



TOWN OF RIVERHEAD PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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2021 Comprehensive Plan Update Purpose and Intent

The Comprehensive Plan, also known as the Master Plan, is a document designed to guide the future actions of our town. It presents a vision for the future, with long-range goals and objectives for all activities that affects our government. This includes guidance on how to make decisions on public and private land development proposals, the expenditure of public funds, availability of tax policy (tax incentives), cooperative efforts and issues of pressing concern, such as farmland preservation, sustainable development or the rehabilitation of older neighborhoods areas. The Plan will provide direction for future activities over a 10- to 20-year period after its adoption.

A Comprehensive Plan serves the following functions –

- **The plan provides continuity.** The plan provides continuity across time, and gives successive public bodies a common framework for addressing land-use issues
- **It is the means by which a community can balance competing private interests.** Planning seeks to strike a balance among the many competing demands on land by creating development patterns that are orderly and rational, provide the greatest benefits for individuals and the community as a whole and avoid nuisance conflicts between land uses.
- **It is the means by which a community can protect public investments.** Planning is the means by which a community avoids digging up last year's new road to lay this year's new sewer pipe. Well-planned, orderly and phased development patterns are also less expensive for a community to provide with public services than low-density, scattered development.
- **It allows communities to plan development in a way that protects valued resources.** Planning can identify environmental features like wetlands, agricultural lands, woods and steep slopes and suggest strategies for preserving those resources from destruction or degradation by inappropriate development.
- **It provides guidance for shaping the appearance of the community.** A plan can set forth policies that foster a distinctive sense of place.

- **It promotes economic development.** The plan contains valuable information that drives the location decisions of prospective firms.
- **It provides justification for decisions.** Plans provide a factual and objective basis to support zoning decisions and can be used by communities to defend their decisions if challenged in court.
- **Through public dialogue, citizens express a collective vision for the future.** Last, but certainly not least, the planning process provides citizens an opportunity to brainstorm, debate and discuss the future of their community. A plan developed through a robust public input process enjoys strong community support. Subsequent decisions that are consistent with the plan's policies are less likely to become embroiled in public controversy.