

# RIVERHEAD

## Comprehensive Plan Update



### **Chapter 9/ Scenic and Historic Resources**

*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 10. SCENIC AND HISTORIC RESOURCES**

### **Introduction**

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Riverhead possesses a variety of significant scenic and historic resources, ranging from expansive views of working agricultural landscapes to scenic roadways like Sound Avenue, the historic structures and property of the Hallock Homestead, the scenic bluffs along Long Island Sound, historic hamlet centers like South Jamesport, as well as the historic buildings and compact layout of downtown Riverhead. These resources and features reflect the richness and diversity of the East End's historic, cultural, and natural landscape. They also contribute to the quality of life for residents and attract visitors to the Town. By preserving these resources, Riverhead can ensure that future generations can enjoy the same cultural heritage and natural beauty that makes the town unique.

This chapter provides an overview of existing policies and resources to enhance and protect those features and an inventory of designated historic sites on the national, state, and local registers. Though often treated separately, scenic and historic resources are intertwined and best addressed jointly. Historic structures contribute visual quality and cultural identity to valued areas— such as hamlets, downtown centers, and agricultural zones. Because of this interrelationship, Riverhead's scenic and historic resources are considered here together in a single chapter. Scenic landscape elements are also discussed in Chapter 6: Natural Features, Environmental Resources, and Agricultural Lands and Chapter 4: Economic Development as they contribute to Riverhead's long-term economic vitality and business development.

### History

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An overview of Riverhead's history is provided in Chapter 2: Land Use and Zoning. The Town's historical growth is outlined below:

**Early Inhabitants:** Before European settlers arrived, the area now known as Riverhead was inhabited by Native American tribes, primarily the Corchoug Algonquin tribes. The location at the head of the Peconic River allowed the Corchougs access to both freshwater and saltwater landings. The riverfront provided the Corchougs with ready access to food sources.

**European Settlement:** European settlers began to arrive in the area in the mid-17th century. In 1649, English colonists purchased land from the Corchougs and established the settlement of Wading River. This settlement joined with Southold to divide up the available land between their two settlements. From 1661 to 1792, all the land between Mattituck and Wading River (that now includes Laurel, Jamesport, Northville, Aquebogue, Roanoke, Riverhead, Calverton, and Baiting Hollow) was described as "Aquebogue".

**Agriculture and Trade:** Riverhead's fertile soil and access to waterways made it a center for agriculture and trade. Farming, fishing, and shipbuilding were important industries during the town's early history.

**Development as a County Seat and Incorporation:** During the early 18th Century, Riverhead was selected to be the County seat as a compromise between Southampton and Southold. In 1792, Riverhead separated from Southold and incorporated as a Town. Riverhead has remained the seat of Suffolk County to this day. This designation brought administrative and legal institutions to the town, contributing to its growth.

**19th Century Growth:** In the 19th century, Riverhead's economy continued to grow. The arrival of the Long Island Railroad in the mid-19th century facilitated transportation and trade, boosting the town's economy. The agricultural industry expanded with potatoes, cauliflower, and duck farms becoming significant industries. Tourism in the East End, facilitated by train service, became an economic driver at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**20th Century and Beyond:** In the 20th century, Riverhead saw continued development and modernization. Agriculture expanded as shipping transitioned from rail to trucking with the development of highways on long island. Riverhead and Suffolk County remain leading agricultural producers in New York State.

Highways connected Riverhead to the New York City region and spurred suburban and industrial development. Riverhead underwent an important transformation in the 1950s and 1960s with the construction of the Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant (NWIRP) in Calverton. The NWIRP was a major employment center for many years until being closed by the federal government in 1995.

