



# RIVERHEAD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Agriculture-Farmland Preservation Meeting - December 13, 2021



## Agenda/Objectives



Source: Riverhead News Review

1. Topic Overview & Vision Statement
2. Existing Conditions Assessment/Roles of Committees/Agricultural Protection Zone/TDR
3. Explore Issues and Opportunities
4. Committee Discussion
5. Community Input
6. Next Steps



## Topic Overview: Agriculture / Farmland Preservation

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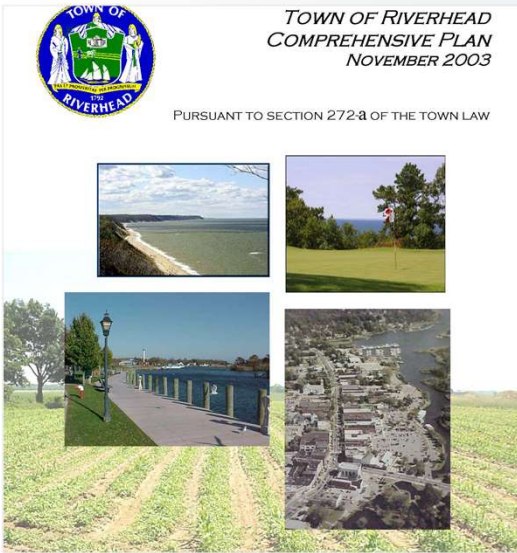
## Topic Overview: Agriculture/Farmland Preservation



- Agriculture
- Farmland Preservation
- Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)
- Agri-tourism/agri-business
- Emerging issues and trends

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# Vision Statement – Agriculture Element



*Riverhead’s agricultural industry will continue to play a leading role in the Town’s economy and shape the town’s character and way of life. The Town will work with farmers and landowners to support farm business and promote farmland preservation, and the Town will strive to do so in a manner that respects private property rights, protects landowner equity, and ensures flexibility and choice in the use of farm property.*

# 2003 Comprehensive Plan: Agriculture Goals

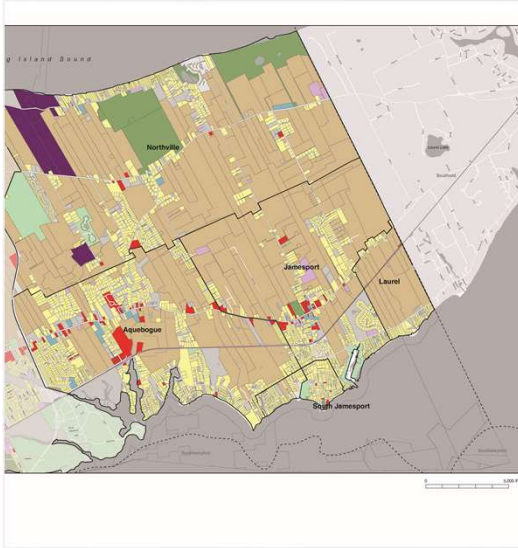
- | Goals   |
|---|
| 1. Protect the agricultural land base, while maintaining equity value for landowners  |
| 2. Foster the local agricultural economy  |
| 3. Maintain and preserve the rural character and heritage of Riverhead  |
| 4. Reduce the amount of development in those areas of Riverhead where agricultural activity is currently concentrated   |
| 5. Target farmland preservation efforts to Riverhead’s agricultural greenbelt, located between Sound Avenue and Route 25 and Middle Road, along with certain actively tilled farms north of Sound Avenue and south of Route 25 at Jamesport |
| 6. In Riverhead’s agricultural greenbelt, concentrate development into compact nodes, while preserving the surrounding open space for agricultural use  |
| 7. Implement a Transfer of Development Rights (“TDR”) program to reduce development pressure on Riverhead’s APZ and certain parcels zoned RA-80, north of Sound Avenue  |
| 8. Use public funding to purchase development rights in Riverhead’s agricultural greenbelt for the purpose of open space preservation   |
| 9. Help promote Riverhead's agricultural industry and products  |
| 10. Reduce the potential for excessive golf course development in Riverhead's agricultural greenbelt, and ensure that golf courses are environmentally friendly   |
| 11. Protect the family farm   |

