

# RIVERHEAD Comprehensive Plan Update



## **Chapter 6/ Parks, Open Space, and Recreation**

*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](mailto: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*

**CHAPTER 6: PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND RECREATION**

**Introduction**

This chapter discusses the Town’s parks and open space resources and presents strategies to safeguard and enhance them for generations to come. Riverhead has a variety of unique parks, recreational facilities, and beaches that are strung together by the network of wooded lanes, open space, and farmland. Riverhead is fortunate to have over 22 miles of shoreline, including one of the largest spans along the Long Island Sound. A large portion of Enterprise Park at Calverton and adjacent areas are part of the Central Pine Barrens Core Preservation Area. Riverhead also has County and State parks, golf courses, and camping, hunting, boating, and other recreational facilities.

As Riverhead experiences more development, expansion and enhancement of the park system is critical to maintaining the Town's quality of life. Parks provide balance to the built-up areas of the Town, adding to the visual character and quality of life in the community and enhancing property values. The Town should expand and improve parks in all parts of Riverhead and should establish a greenway system that links parks and open spaces together. This includes improved access to waterfront areas for recreational purposes, including the Peconic River, Flanders Bay, the Great Peconic Bay, and Long Island Sound. It also includes improved accessibility for pedestrians and bicyclists.

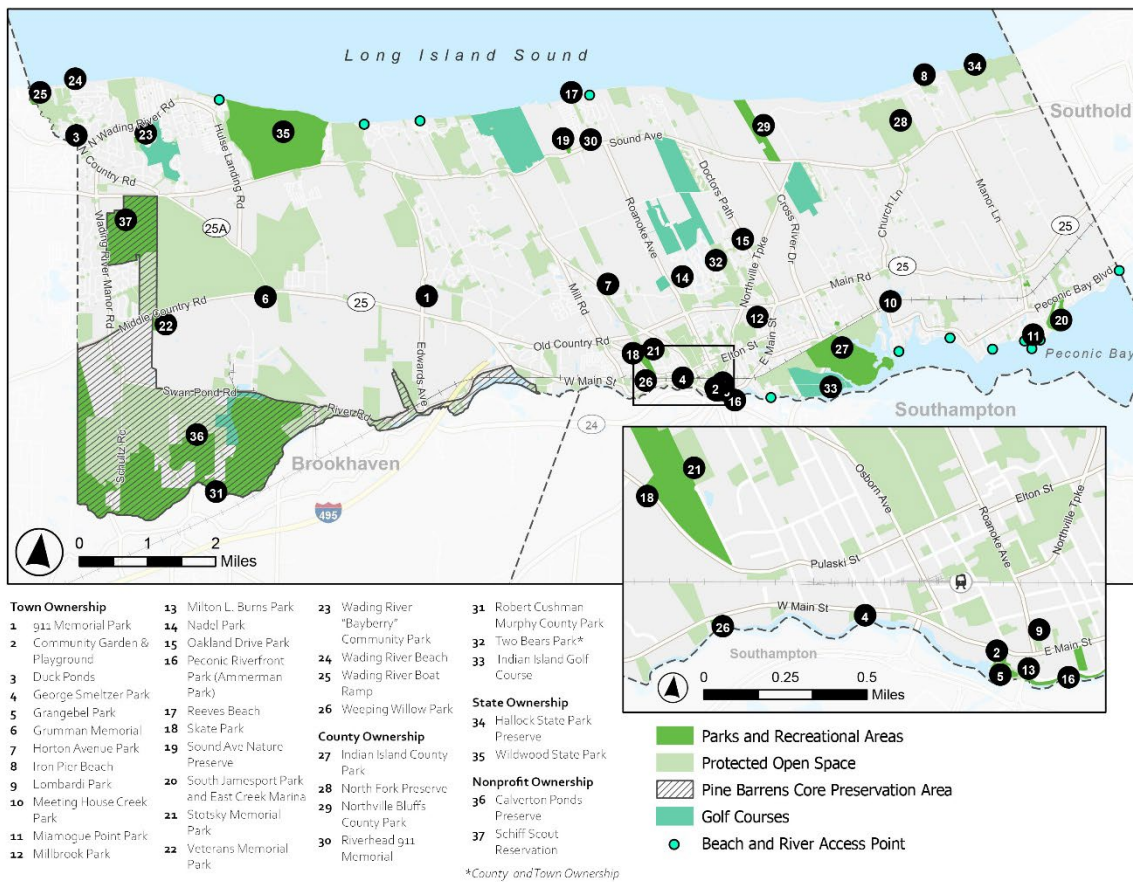
## Existing Conditions

### Parks

#### Riverhead Parks

Riverhead has 26 parks, over 150 acres of Town-owned parkland, and a dozen public waterfront access points (see Figure 1. Parks and Recreational Areas). These resources include neighborhood parks, sports amenities, memorials, and beaches. Neighborhood parks, such as Horton Avenue Park, Unity Drive Park, and Millbrook Gables Park, and Two Bears Park, offer basketball courts, grill and picnic areas, and playgrounds., Grangebel Park, also known as Milton Burns Park, is a picturesque riverside destination in historic downtown Riverhead. It’s outdoor art gallery showcases works by local artists. Grumman Memorial Park and World Trade Center Memorial offer places of quiet reflection. The Town has three public beaches on Long Island Sound, Wading River Beach, Reeves Beach, and Iron Pier Beach. Some of Riverhead’s significant parks are described in more detail below.

Figure 1. Parks, Recreational Areas, and Open Space



Sources: NYOGIS; Suffolk County; Town of Riverhead; USGS; Central Pine Barrens Joint Planning and Policy Commission

### **Veterans Memorial Park**

The 62-acre park which opened in 2013, features softball and baseball fields, bocce ball and pickleball courts, a playground, dog park, concession stand, picnic areas and nature trails. The park provides access to the 9.2-mile Vietnam Veterans Memorial Recreational Trail which provides a loop around EPCAL.