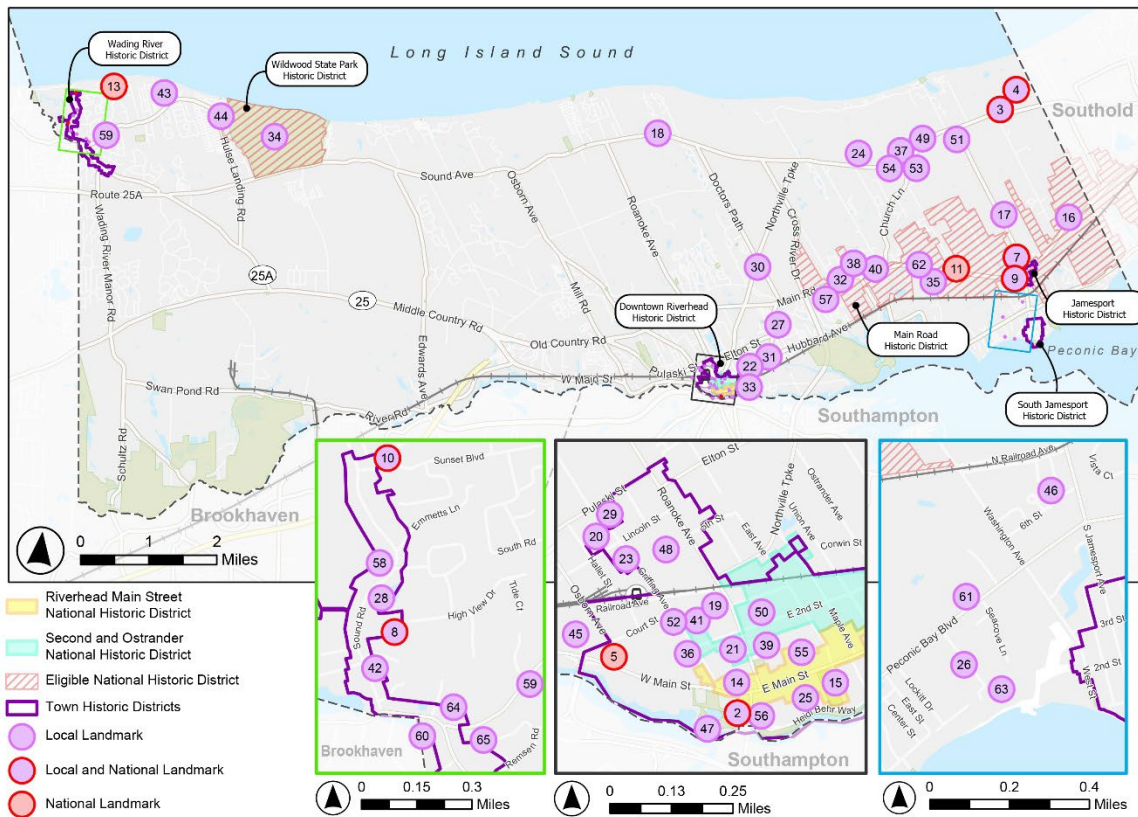
Since the 1980's, Riverhead's tourism industry has expanded with the emergence of the North Fork wine region.

## Existing Conditions

### Inventory of Historic Resources

The Town of Riverhead possesses a wealth of historic resources. Historic buildings, sites, structures and landscapes represent Riverhead’s history, and maintain the sense of place and community character that visitors and local residents cherish. Properties and districts are designated at the local, state, and national level.

Figure 9-1. Historic Districts and Landmarks



Sources: Town of Riverhead, Landmarks Preservation Commission; NYS OPRHP CRIS; NYS GIS; USGS

Numbered labels correspond to Table 9-1

### Local Landmarks

According to the most recent inventory updated in March 2023, the Town of Riverhead’s Landmarks Preservation Commission has officially designated 62 buildings and sites as Riverhead Town Landmarks (two of which have been demolished or destroyed). This inventory can be referred to in the appendix.

## ***Working Draft 1/26/2024***

### ***Local Historic Districts***

Riverhead has four designated local historic districts. These historic districts include 373 qualifying structures. The historic districts are described below.

#### ***Downtown Riverhead Historic District***

The Downtown Riverhead Historic District includes 219 resources. The historic district was designated in 2006. The Downtown Riverhead Historic District encompasses the State and National Register of Historic Places Main Street Historic District.

#### ***Wading River Historic District***

The Wading River Historic District includes 40 resources along Sound Road and North Country Road. The historic district was designated in 2008. The historic district is a rural country road with numerous houses, as well as two churches, a post office and school.

#### ***South Jamesport Historic District***

The South Jamesport Historic District includes 78 historic resources. The historic district was designated in 2006. It is characterized by residences on narrow tree-lined streets near the waterfront.

#### ***Jamesport Hamlet Historic District***

The Jamesport Hamlet Historic District includes 36 resources near the junction of South Jamesport Avenue and Main Road. The historic district was designated in 2006.

### ***State and National Register Individual Historic Landmarks***

There are 14 State and National Register listed properties in the Town of Riverhead. Numerous eligible properties are also located within Riverhead; these properties are not included in this assessment and are available for review on the database maintained by New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (CRIS).

#### ***United States Post Office-Riverhead, 23 West Second Street, Riverhead***

The Neoclassical-style building was constructed circa 1929. The building is located within the Second and Ostrander Historic District.

