenue near White Plains, a major headquarters location, has since become known as the "Platinum Mile." This desirability as a headquarters location was fueled by four major interstate highways constructed after World War II: I-87, the New York Thruway's main route; I-287, the main east-west expressway, which bypasses White Plains; I-95, the New England Thruway, which parallels the New Haven train line; and I-684, a north-south route along the eastern edge of the county.



Westchester has enjoyed the benefits of having an affluent, largely white-collar population. School drop-out rates in the county are a scant 1.5%, and 80% to 90% of students continue their educations past high school. Although population grew slowly from 1980 to 2000, from 866,599 to 871,894, the county is becoming more diverse. Between 1980 and 1990, the African-American population grew by 15%, and the Asian population, by 113%. The county's affluence has not inured it from suffering its share of urban problems. After World War II and the decline of mass transit systems, the downtowns of Yonkers, Mount Vernon, New Rochelle, Peekskill, and White Plains declined substantially, following the national urban trend.

### **5.1.2 WESTCHESTER COUNTY: BUSINESS, INDUSTRY, AND LAND USE**

New York State helped usher in America's industrial age and was home to over one million manufacturing jobs by 1906. However, recent decades have not been so kind to New

York's manufacturing sector. In the 1960s and 70s, factory employment decreased as production moved overseas. Despite a brief recovery in the late 1970s, the trend continued downward. Between 1989 and 1994, New York State lost an average of 42,820 manufacturing jobs annually. This 4% loss each year was particularly dismaying, as the national average was only 1%.

The situation began to turn around in 1994, when job loss slowed to 16,000 jobs (1.7% of total manufacturing jobs) per year. Forward momentum was gained in 1995 and 1996 as the state government cut taxes and loosened regulations on manufacturing. Net change was zero in 1997 and 1998, and projections suggest that they employment will climb in the future. This is indicated in part by a 33% increase in capital expenditures in 1995-1996 compared with the previous two years'.

New York State has traditionally been a strong exporter of industrial goods. While overall industrial employment declined by 100,000 between 1992 and 1996, export-related manufacturing jobs rose by 14,500 (primarily in the production of electrical and electronic equipment, industrial equipment, and the computer, fabricated metal, and chemical sectors). However, this growth was still slower than the national average.

One illusion that has hampered New York State's recovery in manufacturing is its perceived high labor costs. This is in part due to the high wages that must be provided to the non-production managerial classes, who make up 42% of manufacturing jobs in New York State (compared to 35% nationally). This is due to the high concentration of corporate headquarters in the state, especially New York City. When wages are broken down, however, the actual manufacturing payroll per employee is only 9% higher than the national average.

New York State's largest manufacturing sub-sectors are:

- Printing and publishing
- Instruments and related products
- Food and kindred products
- Industrial machinery
- Electronic and other equipment
- Chemicals and allied products
- Transportation equipment

Sectors that added new jobs in 1995 and 1996 are: fabricated metal products; stone, clay, and glass products; furniture and fixtures; industrial machinery and equipment; electronic and other equipment; and transportation equipment. Industrial sites representing all of these sectors (except printing and publishing) can be found in the Study Area.

Westchester County has an industrial profile that varies in significant ways from that of the state as a whole. Of Westchester County residents, only 10.6% of the workforce held manufacturing jobs in 1998. This number is only slightly below the state average of 11.6%, but notably lower than the national average, 15.4%. Westchester and Rockland Counties recently came out of the slump in manufacturing jobs, erasing job loss rates of 3.1% with level growth in 1997 and 1998.

In 1999, Westchester had 976 manufacturing establishments employing 36,150 people. The major categories of manufacturing in the state are as follows:

<b>Category</b>	<b>No. of Establishments</b>
Food and Kindred Products	70
Fabricated Metal Products	65
Lumber and Wood Products	36
Transportation Equipment	22
Stone, Clay and Glass Products	18
Furniture and Fixtures	17

(Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Dept. of Labor)

There were major employment losses in Westchester County during the recession of the early 1990s due to corporate downsizing and relocations, from 460,000 in 1989 to 415,000 in 1993. The employment level was slow to recover, but by 1999 it reached the 1988 level of 432,000 jobs. However, the county has experienced a shift in the type of employment available, with significant growth in the service sector, information technology, the health sector, and professional and business services. Forecasts for occupational growth include a 36% increase in computer- and mathematical-based positions and a 20% increase in engineering and health services jobs. In recent years, manufacturing has seen the largest decline in employment share, falling from 16% in 1988 to 9.8% in 1998. Service sector employment is projected to be responsible for nearly all of the growth in employment over the 1998 to 2003 period.

In the near future, no growth is expected in administrative support or manufacturing occupations. Although manufacturing jobs declined nearly 5.5% between 1997 and 1999, the county has seen dramatic increases in industrial sectors outside of manufacturing. The construction industry as a whole posted growth of 7.92% in 1997 and 12.93% in 1998. Special trade contractors such as electricians, masons, and plumbers, enjoyed year-on-year job increases of 8.13% in 1998 and 11.11% in 1999. Jobs in agriculture, forestry and fishing, which include landscaping, climbed 1.34% from 1997 to 1998 and 3.87% into 1999. The number of jobs in retail trade increased by only 0.70% in 1997 and 0.95% in 1998.

Overall, the employment growth forecast for Westchester between 1998 and 2004 is 1.38%, which is a faster growth rate than New York City and the State of New York. The unemployment rate for the county in 1998 was 3.2% (NYC had a 5.6% rate) and the forecasted rate for 2004 is 3.5%.

Westchester County has 39 million square feet of industrial space, or 3.3 percent of the region's entire inventory. Many of the newer industrial space is re located along Interstate 287 between Port Chester and Tarrytown.

#### *Patterns for Westchester*

The Westchester County Planning Board published *Patterns for Westchester: The Land and Its People* in 1996. The document identified land uses and transportation corridors in the county and offered broad policy recommendations to municipal governments to plan for continued development. New Rochelle was identified as one of four major urban centers in the county, the redevelopment of established urban centers was viewed as critical, and I-95 is identified as a major corridor with capacity for economic development.

According to the report, the three elements of land use review used by the County Planning Board are density of development, relationship to surrounding development, and visual impact. *Patterns* implores city governments to recognize these three elements when writing zoning regulations. The Board also expects (but is not required) to review major development proposals—over 50,000 square feet of commercial floor area or 25 housing units of residential development, taking into consideration the regional implications of proposed development in terms of the three land use elements.

Important land use conditions in the county, according to *Patterns*, include:

- The highest concentrations of density are in the older urban centers—Yonkers, Mt. Vernon, New Rochelle, White Plains, Port Chester, and Peekskill.
- White Plains has a central location and excellent transportation facilities.
- Outside these urban centers, several other intermediate and local centers and corridors have the infrastructure capacity for additional development.
- Many corridors have long-range critical problems, although adjacent land does have the potential for sensitive development.
- Because of the New York City Watershed, development in northern Westchester is limited.
- Much of the open space in the county is due to extensive privately-owned lands.

Among the report’s recommendations were:

- An FAR range for Urban Renewal Areas of 0.2 - 0.8, equating to 130,000 to 520,000 square feet on a 14.9 acre site.
- Residential density of six to 26 dwelling units per acre.
- Development strategies focusing on redevelopment of obsolete and underutilized areas. Growth centers include non-city centers and corridors with infill possibility.

*Patterns* also noted the regional difficulties created by scarce land in Southern and Central Westchester: “Land use decisions that benefit one community’s economy . . . may adversely affect . . . neighboring municipalities.”

## **5.2 NEW ROCHELLE BACKGROUND**

The City of New Rochelle, one of New York State’s oldest communities, is located in Westchester County, New York, on Long Island Sound. With its southern border less than one mile from the borough of the Bronx, and with Manhattan’s Grand Central Terminal only a 35-minute train ride away, New Rochelle has been a commuter haven for more than a century. Unlike other well-known New York bedroom communities such as Scarsdale, Pelham, and Larchmont, all of which border New Rochelle, the city is economically and ethnically diverse and decidedly urban, enjoying many historic and cultural resources, but also facing challenges common to many older Northeastern cities.

### **5.2.1 NEW ROCHELLE : HISTORY**

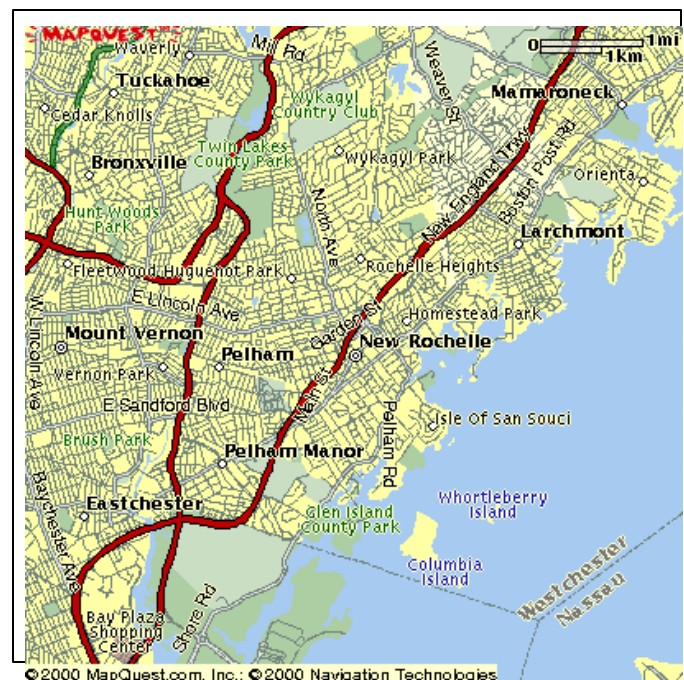
New Rochelle’s history begins with Thomas Pell’s purchase of the Pelham Manor tract, of which the city would become part, from the Siwanoy Indians in 1654. Thirty-four years later, thousands of Huguenots – French Protestants who left France following Louis XIV’s revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which had protected them from religious persecution – began settling the area. Their new home was named after La Rochelle,



the port from which they had departed France. Through the 18<sup>th</sup> century, New Rochelle, with a 1790 population of 692 residents, remained a modest village. It retained an abundance of agricultural land, 300 acres of which was awarded in 1784 to the patriot Thomas Paine by New York State for his service to the cause of independence.

In the first years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, New Rochelle's industrialization and urbanization began in earnest. A four-story flourmill, said to be the country's largest at the time, was constructed in 1801; the next year, a tollhouse was built on the Westchester Turnpike (now Main Street), and the thoroughfare became the village's commercial heart, home to a concentration of taverns, stores, and homes. New Rochelle's urbanization accelerated following the 1848 completion of the New York and New Haven Railroad, which, today known as Metro-North's New Haven line, still connects New Rochelle with both cities and is a vital commuter link. By 1857, the population of the Town of New Rochelle approached 3,000.

The growth and increasing complexity of New Rochelle in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century expressed itself in the establishment of a number of important institutions. The city's first significant newspaper, the *Pioneer*, began publication in 1860; the next year its first volunteer fire company was formed. New Rochelle's easy accessibility to New York City by steamboat led to the 1879 creation of the Glen Island fun park, which featured a zoo, natural history museum, bathing beach, Chinese pagoda, and German beer garden. The city board of health was created in 1881 in response to a smallpox epidemic, and horse car lines were established in 1886, improving transportation within the city. The New Rochelle Public Library was established in 1892.



The 1890s saw intense development. During the decade, New Rochelle's population increased from 9,057 residents to 14,720. Perhaps more significantly, during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, New Rochelle blossomed as a suburb. In 1902, Beechmont Lake was developed as the focal point of an attractive residential area; four years later, New Rochelle's advantages as a commuter haven were advertised to thousands through "Forty-five Minutes from Broadway," a George M. Cohan show in which it was featured. The city, which retained its reputation as an up-and-coming suburb for decades, is still remembered by many across the country as the sitcom home of the star of the "Dick Van Dyke Show" and his TV wife, played by Mary Tyler Moore, from 1961 to 1966. Today, New Rochelle remains the home of well-known artists and performers including Andrea McArdle, Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, and Robert Merrill.

The 1920s were, as much as any time, New Rochelle's glory years, with intense growth encouraging a sky's-the-limit attitude among its boosters and city fathers. In 1929, just before the notorious stock market crash, the Planning Board wrote in its *City Plan and Twenty-Year Program of Public Improvements for New Rochelle*, "We are strongly impressed with the fact that New Rochelle is at a critical point in its history. It clearly appears to be on the eve of a new and great development. It is nearer to New York City than any other community in which there is still available a large area suitable for the development of residential districts of a high type." New Rochelle had problems, but they were the kind that were nice to have: with a vibrant downtown full of entertainment and shopping opportunities, planners had to wrestle with a severe parking shortage; with "the market for apartment houses ... increasing," the planning board had to struggle with the question, "should apartment houses be encouraged or discouraged in a suburban city?" (They concluded, "the apartment house and the dwelling both have a place.")

New Rochelle expected the good times to continue to roll. Its planners, projecting growth to 75,000 by 1940 and 90,000 by 1950, pointed to the city's "good shops and stores ... good harbor, and ... good railway freight facilities," figuring that "if anything, the prognostication for ... growth is most conservative. A population of 100,000 by 1950 is not at all impossible." In 1930, New Rochelle had 54,000 residents, who, in the early years of the 1930s, had the highest per capita income of any city residents in New York State.

New Rochelle never reached the magical 100,000 figure. In the 1980s, in the midst of healthy suburban growth county- and nation-wide, New Rochelle's population fell to 67,265, from 70,794 in 1980.

### **5.2.2 NEW ROCHELLE: SOCIOECONOMICS AND DEMOGRAPHICS**

In 1990, New Rochelle was a heterogeneous place, with nonwhites making up 23.9% of the population, up from 21.3% in 1980. This diversity is nothing new. In 1693, New Rochelle had 44 families, including three Dutch, one German, and one English, and 19 Haitians, presumably slaves. In 1790, New Rochelle's 692 residents included 100 African-American slaves and 36 freemen. The Colored Peoples Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was founded in 1814; in 1820, six slaves remained among New Rochelle's African-American population of 150.

By 1865, 30% of the town's population was foreign-born. Of New Rochelle's 3,968 residents, 800 were Irish and 200 were German. In 1873, several New Rochelle families observed Yom Kippur, and in 1896, the town's first synagogue, Anshe Sholom, was chartered. Today, New Rochelle has approximately 700 Orthodox Jewish families. According to a 1999 newspaper account, "New Rochelle's Orthodox population is flourishing, having doubled in just two decades as Orthodox professionals snap up the classic Tudor-style houses in the city's north end. Two of the four synagogues have built or are planning new sanctuaries, and the two restaurants share North Avenue with a kosher bakery, a kosher pizza shop, and a kosher grocery."

Indeed, diversity remains one of New Rochelle's hallmarks. One 17-year resident, Peter Ackerman, commented in a recent newspaper article that the city's heterogeneity made it a good place to raise children. "When you're forced into an environment where you really



have to interact with kids from different socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds,” he said, “you’re forced to realize that the world is a more complex place than your own personal, rather insular, environment. We believe there are no losses here in New Rochelle as the result of this diverse population. It’s part of its strength.” According to the New Rochelle School Superintendent, “almost half the student body is minority, representing 57 nations. We have students on welfare assistance, ones who are recent immigrants, and wealthy students. We not only savor their differences, we cherish and nurture them.”

New Rochelle’s population of Mexican-Americans has grown by leaps and bounds since the city’s first Mexican immigrant arrived in 1954. Although less than 4% of the city’s population was of Mexican origin in 1990, many believe it is now closer to 15%. Today, New Rochelle’s downtown is as described in a 2000 newspaper article, “dotted with Mexican restaurants and shops.”

There are also many immigrants from Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Ecuador, and other Central and South American countries. They have become the chief parishioners of St. Gabriel’s Roman Catholic Church located at Division and Washington Streets, an elaborate blue granite building featuring Tiffany windows that was built by, as one account put it, former congregations of “socialite millionaires.” Today’s parishioners, according to the article, are people who “live in the old houses in the surrounding neighborhood, people who work long hours as busboys, gardeners, and cleaning women and still have a hard time making ends meet, people who speak little or no English.” New Rochelle also has a sizeable Taiwanese community.

Although New Rochelle has been heterogeneous throughout almost its entire history, diversity has sometimes invited controversy and conflict. In 1961, the city’s Lincoln Elementary School was the focus of a landmark school desegregation battle. At the time, Lincoln was 94% black. Parents of eleven children sued the city because they were prevented from registering their children in city schools outside their district. Attorneys for New Rochelle argued that the city was merely promoting a “neighborhood school” policy, but the federal judge hearing the case concluded that Lincoln had been established “as an all-Negro school by the gerrymandering of district lines and by the transfer of white children residing in the district to schools outside the district.” Although for two years, the school board resisted the judge’s order to desegregate, a new board in 1963 tore down the Lincoln school and complied, integrating the system through busing. Recalling the battle in 1987, one longtime resident said the case “gave us a bad name at the time, but it was one of the best things to happen to the city. We don’t have segregated schools, we have integrated neighborhoods and the climate is quite good.”

Still, that has not prevented violence from erupting in New Rochelle. Following the announcement of the Rodney King verdict in 1992, “dozens of black teenagers and adults roamed the downtown streets, smashing windows and looting.” One rioter said, “It was worth it. We were just tired of being pushed around. It made me feel good to get all of my frustration out.” The city manager at the time, Matthew Iarocci, described New Rochelle as a “League of Nations,” adding, “People do get along quite well. It gives you a more sophisticated and more tolerant perspective when you grow up with other people.”

## **New Rochelle and Its Neighbors**

The median household income in New Rochelle in 1990 was \$43,482, below the \$48,405 for Westchester County as a whole. Although New Rochelle is a relatively wealthy community, it does not come close to the incomes of its neighboring towns and villages. The neighboring Town of Mamaroneck (which includes the Villages of Larchmont and Mamaroneck) had a median household income of \$77,926, almost double that of New Rochelle. Pelham and Mamaroneck are also more homogenous than New Rochelle, with whites accounting for over 90% of residents. The neighboring city of Mount Vernon, in contrast, has a majority (55.3%) black population.

As Jennifer Campion points out, the considerably different socioeconomic profiles of Pelham and Mamaroneck makes them unlikely to approve of any large development that might increase their traffic burden, or harm them in other ways. Her assessment helps explain the aggressiveness with which Mamaroneck residents attacked the IKEA proposal, including the passage of a town law to “require developers to obtain Mamaroneck’s approval for projects just outside its borders in nearby towns.” As Campion explains,

“New Rochelle is surrounded by smaller, more affluent waterfront communities. These consist of Pelham Manor to the south, and Larchmont, Mamaroneck, and Rye to the north.

“The population of each of the surrounding communities is less than one-quarter of the population of New Rochelle and the mean household income is more than double. These municipalities are not faced with the same socioeconomic pressures that New Rochelle is experiencing. Therefore, they have very different concerns regarding development. They are not concerned with promoting growth, but protecting environment and quality of life in their communities. They view development as a threat to this, particularly large-scale development in a neighboring community which will have an impact without providing benefits to these communities.”

Underscoring her point are these data from the 1990 United States Census:

	<b>POPULATION</b>	<b>MEAN INCOME (\$)</b>
<b>WESTCHESTER CO</b>	874,866	69,264
<b>RYE</b>	14,936	128,425
<b>LARCHMONT</b>	6,181	117,048
<b>MAMARONECK</b>	11,231	115,022
<b>NEW ROCHELLE</b>	67,265	62,341

Income levels in the proposed redevelopment area of City Park are substantially lower than citywide and countywide income levels. In 1990, the average per capita income in the Redevelopment Area ranged between \$11,970 and \$12,742, as compared to \$23,745 in New Rochelle and \$25,584 in Westchester County.

**Demographic Data for New Rochelle** (from the 2000 U.S. Census)

**PERSONS** **72,182**

## RACE COUNTS

White	<b>49,001</b>
Black	<b>13,848</b>
American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut	<b>141</b>
Asian or Pacific Islander	<b>2,334</b>
Other race	<b>4,535</b>
Two or more races	<b>2,288</b>

## RACE PERCENTS

White	69.3%
Black	18.6%
Asian	3.2%
Hispanic	10.8%
Other	5.9%

### **5.2.3 NEW ROCHELLE: BUSINESS, REVENUES AND REVENUE CONSTRAINTS**

#### **Revenue and Aid**

The bulk of New Rochelle's revenue comes from sales and property taxes. In the 2001 proposed budget, revenue sources are broken down as follows:

Property Tax Levy	\$ 30,383,762	40%
Sales Tax	21,600,000	28%
Federal and State Aid	7,092,045	9%
Other	11,818,1916	15%
Appropriated Fund	6,181,577	8%
Balance		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>77,076,300</b>	<b>100%</b>

source: Adopted Budget and Work Program 2001, City of New Rochelle

The third major source of revenue is state aid, which many New Rochelle residents and city officials feel they do not receive their fair share of. There are four types of aid distributed to municipalities by New York State:

- *Per capita aid* consists of state income tax revenues distributed by New York State to municipalities based on population; New Rochelle receives \$4.3 million of this type of aid.
- *Supplemental municipal aid* is distributed without a formula. Once called "distressed city aid," supplemental aid is given to municipalities by discretion according perceived need and lobbying on the part of officials.
- *Categorical aid* is given to municipalities for specific projects (for example, New Rochelle's Intermodal Center and the new soccer field in City Park)
- *Recurring operational aid* is allotted for continuing programs (for example, funding day camps for kids or programs for the elderly); New Rochelle receives about \$1 million per year of this aid.

It is in the category of supplemental aid where New Rochelle falls the furthest behind compared to other New York municipalities. The following table illustrates levels of supplemental municipal aid to the eight largest cities in the state, excluding New York City:

*Supplemental Aid for the 8 largest cities in New York (excluding NYC)*

<b>Rank/City</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Per Capita Aid</b>
1. Buffalo	\$48.6m	\$148
2. Rochester	\$21m	\$92
3. Yonkers	\$47m	\$250
4. Syracuse	\$25m	\$150
5. Albany	\$600,000	\$6 *
6. Utica	\$4.7m	\$69
7. New Rochelle	\$465,000	\$7
8. Mount Vernon	\$720,000	\$11

\* Note: Albany receives significant amounts of special aid as the state capital, so this number does not reflect a real deficiency in funding for Albany.

Elsewhere in Westchester, Mount Kisco receives \$22 per capita in supplemental aid. Newburgh, in Orange County, receives \$57 per capita.

However, if one considers total amounts of state aid given to cities (this includes per capita and categorical in addition to supplemental), New Rochelle does not fall as far behind compared to other, similar cities in Westchester County. In 2000, New Rochelle received a total of \$8,631,263 in state aid, or \$564.62 per capita. White Plains received \$494.60 per capita and Mount Vernon, which has a significantly lower median income than New Rochelle, received \$834.61. (In 1990 Mount Vernon had a median income of \$34,850 compared to \$43,482 for New Rochelle.) It should be noted that compared to many nearby municipalities in Westchester, such as Larchmont and Pelham, New Rochelle faces financial burdens due to the economic diversity of its population and the accompanying need for social services. New Rochelle's status as a diverse city rather than a socioeconomically homogenous suburb justifies an elevated level of state funding.

### **Revenue Constraints**

New Rochelle's ability to generate additional revenues from taxes is hampered by a property tax cap. In 1993, the New York State Assembly imposed a cap prohibiting New Rochelle from increasing property taxes at a rate greater than the increase in cost of living. This condition was imposed in exchange for a one percent increase in the city's sales tax from 7.25% to 8.25%. While the city expected that the sales tax increase would generate an additional \$15 million per year, it has in reality created only an additional \$7 million a year since 1993.

