

# RIVERHEAD Comprehensive Plan Update



## Chapter 3: Demographics and Housing

### *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**

**February 15, 2024**

## 1. CHAPTER 3. DEMOGRAPHICS AND HOUSING

### Demographic Trends

Demographic trends help us understand how the population composition has changed over time in Riverhead in comparison with Suffolk County and neighboring communities. Findings from this analysis inform the recommendations of this plan by highlighting changing needs in the Town. For example, an aging population indicates an increasing demand for senior services and housing.

This analysis primarily used data from the U.S. Census Bureau, including the Decennial Census and American Community Survey. The Decennial Census has the most reliable and accurate data because it is a count of the population. However, the census only captures a handful of data points (e.g. age, race). For other population attributes that describe social and economic characteristics (e.g. median household income, educational attainment), the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates are used. Estimates rely on population samples and are thus susceptible to error. This data provides a general description of trends rather than precise counts. These estimates should be tempered with the community's observations of changing social and economic characteristics.

Some of the key findings of the demographic analysis are listed below:

- Riverhead's population grew at a faster rate than Suffolk County's did.
- Riverhead's population is aging. The Town's share of senior residents increased more than the County's, and Riverhead has a greater percentage of residents aged over 60 than the County.
- As of 2020, Riverhead's minority population grew to 33.5%. The Hispanic population saw the largest gain.
- The median household income in Riverhead was estimated to be 28% less than that of the County in 2021, and when adjusted for inflation, shows a decrease of \$6,400 from 2010.
- Riverhead has a smaller household size than the County, at 2.5 and 3, respectively. Riverhead has a higher percentage of non-family households than surrounding communities.<sup>1</sup>
- Riverhead has a lower percentage of the population who attended college than the County.
- Riverhead has a higher percentage of residents with limited English-speaking skills than the County. Spanish is the most common language spoken by this group.

### Population Growth

In 2020, Riverhead's population was 35,902 people. Riverhead's population grew by 30% between 2000-2020, a much faster rate than Suffolk County (8%) (see Figure 1).<sup>2</sup> However, the rate of growth for both geographies slowed after 2010. Estimates from 2021 suggest that the population has

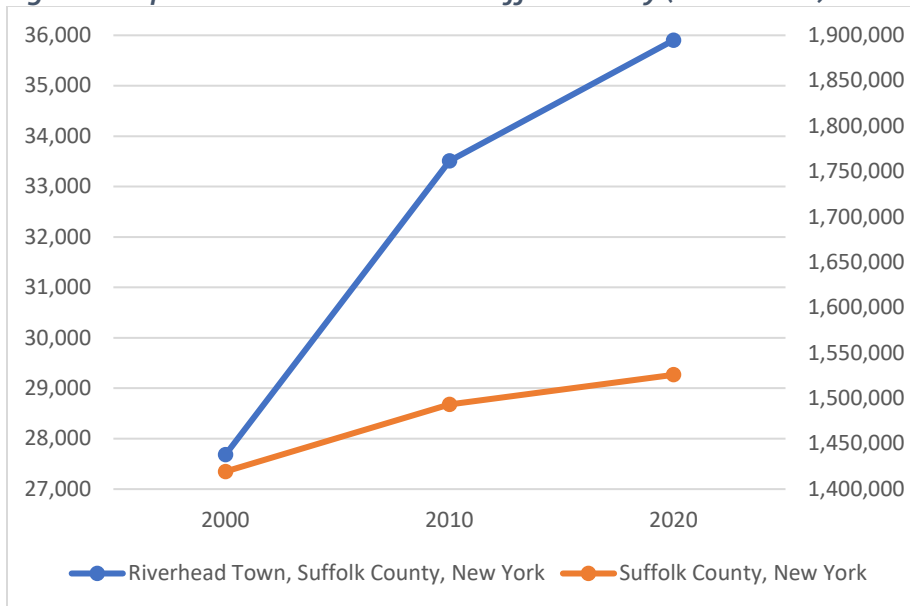
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<sup>1</sup> "Non-Family Household" is defined in the US Census as a household which "consists of a householder living alone (a one-person household) or where the householder shares the home exclusively with people to whom he/she is not related.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Decennial Census (2000, 2010, 2020)

stabilized, or potentially begun to decline slightly, in both the Town and County.<sup>3</sup> The data may only partially reflect trends from the COVID pandemic, where there was a population shift from more dense urban areas to more rural areas. During the pandemic, many part-time owners became permanent residents, however, continued monitoring and assessment is needed to better understand how much of the recent growth will be sustained.

Figure 1. Population in Riverhead and Suffolk County (2000 – 2020)



Sources: U.S. Decennial Census (2000-2020)

### Projected Population Growth

The New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC) projects population growth for the New York Metropolitan Area, including Suffolk County. The most recent NYMTC forecasts to 2055, adopted in October 2020, were created with the full cooperation of Suffolk County Department of Economic Development and Planning and reflect the significant changes in land use throughout the County. Further, the forecasts consider all known development in the pipeline as of 2020 for Suffolk County, including Riverhead.

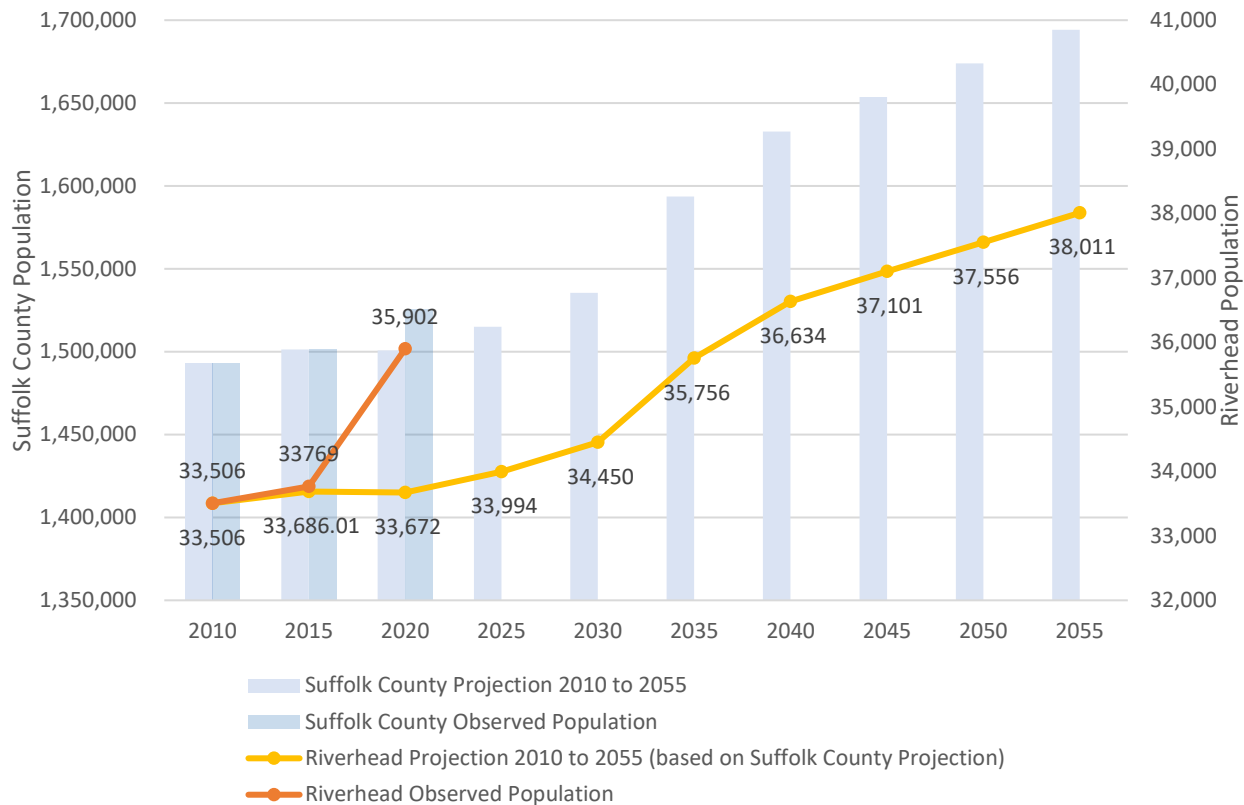
NYMTC projects that Suffolk County’s population will grow 13.8% from 2010 to 2055 (see Figure 2). If Riverhead’s population were to grow at the same rate from its 2010 population, Riverhead would expect to see a population of about 38,000 in 2055. In the 2020 Decennial Census, the actual population of Suffolk County was somewhat higher than projected (about 1.7% greater). Riverhead’s population in 2020 was 6.6% greater than the projected value. As previously noted, Riverhead’s population has recently grown faster than the County.

Riverhead could accommodate 41,064 people by 2040, considering a full residential build-out scenario based on Riverhead’s 2003 comprehensive plan. Any zoning changes that impact residential

<sup>3</sup> ACS 5-Year Estimate (2021)

density could allow Riverhead to absorb a larger proportion of the County's growth or limit the Town's growth.

**Figure 2. Projected Population Growth in Riverhead and Suffolk County (2010 – 2055)**



Sources: NYMTC 2055 SED Forecasts, 2020; U.S. Decennial Census, 2010-2020; ACS 5-Year Estimates 2015

Note: Suffolk County and Riverhead Observed Population series show actual values from the 2010 and 2020 decennial census and the 2015 ACS 5-year estimates. The Suffolk County projections from 2010 to 2055 shows data provided by NYMTC, while projections for Riverhead are based on the percent change projected for Suffolk County each year as applied to Riverhead's population.