#### ***Vail-Leavitt Music Hall, 18 Peconic Avenue, Riverhead***

The Music Hall is located within the Riverhead Main Street Historic District. The building was constructed in 1881 as the Vail Music Hall and is now one of the few surviving music halls in Suffolk County. The brick building has a restrained Classically-inspired façade with gauged brickwork, round-arched windows and a steep gable roof.

#### ***Hallock Homestead, 6038 Sound Avenue, Northville***

The Hallock Homestead is a collection of early 19th century farm buildings, owned by the Hallock family for over 160 years. The original portion was likely built circa 1765, with additional buildings constructed in the early 1800s.

## ***Working Draft 1/26/2024***

### **Suffolk County Historical Society Building, 300 Main Street**

The Georgian Revival-style institutional building was constructed in 1930-1931 after designs by architect Augustus H. Galow. The building was constructed to house the Suffolk County Historical Society's growing archive.

### **Hallock-Bilunas Farmstead, 733 Herricks Lane**

The Hallock-Bilunas Farmstead includes a circa 1880 house and six associated agricultural buildings. The farm is set within the hamlet of Northville, surrounded by farm fields.

### **Jamesport Meeting House, 1590 Main Road**

The Jamesport Meeting House, formerly the Jamesport Congregational Church, is an anchor of the hamlet of Jamesport. The building was constructed in 1731 as a Presbyterian Church, and is recorded as the first church in the Town of Riverhead.

### **Benjamin King Woodhull House, 126 Sound Road**

The Woodhull House, also known as Four Chimneys, is located in Wading River. The house was originally constructed in the mid-18th century and enlarged circa 1843 in the Greek Revival Style.

### **Jedediah Hawkins House, 400 South Jamesport Avenue**

The Italianate-style house, constructed in 1864, is one of the largest in the hamlet and is highly visible from South Jamesport Avenue. Jedediah W. Hawkins made his fortune in the shipping industry during the Civil War and in the fish oil business during the late nineteenth century.

### **Tuthill-Lapham House (Friendly Hall), 324 Sound Road**

The Tuthill-Lapham House, also known as Friendly Hall, is located in Wading River. The earliest portion of the building is a Federal-style section constructed circa 1820 for Bartley Fanning Tuthill. The remaining sections, built in 1838, 1869, and the 1920s, are distinguished by different roof heights.

### **Daniel and Henry Tuthill Farm Complex, 1146 Main Road**

The Daniel and Henry Tuthill Farm Complex is located in Aquebogue and includes a Greek Revival-style house built circa 1890. The property remained in the Tuthill family from 1733 until the mid-20th century.

### **Harrison Downs House & Farm, 5793 Sound Avenue**

Downs House and Farm is located in Northville. The property includes an Italianate style farmhouse, built circa 1874 as a gentleman's country retreat, and a complex of early-20th century agricultural buildings.

### **Wading River Radio Station, 408 North Side Road**

The Wading River Radio Station is located on the campus of Camp DeWolfe, although the radio station predates the summer camp. The radio station was built as a house circa 1912 and operated covertly as a FBI radio transmission station between 1942 and 1945. The secret radio station was installed by engineer Richard Millen and operated by Jorge Mosquera to intercept valuable information from the German military intelligence service.



## ***Working Draft 1/26/2024***

### ***State and National Register Historic Districts***

Two historic districts in the Town of Riverhead are listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places, and two are determined eligible for listing. National Register districts in Riverhead include approximately 175 contributing resources.

#### ***Riverhead Main Street Historic District (listed)***

Riverhead Main Street Historic District includes 61 properties (contributing and non-contributing) along Main Street, between Griffing and Union Avenues. The historic district covers the densest portion of the commercial corridor and is characterized by two- to four-story commercial buildings with ground floor storefronts.

#### ***Second and Ostrander Historic District (listed)***

The Second and Ostrander Historic District includes 147 properties (129 contributing and 18 non-contributing) in a residential area immediately north of the Downtown Riverhead commercial corridor. Developed from 1837 to 1940, the area was home to both wealthy and working-class residents and it now includes a variety of building styles and sizes.

#### ***Main Road Historic District (eligible)***

Main Road Historic District includes 273 properties along a six-mile segment of the semi-rural Main Road, or NYS Route 25, in Aquebogue, Jamesport, and Laurel, including parts of Southold Town in the hamlet of Laurel. The historic district is determined State and National Register eligible due to its associations with the region's agricultural and social history.