Though the increase in sales tax generates substantial revenues from large stores, such as Costco and Home Depot that draw people from neighboring municipalities or even

adjacent counties, it is a burden to local businesses. Both businesses and homeowners alike incur increased energy costs in the form of sales tax on their electric and gas bills, and shoppers are discouraged from patronizing local businesses when the sales tax rates of neighboring municipalities are more competitive.

According to a report by the Westchester County Department of Planning, Westchester ranks fourth among New York State counties in overall sales volume and number of stores. New Rochelle contributes a relatively small portion of Westchester's retail sales, which reached \$7.5 billion in 1992. In that year, New Rochelle's retail sales of \$416 million made up only 5.5% of the county's total.

### **Downtown**

From the early 1900s to the 1970s, New Rochelle's downtown was vibrant and prosperous, clearly the figurative center of the city, if not its literal one. The engine of Downtown's wealth was largely its strong retail environment, which earned New Rochelle a reputation as one of the New York suburbs' most important shopping and entertainment destinations.

"This was the downtown of Westchester," according to Marc Jerome, chairman of New Rochelle's Business Improvement District, which was approved in 1999. "If you talked to anyone in the '50s, New Rochelle was the place people went to. People have been pining for the old days."

Although Downtown during the 1950s and 1960s was a magnet for desirable stores such as a branch of New York retailer Arnold Constable, it was being passed by by the 1970s. As one longtime resident recalled of Bloomingdale's, which opened downtown even before the 1950s boom in suburban department store building, "Bloomingdale's took over the very old Ware's department store on Main Street. The store was instantly a big draw and the magnet that drew people to New Rochelle. Main Street blossomed. Stores and restaurants thrived. It was a terrific time for the city, but in 1975 Bloomingdale's built a large, very modern store in White Plains, and in 1976, the New Rochelle store was closed, and Main Street slipped into a decline." The old Bloomingdale's on Main Street has lain vacant for the past 25 years, and it appears to have brought down neighboring stores. Today, the Bloomingdale's block is one of the few stretches of Main Street marred by a continuous row of vacant, dilapidated storefronts.

By 1991, the downtown retail environment had badly eroded, according to Mitchell B. Kessler, who wrote a study of the New Rochelle Mall in that year. The downtown mall, anchored by a Macy's branch, opened in 1968 as the "centerpiece of the Cedar Street Urban Renewal Plan," with nearly 600,000 square feet of retail, a supermarket, and duplex cinemas. By 1991, Kessler would report, "there ha[d] been little improvement to the city since the New Rochelle Mall opened." He added that "the city's tax base [was] barely treading water," despite the \$824,340 generated by the mall for New Rochelle annually. Although there were 500,000 people living within a five-mile radius of Downtown, Kessler argued that New Rochelle's comparative disadvantages made it "impossible" to compete with White Plains, and that "New Rochelle's reputation as a merchant town in the mid-60s to early '70s, according to residents ... dwindled due to fear of crime, the closing down of major department stores, consistently below-average merchant mix, and stiff competition from the Galleria and White Plains Mall." After languishing for several years, Macy's closed in 1992, taking the entire mall with it shortly thereafter.

Another analysis of New Rochelle, written in 1995 by Jennifer M. Campion, called the city a “victim of economic decay.” That year, 400,000 square feet of downtown retail space sat vacant. Campion related New Rochelle’s 30% loss in tax ratables between 1985 and 1995: in 1988, the city’s taxable assessment roll was at \$400 million, but by 1994, it had declined to less than \$340 million. (New Rochelle’s adopted 2000 budget was \$75.1 million.) School taxes doubled during this period to make up the revenue loss. In addition, declining federal and state aid, and an aging and less wealthy population, added to the city’s troubles.

#### **5.2.4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Since the mid-'90s, city government has taken an active role in attracting retailers to the city. This is consistent with New Rochelle’s economic development strategy, which, as laid out in the City’s 1996 Comprehensive Plan, has three main objectives:

- Stimulate the expansion of job opportunities and strengthen the tax base.
- Encourage government participation and public-private partnerships in developing new business, commercial, and light industrial opportunities.
- Preserve and develop existing commercial and light industrial areas in the city.

The Comprehensive Plan calls for revitalizing Downtown as a safe, attractive, and economically productive shopping and working center that will draw from a larger market area in addition to serving local residents. Mixed-use developments with commercial, residential, cultural, entertainment, and recreational functions are encouraged by the plan. Improving the downtown retail climate would add substantially to New Rochelle’s sales tax revenue. With the city, as described above, currently operating under a property tax rate cap, it sees increasing sales taxes through retail development as a key revenue generator.

City officials considered the attraction of a Home Depot store, which opened in 1996, as a major success. Three years after the store opened at the western approach to Downtown from the New England Thruway, the *New York Times* reported with tempered enthusiasm that “the city’s rebirth began in 1996 when Costco Wholesale” – which had relocated from another location within the city – “and Home Depot opened stores on the city’s South Side, although downtown did not benefit that much.”

New Rochelle’s downtown development efforts are currently centered on three major projects: New Roc City, Avalon on the Sound, and an Intermodal Center at the Metro North train station. Together these represent an investment of over \$265 million in the city.

#### **New Roc City**

By far the most important project in New Rochelle in recent years has been New Roc City, an entertainment complex with a handful of sports-related stores and businesses that opened in fall of 1999 on the former site of the New Rochelle Mall. The 500,000 square-foot development cost \$190 million. Its amenities include an Imax theater with 18 conventional screens, an extensive video arcade, ice skating, three restaurants, a supermarket, a Marriott Residence Inn, and a bowling center. Its roof holds “Space Shot,” a 235-foot free-fall ride. New Rochelle subsidized the project by building its \$24 million garage, which was financed by an IDA bond. The developer, Louis Cappelli, calls the concept “recession proof.”

Thus far, the mixed-use development has had mixed results. The hotel is often filled, and 95% of the mall's retail space is taken. Cappelli has decided to add, instead of office space originally planned on the site, 100 luxury apartments that he has said will create "street presence." Half of the apartments, which will rent for \$2,500 per month for a one-bedroom, were rented by the turn of 2001.

As of December 2000, however, New Roc's visitor totals were lagging far behind initial projections. Only 3.1 million people – 56% of the number expected – went to New Roc in its first year. "Meanwhile, at City Hall," the *Times* reported, "elected officials have compared the tax dollars generated with the costs of patrolling and otherwise maintaining municipal services, including a police substation, at the facility – not to mention their \$24 million investment in the center's parking garage." According to Mayor Timothy C. Itoni, the city's costs to maintain New Roc's new infrastructure exceeded income by \$400 million. Four months earlier, the *Times* reported that "several downtown business owners said New Roc had yet to bring them more customers." Unfortunately, New Roc's flawed design fails to complement existing stores: three of its four walls – including the façade facing Main Street – are blank walls, providing no entrances to the mall. Those leaving the mall's only street entrance, on LeCount Place, face an unenticing group of meager businesses and small offices, including a branch bank, funeral home, and Planned Parenthood office. Of course, with any untested concept like New Roc, there is always the question of whether management can keep the idea fresh enough to attract a continuous flow of repeat customers, especially with first-year customer numbers 44% below expectations.

R.E.I., an upscale retailer of outdoor gear that has had a store on Main Street for eleven years, announced in 2000 that it would close the location in June of 2001.

### **Avalon-on-the-Sound**

Avalon-on-the-Sound, a \$100 million development on Huguenot Street in Downtown New Rochelle, will consist of 1,000 residential units, bringing market-rate apartments to New Rochelle's downtown for the first time in more than 50 years. The first phase of construction, which is expected to be completed in 2001, will create 412 apartments. Construction will begin on a second phase, located across Huguenot Street from the first, once Phase One is fully rented, bringing the total number of apartments to about 1,000. Rents range from \$1,285 for a 449-square-foot studio to \$3,505 for a 1,344-square-foot three bedroom apartment. Located within walking distance of the Metro North train station, the building will cater to commuters.

Avalon Bay Communities, the apartments' developer, received substantial incentives from the city. "We've worked out a 30-year payment plan with the city for the land and taxes on the property," Fred Harris, Avalon's vice president for development said in 1999. "The payments are based on our net income, and it's no secret that it works out to be a lot less than if we were paying up front and were taxed at the full rate." New Rochelle officials believe the incentives are worth it, as Avalon will "attract young professionals who have been priced out of the New York City housing market," spurring downtown development.

### **Intermodal Transportation Center**

The Intermodal Center is to be constructed on city-owned land across the street from Avalon-on-the-Sound with over \$15 million in funding from the federal, state, and county

governments. The Center, which will replace the existing Metro-North and Amtrak station, will include new bus and train terminals as well as taxi and limousine stands.

In addition to these projects, plans are currently underway by Cappelli to construct an office building across Huguenot Street from New Roc City. This would complement the city's apparent strategy of intensifying development around New Roc City, which city officials view as Downtown's focal point.

As detailed elsewhere in this report, New Rochelle's effort to increase sales tax revenue involved entertaining a proposal by IKEA, the Swedish furniture retailer, to build a store on 14.9 acres in the Fifth Avenue/City Park neighborhood, which has 34 residences and several businesses, and which was deemed blighted by a 1999 study. Citing the prohibitive cost of new traffic infrastructure, and facing strong opposition from residents within New Rochelle and its neighboring town of Mamaroneck, including those opposed to the use of eminent domain for retail purposes, Ikea withdrew its store proposal on January 31, 2001.

#### **5.2.5 NEW ROCHELLE: LAND USE**

The city of New Rochelle adopted major land use and development studies in 1965, 1966, and 1977. The 1965 study identified about 130 acres of industrial use, mostly along the railroad and New England Thruway rights-of-way. The study noted the infill of small plots with industrial construction. It recommended that the city conserve large tracts of land for major industrial enterprises providing many jobs and higher tax base. Also, the study recommended "total elimination of slums and blight."

The 1966 study was a follow-up to the 1965 plan. It gave vague guidelines for evaluating neighborhood deficiencies. The study also identified issues of concern for Neighborhood 7 (which encompassed the current study area): new industry was too small, the street pattern was inadequate for industrial use, physical blight was becoming apparent, and the community needed to encourage development in accordance with established goals.

The 1977 plan cited economic viability as its goal. That meant expanding New Rochelle's tax base, especially in vacant or underutilized commercial space. The area near City Park was identified as one of nine underutilized and developable sites.

#### **The 1996 Comprehensive Plan**

This plan, prepared by Sacardi & Schiff, Inc. and adopted by City Council in 1996, renewed New Rochelle's commitment to industrial development. It identified property along Fifth Avenue, and other areas, as having "redevelopment potential" because of blighting influences. The plan recommended that underutilized parcels be combined to create large redevelopment sites. It also identified the Fifth Avenue industrial area for improvement, citing the following problems: narrow streets, limited parking, and truck traffic congestion; small parcels of residential use in a non residential area; and poor access at the Potter and Fifth Avenue intersection.

The Plan recommended that unbuilt streets be combined with underutilized plots to create large developable sites; for the area be used for light industry, commerce, and public



services; and that parcels or assembled sites have adequate access and on-site parking.

### **5.2.6 NEW ROCHELLE: HOUSING**

Both New Rochelle and Westchester County as a whole suffer from a lack of affordable housing. The median price of a one-family house in New Rochelle was \$400,000 in 2000, skyrocketing from \$335,000 in 1999 and \$295,000 in 1995.

Upper-priced housing is selling quickly. One real estate agent said in 2000, "Even our high-end buyers in the \$900,000 range keep losing homes because houses are getting multiple bids by buyers willing to pay \$50,000 to \$75,000 over asking to live here in magnificent Tudors and large, old colonials." Fortunately, the city is considered to have a relatively varied housing stock, especially for Westchester: "This is one of the few places in Westchester where you can still find a small, starter home on a small corner or near the railroad for between \$155,000 to \$225,000," according to Beryl Zawatsky of Beryl Z. Realty. Other housing options include 41 co-op complexes, eight condominiums, 268 multiple-family houses, and 70 apartment buildings. A two-bedroom co-op ranges from \$60,000 to \$150,000, and a two-bedroom condominium from \$135,000 to \$255,000. A two-bedroom apartment rents for approximately \$1,100 a month.

Although New Rochelle maintains public housing units, in recent years, affordable housing has increasingly become the responsibility of the private, not-for-profit New Rochelle Neighborhood Revitalization Corporation (NRNRC), which operates the MacLeay Apartments on Fifth Avenue in the Study Area (see MacLeay Apt, section 5.3.6). Since the NRNRC's founding in 1979, it has built or renovated approximately 1,200 units in New Rochelle, including 180 at MacLeay. Although the NRNRC operates rental housing, including MacLeay, according to the organization, "expanding home ownership to first-time buyers in the City of New Rochelle has been a priority." The needs of those unable to afford even a modestly priced home have not been as convincingly addressed, as rental housing that has been recently built or is planned has been aimed primarily at senior citizens rather than people of working age. Properties owned or developed by NRNRC, in addition to MacLeay, include:

- West End 2000, a \$40 million project, which will have 66 single-family town houses and 100 units of senior assisted living.
- Lawn Avenue, which opened in spring, 1999, with ten two-family town houses. Families living at the complex own their homes, and rent out an apartment within to a senior citizen.
- Lincoln Avenue Townhouses, a group of 37 owner-occupied modular homes. Financial assistance for the development came from the New York State Affordable Housing Corporation, the County of Westchester Housing Implementation Fund, Federal HOME Funds, and land write-down from New Rochelle.

In January 2001, in addition, Westchester County announced that it would spend \$4.8 million to acquire property in downtown New Rochelle, where it would build senior assisted-living units and single-family homes. According to the *New York Times*, the county, with the city of New Rochelle, plans to buy 16 properties in what the article described as a "rundown neighborhood" and turn them over to the NRNRC. The

Corporation will coordinate the construction of up to 20 single-family homes, as well as a seven-story building with 102 rental units aimed at people 75 and older. Again, the emphasis is on seniors and on moving renters to home ownership: "Residents living in New Rochelle's ethnically mixed low-to-moderate-income urban renewal district, who are mostly renting, will have the first chance to own the new units," the article said.

Although the NRNRC is independent of the city, its board members have close ties to City Hall. NRNRC's current president, Frank Garito, was the Mayor of New Rochelle from 1970 to 1975. The current Mayor, Timothy Idoni, was executive vice president of NRNRC from 1990 until he became mayor in 1991.

As elaborated upon below, many MacLeay tenants have complained bitterly about the NRNRC's management of their complex.

### **New Rochelle Housing Prices (2000)**

Median price of a one-family house:	\$400,000
Taxes on median-price house:	\$11,000
Median price in 1999:	\$335,000
Median price five years ago:	\$295,000
Median price of a two-bedroom co-op:	\$75,000
Median price of a two-bedroom condominium:	\$160,000
Midrange rent of a two-bedroom apartment:	\$1,100

### **5.2.7 NEW ROCHELLE: SCHOOLS**

Despite significant erosion of its tax base in the 1980s and early '90s, New Rochelle has maintained an excellent public school system. The district has three magnet schools, and its high school produced semifinalists in the Intel Science Talent Search in 1997, 1999, and 2000. Several of New Rochelle's public schools have also earned the National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence by the New York State Education Department.

In 2000, 62% of the district's 496 high school graduates were accepted to four-year colleges. Another 27% were accepted by two-year colleges; in total, an impressive 89% of New Rochelle's high school graduates are accepted to two- or four-year colleges directly out of high school. In addition, 19% of New Rochelle students attend private schools, including parochial and Jewish schools. The city is home to three colleges: Iona, Monroe, and the College of New Rochelle. Currently, the city is expanding its public schools to ease a space crunch. School officials reported in 2001 that the high school was over capacity, and 300 to 500 additional students were expected over the next few years.

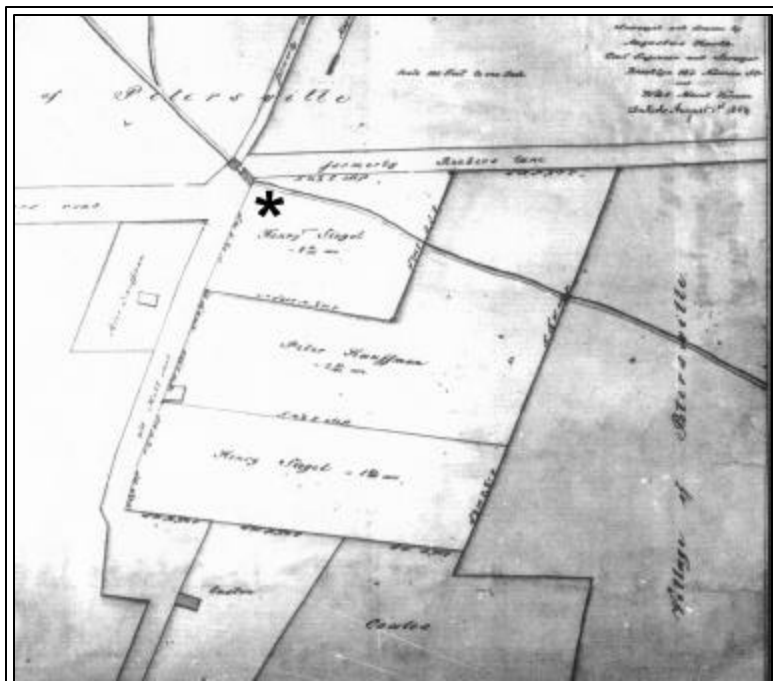
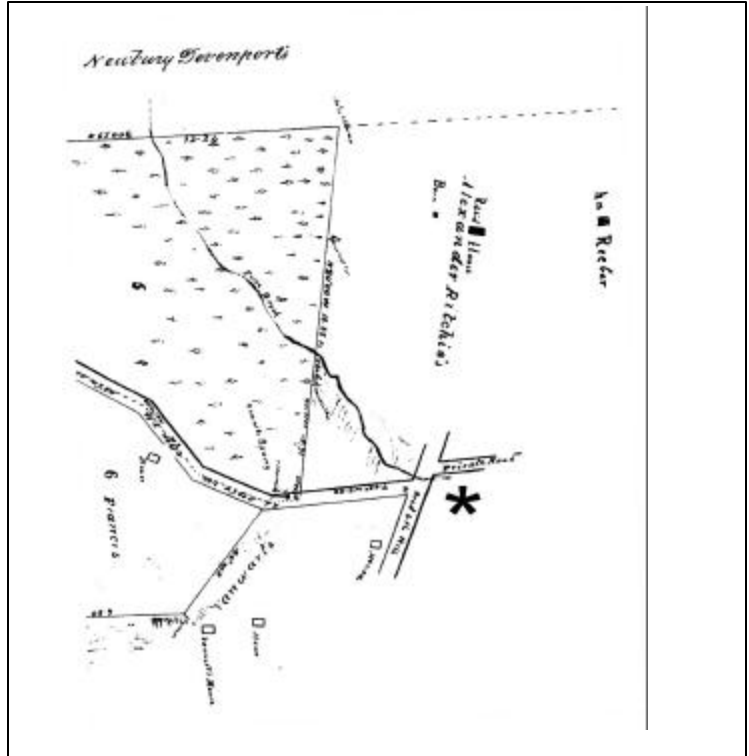
In general, taxpayers in Westchester, with its 1995 average per capita income of \$40,696, have been asked to shoulder more of the burden for their schools than residents of poorer counties, who receive a higher proportion of state aid. James Maisano, a county legislator representing parts of New Rochelle, Pelham Manor, and Pelham, said in 1999 that in New Rochelle, "the state's policies were pitting parents of school-age children against the elderly." According to New Rochelle's school superintendent, the percentage of its budget paid by the state fell from 25% to 13% between 1991 and 1999, despite an enrollment increase of 2,000 students.

### 5.3. CITY PARK BACKGROUND

#### 5.3.1 CITY PARK: HISTORY

##### Rural Beginnings

Through the 19th century, the area including and adjoining today's Fifth Avenue neighborhood was known as Petersville. The northwest corner of the neighborhood appeared on an 1846 "Map of a Farm Belonging to John R. Peters Situated in the Town of New Rochelle," at left. Today's Portman Road, which forms the western boundary of the study area, was labeled as "Road to the Mill"; the street was known as Mill Road at least until 1931, although the size, age, location, and purpose of the mill it refers to do not appear to have been documented. Pine Brook passed under the intersection of Portman and what is today Fifth Avenue, which, in 1846, was labeled, east of the intersection, as a private road. The land that is now City Park was labeled as the property of Alexander Ritchie, and the site of his house and barn. The intersection of what is today Portman Road and Fifth Avenue is indicated by the asterisk.



In 1855, much of the study area was in the hands of Peter Kauffman and Henry Siegel. On an 1855 map, today's Fifth Avenue was labeled as "Formerly Reebers Lane," and Pine Brook passed underneath two bridges at the intersection with "Old Mill Road." The lands east, north, and west of Kauffman's and Siegel's holdings were labeled as "Village of Petersville." Today's Fifth Avenue west of the study area was called Peters Road. The asterisk at right indicates the same location as on the 1846 map.

In 1856, today's City Park

property was still owned by Alexander Ritchie. The lands east of Ritchie's property and between the study area and the main line of the New York and New Haven Railroad had been subdivided. The railroad, which was completed through New Rochelle in 1848, is seen as a heavy black line running across the bottom of the map. According to the map's title, the subdivided properties belonged to an organization called the Petersville Homestead Association. Siegel and Kauffman retained the lands in the western portion of the study area. The MacLeay Apartments now stand on the site of the subdivided properties at the upper-right portion of the map. The eastern two-thirds of the study area was labeled "Land of Lorenz Bielm," possibly corrupted into "Biehn," the name of a street currently located within the study area. The jagged southern boundary of Bielm's holdings today forms the southern boundary of the study area. Fifth Avenue was called Morris Avenue; the asterisk indicates what is today the intersection of Fifth Avenue and Portman.

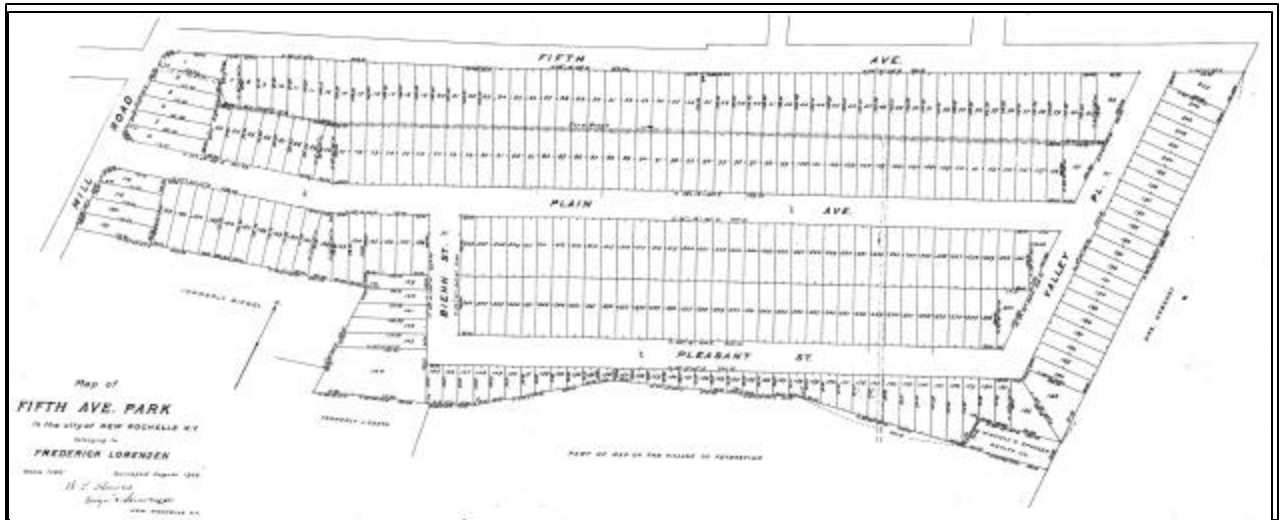


Little development took place in the study area before the early 20th century. The 1901 Bromley map of the neighborhood, shown at right, indicates that no building had taken place in the subdivided areas north and south of the study area. Siegel's and Kauffman's properties had been acquired by James Burns and Fred Krause, who had erected a few wooden buildings and auxiliary structures on their property. Pine Brook continued to run underneath the jagged intersection of what is today Fifth Avenue, but was then known as Morris Avenue east of Mill Road and Peters Road west of Mill. The Petersville name remained north of the study area. The asterisk indicates the same location as on the 1846, 1855, and 1856 maps.

