

RIVERHEAD

Comprehensive Plan Update



Chapter 10/ Community Facilities

Working Draft

This document is presented in its current form as a preliminary draft for public review. We encourage all stakeholders to provide comments as your input will play a vital role in shaping the final version of the Comprehensive Plan. Please email comments to compplan@townofriverheadny.gov.

Please note that the document will be further refined once comments are received from the community. Since it is an interim document, it is in a raw formatted form. The revised draft will be arranged in a more graphic format with photos, figures, and other visual elements to enhance clarity and understanding. Thank you for your time and participation in this important planning process.

Submitted by BFJ Planning

January 23, 2024

CHAPTER 10. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Introduction

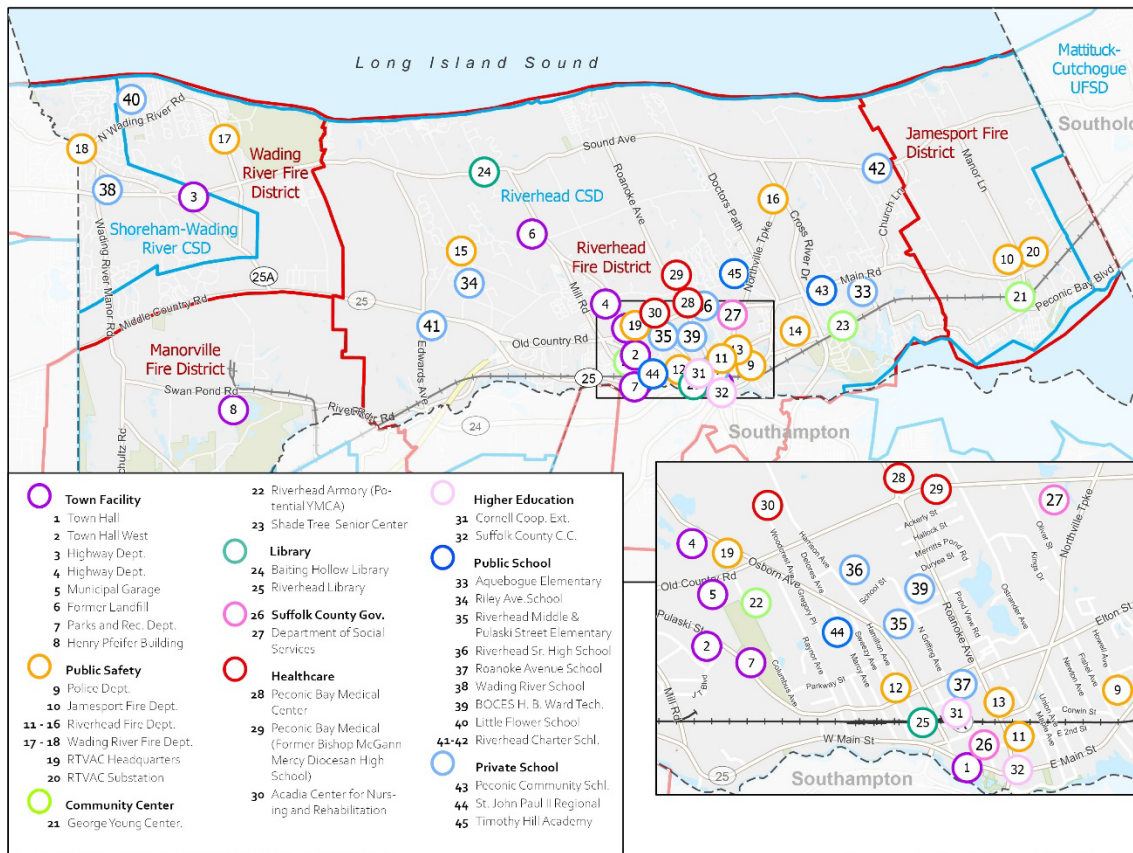
This section discusses the practical aspects of community facilities that play a pivotal role in the daily lives of those who live and work in the Town. This chapter examines the current state of these essential services, from schools and medical facilities to parks and emergency services. It outlines specific goals and recommendations for improvement. The Coronavirus pandemic highlighted the need for community facilities to support well-being and a strong economy, particularly during a period of distress and recovery. The focus of this Comprehensive Plan is to identify needs to ensure these facilities are not only efficiently maintained but also strategically positioned to meet the community's evolving needs.

Existing Conditions

Community Facilities

Figure 1 identifies the locations of key community facilities throughout town. This map serves as a foundation for discussions on where resources are located and where they may be needed or expanded to meet the evolving needs of Riverhead’s vibrant and diverse population.

Figure 1. Community Facilities



Sources: Riverhead, Suffolk County, NYS GIS, USGS, BFJ Planning

Municipal Facilities and Services

In 2023, Riverhead moved its Town Hall to a downtown location on Second Street. This strategic move brought the civic and administrative hub to the center of the community and provided more space for other departments to expand in the prior location. The Justice Court will move from the building they share with the Police Department into the former Town Hall building at 200 Howell Avenue. Other Town Facilities include Town Hall West, the Highway Department, Municipal Garages, and the Parks and Recreation Department, as shown in Figure 1 above. The Town also owns a landfill property, which is discussed in further detail in Chapter 10. The Henry Pfeiffer Building is presently leased to a non-profit organization, East End Disabilities. However, it remains under the ownership of the Town of Riverhead, allowing them the discretion to determine its future use and potential long-term plans.

Police Department

The Police Department serves an essential role in public safety and crime prevention and are also involved with many public service efforts. According to the Police Department, crime and overall calls to the Police Department decreased during the COVID-19 pandemic. The most prevalent crimes are minor offenses, such as larceny, petty larceny, and criminal mischief.

The Police Department consists of 95 full-time sworn officers and 16 dispatchers.¹ Expansion of the Police force and staff is planned for 2024 and anticipated in the future as Riverhead's population and call volume grow. The Department has the following Divisions and Bureaus: Patrol, Detective, Juvenile Aid, School Resource, Marine, and Fire Investigations. The Riverhead Police Department anticipates expanding into the former Justice Court in 2024.

In 2021, the Riverhead Police Department adopted the Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative Plan, produced by an advisory panel appointed by the Town Board. The plan publicly shares the results of a community survey completed by approximately 1,200 people, revealing that the Riverhead Police Department received high marks, with 52% rating services as excellent and 34% as good. Additionally, 75% of respondents trusted the Department's ability to make unbiased decisions. The reform plan, by public feedback and the executive order requirements, consists of six categories: Equality and social justice, accountability and transparency, community relations, policy and procedures, training, and NYS-mandated changes.