### **Vietnam Veterans Memorial Recreational Trail**

This off-road path loops approximately 9-miles around Enterprise Park and connects Veterans Memorial Park, Grumman Memorial Park, and links to the New York State Route 25 Bike Route and the County Route 94 Bike Path. The trail encourages biking, walking, running, and other non-motorized means of transportation. Completion of the first 3 miles was completed in 2008. After several more years of advocacy efforts by the Riverhead Alternative Transportation Committee, an extension was The Trail was completed in 2019. The project was partially funded through a New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation grant. The Wells family cemetery is situated between the recreation trail and River Rd and was recently restored through an Eagle Scout project.

### **Stotzky Park**

Stotzky Memorial Park offers a range of sports fields and courts, picnic areas, Wesley Dean AckleySkate Park, a fitness trail equipped with exercise stations, and several other amenities.

### **Grangebel Park (also known as Milton Burns Park)**

This riverside park is located in historic downtown Riverhead and features paths, benches, and an outdoor art gallery with statues from local artists.

### **Police Officers Memorial Park (formerly Bayberry Park)**

This 7-acre park in Wading River was formerly known as Bayberry Park. It features multi-purpose fields, tennis and basketball courts, a playground, a grill and picnic area, and other amenities.

### **Wading River Duck Ponds**

The majority of this park (about 90%) falls with the Town of Brookhaven, but a portion of it is in Riverhead. Brookhaven Town has carried out several improvement projects on the Duck Ponds to address issues of flooding and pollution, including dredging and stormwater improvements to prevent the stormwater runoff and pollutants from contaminating the water. However, most drainage issues occur within Riverhead's jurisdiction. While Riverhead has applied for grant funding in the past to contribute to drainage and bulkhead improvements at the Duck Ponds, their applications have not been successful. The Duck Ponds provide a passive environment with paths and benches. Annually in summer, the Wading River Duck Ponds are activated with Duck Pond Day, a festival that began in 1994 and includes a 5k, parade, and street fair.

### **Town Beaches**

Riverhead has three public beaches on the Long Island Sound: Iron Pier Beach, Reeves Beach, and Wading River Beach. Iron Pier Beach offers scenic Long Island Sound views, playgrounds, and picnic

areas. Reeves Beach provides a tranquil setting with a gazebo and picnic spots and allows 4x4 access during designated time. Wading River Beach, furthest west, features swimming, restrooms, a playground, 4x4 access, and a boat ramp. In addition, Riverhead features beaches on the Peconic Bay including South Jamesport Beach and Edwards Avenue Beach.