### **Urbanization**

By 1907, Bielm's and Burns's former properties were owned by Frederick Lorenzen. A map filed that year with the Westchester County Registrar called the district "Fifth Avenue Park," possibly in anticipation of the construction of City Park across Fifth Avenue from the neighborhood. The study area was neatly subdivided into lots as close in size to 25-by-100 feet as was possible within the irregular boundaries of the site. This lot size, the standard for developers of New York City rowhouses during the 19th century, indicates that Lorenzen envisioned the neighborhood as a dense, urban district. Despite the new name, the map described the area as "part of map of the Village of Petersville." Fifth Avenue had acquired its present name, and Pine Brook had been redirected, apparently into a pipe, which ran underneath the neighborhood and the intersection of Mill and Fifth.

The neighborhood underwent substantial changes around 1910. That year, the City of New Rochelle purchased the land that was to become City Park. According to local



historian Herbert B. Nichols, writing in 1938, “The park contains nearly 30 acres, a part of which has been left as natural woodland. The rest, with a suitable athletic building, has been conditioned into baseball diamonds, football fields, and a running track.” The Municipal Recreation Building described by Nichols was completed in 1923 and designed by Lawrence M. Loeb, an architect of several Westchester County residences. The building, visible on the previous page at left, still stands, although boarded up and unused, in City Park.

Just as significantly, 1910 was the year in which the trolley was extended to the study area. By that time, New Rochelle had developed a sophisticated trolley system that had begun in 1885 with the organization of the New Rochelle and Pelham Railway Company and the New Rochelle Street Horse Railway Company. From City Park, riders could travel down Fifth Avenue to North Avenue, where they could transfer to the trolley that would take them downtown. A Main Street line from Downtown traveled to Mamaroneck; a connection to Mount Vernon made it possible to ride all the way to New York City. So popular were the trolleys and so willing were their patrons to travel long distances that, according to Nichols, “The trolley and its connection with New York City had been fought by local merchants because they feared that shoppers would take the trolley to New York instead of shopping in New Rochelle.” By the 1940s, as throughout the country, buses began to replace many trolley lines.

By 1910, home builders had already begun subverting Lorenzen’s orderly, dense subdivision plan. The 1910 Bromley map, at right, shows 11 wooden buildings and one wooden auxiliary structure present in the study area, all on combined lots; 146 Pleasant, for example, is tucked into the corner of what were originally three lots, and three houses on Plain Avenue share a frontage of 125 feet.

The 1915 New York State Census provided a thumbnail sketch of the neighborhood’s population. All of the neighborhood’s houses were single-family dwellings, and the male heads of household were primarily laborers or other blue-collar workers. Fifth Avenue’s residents included natives of Germany, Italy, Russia, and Poland. Plain Avenue’s residents were from Italy, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Sweden, and England. Pleasant Street was entirely Italian, except for a German bookbinder, his Irish wife, and their two American-

born daughters.

Subdivision of area properties continued into the 1920s. In 1925, Rosina B. Krause subdivided her land along the east side of Mill Road near Sharot Street into 18 properties, 16 of which had 25-foot frontages. Again, however, dense development did not follow; by 1929, five of the lots were purchased by the Sheffield Farms Dairy, which erected the milk distribution center shown above. The structure, now occupied by the New Rochelle Humane Society, included, according to the 1931 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, an office, wagon storage, and feed storage.



In 1928, the study area was not zoned as a purely residential district. Those areas that were residential were zoned for multiple dwellings. The entire block bounded by Fifth Avenue, Mill Road, Plain Avenue, and Valley Place was zoned “O,” or “business.” The south side of Plain was also zoned for businesses. Both sides of Pleasant Street were zoned “C” or “multifamily residential.” The “O” zoning accommodated modifications and uses such as those present at 71 Plain, where a store was added on to the front of a 1914 Dutch Colonial Revival house typical of many built throughout the neighborhood during its early years.

By 1929, the neighborhood had considerably filled in. The 1929 Hopkins Atlas showed several masonry buildings to have been constructed, particularly along both sides of Pleasant Street and the south side of Plain Avenue between Biehn and Valley. The Fifth Avenue trolley line terminated at Fifth Avenue and Mill Road. The property between the study area and the railroad tracks was labeled “Pelham-Port Chester Parkway,” indicating the proposed route of a highway running from Fairfield County, Connecticut to the Bronx along the eastern portion of Westchester County. The lands between Mill Road and the Mamaroneck town line near the eastern portion of the study area, which were never built upon, were acquired by Westchester County in the early 1930s. Although the parkway was never built, this property was used as the right-of-way for the New England Thruway (the Westchester County portion of Interstate 95), which opened, in its entirety, on October 15, 1958. East of City, where the MacLeay Apartments were constructed in 1949, were approximately eight buildings, all, except for one, built out of wood.



On the 1931 Sanborn Map, the study area is shown to be primarily residential, with some important exceptions. Fifth Avenue, similar to today, had mixed commercial and residential uses, with dwellings interspersed with stores, two contractors’ yards, storage areas, a sheet-metal works, and a gas station in

the same location as today's Citgo station. The north side of Plain Avenue was entirely residential, except for a factory located near Mill Road; the south side was also entirely residential, except for the store, previously mentioned, at 71 Plain. Pleasant Street was entirely residential. Even so, the neighborhood must have had a similar jumbled appearance to today's; most dwellings had auxiliary buildings, likely chicken coops or storage sheds. Moreover, the large number of open lots in the neighborhood, still present, prevented the creation of a continuous residential streetscape, except for the small residential enclaves on the south side of Pleasant Street and the north side of Plain.

Significant change came to the neighborhood in 1955, when it was zoned as an M-1 Light Manufacturing District. Since then, residential and industrial uses have shared the study area. No new houses have been built in the neighborhood since the rezoning, which prohibits residences, and several former houses, such as 53 Pleasant Street, have been converted to commercial use.



Buses, which took over New Rochelle's trolley routes beginning in the 1940s, proved to be a mixed blessing. Although the new, air-conditioned buses initially elicited "applause from merchants and shoppers who crowded the curbs" to see them in Downtown New Rochelle, inconsistent service ultimately followed, likely decreasing the Fifth Avenue neighborhood's appeal. The Fifth Avenue bus line was extended to Valley Place by 1973, where it looped back along Plain Avenue, but this may have decreased the attractiveness of the neighborhood. When bus service had

been extended through a primarily African-American neighborhood in 1967, for example, one resident called it a "Stab in the back to Negroes," protesting to his Councilman, "Is it because Negroes now own the properties along this route on Lincoln Avenue and the surrounding area why you decided to give them more air pollution with the accompanying noise and litter?"

New Rochelle's bus operators ultimately hit hard times; but 1970, the intervention of the County Executive was needed to prevent termination of Sunday service on some city lines, and in 1974, service cutbacks of 15% were imposed in some areas due to financial hardship. Today, the No. 61 route of the Westchester County Bee-Line bus, operated by Liberty Lines, stops at City Park approximately every half hour on weekdays on its way to Downtown New Rochelle.

### **5.3.2 CITY PARK: NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER**

Many residents of the Study Area have lived there for over 20 years. Eighty-two year-old Josephine Notaro, of 49 Pleasant Street, was born and grew up in that house and remembers when the area behind it (now I-95) was swampland. Other residents, like Mr. and Mrs. Dominick Gataletto, of 8 Pleasant Street recall the neighborhood from around the

time of World War II, when it was home mostly to immigrants from Italy. There was a butcher shop and a candy store where children could buy soda and snacks, and the milkman from the Sheffield Farms distribution center on Sharot Street would share his ice with local residents for their iceboxes.

After the city rezoned the City Park area M-1 in 1955, industrial uses increased and residential property values continued to decline. Many of the business owners in the area, however, cite the attractiveness of being in a neighborhood where industry thrives. The McMahons, who own a prepared-food distribution business on Pleasant Avenue, usually begin their day around 3:30 am and try to have the trucks loaded and on the road by 5:00 am. It is a great advantage to them to be surrounded by other businesses that do not complain about the noise and early hours.

Many of the new residents of the City Park area are recent immigrants, mostly Latinos. A few cite living in a mixed industrial/residential neighborhood as an advantage because they work in landscaping or other agricultural services like tree trimming and are able to store equipment and vehicles on the premises without the complaints that could be elicited if the neighborhood were entirely residential. Although the city has designated the Fifth Avenue study area as blighted, most of the structures are well maintained (see blight assessment section). Many of the houses have gardens and planters in the front, and front porches with chairs where people sit and visit. People know each other in the City Park area, and there is a feeling of community among the neighbors. It is a well-integrated neighborhood, with Latino immigrants, older Italians, African-Americans, and a variety of businesses co-existing side by side. The storage yard at the corner of Valley Place on the north side of Biehn Street is not well lit and attracts rowdy teenagers in the early hours but besides that, crime is almost non-existent in this neighborhood, according to residents' and business owners' accounts.

Two churches have buildings in the Study Area. The Emanuel AME church at the corner of Valley and Plain Avenue is home to two congregations. St. Paul's Refuge Church on Plain Avenue is a smaller, independent church. Emanuel AME has a very active African-American congregation which holds a social every first and third Saturday of the month. On Sunday mornings, parking can be difficult, with many people attending the two services.

This neighborhood is alive and active every day. Weekdays begin early and see a flurry of activity dominated by the businesses. Trucks make deliveries and pick-ups, many of them temporarily obstructing the narrow streets. Early mornings and after 3:00 pm, school buses leave their storage lots on the way to pick up children all over New Rochelle. Some of the children who live in the neighborhood also rely on school buses to get to school. The businesses close at night and the entire area quiets down.

The majority of the workers in the study area appear to be men. When asked, many said they live in New Rochelle, within five to ten miles of work. Until April, when it closed, there was one eating place in the area, Rose's Pizza Parlor, which was owned by a Brazilian couple. Between noon and 2:00 pm, the eatery was full and lively, but after about 2:30 it was deserted. The business' owners said they were moving it because the lunch crowd does not provide sufficient revenue for them to stay in business. They claim that no business could survive in this spot because of the lack of parking and customer base. There is one gas station on Fifth Avenue, and a convenience store and laundromat on Fifth



Avenue between Potter and Portman. These are located at the far western end of the Study Area, and are difficult to walk to from the eastern portion, because of the poor condition of Fifth Avenue's sidewalks.

Fifth Avenue is a narrow, two-lane through street leading to North Avenue, one of New Rochelle's main downtown streets. It connects this area with Larchmont and the I-95 South ramp to New York City at Chatsworth Road. Although the posted speed limit is 25, vehicles and heavy trucks regularly speed down Fifth Avenue, posing a great hazard to the residents, especially tenants of the MacLeay Apartments. Fifth Avenue is too narrow to provide any parking, and the speeding traffic makes it extremely difficult for vehicles exiting the lots of the businesses on the street.

Across from the industrial section of the study area on Fifth Avenue is William Flower Park, more commonly called by its original name, City Park, which is surrounded by a continuous green chain-link fence along its Fifth Avenue frontage. A few of the neighborhood's residents stated that they did not know that this was a public park. On weekends, the Park is used by little leagues and two intramural soccer leagues. Parking is a big problem and people who use the park complain bitterly about being ticketed unfairly. There is a pool at William Flower Park, and a playground for the kids, a soccer field, a football field and a baseball diamond. These amenities are not easily visible from Fifth Avenue. The old Municipal Recreation Building remains padlocked and boarded up.

The Redevelopment Area includes portions of three census blocks. The area north of Plain Avenue is part of block 107; the area south of Plain Avenue between Biehn Street, Pleasant Street, and Valley Place comprises block 201; and the small section of the Redevelopment Area to the east of Biehn Street and south of Plain Avenue lies in block 202. The population of all three of these blocks decreased by more than half from 1960 to 1990 and is expected to show further decline when then 2000 census results are available. These blocks are also more racially heterogeneous than New Rochelle as a whole, with nearly 60% of the population being non-white.

### **5.3.3 CITY PARK: LAND USE AND ZONING**

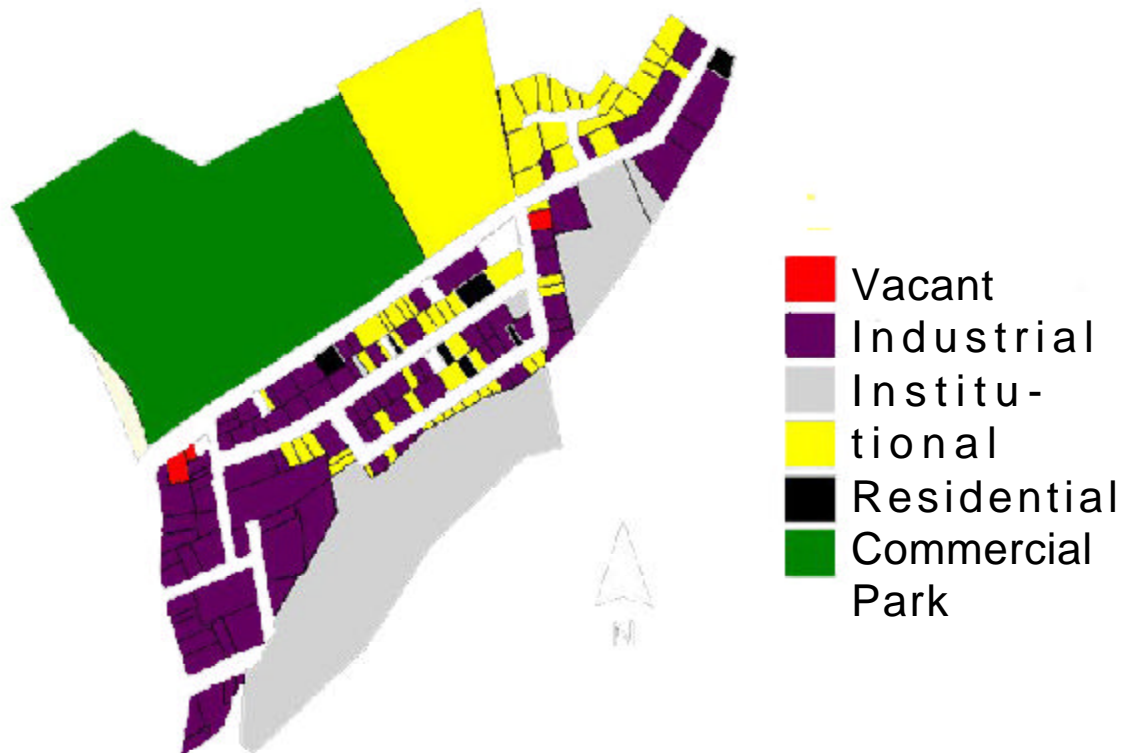
#### **New Rochelle and Adjoining Areas**

Zoning in nearby areas of New Rochelle includes R-3B (garden apartments); R-1A and R-1B (single-family neighborhoods); and small areas of M-1, C-1 (general commercial); and R-2 (two-family residences). Zoning in Mamaroneck includes SB (service businesses); R-TA (tower apartments); B-MUB (mixed use business); and B (business); most of the area, however, is zoned R-7.5 (minimum lot of 7,500 square feet). Zoning in Larchmont is mostly R-5 and R-7.5 (minimum lot sizes, in square feet, of single family residences), and includes areas zoned RC (retail center) and RB (retail business). Adjoining areas east of Valley Place (in Mamaroneck) consist mainly of commercial uses (auto repair, party supplies, millwork, bus parking, maintenance) but include two residences.

Adjoining areas south of the Thruway include mixed commercial and apartment residences (in New Rochelle and Mamaroneck). Further east (in Mamaroneck) are the Thruway exit ramp, several commercial uses, some light industrial, a couple of single family homes, and several 6-8 story apartment buildings. In Mamaroneck, the Study Area encompasses a low-density single-family residential neighborhood. Further north is a low-density residential neighborhood. Further west and south (in New Rochelle) are commercial uses

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# Study Area Land Uses



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along Fifth Avenue, light industry and manufacturing, and some residential homes.

## Study Area

Within the Study Area, features north of Fifth Avenue include William Flower Park (City Park, 20 acres), and MacLeay Apartments (180 units). Adjoining areas west of Portman Road and Biehn Street are a mix of manufacturing, residential, and commercial uses.

The New Rochelle Zoning Code calls for the protection and promotion of the public health, safety, and welfare; adequate public facilities and services; family privacy; prevention of traffic congestion; protection from excessive monotony of building design, enhancement of the community appearance, and protection of the environment.

The Fifth Avenue Area is zoned M-1, Light Manufacturing. This district allows the following uses as of right:

- Retail stores and shops, except drive-in establishments.
- Service and automobile repair establishments, except body work, painting, or gasoline filling stations.
- Restaurants and amusement establishments.
- Business, professional, utility, or government offices and 1 dwelling for a caretaker.
- Off-street parking facilities.

- 60% maximum lot coverage.
- 10 foot minimum front yard.
- No required side or rear yard.
- Parking Spaces: 1 for every 600 square feet of floor area (only 1 per 2000 square feet for storage facilities).
- Off street loading berths: 1 for the first 10,000 square feet of floor area, plus 1 for every additional 20,000 square feet.

In addition, in City Park:

- Residential uses account for about three acres of the former IKEA redevelopment area. All homes (except one) were constructed before 1932, most are rented (18 rented and 13 owned), and many along the south side of Pleasant St “infringe” on Thruway property.
- Vacant and Open uses (not including City Park) comprise 2.41 acres; many are currently used for vehicle and equipment storage.
- Warehouse, Distribution, and Storage uses comprise five acres. Many of the lots were formerly residential. Commercial structures use nearly the entire lot, and few have on-site parking or loading.
- Other uses amount to 1.7 acres, which include 2 churches, 140,000 sq.ft. of manufacturing space, a gas station, a deli, and an office.

There are a total of 176 tax lots in the study area, 135 of which are in New Rochelle and 41 of which are in Mamaroneck. Three variances have been granted by the Board of Appeals on Zoning (in 1992, 1993, and 1996) to allow auto body establishments.

The expanded study area comprises a total of 102.42 acres. Of this, 86.79 acres are located in New Rochelle and 15.63 acres are in Mamaroneck. Significant portions of the area are constituted by MacLeay Apartments (10.95 acres), City Park (21.62 acres), and I-95 (15.29 acres). Details are contained in the table below.

## Area of Study Area by Land Use

### New Rochelle Portion

Commercial Properties	1.6
Industrial Properties	13.3
Religious Properties	0.17
Residential Properties	4.46
Vacant Properties	0.68
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>20.21</b>
City Park	21.62
MacLeay Apartments	10.95
I-95 (Thruway Authority)	15.29
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>68.07</b>
Other uses (Roadways)	18.72
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>86.79</b>

### Mamaroneck Portion

Commercial Properties	0.18
Industrial Properties	4.84
Residential Properties	7.37
Thruway Authority Equipment Yard	0.46
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>12.85</b>
Other uses (Roadways)	2.78
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15.63</b>

### Combined

Commercial Properties	1.78
Industrial Properties	18.14
Religious Properties	0.17
Residential Properties	11.83
Vacant Properties	0.68
City Park	21.62
MacLeay Apartments	10.95
I-95 (Thruway Authority)	15.29
Thruway Authority Equipment Yard	0.46
Other uses (Roadways)	21.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>102.42</b>

#### **5.3.4 CITY PARK: BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY**

The City of New Rochelle still retains a significant amount of manufacturing and warehousing activity. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 1997 Economic Census, New Rochelle has 61 manufacturing establishments and 147 wholesale trade establishments. These two categories of business employ 2,388 people in the city.

The City Park neighborhood is a vibrant industrial area. Existing manufacturers have been in the area for a long time, in many instances more than ten years. Others, like

Marble America, are actively expanding. Many of the dominant industrial sectors in the county also have a strong presence in City Park. In our surveys of the study area, we identified a total of 64 businesses (see Appendix 1), nearly all of which are involved in light industrial activities. Fifteen of these businesses are auto-related, performing such services as repair and body work. Sixteen of the area's businesses provide goods and services related to building construction and home design and decorating (e.g., cabinets and floor tiles). Other light industrial uses found in the area include food production and distribution and the manufacture of industrial machine parts.

### **1989 Industrial Development Study**

This study, conducted in 1989, catalogued land uses in the Fifth Avenue area. Each parcel was reviewed and deficiencies were noted as slight, intermediate, or critical. 50% of the properties were assigned a "critical" label (11 acres), 14% were "intermediate" (3.4 acres), and only 35% were "economically viable" (about 8 acres). None of the properties identified in the same category were contiguous, making it difficult for the city to assemble large parcels of re-developable land without upsetting the viable properties.

The study proposed the following action plan:

- Estimate property values to determine acquisition costs.
- Authorize staff to prepare necessary findings to declare the site an Urban Renewal Area.
- Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement to amend zoning and adopt a new Urban Renewal Plan.
- Prepare a study to determine the area's appropriateness for use as a the municipal equipment yard. The Commissioner of Public Works estimated that any potential equipment yard site must be a minimum of 6 contiguous acres.

### **5.3.5 CITY PARK: MACLEAY APARTMENTS**

**Note:** During the spring of 2001, two meetings were held with MacLeay residents, who provided information on their experiences at the complex. Although numerous attempts over a period of several weeks were made to arrange a private interview with the management of NRNRC, these requests were not granted.

#### **Background**

MacLeay Apartments is located across from Fifth Avenue adjacent to William Flower Park (City Park). The 180-unit complex has three buildings, which were built in 1949 and owned by the New Rochelle Public Housing Authority until sold in 1986 to the non-profit New Rochelle Neighborhood Revitalization Corporation (NRNRC), which was created in 1979 by the city to develop, own and manage affordable housing.

In 1985, the city turned to the NRNRC because it could not finance renovations at MacLeay, but a private agency could, by qualifying for HUD grants. City officials and residents described the complex as "deplorably dilapidated." The buildings had numerous broken windowpanes and extensive graffiti on the walls. NRNRC took over MacLeay Apartments for \$4.5 million, which was financed by a local bond issue and a \$1.93 million grant for renovations from HUD. City officials and members of NRNRC pointed out that, at

that time, MacLeay might have been the first public-housing project to be privatized and to retain all of its units as low-income. The HUD grant specified that only 20 percent of the rehabilitated housing had to remain low-income. NRNRC also paid the outstanding taxes and created a community center and a computer center during the renovation process.

