

<b>CITY OF NORWALK REPORT TO THE NORWALK PLANNING COMMISSION</b>
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**ITEM:** Discussion on the second, third, and fourth chapters of *Suburban Nation*

**MEETING DATE:** July 11, 2016

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**GENERAL DISCUSSION:** City staff asked the Planning Commission to read and provide feedback from chapter 2, 3, and 4 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. As we move forward on the Subdivision Regulation update, we feel the takeaways from Chapter 4 are particularly important.

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

- Identifying why there are more traffic congestions in the suburbs than in the city (everyone is forced to drive)
- Creating a distinction between adjacency & accessibility.
- Visualizing structures in a different light: the convenience store as the corner store, the shopping center as the main street, and the office park included on main street.
- Rethinking how we use open space in the suburbs.
- Reevaluate the need to have curving streets and cul-de-sacs.
- Traffic Calming

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

- Considering why housing trends help support the spread of sprawl. "Isolation en masse"
- An examination of differences between the private and public realm of the 'McMansions' and subdivisions.
- Why suburbs fuel segregation by how much you earn.
- Cookie cutter housing and the value of diverse housing styles
- The two types of affordable housing that are illegal: The home above the store and the outbuilding.
- The two forgotten rules of affordable housing: affordable housing should not look different from market rate housing and that affordable housing shouldn't be concentrated in large quantities.
- The middle class housing crisis.

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

- Identifying the increasingly reluctance to participate in civic life: family, community, the public realm, the motorist.
- The relationship between drivers and pedestrians.
- Prerequisites for street life: meaningful destinations, safe streets, comfortable streets, and interesting streets.



A small curb radius slows down vehicles and shortens crossing distance. Meanwhile, highway geometry applied to local streets encourage speeding and increases crossing distance



Poor street design severs walking connections and precludes pedestrian life. Proper design can create a street that is a sociable space with many purposes.