The Riverhead Community Oriented Policing Enforcement (C.O.P.E.) unit actively improves community quality of life by addressing public safety concerns and collaborating closely with residents, local schools, community groups, and law enforcement agencies to address immediate issues affecting neighborhoods. They investigate complaints, engage in community partnerships, provide a visible presence in schools and downtown areas, and work on various investigations, including DWI, narcotics, prostitution, anti-terrorism measures, and underage substance sales, constantly adapting to address evolving criminal trends and prioritizing community safety.

Police Department Needs

Facility space is of concern as the Police Department has outgrown its current facility. Training facilities are also limited. Other needs cited by the Department include improved technology and

¹ 2023 Staffing numbers.

additional police vehicles. The Department expects that there will be increasing demand for services, particularly considering anticipated development downtown and the potential for industrial or other development at EPCAL.

Emergency Response

Riverhead's emergency response section on their website provides a general guide for residents in times of crisis. It includes details on personal evacuation planning, a recommended packing list, advised news channels, evacuation instructions, applications for special needs residents, guidance on preparing pets for emergencies, and a hurricane preparedness brochure. Additionally, the site lists comprehensive County and State resources for further assistance and information during emergencies.

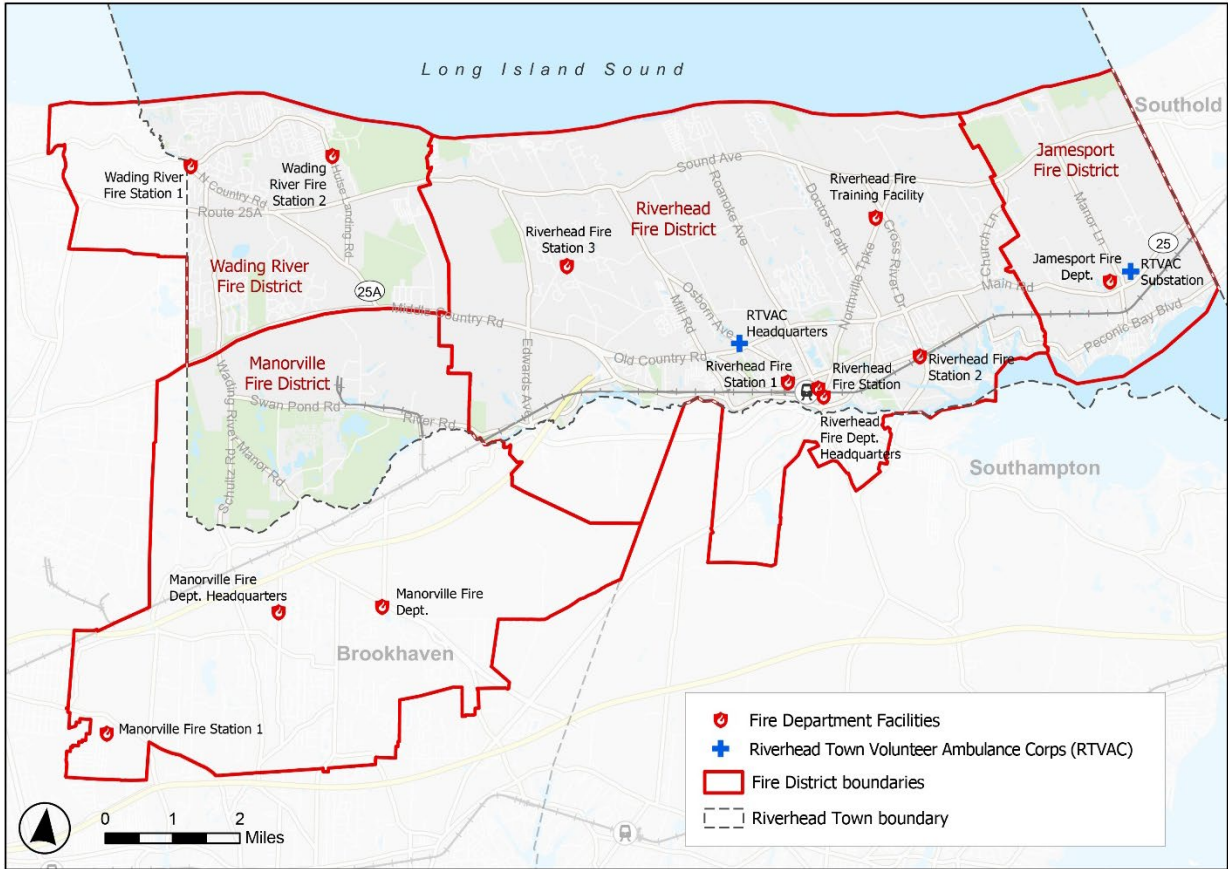
Suffolk County's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) oversees the County's reaction to natural and human-made crises. OEM staff handle the creation of the Comprehensive All-Hazards Emergency Management Plan, run the County's Emergency Operation Center (EOC), and collaborate with local, state, and federal authorities on shelter management, resource planning, and emergency response and recovery efforts.

The New York State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) comprises three key volumes: Volume 1 addresses hazard mitigation planning and risk assessment to reduce vulnerabilities and enhance preparedness. Volume 2 outlines the state's policies, authorities, and organizational structure for immediate emergency response. Finally, Volume 3 focuses on long-term recovery efforts in compliance with the Federal Stafford Act, aiming to restore and rebuild communities affected by disasters for sustained resilience.

Fire Protection

Four Fire Districts serve Riverhead Town: Jamesport, Riverhead, Wading River, and Mannorville Fire Departments (See Figure 2). Each Fire department may have multiple stations to ensure adequate response time and service within its district. Each Fire Department has a budget funded through tax collection in the corresponding district, donations, and grants on occasion.

Figure 2. Fire Districts



Human Resources

All fire districts are volunteer and do not have career firefighters. Because of dwindling human resources, especially daytime volunteers, fire districts have entered into mutual agreements to share resources during staff shortages. Fire districts have been actively recruiting volunteers and working on recruitment and retention programs. For example, the Jamesport and Riverhead Fire Districts have adopted Length of Service Award Programs for qualified firefighters. Manorville has an existing junior program through the Boy Scouts of America Youth Explorer Program, which has been very successful for the past 15 years, with 24 juniors promoted into the Manorville Fire Department. However, program attendance has dropped in recent years. Jamesport had a Junior Contingent, but it has not been active in the past ten years. Wading River has expressed interest in establishing a Junior Corps program.