In order to finance renovation of the three buildings, NRNRC issued more than \$5 million in bonds with future rents as security. It also received about \$3 million from the city, which will be repaid by the sale of tax credits and future rents, in addition to a \$1.9 million Housing Development Action Grant (HODAG) from HUD.

In April of 2001, NRNRC was in the news as the subject of a demonstration by approximately one dozen MacLeay residents outside of its Downtown New Rochelle office. The organization announced that it would switch from Section 8 to Housing Choice vouchers, enabling it to choose not to renew the leases of several residents, who complained that they had been good tenants and should be kept on. In addition, the unannounced removal of several benches and trees at the complex was a trigger that set off simmering complaints about what some residents saw as their landlord's high-handed manner.

This is not the first time that NRNRC has faced scrutiny. In 1989, an auditors' report criticized accounting procedures at NRNRC. The report found that \$77,500 was unaccounted for and that lawyers' fees of \$266,200 had not been paid. More than ten years later, there has been a financial turnaround. "Before conversion the complex was losing \$250,000 a year. Now it makes a profit of more than \$600,000 annually." For more on the MacLeay Apartments, please see section 7.

### **5.3.6 Environmental Assessment**

#### **Surface Water Resources**

There are no wetlands, wetland buffers or water bodies present within 100 feet of the Study Area. The closest water body to the Study Area is Beechmont Lake, which is located approximately 2000 feet to the northwest. The lake is at a higher elevation than the Study Area. Stormwater from the Study Area is collected in the city-maintained stormwater drain system and exits the Study Area at four discharge points.

Existing sources of pollutants may include: existing vehicle maintenance activities, the long-term storage of vehicles undergoing repairs, construction vehicles, and buses, the commercial use of diesel fuel and gasoline; and the outdoor storage of petroleum and/or chemical containers.

#### **Air Quality**

Although there are no available ambient air quality monitoring data within New Rochelle, regional state monitoring data are available to characterize the Redevelopment Area. The region 3 Air Quality Control Region (AQCR) meets the State Ambient Air Quality Standards (AAQS) for all criteria pollutants (including ozone, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, total suspended particulates, inhalable particulates, carbon monoxide, and lead) except ozone.

The report, however, notes that high ozone levels are found throughout the north-eastern United States, but this a regional problem more than a local problem and NYS along with other states have developed coordinating regulatory programs to work towards bringing the region into compliance. The sulfur dioxide annual concentrations have increased about 15% each year from 1994 to 1997, but decreased slightly between 1997 and 1998.

In terms of vehicle generated air quality, the primary pollutants include nitrogen dioxide, hydrocarbons, and carbon monoxide. Air quality impacts were calculated at four different intersections (Fifth Avenue and Portman Road, Fifth Avenue and Valley Peace, Madison Avenue/New Jefferson/I-95 Ramps, and Huguenot and North Avenue). The impacts were modeled assuming neutral atmospheric stability conditions and a 1 meter per second wind speed, which is representative of worst case dispersion conditions for urban areas. Table 3.10-2 of the DEIS presents the findings of the study in detail. The report indicates that all existing air quality concentrations were well below the AAQS.

### **Hazardous Materials**

As part of the background research for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) prepared by IKEA for their proposed store, a Phase I Environmental Assessment was completed for the area and its adjacent surroundings in May of 1999. The assessment involved interviews with persons knowledgeable of the site, a site inspection, and a review of environmental records and databases held by local, state, and federal agencies. Interviews with the property owners and managers of on-site businesses were not conducted, as it was difficult to obtain their cooperation regarding potential hazardous releases. Thus, visual site inspection was limited to public properties only.

A Phase II Site Assessment was completed in both March and August of 2000. In this assessment, an analysis of soil, groundwater, and soil gas samples was done. A portion of the study was completed with a geotechnical investigation. But as of the printing of the DEIS, the two phases had not yet been reviewed by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation or any other state or local agencies.

### Background Topography

Bedrock is predominant in the local topography. Groundwater in the area flows generally towards the east-northeast. It is important to note that groundwater is not used in the vicinity of the area as a drinking source or as an industrial supply. No public water supply, private wells, or industrial wells are known to be located in the vicinity of the area. Groundwater does not discharge to the surface in the vicinity of the area, and the closest downgradient receptor is Long Island Sound, which is 4,500 feet from the area. Therefore, the chemical composition of the groundwater is not directly impinging on human affairs.

### Phase I Findings

With the exception of fuel tanks, no environmental concerns were identified on residential properties. 39 fuel oil tanks are located within the Redevelopment Area. 17 fuel oil tanks serve residential properties, and of these, 3 are underground tanks. 12 of the 22 commercial tanks are underground. So a total of 15 underground fuel oil tanks are located within the Redevelopment Area.

On the Citgo Service Station property, a.k.a. S&A Garage, there is one active spill, one closed spill, and a closed tank test failure. Also, there are nine underground petroleum storage tanks in the area registered with the NYSDEC and there are underground petroleum storage tanks on two adjacent properties managed by Beechmont Bus Service near the eastern boundary of the site. The bus service has an active tank failure but we were not able to acquire information regarding remediation or follow-up. The spill involved small perforations in a fuel oil storage tank, which was being replaced at the time.

The Bluebird Taxi Service property at 613 Fifth Avenue also has an active gasoline spill from the removal of tanks in 1991, but again, we were not able to acquire the information on any follow-up here.

### Targeted Phase II Assessment

The purpose of Phase II was to characterize the hazardous materials or petroleum products within the Area via soil and groundwater sampling. The study targeted the three previously mentioned businesses, as well as the Absolute Coatings facility at 38 Portman Street because of its chemical usage and its status as a hazardous waste generator. The analysis was unable to procure data from private properties, so an additional investigation and sampling of these properties adjacent to Citgo are still necessary.

The six geotechnical sites found no volatile organic compounds. However, six of the seven environmental borings found volatile organic compounds, the most egregious of which were found at wells E-12 (950-3,500 PPM) and E-13 (23-225 PPM), adjacent to Citgo. These two wells contain a number of gasoline-related volatile organic compounds greatly in excess of state standards. The report confirms that gasoline-related compounds are present in the soil and groundwater near the Citgo station.

Tri-chloroethylene, a common solvent used in the manufacturing industry, was found at well E-8, adjacent to Absolute Coatings. This concentration is also above the State Ambient Water Quality Standard.

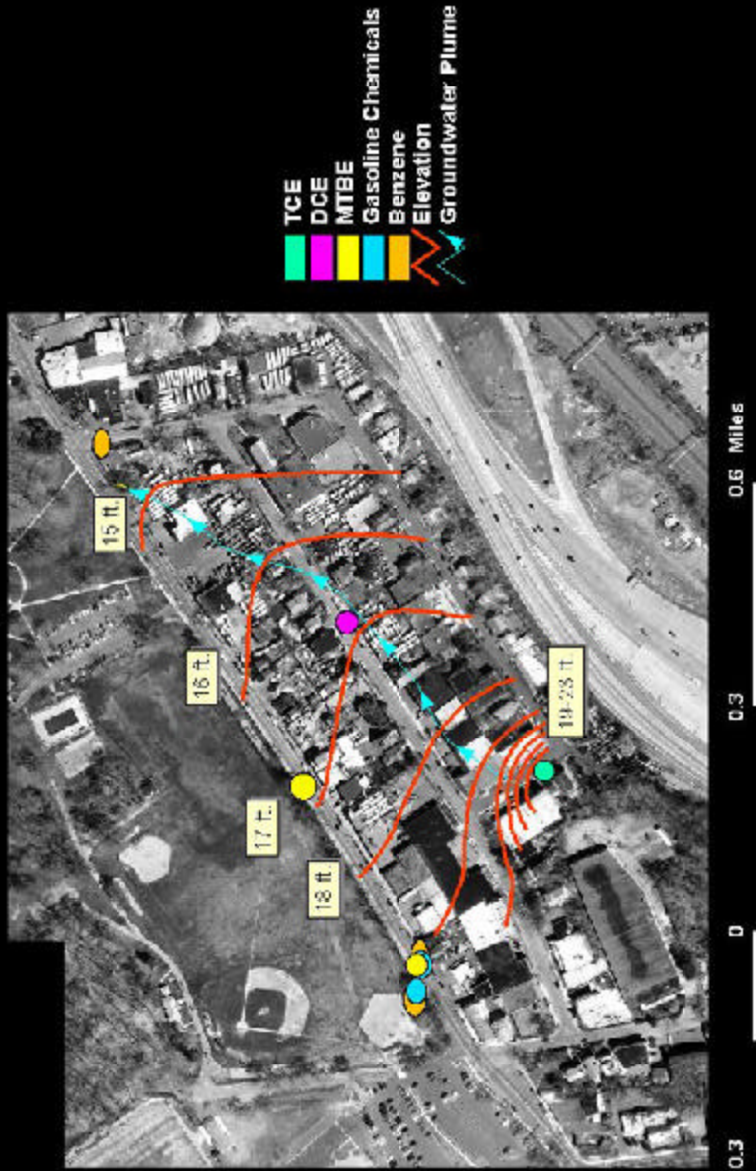
The compound 1,2-dichloroethylene was found in well E-18 (center of area) and E-1 (eastern edge), which is a huge distribution area. This chemical concentration was above the standards but the source was not known.

MTBE, a gasoline additive that is at the center of some national environmental issues, was found in six of the ten sampled wells. According to the EPA, MTBE concentrations between 20 and 40 parts per billion in drinking water would cause negative health effects. Even with that being said, the DEIS states that the concentration in well E-8 represents relatively low hazardous levels because the groundwater is not a drinking source, and it does not discharge into a sensitive receptor.

The low-level concentrations of volatile organic compounds in this area do not warrant remediation, but according to the report, the Citgo Station spills represent a "known potential threat to human health and the environment, and therefore warrant remediation". Now that Ikea has pulled out, a remediation plan must be agreed upon by the current property owner, the City, and the NYSDEC. Also, the report says that it can be assumed that the park has been affected by the petroleum and that the City and NYSDEC will need to remediate the property.



# Spills



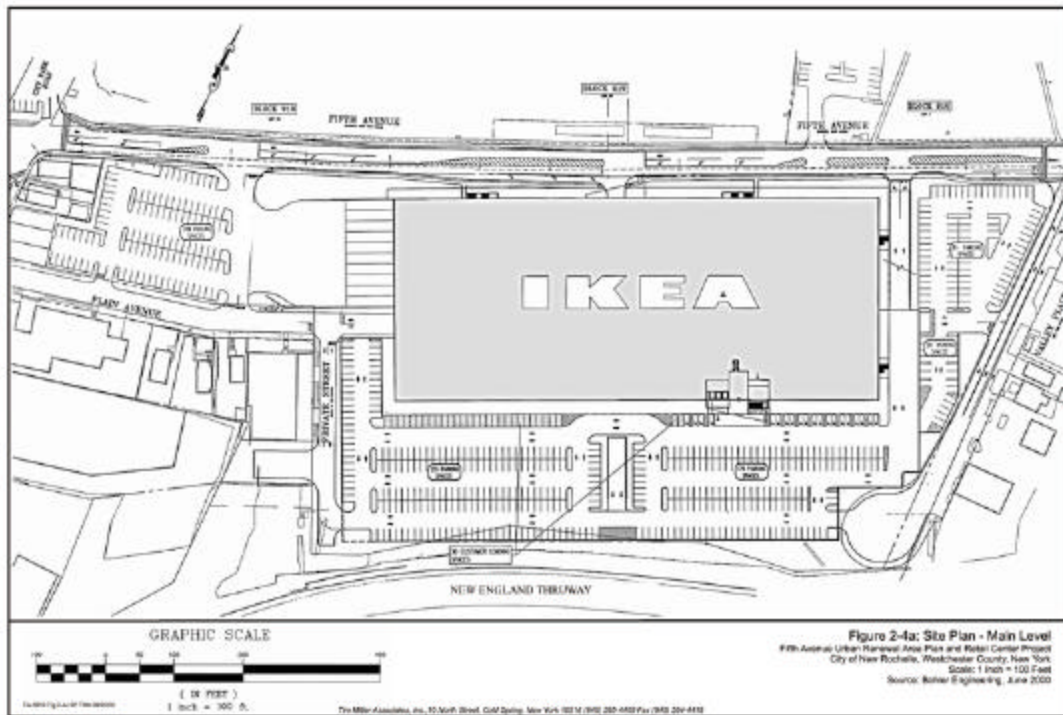
#### **5.4 IKEA**

With 159 stores in 29 countries, IKEA is one of the world's largest furniture retailers. The United States is home to fifteen IKEA stores. Generally located outside of major cities along highways, they range from about 250,000 to 325,000 square feet in size. The New Rochelle project was to be IKEA's third store in the New York metropolitan area, forming a "triangle matrix" with existing stores in Hicksville, NY and Elizabeth, NJ. The New Rochelle store was expected to draw customers from Westchester and areas north, Connecticut, northern New Jersey, the Bronx, and Manhattan. IKEA anticipated that the proposed store would achieve sales of \$87 million based on projected 2003 household counts within its trade area. By diverting drawing customers from the trade areas of the existing IKEAs, the presence of a New Rochelle store would have decreased sales at the Elizabeth store by 13% to \$132 million and at the Hicksville store by 7% to \$78.1 million. Ultimately, IKEA plans to have a store in each of New York City's five boroughs in addition to one in Westchester.

In February of 1999, IKEA obtained an Exclusivity Agreement with the City of New Rochelle, which bound the City to deal exclusively with IKEA in redeveloping the City Park neighborhood. In April of 1999, the City designated the City Park site "blighted" based on a study by Ferrandino & Associates. This designation made the site eligible as an urban renewal area in which the City could assemble parcels of land into a development site using eminent domain.

IKEA subsequently put forth a preliminary plan to build a two-story 308,000 square foot store with approximately 1,572 off-street parking spaces on 14.9 acres of land in the urban renewal area (see site plan map on p. 44). The plan is described in detail in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), prepared by Tim Miller Associates, Inc. and released in September 2000. As described in the DEIS, the building was to be 300 feet wide, 722 feet long, and 36 feet high, with the main entrance facing south toward the New England Thruway. In conformance with the standardized design concept of IKEA International, the store was to be painted blue with yellow signage. Along the south and west sides of the building would have been a parking deck approximately 11.5 feet in height. Additional grade level parking was to be provided on site underneath and to the east, west, and south of the building.

Building the proposed structure would have required the removal of all existing structures on the site, which include 33 commercial or mixed use structures, two churches, and 31 residential buildings. All residents and businesses were to be displaced. Although the City was treating the site as an urban renewal area and intended to use eminent domain to acquire the land if the project was approved, IKEA attempted to purchase the individual properties independently. In April 2000, IKEA began acquiring property at its own risk without having secured project approval from the City. The company's first property acquisition was the purchase of nearly two acres of land from Gerard Daniel & Company, for which IKEA paid \$2 million. IKEA intended to relocate each resident and business owner to another home or business space in or near the New Rochelle area.



According to IKEA's estimates, the company would have paid \$1.9 million annually in property taxes for the store, of which \$245,000 would have gone to Westchester County; \$64,000 to the New Rochelle Sewer District; \$395,000 to the City of New Rochelle; and \$1.2 million to the New Rochelle School District. The present occupants of the area pay a total of \$683,000 in property taxes annually. IKEA waived the ten year property tax abatement offered as an incentive by the City of New Rochelle.

IKEA estimated that the proposed store would have generated a total of \$7.59 million in sales tax revenue, \$3.68 million of which would have gone to New York State; \$1.38 million to Westchester County; \$2.3 million to the City of New Rochelle; and \$230,000 to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (these figures were provided by Jim Gdula, Project Manager, IKEA).

The proposed store was to employ approximately 350 workers, 180 of which would be part-time. Clearing the site for the store would likely have resulted in a net loss of employment in the area. The DEIS identified 33 businesses and gave employment counts for only 26 of these. According to data from Cushman & Wakefield and a Claritas Business Facts Report, these 26 businesses employ a total of between 327 and 347 people. As an evaluation of the DEIS by Abeles Philips pointed out, these employment figures leave out nearly a quarter of the businesses in the redevelopment area. If all businesses were included, the total numbers of jobs could be 20-25% higher than the number given in the DEIS.

The dramatic increases in traffic volumes that the proposed store would have drawn were a major concern both to IKEA and the community. According to the DEIS, the proposed store would have generated 183 inbound and 172 outbound car trips during the Friday PM

peak hour (5:00 – 6:00 pm). On Saturdays, it would have generated 740 inbound and 567 outbound trips during the midday peak hour (2:30 – 3:30 pm) and 638 inbound and 869 outbound trips during the PM peak (4:00 – 5:00 pm). During sale weeks, which occur about 10% of the year, inbound traffic during the Saturday midday peak would have reached nearly 1,000 cars.

In order to mitigate the increased traffic, IKEA had proposed to make numerous off-site transportation improvements at its own expense. Fifth Avenue was to be widened from two lanes and 30 feet in width to three or four lanes at 35 to 45 feet in width between Valley Place and Portman Road, allowing for left turn lanes at three locations. Portman Road and Valley Place were also to be widened in order to accommodate turn lanes. Additionally, the traffic mitigation plan called for the installation of traffic signals at six nearby intersections.

Analyses of the DEIS traffic study by several urban planning consultancies called the document's findings into question. Reviews of the DEIS by Daniel Gutman and by Buckhurst, Fish & Jacquemart, Inc. assert that traffic volumes were underestimated in the DEIS study and that the proposed mitigation measures on the part of IKEA would be inadequate. BFJ argued that the peak hours chosen for the DEIS study were not the hours at which traffic volumes would actually be the highest. Moreover, it was argued that the weeks following the release of the IKEA catalog in late summer would bring more traffic than the January sale week chosen to represent maximum traffic volumes of the year.

A long and persistent campaign on the part of community groups armed with technical critiques of the proposal and the DEIS ultimately derailed IKEA's effort. In response to the public outcry, Mayor Idoni sent a letter to IKEA officials in December requesting that they investigate the feasibility of reducing the size of the proposed store to 260,000 square feet or less and building a south-bound exit ramp off I-95.

IKEA canceled plans on January 31, noting that it was not feasible to adequately address the community's traffic concerns while maintaining the profitability of the proposed store. In order to meet the community's traffic mitigation demands, IKEA would have had to build new exit ramps off Exit 17 of I-95. But in order to compensate for this expense, IKEA would have had to increase the size of its store to generate additional revenue. Thus, according to the mayor, IKEA and the City "jointly and amicably" concluded that the project was not in their mutual best interests.

IKEA intends to continue purchasing properties in the redevelopment area with the apparent goal of assembling a large piece of land, which could be sold to a developer. (See map on p. 46 for IKEA's land holdings in the City Park neighborhood.)

# Properties Owned by IKEA As of 2/26/01



■ IKEA-owned properties, 2/26/01

### **5.4.1 BIG BOX RETAIL**

Windowless, rectangular single-story buildings that occupy more than 50,000 square feet and typically range from 90,000 to 200,000 square feet characterize big box retail structures. The exterior designs of the buildings are standardized so that every location looks the same and is easily recognizable, and acres of parking surround the entire structure. The above features lend to “big box” retail stores an anti-community feel. They cater to the auto-borne shopper and are usually located just off of highway exits or along major traffic corridors. They do not support pedestrian amenities nor do they attempt to make any connections with the neighboring community—they are large, isolated boxes in seas of parking lots.

Their major appeal to the consumer comes from the fact that they can offer low prices, due to high sales volumes. They tend to be convenient for people who have little time for shopping because with a wide variety of merchandise in stock, they can offer “one-stop shopping.” Their appeal for a municipality is the large amount of sales tax revenue that a large retailer generates, which can help increase a municipality’s budget for financing local services. This was the main reason for New Rochelle’s interest in IKEA. However, these big box retailers are also known as “category killers” because they have often contributed to the decline of any smaller businesses that sell the same or similar merchandise. Smaller businesses derive their profits from price mark-up instead of high sales volume and because of this they cannot offer the same low prices as the big box retailer.

The site that IKEA was interested in occupying in New Rochelle is not suited for big box retail. The amount of traffic that such a store would have drawn was too great for the infrastructure of the surrounding area and the Fifth Avenue corridor to accommodate. Finally, the City of New Rochelle has recently spent a great deal of money and effort trying to revitalize its downtown through the creation of a strong retail base. To place an extremely large retail store outside of downtown would have drawn business away from the downtown, thus countering the city’s own efforts at revitalization.

## **6 . FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

New Rochelle must pursue economic development and revenue generation while retaining a diverse base of industries and employment. We propose that the city adopt policies to strengthen manufacturing in the City Park area while pursuing sales tax revenue-generating projects elsewhere in the city in more appropriate locations such as downtown and along the waterfront.

### **6.1. ARGUMENT FOR LIGHT INDUSTRY**

The need to preserve the light industrial manufacturing base of the City Park area has been identified as one of the most important goals of this proposal. There are several reasons for promoting light industrial manufacturing. Primarily, manufacturing jobs pay higher per-hour wages than retail jobs requiring similar levels of education. This translates into higher incomes for local residents who work at those jobs, as well as better lives for their families. The multiplier effects of these higher manufacturing wages, in contrast to lower retail wages, are shown in the table on the following page. There is a regional component to this as well. By locating businesses that require close proximity to their customers in the City Park area, New Rochelle would attract industrial investment and jobs from other areas in Westchester.

The New York State Economic Forecast in the New York State Assembly's White Book reports that manufacturing has been declining in the entire State of New York over the past 20 years, due mainly to globalization and technological advances in manufacturing. Inexpensive labor costs compounded by the high cost of land have led to a steady decrease in manufacturing businesses in Westchester County. During that time, much of the job growth in the state has occurred in the service sector.

In response to the exodus of manufacturing jobs and industries, municipalities across Westchester have responded by seeking to replace these departed businesses with service-based retail. This has been done, primarily, by allowing zoning changes that permit the conversion of industrial areas to mixed use/retail areas. The City of New Rochelle in particular has an added pressure to re-zone because of the hardships created by the cap placed on property tax assessments by the New York State Assembly. Consequently, the City has pursued the development of the new Costco and Home Depot stores west of Downtown to add new sources of revenue for the city. Likewise, the proposed IKEA superstore was supposed to have generated new revenue streams.

Because of its proximity to New York City, less than 30 miles from Midtown, New Rochelle produces many goods and services consumed by New York, including housing. According to the White Book's Executive Summary, "As the world's

financial capital, New York City’s economy has benefited immensely from the recent surge in financial market activity,” and “Wall Street firms have enjoyed spectacular growth for the past three years, with financial firm employees seeing equally spectacular growth in their bonus income.” Much of this newly created personal wealth is being used to consume goods and services produced in the New York Metropolitan Area, which includes Westchester County and New Rochelle. Luxury housing construction and related industries (landscaping and furnishings) have been increasing. This type of industry depends on close proximity to its customers and cannot be exported where land costs are cheaper - housing construction, landscaping, automotive services all need to be produced near their customer base. Despite the recent downturn on Wall Street, The New York Times’ Business Section of April 28, 2001 reported that real estate prices for both Residential and Commercial properties continued to climb in Westchester in the spring of 2001.

A survey of the business owners shows the City Park area as having a thriving light industrial/manufacturing base. Predominant industries include: Construction, construction-related materials manufacturing, food manufacturing and distribution, landscaping and related services, auto parts and auto related services, and computer parts manufacturing. All of these industries have shown a pattern of growth over the last few years and are directly tied to the consumer patterns that have emerged in the New York Metropolitan Area.

