

CITY OF NORWALK REPORT TO THE NORWALK PLANNING COMMISSION
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ITEM: Discussion on the first chapter of *Suburban Nation*

MEETING DATE: June 27, 2016

STAFF CONTACT: Luke Parris, AICP
City Planner
Wade Wagoner, AICP
Planning & Economic Development Director

GENERAL DISCUSSION: City staff asked the Planning Commission to read and provide feedback from chapter 1 of the book *Suburban Nation*. The purpose of this exercise is to have the Planning Commission gain a better understanding of past development patterns used across the U.S and to learn new practices to implement when developing future plans for the City of Norwalk.

The following are key takeaways identified from City Staff after reading and review of the first chapter of *Suburban Nation*:

- Identifying two different models of urban growth: The traditional neighborhood & Suburban sprawl.
- The five components of suburban sprawl: Housing subdivisions, Shopping centers, Office parks, Civic institutions, Roadways.
- The history of sprawl in America: The transition away from traditional neighborhoods to suburban sprawl by way of zoning codes and government programs favoring sprawling developments.
- Comparing planning styles of Virginia Beach, VA to Alexandria, VA: Suburban sprawl vs. traditional planning.
- The six components of traditional neighborhood: The center, The five-minute walk, The street network, Narrow, versatile streets, Mixed use, Special sites for special buildings.
- The need to rethink zoning codes: Update zoning codes to provide for more integrated uses, enhance flexibility, shorten the length of the codes and create a clear picture of what they want their communities to be.