### Age

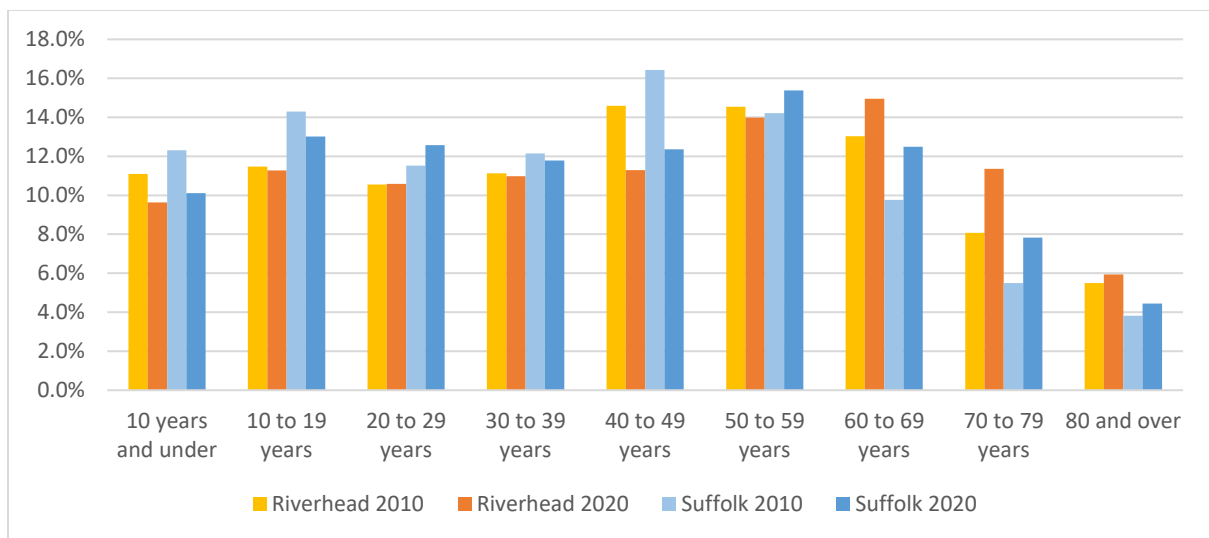
Riverhead's population is aging and has a larger share of population over 60 than the County (see Figure 3). The median age in Riverhead in 2020 was 46.9 years, up from 44 years in 2010. While the County's population is also aging, the Median age at the County level is younger at 42 years, up from 38.9 in 2010.

In 2020, 32% of the Town was over 60, up from 26% in 2010. This is due to aging in place or immigration of retirees. Suffolk County is also aging, although a smaller portion of the County's population is over 60 than the Town's (25% in 2020 and 19% in 2010). The data suggest that there will be an increasing need for senior housing as long-term residents age out of their homes.

The percentage of children as a share of Riverhead’s total population is declining. In 2020, people 19 and under made up 21% of the population, compared to 23% in 2010. Suffolk County shows the same pattern, although a larger proportion of the County’s population is under 19 years old than the Town’s.

As a percent increase, the population over 60 grew by 30% in Riverhead and 33% in the County. Between 2010 and 2020, Riverhead saw the largest growth in the population aged between 70 and 79 years old (plus 1,370 people) and the greatest decrease in the population aged 40-49 years (minus 833 people). This pattern is consistent with the County.

Figure 3. Age of the Population in Riverhead and Suffolk County (2020)

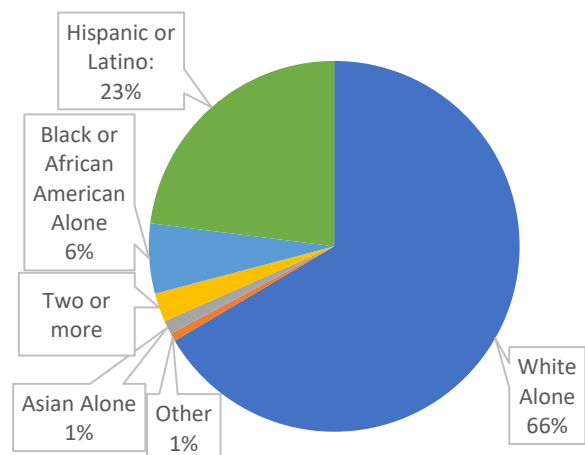


Sources: U.S. Decennial Census (2000-2020)

### Diversity

Riverhead’s population is about a third minority<sup>4</sup> and two-thirds White Alone (see Figure 4). Riverhead’s population has become more diverse, with the minority population increasing by 49% (approximately 3,900 people) from 2010-2020. Riverhead’s Hispanic population made up the majority of the growth, increasing by 78% (from approximately 4,600 to 8,300 people) during this period (see Figure 5).

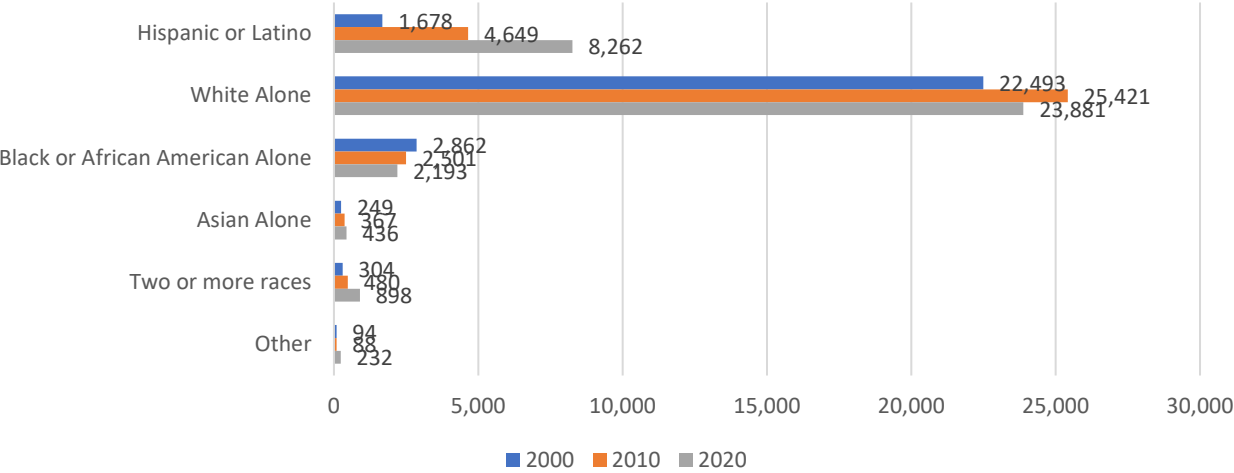
Figure 4. 2020 Population by Race and Ethnicity



<sup>4</sup> "Minority population" refers to Hispanic or Latino people of all races, and all races of Not Hispanic or Latino people that are not White Alone, according to decennial census categories.

At the County level, there was also an increase in the minority population, but at a lower rate. The most growth was in the Hispanic community, which grew by 35% at the County level (by 86,700 people). The County saw greater increases by percent change in the Asian Alone and Black or African American Alone populations than the Town. The Asian Alone population grew 29% (14,700 people) in Suffolk County, while the increase was only 1% in Riverhead (69 people). The Black or African American Alone population in Suffolk County grew by 7% (5,000 people). By contrast, in Riverhead, the Black or African American Alone population decreased by 12% (from approximately 2,500 to 2,200 people).

**Figure 5. Change in Race and Ethnicity of the Riverhead Population (2000-2020)**



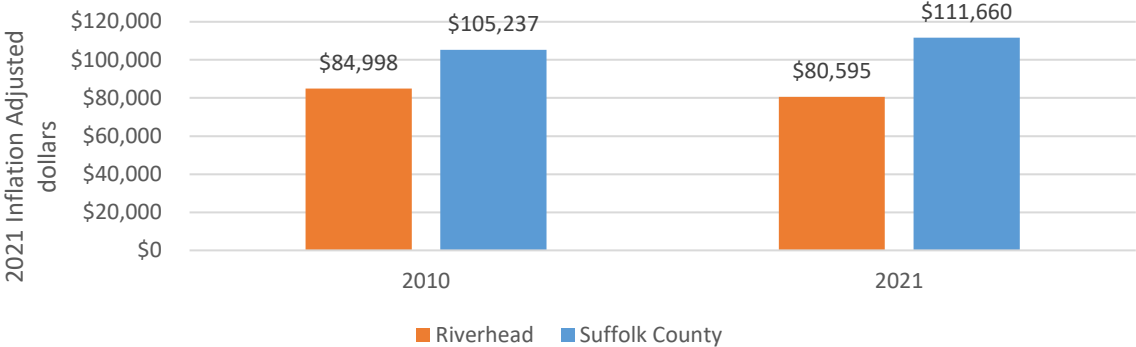
*Note: In the graphics, Hispanic or Latino includes people of all races who identify as Hispanic or Latino. All other categories shown are Not Hispanic or Latino. "Other" includes Decennial Census categories of American Indian and Alaska Native Alone, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone, and Some other race Alone. These categories were combined due to the small numbers and ease of graphic display.*

Source: U.S. Decennial Census, 2000-2020

**Income**

The 2021 median household income in Riverhead was \$80,595, about \$31,000 below or 72% of the County’s \$111,660. Riverhead’s median household income has historically been lower than the County’s, but the gap has grown. This disparity underscores the pressing need for initiatives aimed at bolstering economic opportunities and increasing household incomes within the town. Moreover, while Suffolk County’s median household income experienced a modest increase of about \$6,400 between 2010 and 2021, the concerning trend emerges as Riverhead’s median household income decreased by about \$4,400 in 2021 when adjusted for inflation. This decline highlights the urgency for targeted interventions and support mechanisms to reverse this negative trajectory and foster economic stability and prosperity for Riverhead residents.

