

RIVERHEAD Comprehensive Plan Update



Chapter 2/ Development Patterns: Land Use and Zoning *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 26, 2024

3. DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS: LAND USE AND ZONING

This chapter provides a general overview of the existing land uses and historical development patterns that have shaped Riverhead. This historical context is vital for understanding the forces that have molded our community and the factors that drive our current planning initiatives. By acknowledging the past and current conditions, we gain valuable insight which helps to make informed decisions about the future.

This chapter also provides an overview of the Town’s zoning districts, which is the primary tool the Town uses to plan and manage how land use utilized. Fundamental to this Comprehensive is the establishment of appropriate zoning recommendations that align with the Plan’s overarching vision. While zoning is a pivotal component of the Plan, it is important to note that discussions of zoning recommendations are not confined only to this chapter. Instead, they are distributed throughout the various topic-oriented chapters. In this organization, the zoning recommendations integrated with the specific challenges and opportunities presented by each topic area.

A comprehensive summary of land use and zoning recommendations can be found in the Future Land Use Chapter. This consolidation ensures that all key directives related to land use and zoning are readily accessible and can be reviewed in conjunction with the corresponding thematic chapters for a more in-depth understanding.

Historical Development

The history of the Town of Riverhead stretches from the life and times of the Corchoug Indians — before the arrival of the first white settlers to Long Island in 1640 — through the Revolution, the Civil War, and the suburbanization of the late 20th century.¹ The historical development pattern of Riverhead can be grouped generally into the main periods described below:

Pre-1640: Indian Settlements

The Corchougs, one of thirteen Algonquin tribes inhabiting Long Island prior to white settlement, originally occupied the limits of the Town of Riverhead.² The Corchoug villages were found in places now called Aquebogue, Cutchogue, Mattituck and Hashamomuk.³ These locations at the head of the Peconic River allowed the Corchougs access to both fresh water and saltwater landings.

1640 to 1776: White Settlements, Land Divisions, and Early Farms and Mills

In the 1640s, European settlers began to arrive in the area. In 1649, settlers from Southold purchased the main portion of Riverhead from the Corchougs as part the "Aquebogue Purchase".⁴ By 1671, there was also a small settlement in Wading River.⁵ In 1680, the settlers of Wading River joined with a contingent from Southold to divide up the available land between their two settlements.⁶

Between the late 1600s and the time of the Revolutionary War, settlers established farms for both local consumption and trade. The colonists also laid out roads (including King's Highway from Southold to Wading River by 1710), and established a County jail, courthouse, and seat in Riverhead.

During this period, Africans were imported as slave laborers, which accounted for significant contributions to the agrarian and maritime economies of Suffolk County. In 1790, the town (which included Southold at the time) had 206 free Blacks and 179 enslaved, totaling 11.5% of the population. After the Revolutionary War, the State passed a series of laws that gradually emancipated New York slaves by 1827.⁷ Almost all the former slaves moved to other parts of Long Island, leaving the population primarily made up of descendants of the original seventeenth century Puritan settlers of the North Fork.

Riverhead's location at the mouth of the Peconic River made it an ideal site for water-powered mills. Riverhead has the oldest flour milling establishment in the State of New York — the Hallett

¹ The history of Riverhead during the Colonial period is fairly well documented through a number of secondary sources. However, there is a lack of secondary source information from the late 19th century to the present day. Those sources that exist are summarized below, providing a framework for further research into the significance of existing historic resources within the Town.

² Hood, Peter. A History of North Sea Beach Colony.

³ The Bicentennial Book Committee. Riverhead Bicentennial Album.

⁴ History of Suffolk County, New York, 1.

⁵ The Riverhead Story, 9.

⁶ Long Island, A History of Two Great Counties, Nassau and Suffolk, 1949, 183-184.

⁷ Marcus, Grania, B., A Forgotten People: Discovering the Black Experience in Suffolk County (NY).

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Brothers flour mill of 1696.⁸ By 1800, mills dotted the length of the river and included a number of sawmills, iron forges, fulling mills, and gristmills.

1776 – 1870: Town Incorporation and the Growth of the Agricultural Industry

In 1792, Riverhead separated from Southold and became the official county seat of Suffolk County, a status it retains to this day. Agriculture continued to be the primary industry, which was fueled by the expansion of the road network and the advent of the railroad. Beginning around 1800, three main roads were built along the length of Long Island: North Country Road along the north shore; South Country Road along the south shore beaches; and Middle Country Road. The first railroad line to run through Riverhead was the Greenport line in 1844.⁹ Potato production began as early as the 1700's, but did not become a standard crop until the railroad facilitated transportation.

Long Island's shorelines are well-suited for building small sea-faring vessels, and the outfitting of ships became a thriving industry in the towns of Riverhead, Northport, Sag Harbor, Port Jefferson, and Greenport starting in the early 1800s.

In this period, Riverhead grew in terms of population and in the number of civic and cultural institutions. Some of the major landmarks built during this time frame include: the Female Seminary (1834), the First Methodist Church (1834), the First Congregational Church (1841), and the County Clerk's Office (1846).¹⁰ By 1875, Riverhead had six churches, two grist mills, two moulding and planing mills, a paper mill, three hotels, twenty stores, a cigar factory, a wagon jack factory, an organ factory, many shops and offices, and a population of 1,600.

Starting in the 1840s and 50s, a wave of Irish immigrants arrived in Riverhead. Initially these were mostly farm laborers, but a significant number became farmers, especially in the Calverton area. Parts of downtown Riverhead became heavily Irish. These immigrants founded St. John's Roman Catholic church in 1869.

1870 to 1945: Thriving Agricultural Industry and a Small Town Character

Riverhead continued to grow into a thriving agricultural community in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Cauliflower and duck production became staples of the economy. Duck production reached its peak just after World War II, when there were approximately 788 duck farms in Suffolk County, raising two-thirds of all ducks produced in the U.S. Like the potato, the duck and cauliflower industries were able to build off the availability of railroad transportation. The railroad also facilitated the sale of other produce and return shipments on the rail lines contained manure from New York City to be used for fertilizer. Other important industries during this time were cordwood (firewood) and ice which took advantage of the Peconic River's large quantity of clean and clear water.