## Existing Conditions Assessment

## Roles of Town Committees

- **Agricultural Advisory Committee:** to advise Town on legislative and regulatory issues pertaining to Agriculture
- **Farmland Preservation Committee:** to review and approve an inventory of agricultural lands; to aid in prioritization of agricultural lands to be preserved or acquired
- **Open Space Committee:** to identify, review, and recommend to the Town Board lands that should be acquired and preserved as open space or incorporated or dedicated as a park

# Agriculture



- Unique agricultural character
- Approximately 15,000 acres of farmland
- Approximately 8,900 acres of farmland in the Agricultural Protection Zone (APZ)
- Approximately 400 acres have been preserved through Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)
- Nearly 6,400 acres have been preserved through the County’s Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program

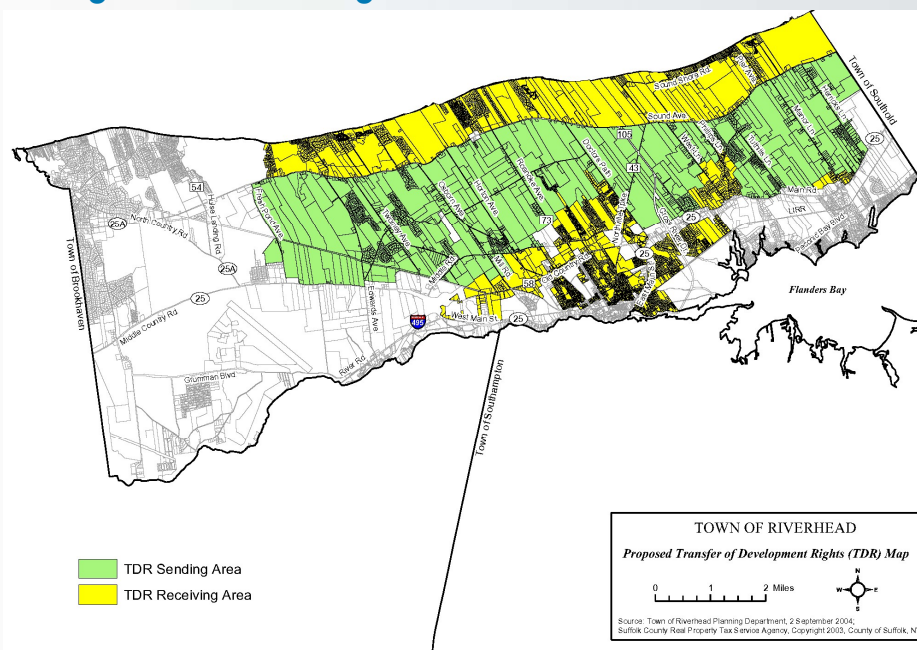
## Agricultural Lands Acreage by Zoning District

| Zoning District  | Total Acreage (15,137 acres) |
|--|------------------------------|
| Agriculture Protection District (APZ)                                      | 8,893.8                      |
| Business Center Zoning Use District (BC)                                   | 2.7                          |
| Hamlet Center Zoning Use District (HC)                                     | 3.2                          |
| Hamlet Residential Zoning Use District (HR)                                | 136.0                        |
| Industrial A Zoning Use District (Ind A)                                   | 365.5                        |
| Industrial C Zoning Use District (Ind C)                                   | 531.8                        |
| Multifamily Residential Professional Office Zone Zoning Use District (MRP) | 22.6                         |
| Natural Resources Protection Zoning Use District (NRP)                     | 36.4                         |
| Open Space Conservation Zoning Use District (OSC)                          | 0.5                          |
| Planned Industrial Park Zoning Use District (PIP)                          | 91.3                         |
| Peconic River Community Zoning Use District (PRC)                          | 0.3                          |
| Residence A-40 Zoning Use District (RA40)                                  | 432.1                        |
| Residence A-80 Zoning Use District (RA80)                                  | 1,903.6                      |
| Residence B-40 Zoning Use District (RB40)                                  | 144.8                        |
| Residence B-80 Zoning Use District (RB80)                                  | 2,325.2                      |
| Residence RC Zoning Use District (Retirement Community) (RC)               | 0.6                          |
| Riverfront Corridor Zoning Use District Arts District (RFC)                | 52.9                         |
| Rural Corridor Zoning Use District (RLC)                                   | 34.2                         |
| Other  | 160.0                        |

## Existing Town of Riverhead TDR Program – Article XLII §301-199-210

- Transfer of Development Rights or TDR, is a zoning approach used to protect land with conservation value (in this case, farmland) by redirecting development that would otherwise occur on this land to an area planned to accommodate growth and development.
- According to Town code (§301-3), TDR refers to "the process by which development rights or Pine Barrens credits are transferred from a lot or parcel located in any sending area to another lot or parcel located in one or more Receiving Districts."