#### ***Wildwood State Park Historic District (eligible)***

The 600-acre Wildwood State Park is located in the western portion of Riverhead. The Park is determined State and National Register eligible, for its intact landscape design and park architecture and for its associations with the early development of Wading River. A portion of Wildwood was originally owned by Ronald Mitchell who had planned on building a private estate there. Another section of Wildwood (known as the Driftwood Manor) was owned by Joseph Robin. The only structure that was part of the manor that still stands today is the Carriage House, located on the eastern boundary of the park.

### ***Archaeological Sites***

Due to its location along the Peconic River and Flanders Bay, Riverhead was — in pre-colonial times — an attractive fishing, hunting, and gathering grounds for Native Americans. Many archeological sites have been identified since the nineteenth century and are recorded by the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation.

### ***Historic Property Watch List***

The LPC maintains a "Watch List" of threatened buildings to encourage their restoration. Several buildings previously on the list have been restored, in part as the result of LPC efforts. The current watch list includes the following properties:

- 178 Main Road

# Working Draft 1/26/2024

- 1117 Main Road (Leslie Alexander)
- 57 South Jamesport Avenue (Albert Young House)
- 1368 Sound Avenue (Irving Hulse House)
- Half Hollow Barn

*Note: LPC has updated their watchlist. We will update this list as it becomes available.*

## Existing Policies and Resources

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This section describes existing policies and resources, including commissions, organizations, local laws, incentives and other tools for historic preservation and the protection of scenic resources in Riverhead.

### Local Policies and Resources

#### Local Landmarks Law

Landmarks and historic districts promote the economic, cultural, educational, and general welfare of the public. The landmarks law provides the criteria and procedure for the local designation of landmarks and historic districts and for the referral and advisory process for building permit applications and site plan review involving landmarks and historic districts. Local designation tends to be more effective in preserving historic landmarks compared to state or national designation because they have more authority to prevent demolition. Local landmarks laws can also help property owners and the Town Board make informed decisions about the alteration and permits for designated properties.

#### Landmarks Preservation Commission

The Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) was established in 1976 and serves an advisory capacity to the Town Board. They may recommend designation of a landmark or historic district or the acquisition of a historic property by the Town. The LPC also assist with the review applications for alterations (in conjunction with the Architectural Review Board), or demolitions of designated landmarks or structures within historic districts. The Building and Planning Departments will refer such applications and site plans to the LPC. The LPC develops the criteria used for the identification of significant historic, architectural and cultural landmarks and for the delineation of historic districts. They also work to increase public awareness of the value of preservation through educational programs and literature.

The LPC is comprised of seven members appointed by the Town Board and must include a member of the American Institute of Architects; an architectural historian; an attorney; and four residents of the Town of Riverhead.

#### Initiatives of the Landmarks Preservation Commission

Since completion of the current Master Plan in 2003, the Landmarks Preservation Commission has implemented several of that plans recommendation and carried out other initiatives summarized below.



## *Working Draft 1/26/2024*

- Designation of four historic districts, as recommended in Policy 5.4J of the 2003 Comprehensive Plan.
- Designation of two National Register Historic Districts.
- Designation of more than 25 additional historic resources as individual town landmarks.
- Designation of four additional National Register sites.
- Proposed an extensive National Register Historic District extending along Main Road.
- Instituted a 10-year tax abatement for increases in assessed value caused by historic preservation renovations.
- Published a booklet in 2008 titled “Wood, Brick and Stone” with walking and driving tours of downtown Riverhead.
- Inaugurated a Downtown Riverhead Historic Trail in 2022 that is available through QR codes or virtually on the Town and BID websites.
- Dedicated an historic marker for the Bell Town Heritage Area in 2022, celebrating the Town’s heritage of Black communities founded by people who came here in the Great Migration.
- Prepared a Survey of Historic Resources in Riverhead, as recommended by Policy 5.3A and 5.4A of the 2003 Comprehensive Plan.
- Developed design guidelines for landmarks and historic districts, as recommended by Policy 5.4C of the 2003 Comprehensive Plan.

### **Architectural Review Board**

New development can have a substantial impact on the character of the area in which it is located. While some harmful visual impacts can be prevented through land use regulations (i.e. zoning, subdivision regulations, and building codes), other visual impacts need to be evaluated by qualified personnel who can ascertain the appropriateness of architectural design or appearance within their context. The Architectural Review Board (ARB) was established for this purpose.