With the enormous growth and industrialization of New York City after the Civil War, eastern Long Island, particularly the South Fork, started to become a popular summer destination for families eager to escape the city during the hottest months of the year. Tourism was facilitated by train service to the East End. It was at during the early 20th century that the Hamptons first became a

⁸ The Boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens, Counties of Nassau and Suffolk, Long Island 1609-1924, 727.

⁹ Kramer, Frederick, Long Island Rail Road.

¹⁰ The Boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens, Counties of Nassau and Suffolk, Long Island 1609-1924, 727.

well-known vacation destination for wealthy New Yorkers. As more and more people purchased personal automobiles, many seasonal residents and visitors eschewed the railroad and drove their cars instead.

Starting in the 1880s, a wave of immigrants arrived in Riverhead from eastern Europe, including Poland and Ukraine. They primarily worked as farm laborers, but quickly saved money and acquired farms of their own. These immigrants founded St. Isidore's Roman Catholic Church in 1903 and John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Church in 1924. In some of the town's farming areas, such as the neighborhood of the Hallockville Museum Farm, Polish immigrants owned up to 70% of the farms by 1920.

African Americans also moved to Riverhead from the south during the Great Migration from 1920. By 1940, almost 10% of the Town's population was Black and almost all came from Powhatan County, Virginia. Many lived initially in appalling conditions in the migrant labor camps that dotted the town.

1945 to Present: Suburbanization to North Fork Tourism

Between World War II and the present day, Riverhead saw continued development and modernization. It evolved from a primarily agricultural community into a suburban area with residential and commercial development. The tourism industry also became important due to the town's proximity to the Hamptons and the Long Island Wine Country.

Riverhead has remained the center of Long Island's agricultural industry. In the early 1990s, the Town had 20,000 acres in production. While potato, cauliflower, and duck production have declined, crops such as grapes, sod, and greenhouse growing, which require fewer acres but yield higher profits, have maintained Suffolk County as the leading agricultural producer in New York State.

Riverhead underwent an important transformation in the 1950s and 1960s with the construction of the Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant (NWIRP) in Calverton. The NWIRP was a major employment center for many years until being closed by the federal government in 1995. The site has continued to be a long-term opportunity for economic development.

Construction of the Long Island Expressway (LIE) made Riverhead easily accessible to the rest of the New York metropolitan region, further facilitating truck farming but also opening up the Town to new development pressures. Because the LIE made the Town so accessible, Riverhead also started changing into a fringe suburb of the job centers in Nassau County and western Suffolk County. Low-density subdivisions were built throughout the Town, particularly in the Wading River area and around downtown Riverhead, and strip-style shopping centers were constructed along Route 58. Downtown and the hamlet centers lost much of their pedestrian activity and commercial vitality.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the North Fork wine industry emerged and the East End started gaining both national and international recognition as an important wine-producing region. This trend not only added a new element to the agricultural industry, but also introduced the concept of agrotourism to the East End. Following the model of Napa Valley, wine makers now offer wine tasting, tours, shops, and banquet facilities to attract tourists and visitors. The bucolic nature of Riverhead

and the rest of the North Fork has also made it popular destination for tourists as well as for people looking for second homes.

Hamlet Areas

The Town of Riverhead has nine hamlet areas, which are akin to neighborhoods, each with their own character, history, and its own unique set of amenities. These areas are very important to community identity for many residents, as the hamlets reflect on the rich heritage of various areas in town. Businesses also often use the name of a hamlet as part of their name.

While these areas are culturally important, the term "hamlet" is not defined under New York law, and official hamlet boundary maps are not designated. Hamlets often share names with that of a local school district, post office, or fire district. The boundaries of these various districts do not always align, which is a source of confusion and as a result, there isn't always a clear consensus on where these boundaries are. Likewise, the U.S. Census used hamlet names to outline statistical areas in the Town that do not align with the boundaries that communities or individuals would recognize. The Comprehensive Plan does not define hamlet, district, or census boundaries but recognizes these hamlets for their cultural significance to the community.

Aquebogue

Aquebogue is located east of downtown Riverhead, at the mouth of the Peconic River on Meeting House Creek. The hamlet is known for its agricultural tradition and scenic beauty, with lush farmland, vineyards, and water views. The Peconic Bay and nearby Long Island Sound provide opportunities for boating, kayaking, and other water-based recreational activities. Historic sites in Aquebogue include approximately 48 houses, a windmill base, a post office, a former schoolhouse, as well as one prehistoric site.

Baiting Hollow

Baiting Hollow is located on the north shore of Long Island and is characterized by rolling hills, wooded areas, and scenic vistas. Baiting Hollow is primarily a residential community. Historic sites include approximately 19 houses, several water towers, a church, a number of farms, and one prehistoric site.

Calverton

Calverton is located inland at the west end of Riverhead. The hamlet initially developed with the arrival of the Long Island Rail Road in 1844. The hamlet is home to Enterprise Park at Calverton (EPCAL), which was formerly the Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant. In addition to this business complex, Calverton has a mix of residential neighborhoods and open farmland. Historic sites in Calverton include approximately 19 houses, a pickle factory, several farms, a hotel/inn, and two prehistoric sites.

Jamesport & South Jamesport

Jamesport and South Jamesport are historic settlements in Riverhead, located near the Great Peconic Bay. The hamlet was originally a farming and fishing community and retains much of its historical charm. The hamlet includes farms, wineries, residential neighborhoods, and a historic center along Main Road. South Jamesport is particularly known for its waterfront real estate,

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including homes with private docks and direct access to the bay. Historic sites include approximately 46 houses, two cemeteries, eight farms, 15 cottages, and one prehistoric site.

Laurel

Laurel is located immediately east of South Jamesport, along the Great Peconic Bay. It is also generally split between Southold and Riverhead. The sparsely developed hamlet is characterized by agricultural land and forest, with some commercial properties along Main Road.

Manorville

Manorville is a hamlet located in both Riverhead and Brookhaven. The hamlet developed initially as a farming community but grew with the advent of the Long Island Rail Road station St. George's Manor. Manorville is surrounded by parks and nature preserves, including the Pine Barrens Core Area and Robert Cushman Murphy County Park. Development within the Pine Barrens Core Area is subject to density restrictions to prevent the integrity of this environmentally sensitive area. Commercial areas in Manorville are largely within the Town of Brookhaven along Route 111 which has direct access to the Long Island Expressway. Historic sites in Manorville (within Riverhead) include six houses and one prehistoric site.