### **6.1.1 SOCIAL CAPITAL**

New Rochelle is home to one of Westchester County’s greatest concentrations of economic and ethnic diversity. Promoting a stronger industrial base is a healthy and sound way to meet the needs of the city’s residents and raise the base income level of the city as a whole. Wages for manufacturing jobs are, on average, 50% higher than retail wages. These higher wages trickle through the local economy, increasing overall sales, and boosting the city’s sales tax revenues.

### **1997 Average Wages**

	Retail Trade		Manufacturing		Wholesale Trade	
	# of employees	avg. wage/yr	# of employees	avg. wage/yr	# of employees	avg. wage/yr
New Rochelle	2,581	\$19,478	1,167	\$31,547	1,221	\$45,722
Westchester	46,984	\$20,404	18,797	\$33,319	31,486	\$41,700
NYC Metro	904,682	\$19,691	837,259	\$35,015	N/A	N/A
New York State	805,208	\$17,796	785,891	\$33,740	414,249	\$41,487

source: U.S. Census Bureau 1997 Economic Census



Creating industrial jobs also serves New Rochelle's people of color, who enjoy a more equitable representation in manufacturing jobs than in other sectors, although African-Americans do better in some other sectors.

### **6.1.2 STATE AND FEDERAL AID**

New York State has recognized the need to preserve and create industrial jobs to strengthen the state's economy and meet the needs of its citizens. To move forward in this regard, the state has initiated many programs and economic incentives that can be accessed in the effort to create and retain industrial jobs.

### **6.1.3 LOCATIONAL ADVANTAGES**

Currently, the City Park area offers distinct advantages to the businesses that have chosen and will choose to locate there. There are two immediate advantages: proximity and access to I-95 and a central location in southern Westchester County. Direct access to I-95 southbound into New York City and relatively easy access to points north provides a broad market for the sale and distribution of products manufactured in the City Park area.

For other businesses (primarily construction, landscaping and auto repair), this central location in southern Westchester County constitutes a direct connection to their customer base. The cost savings garnered through this proximity reduce costs for both the service providers and their customers. The rental costs are relatively low compared to other areas in southern Westchester County and Lower Fairfield County, Connecticut. Conversations with business owners indicate that in order to obtain a reasonably comparable site and facilities, businesses would have to move outside of Westchester County and pursue industrial space in Putnam County.

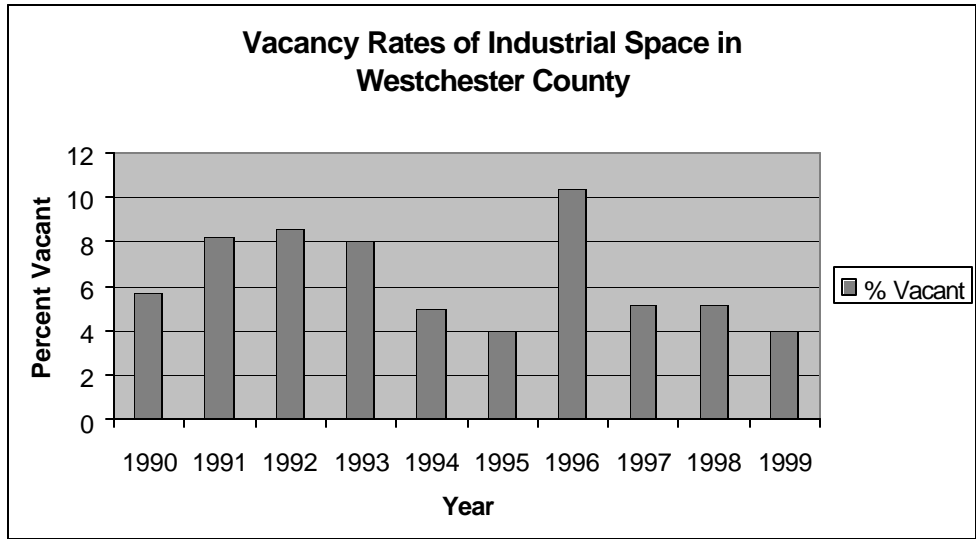
The area also benefits as an industrial site by the relatively low number of residents affected by the noise, traffic, and activity of industrial uses as it is bounded on the northern edge by City Park and on the southern edge by I-95. Its proximity to the park, bodegas, restaurants, and access to public transit make the area a "luxury" site for industrial uses. Workers have ready access to open space and convenient shopping.

### **6.1.4 DEMAND FOR INDUSTRIAL SPACE IN WESTCHESTER**

Buildings well-suited for modern industrial and warehousing activity are in demand in Westchester as well as in the New York metropolitan region as a whole. In 1999, the vacancy rate for industrial space in Westchester County was 4% and the total inventory was 39 million square feet.

Rents throughout the county generally range from \$6 to \$10 per square foot, though particularly advantageous spaces can fetch rents as high as \$20 per

square foot. Within New Rochelle, rents typically fall between \$6.50 and \$12 per square foot.



As the above graph shows, the vacancy rates of industrial space have been increasing in recent years, indicating a high overall demand for industrial properties in the county. The following table indicates the recent shortages of supply compared to demand of industrial spaces in all size categories:

Size (sq. ft.)	1992	1995	1997	1999
Less than 5,000	<b>Moderate Shortage</b>	<b>Substantial Shortage</b>	<b>Moderate Shortage</b>	<b>Substantial Shortage</b>
5,000 - 19,999	Balanced Market	<b>Moderate Shortage</b>	<b>Moderate Shortage</b>	<b>Substantial Shortage</b>
20,000- 39,999	Balanced Market	<b>Moderate Shortage</b>	<b>Moderate Shortage</b>	<b>Substantial Shortage</b>
40,000- 59,999	Balanced Market	<b>Moderate Shortage</b>	<b>Moderate Shortage</b>	<b>Substantial Shortage</b>
60,000- 99,999	Balanced Market	<b>Moderate Shortage</b>	<b>Moderate Shortage</b>	<b>Substantial Shortage</b>

Source: Society of Industrial and Office Realtors

### **6.1.5 INDUSTRY FOCI**

In April 2000, the Westchester County Economic Development Plan and Marketing Strategy identified five “clusters” that the county should focus promotion efforts on. The Department defined “clusters” as groups of businesses working within a similar industry that seem to have certain size, growth rate, interdependency and vibrancy. Clusters of smaller, related businesses are seen, by some, to have an advantage under the current regime of flexible production. The cluster as a whole can more readily adapt to market changes by more rapidly and inexpensively replacing outdated businesses, by sharing important information on technique and technology, and by being suited for smaller production runs. When clusters do well within a region it means that the locational attributes are positive for the businesses and it is easier to expand these businesses than attract new ones. Westchester has a strong portfolio of “New Economy” clusters such as business, financial, and professional services. The consultants determined that the five major clusters in Westchester County are:

- 1. Information Technology** – employs 18,000 in the county and has shown rapid growth.
- 2. Headquarters and Corporate Service** – there are a high number of corporate headquarters for a non-urban area. This cluster offers limited opportunities and growth but is important because there is a large number of small to medium-sized businesses in this cluster.
- 3. Bio-technology** – employs 8,000 people, which is the highest concentration of bio-tech workers in the State of New York.
- 4. Education** – employs over 10,000 and provides education and training as well as contributing to a knowledge-based economy, which can help the recruitment and retention of businesses.
- 5. Manufacturing** – employs around 37,000 employees but is declining. This cluster may decline even further due to labor shortage and the lack of suitably zoned land—a problem our proposal intends to address (there is a possible link between this cluster and the research and development activities of the Headquarter Cluster).

The report breaks these clusters up into four categories:

- **Star Clusters** – have a strong competitive position in the county and have dynamic market potential. These include information technology, internet, financial and business services, bio-medical companies and professional services. Westchester needs to focus on adding new Star Cluster companies to build an economic value chain.
- **Cash Cow Clusters** – have a strong competitive position but face markets with lower than national average growth. These include publishing, consumer products, chemicals, and food and beverage industries. Westchester should attempt to take advantage of new, faster growing markets.

Companies in this cluster need to understand the market requirements, improve production capabilities, enhance worker productivity and innovate in marketing and distribution.

- **Opportunity Clusters** – are located in rapidly growing markets but are currently weaker in competitive position. In Westchester County the Opportunity Cluster is Tourism. Businesses in this cluster need to focus on developing the relevant economic foundations. They could try to implement a recruitment and enterprise formation process that could harness existing demand, leading to creation of new jobs in the region.
- **Challenge Clusters** – have weaker competitive position in the county and a slowly growing market, such as metal products and machinery. Westchester needs to create a niche to improve competitive position or reinvent their products to take advantage of higher-growing market segments.

It is important to note that the State Department of Labor predicts that jobs in precision production, craft & repair occupation, and for operators, fabricators, and laborers to rise in the Hudson Valley region, from 170,660 in 1997 to 184,680 in 2007, an 8.2% increase over ten years.

#### **6.1.6 LONG RANGE IMPACT OF REINFORCING LIGHT INDUSTRY: Input-Output Analysis of Development Impacts on the Study Area**

In order to determine the impacts of several possible development plans for the study area, we employed a computer-based input-output analysis system (IMPLAN Pro 2.0, MIG, Inc.). Input-output models track the flow of spending through the industries, businesses, households, and government agencies that comprise the economy of a region and calculate the long-term economic effects of an impact, such as job creation and investment, in terms of total output, value added, labor income, and jobs created. Using this model, we computed projections of the impacts that various types of development in the study area would have on the economy of Westchester County. Because they create different types and levels of jobs, industry and large-scale retail the City Park area would have drastically different economic ramifications.

#### **Methodology**

We limited our analysis to the New Rochelle portion of the Study Area (i.e., excluding the segment within Mamaroneck) for two reasons. First, available data is more complete and reliable in the New Rochelle part. And second, the New Rochelle side of the Study Area is more likely to see greater change and attention in the near future as IKEA has purchased a number of properties; additionally, there are several vacant sites.

Our economic analysis is based on our survey of land uses and business types in the City Park area. We first calculated the acreage of the area (excluding City Park and MacLeay Apartments) and broke that down into acreage by current use. The total acreage is 20.70, of which 14.99 is industrial, 0.45 commercial, 3.18 residential, 0.30 religious, and 1.78 vacant. Of this space, according to records obtained from the New Rochelle tax assessor's office, IKEA currently owns 3.58 acres (1.89 industrial, 1.24 residential, and 0.45 vacant).

Next, we isolated the study area businesses for which we have data on number of employees and the lot size (see Appendix 2). Based on these cases we found a job density of 68.39 employees per acre. We used this density figure to calculate the number of jobs that would be created for every additional acre converted to industrial uses. There are two important aspects to keep in mind about the use of this figure. All projections employing it are based on the current mix of industrial uses. This figure could, then, be increased or decreased by encouraging industrial development that is more or less dense, respectively. Second, this density is calculated based on buildings constructed under the current zoning, which allows the footprint of a building to cover only 60% of the lot. If the area were rezoned in accordance with our recommendations of 3 FAR and 80% maximum lot coverage (see zoning section 6.2), the density of employees per acre could be significantly greater. Therefore, the figures for income, jobs, and value added for industrial scenarios presented are conservative estimates.

Using the businesses for which we have complete data, we determined the relative proportion of lot acreage by industry type. Of the 10.63 acres occupied by the above businesses, 2.20 acres (21% of the total) were occupied by auto repair and service establishments, 1.72 acres (16% of total) were occupied evenly by construction companies and special trade contractors, like plumbers and electricians, and 0.99 acres (9% of total) were home to landscaping businesses. The remaining 5.72 acres (54% of the total land area) were occupied by a variety of industries, which for purposes of the input-output analysis were divided evenly among businesses that produce fabricated metal products, electronic components, general industrial machinery, food and beverages, miscellaneous metal work, and wood products.

We analyzed the economic impacts of five development scenarios:

- a short term scenario (3-5 years) based on the current industrial mix
- a long term scenario (assumed to be 20 years) based on the current mix of industries in the area
- a scenario in which large-scale retail replaced existing jobs, similar to that of the former IKEA proposal
- a blank slate or "greenfield" retail scenario in which large-scale retail is developed assuming the study area was a blank slate with no existing businesses or jobs
- a greenfield industrial scenario intended to represent the current mix of

industries in the former IKEA Redevelopment Area, indicating what the existing businesses are contributing to the economy

### **Short Term Scenario**

The short term scenario, which is conceived to cover the upcoming three to five years, projects a build-out of currently available space (vacant space (1.78 acres) plus residential properties owned by IKEA (1.70 acres)) at the current industrial mix and employee density. This scenario also assumes that IKEA-owned industrial properties continue to employ workers at levels prior to their purchase. We calculated a vacancy rate of 6% (1.24 acres) based on the average of the 4% vacancy rate for industrial spaces in Westchester County as whole and the current Study Area vacancy rate of 8%, which is inflated by IKEA's holdings. An average was used to accommodate the probably reality that a sudden influx of industrial space would not be occupied immediately. These figures yielded an additional 123 jobs on 1.80 acres of the New Rochelle portion of the Study Area.

### **Long Term Scenario**

The long term scenario assumes that lots not currently used for industry were converted to industrial uses under current zoning restrictions at a 4% vacancy rate. This scenario adds 283 jobs on 4.13 acres.

### **Large-Scale Retail Scenario**

The third scenario is that of a large-scale retail development modeled on the IKEA proposal. This scenario would remove 458 employees (calculated at current densities) and replace them with 170 full-time and 180 part-time retail jobs. Part-time jobs were considered half-time, resulting in the equivalent of 260 full-time retail employees. This estimate itself is probably an overestimate as large-scale retailers often cut their staff by up to one-third once they have established themselves (see section 5.5.1, Big Box Retail).

### **Blank Slate or “Greenfield” Scenarios**

For comparison, we introduce two greenfield scenarios, which are intended to illustrate the overall effects of large-scale retail and industry located in the area currently designated by the City of New Rochelle as the Redevelopment Area. The economic impacts of a greenfield large-scale retail development were calculated assuming that the equivalent of 260 full-time retail jobs were provided. The

greenfield industry scenario analyzes the effects of the current estimate of 458 jobs distributed according to the proportions detailed above.

## **Findings**

The results of the input-output analysis are summarized in the table below. Figures are given for the impact on value added, labor income, and jobs created. Value added and labor income are annual figures. Value added consists of four components: employee compensation, proprietor income, other property income, and indirect business taxes. Employee compensation refers to wage and salary payments and includes benefits. Proprietary income consists of payments received by self-employed individuals as income. Other property income consists of payments for rents, royalties, and dividends. Indirect business taxes consist of excise taxes, property taxes, fees, licenses, and sales taxes paid by businesses. Labor income is the sum of employee compensation and proprietary income.

## **Impact of Scenarios on the County Economy**

<b>SCENARIO</b>		<b>DIRECT</b>	<b>INDIRECT</b>	<b>INDUCED</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Short Term</b>					
	<b>Value added</b>	\$ 8,948,753	\$ 3,321,652	\$ 2,803,906	\$ 15,074,311
	<b>Labor Income</b>	\$ 5,811,190	\$ 2,120,256	\$ 1,629,850	\$ 9,561,298
	<b>Employment</b>	123.0	40.6	42.7	206.3
<b>Long Term</b>					
	<b>Value added</b>	\$ 20,814,927	\$ 7,745,824	\$ 6,516,556	\$ 35,077,308
	<b>Labor Income</b>	\$ 13,489,062	\$ 4,945,509	\$ 3,787,950	\$ 22,222,519
	<b>Employment</b>	283.0	94.4	99.2	476.6
<b>Large Scale Retail</b>					
	<b>Value added</b>	\$ - 22,499,596	\$ - 11,210,998	\$ - 7,663,560	\$ - 41,374,154
	<b>Labor Income</b>	\$ - 14,519,563	\$ - 7,209,016	\$ - 4,455,328	\$ - 26,183,907
	<b>Employment</b>	-198.0	-136.6	-116.6	-451.3
<b>Greenfield Large-scale Retail</b>					
	<b>Value added</b>	\$10,821,428	\$ 1,147,525	\$ 2,774,281	\$ 14,743,234
	<b>Labor Income</b>	\$ 7,117,302	\$ 679,830	\$ 1,611,965	\$ 9,409,096
	<b>Employment</b>	260.0	14.3	42.2	316.6
<b>Existing Industrial Mix</b>					
	<b>Value added</b>	\$ 29,788,996	\$ 11,048,519	\$ 9,331,430	\$ 50,168,945
	<b>Labor Income</b>	\$ 19,343,357	\$ 7,052,629	\$ 5,424,160	\$ 31,820,146
	<b>Employment</b>	458.0	150.9	158.9	767.8

\*All figures except employment in 2001 dollars.

The analysis distinguishes three types of effects: direct, indirect, and induced. Direct effects of expenditures by local businesses result from the purchase of goods and services by the businesses as well as the wages, salaries and benefits paid to their employees. Indirect effects refer to the impacts created by the successive purchases of goods and services by vendors that derive business from the purchases made by local businesses. The third, induced effects, are the impacts on all local industries caused by the expenditures of new household income generated through the direct and indirect effects of job creation.

As the table indicates, the short and long term effects of maintaining industry in the City Park area on the economy of Westchester County are dramatically more beneficial than those of replacing existing jobs with large-scale retail. This is in large part due to significantly higher wages and job density of industrial uses in comparison with retail uses. This labor income then cycles back into the county's economy, generating additional jobs and income. The City of New Rochelle can capitalize on this income to the extent that it encourages job training and hiring within its municipal borders. At present, the highest density of individuals working in industry are concentrated in the downtown area. Ensuring and adding to industrial income will most likely increase local spending and contribute to the revitalization of the downtown area as well as boosting sales tax revenues.

## **6.2 ZONING AND INFRASTRUCTURE RECOMMENDATIONS**

In order to enhance the area's appeal for light industrial uses, we propose that the zoning designation be changed and that several infrastructure improvements be made.

### **6.2.1 INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS**

We propose several infrastructure improvements with three goals in mind:

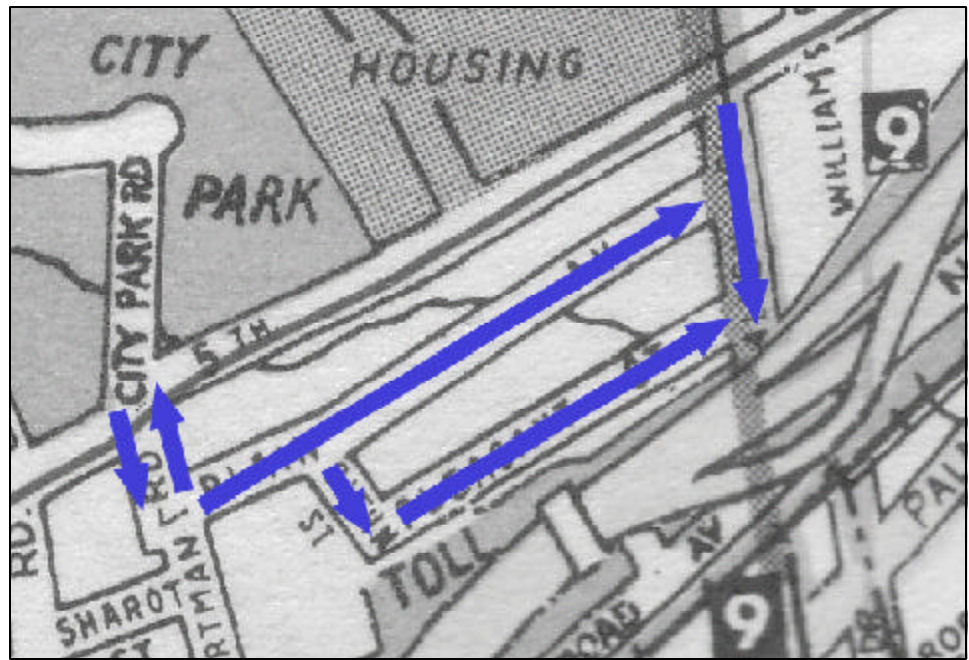
1. The safety of pedestrian and automobile traffic in the neighborhood
2. The aesthetic appeal of the area, realizing Fifth Avenue is a major entrance to New Rochelle and that City Park is a public amenity of regional importance
3. The physical infrastructure needs particular to industrial businesses

Within the industrial area, the streets need attention. They were originally built for residential traffic, but are not adequate for use by heavier vehicles associated with the growing industry in the area.

Also, the street circulation creates confusion in the neighborhood. Currently, both Plain and Pleasant run one-way east to Valley. Assuming most traffic will enter



the study area from the Thruway exit northeast of the industrial area in Mamaroneck, Valley Place is the most logical entrance to the City Park neighborhood. Vehicles must be given the option to turn off of Valley onto either Pain St. or Pleasant St. As such, we propose changing the direction of



Pleasant Street to one-way west and Biehn Street to one-way north.

### **The Fifth Avenue Corridor**

Fifth Avenue and adjacent land also needs to be redesigned. Currently, the avenue is unsafe for pedestrians and visually unpleasing. Fifth Avenue is the principal through street in the study area. Sections of the sidewalk are missing on the south side of the street, and the sidewalk is in generally poor repair. This is due in part to poor drainage that degrades the condition of both the sidewalk and the road surface. The utility lines on the south side of the street still run above ground on telephone poles. The existing fence at City Park along Fifth Avenue does not present a positive image of the valuable green space, and parking for City Park is inadequate during athletic games, as the street is unable to accommodate on-street parking. During periods of heavy use, parking spills over onto the adjacent streets, competing with other uses for parking. People also frequently park on the sidewalk, causing traffic problems on the sidewalk and further damaging the sidewalk. The City applied for funds from the state's Capital Highway Improvement program in the 1980s to widen the street and make other improvements, but was turned down.

There is little data available about traffic in New Rochelle. The City has not collected data for over a decade, and the data from the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) prepared for IKEA only covers the periods when the store was expected to draw the most traffic. Furthermore, there have been serious questions raised by consultants for the Town of Mamaroneck and the Village of Larchmont concerning the quality of the analysis and its findings. The City of New

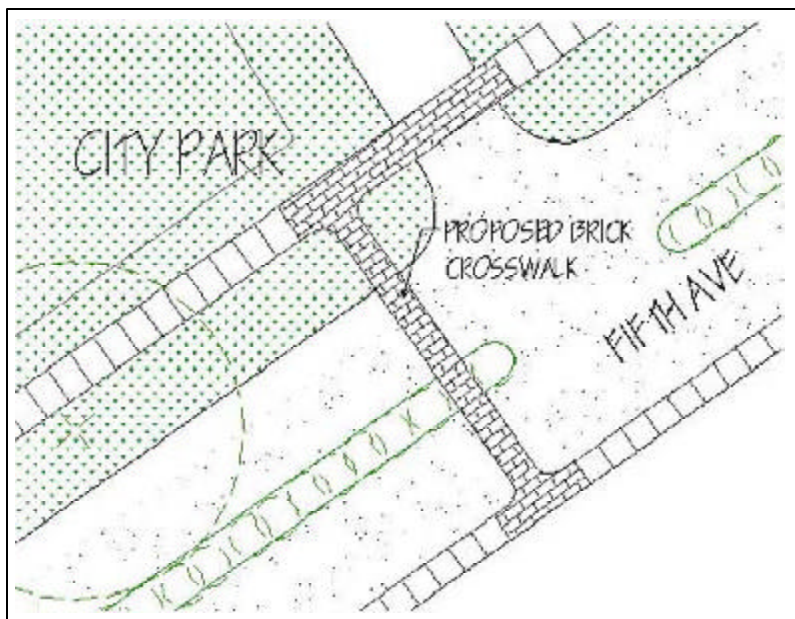
Rochelle identifies the intersection of Fifth Avenue and Pinebrook Street as the worst intersection in the area, with a poor level of service due to an intersection geometry that creates difficulty and delays for cars making right turns onto Pinebrook Street. The IKEA DEIS report addresses the condition of this intersection only by stating that it serves at a level of service B. (Level of service is rated on a six-point scale of A through F, with A being the best.)