The ARB is responsible for reviewing site plans for the quality of their exterior design, sign permit applications, and compliance with other ordinances that affect visual impact. The ARB also works to prevent the unnecessary destruction or blighting of the natural landscape or man-made environment and to ensure that architectural treatments relate harmoniously to existing buildings that have a visual relationship to proposed development. The ARB also reviews applications for alterations or demolition of designated landmarks or structures within designated historic districts.

The Architectural Review Board is appointed by the Town Board upon the recommendation of the Town Building and Planning Administrator or the Chief Building Inspector. It is comprised of five members including a licensed architect, and other architects, landscape architects, or designers. Requirements for review and procedures are detailed in Chapter 209 of the Town Code.

### **Other Committees and Partners**

In addition to the LPC and the ARB, several other committees work towards preserving the scenic and historic qualities of Riverhead. These include the Farmland Preservation Committee, TDR Committee, Open Space Committee, and others who are introduced in other chapters of this plan. Local businesses, non-profits, and organizations may also be partners in the preservation of scenic, cultural and historic resources in Riverhead. These partners include, but are not limited to, The Long Island Chapter of The

# Working Draft 1/26/2024

Nature Conservancy, Peconic Land Trust, The East End Arts & Humanities Council, The Suffolk Theater, the Suffolk County Historical Society, and the Long Island Railroad Museum.

## Design Guidelines, Zoning Code Provisions, and Other Regulations

### Historic Preservation Design Guidelines

The LPC and the ARB published the Historic Preservation Guidelines, which provide recommendations for the treatment of historic properties in Riverhead. The guidelines which are available on the Town’s website, are targeted to property owners, design professionals, contractors, the LPC, the ARB and Town officials and staff.

### 10-Year Historic Preservation Tax Abatement

Town designated landmarks and contributing properties in a designated historic district are eligible for a 10-year exemption from property taxes on any increase in the assessed value of the property resulting from an alteration or restoration, under chapters 279-39 and 40 of Town Code.

### Variations for Historic Properties

As recommended by the 2003 Comprehensive Plan, the LPC has worked with property owners to obtain reasonable variations when they are willing to designate their properties as town landmarks. Allowing owners of historic sites variations for land use, parking, bulk, and other requirements can help protect threatened landmarks.

### RLC Special Permit

Under chapter 301-64-7, in the Rural Corridor (RLC) zone along Main Road, by special permit, “Existing structures may be enlarged for use as professional offices of attorneys, architects, medical doctors or dentists, as wellness facilities or as general offices” provided that the subject property is designated as a town landmark and is restored following guidelines in town code. Moreover, additions up to 100% of the floor area of the existing structure or 3,000 square feet, whichever is less may be added if they comply with Landmarks standards and do not exceed total lot coverage allowed for this zone.

### Town of Riverhead Lighting Ordinance

In addition to promoting public health, safety, and welfare, Riverhead’s Lighting Ordinance intends to preserve the quality of life, preserve the Town’s rural character, and allow the public the ability to view the night sky. The Ordinance establishes regulations and a process for review of exterior lighting under Chapter 301, Article XLIX Exterior Lighting.

### Cluster Development Requirement

The subdivision regulations in Chapter 301 of the Town Code include cluster development requirements intended to maximize the preservation of open space, significant natural features, agricultural lands, and scenic vistas. The provision requires that 70% of the land be conserved as open space or agricultural lands.

# Working Draft 1/26/2024

## State and National Resources

### The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is responsible for working with the National Park Service (NPS) to administer programs such as the statewide historic resources survey, federal rehabilitation tax credit, certified local government program, state historic preservation grants, federal environmental review, and technical assistance. In compliance with the federal historic preservation law, the SHPO produces a five-year historic preservation plan that outlines the goals and objectives of the State.

### The State Register

The State Register is the official list of buildings, structures, districts, and other resources that are significant to the history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture of the State. Listing on the State Register gives some protection from the effects of state agency-sponsored, licensed, or assisted projects through a notice, review, and consultation process. Matching state historic preservation grants are available for municipal and not-for-profit owners of registered historic properties. Listing does not put any restrictions on private owners of the registered properties.

### The National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places, maintained by the National Park Service (NPS), is the Nation's official list of sites worthy of preservation for their historic, architectural, and other cultural values. Listing on the national register provides some protection from the effects of federal agency-sponsored, licensed, or assisted projects through a notice, review, and consultation process. Being listed on the national register gives property owners access to federal preservation tax credits, NPS grant programs, and preservation easements. In addition, property owners can order a bronze plaque to mark their property. There is a sense of prestige in listing properties for owners, neighbors, and visitors.