Northville

Northville, formerly an incorporated village, is located on the north shore of Long Island in the eastern portion of Riverhead. Northville is primarily agricultural and single-family residential in nature. Northville is part of the larger wine region on Long Island, and there are several vineyards and wineries in the vicinity. The historic center is located on Sound Avenue, and includes historic houses and a church.

Riverhead

The hamlet of Riverhead developed as the seat of Suffolk County, since 1727 when the Suffolk County Court House was built. The hamlet is the central and most densely populated area within the Town. The hamlet contains the historic downtown area as well as several commercial corridors including portions of Route 58. The Peconic River is a significant waterway that flows through the downtown area, offering recreational opportunities, and contributing to the vitality of the downtown district. One of the notable attractions in Riverhead Hamlet is Tanger Outlets, a large outlet shopping complex with numerous brand-name stores, making it a popular destination for shoppers. The hamlet also includes Polish Town, settled by Polish immigrants at the turn of the 20th century and encompassing approximately 15 blocks along Pulaski Street. Historic sites in Riverhead include approximately 210 houses, one cemetery, a wide assortment of historic commercial and civic buildings and sites, churches and farms, as well as two prehistoric sites.

Wading River

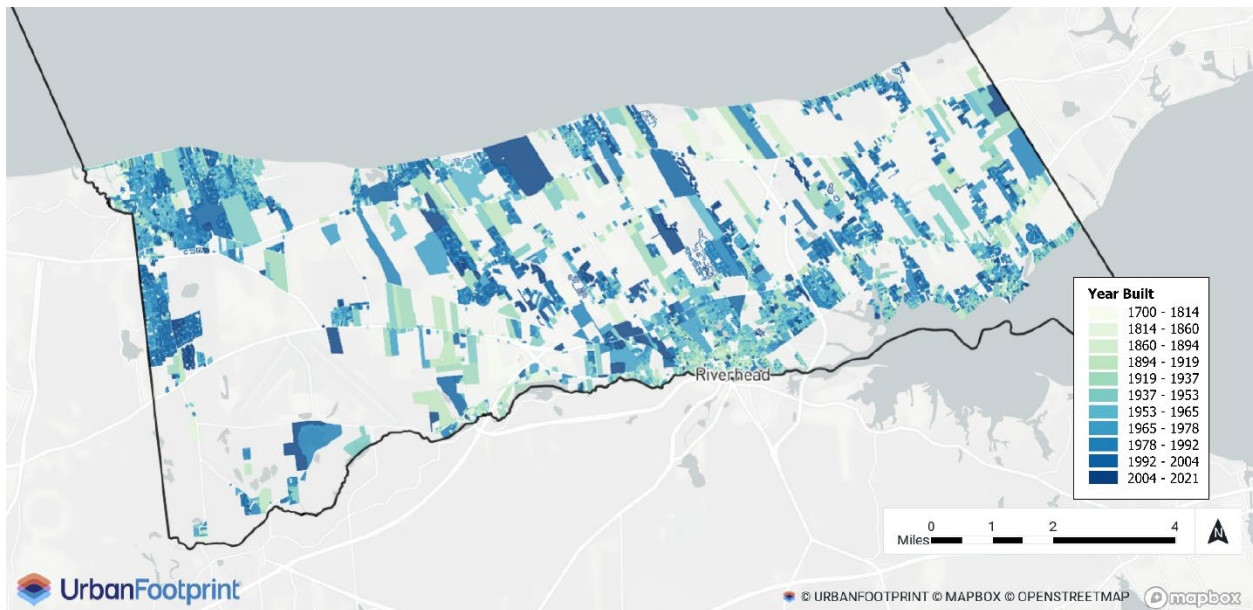
Wading River is on the northwestern portion of the Town, bordering on the Town of Brookhaven and the Long Island Sound. shore of Long Island NW end of the Town of Riverhead, borders the Town of Brookhaven. The Shoreham Nuclear Power Plant (within Town of Brookhaven) is an imposing structure

The hamlet's history dates back to 1671, when European settlers established a community there. The hamlet contains a historic village center, with a village green, churches, cemeteries, and historic houses. The hamlet also has several beaches and waterfront areas along the Long Island

Sound. Like many of Riverhead’s hamlets, Wading River is home to many farms, vineyards, and wineries. It is also near the Shoreham Nuclear Power Plant (within Town of Brookhaven), which is an imposing structure.

The map on the following page shows the age of structures in the Town based on assessor’s data. The data doesn’t show historic develop patterns, it just shows homes present when the data was collected. However, the map does give some indication of general settlement patterns.

Figure 1. Year Built



Source: Corelogic, Urban Footprint, Mapbox, Openstreetmap

Existing Land Use

Land use refers to the distribution of various activities across public and private lands, typically ranging from commercial, industrial, and residential uses to conservation, recreation, and “vacant” land (i.e. land that is not currently being put to any particular use). Land use is different than zoning. While land use describes the *current* use of the land, the town’s zoning ordinance regulates land use changes that *can* occur, both now and in the future. In each of Riverhead’s zoning districts, the zoning ordinance sets specific standards for uses, densities, and dimensions that must be followed. Current uses may generally continue, but any change in use must go through a permitting and approval process and be consistent with the ordinance or obtain a variance.

As seen in the chart below, the Town’s land areas include over 41 thousand acres, or approximately 65 square miles. There are also almost 94 thousand acres of land in the Town’s jurisdiction that is under water (e.g the Long Island Sound, Peconic River, and Peconic Bay), and are excluded from the land use coverage calculations. Agricultural use is the largest use, which comprises over 15 thousand acres or 36 percent of Town lands. The next largest category is residential (16 percent) followed by open space. Most of the land use categories are not anticipated to change significantly. 9.5 percent of land is “vacant”, meaning it is currently undeveloped, either in a natural state or cleared for potential future development. The vacant designation implies that the area is available for potential