Rashim D. Mehta at the City of New Rochelle shares the observation of the business owners and real estate agents in the area that the turning radii in the study area are too narrow and create difficulties for trucks. Mehta also points out that the right turn from Potter Avenue onto Fifth Avenue is too sharp, and he identifies a friction point at that intersection between the exit from the parking lot for City Park and the cars waiting at the light.

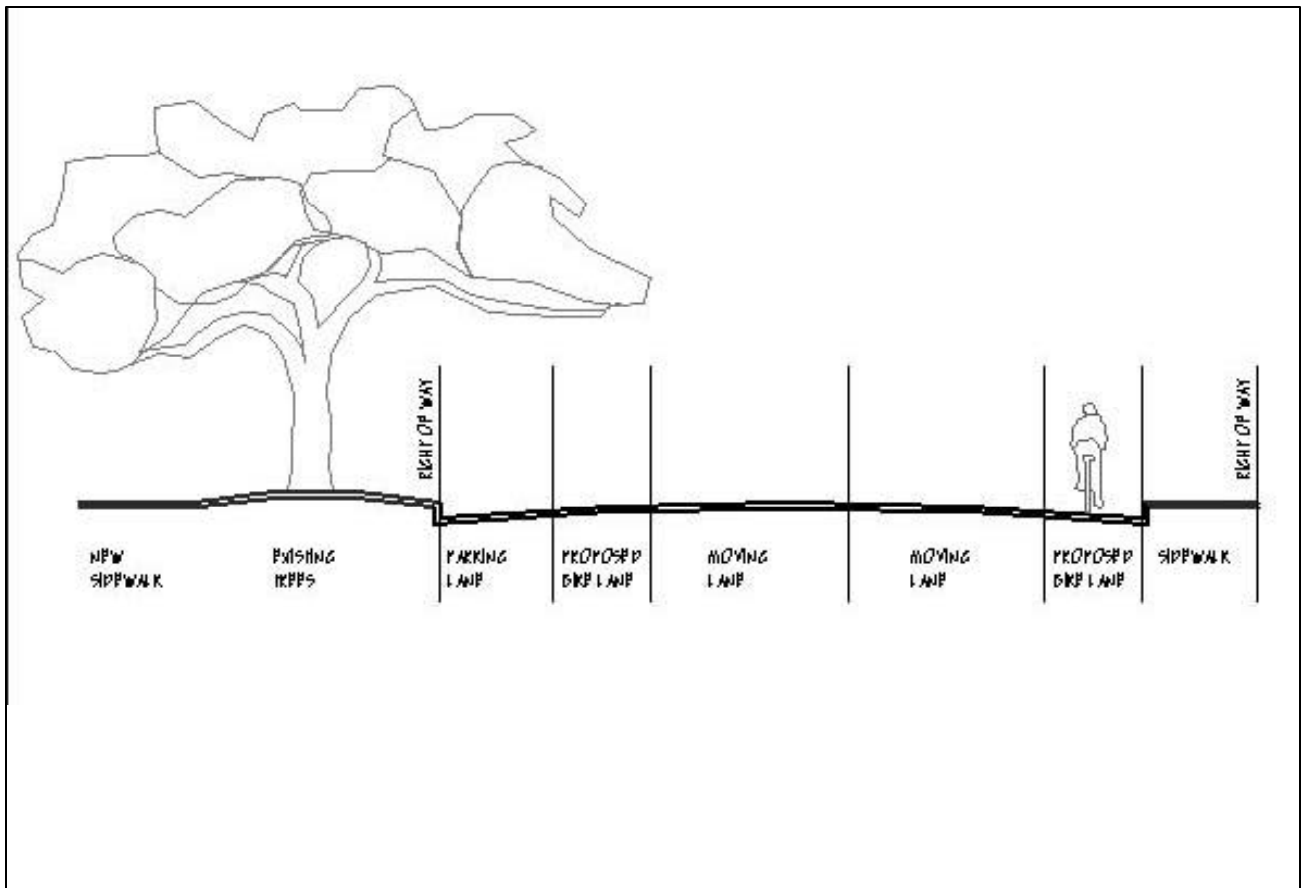
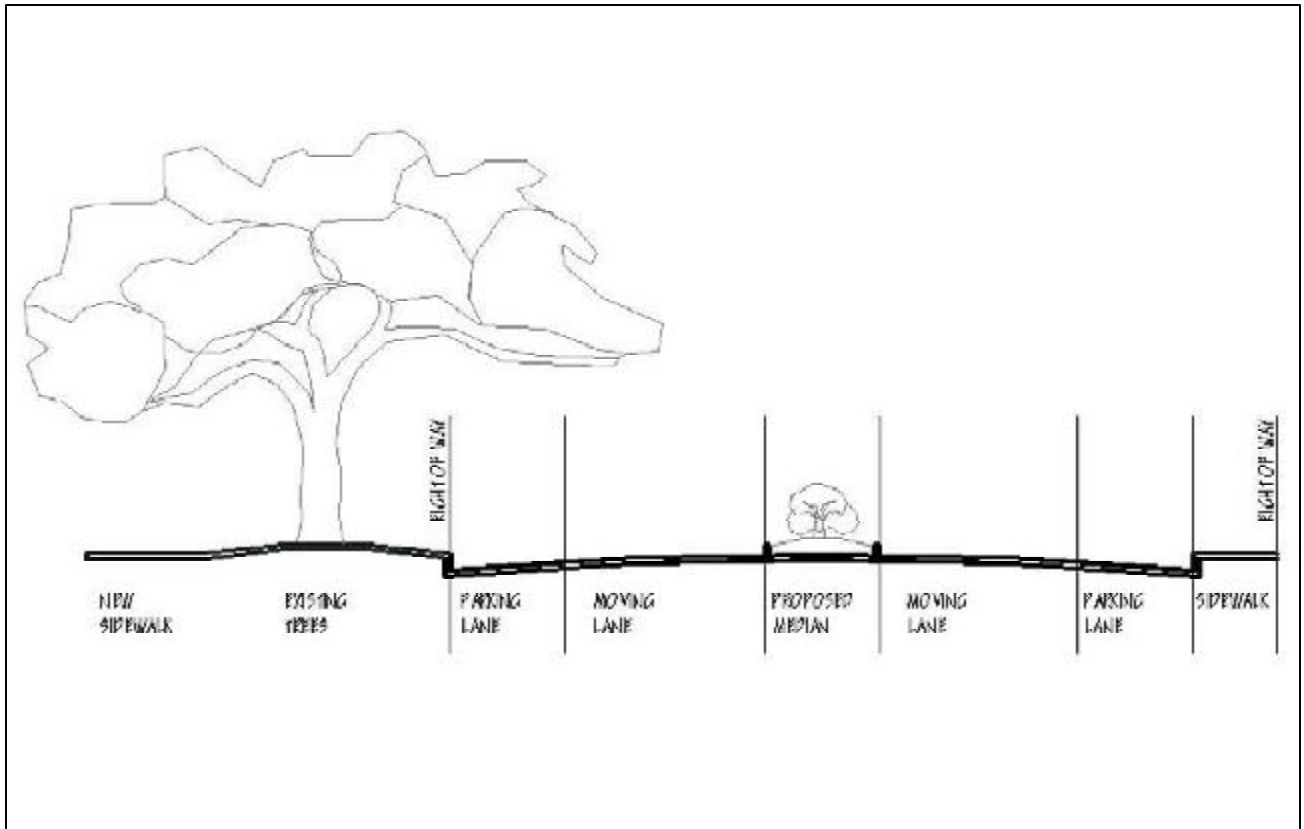
Given the existing 50-foot right-of-way, we have developed two proposals as seen in the drawings below. While these are not complete plans, they provide guidance for future reconstruction.<sup>5</sup>

In the sketch to the right, the landscaped median helps to calm traffic and enhances the visual quality of the Avenue. Parking lanes also help reduce traffic speeds and meet a need for limited weekend parking (approximately 100-110 extra parallel parking stalls). Proposed moving lanes would be twelve feet wide, meeting all common transportation engineering standards. Of the two sidewalks, one could be in the existing right of way and one could be moved into City Park. Besides freeing space in the right of way, this would allow for a wider path—accommodating pedestrians and bicycles—and becomes an attraction of the park.

In the second option, two bicycle lanes are added. This accommodates bike enthusiasts and is a valuable amenity to the park area. The lanes may also help secure federal funding for Fifth Avenue improvements through the TEA-21 grants for multiple transit modes. This is potentially very promising if inter-municipal coordination allows the lanes to connect to the Larchmont train station.



To further enhance both pedestrian safety and the appearance of the

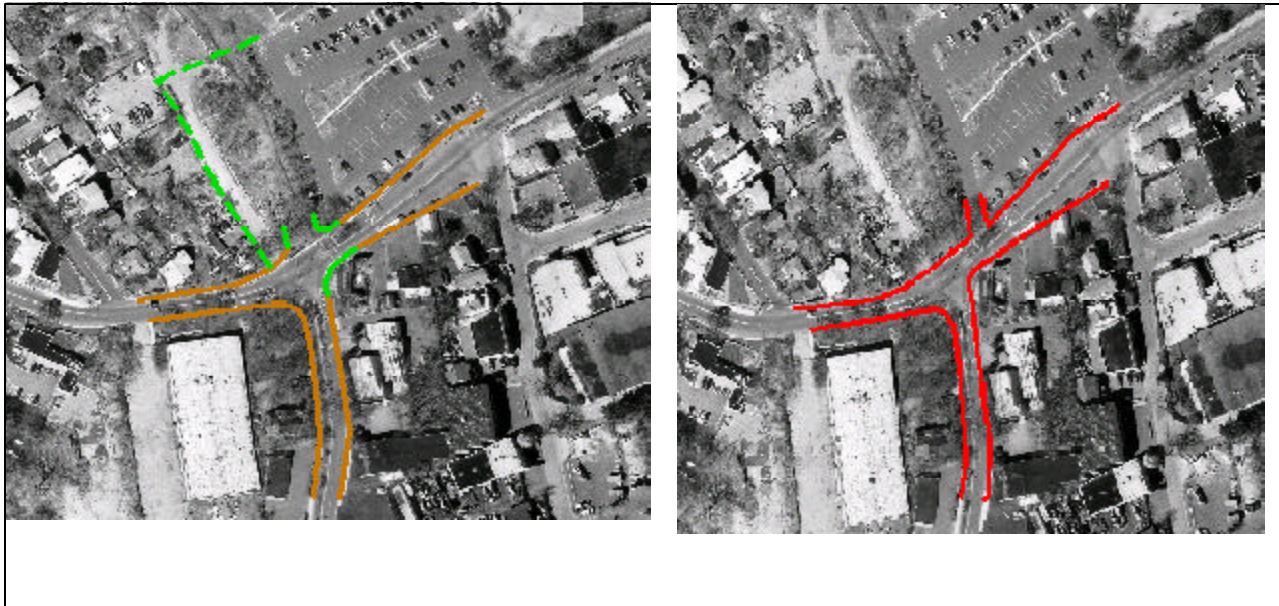




intersection, we also propose the addition of brick crosswalks at pedestrian crossings along Fifth Avenue. The different material attracts the attention of drivers to pedestrian crossings visually and physically.

Reconstruction of Fifth Avenue provides the opportunity for improving the visual quality of the area by putting the overhead utility lines underground. While construction is being done to the street, it would also be advisable to create conduits for future installation of fiber optic or other new communication technology cable.

Additionally, we recommend placing drainage basins behind the curb line to improve drainage and maintenance, and using granite curbstones or iron-capped curbs to maintain the condition and lower maintenance costs of the sidewalk. The inside turning corners within the study area should also be widened using the



available right-of-way.

Another point of concern along Fifth Avenue is the intersection with Potter Avenue at the west end of the study area. The existing contours of the road are outlined in the above image.

The City owns an underutilized parcel adjacent to the current parking lot, which would allow for expanding the lot to provide needed additional parking. If this is done, the entrance to the lot can be aligned with Potter Avenue, creating a more efficient intersection. The southeast corner should also be rounded to address the sharp turn.

### **6.2.2 ZONING AND DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS**

To remain consistent with New Rochelle policy and to further reinforce the industrial quality of the Fifth Avenue Area, the city zoning code needs to be amended. A vision for the future of the study area has been formulated; however, the current zoning code is not in line with this vision.

To rectify the shortcomings of zoning as it pertains to the Fifth Avenue manufacturing district, the stakeholders can take one of three steps:

1. Modify the current M-1 regulations in the zoning text
2. Create a new zoning district that clearly defines uses and intensity in the area
3. Enforce regulations through restrictive deed covenants (which could be managed through a Local Development Corporation)

However the regulations are employed, we recommend the following substantive changes to zoning:

<b>Current Allowable Land Uses</b>	<b>Proposed Allowable Land Uses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ Retail stores and shops</li> <li>✍ Service and automobile repair establishments</li> <li>✍ Restaurants and amusement establishments</li> <li>✍ Business, professional, utility, or government offices</li> <li>✍ Off-street parking facilities</li> <li>✍ Schools or academies</li> <li>✍ Car sales</li> <li>✍ Bus shelters</li> <li>✍ Farms, nurseries, greenhouses, and arboretums</li> <li>✍ Bars and nightclubs</li> <li>✍ Accessory Uses</li> <li>✍ Storage of passenger vehicles</li> <li>✍ Animal Hospitals</li> <li>✍ Wholesale and storage establishments</li> <li>✍ Manufacture, fabrication, or assembling of products</li> <li>✍ Dry cleaning establishments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ Light Manufacturing</li> <li>✍ Light Industry</li> <li>✍ Enclosed Storage and Warehousing</li> <li>✍ Office space, wholesale, and storage accessory to on-site manufacturing or industry</li> <li>✍ Automotive, Construction, and Landscaping Services</li> <li>✍ Existing Residential Uses</li> </ul>

<b>Current Intensity Regulations</b>	<b>Proposed Intensity Regulations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ No maximum floor area ratio</li> <li>✍ Maximum height of 40 feet</li> <li>✍ 60% maximum lot coverage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ Maximum Floor Area Ratio of 3</li> <li>✍ Maximum height of 60 feet</li> <li>✍ 80% maximum lot coverage</li> </ul>

As currently written in the zoning code, the M-1 district in New Rochelle is a catch-all area that allows for virtually any use except residential. Because land-use restrictions are so vague, the area has attracted a host of undesirable uses, such as bus parking.

This mix of incompatible and undesirable land uses that resulted from thoughtless municipal law was precisely the basis on which the area was declared “blighted” by the city council in 2000.

Along with the unnecessary open space requirements and large amounts of required parking, the current M-1 zone is especially attractive to large retail

establishments such as the recently proposed IKEA store, which could have been constructed as of right under the existing zoning. In addition to the arguments we make for the value of industry in the neighborhood, city-commissioned reports have consistently recognized the importance of the study area as an industrial center (in 1965, 1977, 1989, and 1996). Moreover, city policy of late has advocated the location of regional retail downtown. The M-1 zoning guidelines must coincide with the needs of a viable light manufacturing district, leaving big box and other retail uses not suitable for manufacturing districts to more appropriate areas of the city.

According to area business owners and Westchester real estate brokers, small and medium sized manufacturers have little use for open space on their property. Therefore, we propose that the maximum lot coverage be expanded from 60% to 80%. Because the area is adjacent to City Park and I-95, the reduced open space will not detract from the quality of light and air in surrounding neighborhoods.

Along with the other steps we propose, altering zoning regulations will help reinforce industrial uses in accordance with city policy and sound economic development and prevent their displacement by retail uses, which are better suited to areas with better traffic access and proximity to downtown.

### **The Fifth Avenue Corridor**

Along properties adjacent to Fifth Avenue, an allowance should be made for small-scale retail activity. Such uses should be limited to 10,000 square feet. This would allow for stores and services that support area residents and businesses but do not detract from the industrial vision for the area. This could be implemented through a commercial zoning overlay.

Besides land-use regulation, the property along Fifth Avenue should be subject to some additional design guidelines. Because the corridor is a significant entrance to the city and adjacent to City Park, the image of the streetscape is an important consideration. Property improvements benefit the area as a whole, and therefore property owners should be compensated for necessary improvements.

Every building needs to have at least one entrance that faces the Avenue and a path that leads from the entrance to the sidewalk. The front facades should be between 20 and 30 feet high. Buildings should be setback at a consistent line 10 feet from the street.

## **6.3 NOT-FOR-PROFIT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

### **6.3.1 MISSION, GOALS AND FUNCTION**

We recommend the creation of a City Park Local Development Corporation (CPLDC) as a not-for-profit entity to facilitate and oversee the continued development of industry in the area. The LDC would be a private, non-governmental development organization run by local residents, business owners, and other stakeholders in the neighborhood. The mission of the LDC would be to strengthen and improve the City Park neighborhood both economically and physically while leveraging the diversity of the community.

The LDC could be used to direct the City Park area's development as the residents and business owners see fit. To reinforce industry, an LDC might:

- Strengthen the industrial base of the area by providing management and technical assistance to businesses. This would include resources such as management training, financial advising, and marketing and export assistance.
- Improve the area's infrastructure to make it more suitable for light industrial vehicles. Carry out other physical improvements to enhance the area's value for manufacturing, including noise-reducing landscaping (e.g., strategically placed trees) that would ensure the compatibility of industrial uses with the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Assist in developing new, modern manufacturing and warehouse space in the area, as well as retrofitting and modernizing existing structures.
- Link businesses with financial resources such as tax credits and small business incentives for which they may qualify
- Develop a network of local businesses that could potentially form the basis for a county-wide manufacturers' association. Networking could be facilitated through events such as workshops and trade shows.
- Provide employment services to match qualified employees with firms. This could include partnerships with educational institutions in New Rochelle and elsewhere in southern Westchester County.

This list of possible services to be offered by the LDC is not exhaustive or definitive. Rather, its functions would change and expand as new community needs were brought to its attention.

### **6.3.2 DETAILS ABOUT FORMATION**

The principal agents in forming a City Park LDC would be local residents, business owners, and other community stakeholders. Interested parties should conduct a needs assessment to identify crucial objectives, existing programs and area potential. Community organization in City Park has already been galvanized by the fight against Ikea, so the basic community networks needed to form an LDC are in place.



As a launching point, we outlined a strategic plan and mission statement in line with our vision for reinforcing Westchester's industrial base. However, it is critical that the established LDC clearly affirm objectives up front to avoid political conflicts, duplication of services, or competition for funds with another development corporation.

The success of the LDC would be dependent on how well the founders address the key elements of building consensus, procuring stable funding, establishing due process, and creating a sound organization and good community relations. The general criteria are modeled in a four-step fundamental plan.

Step 1 - Bring together community residents, city officials, other stakeholders and people with technical and financial resources to draft the strategic plan and goals. It would be particularly important that the residents of the MacLeay apartment complex be represented in the group, as they have been underrepresented in the community discussions thus far. This group would lead to formation of a board of directors. Diverse representation from all affected sectors of the community, as well as support from influential city officials, would be important (6 months). During the start-up phase, the LDC could be run by a part-time executive director in a small office space that may be provided by one of the area businesses.

Step 2 - Explore all funding resources available, including state and city incentives, foundations, philanthropic groups, and existing economic development project groups (see funding section below). It could also be beneficial to identify an interim fiscal agent that already has 501(c)3 tax-exempt status while pursuing funding (6 months).

Step 3 - Write and submit all federal, state, city and environmental applications and proposals. This would include filing with the IRS, filing the 501(c)3 status, registering the LDC with the state, creating a consolidated plan and abiding by standard EIS procedures (1-2 years).

Step 4 - Establish an initial organizational structure based on a five-year plan including: a working board to form the LDC, an executive director, an interim volunteer staff (until funding provides for permanent staffing), and several committees to (a) draft bylaws and articles of incorporation, (b) initiate fundraising, (c) build community relations and (d) develop programs. It would be essential for the working board to address ongoing organizational structure as part of the LDC's formation. (3 months)

There are a number of programmatic details the LDC working board would need to address within each of these steps. However, the key would be a carefully planned blueprint. Only through rigorous organizational principles could an LDC become an effective agent in the face of two extreme challenges, fundraising and land acquisition.

### **6.3.3 POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES**

Possibly the greatest challenge in founding an LDC is securing the initial funding. To assume legitimate development power, the LDC would need enough support to acquire and convert some parcels in accordance with its industrial vision. A diversified financial scheme would ensure a more balanced approach. This subsection identifies a variety of potential resources for the proposed City Park LDC.

#### *Foundations and Grants (from Private and Nonprofit Sectors)*

- The LDC could pursue grants from private banks and financial institutions via the Community Reinvestment Act, which would encourage depository institutions to help meet the financial needs of the communities in which they operate. CRA provisions include not only loans but grants, which commonly fall within the range of \$2,500 to \$5,000.
- The proposed development corporation could also pursue funding from local and regional nonprofit institutions such as the Westchester Community Foundation, which provides grants in the range of \$10,000 for programs that strengthen communities. The Foundation also has environmental programs that fund development plans for brownfield areas, which include former shopping centers, vehicle storage sites, and other areas like the City Park area that do not necessarily pose a health threat. Grants of this type typically range from \$20,000 to \$30,000. (Conversation with Catherine Marsh, Executive Director of the Westchester Community Foundation, April 20, 2001)

#### *Federal, State, and County Resources*

- Community Development Block Grants: The needs of the LDC could be incorporated into New Rochelle's Consolidated Plan, which is used to solicit CDBG funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- Industrial Retention Network/Move Smart Program: In its "Jobs Agenda 2001," the New York State Assembly has outlined plans for \$4.3 million in funding for an Industrial Retention Network to provide business and financial assistance to manufacturers. The Assembly supports funding of industrial retention efforts in each region of the state to link Local Development Corporations with funding and assistance from government agencies, financial institutions, unions, and non-for-profit organizations. The proposed LDC could also possibly channel assistance from the \$4 million allocated in the Jobs Agenda for Technology Development Organizations (TDOs). The TDO program leverages state and federal funds to provide technical assistance to manufacturers seeking to increase their efficiency and competitiveness.
- The Westchester County Industrial Development Authority (WCIDA) issues Industrial Revenue Bonds for purchasing land, building or renovating

structures, and buying machinery and equipment. For qualified manufacturing projects, bonds are exempt from federal, state, and local taxes.

- The Empire State Development Corporation's (ESDC) Empire Zones (EZ) Program encourages business development in designated areas by offering targeted incentives and benefits to new and expanding commercial and industrial firms. Benefits include sales tax, wage tax and investment tax credits, free security surveys, and energy discounts. However, it should be noted that a city with a median income as high as New Rochelle's would have difficulty in obtaining an Empire Zone designation, as New Rochelle and Westchester in general are perceived as wealthy in comparison with distressed areas upstate.

Once the LDC developed a base of member businesses, annual dues would contribute to its revenue sources. Nonetheless, fundraising would be a perennial activity, as local development corporations generally rely heavily on government and private support for their continuing operation.

#### **6.3.4 LAND ACQUISITION**

Since the LDC would be a non-profit entity, donors of property or money would receive a tax deduction for their contributions. This would provide an attractive exit strategy to any landowners seeking to rid themselves of property in the area.