### **East Creek Marina**

This marina has docks reserved for Town residents, reserved on an annual permit basis. It offers amenities such as picnic areas, restrooms, and showers. Boaters can tie up at the waterfront all day without a permit, but an evening stay requires a permit from the Recreation Department. The Marina is owned by

### **Parks and Recreation Department**

The Town's Parks and Recreation Department conducts annual inspections of all its parks and recreational facilities to assess their needs. Additionally, the department annually reviews and revises the Town's Parks and Recreation Department capital plan, outlining 5-year objectives for the community. Proactively staying ahead of trends, the department engages in meetings with other towns, conducts thorough research, and seeks feedback from Riverhead residents.

In an effort to enhance accessibility and streamline processes for Town residents, the Department actively explores new technologies. This includes facilitating easier access to permits, schedules, and activity sign-ups. The integration of social media has become indispensable for the Department, serving as a vital tool for reaching out to and informing Town residents.

### **Adopt-a-Park Program**

This program serves as a platform to actively engage the community in preserving the cleanliness and appeal of Riverhead's parks and beaches. Residents, resident groups, and organizations are encouraged to "adopt" specific sections within these recreational areas. Adopters commit to enhancing these spaces by conducting litter and debris cleanup, promptly reporting any safety concerns or maintenance needs, and engaging in manual labor activities. While routine inspections and maintenance is carried out by the Town of Riverhead Parks Department and Buildings & Grounds Department, adopting groups and individuals provide additional care and attention to these locations.

### **Suffolk County Parks**

Riverhead has six parks and one golf course owned by the County. Indian Island County Park is a 275-acre estuarine park situated at the mouth of the Peconic River that offers campgrounds, beaches, and hiking trails. The David A. Sarnoff Pine Barrens Preserve provides hiking trails in the unique ecosystem of the Central Pine Barrens. The Peconic Riverfront Park provides scenic river views and recreational areas. Other county parks include Northville Bluffs County Park, the North Fork Preserve, and Robert Cushman Murphy County Park. Suffolk County owns the public golf course at Indian Island.

### **New York State Parks**

There are two state parks: Wildwood State Park and Hallock State Park. Wildwood State Park, located in Wading River, spans over 600 acres and offers campsites, hiking and biking trails, and

beachfront access to the Long Island Sound. The Hallock State Park Preserve land was acquired by the State from KeySpan Energy in 2002 and officially opened to the public in 2017 after over 15 years of conservation and planning work. It comprises approximately 220 acres in Northville and primarily serves as a nature preserve while offering public trails and a beach.

### **Golf Courses**

Riverhead has eight privately-owned golf and country clubs that provide outdoor recreational space. Both 18-hole and 9-hole courses are available. These include Cherry Creek Links / The Woods at Cherry Creek, Long Island National Golf Club, Swan Lake Golf Club, Baiting Hollow Golf Club, The Rock Golf Club, Friar's Head, Sandy Pond Links, and the Vineyards Golf and Country Club.

A ninth private golf course, Calverton Links, closed in 2013 and has been redeveloped as a solar farm. Golf continues to be a popular sport that attracts visitors to Riverhead, and it seems unlikely that additional courses will close in the near term. Most golf course in the Town are in residentially zoned areas that would require cluster subdivisions with open space set asides if they were to be redeveloped in the future.

### **Private Marinas and Yacht Clubs**

There are several marinas and locations offering private boat slips, docking services, and water recreation activities. Notable examples include Treasure Cove Resort Marina, Meeting House Creek Marina, Jamesport Bay Suites & Marina, and Strong's Marina. Riverhead Moose Lodge and Riverhead Yacht Club provide docking facilities for members.

### **Splish Splash**

Splish Splash is a large privately-owned water-themed park open to the public with paid admission. It is a popular entertainment destination, drawing visitors from around the region with its array of water slides, wave pools, and other aquatic attractions, making it the largest water park in Long Island and one of the largest in New York State.

### **Open Space Preservation**

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Because of Riverhead's precious natural features and rich agricultural lands, many programs and regulations have been implemented to preserve open space permanently. These programs and regulations all intend to protect significant natural areas, farmland, and community character while providing open space and recreational opportunities, protecting water and wildlife, and ensuring long-term agricultural production. Zones in Riverhead, including the Open Space Conservation District (OSC), Natural Resources Protection (NRP), and Riverfront Corridor District (RDC), have been designated to further these goals. The primary means of open space preservation in Riverhead include Town, County, State, Federal, and Non-governmental organization ownership of properties, conservation easements, and cluster development set-asides. Land preserved as open spaces or parks in Riverhead is shown in Figure 1.