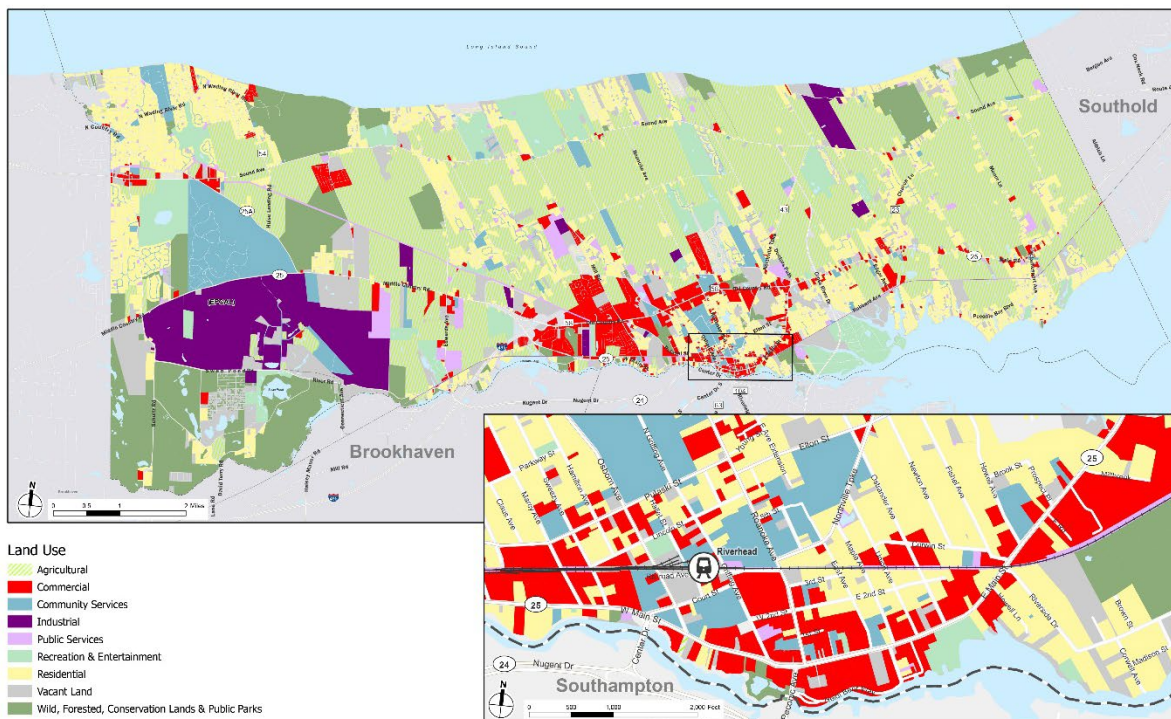
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use or redevelopment, however, it is possible that some of the lands listed as vacant have deed restrictions or are preserved through TDR, so the actual size of vacant parcels may be somewhat less. Additional details about preserved lands can be found in Chapter X.

Existing Land Use

Use	Land Area (Acres)	%
Residential	6,802	16.4%
Commercial	1,985	4.8%
Industrial	2,630	6.3%
Agricultural	15,145	36.5%
Community Services	2,216	5.3%
Public Services	787	1.9%
Recreation & Entertainment	2,834	6.8%
Open Space (Conservation Lands & Public Parks)	5,141	12.4%
Vacant Land	3,931	9.5%
Total	41,471	

Existing Land Use Map



Source: Town of Riverhead, NYS GIS, USGS, BIF Planning

Distribution of Land Uses

This section presents an overview of the distribution of land use categories throughout Riverhead.

Residential Areas: Riverhead has various residential neighborhoods, including single-family homes, apartments, and condominiums. The town offers a mix of housing options, from historic homes in the downtown area to suburban-style neighborhoods and waterfront properties. Additional details on housing trends, issues, and opportunities are provided in Chapter X.

Commercial and Retail: The town features several commercial areas, including:

- Downtown Riverhead, which serves as a central business district with a mix of shops, restaurants, and cultural institutions.
- Route 58 is a significant commercial corridor, featuring numerous shopping centers, big-box stores, restaurants, and other retail establishments. Commercial and retail development has expanded significantly along this corridor since the prior Plan was completed.
- Tanger Outlets is a major shopping destination for the wider region. It's home to a wide range of brand-name outlet stores, making it a popular destination for shoppers seeking discounts on clothing, footwear, accessories, etc. The shopping center includes both indoor and outdoor shopping areas.
- There are other scattered commercial corridors along which feature local shops, restaurants, and service providers such as along Roanoke Avenue, West Main Street, Main Road, Middle Country Road, and Route 25A in Wading River.

Additional details on trends, issues, and opportunities related to commercial areas are provided in Chapter X.

Agriculture: Agriculture is an essential part of Riverhead's identity. The Town is home to farms, vineyards, and orchards, particularly in the eastern part of town. The Long Island Wine Country is known for its vineyards and wineries, making it a significant component of the local economy. It has also been a draw for tourists and wine enthusiasts. Further discussion of Agriculture and Agro-tourism can be found in Chapter X.

Waterfront and Marinas: Riverhead has a substantial waterfront area along the Peconic River and Flanders Bay. This area features marinas, boat docks, and access to the Peconic Bay. The waterfront is often used for recreational boating and fishing.

Industrial and Manufacturing: Some areas of Riverhead are designated for industrial and manufacturing purposes. These zones may include warehouses, manufacturing facilities, and other industrial establishments. The Calverton hamlet also includes the EPCAL site which has been a focal point for economic development. The EPCAL site includes a range of businesses in industries such as manufacturing, technology, aviation, and warehousing. Calverton is also home to several large-scale commercial solar energy production facilities which generate renewable energy.

Educational and Institutional: Riverhead has many educational institutions, healthcare facilities, and other institutional land uses. This includes facilities owned by the Town, Riverhead School District, Riverhead Charter School and other private or parochial schools, Peconic Bay Medical Center, Suffolk County Community college, religious institutions, and other cultural and historical institutions. A more detailed discussion of community facilities can be found in Chapter X.

Cultural and Entertainment Attractions: Riverhead has invested in cultural and entertainment attractions, with the revitalization of downtown Riverhead being a notable example. The Suffolk Theater, for instance, has become a cultural hub with live performances and events. Other notable attractions include the Long Island Aquarium, Vail-Leavitt Music Hall, and East End Arts.