### Eligible Resources

Before a resource is listed on the State and National register, the SHPO will determine if it is "eligible," meaning that it meets specific criteria, and additional documentation is requested of the nominator. If the required information is provided, the New York State Board for Historic Preservation will review and recommend listing on the State Register and forward the application to the NPS for review and listing on the National Register. There are hundreds of eligible properties in Riverhead that have been documented during surveys or individual nominations.

### State and Federal Preservation Tax Credits

Structures listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places or contributing structures in a National Register Historic District may be eligible for Federal and New York State tax credits. An owner of a historic property may also enter into an easement agreement with a preservation or conservation non-profit to preserve their property in perpetuity while qualifying for tax reductions.

## Working Draft 1/26/2024

### Federal Historic Preservation Fund

The Historic Preservation Fund provides funding to states, local governments, and non-profits. States must subgrant 10% of their funds to Certified Local Governments, however Riverhead is not currently a Certified Local Government.<sup>1</sup>

### New York State Heritage Areas

Riverhead is within the Long Island North Shore Heritage Area (LINSHA). The LINSHA spans from Great Neck to East Marion and covers most of the area north of Interstate 495. New York State Heritage Areas are state-local partnerships in regions with significant natural, historic, and cultural resources. The program intends to create shared resources and goals for preservation, education, recreation and leisure, and economic development. There are only five of these heritage areas in New York.



### Long Island North Shore Heritage Area

Source: NYS Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

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<sup>1</sup> Certified Local Governments are local governments that meet criteria of the SHPO and NPS, thus qualifying them for competitive grants and other historic preservation support.

## Scenic Resources

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Riverhead's scenic character helps maintain the Town's economic vitality and overall quality-of-life. Scenic resources include natural and built features that are distinctive and integral to the community's scenic character. The following features contribute the Town's scenic character.

### Shorelines, Rivers, Streams, Ponds, and Wetlands

Views of and access to water bodies are important in defining Riverhead as a coastal community. Major water bodies and their shorelines or banks serve as scenic vistas, including: Long Island Sound, Flanders Bay, the Great Peconic Bay, and the Peconic River. The picturesque bluffs along Long Island Sound are part of the natural landscape and give a unique and special feeling to the northern part of Riverhead.

The Peconic River is a major scenic feature in Riverhead's landscape. It contributes to the character of the Pine Barrens region as well as downtown Riverhead, and the Town's name and identity is closely tied to the Peconic. Under New York State's Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers Act, the Peconic River is designated as "scenic" from the western Town boundary, through Robert Cushman Murphy Park on the southern side of EPCAL and ends about 3,000 feet east of Edwards Ave and River Road. The "recreation" designation picks up where "scenic" ends and continues east, past the LIRR bridge, and along West Main Street to Mill Road, where the "community" designation starts to mix in. The remainder of West Main Street going east to Grangebel Park is under the "community" designation. . Most new development along the riverfront is strictly limited, but recreational trails and paths are permitted.

*Note: The updated plan will have a map of these features*

### Vegetation

Wooded areas, such as the Pine Barrens, contribute to the Town's rural character. There are mature trees throughout Riverhead, including notable stands along Sound Avenue. Areas with significant expanses of native vegetation can be found in woodlands, wetlands, or meadows. Native plants are valuable not only from an ecological point of view but also as historic elements of the Town's landscape.

### Agricultural Landscapes

Agricultural lands include cultivated fields, vineyards and orchards, pastures, and farm stands. These areas can be found throughout Riverhead, however the main farming belt is located within APZ zone in the central part of Town between Sound Avenue and Middle Road. Agricultural lands are also commonly found outside of this "belt" north of sound avenue within RA-80 Zone and south of Route 25 in the eastern part of Town within RB-80 Zone. Views of agricultural land are integral to Riverhead's identity as a rural community and play an important role in attracting tourists who support a growing number of agriculture-associated retail businesses. The aesthetic value of these views needs to be balanced with the economic values of working farms.

### Scenic and Historic Corridors

Scenic corridors are roads, streams, trails, and other linear paths that are characterized by an exceptional visual quality along the sides of the corridor. Many factors may contribute to their visual

## ***Working Draft 1/26/2024***

quality: views of agricultural landscapes; forested tree cover; the presence of historical sites; vistas of bluffs, wetlands, water bodies, or other natural features. These corridors attract visitors, who enjoy driving, walking, biking, or traveling through Riverhead's scenic landscape. These corridors are the vantage points from which most people — residents and visitors alike — experience Riverhead's rural landscape.