**Figure 6. Median Household Income (2010-2021)**



Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2010, 2021

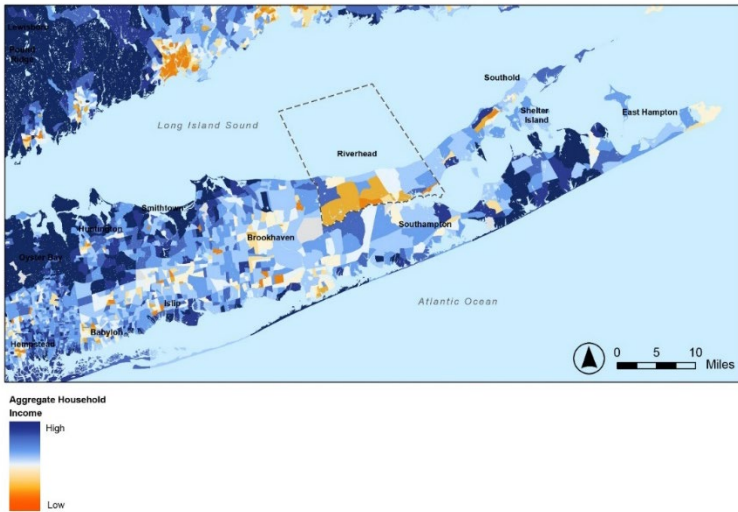
*Note: BFJ to revise Figure 6 to include median income from surrounding towns*

Looking at the average aggregate household income<sup>5</sup> by census tract on Long Island reveals income disparities within and between the Town and neighboring jurisdictions (see Figure 7). Areas of Riverhead have some of the lowest values in the region.

<sup>5</sup> "Average Aggregate Household Income" is defined as the sum of the incomes of all households in a geographic area divided by the number of occupied housing units.

Definition Sources: American Community Survey and Puerto Rico Community Survey 2019 Subject Definitions; Urban Footprint, Income – Census Planning Database 2021, Column Description

Figure 7. Average Aggregate Household Income (2015-2019)

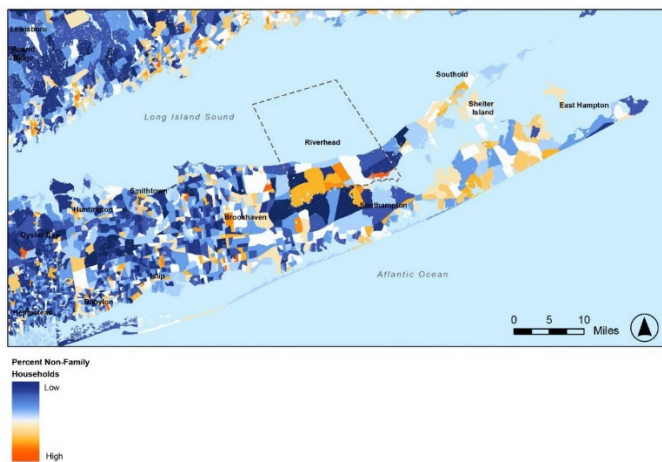


Source: Urban Footprint, Income - Census Planning Database (2021); ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2019

### Households

The average household size in Riverhead is 2.5, which is smaller than Suffolk County's 3.0. The average household size of both has remained stable and has not changed between 2000 and 2021. Riverhead has a higher percentage of non-family households than surrounding communities. In 2021, non-family households comprised about 34.5% of all households in Riverhead, compared to about 27.4% of the County's total households. When viewing this data on a map of Long Island, it becomes clear that Riverhead is unique in this way (see Figure 8). It's important to note that the category of non-family households is broad and encompasses various living arrangements, including individuals living alone, roommates, unmarried couples, and more. Therefore, there may be multiple contributing factors to why Riverhead has a higher percentage of non-family households compared to the surrounding areas.

Figure 8. Percent Non-Family Households (2015-2019)



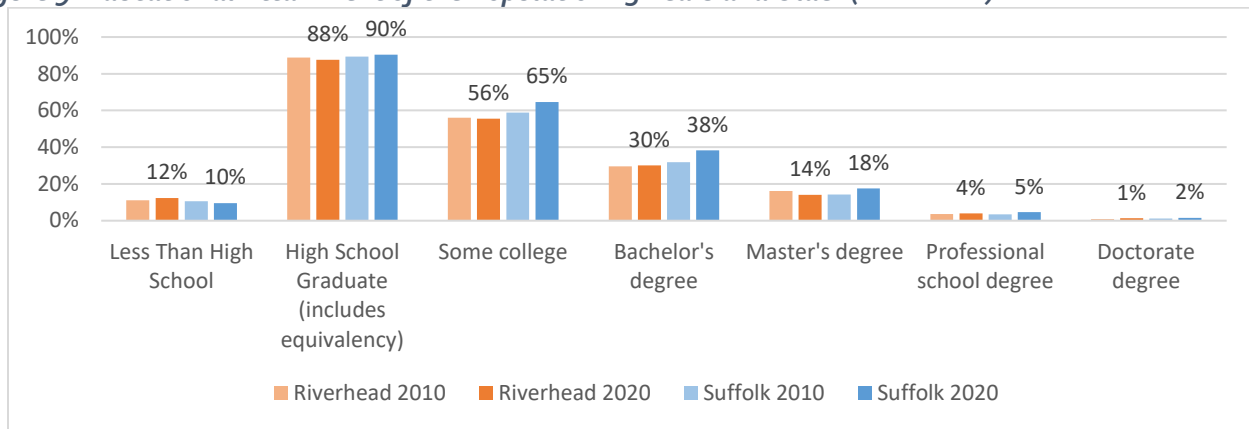
Source: Urban Footprint, Household Characteristics - Census Planning Database (2021); ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2019



### Educational Attainment

In Riverhead, 12.4% of the population over 25 years old have less than a high school education, a larger percentage than in Suffolk County (9.6%) (see Figure 9). Suffolk County has a higher portion than Riverhead of people having a high school diploma or equivalent, some college, a Bachelor’s degree, Master’s degree, professional degree, or doctorate. Riverhead's share of the population with less than a high school diploma or equivalency has increased from 11.2% to 12.4% between 2010 and 2020. At the same time, Riverhead saw a slight decline in the percentage attaining higher levels of education. The County experienced the opposite trend, a decrease in the portion of the population without a high school diploma or equivalent and increases in the percentage with all other levels of education.

Figure 9. Educational Attainment of the Population 25 Years and Older (2010-2020)



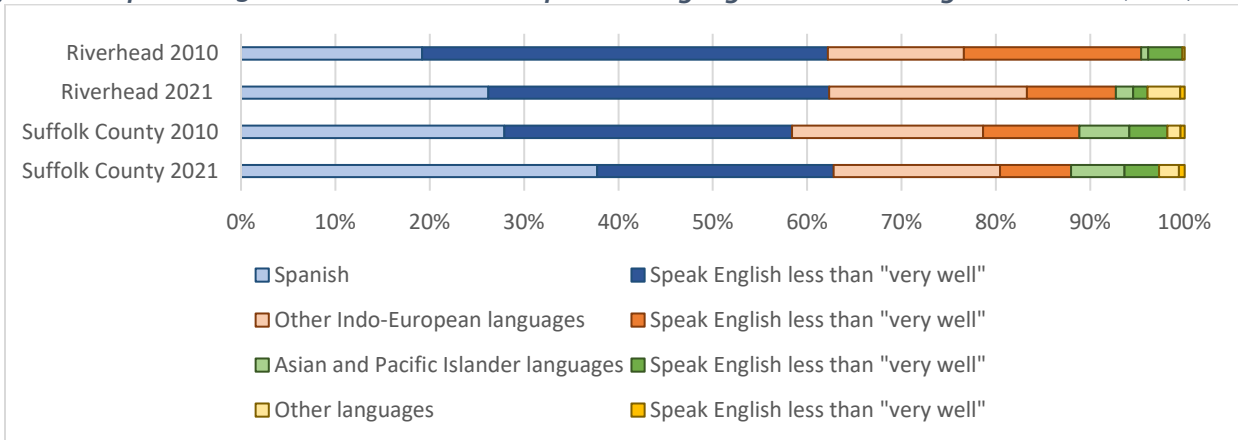
Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2010, 2021

### Language Spoken at Home

Of Riverhead’s population five years and older, about 17% and 5,800 people speak a language other than English at home (see Figure 10). The majority speak Spanish at home (62%, 3,600 people). About half of those who speak another language at home speak English less than “very well” (47%, 2,700 people). This portion is higher in the Spanish-speaking population (57%, 2,100 people.) Riverhead’s other language and Spanish-speaking groups increased from 2010 to 2021, by 19% and 20%, respectively. At the same time, the population who speak English less than “very well” has decreased by 13%, indicating that the other language and Spanish-speaking populations have grown and their ability to speak English has improved.

The County has a higher percentage of the population five years and older who speak a language other than English at home (22%) than Riverhead (17%). At the County level, about a third of that group speaks English less than “very well” (37%). The proportion of Spanish speakers is about the same in the County and Riverhead. However, a smaller portion of the Spanish speakers speak English less than “very well” (37%) than in Riverhead (57%), indicating that a larger share of the Spanish-speaking population in Riverhead has difficulty speaking English.