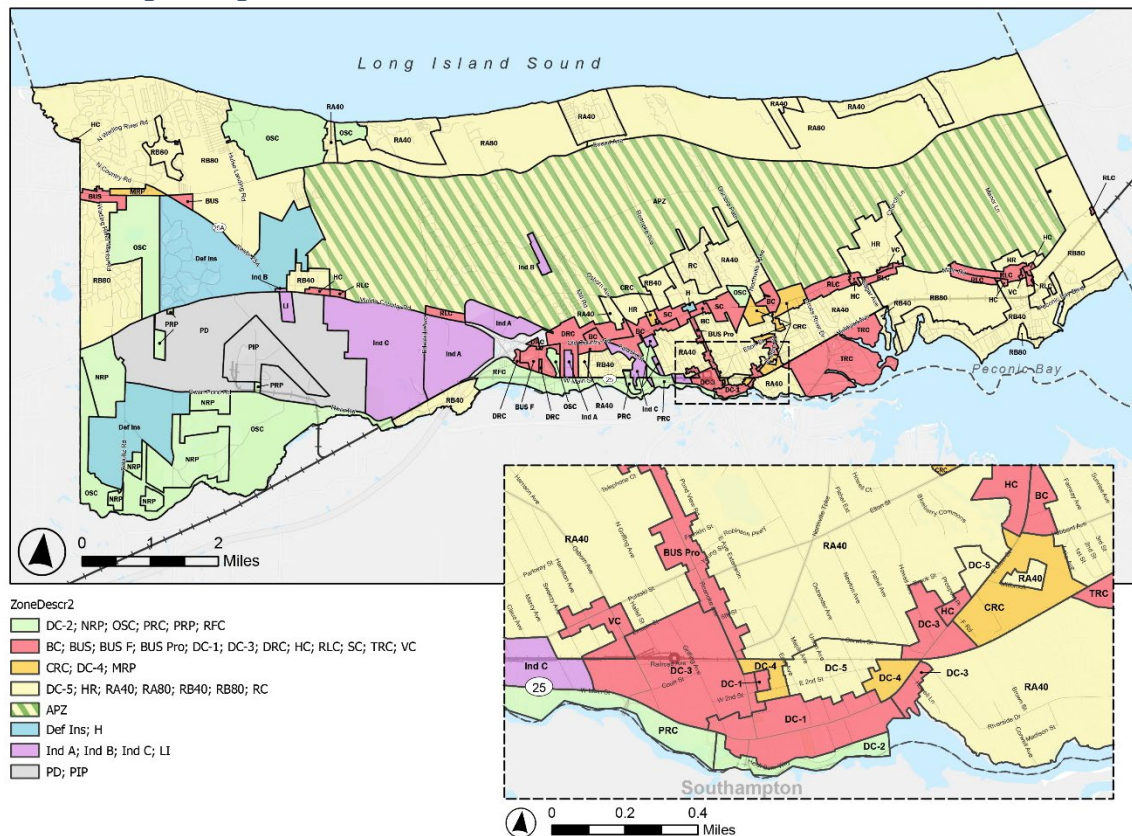
Open Space and Parks: The town has open space and parkland areas, including town, county and state-owned parks, nature preserves, and recreational spaces, which provide opportunities for outdoor activities and community gatherings. A description of parks is provided in Chapter X.

Historic Districts: Riverhead has designated historic districts, particularly in its downtown area, aimed at preserving and showcasing historic architecture and landmarks. A more detailed discussion of historic districts is provided in Chapter X.

Existing Zoning Districts

Zoning is depicted on the map in Figure 3. This is not the official zoning map of the Town of Riverhead and is provided for reference for the Comprehensive Plan text only. The following description provides a general overview of the Town's zoning districts for informational purposes only. For specific regulations and requirements applicable to each district, it is imperative to refer directly to the official Town zoning code. This description is not intended to replace or supersede the authoritative information contained within the Town's zoning code, which should always be consulted for precise and up-to-date zoning information.

Figure 3. Existing Zoning



Sources: Town of Riverhead, NYGIS, USGS, BFJ Planning

Residential Districts:

Approximately 65 percent of the Town is zoned for single-family residential housing (Residence A-40 (RA40), RA80, RB40, RB80, APZ, and HR zoning use districts).

Residence A-80 (RA80) and Residence B-80 (RB80): These districts can generally be found in Jamesport, Wading River, and areas north of Sound Ave. Both RA80 and RB80 generally allow for low-density residential at a 2-acre minimum lot size (80,000 SF). These districts have the same dimensional regulations, however, there may be some differences in other regulations such as permitted uses. The RA80 district allows for the use of TDR credits to increase density to 1 acre per lot (40,000 SF).

Agricultural Protection (APZ). The APZ zone covers a substantial amount of the Town and is broadly located in areas between Sound Avenue and Middle Road. This district is similar to RA80 with regard to dimensional regulations. It allows for low-density residential at a 2-acre minimum lot size (80,000 SF). This focus of this district is to maintain highly productive agricultural lands by limiting encroachment of nonagricultural development. It is the only district currently designated as a sending district for TDR credits.

Residence A-40 (RA40) and Residence B-40 (RB40): Both districts generally allow for medium-density residential at a 1-acre minimum lot size (40,000 SF). Both districts also allow attached single-family dwelling units within a cluster subdivision. These districts have the same dimensional regulations, however, there may be some differences in other regulations such as permitted uses. The RA40 district allows for the use of TDR credits to increase density to 0.5 acre per lot (20,000 SF). RA40 also has a workforce housing option which allows an increased development yield of 10%, provided that any additional development yield is reserved exclusively for workforce housing.

Hamlet Residential (HR): HR is generally located along Church Lane (Route 23) north of Rote 58 and just north of the hamlet center in Jamesport (on Manor Lane). The district is similar to RA80 with regard to dimensional regulations. It allows for low-density residential at a 2-acre minimum lot size (80,000 SF) and allows for an increase to 1 acre per lot (40,000 SF) with the use of TDR credits.

Retirement Community (RC): This district is located in one large area north of Middle Road. RC permits the construction of medium-density living accommodations for seniors and disabled older individuals with comfortable and safe housing in a congregate setting. The district is intended to be in areas in close proximity to shopping, medical offices, public services, and public transportation. The district provides for the use of TDR credits to increase development yield not to exceed four dwelling units per acre (40,000 SF). The minimum parcel area to be considered for inclusion within the Residence RC Zoning Use District is 15 acres

Multifamily Residential Professional Office Zone (MRP): This district is located in one area along Sound Avenue in Wading River. MRP provides for medium density residential options such as multifamily condominiums and townhomes. It also allows for professional office activities. The number of dwelling units permitted is variable, based on the number of bedrooms per dwelling unit and the availability of water and sewer infrastructure. The maximum density would be 4 units per acre assuming one-bedroom units and the provision of necessary infrastructure.