Facilities and Equipment

Each department has individual capital improvement plans for the acquisition of new equipment and the renovation or expansion of facilities. Several districts noted that some of their apparatuses and trucks are over 30 years old and need replacement. Others stressed the need to expand existing stations to accommodate tall apparatus and trucks, expand parking, or add additional maintenance and storage space. Additional equipment needs include ATVs and rescue boats to access emergencies off the main roads (such as in the Pine Barrens Preserve or on water). Specific needs described by each district are noted in this chapter's goals and recommendations section.

Ambulance

Wading River Fire District provides ambulance service within its district. In other areas of Riverhead Town, the Riverhead Town Volunteer Ambulance Corps (RTVAC) operates as a volunteer ambulance department and responds to around 5,500 emergency medical assistance calls annually. RTVAC maintains its headquarters on Osbourne Avenue and operates a substation in Jamesport. The organization heavily relies on donations to sustain its operations and success.

Community Centers

George Young Community Center

The George Young Community Center, once the Jamesport School, now serves as a vibrant venue for various town events and activities, including the annual Family Turkey Trot, archery and fencing classes, yoga sessions, political events, carnivals, and employment open houses. Rooms are available for rent for public and private events. The Town invested \$10,000 in CDBG funds to extensively improve the Honor Garden, incorporating walkways and a gazebo, to honor Riverhead's heroic veterans. The Recreation Department also introduced new playgrounds at the center and recently replaced its aging historic cupola.

Shade Tree Senior Center and Senior Services

- The Senior Citizen Department in Riverhead offers a comprehensive range of programs and services for older residents at 60 Shade Tree Lane in Aquebogue. The center provides various amenities, including a disability-accessible building with a spacious dining room, auditorium, a modern kitchen, and multiple rooms for activities like billiards, computer use, crafts, and a TV room. An array of activities is available, such as bingo, line dancing, aerobic exercises, and movie viewings on a wide-screen TV. The Senior Citizen Services offered include:
- **Dial-A-Ride:** Transportation within Town limits for grocery shopping, banking, and medical appointments. Reservations must be made in advance, and the service is funded by the Town of Riverhead and Suffolk County Office of the Aging.
- **Home Aide:** Offers light housekeeping, shopping, laundry, and errands for eligible seniors. Eligibility is determined through an assessment by the Suffolk County Department for Aging, and fees are based on a sliding scale. The service is funded through the Town of Riverhead and Suffolk County Department for Aging.
- **Meals on Wheels:** Provides hot noontime meals delivered to homebound seniors or those unable to cook for themselves. Eligibility for meal delivery requires an in-home assessment by senior staff.
- **Residential Repair:** Offers minor home repairs for Riverhead homeowners at no labor cost, with payment only for materials. The service encompasses a wide range of tasks, including plumbing, electrical repairs, minor masonry, and safety hazard removal.

Riverhead Armory

The Armory Building adjacent to Stotzky Park on Route 58 previously housed Parks and Recreation Department programs such as indoor basketball and tennis. Currently, the Police Department is using it for storage. The feasibility of repurposing the property for the YMCA is under study. However, this project presents many changes such as the need for extensive and costly renovations

(and possible asbestos remediation). There is also an impediment related to the State's deed, which requires that the property be used by the police department, justice court, or recreational programs operated by the Town of Riverhead, thereby limiting use by a private entity.

Libraries

Riverhead Free Library

Riverhead Free Library provides various services, including traditional material borrowing, digital media access, classes and activities, and technology literacy programs. It hosts community services such as health screenings and counseling.

The Riverhead Free Library underwent a renovation following the last plan and secured a grant for an exterior walkway. Additionally, the library secured a \$25,000 grant to restore the historic Perkins Carriage House, known as the Yellow Barn, a town-designated landmark undergoing renovation. In addition, the library received \$215,000 from the Downtown Revitalization Initiative Grant awarded by New York for the Riverhead Free Library entrance and welcome center. The Yellow Barn operates seasonally as a bookstore managed by Friends of the Library, an all-volunteer organization supporting the Riverhead Free Library by raising funds through book sales, the proceeds of which support the library's endeavors.

Since the last master plan in 2003, the library's patronage has grown from approximately 33,000 to 41,000 patrons. Additional expansions and outposts to accommodate the growing patronage are considered in this plan.

Baiting Hollow Free Library

The Baiting Hollow Free Library, established in 1903, joined the Suffolk Cooperative Library System in 1972. The library operates on Thursdays and Saturdays for limited hours, providing book lending and a public computer.

County Facilities

Riverhead is the County Seat of Suffolk County, and the County's government offices, courts, and other offices are in Riverhead's downtown. Suffolk County Department of Social Services also has an office on Route 58.

Social Services

Suffolk County Social Services and private institutions mainly provide social services for the Town of Riverhead. Within the Town, a few notable organizations offer vital social services, including the Riverhead Family Center, Maureen's Haven, Long Island Cares, The Retreat, and East End Hospice. These organizations provide crucial support in housing, food assistance, healthcare, and mental health services.

Health Care

Riverhead has a variety of healthcare providers, medical facilities, and services available to the community. Some of the larger providers are discussed below:

Peconic Bay Medical Center (PBMC)

Peconic Bay Medical Center (PBMC) is the largest hospital in eastern Suffolk County and the Eastern Hub of Northwell Health, the largest healthcare organization in New York State. With a focus on orthopedics, women's health, and heart care, PBMC is a critical contributor to the regional healthcare infrastructure. PBMC is also one of the largest employers on Long Island.

Peconic Bay Medical Center (PBMC) is expanding its emergency department by 6,600 square feet, aiming to address the growing demand for critical care due to the region's increased population. Renamed the Poole Family Trauma & Emergency Center after a \$5 million donation, the expansion includes a 75% increase in capacity, a new trauma unit, advanced cardiac technology, and enhanced radiology, significantly improving access to life-saving care. The hospital also acquired the former Mercy High School property and is envisioning future development there.

Acadia Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation

The Acadia Center, previously known as Riverhead Care Center, has been an established skilled nursing facility catering to Long Island's East End for over four decades and is committed to providing person-centered care in a home-like environment.