### **Community Preservation Fund**

Riverhead set up a \$72,000,000 bond against future revenues to enable the Town to preserve key properties. The Town's opportunity to purchase development rights, acquire land, or invest in other eligible properties with CPF funds is limited by the repayment of the bond indebtedness. As of

January 1, 2023, the remaining debt payments, including interest, are approximately \$20,000,000. The bond is expected to be paid off by 2030.

As of the 2021 CPF Plan, the Town has invested \$22,000,000 in purchasing open space parcels using CPF funds and has successfully preserved about 300 acres of open space.<sup>1</sup> A list of properties protected with CPF funds is included in the CPF Plan.

The 2021 CPF Plan prioritized open space to be protected and recommends the best method to do so. Various data, including NYS DEC Open Space Plan priority status, Regional Aquifer Protection Land Acquisition Program criteria, Suffolk County priority list, wetlands status, Pine Barrens preservation boundaries, and other fragile environmental statuses, are used to prioritize land for preservation.

The Open Space Committee established a parcel ranking system to evaluate open space for preservation, considering State and federally designated rare, endangered, threatened, and special concern species habitats, rivers, water bodies, floodplains, critical environment areas, PEP-identified areas to protect and restore the Peconic estuary and watershed, and at-risk properties identified in PEP's Climate Vulnerability Assessment.<sup>2</sup>

### **Ownership**

About a third of Riverhead's CPF funds have been used to purchase open space parcels through fee-simple acquisition. These parcels are owned by the Town and can be used for recreation or conservation purposes. The Town may also acquire land through a land donation or grants. For example, New York Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) funding was used to preserve the Miamogue Park and Weeping Willow Motel properties.

Properties in Riverhead are also preserved through ownership by the County, State, and Federal governments and non-governmental organizations or combinations of these entities. For example, the Nature Conservancy and the County worked together to preserve River Club and Riverhead Meadows. The Town and the Peconic Land Trust preserved the former Pratt property on Long Island Sound. The County quarter-percent sales tax for open space and hamlet park preservation program – partnered with Town to protect large open space parcels, including North Fork Preserve.

### **Conservation Easements**

Conservation easements are voluntary legal agreements between the property owner and a public, non-profit, or other entity restricting the land's use. The owner may continue to use their property and transfer it. However, the easement will stipulate the allowable uses, conservation values, and permanent protection of the property. There are several types of easements in Riverhead. For example, Riverhead's cluster zoning regulations, detailed below, require developers of residential subdivisions to record conservation easements restricting a portion of the property to open space or farmland. Suffolk County and NYS OPRHP have conservation easement programs. The US

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<sup>1</sup> Town of Riverhead, Community Preservation Project Plan, Adopted 2021

<sup>2</sup> Peconic Estuary Program, Peconic Estuary Program Climate Vulnerability Assessment and Action Plan, 2019, <https://www.peconicestuary.org/peconic-estuary-program-climate-vulnerability-assessment-and-action-plan-final-report/>

Department of Agriculture provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands and wetlands through conservation easements. Non-governmental organizations may also hold easements and have agreements for land stewardship. For example, Peconic Land Trust will accept conservation easements and help property owners conserve natural resources. The Pine Barrens transfer of development rights program involves the record of an easement in the Pine Barrens Core Area in exchange for Pine Barrens credits that can be sold and used for development elsewhere. This program is discussed in further detail in this plan's Natural Features and Environmental Resources chapter.

### **Open Space Set-Asides in Subdivisions**

Cluster development requirements in the APZ, RA-80, and RB-80 zones aim to preserve 70% of the land for agriculture or open space while concentrating development onto the remainder of the property. Cluster development regulations are discussed in further detail in the Agriculture chapter. In industrial subdivisions, open space or recreational reserved land should have an area of at least one acre per 50 acres of the plat, and no reserved area should be less than one acre.

### **Payment in Lieu of Parkland**

In the Town code, there are provisions to require developers, when proposing a subdivision, to establish recreational facilities. If insufficient or unsuitable land is available, the Planning Board may require a developer to make a payment in lieu of parkland. The Park Fund is only usable for capital improvements to parks.