#### **6.3.5 BENEFITS OF THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

The City Park LDC would bring a proactive vision to the area and provide a the long-term organizational means for sustainable economic development. Not only would it serve as a vehicle by which funds from various sources could be directed to the neighborhood, but it would also empower the community to take part in the area's development. By this means, an area heretofore perceived as blighted could increase its economic and social vibrancy. Furthermore, the type of economic development promoted by the LDC would especially benefit low and moderate income workers by retaining and creating jobs that pay relatively high wages without requiring advanced degrees.

## **7. RELATED ISSUES**

There are several issues tied to the Fifth Avenue area that need additional consideration and study. Planning to support the economic vitality of downtown and the waterfront should be a priority and will need continued attention. As detailed elsewhere in this report, the City of New Rochelle's efforts to bring an IKEA superstore to the Fifth Avenue neighborhood were spurred in part by the desire of city officials to generate substantial sales tax revenue. The IKEA proposal was defeated largely because highly vocal opponents pointed out that the Study Area did not have the necessary infrastructure, such as direct access from Interstate 95, to support a store of the size without substantially eroding neighboring residents' quality of life. In keeping with contemporary planning principles embodied in programs such as Westchester's *Patterns*, the Regional Plan Association's *Third Regional Plan*, and the New Jersey State Plan, New Rochelle should reinforce and regenerate its downtown, the city's traditional center for shopping, dining, and entertainment.

Renewal of the waterfront, and Echo Bay in particular, is another appropriate venue for enhancing the City's tax revenues. Improvement of the waterfront could also improve the quality of life for residents of New Rochelle and Westchester County by providing more adequate public access and a higher quality waterfront.

The location of a vocational school in the area is an idea that should be explored, particularly as a potential means for further supporting New Rochelle and Westchester County's industrial base. Finally, the social fault lines within the community need to be addressed.

### **7.1 DOWNTOWN**

The City has taken many encouraging steps to revitalize its downtown in recent years. Nevertheless, it should be noted that a potential economic downturn might place that turnaround on shaky footing. Attendance at New Roc City has not met expectations, and the viability of its entertainment concept is questionable. It is also unclear whether its primarily youth-oriented activities will enhance the marketability of the new office space that has been proposed for "Parcel 1-A," across Huguenot Street from the New Roc parking garage. The fate of several blocks of prime downtown real estate now rest in the hands of two developers – AvalonBay and Louis Cappelli – which may place the city in a precarious position should these companies face economic problems. This underscores the need to support the remainder of the CBD, with its diverse property ownership.

Huguenot Street has gradually undergone a degradation as a pedestrian environment. The street's gradual decline as a business area and its increased level of traffic have contributed to deteriorate much of its length. As a result, several aging apartment buildings were removed between Lawton Street and

Division Street a few years ago and replaced with surface parking lots in preparation for the second phase of Avalon-on-the-Sound. Unfortunately, this removed some of the remaining activity from the sidewalks and created an environment that was less inviting for people who would still have reason to walk through. Recently the Avalon-on-the-Sound apartment tower was completed, with only moderate interaction with the street. The most detrimental aspect, however, is the lack of pedestrian traffic signals to cross Huguenot Street.

The opening of the Library Green will help improve this situation by making the area more attractive to pedestrians. The proposed retail in the ground floor of the second phase of Avalon will also have a positive effect. The much-needed pedestrian signals would also presumably be installed.

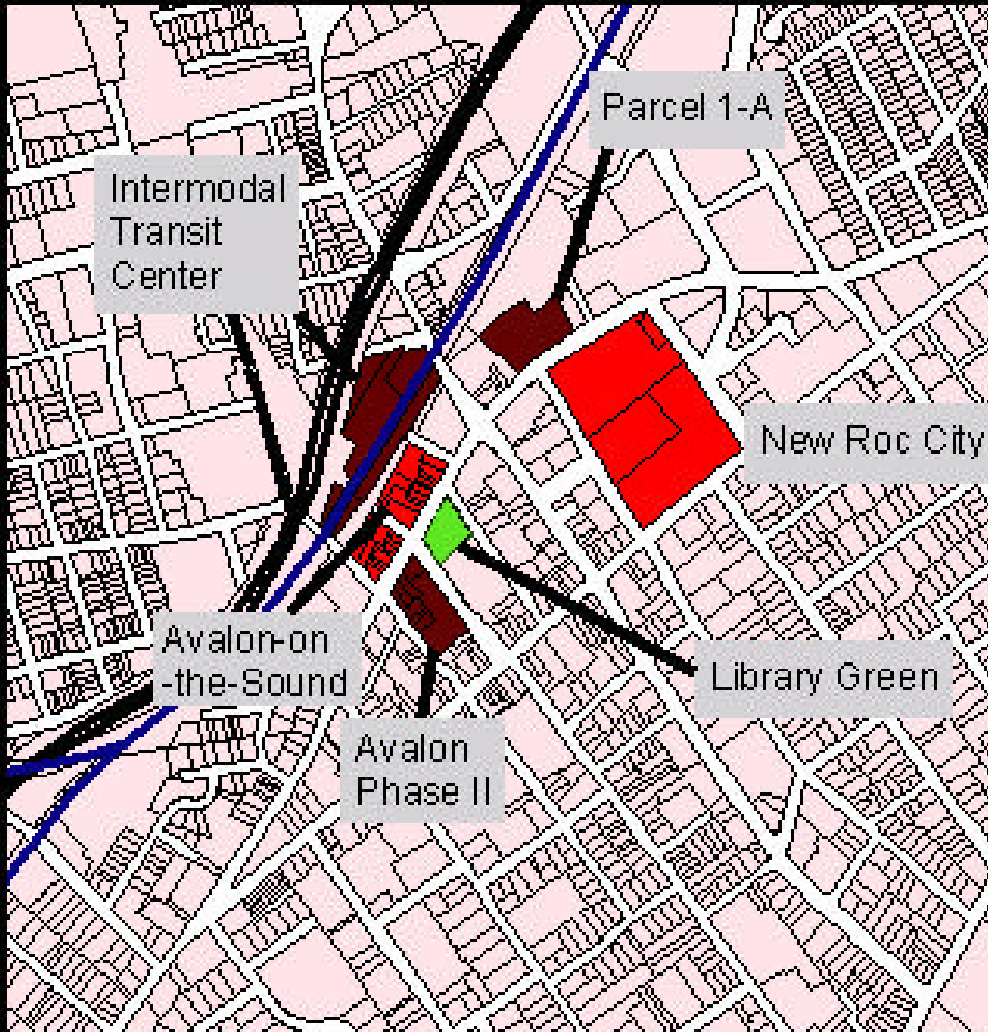
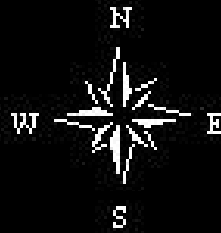
In recent years, new downtown development has included:

- **New Roc City**, an entertainment center with an 18-screen movie theater, bowling alley, large video arcade, and skating rink. This complex, which includes a parking garage funded by the city, replaced a mall anchored by Macy's that closed in the mid-1990s. Thus far, visitor numbers have not come close to meeting expectations: while 5.5 million were expected in New Roc City's first year, only 3.1 million came. According to Mayor Itoni, first-year expenses for the city exceeded income by \$400,000, which has drained discretionary resources from other areas. The developer is Louis Cappelli of Valhalla, New York.
- **Avalon on the Sound**, a 412-unit, 25-story residential tower adjoining the New Rochelle train station, with an adjacent parking garage. When this tower is fully rented, which is expected to occur by the end of 2001, the developer, AvalonBay Communities, Inc. plans to begin construction on a 588-unit residential tower across the street from it, at Division, Huguenot, and Main Streets.

Many developments are in the works that will have a positive effect on Downtown New Rochelle:

- **A proposed downtown historic district.** A cultural resources survey was completed in September 2000 by Taylor & Taylor Associates, Inc., with the intention of establishing a historic district between LeCount Place and the western entrance to downtown. New Rochelle's Business Improvement District is supportive of creating a historic district, which would enable property owners to benefit from the federal tax credit for renovations that meet the Secretary of the Interior's design standards for historic properties. Many downtown property owners as well as the City Council are hesitant to support a historic district, as they are fearful of design regulations that would restrict their options in performing alterations or that might prevent demolition of existing structures.
- **The construction of Library Green** north of the Public Library. This \$2.8 million open-space project was funded by Westchester County, and will be

# Recent and Proposed Projects in Downtown



## Legend

- Railroad
- Thruway
- Downtown Lots
- Proposed Developments
- Recent Developments
- New Park
- Other Lots

completed by the summer of 2001.

- **The construction of an Intermodal Transportation Center**, which will include a parking garage and improved infrastructure integrating bus lines and the Metro-North train line to New York City and New Haven. Construction is expected to begin in May 2002 and finish 12 to 18 months later.
- **A five-phase improvement program for North Avenue.** The first phase, from Huguenot to Garden Streets, will be completed with the Intermodal Transportation Center. The North Avenue improvement will include a redesign of a currently inhospitable small plaza at Main Street and Memorial Highway.
- **The development of “Parcel 1-A,”** formerly a city-owned lot. Louis Cappelli has purchased the lot with plans to develop an office tower.

### **Downtown Recommendations**

In order to reinforce the efforts already underway to buttress the financial, social, and cultural performance of Downtown New Rochelle, we offer the following recommendations for future study:

- **Design standards for new downtown buildings.** New buildings should perpetuate the streetscape and pedestrian-oriented nature of New Rochelle’s Central Business District. All new structures built downtown, including parking garages, should have first-floor retail to encourage ground-floor activity. This retail requirement would enable the city to avoid shortcomings that have surfaced in the past, such as the blank wall at New Roc City facing Main Street. This has largely prevented Main Street businesses from benefiting from the 3.1 million visitors to New Roc City. New structures taller than three stories should perpetuate the existing streetwall before setting back above the third story.
- **Downtown historic district.** These plans should move forward, and design controls for historic structures should be instituted. Main Street has a substantial collection of buildings from the late 19th through mid-20th century that are architecturally valuable and could provide a solid foundation for the economic revitalization of the CBD. The city and the Business Improvement District should begin a program to educate downtown property owners on the positive effects of historic districts, which have historically had the effect of raising property values and retail quality, and should invite mayors of cities in which historic districts have had positive economic effects to speak to downtown owners and business operators. The tax incentives available in a New Rochelle historic district would complement the city’s existing Façade Improvement Program, which provides free architectural and design services and 50% of construction cost, up to \$80,000, for qualifying downtown property owners.

- **Pedestrian improvements on Huguenot Street.** Improving the pedestrian environment, and reinforcing the crosswalks in particular, is important to reinforce the connection between downtown and the train station, while making walking trips around downtown more attractive to residents of the new apartment towers. Enhancement of the uses and esthetic attributes need to be considered. As already mentioned, the city is taking several positive steps. It may also want to consider special conditioning of the street corners to make the crosswalks more prominent, creating a special feature to serve as a welcoming pedestrian gateway into downtown in conjunction with converting the train station into the Intermodal Transit Center, and including bicycle lanes on Huguenot to both increase the level of activity on the street and to facilitate alternative means of transportation in connection with the transit center.
- **Enhance Ties with Iona College.** Located on North Avenue several blocks north of Downtown, the college could add vitality to Downtown. A free shuttle could be instituted, with frequent, reliable travel between the campus and several downtown stops. This service should run at least until midnight during the week and into the early morning on weekends. This would not only encourage students, many of whom do not own automobiles, to visit Downtown more, but may encourage many to move Downtown, helping to improve the CBD's performance as a 24-hour community and providing additional customers with disposable income. The possibility of a downtown cultural venue (performing arts, art gallery) operated by Iona, or jointly between the college and the City, should also be explored.
- **Parking Study.** The city should initiate a study to determine the need for additional downtown parking. Although several new garages have been built in recent years or are in the works, these are either private (those serving Avalon) or meant to serve drivers going to the area immediately surrounding New Roc City. A parking field currently located off of Centre Street south of Main may be a candidate for expansion or for construction of a parking structure. This is an especially crucial issue, as a lack of parking has hampered some potentially positive development plans. For example, a proposal to convert the former Main Street Bloomingdale's store, whose vacant condition has been a symbol of Downtown's decline, into office space, has been termed "highly speculative" by New Rochelle's Development Director in large part because of a lack of parking in the immediate area. A Bloomingdale's office building, at approximately 100,000 square feet in size, would require up to 300 spaces.
- **Housing.** The City should begin a marketing campaign to attract residents of New York City and other areas squeezed by high rents to older, vacant apartments in Downtown New Rochelle in the areas west and south of the New Roc City area.



## **7.2 WATERFRONT**

Echo Bay is an inlet off Long Island Sound located just beyond the eastern edge of New Rochelle's downtown. While the waterfront has long been a wonderful asset for the city, there is a lack of association between it and the downtown.

Furthermore, Echo Bay is spotted with industrial uses and dominated by the Westchester County Sewage Treatment Plant, which stands on its east shore.

In addition to the sewage treatment plant, the major parcels around the bay include Five Islands Park, a large vacant manufacturing facility, the New Rochelle City Yard, the former New York State Armory, a concrete company, a former Con Edison plant, and the municipal marina and Hudson Park. There is a stretch of homes between the Con Edison plant and the marina.

The State turned the Armory site over to the City in 1997 under the condition that it make the section of waterfront accessible to the public. The former Con Edison plant will also be turned over to the City, following environmental remediation. The City has also expressed an interest in acquiring the Nelsted Concrete Company to consolidate the waterfront. These sites, together with the parks and the City Yard, place much of the bay's waterfront under municipal ownership. And as the City is currently in the process of finding a place to relocate its City Yard, the opportunity is open to redefine this area and the image of New Rochelle in a more aesthetically pleasing and pedestrian-friendly manner.

At present, the vacant manufacturing plant is privately owned and is likely to be developed privately in the future. It was previously occupied by Tuck Tape Corporation. In August 1997, the owner of New Rochelle Ford and other investors bought the site and now propose a major redevelopment. Dubbed Soundview Plaza, it would incorporate commercial uses, which would require rezoning.

The City Council approved redevelopment plans for the area in 1983 and 1999. In 1983, the area was given the zoning designation "Planned Unit Development" following extensive discussion at a public hearing concerning the appropriate reuse of the Armory and City Yard sites, where strong opposition to high-density, high-rise development was voiced. The PUD designation permits residential and/or commercial development on this site, but leaves major controls, such as height and density, to be determined by the Planning Board and the City Council when development proposals are made.

The Harbor Management Plan provided much of the framework for the 1999 plan, and is frequently cited by the City's plan. The Harbor Management Plan deals with two sets of waterfront uses: water-dependent uses/support facilities, and public access/recreation. The plan suggests as an option a high-speed ferry to Long Island and/or New York City from the Municipal Marina, which has available parking and good access to I-95 and the proposed Intermodal Transportation Facility.

It also recognized the City Yard site as a major waterfront parcel whose redevelopment could significantly improve the quality of life and property values of the surrounding areas. City Yard lies in close proximity to the central business district and equidistant from two underutilized city waterfront facilities - Five Islands Park and the Municipal Marina. The plan highlighted the opportunity for tying together these three city-waterfront nodes with walkways and boat shuttles, thereby enhancing the physical activity and landscape of Echo Bay.

The 1999 plan delimited the Main Street/Echo Bay Urban Renewal Area by Echo Avenue on the west, Main Street on the north, and included all of City Yard to the east and the former Con Edison Plant and Echo Bay to the south. The Urban Renewal Plan called for improved public access to the waterfront, outlining the creation of a public promenade and suggesting a ferry between Five Islands Park and Hudson Park. Proposed developments providing views of the waterfront from Main Street were to be given priority on city-owned property. The plan envisioned mixed residential, commercial, and water-related recreational uses, and encouraged water-dependent and water-enhanced uses.

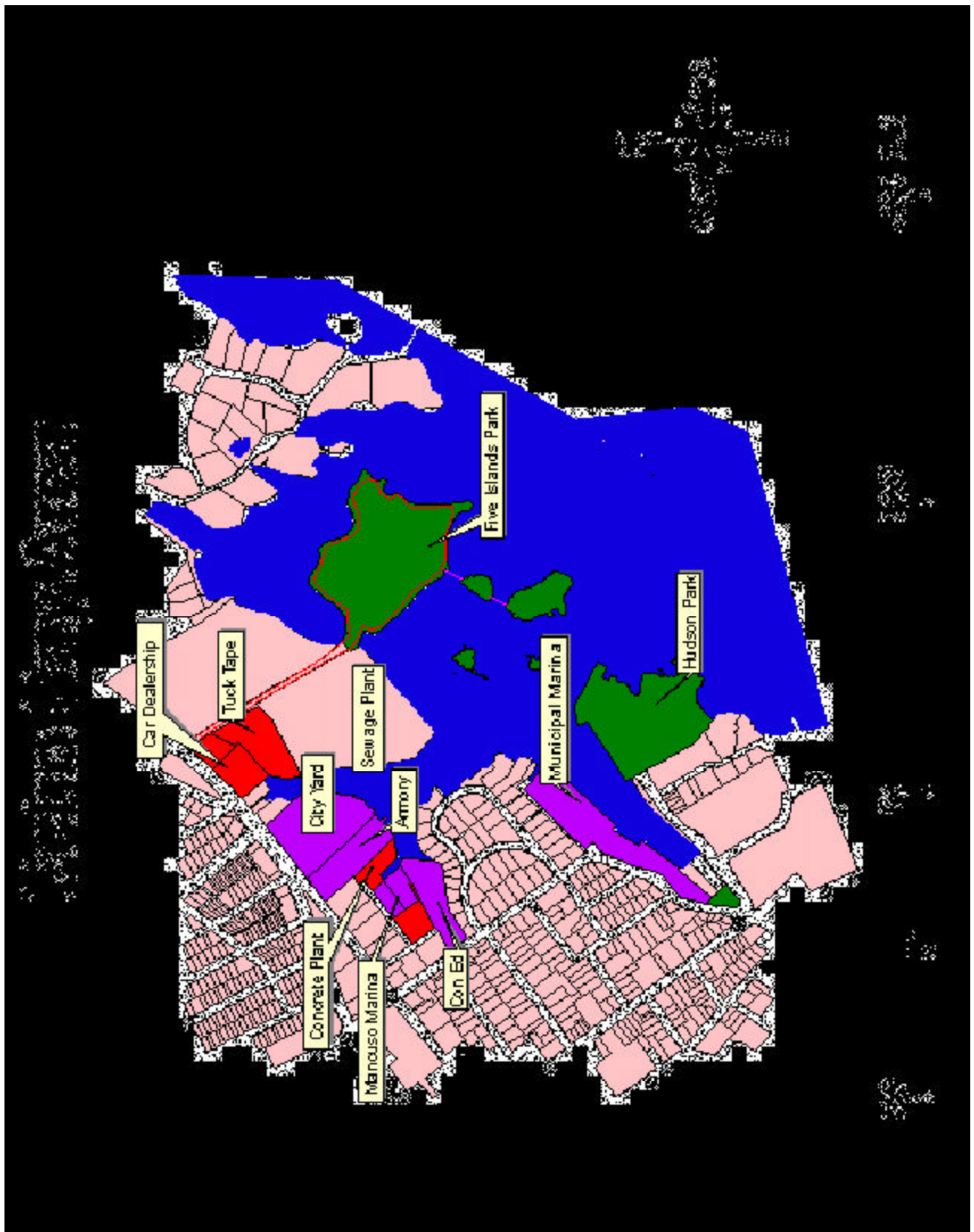
The City replaced its old zoning with new Waterfront Related Zoning Codes in order to allow by special permit residential uses and other commercial uses that are not water-dependent. Approval would be conditional on the uses not displacing existing water-dependent uses, while remaining compatible with adjacent and nearby residential neighborhoods, several of which now enjoy views of the waterfront.

The water-dependent uses encouraged by the 1999 plan may not be viable, however, unless navigation channels are dredged and waterfront edges are improved. If Echo Bay is allowed to continue silting in, the municipal marina, which is the largest public boat basin in Westchester County, will continue to lose capacity. Dredging contaminated areas is expensive and environmentally controversial, however. The Department of Public Works has been dealing with the issue, but has suffered setbacks as the Environmental Protection Agency changed its standards regulating dredging. At last check, the Department of Public Works needed to retest the sediment.

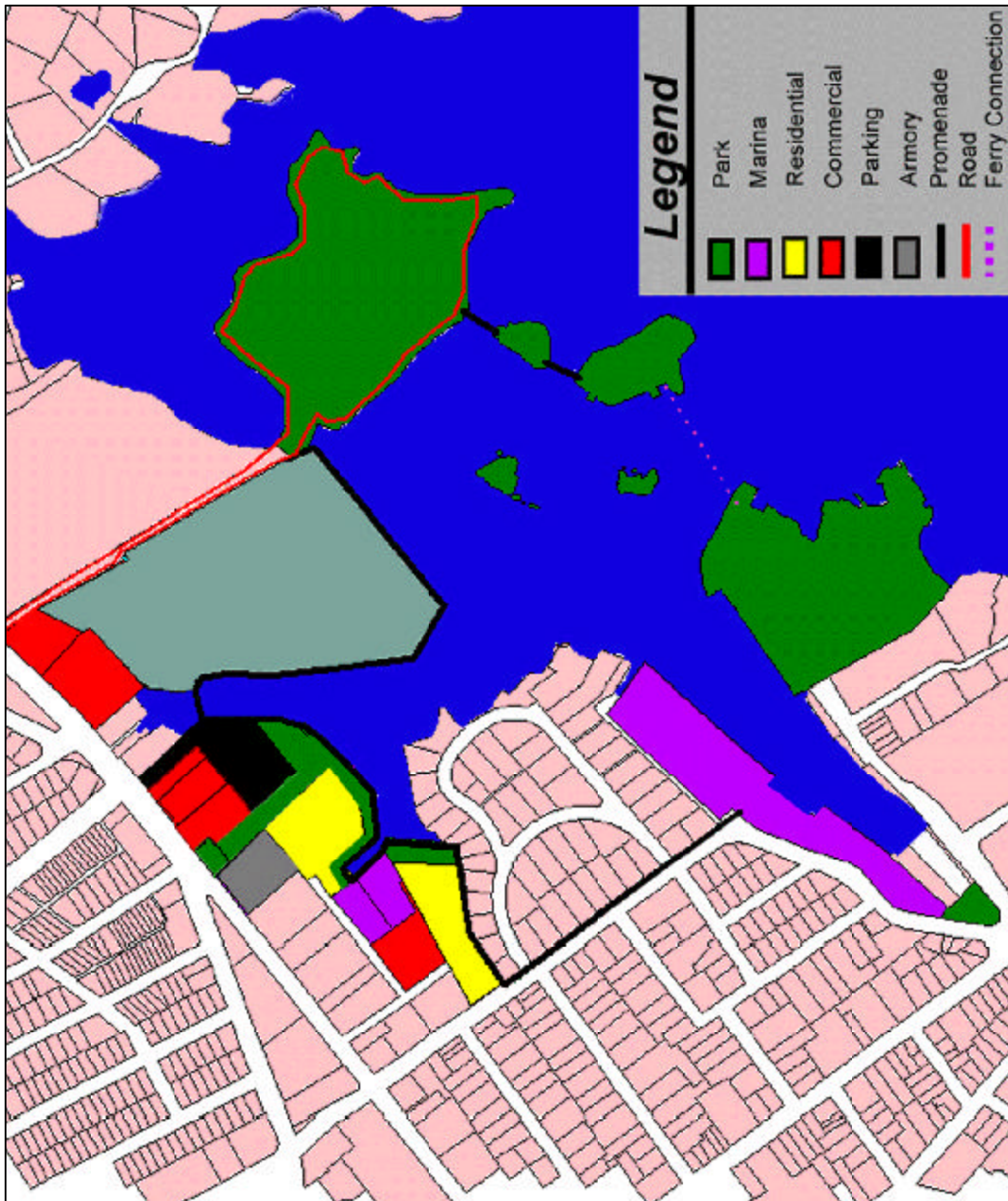
The plan also did not adequately address the sanitation plant, which was not included in the redevelopment area. While there seems to be little odor associated with the plant, it is visually detrimental to the area and occasionally discharges overflows into the bay.