Figure 10. Population 5-Years and Older Who Speak a Language Other Than English At Home (2021)

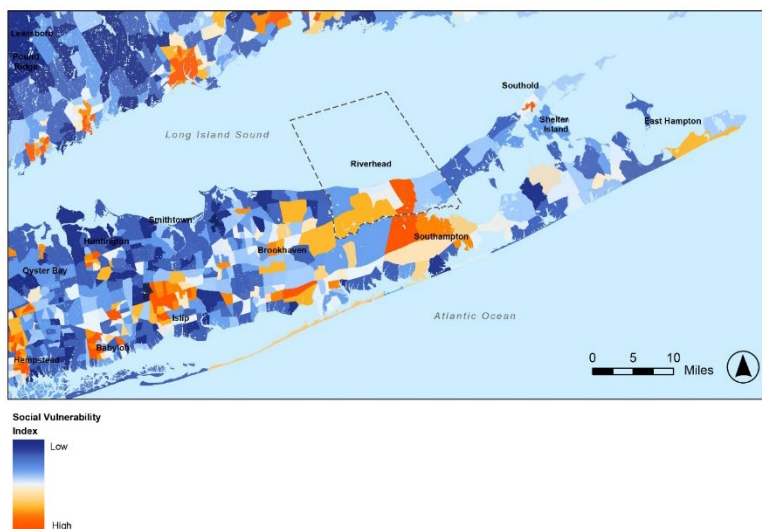


Source: ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2021

### Social Vulnerability

The U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) created the social vulnerability index to help jurisdictions plan for and respond to public health emergencies and natural disasters. The index factors in 16 different census characteristics to determine the level of vulnerability across the country. Vulnerable areas may have characteristics, such as high percentage of the population aged 65 and older, high poverty rates, overcrowded housing, and or lack of access to transportation. Figure 11 shows the social vulnerability index for Riverhead and Long Island census tracts. The data indicates that some areas of Riverhead have more vulnerable populations.

Figure 11. Social Vulnerability Index (2020)



Source: Urban Footprint, CDC, 2020

## Housing Trends

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Riverhead's housing sector demonstrates several key areas of success. The Town boasts a significant amount of existing affordable housing, particularly in unique hamlets and downtown areas with convenient access to transit. Its location as a gateway to the East End, coupled with its proximity to the Peconic River and popular attractions like the Tanger Mall Outlets, positions Riverhead as an attractive residential destination. Additionally, the burgeoning food and beverage scene, along with opportunities in agritourism, further enhance its appeal. However, there are notable areas in need of improvement. Overcrowded housing, a lack of diverse housing stock, and challenges with enforcement regarding short-term rentals present hurdles. Moreover, the saturation of sober homes highlights the need for balanced housing solutions that cater to various demographics and needs within the community.

Riverhead's future housing development holds promising opportunities for growth and enhancement. Federal Opportunity Zones, coupled with the demand for market-rate housing and alternative housing types such as assisted living, co-ops, condos, and townhouses, present avenues for expansion. Initiatives like the Long Island Workforce Housing Act and Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Plan offer strategies to address housing needs while promoting sustainable growth. Repurposing vacant big-box stores or other underutilized commercial areas for new purposes, such as assisted living facilities or medical offices, can also help meet evolving community needs. However, threats such as the lack of senior housing options, impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, and vulnerabilities to climate change and severe weather events necessitate careful planning and resilience measures in Riverhead's housing development strategy. Balancing these opportunities and threats will be critical for fostering a thriving and resilient housing landscape in Riverhead's future.

The housing section builds upon work completed by AKRF for the Town in 2022 as part of the Comprehensive Plan effort. The Economic and Market Trends Analysis considers both micro-economic and macro-economic real estate trends and opportunities. The report also provides an Affordable Housing Analysis, which was included as an appendix to the Economic and Market Trends Analysis report. Data in this chapter were updated to reflect current trends, however, many of the issues and opportunities identified in 2022 remain valid.

## Housing Types

Single family detached homes make up the largest share of housing in Riverhead Town (69% of total housing units in 2021). According to the American Community Survey, Between 2000 and 2021, Riverhead saw a 27% increase in single-family detached homes (added 2,435 homes for a total of 11,383). The County's growth in single-family detached homes was slower at 8% and the share of single family detached homes in the County decreased slightly (from 82% to 80%).

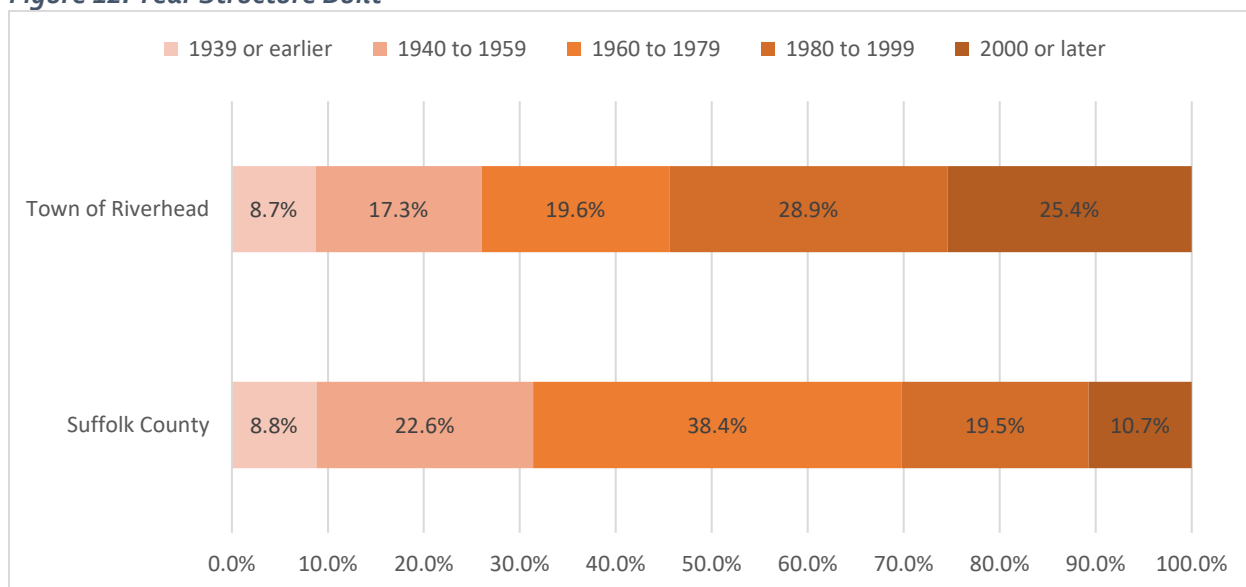
In Riverhead, the share of single-family attached, 2-family, and 3-4 family homes increased substantially. Single-family attached homes nearly quintupled (from 187 units to 984 units) while the number of 2-4 family homes almost doubled (from 487 units to 838 units). Growth in these housing types was much faster in the Town than in the County as a whole.

Mobile and manufactured homes make up the second largest share of housing in Riverhead after single-family detached homes (2,343 units, or 14.2% of total housing stock in 2021). The number of these homes in Riverhead grew by 30% (about 538 units) over 20 years, roughly 40% of the County's increase in that category. The Census differentiates between mobile and manufactured homes strictly by date of construction with the former produced before June 15, 1976, and the latter, after that date. Within the industry, mobile homes have non-permanent foundations with land leased from park owners while manufactured homes have permanent foundations and the land is also held by homeowner. As of January 2024, of the 2,343 total units, 1,513 were age-restricted manufactured homes, while the remainder were mobile homes, both all ages and senior. A more detailed breakdown of mobile homes in the Town can be found in the Market Trends Analysis completed by AKRF.

### Recent Housing Development

In the past two-plus decades since the Town's prior Comprehensive Plan in 2003, the housing market has exhibited significant growth and change. Over one quarter of Riverhead's current housing stock was built after 2000, compared to just over 10% for Suffolk County during the same period.

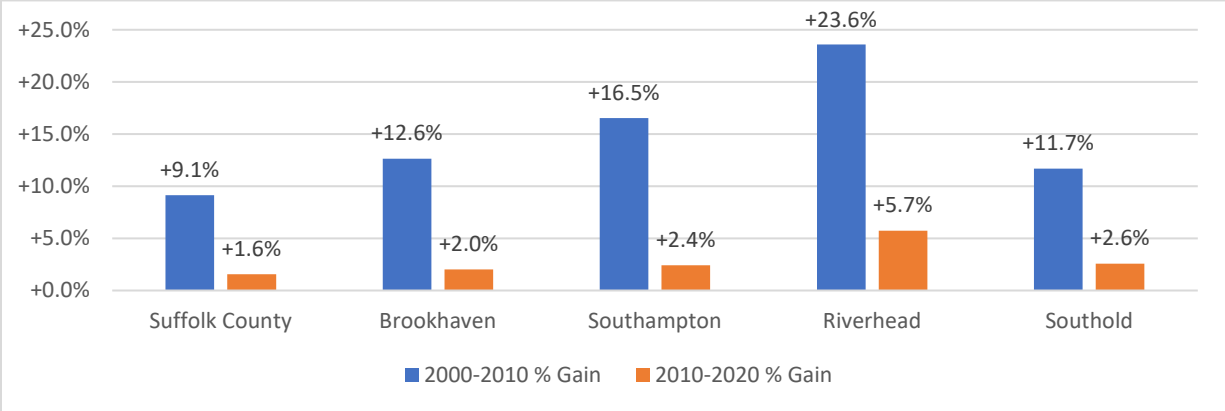
Figure 12. Year Structure Built



Source: US Census Bureau, ACS, 2017-2021 5-Year Estimate

Between 2000 and 2020, Riverhead added 2,945 housing units. As shown in the figure below, this growth as a percentage was much higher in Riverhead compared to other East End towns as well as Suffolk County as a whole.