Commercial Districts:

Downtown Center (DC): The DC district was divided into five categories (DC-1 thru DC-5) in order to balance downtown land uses and development patterns with the historic and natural context of the area. The DC Districts are intended to limit sprawl and protect open space; develop the downtown as a cultural, civic, and tourist center by creating a high-density of mixed uses; increase public access to the waterfront; promote transit, pedestrian, and bicycle use; preserve historic resources; and provide community facilities.

- **Downtown Center 1: Main Street (DC-1):** The DC-1 district allows a variety of commercial and cultural uses found in a downtown core area. It also permits professional offices, residential units on upper floors, B&Bs, and townhouses. Prohibited uses include office buildings only, flea markets, gas stations, car washes, and drive thru windows.
- **Downtown Center 2: Waterfront (DC-2):** This district allows marinas, resorts, and retail stores, while hotels, inns, B&Bs, and indoor recreations are allowed by special permit. It is zoned for areas along the Peconic River near the downtown core area.
- **Downtown Center 3: Office (DC-3):** This district is similar to DC-1 but with lower intensities. It complements the State Supreme Court of Suffolk County Complex by allowing a moderate-

intensity mix of uses, with ground-floor offices and retail and a greater mix of housing types. The Railroad Avenue Urban Renewal Area (RRA-OD) is an overlay district that allows for a higher-intensity mix of uses in DC-3, emphasizing ground-floor offices and retail, along with residential spaces on upper floors for larger sites, with site plans reviewed by the Town Board. RRA-OD is discussed further in this section.

- **Downtown Center 4: Office/Residential Transition (DC-4):** This district permits professional and public offices, single family units, townhouses, places of worship, and funereal homes, while retail and personal services are prohibited. Professional offices, B&Bs, day care, and nursery schools are allowed by special permit.
- **Downtown Center 5: Residential (DC-5):** DC-5 provides for a downtown residential neighborhood with permitted live/workspaces and home occupations.

Hamlet Center (HC): HC zoning is located along Main Rd in Aquebogue in Jamesport and along Route 25 in Calverton. This district provides for small clusters of shops and professional services in a rural setting, with a residential character. Development is intended to be pedestrian-friendly, small-scale, and clustered in a campus-style pattern. The HC Zoning Use District is intended to have larger front and side setbacks and more landscaping than the Village Center (VC) Zoning Use District. Apartments are permitted on upper floors.

Village Center (VC): VC districts are located in hamlet center areas in Polishtown, Aquebogue, and Jamesport. The purpose of VC is to encourage “Main Street” style commercial nodes with small shops, restaurants, and professional services following a traditional pattern of development and design in a compact, pedestrian-oriented setting.

Business Center (BC): BC encourages single, freestanding roadside commercial uses, primarily along Route 58, between the existing Destination Retail Center (DRC) and Shopping Center (SC) Zoning Use Districts. Preservation credits (TDR) may be used to increase the FAR development yield from 0.2 to 0.3 (with sewer infrastructure).

Shopping Center (SC): SC allows for moderate-sized convenience shopping centers, mainly on Route 58, in central locations that are accessible from adjacent neighborhoods. Retail development is intended to be arranged in a shopping center layout, with large-scale stores complemented by ancillary small-scale stores. Professional office buildings are intended to be arranged in campus-style layout. Strip or freestanding development is discouraged. TDR credits can be used to increase the allowable development yield to a maximum 0.3 floor area ratio.

Destination Retail Center (DRC): DRC provides for large regional retail centers along Route 58 while linking development to open space protected in the Agriculture Protection (APZ) Zoning Use District. Development is intended to have a campus-style layout, with no strip or freestanding businesses permitted.

Commercial/Residential Campus (CRC): The intent of the CRC District is to provide for both office development as well as additional housing alternatives which are in close proximity to service and arterials. While the district permits housing types that are more dense than single family homes (the dimensional regulations effectively the maximum density to 2 units per acre (with the use of TDR). CRC is primarily located in areas around East Main Street between the downtown core and Route 58.

Business F (BUS F): This district located adjacent to the I-495 interchange/terminus includes most of Tanger Outlets Riverhead. BUS F provides for outlet centers and their customary accessory and attending uses at sites that are appropriate due to their location relative to public infrastructure, and which are accessible to arterial roadway networks.

Riverfront Corridor (RFC): RFC provide for a mix of residential, commercial and recreational uses that are in harmony with the ecologically sensitive areas of the Peconic River. RFC allows for single family homes, river-related retail uses, and non-motorized open space uses.

Peconic River Community (PRC): This district, which is located along West Main Street, west of the downtown core, provides for an array of commercial, and recreational uses while preserving the ecological resources along the Peconic River – consistent with land use policy established by DEC. While the stated intent of this district includes residential uses, no residential uses are currently permitted.

Rural Corridor (RLC): Allows a very limited range of roadside shops and services that are compatible with the agricultural and rural setting along major arterial roads, such as New York State Route 25, leading into Downtown Riverhead and areas zoned Hamlet Center (HC) or Village Center (VC).

Business (PB): This district, which provides for a variety of professional office uses, is mapped along Roanoke Avenue to provide a transitional area between Route 58, the downtown area, and adjacent residential areas.

Business Center (CR): This district is limited to two small areas along Sound Avenue and Route 25A in Wading River. CR allows small clusters of shops and professional offices oriented towards residents in the surrounding hamlet area. The scale and design of new development in this district are intended to complement the rural character of the Town and preserve and enhance natural open space areas and habitat. Where lot sizes and depths permit, development is intended to be clustered in a campus-style pattern.

Tourism/Resort Campus (TRC): TRC provides opportunities for overnight accommodations and recreational amenities in a campus setting with significant open space preserves. TRC is mapped for Indian Island County Park and Indian Island Golf Course.

Hospital (H): The H District is mapped for lands owned by the Peconic Bay Medical Center. The district is designed to optimize the hospital's services and meet the growing needs of the Riverhead community. Site plans in the Hospital District are reviewed by the Town Board.

Industrial A (Ind A): Ind A allows for industrial and warehousing uses, primarily located north and west of the terminus of the Long Island Expressway. IND A is intended to allow heavier uses than the Industrial C (Ind C) Zoning Use District.

Industrial B (Ind B): This district is found in two locations in the Town. While the zoning code provides for a variety of general industrial uses, no lot, yard, bulk, and height requirements are specified in the Zoning Schedule.