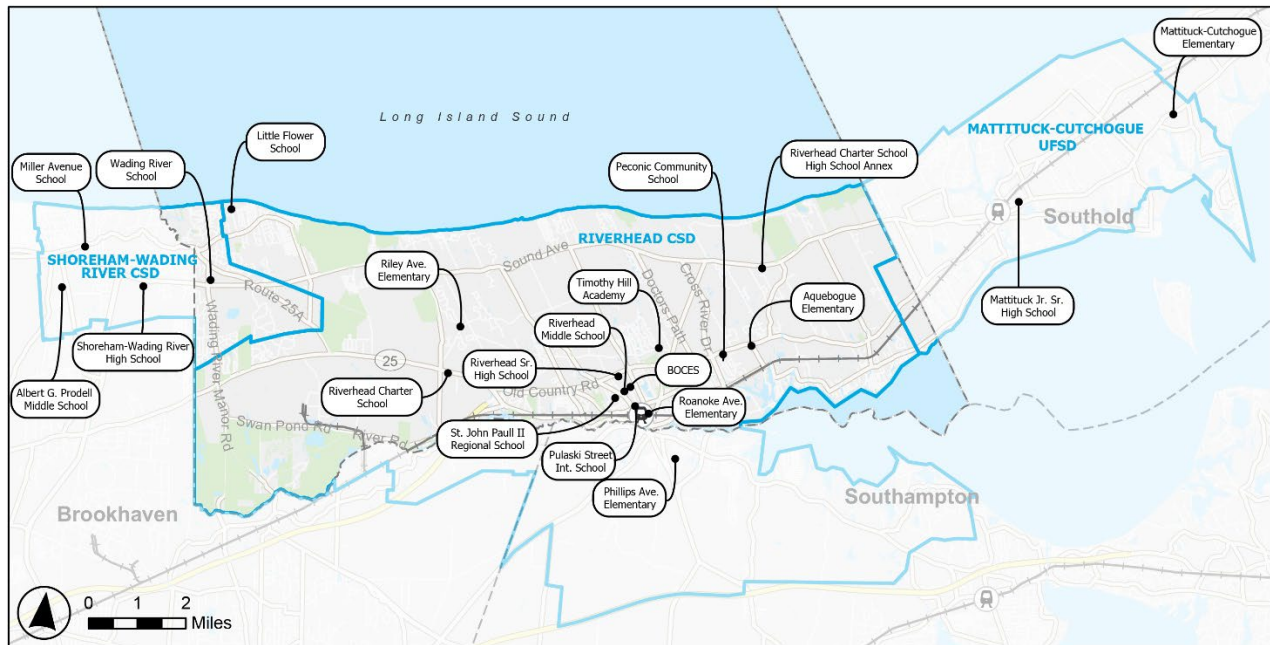
Higher Education

The Eastern Campus of Suffolk County Community College and Cornell Cooperative Suffolk County Extension are in Riverhead. These institutions provide various services, including diverse educational programs, associate degrees, vocational training, workforce development initiatives, and continuing education opportunities. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County also provides various community-based educational programs and resources encompassing agriculture, horticulture, health education, youth development, environmental initiatives, and community outreach...

Schools

The Town's school districts play an essential role in the overall development and well-being of Riverhead. Three school districts are found within the Town of Riverhead (See Figure 3). Riverhead Central School District (Riverhead CSD) encompasses most of the Town of Riverhead and portions of Southampton and Brookhaven. Geographically, it is the largest school district in Suffolk County. Some areas of the western side of Town are in the Shoreham-Wading River Central School District (Shoreham-Wading River CSD). Additionally, some areas are on the eastern side of Town in the Mattituck-Cutchogue Union Free School District (Mattituck-Cutchogue UFSD).

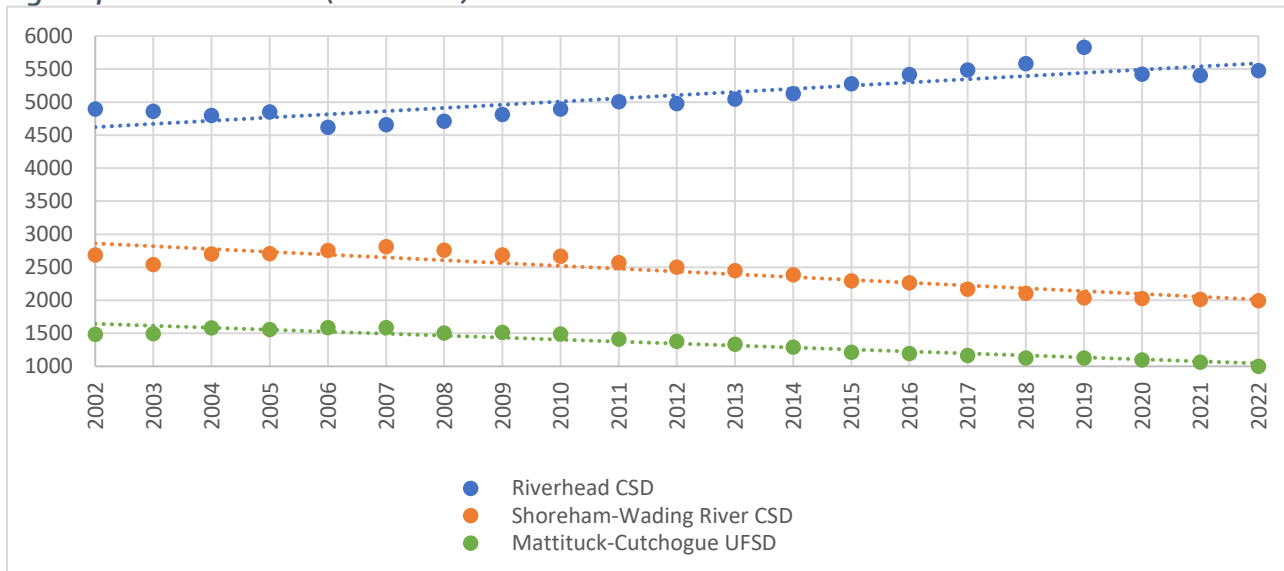
Figure 3. K-12 Schools and Districts



Sources: NYS GIS, USGS, BFJ Planning

New York State Education Department (NYSED) provides annual data on enrollment, student demographics, academic achievement, and financial reports.² NYSED provides all data referenced in this section. Riverhead CSD is much larger than either of the other school districts (See Figure 4). Enrollment has notably grown (14% from 2005-2023), while in the other two school districts, it has decreased (Shoreham-Wading River CSD by -26% and Mattituck-Cochogue UFSD by -37%) during the same period.