Figure 13: Growth in Housing Units (2000, 2010, 2020)



Source: US Census 2000, 2010, 2020

**Housing in Downtown Area**

There are several ongoing initiatives and programs designed to revitalize the downtown with new investment in housing and the public realm. While some projects have recently completed, others are anticipated to be finished in the near future. The Pattern Book for the downtown area estimates net new development could effectively double built square footage in Downtown Riverhead and accommodate approximately 1,200 rental apartments (assuming a 50/50 mix of 1- and 2-bedrooms). As shown in the table below, over 900 new multifamily units have recently been built or have been proposed for Riverhead’s downtown.

**Recent Downtown Multifamily Projects (as of 2/14/24)**

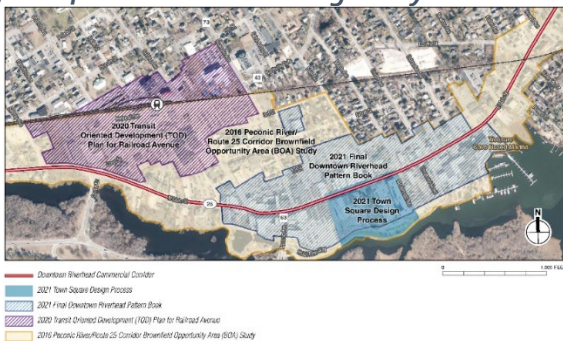
Project	Status	# of Apartments
<b>DC-1 District</b>		
Summerwind	Constructed	52
Woolworth	Constructed	19
Peconic Crossing	Constructed	45
Riverview Lofts	Constructed	116
203/213 E. Main St.	Approved, but not yet constructed	165
Suffolk Theater Addition	Preliminary approval by Town Board	28
Zenith Building	Site plan application approved by Town Board	9
331 E. Main Street	Constructed	36
Landmarks of Riverhead	Site plan application under review by Town Board	45
Barth’s Drug Store	Site plan application under review by Town Board	1
DC-1 – Subtotal		516
<b>DC-3 District/RRA-OD</b>		
205 Osborn Ave	Under Construction	37
The Vue	Site plan application under review by Town Board	133
TOD Apartment Building	Site plan application under review by Town Board	243
DC-3/RRA-OD– Subtotal		413
<b>Total</b>		<b>929</b>

Source: Town of Riverhead

While there has been a significant amount of growth, there is a 500-unit cap on residential units allowed in the core area zoned DC-1. This cap has effectively been reached, so new development in the core area is unlikely to occur unless this restriction is addressed.

Recent planning initiatives including the Railroad Avenue URA TOD development (2021), the Pattern Book (2021), the Downtown Riverfront Activation Plan, and the DRI Strategic Investment Plan (2022) will continue to feed investment and development in Downtown Riverhead. A portion of downtown is in a federal Opportunity Zone (Census Tract 1698), along with portions of Calverton and Manorville including the EPCAL property (See Chapter 3 for map). 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.”

Figure 14. Downtown Planning Study Areas



Note: BFJ will update the Downtown Planning Study Areas map above that was produced by AKRF. The area labeled “2020 Transit Oriented Development Plan (TOD) Plan for Railroad Avenue” should be labeled “Strategic TOD.” The area labeled “2021 Town Square Design Process” should be labeled “2022 Downtown Activation Plan.”

### Tenure

As seen in Table 3 below, Riverhead has a higher percentage of renter occupied homes (24.2%) compared to surrounding towns or the County as a whole (21.6%). Affordability is a significant factor influencing homeownership. Higher housing prices or a lower median income in Riverhead compared to surrounding areas could make it more challenging for residents to afford homes, resulting in lower homeownership rates. Employment opportunities and income levels in the town may also impact the ability of residents to qualify for mortgages and sustain homeownership.

Table 3. Tenure in Riverhead, neighboring Towns, and Suffolk County

Location	Total Housing Units	Owner occupied		Renter occupied	
		Number	%	Number	%
Riverhead	13,879	10,523	75.8%	3,356	24.2%
Southampton	25,806	19,841	76.9%	5,965	23.1%
Southold	10010	7,897	78.9%	2,113	21.1%
Brookhaven	167187	12,9935	77.7%	37,252	22.3%
Suffolk County	516,872	405,016	78.4%	111,856	21.6%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census

For renters, the distribution of home sizes (i.e. 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom, 3-bedroom, and 4+ bedroom) is comparable to the county as a whole. For homeowners, the Town has a higher proportion of 2-bedroom homes and a lower percentage of 4+ bedroom homes compared to the

County. This is consistent with the demographic data which shows that the average household size in Riverhead is smaller than that of the county. If Riverhead’s population consists of more single individuals, couples, or smaller families, there could be a higher demand for 2-bedroom homes. Riverhead also has a downtown area with smaller lots and apartments, which is denser than the County as a whole.

**Table 4. Distribution of Homeowner and Renter Households by Number of Bedrooms, 2021**

		Town of Riverhead	Suffolk County
Homeowner: 1BD	1BD	4.7%	3.3%
Homeowner: 2BD	2BD	25.7%	13.4%
Homeowner: 3BD	3BD	44.1%	41.3%
Homeowner: 4+BD	4+BD	25.4%	41.9%
Renter: 1BD	1BD	32.7%	37.7%
Renter: 2BD	2BD	30.4%	30.6%
Renter: 3BD	3BD	23.5%	21.2%
Renter: 4+BD	4+BD	13.4%	10.5%

Source: US Census Bureau, ACS, 2017-2021 5-Year Estimate

### Vacancy

In 2021, the vacancy rate was about 16% (2,665 vacant units out of 16,540 total units). This does not mean that all of these units are available for lease or sale; only 10.5% of units in Riverhead are on the market as shown in the following table. The greatest share of vacant units in Riverhead (60.8%) are being held for seasonal or occasional use—a similar percentage to the County as a whole, but a smaller share than Southampton and Southold.

**Table 5. Distribution of Vacant Units, 2021**

	Riverhead	Brookhaven	Southampton	Southold	Suffolk County
Total Vacant Units	2,665	13,024	20,356	5,865	72,781
For rent	4.3%	9.3%	0.8%	2.2%	4.9%
Rented, not occupied	1.2%	3.1%	0.1%	0.5%	1.5%
For sale only	6.2%	9.0%	1.8%	3.1%	5.9%
Sold, not occupied	12.6%	9.4%	1.0%	3.0%	4.3%
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	60.8%	31.7%	93.3%	85.6%	63.5%
For migrant workers	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%
Other vacant	14.9%	36.9%	3.0%	5.5%	19.8%

Source: US Census ACS 2017-2021

### Sales Market

In 2021, Riverhead’s Median Housing Value for owner occupied units was \$389,600 which is less than the County’s value of \$436,300. Riverhead has substantially more housing valued below \$200,000 than the County (16.5% and 6.1% respectively). The Town has a smaller share of housing that is valued at \$1 million or greater than the County as well at 3.7% and 5.9%, respectively.

**Table 6. Home Value**

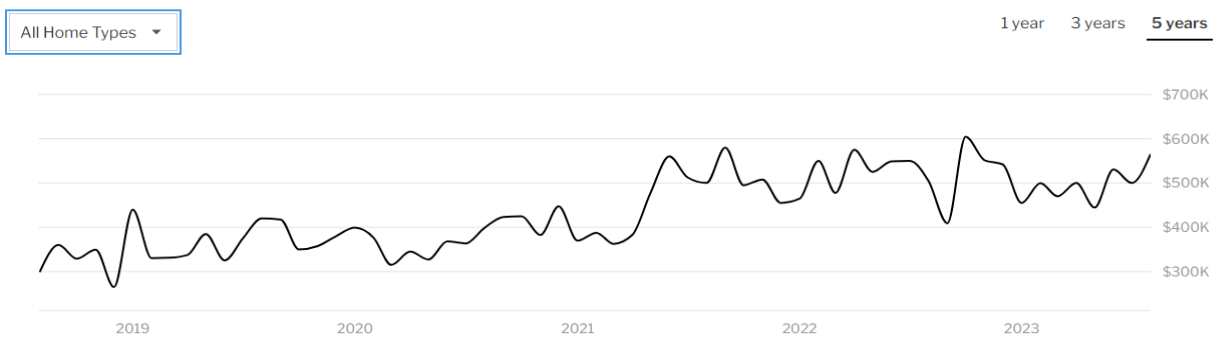
	Town of Riverhead	Suffolk County	Southampton	Southold	Brookhaven
<\$200k	1,825	25,150	1,002	291	11,237
\$200k-\$399k	4,021	147,760	2,286	769	66,738
\$400k-\$749k	4,219	187,812	7,036	4,873	47,942
\$750k-\$999k	583	28,604	3,201	1,532	3,238
\$1.0m-\$1.4m	251	12,119	2,365	544	1,042
\$1.5m-\$1.9m	93	4,446	947	292	444
\$2.0m+	68	7,872	2,852	363	698
Median Value	\$389,600	\$436,300	\$725,900	\$632,800	\$371,600

Source: US Census ACS 2017-2021

**Home Prices**

However, Census data for housing value provides a consistent baseline of the values of all units, current realtor reports and real estate listings provide context in what has been a volatile market during the COVID pandemic. As shown in the following chart from Redfin real estate data, median sale prices for homes in Riverhead had grown from roughly \$300K in early 2019 to \$565K by year end 2023. These increasing costs have made it increasingly difficult for first time home buyers to enter the market.