## **Committees**

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### **Open Space Committee**

The Open Space/Park Preserve Committee (Open Space Committee) is an advisory committee comprised of five members appointed by the Town Board, including a member of the Recreation Committee and a member of the Conservation Advisory Council (CAC). This advisory committee is responsible for identifying and recommending land acquisitions for open space preservation and incorporation into the park system to the Town Board and development of an open space conservation plan for the utilization, maintenance, and management of lands owned by the Town.

The Open Space Committee uses a parcel rating system that rates the natural habitat and community value of properties under consideration for recommending purchase by the Town. Formerly, the Open Space Program was funded through the Community Preservation Fund (CPF), which was used to purchase several properties, including the Kayak Launch (formerly Weeping Willow Motel), the Sound Avenue Preserve, Riverhead Meadows (Riverside Drive), and Miamogue Point Park. The Open Space Committee has recently focused their efforts on stewardship, considering CPF funding is not currently available. Some recent activities include:

- Collaborate with Town and County to implement walking paths and appropriate culturally respectful signage at Sharper's Hill, Jamesport, a burial ground.
- Collaborating with the Highway Department to improve signage and parking lots at Sound Avenue Preserve.



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- Advising the County on several County open space purchases, such as Saw Mill Creek.
- Advocacy for the acquisition of the Broad Cove property by the Peconic Land Trust.
- Advising the Town of Southampton to purchase the former Peconic Paddler property.
- Providing input on the Town Square Project to incorporate maximum green space.
- Working with the Peconic Land Trust, updated the town's open space priority list and created the Town of Riverhead Updated Community Preservation Fund Project Plan.

### **Beach Advisory Committee**

The Beach Committee plays a crucial role in advising the Town Board on ways to improve the appeal, physical conditions, and accessibility of Riverhead's beaches. Comprising Town residents, members of the Montauk Surfcasters Association, a representative from the Parks and Recreation Department, and a Town Board Liaison, the committee provides recommendations on maintenance programs, amenities, and usage regulations.

As part of their initiatives, the Beach Committee has created an informative brochure outlining beach rules, including regulations for 4 x 4 truck access on the north side of the beach. The brochure also underscores proper beach etiquette. Beyond educational efforts, the committee actively organizes and executes beach cleanup initiatives.

### **Recreation Advisory Committee**

The Recreation Advisory Committee oversees the allocation of park and recreation funds dedicated to Recreation Capital Projects in the Town of Riverhead. Comprising eight members representing various town areas, a Town Councilperson, and the Parks and Recreation Superintendent, the committee collaborates with the Recreation, Engineering, and Accounting Departments. Together, they prioritize new projects and improvements to existing facilities, submitting recommendations to the Town Board. The committee also plays a vital role in planning and administering approved Recreation Projects.

Recent capital projects and actions by the Recreation Advisory Committee include constructing a Beach Booth, installing park signs, and establishing new facilities like pickleball courts at Veterans Park and a playground at Iron Pier Beach. As of 2023, prioritized projects for the committee involve upgrading facilities at Two Bears (tennis courts, basketball courts, playground, and walking paths), East Creek (surveillance and lighting, pavers for the parking lot, and concession stands), Reeves Beach (bathrooms), Veterans Memorial Park (bathrooms), Bayberry Park (parking lot), and Horton Ave (parking lot and lights).

## Goals and Recommendations

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### **Goal 1. Expand recreational opportunities to address additional community interests and needs.**

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There is a strong commitment to creating new park and open space opportunities, even though CPF bonds won't be fully paid off until 2030. Riverhead's Department of Parks and Recreation, along with the Recreation Advisory Committee, has diligently worked to improve recreational offerings and facilities, addressing resident-identified priorities. The Town manages non-resident beach access to mitigate crowding and cleanliness issues, and the Beach Advisory Committee actively works on improving beach etiquette and facilities. Residents have identified various priority projects for the upcoming years, such as enhancing parking facilities, upgrading playgrounds, augmenting lighting, resurfacing courts and playing fields, and adding recreational facilities such as a gym and an indoor pool. The downtown area is also evolving with new public spaces, streetscape improvements, and amenities, reflecting ongoing efforts for community enhancement.