## Map of Sending and Receiving Areas

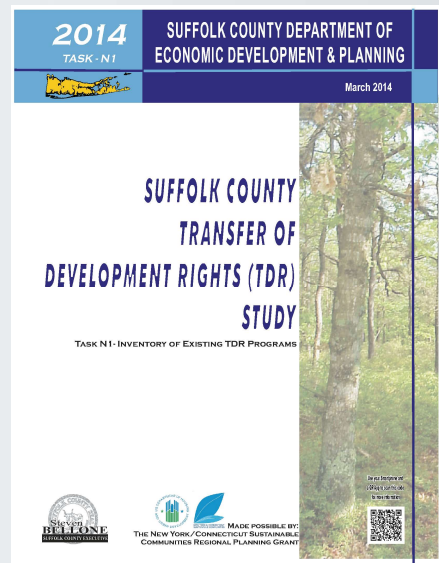


## TDR Success Rate

- The TDR program has been in effect since 2003
- Approximately 300 acres/credits have been preserved/redeemed
- Approximately 163 residential credits have been redeemed to date

## Suffolk County's Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Study

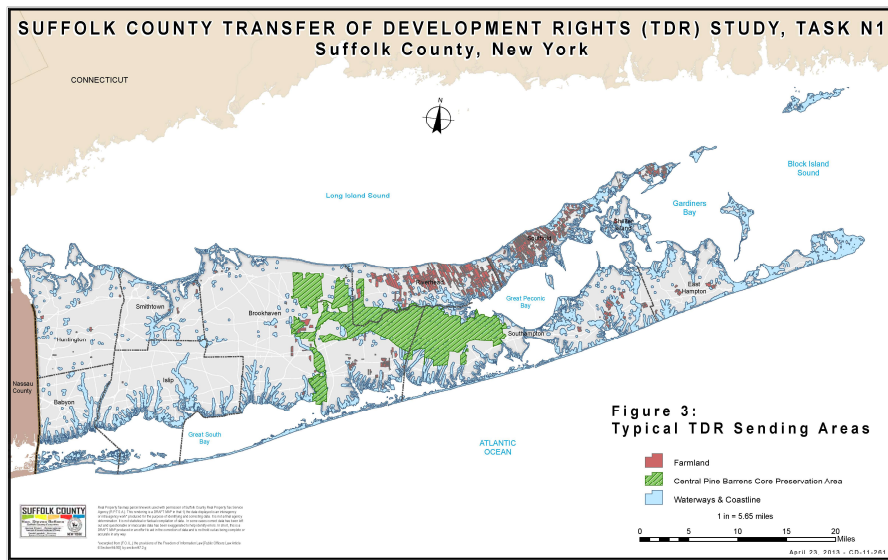
- Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)
- Farmland Preservation
- Agriculture



## Sending and Receiving Areas (Generic)

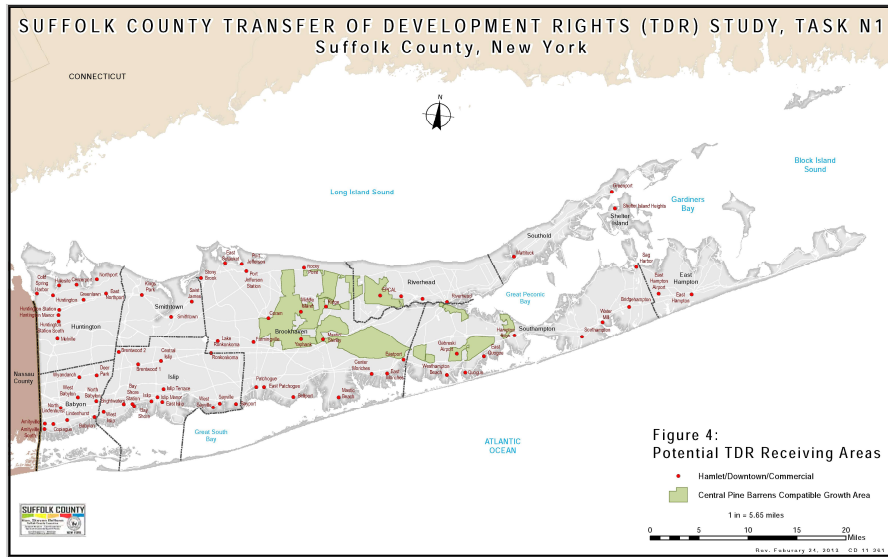
- Sending Areas
  - The typical TDR “sending” areas are environmentally sensitive land (such as steep slopes, wetlands, prime agricultural soil, and coastal erosion areas) or historic locations.
    - Within the Town of Riverhead, the Sending Areas are agricultural areas.
- Receiving Areas
  - The typical “receiving” sites in town ordinances are downtowns, commercial areas, and affordable housing and TOD projects.