**Table. Home Prices**



Source: Based on Redfin calculations of home data from MLS and/or public records.

During the COVID pandemic, the real estate market on the East End, including Riverhead, experienced a significant surge, which was largely due to a migration from urban centers like Manhattan and Brooklyn, as people sought more spacious living quarters. The number of sales and median home prices surged, with the median price on the North Fork jumping by 23.8% in 2020 to a record of \$805,000. This trend has continued through 2022, with sales on the North Fork peaking in number at 527. While the Hamptons experienced dramatic increases in home sales and prices, with the total home sales volume skyrocketing by 34% from 2019 to 2020, the North Fork, including Riverhead, did not witness the same level of price increase. Through 2023, Riverhead’s housing market remains more affordable than some of its more affluent neighboring areas.



### Rental Market

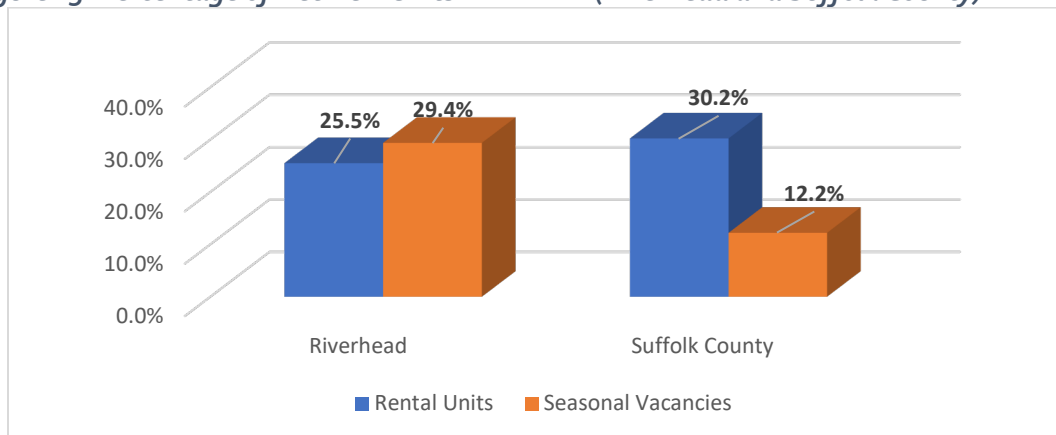
The rental market in Riverhead has experienced notable changes over the past two decades. From 2000 to 2020, there was a significant increase in the number of renter-occupied units, with a growth of approximately 20%. Despite this growth in rental occupancy, Riverhead stands out for its affordability compared to its surrounding areas. The median gross rent in the town was \$1,576 in 2021, which is noticeably lower than the median rent in Suffolk County, where the average is \$1,895. This makes Riverhead an attractive option for those seeking more affordable rental options in the region.

Further emphasizing its relative affordability, Riverhead has the lowest median gross rent when compared to other towns in the East End which include some of the most expensive zip codes in the country. Affordability challenges still exist for many Riverhead residents. More than half (56%) of the renters in Riverhead spend over 30% of their income on housing costs, a threshold commonly used to define housing affordability, while 20% spend more than half of their income on rent. These statistics indicate that despite lower median rents, the burden of housing costs remains a significant issue for a substantial portion of Riverhead's renting population.

### Short Term Rentals

Regionally, short-term rentals have contributed to significant loss of year-round residential properties. As mentioned earlier, 60.8% of Riverhead's vacant units are held for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. This is similar to the County as a whole, for which 63.5% of vacant units are held. However, in the towns of Southampton and Southold, a full 93.3% and 85.6%, respectively of vacant units are for seasonal use. The implications of this is that the majority of potential new permanent residents on the East End will be competing for the limited amount of available housing--often in Riverhead and Brookhaven. The limitations to supply drive up rents throughout the area.

Figure 15. Percentage of Net New Units 2000-2021 (Riverhead and Suffolk County)



Source: US Census Bureau, ACS, 2017-2021 5-Year Estimate

New construction is not alleviating the pressure either. Between 2000 and 2021, the number of housing units in Suffolk County increased by 56,000 units; of these 30.2% were new renters while

12.2% were new units for seasonal use. In the same period in Riverhead, 1,396 net new units were constructed, of which 25.5% were new renters and 29.4% were for seasonal use.

Short-term rentals (29 days or less) are not permitted by code, however this is challenging to enforce. The 2016–2017 rental ordinance was amended to ban rentals for 29 days or less. For rentals 30 days or more a rental permit from the Town is required. Lesser stay rentals are not permitted but are still occurring in the Town. The Town has discussed possibly amending the code to allow them in certain areas, possibly with a separate permitting process—this way the Town will have a better idea of where they are located.

### Affordable Housing

Riverhead has always been the workforce housing alternative for the East End, and this trend continues today. The number of affordable housing units in Riverhead is substantially higher than other East End Towns. In Riverhead there were 884 designated income-restricted units. In comparison, there are approximately 504 in total for the four other East End Towns combined. Riverhead’s income-restricted units are a subset of the approximately 2,334 designated affordable rental units in the Town.<sup>6</sup> The Market Trends Analysis developed by AKRF found that the total existing and proposed affordable housing meets the forecasted 10 percent demand in both 2030 and 2040.

#### Designated Income-Restricted Units in East End Towns

Town	Riverhead	Southampton	East Hampton	Southold	Shelter Island
Units	884	142	350	12	0

Source: Riverhead Comprehensive Plan Update Economic and Housing Trends Analysis – Appendix A: Affordable Housing Analysis Memorandum. Conducted by AKRF, June 2022

“Affordable” is defined as meeting the adjusted monthly rent of a person making 130% or less of the area median income (AMI) and contributing less than 30% of their income to housing costs.<sup>7</sup> HUD provides thresholds for AMI and fair market rents (FMR) for the Nassau-Suffolk primary statistical area.

The Market Trends Analysis developed by AKRF for this Comprehensive Plan (see Appendix A), found that the Town has an adequate supply of affordable housing, including income-restricted units and naturally occurring affordable housing. In addition, the report found that all of the Town’s 3,133 rental units are considered “naturally affordable” --or market-rate housing that is affordable to workforce populations.

Despite the higher number of designated and naturally affordable homes in Riverhead, there is still a sector of Riverhead residents who struggle to make their rent. HUD’s level of affordability does not properly capture Riverhead’s composition or needs, existing rents are relatively high for the Town’s income level. The Town’s median household income is about 72% of Suffolk County’s median household income. The maximum monthly rent considered affordable would be \$1,829, however,

<sup>6</sup> Market Trends Analysis, AKRF, 2022

<sup>7</sup> 130% AMI is the affordability threshold set by the Long Island Workforce Housing Act.

the report found that the majority of market-rate listings exceeded that. Roughly half of rental units in Riverhead are occupied by families that pay more than half of their income on rent. These findings suggest that Riverhead would benefit from more affordable housing options. Indeed, the Housing Demand Forecast estimates a need for 800-900 new designated affordable units by 2040.

### **Long Island Workforce Housing Act**

The Long Island Workforce Housing Act requires housing developers who propose developments with 5 or more units at the maximum allowable residential density to set aside at least 10% units in exchange for a density bonus. Under the Act, “Affordable workforce housing” is defined as housing for individuals and families at or below 130% of the area median income (AMI) for the Nassau-Suffolk primary statistical area, which for a family of four, in 2022, was \$146,400, and the average from 2018-2022 was \$128,720. The Town of Riverhead adopted a local law incorporating the provisions of the Long Island Workforce Housing Act into the Town code in August of 2022. As adopted in Riverhead, bonuses can be a “density increase of 10% over the otherwise maximum allowable residential density pursuant to a yield map approved by the Riverhead Planning Board in connection with a major residential subdivision proposing five or more residential lots, or 10% over the allowable floor area ratio if part of a mixed-use development site plan application.”

Developments in the RA40 Zoning Use District have a different set of regulations. The Planning Board and/or Town Board when reviewing the application will determine whether the developer should provide the affordable housing units in the approved development, in another development in the Town, or if they should pay a fee in lieu of constructing the affordable units. These fees could go into the Town’s Affordable Housing Trust and Agency Fund, which was designated to be administered by the Community Development Department, to be used for the “purposes of advancing the construction of, acquisition of land or the rehabilitation of affordable housing within the Town of Riverhead.” It is important to note that this fund still needs to be formally established by the Town.

### **Housing Demand Forecast**

The Town’s existing and proposed market-rate apartments are anticipated to meet the existing and future housing demand for the average household on Long Island through 2040. However, as discussed above, more income-restricted affordable units are needed to meet the projections for lower-income and workforce populations through 2040.

Based on age data, average household size, and discussions with real estate brokers, it is envisioned that the demand in Town will be for 2- and 3-bedroom family units. However, housing is also needed for the 24% of the Town’s population that is over 65 years of age, such as 1-bedroom condos and assisted living facilities, as well as housing for persons with disabilities. There is a need for additional affordable home ownership units. It is anticipated that the Town’s existing and projected future supply of affordable and Downtown apartments will meet the needs of the younger population age groups, work to attract young professionals, and retain students and younger residents, but may also serve empty-nesters. The Town’s future residents are expected to come from the west, such as from the Towns of Brookhaven, Smithtown, and Islip, as residential distribution on Long Island expands and affordable housing options move further east.