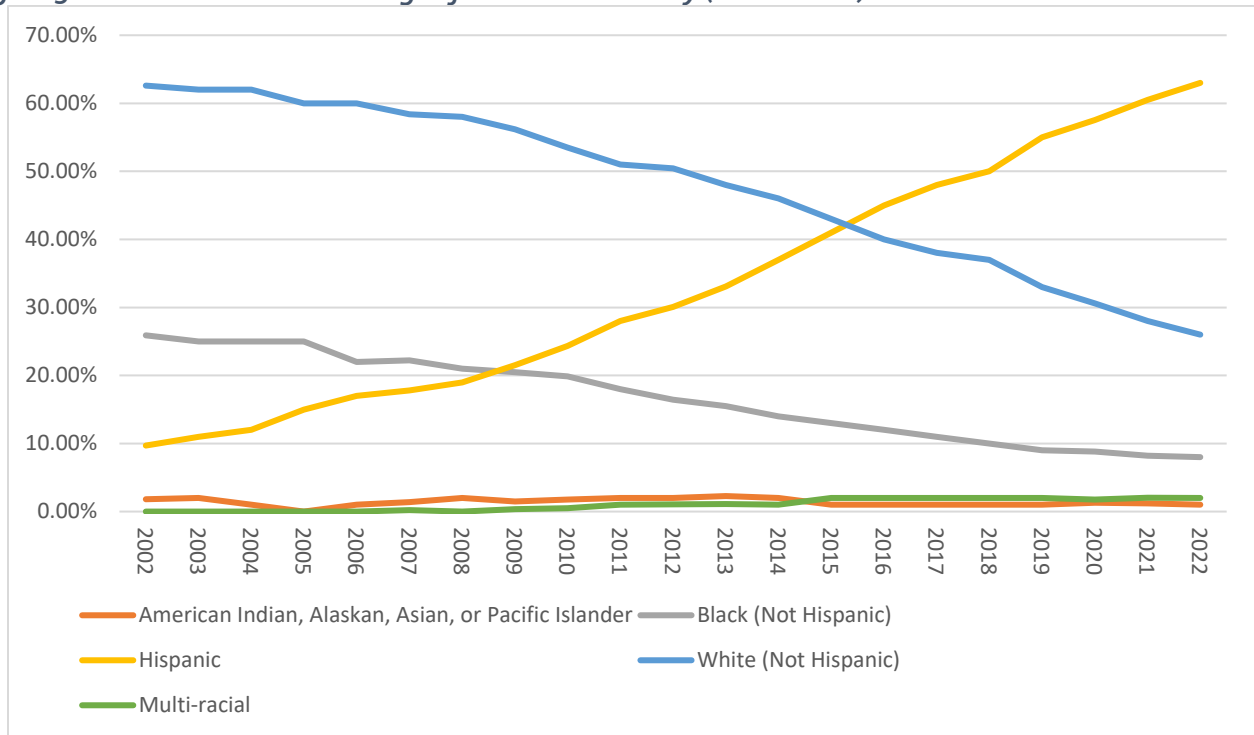
Figure 4. K-12 Enrollment (2002-2022)



² New York State Education Department, 2023 <https://data.nysed.gov/>

At 63%, Riverhead has a significantly higher percentage of Hispanic students enrolled than the County (38%), the State (29%) and neighboring school districts (Shoreham Wading River 11%, and Mattituck-Cutchogue 24%). The demographics of the Riverhead CSD have changed significantly over the past 20 years. Enrollment data between 2002 and 2022 school years, shown in Figure 5, shows that the Hispanic student population increased from 10% of enrollment (475 students) to 63% of enrollment (3,433 students). At the same time, the Black or African American (non-Hispanic) student population has declined from about 26% of enrollment (1,267 students) to 8% of enrollment (450 students). In the same period, the white (non-Hispanic) student population also declined from 63% of enrollment (3,067 students) to 26% of enrollment (1,432 students).

Figure 5. K-12 Enrollment Percentage of Race and Ethnicity (2002 – 2022)



Several indicators show that Riverhead CSD has more student needs than the other two school districts, the County and the State. As of the 2022-23 school year, 37% of Riverhead CSD students qualify as English language learners, 62% are economically disadvantaged, and 4% are homeless. In the 2021-2022 school year, 50% of students were eligible for free lunch. Riverhead CSD has significantly higher percentages many of the categories in Table 1.

Table 1. Student Enrollment Statistics (2022-2023 School Year)

	Enrollment	English Language Learners	Students with Disabilities	Economically Disadvantaged	Migrants	Homeless	Free School Lunch*
Riverhead CSD	5,480	37%	17%	62%	2%	4%	50%
Shoreham-Wading River CSD	1,993	1%	17%	6%	1%	1%	1%
Mattituck-Cutchogue UFSD	1,000	11%	18%	31%	3%	2%	30%

WORKING DRAFT (1/23/2024)

Suffolk County	2,188,77	13%	17%	44%	0%	1%	NA
New York State	2,422,494	10%	19%	58%	NA	NA	NA

*2021-2022 School Year, 2022-2023 School Year data not available

At about \$19,000, Riverhead CSD's spending per pupil is significantly lower than the County and State averages (~\$27,000 and \$28,000, respectively), and spending in both other school districts (~\$33,000). Riverhead CSD's average class sizes are also generally larger than their counterparts in Shoreham-Wading River CSD and Mattituck-Cutchoque UFSD.

School Facilities

Riverhead CSD, Shoreham-Wading River CSD, and Mattituck-Cutchoque UFSD have 5-year strategic or facilities plans that include goals for capital improvements.³ However, these plans do not indicate anticipated expansions of new facilities within the Town of Riverhead.

Pre-K

In Riverhead, several pre-kindergarten (pre-K) programs are available, offering diverse educational opportunities:

- **SCOPE Education Services** provides a financially self-supporting pre-K program following New York State pre-kindergarten learning standards. The program is taught by NYS-certified teachers, emphasizing STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math).
- **UPK**: Riverhead School District offers a UPK lottery for district residents only, providing free full-day pre-kindergarten classes for eligible children within the Riverhead School District five days per week.
- **Just Kids** operates integrated universal pre-K classrooms in Riley Avenue Elementary School in Riverhead Central School District. These classrooms include UPK students and children with special needs, offering related services like speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and counseling in a modern early childhood classroom.
- **Head Start** operates a location in Riverhead, and a second in Flanders, providing public educational programs for preschool children. These programs typically offer early childhood education, health, nutrition, and parental involvement services.