## Typical TDR Sending Areas



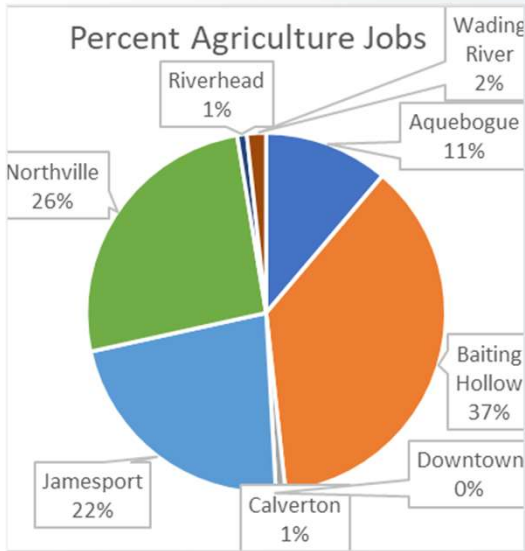


# Potential TDR Receiving Areas



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# Agricultural Economy



- Agriculture includes approximately 4 percent of the Town’s employment
- Ag is an important employment generator in Aquebogue, Baiting Hollow, Jamesport, and Northville.

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## Issues and Opportunities

## Farmland Preservation Tools

- Planned Development District (existing)
- Voluntary preservation (existing)
- Formalized cluster subdivisions (existing)
- Community Preservation Fund (existing)
- TDR / TDR Bank (existing/potential)
- Conservation Opportunities Subdivision Review (potential)



Source: Riverhead News-Review

## Community Preservation Fund

- The Peconic Bay Region Community Preservation Fund (CPF) is a public program managed by each of the five East End Towns for the protection of farmland, open space, and community character.
- The funds collected by the Town from 1998 to 2020 equaled over \$73 million
- The funds were used to purchase development rights and open space, to partner with Suffolk County open space and farmland programs, and matching funds to qualify for NYS Agricultural & Markets and state funding for open space and farmland.

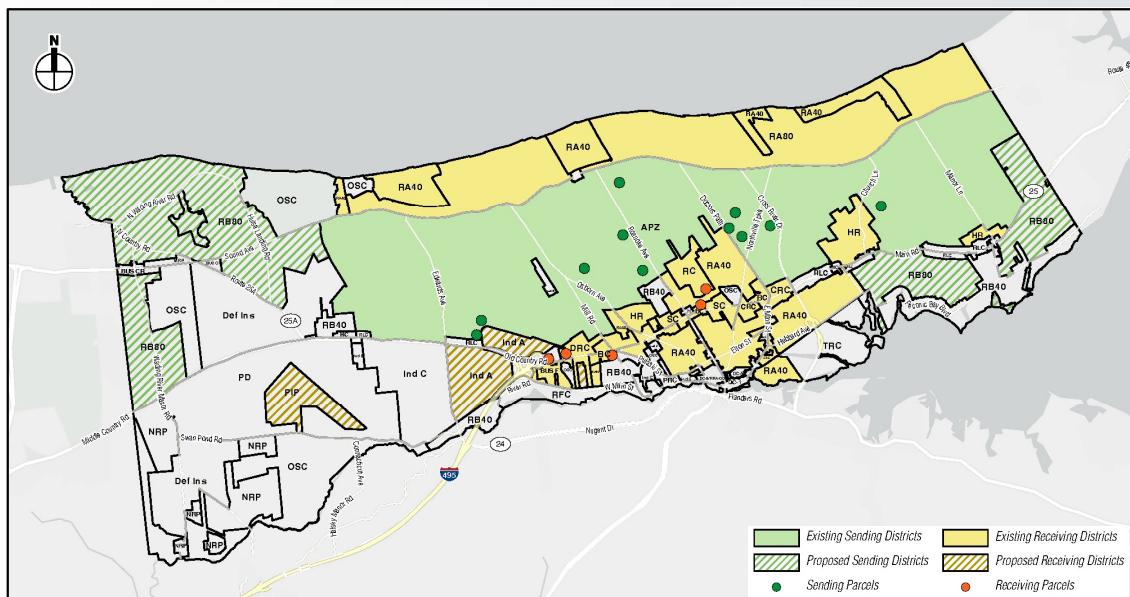
## Existing TDR Program – Issues and Constraints