Most of the current and forecasted demand for housing is in the Riverhead Hamlet area due to the availability of public sewer infrastructure, higher-density zoning, and proximity to transit.

## Goals and Recommendations

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### **Goal 1. Continue to promote housing affordability and the availability of quality affordable and workforce housing in Riverhead and throughout the region.**

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Riverhead has historically provided most of the East End's affordable and workforce housing. This trend has remained in the last 20 years as development elsewhere on the East End has become significantly more expensive. Without intervention, the increased development pressure will continue to diminish the supply of attainable housing options. This issue also affects economic development, as housing affordability is a key factor linked to workforce growth.

Despite the higher number of designated and naturally affordable homes in Riverhead, there is still a sector of Riverhead residents who struggle to make their rent. Findings from the Market Trends Analysis suggest that Riverhead would benefit from more affordable housing options. A Town goal would be to add modest incremental new income-restricted affordable units over the planning period to meet the needs of workforce and lower income residents.

#### **1.1. Regularly monitor housing dynamics and review housing policies.**

While Riverhead currently has a relatively affordable housing stock, compared to other East End towns, increasing development pressures may diminish the supply of workforce housing in the future. The Town should continue to monitor housing values and rents and the ability of lower-income households to find housing in Riverhead. On an ongoing basis, the Town should also periodically review its own affordable housing initiatives to make sure that they are having the desired effect. The Town should attempt to determine what groups, if any, are having trouble finding appropriate housing in Riverhead.

#### **1.2. Monitor short-term rentals for their impact on Riverhead's housing stock.**

Short-term rentals have an impact on the availability of year-round housing throughout the region. While not as pervasive in Riverhead, there are hamlets in the community that have significant numbers of short-term rental listings. The numbers and impacts of these units on neighborhoods should be quantified to determine if further regulation is required to maintain housing stock for full-time residents. There may be some areas where shorter-term rentals are appropriate, such as in more touristy areas such as near the downtown. Allowing shorter-term rentals in these areas can boost and sustain local businesses, such as restaurants, shops, and attractions.

#### **1.3. Reach out to local financial institutions and non-profit housing developers to identify sites and funding for the development or rehabilitation of workforce housing.**

Experienced and reputable non-profit housing developers can leverage incentives from federal and state programs to provide affordable housing for a variety of users and income levels.

The Town's Department of Community Development has been working to diversify its funding sources to include a variety of State, federal, and foundation funds. Federal funds available from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) have become scarcer. Alternative funding sources are needed to supplement HUD allocations. Information on available funding sources should be shared on the Town's website and updated annually.

**1.4. Encourage other East End towns to provide their fair share of affordable and workforce housing, so that senior citizens, young adults, first-time homebuyers, seasonal workers, low-income individuals and households, and special needs populations have the choice to live in a wide variety of locations.**

Affordable housing is a regional issue experienced by all of the East End communities. The Town should continue to work with other municipalities to expand affordable housing options in eastern Long Island outside of Downtown Riverhead. In recent years, because of Riverhead's relatively affordable housing stock, many people who are no longer able to afford homes in nearby towns are moving to Riverhead as an alternative. The Town has partially benefited from this spillover effect, as property values in some areas have increased. Nevertheless, the trend also suggests that Riverhead may be providing more than its fair share of housing for lower-income residents. Other East End towns should work to increase workforce housing opportunities throughout the eastern part of Long Island.

Another significant concern is the potential for significant housing development within the Flanders/Riverside hamlets of Southampton. If this area experiences significant population growth, it will have impacts on the Town's economy, traffic congestion, and can place other demands on regional infrastructure and services. Since all of the Flanders area is within the Riverhead Central School district, any development would also impact local schools. To address these concerns, it is necessary for Riverhead and Southampton to work together ensure that development in one area considers the broader impacts on neighboring communities. Some potential options to discuss include the annexation of areas in Flanders or the modification of school district boundaries so that they more closely align with municipal boundaries. It is recognized that both of these actions are significantly complex changes that would require legislative approval and mutual agreement by all parties. A third and more realistic option would be to establish a regional inter-municipal planning working group to develop the two areas in tandem.

**1.5. Ensure that workforce housing is compatible in design and quality with market-rate housing and the surrounding neighborhood.**

New workforce housing projects should be designed such that they fit into their surroundings and workforce units and market-rate units in the same development should be indistinguishable. Features that can promote compatibility with the neighborhood include high-quality façade materials; architectural variety between adjacent units (i.e., building massing, fenestration, and façade treatments); and native landscaping that can be affordably maintained. Within developments, affordable and workforce units should be distributed throughout the building, offer the same mix (studios, one bedroom, two bedrooms etc.), and feature the same materials and fixtures as market-rate units to promote economic integration.

**1.6. Make the Long Island Workforce Housing Act mandatory for every subdivision and site plan, with no opt-out provision.**

The promotion of attainable housing options is a fundamental goal in the Plan. Currently, developers seeking approval for subdivisions and site plans have the opportunity to opt-out of density increases so they don't have to provide affordable units or pay into the workforce housing fund. The Town may consider removing this opt-out district in order to maximize the benefits of the Long Island Workforce Housing Act.

**1.7. Ensure that workforce housing remains perpetually workforce.**

As a general policy, it is important to ensure that workforce housing remains perpetually affordable. This can be achieved through a combination of legal, financial, and regulatory measures. Community land trusts are another option to maintain the long-term affordability of housing units.

It is important to recognize that policies addressing affordable homeownership should be flexible in the long term to allow people to thrive within Riverhead. Allowing affordable homeownership to build equity promotes economic mobility, helping individuals and families move from renting to owning, which can significantly improve their financial stability. Provisions would need to be put in place (i.e. covenants/deed restrictions) to ensure that people don't take advantage and quickly cash out when homeownership subsidies are provided.

**Goal 2. Encourage more diverse housing types to accommodate a wide range of income levels and to address evolving housing needs.**

Providing for a range of housing types is necessary to address overcrowded housing and issues of affordability. Demand for housing of all types at all levels continues to rise, while housing costs have grown exponentially. Eliminating burdensome restrictions in the Town code allows for greater flexibility in housing design and facilitates the development of affordable housing options. Building code standards already ensure the safety of residential structures.

**2.1. Eliminate minimum home size in residential districts.**

Some residential zones have a 1,200 square foot minimum size. Building code standards already ensure the safety, structural integrity, and habitability of residential structures, making additional minimum size requirements redundant. Eliminating such restrictions allows for greater flexibility in housing design, promotes innovation, and facilitates the development of diverse and affordable housing options that better meet the evolving needs of the community.

**2.2. Utilize TDR to allow for slightly higher densities designated areas.**

The Agriculture chapter outlines recommendations for a revised TDR program which will preserve farmland while incentivizing developers to build additional housing units in receiving zones. As proposed, TDR credits could be used to exceed the 500-unit cap in the downtown, but only for homeownership developments. The CRC and PRC zones could also allow for slightly increased housing density provided infrastructure is in place. This would allow for the development of townhouses and garden apartments. The MFP district could be looked at as a comp for allowable development types and densities for both districts. It is recommended that design guidance be put

in place in PRC to push buildings away from the Peconic River and ensure that riparian areas are maintained. It is acknowledged that development in this district is further controlled by DEC.

The Agriculture Chapter also discusses how TDR ratios could be modified to make preservation credits more valuable. This recommendation would make the use of TDRs for non-single family housing options more appealing to developers, helping to increase the variety of housing stock in receiving areas throughout Riverhead.

### **2.3. Allow adaptive reuse of buildings for residential uses in DC-1 District.**

Buildings in the DC-1 district should be permitted to exceed the 500-unit cap when redeveloping existing upper floors of historic buildings for housing. TDRs would not be required in this instance, to promote the preservation and rehabilitation of existing historic buildings.

### **2.4. Evaluate the 500-unit cap for the DC-1 District.**

The greatest density and housing growth has been focused, appropriately, in the Downtown. In the next 5 years, a wave of new development is anticipated in the Downtown area which is anticipated to exhaust the 500-unit cap on residential in the DC-1 district. It would be reasonable for the Town to reassess this cap once development in the pipeline is complete, given the significant demand for development, and the continued need to meet other housing, economic, and community development goals. A Market Study for the Town Square by Streetsense in 2021 recommends the removal of the 500-unit cap. 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.

This recommendation includes two actions. The first would be to conduct economic and fiscal cost-benefit analysis of impacts of new development on the Downtown and the Town of Riverhead. This will provide a fiscal understanding of the benefit of any potential increases of the cap.

Regulations for the cap should also be cleaned up. Currently, the conditions on when the cap threshold would be reached is based on certificate of occupancy, which creates issues related to implementation and enforcement.

### **2.5. Revise standards for accessory dwelling units to reduce extraneous barriers for new housing.**

Within the Accessory Apartment code, there is currently a requirement that applicants have 3 years of a certificate of occupancy (CO) in an accessory building before an accessory unit can be approved. The intent of this provision was to allow accessory units in existing buildings but not to promote a wave of new development. The existing regulation is burdensome for applicants and could be remedied by changing the 3-year CO period to apply to the principal building and not the accessory building.