BOCES

The New York Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) Suffolk County East division's Harry B. Ward Technical Center is located in Downtown Riverhead and shares some facilities with Riverhead High School

³ RSCD Strategic Plan, July 2022, <https://www.riverhead.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/RCSD-Strategic-Plan-July-2022-final.pdf>

http://www.swrschools.org/Assets/District/062719-621_Strategic_Plan.pdf

https://files.smartsites.parentsquare.com/3594/5_year_facilities_plan_december_2021.pdf

Other Community Resources

Quality of Life Advisory Committee

The Quality of Life Advisory Committee aims to enhance community members' well-being by addressing issues like aging, safety, homelessness, crime, and sanitation.

Senior Citizen Advisory Council

The Senior Citizen Advisory Council was re-established in 2014. Their primary role involves identifying the needs of the senior community and advising the Town Board on recommendations for coordinating services and programs to benefit the aging population. Their vision involves continuously reviewing the needs and interests of seniors, using community feedback to guide future directions, and providing updated resources to support the senior population.

Veterans Advisory Committee

The Veterans Advisory Committee focuses on improving the quality of life for veterans by assessing their needs, recommending increased services, advising on veteran-related matters, maintaining awareness of veterans' issues, facilitating a forum for veteran feedback, and fulfilling additional duties assigned by the Supervisor. They also submit an annual report to the Supervisor and Town Board. This Committee recently collaborated with the Riverhead Business Improvement District and Wedel Sign Company to install personalized tribute banners honoring veterans on Main Street lamp posts in Downtown Riverhead and Jamesport.

Goals and Recommendations

Goal 1. Ensure public services have sufficient facilities and resources.

In 2023, Riverhead moved its Town Hall to a downtown location on Second Street. This strategic move provides the Town with a modern administrative hub and opportunities for other departments to expand their spatial capacities and assess their current resource requirements. Leveraging this relocation as a catalyst, the Town can thoroughly evaluate the spatial and resource needs of diverse public services, aligning them with the evolving demands of the community. The goal is to ensure that public services not only meet the present demands but also remain adaptable to the community's dynamic needs in the future.

1.1. Expand and renovate the Police Station and resources to meet the needs of a modern and growing police force.

The recent relocation of Town Hall presents an opportunity for the police station to expand to address its needs. A renovation and additional space in the new justice court building (former Town Hall building at 200 Howell Street) may be required for efficient police and justice operations. Some of the priority needs of the police department are listed below:

Handicap Accessibility and Ground-Level Detention Cells: A ramp is needed at the front of the building to make the station accessible. Another alternative would be to provide detention cells at

ground level (instead of the basement), potentially within the former Town hall building. This would provide for a more efficient prisoner transfer to the courtrooms within the building.

Secured Lot and Sally Port: Most police cars are kept in front of the police headquarters in an outdoor, unsecured lot. A preferred solution would be to have a dedicated, secured police lot to protect police vehicles and a sally port to provide a secure transition area for prisoners.

Communications Center: The communication center needs to be expanded. The staff of 11 dispatchers will grow to 16 in 2024 and may grow further in the next decade. Staffing of the communications center is based on call volume, which has increased as the Town's population grows.

Impound "Yard": Impounded vehicles are currently stored in a portion of the municipal garage; however, the garage is not secured. Impounded vehicles are evidence and may be subject to damage when not stored securely.

Storage: The Police is currently using the Riverhead Armory for storage for equipment such as ATVs and boats. The Town is exploring the use of the Armory as a YMCA. If the Police Department loses this facility, an alternative storage facility is needed. The 210 Howell Building could potentially be expanded on the north side to accommodate this need.

Property Room: The Police Department needs a secure facility to store evidence and records. This could be a room within the former justice court building or an off-site facility.

Training Room: Currently, the Police Department can accommodate 18 people in the training room. A larger room would allow for more effective training and will be appropriate with the expansion of the police force, which will increase from 95 to 100 officers in 2024, with additional staffing increases recommended for coming years.

Docking Facility on the Long Island Sound: The police department has difficulty assisting in operation on the Long Island Sound as it does not have a safe harbor and is exposed to elements and storms. The Police Department currently uses a harness to hold a boat in the water at Northville. The Wading River Fire Department keeps its boats at a Long Island Power Authority (LIPA) station in Brookhaven. While this would be an ideal location, an agreement would need to be reached between Riverhead, Brookhaven, and LIPA to allow the Riverhead Police Department to use the facility.

Emergency Operations Center: While there is a communications center in the Police Department headquarters, a backup facility that could be used during a disaster, such as a hurricane, could provide a safe space for the Police Chief and Town Leaders to operate the emergency response. The Emergency Operations Center should be equipped with landlines, satellite phones, radios, internet, a kitchenette, a bathroom, and a place to rest.

Downtown Police Substation: The Town is currently working to establish a substation in downtown Riverhead in the parking garage or near Grangebel Park to help address concerns about safety. While there is no current need for additional substations, the Town and Police Department should evaluate the need for facilities in places where police are posted for walking patrols.

Technology and Equipment: Technological advances in policing and Riverhead’s unique waterfront location implicate additional equipment needs in the near term. Some of these needs include body cameras, drones, a mobile command post, and a rescue boat.

1.2. Identify a long-term strategy for Riverhead Town Volunteer Ambulance Corps (RTVAC) facilities.

The RTVAC and the Town should work together to develop a long-term strategy for expanding or replacing the Osborne Avenue Headquarters. Although the site may not be able to accommodate an expansion, adjacent underutilized sites could potentially be purchased. Any needs at the Jamesport station should also be addressed. The RTVAC may also need additional substations, such as at EPCAL.

1.3. Ensure that EPCAL has adequate police, firefighting, and ambulance services and explore methods to finance the construction of substations.

When EPCAL is developed, police, RTVAC, and fire substations may be needed. The Town should work with the Police Department, RTVAC, Manorville Fire District, Riverhead Fire District, and Wading River Fire District and Ambulance to determine needs, financing, and appropriate locations (e.g., Grumman Boulevard). Developers should be required to help finance these improvements. One possibility is the development of a fire brigade within EPCAL that could be drawn from volunteers who work at EPCAL businesses.

1.4. Support the expansion or new construction of firehouses to accommodate new and larger firefighting equipment.

New firefighting equipment and facilities are needed to service new development. For example, if tall buildings are built at EPCAL, the Riverhead and Manorville departments would need larger aerial devices and stations with larger bays.