#### **1.1. Continue planning for new parks, prioritizing environmentally sensitive and or underserved areas.**

The Town should continue to monitor use patterns, to assess exactly how much land will be required and when new facilities may be needed. The best sites would be those located in hamlet centers, in the downtown area, or adjacent to schools. Sites in proximity to preserved open space areas, having waterfront access points or greenway connections, or with attractive scenic vistas should also be considered. If feasible, the Town should consider purchasing and reserving preferred parkland sites in advance of development.

The process of identifying park needs should be done in close collaboration with various departments and committees to ensure transparency and cooperation. The Recreation Committee has expressed their need to receive periodic updates on the Town's open space priority list, the status of funding, site plan and subdivision applications. Likewise, the Town should continue to have open conversations and information sharing between the Open Space Advisory Committee, Recreation Advisory Committee, Beach Committee, and Environmental Advisory Committee.

The Town should also continue to collaborate with State and County officials to explore the feasibility of expanding existing parks or establishing new parks. By adding parkland, State and County agencies can simultaneously conserve open space and scenic views, protect natural resources, and provide greater recreational opportunities for residents. Because the Town is not responsible for maintaining State and County parks, they provide a relatively low-cost amenity to the community. Moreover, the value of residential property located near parkland is typically increased, strengthening neighborhoods.

There are several non-profit partners the Town also collaborates with to identify priority lands for conservation including the Peconic Land Trust and the Nature Conservancy. The Peconic Estuary Partnership has developed a useful GIS tool to prioritize parcels for acquisition and protection that considers climate change metrics. The Town should make use of this tool in its decision-making processes.

**1.2. Implement the vision for the Town Square and other public spaces in Downtown Riverhead.**

Continue to implement this transformative project which will be developed over five phases: 1. Town Square, 2. Parking Garage and Passages, 3. Adaptable Play and Plaza, 4. East End Arts, 5. Riverfront and Heidi Behr Way. Placemaking strategies, such as moveable chairs and tables in the town square and an amphitheater and event lawn at East End Arts, were identified for each of these phases. Several of these projects were selected for funding in the Downtown Revitalization Initiative.

**1.3. Pursue opportunities to repurpose the armory for community use.**

The existing George Young Community Center is in the Jamesport area which is further away from residents in the western portions of Town. Residents have expressed the need for additional community space in the Wading River, Calverton, or downtown areas. The YMCA is considering occupying the former state armory on Route 58, which has served Riverhead as a community recreation facility in the past. This opportunity is further discussed in the Community Facilities chapter.

**1.4. Expand recreational programming.**

Riverhead's Department of Parks and Recreation provides ample programming year-round for all age groups. The Town may consider expanding recreational programming to address additional interests, such as passive recreation. Residents have expressed the need for expanded recreational facilities such as a gym and/or an indoor pool. Communications about programming should be provided in Spanish to better include the needs of the Town's growing Hispanic community.

The Town could partner or coordinate such efforts with the Riverhead YMCA and/or the Riverhead Central School District. The Town should consider the feasibility of building a Town gym (i.e. an indoor facility with multi-purpose playing courts and activity rooms) that would provide dedicated space for the Recreation Department's programs. Ideally, the gym would be centrally located and co-located with other public facilities, such as a police substation, a school, a branch library, or a community center.

The Town may also consider a dedicated Town Youth Center to serve as a clearinghouse for the full range of youth services and programs. In particular, the 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. This could also be done in coordination with the YMCA should they come to Riverhead.

**Goal 2. Activate the Peconic Riverfront and other navigable waterways with recreation opportunities and good stewardship.**

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Currently, programming along the Peconic Riverfront in Riverhead is primarily for active uses such as boating. The Recreation Department and partners should explore opportunities for passive activities such as hiking and birding. Boating is also a popular activity in the Long Island Sound and Peconic Bay. There are several identified issues with boat access, such as the need for adequate parking

areas near boat launches, to the lack of depth in the Peconic River and other water bodies to enable boating.

**2.1. Provide safe public access to the Peconic riverfront.**

This could include new pathways or trails along the riverbank, improved access points, designated launch sites for non-motorized watercraft, improved signage and wayfinding, and other measures to protect and preserve the natural habitat while making it accessible. This would include regular clean-up efforts and educational programs on river conservation. The Town should work closely with DEC to regularly clear overgrown invasive plant species, such as the Cabomba Caroliniana, commonly known as Carolina Fanwort. A police officer and/or a recreation attendant should be stationed on the riverfront in downtown to assist visitors and boaters who park downtown (i.e., collect fees, help dock, provide dining recommendations, ensure security.) In addition, Life rings should be provided near the riverfront in case of emergencies (i.e., if someone falls into the river).