Industrial C (Ind C): Ind C allows for a mix of light industrial, warehouse development, recreational uses, and office campuses in the area between Enterprise Park and the terminus of the Long Island

Expressway. It is also zoned for several scattered sites in more urbanized areas between Calverton and downtown. Ind C is intended for moderate-sized businesses. In addition, the district allows and encourages commercial recreation businesses. The use of generous landscaping and open space buffers is intended to help protect the rural appearance and minimize views of development from the expressway and arterial roads.

Light Industrial (LI): encourages the development of employment-creating enterprises within buildings in an industrial park setting in accordance with modern development standards.

Planned Industrial Park (PIP): PIP provides for industrial and office development in a comprehensively planned and designed environment. It encompasses the bulk of the former Grumman facilities, sometimes referred to as the "industrial core" or the Burman Subdivision.

Open Space Conservation (OSC): OSC provides for conservation and preservation of lands, whether in public or private ownership, which are open areas of significant environmental importance and which are wholly exempt or have nontaxable status. Robert Cushman Murphy County Park, Sawmill Creek, Andrew Sabin Nature Preserve, the Schiff Scout Reservation, and Wildwood State Park.

Def Ins: This district is zoned for Calverton National Cemetery and other properties on the Route 25A. This zoning district is not explicitly described in the Town's zoning code.

Planned Recreational Park (PRP): This district is mapped for some portions of the former Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant at Calverton. The district allows for commercial recreation complexes within a flexible regulatory framework which allows flexibility both in the use and design of these facilities in a single location.

Natural Resources Protection (NRP): This area is known as the "Pine Barrens Protection Zone." The Pine Barrens provide vegetation, wildlife habitats, and aeras for groundwater supply located over a sole source aquifer. The zoning is intended to encourage clustering to create open space and minimize disturbances.

Overlay and Other Districts

Railroad Avenue Urban Renewal Area (RRA-OD): This district was intended to spur investment in the DC-3 District to build off recent investments in the DC-1 area. The overlay district was formed in recognition of the blighted conditions that exist in this area of the downtown and the unique obstacles which face the area. The area also has access to several resources such as the Suffolk County Supreme Court Complex, Riverhead Town Hall, LIRR Station, Riverhead Public Library, Railroad Museum and Riverhead Historic Society Museum. The overlay district permits a higher-intensity mix of uses, with ground-floor offices and retail and residential on upper floors for larger sites within the area. Site plans in the Urban Renewal Area are reviewed by the Town Board.

Arts District: This overlay district, which is mapped in the central business district, to help with the revitalization of the downtown area. It allows for unused floor space on upper floors to be used for art and cultural resources, together with living accommodations for artists.

Downtown Riverfront Overlay: The intent of the Downtown Riverfront Overlay District is to enhance implementation of the recommendations of the Comprehensive Master Plan and the Riverhead Downtown Pattern Book and the Downtown Riverfront District Activation Plan, promote waterfront development to enhance recreation and tourism, and manage land uses to develop the district as a civic area that is people-friendly with active uses, additional entertainment facilities and events, specialty retail and restaurants. The use, dimensions and other requirements for the underlying zoning use district shall apply, unless further restricted hereunder. Where there are conflicts between the regulations hereunder and those contained elsewhere in this chapter, the more restrictive shall apply. The proposed Pattern Book would be applied to this district if adopted.

Pine Barrens Overlay District: This district was designed to provide additional restrictions to protect the Pine Barrens Core and Compatible Growth Areas.

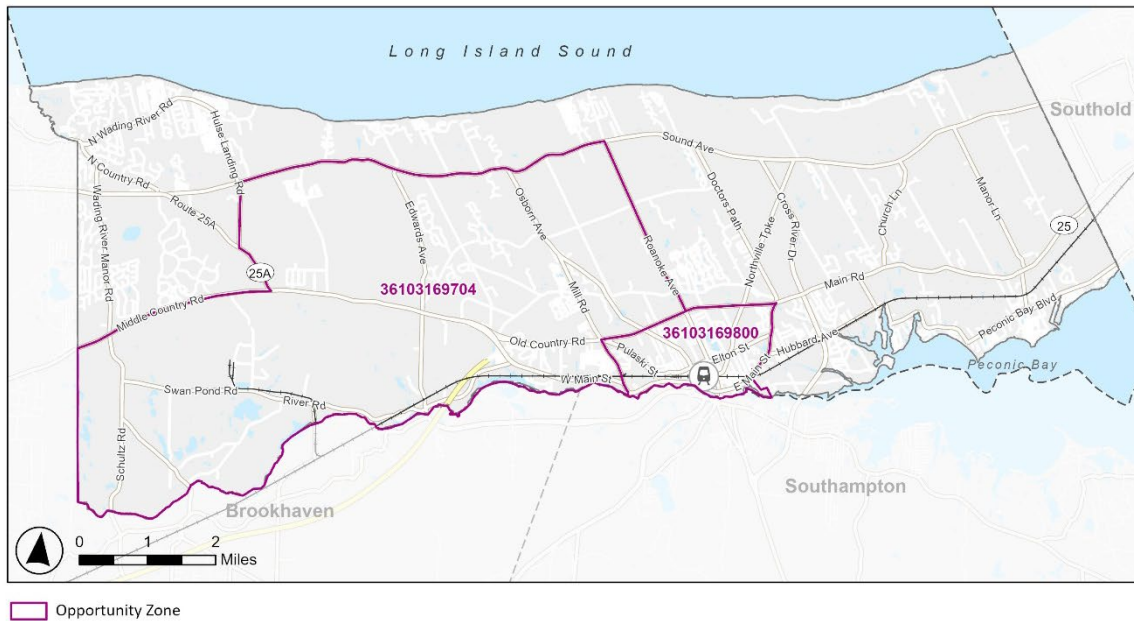
Community Benefit District (CBD): CBD is in effect a floating zone which would permit clustered multifamily rental dwelling units. Permission for use of this district requires the concurrent construction of on-site community center and nonresidential use(s). This district would only be permitted on lots larger than 10 acres situated on state or county arterial roadways.

Other Districts

Federal Opportunity Zone: A portion of downtown is in a federal Opportunity Zone (Census Tract 1698), along with portions of Calverton and Manorville including the EPCAL property. The Opportunity Zone program uses federal income tax incentives to spur economic development by allowing taxpayers to defer capital gains by reinvesting those gains into communities designated as “qualified opportunity zones.”