Many people experience the Town's rural and natural landscape from the Town's roads, whether they are traveling by car, by bus, on foot, or via bicycle. Those who hike or bike on off-road trails or who go canoeing or kayaking on the Peconic River experience the scenic qualities of those corridors.

In 1975, in honor of the Bicentennial and Long Island's role in the American Revolution, the New York State Assembly and the Riverhead Town Board established the Sound Avenue Scenic and Historic Corridor. However, this state designation does not include any meaningful regulatory protection. According to the LPC, since its identification seven out of the 20 historic structures along the Sound Avenue corridor or have been demolished.

Scenic and Historic Corridors are not defined in the Town Code, and their preservation relies on other policies including zoning, landmark and historic district designations, and TDR. Following the adoption of the 2003 Comprehensive Plan, the town added the Rural Corridor (RLC) zoning district, the Agriculture Protection Zone (APZ), and the Residence A-80 (RA80) zone to the Town code and map. Among their other purposes, all of these districts were created to preserve agricultural vistas and the rural character of the Town. RLC provides some restrictions along Route 25 and RA80 specifically provides protections for the Sound Avenue Corridor. The APZ and RA80 zones limit the density of development and play essential roles in the TDR program with the intent of preserving agricultural land.

### **Historic Structures and Sites**

Older homes, barns, and churches, whether found on individual sites or in small clusters, can contribute to scenic views, particularly in rural areas and along scenic corridors. For example, a historic home or church situated at a crossroads can endow that place with a special character. An old farmhouse, cemetery, or stone wall adds to the rural character of a farm as much as the presence of cultivated fields or grazing farm animals.

Goals and Recommendations

Goal 1. Protect scenic resources and views.

A fundamental goal of this comprehensive plan is to proactively protect and enhance Riverhead’s scenic resources and views. Advancement of this goal requires the implementation of thoughtful land-use policies, promoting responsible development practices, and collaborating with stakeholders. Integrating protective measures into development regulations will help to strike a balance between growth and preservation, fostering a resilient and visually appealing environment for all residents and visitors alike.

1.1. Undertake a study to identify locations throughout Riverhead with scenic resources and significant views.

At the discretion of the Town Board, and by recommendation of a Town Committee, Riverhead could undertake a study to identify scenic resources and viewsheds. This could include the documentation of scenic viewsheds along with recommended mechanisms for maintaining them. Scenic resources, including natural features, agricultural lands, and open spaces, are discussed in more detail in other chapters.

1.2. Continue to recognize the importance of scenic qualities throughout the Town Code and in site plan review.

This could include strengthened zoning regulations, design guidelines to protect views, or other provisions in the Landmarks Preservation Law. Most zoning use districts, cluster development, and subdivision regulations identify the importance of scenic qualities.

1.3. Coordinate scenic preservation initiatives with other community enhancement programs

Other recommendations throughout the Comprehensive Plan (i.e. open space acquisition, natural resource conservation, park and recreation development, farmland preservation, and business district improvement efforts) are intended to help preserve open space areas and natural features of the landscape.

The Open Space chapter provides recommendations such as open space acquisition and improved waterfront access. The Natural Features and Environmental Resources chapter provides recommendations for protecting natural features (such as the Peconic River and bluffs overlooking Long Island Sound). The Land Use and Zoning chapter discusses design guidelines for downtown, hamlet centers, and Route 58. These initiatives should consider scenic vistas and protect them wherever possible. Farmland preservation efforts are discussed in the Agriculture chapter. It is important to balance the need to support the economic vitality of the agricultural industry with the desire to preserve farms as a bucolic scenic resource.

1.4. Continue to enforce exterior lighting code violations.

The purpose of Riverhead’s Exterior Lighting provision is to preserve the rural character of Riverhead and allow the public the ability to view the night sky. Riverhead should continue code enforcement efforts and be vigilant in reviewing exterior lighting on future development applications.



# Working Draft 1/26/2024

## 1.5. Nominate Sound Avenue to the National and/or New York State Scenic Byway Program

The U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration and the New York State Department of Transportation both have scenic byway programs. These programs provide grant funding for designated byways and require the development of a Corridor Management Plan, which could help create a community vision and priorities for the corridor including economic development and environmental and historic preservation.