**Provide signage to make attractions along the riverfront more visible and accessible.**

Effective signage is crucial in guiding individuals to the many attractions and points of interest along the riverfront, ensuring that visitors can find their way to key attractions, parks, trails, and recreational facilities.

**Develop a plan for Moorings.**

The Town should create formal requirements for moorings in Town waters to ensure safety, establish locations, and provide revenues for the Town. Any discussion about the siting of moorings or other water infrastructure should include input from the aquaculture industry to ensure that their business is not obstructed or negatively impacted.

**Goal 3. Encourage open space preservation and public access opportunities in new development.**

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This goal provides several recommendations to strengthen Town code to better leverage new development to provide open space. The Town currently mandates open space provision for subdivisions, allowing flexibility through options like in-lieu payments into a parks fund when proposed preserved lands are unsuitable for public use. In waterfront areas, some subdivisions extend properties up to the water, restricting access for the public and neighboring properties. Adhering to New York State's Public Trust Doctrine, the public has the right to use the water surrounding Riverhead. Open space preservation should also consider opportunities for off-street pedestrian and bike corridors. The success of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Recreation Trail at Calverton Enterprise Park has spurred residents' desire for an expanded bicycle network with on- and off-street paths, interconnected to regional networks. Considering opportunities like power line corridors and the Peconic River, the Town aims to enhance connectivity and accessibility for a more robust network.

**3.1. Conduct a comprehensive review of both subdivision and cluster regulations to strengthen open space requirements.**

Subdivision and cluster regulations should be adaptable to the unique needs and characteristics of the community. Open space requirements can be tailored to address the need to preserve natural

features (wetlands, woodlands, etc.), and the promote interconnected open spaces such as wildlife corridors. The Town should explore partnerships with private landowners and developers to leverage private funds and expertise for open space creation and long-term stewardship.

The Town should allow subdivisions to provide a portion of the required park space in the form of a linear greenway, provided that the greenway meets established standards, is accessible to the public, and fits into the adopted greenway plan discussed below. The Town should also consider allowing a developer to use an in-lieu fee to purchase a greenway easement or improve a greenway near the subdivision. This provision would help bolster the greenway system and would ensure that subdivisions without neighborhood parks have access to a nearby greenway.

### 3.2. Encourage cluster development on waterfront sites in RA40 and RB40 zones.

The zoning code is currently vague with regard to when cluster whether cluster development is required. It is currently encouraged in in APZ, RA80, RB80, and HR. However, cluster development should be mandatory in these districts for major subdivisions. It can remain option for minor subdivisions as there may not be suitable quantity of land to set a aside a meaningful amount of open space. The Planning Board should also be allowed to request a cluster development alternative in RA40 and RB40 to protect unique natural features and open space.

### 3.3. Require public easements as part of subdivision approval wherever possible to ensure public access and connectivity between open spaces, the waterfront, and greenways.

In Cluster Developments, the Planning Board may require open space easements running to the Town as a condition of approval. In any subdivision, public easements could be required as trails, greenways, waterfront access, and other open spaces to allow the public uninterrupted enjoyment of open spaces. Public access to the beach and the waterfront should be maintained to the greatest extent by requiring developers to maintain public water access and ensure that public right-of-ways are kept clear.

Riverhead subdivisions in waterfront areas where properties extend right up to the water have wonderful waterfront views and access, but other properties in the subdivision and the public at large are cut off from the waterfront. Public access to the beach and the waterfront should be maintained to the greatest possible extent. To safeguard that right, the Town should require that access points to the waterfront from local roads be provided. These access points should provide people with the ability to reach the waterfront for the purpose of boating, fishing, and swimming. However, the Town cannot require developers to dedicate or otherwise provide access to beach areas above the mean high tide line for use by the public.

Additionally, the Town should ensure that an existing public right-of-way that provides waterfront access is not obstructed because of private development. In some cases, those access points have been grown over and no longer have the appearance of a public right-of-way. The Town should endeavor to identify all such right-of-ways and ensure that they are kept free and clear, continuing to provide access to the waterfront.