While the Federal Opportunity Zone designation provides funding opportunities and developer interest in the downtown Riverhead area, the existing 500-unit cap for the DC-1 zoning area limits new growth. With a strong push for development and a federal opportunity zone in play, investors and developers need predictability in the process and to know whether they can or cannot build.

Federal Opportunity Zones



Sources: Town of Riverhead; US IRS; NYS GIS

Parking District: The Riverhead Parking District No. 1 is an official Town of Riverhead Special District. The district is a taxing jurisdiction that levies taxes on all property owners within the district. The district is not required to provide parking for all uses located downtown. Rather, the purpose of the district is to demand and create additional parking spaces that serve the downtown area. Properties within a parking district do not have to provide off-street parking. The Town Board serves as the regulating board of the district.

ZONING ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One objective for this Comprehensive Plan was to provide a clear and effective roadmap for guiding sustainable growth and preservation of the Town. Fundamental to this process is the establishment of appropriate zoning recommendations that address existing or anticipated issues and align with the Plan’s overarching vision.

While zoning is a pivotal component of the Plan, it is important to note that discussions of zoning issues and recommendations are not confined to this chapter, which provides an overview of existing zoning and land use. Instead, recommendations are distributed throughout the various topic-oriented chapters. In this organization, the zoning recommendations are integrated with the specific challenges and opportunities presented by each topic area.

A brief synopsis of zoning issues addressed in other chapters is below:

Demographics and Housing (Ch. 3)

The Demographics and Housing Chapter includes four goals which collectively address the diverse housing needs of Riverhead, encompassing affordability, diversity in housing types, homeownership support, and inclusivity.

Goal 1 focuses on promoting housing affordability and workforce housing availability. To achieve this, the plan proposes regular monitoring of housing dynamics, reviewing housing policies, and addressing the impact of short-term rentals on the housing stock. The plan also stresses the importance of encouraging other East End towns to contribute their fair share of affordable and workforce housing.

Goal 2 emphasizes diversifying housing types to accommodate various income levels and evolving needs. Initiatives include eliminating minimum home size requirements, utilizing Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) to allow for new housing types (i.e. townhomes and garden apartments) in areas that can accommodate increased densities. In the downtown area, the plan recommends allowing for adaptive reuse of buildings for residential purposes and evaluating the 500-unit cap for the DC-1 District.

Goal 3 aims to support the creation and protection of homeownership for low- and moderate-income households. Strategies include providing resources and incentives for first-time homebuyers, revising the 500-unit cap to promote homeownership opportunities, and changing affordability thresholds for ownership versus rentals.

Goal 4 focuses on promoting inclusive housing policies and accessible design standards. Recommendations include supporting home improvement funding for low-income senior residents, allowing residential health care facilities in designated zones (i.e. assisted care and continuing care facilities), and developing accessible design standards.

Economic Development (Ch. 4)

The Economic Development chapter outlines a comprehensive set of initiatives to guide land use and zoning strategies, aiming to balance economic growth with community needs. One topic is the reassessment of the Enterprise Park (EPCAL) development strategy with the initiation of a collaborative study involving residents and stakeholders. The goal is to proactively address potential impacts, improve infrastructure, and align development with local needs. Additionally, the chapter emphasizes responsible industrial development by encouraging recreational opportunities, scaling back allowable density in industrial areas “outside the fence,” allowing for slightly higher building heights (with increased setbacks, and incorporating design standards for aesthetics and environmental harmony).

The chapter addresses other key areas such as revitalization of the downtown area, enhancement of the Route 58 corridor, responsible land use planning in hamlet centers. Future study is needed in some of these areas including the creation of design guidelines for Route 58 as well as the development of several hamlet studies to guide tailored to each hamlet center. Overall, the initiatives reflect a holistic approach to economic development, which balance fiscal considerations, and the diverse needs of the community and the environment.

Agricultural Lands (Ch. 6)

This chapter underscores the importance of aligning zoning regulations with the goals of sustaining agricultural activities, preserving the rural character, and managing environmental impacts. Several recommendations address how the TDR program can be improved to make it a more attractive tool for property owners and developers. One initiative would be to revisit the transfer formula which could improve the demand for TDR Credits. Another recommendation includes creating new receiving areas for TDR credits. There are several other TDR recommendations that are administrative in nature. The plan also highlights policy and code changes to help to preserve more agricultural lands during subdivisions.

Natural Features and Environmental Resources (Ch. 7)

This section explores the diverse natural elements that shape Riverhead. Recommendations focus on the myriad ways riverhead can protect and preserve these resources. Land use regulations address how the Town code and incorporate best practices for stormwater management, landscaping, and conservation. The chapter also recommends several initiatives to protect the urban forest such as a tree preservation law. Land use decisions could be better informed through the mapping of the Town's urban forest as well as an updated inventory of wetlands.

Open Space, Parks, and Recreation (Ch. 8)

This chapter discusses the Town's parks and open space resources and presents strategies to safeguard and enhance them for generations to come. Land use recommendations address opportunities to provide new parks and facilities for recreational programming, prioritizing underserved areas. The Town should continue to implement the vision for the Town Square and other public spaces Downtown. There are also opportunities to improve areas along the Peconic River to make it a more attractive destination for recreation. The chapter also addresses opportunities to strengthen open space requirements such as through cluster development.

Sustainability and Resilience (Ch. 12)

This chapter discusses a variety of strategies to promote sustainable patterns of development. One strategy related to zoning is the incorporation of sustainable construction and design standards.

Future Land Use Chapter and Implementation (Chapter 13)

The Future Land Use Chapter acts as a roadmap, providing a framework for decision-making by local authorities, developers, and residents, fostering a cohesive and sustainable development trajectory. Within this chapter, specific land use policies and goals are articulated to guide the allocation of land for various purposes, balancing the need for economic development with the preservation of natural resources and community character. This chapter incorporates zoning recommendations, density regulations, and strategies for sustainable development, aiming to align future growth with the community's values, economic goals, and environmental considerations.

This chapter also includes an Implementation "Action Agenda," which serves as a guide to navigating the Comprehensive Plan to locate the recommendations related to each topic area. We emphasize the need for the Town Board, government agencies, community members, and other stakeholders to explore the plan in its entirety to gain a holistic perspective on the proposed vision for Riverhead.