### **Waterfront Recommendations:**

There are some possible alternatives for revitalization in the Echo Bay Area. The objectives of the bay's redevelopment should be a good balance of residential and commercial uses, better connections between the waterfront and the rest of the



# Proposal



city, and additional study of the infrastructure that will be needed in the area. Bearing this in mind, the following points merit additional study and attention:

- **Commercial Development.** Extending commercial uses to this section of Main Street could help improve the connection between downtown and the waterfront. The businesses that could benefit from the access to the waterfront would help bolster the City's finances through higher sales and property taxes. The car dealership's lot should be retained for commercial uses, and most of the Main Street frontage of the City Yard site should be opened to commercial development.
- **Variations on a Theme.** The City might consider using public art, decorative benches or lampposts, or other similar techniques to create a series of related elements along Main Street and the waterfront. This carries pedestrians along, wanting to see how the next piece will interpret the theme.
- **Public Parking.** On the City Yard site, the area between the waterfront promenade and the commercial frontage on Main Street could be used for public parking to improve access to the waterfront and serve adjacent businesses.
- **Bicycle Lanes.** In order to better reinforce the connection between the waterfront and the rest of the city, to provide better recreational opportunities to residents, and to alleviate some of the parking pressure on the waterfront, the City should study the possibility of adding bicycle lanes between the waterfront promenade and other parts of the city.
- **Ferries.** The different proposals for recreational and commuting ferries could provide more adequate usage of the waterfront and help make the area more vibrant. There may also be a possibility of mildly curbing the increases in congestion on I-95 with a ferry commuting service. These will have to be carefully studied in terms of economic viability as well as traffic impacts on the surrounding area and throughout the region.
- **Parks, Promenade, and Public Plaza.** The waterfront should be reserved or acquired to create a continuous promenade with lanes for walking, rollerblading, and bicycling along the waterfront, thereby increasing the recreational possibilities of this resource. In addition, the City should consider expanding the existing paths to include these uses. There should be a prominent connection between Main Street and the waterfront adjacent to the Armory, which could include a public plaza. The plaza could become a venue for summer events as well as establishing a gateway that would serve as a connection between the city and its waterfront.
- **The Armory.** As the armory was given to New Rochelle to improve public space,

we suggest that the building itself be dedicated to a public function. This could take the form of a museum, as has been suggested. Another possibility might be a community center.

- **Residential Uses.** The City has expressed an interest in developing portions of the bay as market rate housing. It might allow residential development on the Con Edison and Nelsted Concrete sites, while retaining the waterfront as a public promenade. Given the amenity of the waterfront, the City could improve its finances through the sale and increased property taxes of these sites.
- **Sewage Treatment Plant.** This facility is currently an aesthetic detriment to the surrounding area. This problem could be largely alleviated through the use of landscaping as screening. A change of grade, the insertion of trees around the facility, the use of decorative stone walls and other landscaping techniques, could be used to separate the public promenade as it edges the plant.

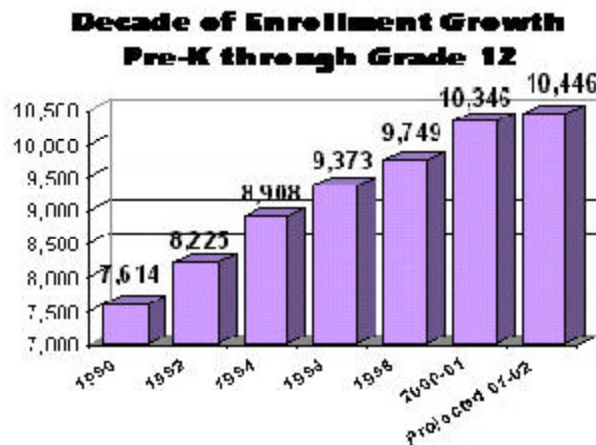
Given the low capacity of the facility, and the city's increasing population, the need to expand the plant must be studied as a comprehensive element of the plan for the bay's development. If purchase of the Tuck Tape site becomes necessary, this could be done in conjunction with the creation of the public promenade to facilitate land acquisition and limit construction impacts.

- **Environmental Cleanup.** This is a complex issue which needs continued attention pertaining to the municipal marina, and potentially any redevelopment of the City Yard and Nelsted Concrete Company sites. While planning comprehensively for Echo Bay, the City should investigate any benefits from combining the potential remediation of these sites, such as economies of scale, lower application costs, and increased federal and state aid.



### **7.3 PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

New Rochelle's schools are strained under growing enrollment. Enrollment has surged over 35% in the last decade from 7,614 students in 1990 to a projected 10,446 in 2001. The steady rise in enrollment is expected to continue due to two factors: increased births, and sales of homes to families with several children of school age.



Families continue to be attracted to New Rochelle due to the reputation of the school district. For instance, the largest school selection consulting firm, SchoolMatch, an independent, nationwide service in Ohio that helps corporate employee families find schools that match the needs of their children, placed the City School District of New Rochelle in a nationally select top group of 15% of the nation's 15,620 school systems. In addition, the U.S. Department of Education has given five Blue Ribbon School Awards to the New Rochelle schools, more than to any other school district in Westchester. This growth, however, puts a considerable strain on the City's aging facilities.

New Rochelle's Board of Education is actively addressing these financial demands of physical expansion in its 2001-2 Proposed Budget. On March 27, 2001, Bond Proposition No. 1 authorized \$39.9 million to finance the reconstruction of and addition to New Rochelle High School. Currently, most (73.5%) of the New Rochelle school budget is supported by local tax dollars. State aid, the second-largest source of revenue, accounts for 15.4% of the school district's income and is expected to increase about 6% during the 2001-2002 school year. Any increase in state aid would decrease the local tax levy.

Further challenging New Rochelle's efforts, the New York Board of Regents has mandated new standards, tests, and graduation requirements for all public schools. One major change for New Rochelle is the shift in its high school from a

comprehensive institution which formerly offered the option of a local diploma, to an All-Regents high school for all students. Among the changes in Regents requirements relevant to the City Park Redevelopment vision are:

- **Academic Intervention Services (AIS).** Identify and serve children (K-12) who give indication through multiple measures that they are at risk of academic failure. Each child must be furnished with a personal educational plan to be implemented by certified personnel.
- **Staff Development.** The district incurs costs for training/preparing teachers for instructional requirements. Teachers need training where local curriculum indicates major shifts from current practice.
- **Additional Instructional Courses.** Prepare instruction directed toward high-risk students to improve their academics before examination.
- **Proctoring Costs.** District costs for Special Education and for students who are not classified as requiring Section 504 modifications (e.g., extended school time, being read to, physical modifications, and special setting small groups) so that the children can succeed.
- **Part 154 Regulations.** Significant costs associated with the new regulations for Limited English Proficient (LEP)/ English Language Learners (ELL). Mandates increased instructional time for English, native language, and content area instruction.

In short, these state mandates further justify serious consideration for a special needs, advanced occupational training, or vocational education center. The City Park Redevelopment area has the potential to house such a facility, especially given the low usage of City Park during the day and the potential to share parking with the park.

A school providing vocational and occupational training in the study area would complement other efforts to reinforce the industrial base. School construction could be accomplished through the institution of a development corporation. Information regarding the need for a school and its location in southern Westchester, and the type of school that would be required are backed by the following information from Claudia Fuller, Director, and Harry Kaplan, Supervisor, Center for Career Services, at Southern Westchester Boces.

BOCES is an organization providing occupational and vocational training, as well as immigrant services and a wide array of other educational programs for adults and high school students in New York State. Southern Westchester Boces' current facility is located north of White Plains in Valhalla, which is difficult to reach by public transportation from many areas of southern Westchester. According to Fuller and Kaplan:

- New Rochelle accounts for approximately 150 of the students coming to Southern Westchester Boces every year for technical training.



- There is a waiting list for Boces training.
- Of graduating students, 95% of Boces students further their training or go on to work in the field of their training.
- New Rochelle's demographics, with a large working-class, immigrant population, make it a good candidate for additional adult occupational training.
- Boces has identified a need for additional occupational education in Westchester.
- Training is in demand for mechanics, plumbers, electricians, carpenters, and HVAC technicians. Also, there is big demand for computer networking technicians, and these jobs are also the most attractive to prospective students because they are seen as having the largest future potential. There is a need for workers in heavy industrial trades, but not many people are interested in receiving training in these fields because they are not seen as having big future potential.
- Auto mechanics, especially those trained in the latest, computer-oriented systems, are in short supply.
- Health services is a fast-growing field. Medical billing and coding is a big area.
- Not surprisingly, there is always a need for retail workers, but retail jobs generally don't pay well, and those that do pay well generally go to people with business management backgrounds, who are more highly educated.
- Many young people are going into food preparation. There is a big market for it in the area, with many new hotels, conference centers, and restaurants around. But the better-paying jobs in food prep go to those with much more advanced training, such as from the Culinary Institute or Johnson & Wales. Those below them do not receive good wages and benefits.
- Boces is expanding. It just installed a new Cisco training program for computer networking technicians at the Valhalla campus. Although both Kaplan and Fuller said there was additional demand for Boces services, neither provided a ballpark figure on how many additional students could be accommodated.

## **7.4 HOUSING**

Of the 77 tax lots in the redevelopment area, 31 have been identified as being residential in use, making them non-compliant with the existing zoning designation. 13 of the properties are owner-occupied, and 18 are tenant-occupied; many are both. Of these properties, a total of 10 have been purchased by IKEA (5 owner-occupied and 5 tenant-occupied).

The owner-occupied units are inhabited by older residents, mostly African Americans and persons of Italian descent. The rental units are mostly occupied by immigrant Latino families.

Given our proposal to reinforce the industrial base, the residential properties will eventually be replaced by industrial uses. The manner in which this replacement should occur is an open question. We have identified these possible means to

adequately address the needs of residents, many of which could be used in combination:

- Allow for input by the current long-term residents of the area regarding any conversion decision
- Require compliance with the existing zoning upon change of ownership. This would permit older homeowners to stay put until they no longer need their houses.
- Institute a reverse-mortgage type of program to buy out properties so that the present owner/occupants can enjoy income before the property is acquired by the City; this could be a function of the LDC.
- Implement Tax Increment Financing on properties converted to industrial use from residential.
- Provide deposit and relocation cost assistance to tenants
- Work closely with local non-profit housing development groups to find replacement housing for those who wish it.

#### **7.4.1 MACLEAY APARTMENTS**

(FOR A HISTORY OF THE MACLEAY APARTMENTS, SEE SECTION 5.3.5)

MacLeay Apartments, formerly a public housing development, is now owned and managed by the New Rochelle Neighborhood Revitalization Corporation. Since acquiring the complex in 1986, MacLeay has gone from being a financial drain on the city to one that generates \$600,000 annually for the city's coffers. While NRNRC measures its success in part in terms of financial objectives, the residents evaluate the organization in terms of its undelivered promises of social services and day care, inadequate maintenance, and the seemingly arbitrary eviction of residents, particularly long-time residents. All of these problems are inter-related and require greater accountability of NRNRC to its tenants and a more democratic and transparent process for residents to express their grievances, respond to lease violations, and participate in the management and development of their community.

#### **INTEGRAL ISSUES**

Our assessment of the needs and issues relating to the MacLeay Apartments is based on research and discussions with MacLeay Apartment residents. We made several attempts to contact Charles Depasquale, the executive vice president of NRNRC, but he was unavailable for comment.

#### **Privatization, Lease Violations and Evictions**

The privatization of MacLeay is displacing low-income residents receiving Section 8

rent subsidies with people who can pay market rents. Many of the low-income residents have lived there for more than 20 years, and they are being removed from their apartments as a result of two factors. One is NRNRC's rejection of Section 8 vouchers due to a change in the city's rent subsidy program. The city is switching from Section 8 certificates to Housing Choice vouchers, a similar rent subsidy program. The switch requires a new contract between landlords and the public housing agency that provides the voucher, which creates a loophole for landlords to reject the contract with no explanation. NRNRC, as a landlord, has chosen not to sign contracts and will not accept the new vouchers. Consequently, residents whose leases expire must either be able to pay market-rate rents for their units at MacLeay or find another place to live. So far, about 15 families have been affected by this change. This problem is not specific to New Rochelle, and countywide more than 50 families with Housing Choice vouchers are still looking for affordable housing. Many are being forced to look outside Westchester County.

The second factor contributing to an increase in the number of families moving out of MacLeay Apartments are lease violations. Almost 10 families have been asked to move recently after being accused by NRNRC of lease violations, such as not paying their rent or having people who aren't on the lease live with them. Some of these families, however, feel the accusations are not justified. The dispute between NRNRC and residents over illegal evictions has been an ongoing problem since NRNRC assumed ownership of the buildings. In 1996, for example, eleven families faced eviction for "quality of life offenses" that they denied. According to NRNRC, its private security force had documented lease violations such as loitering, marijuana-smoking, and gambling.<sup>6</sup>

The evictions have left some residents feeling intimidated, threatened, and uncertain about their futures. The displacement of longtime residents from MacLeay has not only forced families to move out of New Rochelle, it has also reeded a strong sense of community.

### **Unmet Needs: Local Retail and Social Services**

In 1989, the NRNRC's board directed the manager, Calvin Walton, to research funding sources for social services, including transportation to local programs for youth and seniors, a referral service for counseling and job training programs, day care, and tutoring.<sup>7</sup> "Whenever you have a large concentration of low-income people, you need social services," Mr. Walton said. "We have to find a way to motivate some of these young people and some adults."

In a survey of current residents during the course of our study, those services are still in demand. Residents would like to have local retail, such as a clothing store and grocery store, an educational facility, day care, and job training programs in the City Park area.

Another related issue is the restricted access to the community center, known as the RESPECT room, and the computer center. Residents complain that they are unable to use the resources in these rooms, because they do not have access to them. On many occasions, they have had to hold their meetings outside the complex, because they were not provided access to the RESPECT room by Mr. DePasquale.

### **Maintenance Problems**

During our discussion with MacLeay residents, they spoke at length about the maintenance problems they've encountered since the 1990 building renovations. Many are concerned of exposure to asbestos during the renovation, when abatement measures in the basement were performed without evacuation of the residents from the building. Furthermore, materials left over from the renovation were apparently buried in an area that was formerly used as a playground.

Residents are also frustrated with repeated flooding of raw sewage in their apartments due to old pipes. Many also complain of rust in their water, as well as inconsistent water service. Some only receive cold water, while others only receive hot water.

The most recent grievance occurred when NRNRC cut down four trees and removed two benches in front of the building that the management staff claimed were obstructing the surveillance cameras from monitoring drug-dealing activity. These actions were taken without consultation with the residents or warning.

### **Racial Profiling and Mobility Constraints**

According to residents, their children have been shadowed by Larchmont police officers who claimed "it's a private town" and turned them away from using the MetroNorth train station. Since these incidents of racial profiling, neither the adults nor their children use the Larchmont station. Instead, they either walk an hour to the New Rochelle station, or they take a cab. The residents also have complained of retail racism, describing experiences where they have had to wait for service in Larchmont or have not been served at all.

The residents' mobility is further limited by the infrequency of public transportation. The buses only run once an hour and do not run on Sundays, which makes scheduling even routine activities difficult.

While residents' access outside of MacLeay is constrained by racial profiling and limited public transportation, the access of visitors to MacLeay is constrained by the lack of visitor parking in the lot adjacent to the buildings. There are reserved spaces that neither residents nor visitors have permission to use without submitting a written request to NRNRC. In their request, residents must provide the

registration number for the vehicle that will be parked there during the visit. Residents themselves have had their cars towed by NRNRC, because of inadequate parking and strict rules on proof of ownership that penalize residents whose cars are owned by friends or family members. The parking lot has approximately 90 spaces, half of MacLeay's 180 units.

## **Tenants Council**

Exercising their right to organize, the residents of MacLeay Apartments formed the Macleay Apartments Residents Association to oppose arbitrary evictions, educate residents of their rights, improve their living conditions, and strengthen a sense of community. On April 23, 2001, more than 35 residents, most of them women, elected an Executive Board comprised of six resident leaders. Their mission statement is as follows:

“The MacLeay Apartments Residents Association is an organization committed to protecting and improving the quality of life of all who reside at the MacLeay Apartment Houses. Our mission statement currently has these objectives:

1. Educate and support residents of their rights and responsibilities as it relates to the MacLeay Apartment Houses, city of New Rochelle, Westchester County, New York State and the United States of America.
2. Inform and encourage residents of the MacLeay apartment complex of the various programs and services that are available to them, and if needed, provide support and resources for the use of those services.
3. Resurrect a community feeling that was prevalent for many years at the MacLeay Apartments, which have been a part of the Queen City since 1948.”

## **Summary**

We have only presented the tenants' side of these issues here, because we have made repeated efforts over the past month to interview NRC officials, who remained unavailable. Given the NRC's cool response to us, we are not confident that it meets the standards of transparency demanded of a private group charged with acting in the public interest. Therefore, we believe the following questions must be addressed, and we strongly encourage the residents of Larchmont and New Rochelle, and concerned citizens' groups like the New Rochelle Citizens Committee (NRCC) and the Westchester Residents Against IKEA Now (WRAIN) to work towards answering them over the coming months:

- How can the NRC's operations, especially the tenant eviction and screening processes, be made more transparent?
- How can we ensure that the goal of MacLeay's builders, of providing quality housing to low-income New Rochelle residents, is not lost in an effort to maxi-

mize revenue?

- How can we guarantee that MacLeay residents, who contribute \$600,000 to city coffers each year, receive their fair share of social and transportation services?
- Related to the last point, how can frequent and reliable access to Downtown be created, to the benefit of both Downtown businesses and MacLeay residents?
- And finally, how will the MacLeay residents be included in the planning process for the economic and social development of City Park and New Rochelle?

**The Spring 2001  
New Rochelle Studio**

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The Studio maintains a website with reports, studies, graphs, charts, analyses, maps and related materials about the New Rochelle Project at:  
**[www.columbia.edu/itc/architecture/bass/newrochelle/index.html](http://www.columbia.edu/itc/architecture/bass/newrochelle/index.html)**

## 10. Appendix 1: Businesses Identified in Study Area

COMPANY NAME	ADDRESS	NATURE OF BUSINESS
Total Performance Auto	479 Fifth Ave.	Auto repair
Westchester Wood & Mica Works	521 Fifth Ave.	Cabinetry
Marble America	517 Fifth Ave.	Stoneware
North Star Electric	567 Fifth Ave.	Heavy construction
Cadbury Utility	559 Fifth Ave.	Utility provision
Day Electric	Fifth Ave.	Electrical contracting
Andretta Construction	332 Fifth Ave.	Masonry and construction
Fradan Industries	499 Fifth Ave.	Manufactures leaf blowers
Anthony Truck Repair	49 Plain Ave.	Auto repair
Derf Electronics	37 Plain Ave.	Manufacture of computer parts
Elcan Industries	57 Plain Ave.	Manufacturers screening & sifting equipment
Gerard Daniel	5 Plain Ave.	Manufactures industrial screens
Jantile Ltd.	65 Plain Ave.	Custom design tiles
Montesano Brothers	76 Plain Ave.	Site developer
Ortho-Rite	55 Plain Ave.	Manufactures orthopedic appliances
Vernon Devices	111 Plain Ave.	Manufactures tool cutting parts
Wilco Energy	95 Plain Ave.	Heating, A/C, oil delivery
Ardee Electric	53 Pleasant Street	Electrical contractors
Captech Industries	10 Pleasant Street	Manufactures vending machines for Metro North, LIRR
McMahon's Farms	30 Pleasant Street	Food distributor (eggs)
Mountaintop Cabinet	24 Pleasant Street	Cabinetry
Renzo Auto Springs	15 Pleasant Street	Auto repair
Rudy's Auto Repair	32A Pleasant Street	Auto repair
Safeway Towing & Haulage	1 Pleasant Street	Towing services
Southern NY Bus Sales	6 Pleasant Street	Sells school buses
Telefuture Communications	10 Pleasant Street	Telecommunications consultants
Trotta Foods	Pleasant Street	Manufactures pasta for restaurants, retail
Wodraska Roofing	42 Pleasant Street	Roofing, sheet metal, siding contractors
Van Waters and Rogers	1 Portman Rd.	Pest control equipment & sales
D&G Auto Repair	8 Valley Pl.	Auto repair
Jeff Williamson Tree Service	227 Weyman Avenue	Tree cutting
Absolute Coatings	38 Portman Road	Manufacture polyurethane coatings for floors
Rawl (Ranero corp)	29 Sharot Street	Manufacture power facets for wall anchors
Mario Bulfamante & Sons (Name Unknown)	262 Drake Avenue 14 Sharot Street	Nursery/garden center, landscaping Heavy machinery
Goldman Electrical Contractors	48 Potter Avenue	Electrical contractors
Westchester Dental Implant Institute	45 Potter	Dentistry
B&F Precision Manufacturing Company	62 Potter	Manufacture small precision parts for the medical and aircraft industries
Noto's Auto Repair (Angela Lopane-owner)	62 Potter 70 Potter	Auto repair New auto prep
Laser Frame and Body (Ace Autobody & Col., Inc.)	74 Potter	Auto body repair
Micelli Excavating	110 Portman Road	Heavy machinery storage, excavation
LaRocca & Sons	69 Potter	Landscaping, masonry, snow removal
New Rochelle Autobody, Inc.	43 Potter	Auto body repair
GER Industries, Inc.	28 Potter	Architectural woodworking
Tekcast Industries, Inc.	12 Potter Avenue	Manufactures "spin cast" parts for machinery
Matthew Outdoor Advertising Acquisition	Potter and Fifth	Billboard advertising
Wash & Dry	453 Fifth Avenue	Laundromat



## Appendix 1 (continued)

COMPANY NAME	ADDRESS	NATURE OF BUSINESS
Imperial Milk Mart	453 Fifth Avenue	Bodega
Green Market Lunch	459 Fifth Avenue	Restaurant
Beechmont Bus Service, Inc.	26 Valley Place	School bus service and repair
Southern New York Bus Sales, Inc.	6 Pleasant Street	Sells school buses
Larchmont Millworks	8 Valley Place	Custom cabinet makers
Atlas Party Rentals	(address unknown)	Party rental
Librett Industrial Wholesale Distributors, Inc.	615 Fifth Avenue	Distribution
Bayview Larchmont Rapid Car Service	(address unknown)	Car service
Rosann Land Improvement	5 Fifth Avenue	Landscaping
Mat-Bon Construction	(address unknown)	Construction
Collins Brothers Moving Corp.	(address unknown)	Moving service
Chow-Down Discount Pet Food	626 Fifth Avenue	Pet food store
Lesco Service Center (pro turf care)	5 Fifth Avenue	Lawn care
East Coast Auto Body	1 Fifth Avenue	Auto body repair

COMPANY	NATURE OF BUSINESS	TOTAL EMPLOYEES	RESIDENCE OF EMPLOYEES NEW ROCHELLE WESTCHESTER COUNTY WESTCHESTER



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