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

MEETING DATE: August 22, 2016

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GENERAL DISCUSSION: City staff asked the Planning Commission to read and provide feedback from chapter 11 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 eleventh chapter of *Suburban Nation*:

- Victory Myth: While architects, traffic engineers, planners, and elected officials are advancing anti-sprawl policies, developers by and large are still promoting and building sprawling projects.
- Tools for manipulating the physical environment: Design, policy, and management.
- The role of policy: Developers adhere to regulations set by government policy. If the public sector does not actively involve itself in the process, private action cannot be anything but self-interested and chaotic.
- Municipal and County Government: Put community design back on the agenda. Rewrite the regulations in a way that promote an alternative new development code that has a more streamlined permitting process compared to the old one that could still be used. Make government proactive by commissioning a professional public plan and provide incentives for its private implementation, Think globally, act locally, but plan regionally. Plan with public participation in order to avoid costly mistakes, but administrators must still act on principle when making difficult decisions on behalf of the public good. Finally, practice what you preach.
- Regional Government: By participating in regional governments (Think the Tomorrow Plan by the Des Moines MPO), local entities can collaborate with each other on plans that will achieve goals that will benefit the region as a whole for everybody.
- State Government: Legislators must pass new growth management laws or modify existing laws and funding vehicles to promote smart growth planning. State governments also must combine regional planning and transportation planning into a single activity.

- Federal Government: It is in the nation's interest to grow healthily, if for no other reason than to maintain its competitive advantage in the global marketplace. Reversing policies that pushed America into the suburbs would be the best place to start.
- Architects: Must accept a proposal that runs counter to most architectural schooling, design affects behavior. Good design may not generate good behavior, but bad design can generate bad behavior.
- Citizens: Once citizens begin to understand how much their environment affects their quality of life, we can better serve them and our own needs by improving our physical surroundings. For our country to prosper, Americans must concern themselves with the building of community.