Jamesport Fire District

The Jamesport Fire Station can accommodate current equipment, but expansion could be needed in the future, depending on community growth. The District recently acquired a parcel north of their existing facility that can accommodate future expansion. The District is in the planning stages of purchasing new apparatus in their upcoming budget. Additional grant funding is needed for purchases.

Wading River Fire District

The district recently conducted a property assessment and estimates for facility upgrades that will cost between eight to nine million dollars.

The Wading River Fire Headquarters was built in 1987, expanding upon the original 1947 firehouse. The District is currently remodeling staff and chief office spaces, storage and maintenance areas, and the Board room and office. Parking has not been enough to accommodate existing needs, and the District is considering the purchase of a nearby lot to accommodate additional parking space. The district also noted that sidewalk improvements near the station would allow safer access from the nearby church parking lots, which visitors occasionally use.

The second Wading River District Station was built in 1982. It requires exterior and roof replacement and renovation, including asbestos remediation. The District foresees the need to add two to three additional bays to the existing building to accommodate apparatuses. There are also plans to build a maintenance and storage building on this property and a training facility.

The District has a contract for two apparatuses: a rescue and pumper and a tanker to replace the aging model. Funding came from the reserve account, a partial grant, and a partial lease. Next year, the District will apply for another grant to help replace the more than 30-year-old pumper. The cost of each purchase is estimated at around 1.2 million dollars.

Manorville Fire District

The Manorville fire station is in Brookhaven. Manorville Fire District needs to replace its tanker truck, which is over 30 years old, within the coming year. The district also needs a new fire police vehicle.

Riverhead Fire District

Riverhead Fire Station 3 needs an expansion to accommodate an aerial device. The District noted that there is room for expansion on their property.

Goal 2. Enhance Responsiveness and Service Quality of Emergency Services.

In the face of modern technological advancements, urban development, and population growth, the comprehensive plan aims to fortify the responsiveness and service excellence of Police, Fire, and Ambulance Services. The intersection of innovation and challenges poses unique considerations for emergency responders, such as addressing fire safety concerns associated with Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), mitigating delays caused by traffic congestion, and navigating potential lapses in services due to inadequate funding and human resources.

This goal also recognizes the need to bolster volunteerism in the face of shifting demographics. An aging population and evolving work patterns necessitate a proactive approach to ensure adequate resources during crucial daytime hours. Strengthening collaboration through mutual aid agreements with neighboring fire districts further underscores the commitment to meeting operational requirements and optimizing emergency response capabilities in Riverhead.

2.1. Plan for specialized training and equipment for modern firefighting challenges, such as Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) facilities.

BESS fires require nontraditional firefighting methods, training, and equipment. The Town must support fire departments to ensure firefighters are prepared.

The Manorville Fire District identified the need for training and a water and ice rescue vehicle for coverage of the water park and ATVs for coverage of the Pine Barrens area.

Specialized training may also be needed to provide service to new uses at EPCAL.

2.2. Ensure that water supply and pressure are sufficient throughout the Town for firefighting.

The Town, Water District, Fire Departments, and developers are working together to provide better water pressure in the downtown area to meet the demands of new development. This work includes the repair or replacement of old infrastructure and dead ends. The Town must also ensure tanker trucks can access areas without public water.

2.3. Ensure that emergency vehicles can quickly and efficiently access all parts of Riverhead Town.

The Fire Districts and the Planning Board review site plans together to ensure that site plans are accessible by emergency vehicles and will not present fire hazards. However, in older areas of Town, there are issues that cause less-than-ideal response times:

- Narrow streets and driveways north of Sound Avenue and in South Jamesport are difficult to access. Private roads may also have barriers to access.
- Sound Shore Club in Wading River: Fire Vehicles cannot access the entrance and are forced to use the exit for access.
- Poor drainage and flooding issues should be addressed to enable ease of access (e.g. Creek Road).
- Calverton Meadows (703 Fresh Pond Ave.) – Private hydrants are unusable because the water mains are too small. These should be updated.
- Little Flower Children’s Services (2450 N Wading River Rd) – This facility makes frequent calls to the Wading River Fire Department.
- Lack of Tree Trimming in town causes damage to apparatuses. The Town should enforce tree trimming regulations and regularly inspect key locations.
- Beach/Water Access – The Fire Department is unable to launch boats in some waters of Town. Creeks could be dredged and be kept at an operational depth at low moon tide.
- EPCAL - It would be great if the access road behind Wellbridge on Grumman Blvd could be opened for the Fire Department to use. It would decrease response time to the Grumman facility, the water park, and the new Ice rink, instead of having to respond via Route 25. The Town should investigate paved access roads in EPCAL for these locations.

2.4. Implement a preemptive signal program to allow Police, Fire, and Ambulance vehicles to respond quickly in emergencies.

Preemptive signals prioritize emergency response vehicles over others at intersections during a time-critical situation. RTVAC has preemptive signals on Route 58 west of Roanoke Avenue. However, Police and Fire do not have this ability, and the service area could be expanded. The Town should work with emergency responders to identify priority intersections that are most congested and en route to the hospital or other emergency facilities. Funding sources, such as FDOT grants, could help pay for new signals, equipment within vehicles, and system monitors.

2.5. Ensure that the Fire Departments and RTVAC have adequate human resources.

All fire departments and the RTVAC are dependent on volunteers and do not have career service providers. Changing demographics including an aging population, cost of living, and workers’ business hours, present challenges to volunteerism. Riverhead’s Fire Districts have mutual aid agreements to augment operational requirements. The Town should encourage volunteerism and support efforts to recruit and retain volunteers, such as Junior Corps and Length of Service Award Programs. Affordable housing for volunteer firefighters could incentivize more participation. Full-time employees may be required in the future to ensure consistency of coverage.

Goal 3. Strengthen community well-being through enhanced programming and facilities for all ages.

Recognizing the unique demographic challenges and evolving community needs, the comprehensive plan aims to elevate programming and facilities catering to senior citizens, youth, and the broader Riverhead community. As Riverhead's population ages at a faster pace than the County, the focus is on enhancing services provided by the Senior Citizen Department, addressing transportation concerns, and expanding the offerings at the Senior Center. Beyond the senior demographic, the plan also recognizes the growing and diverse population's needs for increased recreational programming, expanded youth services, and upgraded library facilities. By addressing these multi-faceted needs and modernizing facilities, the goal is to create a community hub that fosters inclusivity, engagement, and improved well-being for residents of all ages in Riverhead.