### **2.6. Promote high levels of construction quality and sustainability.**

There is concern about the current building and construction codes and whether new housing construction is being built to last and meet sustainability goals. Green building is discussed further in the Sustainability and Resilience section.

### Goal 3. Support Creation and Protection of Homeownership for Low- and Moderate-Income Households.

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The Town has sufficient rental opportunities but needs reasonably priced ownership options for young people to purchase and build wealth. Financial barriers and lack of knowledge can make buying a home difficult for first timers and low- and moderate-income households. Making homeownership more attainable for individuals and families encourages their accumulation of wealth and economic stability.

#### 3.1. Provide resources and incentives to assist first-time homebuyers.

There are opportunities for condominium development in the downtown and/or hamlet centers that would be contextually compatible with neighborhood character while providing first-time homeownership opportunities.

The Town can work with the Riverhead Community Development Department, financial institutions, nonprofits, and New York State to identify financing options for homeowners and buyers. The Town could help connect these institutions with low- and moderate-income households to obtain low-interest or reduced-down payment mortgages. This would be enormously helpful to households that want to become homeowners but do not have the resources to get started.

New York State Homes and Community Renewal (NYSHCR) offers funding to support affordable rental and homeownership opportunities in New York State including the Affordable Homeownership Development (AHOD) Program and State of New York Mortgage Agency (SONYMA). Through the AHOD Program, grants are available for governmental agencies and non-profits to assist families in accessing affordable homeownership. In Suffolk County, this money goes to organizations including the Long Island Housing Partnership, Habitat for Humanity, Community Development Corporation of Long Island, and Nassau/Suffolk Partnership Hsg. Dev. Fund Co. SONYMA provides low-cost home mortgages, down payment assistance, and partners with nonprofit housing counseling agencies to support first-time homebuyers and others.

Another long-term option is to utilize CPF funds to offset costs for first time homebuyers. This is a long-term option because CPF funds are not accessible until 2030 and the Town does not currently have the financial ability to modify their fund. This option would require a ballot referendum to add .5% tax for the affordable housing fund when the CPF bond is paid off.

#### 3.2. Develop policies and procedures to utilize the Affordable Housing Fund to support first time homebuyers

The Affordable Housing Fund can play a pivotal role in expanding access to affordable housing for those seeking to transition from renting to homeownership, ensuring a more balanced and diverse housing landscape. However, it's important to note that while the affordable housing fund has been provided for in the Town code, it was never formally established. Moving forward, the Town will to create the fund, identify the eligibility criteria, such as income guidelines, and establish processes for applications and fund allocation. This may include offering down payment assistance, closing cost assistance, reduced-interest loans, or renovation assistance to eligible applicants. Additionally, the



Town should prioritize providing information and resources for first-time homebuyers on the Town website, facilitating access to necessary support and guidance throughout the homebuying process.

### **3.3. Revise the 500-unit cap to promote homeownership opportunities and other housing goals.**

Expanding the number of residential units for homeownership in the downtown district can attract new residents who are committed to investing in the community's long-term well-being. To achieve this, it is recommended that the 500-unit cap allowed to be exceeded, but with the stipulation that the additional units are dedicated exclusively to homeownership. These housing units would also require the use of TDR preservation credits. This policy aims to provide for some additional economic growth in the downtown area while helping to preserve other agricultural and environmentally sensitive areas.

### **3.4. Change affordability thresholds for ownership and rentals.**

Homeownership and rental housing come with different financial responsibilities. Homeownership entails mortgage payments, property taxes, and maintenance costs, while renters typically have a more straightforward monthly rental payment. Long Island Housing Partnership recommends adjusting affordability thresholds for the Long Island Workforce Housing provision in the Town Code to distinguish between homeowner and rental developments, such as 50-80% AMI for rental units and 80-120% AMI for homeowner units. This will allow the Town to provide rentals that more closely match Riverhead's rental market, while providing homeownership opportunities to moderate-income individuals and families.

## **Goal 4. Promote inclusive housing policies and accessible design standards to ensure that housing is available to people of all ages and abilities.**

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There is a special concern for the needs of the aging population in Riverhead. With 24% of Riverhead's residents over 65 years of age, it is important to address the lack of senior housing, assisted living, and medical services that could allow seniors to age in place in the Town and the East End more broadly.

As Riverhead continues to age and the needs of residents evolve, a strategic and proactive approach is needed to expand the availability of supportive care facilities. This goal reflects the Town's commitment to addressing the growing demands of the aging population and ensuring that residents have access to appropriate care and support as they age. There may be opportunities to locate these facilities in areas with access to sewer infrastructure such as along Route 58 in areas close to Peconic Bay Medical Center. They could also be located in areas just outside of the core downtown area. Riverhead will also continue to experience increasing need for affordable retirement housing beyond mobile home parks. Producing housing alternatives for seniors wishing to downsize has the additional benefit of freeing up single-family stock for younger families.

### **4.1. Continue to support the Community Development Department's program to provide home improvement funding for low-income senior residents.**

This program has been successful in rehabilitating units occupied by lower-income senior residents, improving the quality of life for those households. Another added benefit is that — in case of resale

— the unit may sell at a higher price as a result of rehabilitation. The Town may eventually see a positive impact in tax revenue from the property. Additional staffing of this element of the Community Development Department is recommended.

**4.2. Allow residential health care facilities, including "continuum of care" housing, to be developed in the Residence RC zone, as well as in areas near the Peconic Bay Medical Center, CRC zones, and CBD zones.**

Residential health care facilities include nursing homes, assisted living, skilled nursing care, and similar facilities where seniors both live and receive daily health and personal care. "Continuum of care" facilities allow seniors to "age in place," by providing whatever services a senior citizen would need at their particular stage of life, ranging from minimal care to intensive health and personal care. Thus, seniors could receive increased levels of care over time without having to move from place to place.

As discussed in the TDR Recommendations, an assisted living overlay zone is proposed for parts of Route 58 near the Peconic Bay Medical Center. There may be other locations in the Town where assisted living should be allowed by special permit. For example, it may be appropriate to allow assisted living by special permit within HC or RLC districts. Assisted living facilities should also be a defined use in the zoning code.

Senior housing generates a greater need for emergency response services than non-age restricted housing. Thus, it makes sense to locate senior housing in places where emergency response services and medical facilities are more concentrated, particularly in the downtown area. Ideal locations for senior housing are in downtown and hamlet centers and near the hospital.

**4.3. Develop Accessible Design Standards for Inclusion in the Town Code.**

These standards, which would be incorporated into Town Code, would serve as a foundation for creating an environment that accommodates the needs of individuals with disabilities, ensuring equal access and participation for everyone. These standards should cover a broad range of aspects, including physical infrastructure, signage, public transportation, and technology. The code would also address the application of standards for different uses and building types.

**4.4. Collaborate with Suffolk County and community partners to create and maintain safe and healthy neighborhoods that contribute to residents' well-being and security.**

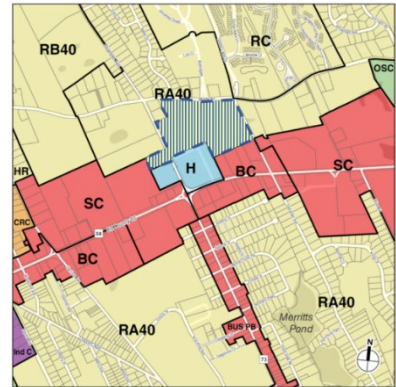
The Town has at least 14 sober homes in the downtown area, including nine on Main Street. While these facilities provide a very important role by providing safe housing for those recovering from addiction, the homes have reportedly become a source of activity that is unwelcome in the Downtown area. This recommendation encompasses a holistic approach to addressing housing issues, including the regulation and support of sober homes and group homes. It also addresses supportive care services, many of which are provided by Suffolk County. By working together, the Town, County and organizations can create a supportive environment that ensures access to safe housing for all, while respecting the rights and dignity of those in recovery and individuals with disabilities. Collaborative efforts are needed with residents, neighborhood associations, and stakeholders to address concerns, foster cooperation, and ensure that these housing options are seamlessly integrated into neighborhoods.

The Town should continue to address code enforcement issues such as occupancy standards, quality-of-life infringements, code-enforcement inspections when needed. Additionally, the Town should continue to be a resource of information and a first point of contact to address neighborhood related issues. The Town should work with Suffolk County to facilitate the even distribution of sober homes in the East End, rather than concentrating them in one neighborhood.

Chapter 10: Community facilities provides more information on public health care services.

#### 4.5. Expand and amend the Hospital zone to accommodate housing that meets the needs of hospital staff.

The plan recommends that the existing hospital zone be expanded to encompass adjacent properties owned by the Peconic Bay Medical Center. The Hospital District should also be amended to permit a wider variety of wellness related uses and allow housing for hospital staff. These recommendations align with Peconic Bay Medical Center's long-term plans and the Town's desire to support this essential institution and promote accessibility to quality healthcare services. Chapter 13: Future Land Use Plan, includes more information about the zoning changes recommended for the Hospital zone.



#### 4.6. Revisit housing standards to promote construction quality and sustainability

The Town has sought to amend Chapter 217 and 263 of the Town Code, to bring housing standards to into conformity with NYS building code and to create stricter requirements for renting out single-family dwelling units and ensure proper inspection for quality standards. This code would also apply a saturation number of sober homes to prevent the concentration of those facilities in the downtown area. There is also an opportunity to strengthen requirements for construction quality and sustainability. This would address about the current building and construction codes and whether new housing construction is being built to last and meet sustainability goals. Green building is discussed further in the Sustainability and Resilience section.