- Existing ratios:
  - 1 TDR = 1 Dwelling Unit
  - 1 TDR = 1,500 sf commercial
  - 1 TDR = \$65,000/unit
- Adequacy of Receiving Districts
  - Is there a market for increased development?
  - Is there a market for different uses?

## Proposed Changes by the Agricultural Advisory Committee/TDR Subcommittee

- The Agricultural Advisory Committee advises the Town Board on legislative and regulatory issues related to agriculture.
- Remove the 500 residential preservation credits redemption cap
- Added new receiving districts (Community Benefit District [CBD], Planned Industrial Park [PIP], Industrial A)
- Recommended residential units by special permit in Business F, and as permitted uses in Business C and Shopping Center Districts, and additional densities with credits in the Commercial/Residential Campus (CRC), Retirement Community (RC)
- New Incentive Zoning

## Existing and Proposed\* TDR Sending/Receiving Districts



## Conservation Opportunities Subdivision Review Procedures

- Addresses Policy 3.4B in the 2003 Comp. Plan Agriculture Element (p. 3-8)
- e.g., Town of Southampton
- Streamlines subdivision review procedures if the subdivision meets certain conservation requirements and performance standards
  - No more than 10 lots are created
  - The subdivision will preserve at least 80% of the parcel, through one or more preservation options, including but not limited to donation, and sale or transfer of development rights
  - The total yield is reduced by a minimum of 50%
  - Design considerations

## Agriculture Business/Agri-tourism Opportunities

- Continue building upon established Agriculture Business/ Agri-tourism activities, including:
  - Roadside stands
  - Pick-your-own crops
  - Farm tours
  - School field trips
  - Riding lessons
  - Hay rides
  - Wine/Hard Cider tastings
- Agri-tourism provides an additional income opportunity for farmers, and it ties into the established East End tourism industry



Source: <https://harbesfamilyfarm.com/harbes-orchard/>

## Agriculture Business/Agri-tourism Issues

- Increased traffic during the apple and pumpkin picking season
- Agritainment – weddings; live amplified music
- Impact on adjoining land use
- Town of Riverhead Town Code, Chapter 301, Article LIIA, Farm Stand Review (Policy 3.9A in 2003 Comprehensive Plan)
- East End Food Institute Opened (Riverhead's Indoor Farmer's Market) opened November 27<sup>th</sup> on Main Road with plans for a food processing facility and incubator space (Policy 3.9B in 2003 Comprehensive Plan)

## Emerging Issues

- Legalization of recreational cannabis
- As an agricultural use, potential issues include lighting, security, and traffic issues
- Cannabis growers are investing in Riverhead farms

## Agrivoltaics

- **Agrivoltaics** can be defined as co-developing the same area of land for both solar power as well as for conventional agriculture to maximize land use.
- Solar panels on farmland may be an effective preservation tool for future farm use as it has little impact on the farmland, and allows farmland to be restored easily for future generations.
- Support from Long Island Farm Bureau
- Used to Support and preserve farmland; not to replace it
- Impacts on adjoining land use



## Committee Discussion

## Discussion Format

- Please discuss your vision and potential goals and recommendations for the future of agriculture in the Town
- Comments and suggestions can also be submitted in writing at [www.TownofRiverheadComprehensivePlanUpdate.com](http://www.TownofRiverheadComprehensivePlanUpdate.com)
- The committee discussion will be followed by opportunity for community input

## Thank You and Next Steps

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Fall/Winter 2021:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analyze Public Survey Results</li><li>• Meet with the Advisory Committee</li></ul></li><li>▪ <b>Winter/Spring 2022:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Draft Statement of Community Goals</li><li>• Draft Summary of Issues and Opportunities</li></ul></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Meetings with:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community on preliminary findings and recommendations</li><li>• Central Advisory Committee</li><li>• Subcommittees</li></ul></li><li>• Report to Town Board</li></ul> |
|---|--|