3.1. Expand the variety of social activities, programs, meals, and support services through the Riverhead Senior Citizen Department.

The Town should enable the Senior Citizen Department to expand its services by providing additional resources. The Senior Center could increase the reach of the congregate meal program by providing a second location on the west end of Town. With additional staff and vehicles, transportation and Meals on Wheels services can reach more people. Improving access to computers, tech support, and computer literacy programs could open resources and other services to Seniors.

3.2. Establish a second senior center on the west side of Town.

The Shade Tree Senior Center provides a wealth of services that are not easily accessible to Seniors who live in western Riverhead. The Town and Senior Citizen Department should identify an appropriate location for a senior center in Calverton or Wading River. While the Henry Feifer Community Center in Calverton was not successful when used as a senior center in the past, its proximity to new public amenities, coupled with a growing demand for this service, may warrant a reconsideration of this Town-owned facility.

3.3. Help the Peconic YMCA identify a suitable site in Riverhead and advocate for needed amenities.

The feasibility of establishing a YMCA at the Town-owned Armory is ongoing. Alternatively, the Town should proactively seek out another centrally accessible site, considering the potential advantages of co-locating with Veteran's Memorial Park at EPCAL. The YMCA and the Town should collaborate to determine the recreational amenities and programs provided to ensure this significant facility responds to community needs.

3.4. Explore the feasibility of establishing a Riverhead youth center.

A youth center could provide a location for 4-H programs, information on youth services, mentoring or big-brother/big-sister programs, counseling sessions, summer classes and activities, sports outings, and social events. The Town should explore partnerships with the YMCA, JCC, Boys and Girls Club, and other organizations.

3.5. Work with the Riverhead Free Library and Baiting Hollow Free Library to expand and establish branches or outposts.

There is a need to expand the current footprint of the Riverhead Free Library and establish a storefront location to provide the spaces, technologies, and programs for the growing patron base. Outposts, including a bookmobile or exchanges at the beach or parks, can help collections reach a larger population.

Goal 4. Support expansion of school district facilities to accommodate growing demand

Riverhead Central School District has experienced a consistent increase in enrollment over the past two decades. Enrollment has steadily increased over the past 20 years. Despite this growth, critical aspects like classroom space have not been expanded to meet the rising demands. The closure of Mercy School in 2018 and migration have contributed to the surge in enrollment at the Middle and High School levels. With anticipated population growth and new developments in both Riverhead and the Southampton area of the school district, future enrollment is likely to rise further. A proactive approach to identifying new facilities is essential to accommodate the evolving needs of the community, ensuring that the school district can effectively respond to increased enrollment and provide an optimal learning environment for students in Riverhead.

It is important to acknowledge that the school districts are autonomous entities separate from municipalities, and they operate independently under state regulations and guidelines. Nevertheless, collaboration between the Town and school district is essential to ensure alignment between residential development plans and educational needs. This could involve joint planning efforts, sharing demographic data, and coordinating infrastructure investments to accommodate growing student populations.

4.1. Work with the school districts to identify appropriate sites for new schools and expansions.

The Riverhead Central School district should plan to accommodate larger class sizes by expanding existing schools or developing new facilities. The Town can identify vacant, underutilized, or publicly owned sites that could accommodate expansions or additional schools.

4.2. Ensure that expansion is equitable and consistent with the demand for ESL, Special Needs, and low-income students.

Determine how private development projects in proximity to schools can contribute funds for school expansion efforts. Ensure aid and services meet the needs of less advantaged students and their families where the School District may be lacking in resources to meet.

Goal 5. Increase childcare options and promote affordable childcare.

Access to affordable childcare continues to be an issue in Riverhead. All efforts should be made to streamline the opening of childcare facilities and ensure they operate safely. The Town's zoning ordinance currently allows daycare facilities by special permit in most residential and commercial zones. Childcare facilities require licensing by the State.

5.1. Allow small daycare centers (six children or less) in single-family detached homes as a home occupation.

Small daycare centers present less traffic than larger ones, negating the need for special permitting. However, they still require compliance with State regulations to ensure safety. Allowing in-home daycare as a home occupation can increase the available childcare services in Riverhead and relieve the shortage of facilities.

5.2. Allow daycare centers in places of worship as an accessory use.

Religious facilities often have community rooms and adequate parking to support a childcare facility and many parents prefer the option of leaving their children in a faith-based facility. The code should be clarified to ensure that daycare is accessory to the principal faith-based use.

5.3. Incentivize or require large employers to provide onsite daycare to employees.

Incentives may include zoning bonuses, such as increased floor area ratios or density allowances, for employers who integrate onsite daycare facilities into their business establishments. Simultaneously, zoning regulations can stipulate requirements mandating large employers to include onsite daycare facilities as part of their development plans. This could be tied to the scale of the business, making it a prerequisite for companies reaching a certain employee threshold.

Goal 6. Strengthen the Town's capacity to address diverse community health and human service needs.

This entails developing targeted strategies to confront healthcare challenges encountered by vulnerable groups, such as seasonal farm workers lacking health insurance and adequate medical care, while also addressing the language barriers faced by a growing population in Riverhead. Special attention is directed towards the unique needs of those recovering from addiction in the high concentration of sober homes. Recognizing transportation limitations, collaborative efforts are underway, including initiatives like Peconic Bay Medical Center's health services shuttle. The plan advocates for a holistic response, encompassing the establishment of critical facilities like a detoxification clinic and addiction recovery agency. Moreover, it aims to enhance awareness and accessibility to essential programs offered by the Suffolk County Department of Social Services, spanning family and child services, financial assistance, employment support, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and temporary housing assistance, among others.

6.1. Work with Suffolk County to understand what role the Town can play in addressing community health and human service needs.

Build on the partnership with Suffolk County to gain insights into the Town's potential role in addressing community health and human service needs. Ensure coordinated programming efforts with the County to guarantee that proposed solutions complement and enhance existing County resources. The Town can also help expand outreach to vulnerable populations to connect them with health and mental health services. Information about these services should be available in Spanish and other languages commonly spoken in Riverhead.

6.2. Collaborate with Peconic Bay Medical Center to Enhance Community Health and Service Delivery

The Town should be an active partner with Peconic Bay Medical Center, which plays a critical role in addressing community health needs. This strategic partnership should focus on developing and implementing initiatives that address specific health and service needs within the community. By leveraging the expertise and resources of Peconic Bay Medical Center, the Town can enhance access to quality healthcare, promote preventive measures, and provide targeted services that align with the unique requirements of the Riverhead population.