## 1.6. Continue protecting scenic corridors through zoning regulations.

Currently, scenic corridor protection is provided by RLC, APZ, and RA80 zoning districts. The Town may consider strengthening zoning regulations to further protect views along scenic corridors, such as expanding buffer areas and enhancing landscaping requirements. Chapter 5 Transportation recommends that the town develop and adopt design criteria for rural corridors. The Town should consider designation of historic landmarks or districts, as appropriate, along scenic corridors.

## 1.7. Protect the visual quality of scenic corridors and improve the scenery along other roads.

The Town should develop and adopt roadway design criteria for rural corridors, as recommended in Chapter 5 Transportation.

## Goal 2. Continue to identify, document, and promote public awareness of town’s historic resources.

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The Town must actively engage in ongoing efforts to identify and document the diverse array of historic sites, structures, and cultural assets that contribute to the tapestry of its history. This effort requires collaboration with local historical societies, preservation organizations, and community stakeholders. Targeted educational initiatives, public outreach, and the integration of interpretative signage will help to raise awareness and ensure Riverhead’s rich history remains a celebrated aspect of our community’s identity for generations to come.

### 2.1. Update the comprehensive survey of historic resources in Riverhead.

Historic resources include individual buildings, groups of buildings (such as a hamlet area), and sites and landscapes (e.g. cemeteries, archaeological sites) that are important to the historic character of the Town. An updated survey would supplement the list of officially designated town landmarks maintained by the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

### 2.2. Develop an integrated public signage program for historic resources

Signs should be located along Sound Avenue, at historic structures and archaeological sites, and within historic districts. These signs will allow residents and visitors to recognize, understand, and better appreciate the various points of interest throughout the Town.

### 2.3. Provide educational materials and technical assistance to historic and designated landmark property owners.

The Town should continue to support the LPC’s efforts to educate the public and encourage property owners to consider the designation of their properties on the local, state, and national registers. The LPC should continue to inform municipal boards to ensure that the preservation of historic buildings

## ***Working Draft 1/26/2024***

(regardless of their designation status) is considered in all planning and development decisions. These resources will help property owners to access funding, tax incentives, and educational materials to maintain their property correctly.

### **2.4. Designate additional historic districts.**

The SHPO determined that the Main Road Historic District and Wildwood State Park Historic District are eligible for State and National Register listing. Eligible status provides some protection of historic structures by requiring additional review for state or federally funded projects within the districts. However, without National and State Register listing, the property owners cannot access tax credits and other benefits. The LPC should continue its efforts to officially designate these districts.

Additional districts to consider nominating to the National Register include:

- Sound Avenue
- Polish Town
- South Jamesport
- Jamesport Campgrounds

### **2.5. Pursue local, state, and national designation of individual landmarks.**

There is interest in designating resources related to the town's Black history and resources on the Main Road corridor and in Hamlet areas. Completion of nominations for eligible properties should be pursued when the property owner agrees.

## ***Goal 3. Ensure that design of new development is compatible with its surroundings and scenic and historic resources.***

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This comprehensive plan underscores the commitment to fostering a built environment that is not only functional and sustainable but also harmonious with the natural and cultural landscapes of Riverhead. By encouraging thoughtful site planning, architectural diversity, and the use of sustainable design practices, we can ensure new development enhances, rather than detracts from, the distinctive charm of Riverhead. This could include hamlet specific design guidelines that prioritize compatibility with respect to scale, architectural heritage, and scenic vistas of the surrounding areas. These guidelines would require a collaborative approach, involving residents, stakeholders, design professionals, and town officials.

### **3.1. Adopt the Downtown Pattern Book into the zoning code.**

This document is a valuable tool, providing clear guidance for developers, architects, and the community on how to design buildings that preserve and enhance the unique character of the downtown district.

### **3.2. Develop design standards for historic hamlet center areas to ensure any development is compatible with the area's scenic and historic characteristics.**

Chapter 3 Land Use and Zoning proposes the development of pattern books for Main Road, Sound Avenue, Jamesport, Aquebogue, Polish Town, and other areas.

# Working Draft 1/26/2024

Any design regulations should define terms with respect to massing, size, roof slope, building arrangement, etc. The pattern book should also define subjective terms such as 'rural appearance,' to ensure that desirable outcomes are implemented.

It is also suggested that design standards and guidelines for subdivisions and site plans be developed to protect scenic views and historic resources. This would create more predictability for applicants, by clarifying what aspects of design the ARB should focus on and base its decisions upon.

### 3.3. Improve coordination between the LPC and ARB review process.

To ensure that the ARB can make informed decisions, expertise of Town departments should be consulted as appropriate. The ARB may request that a developer provide elevations showing adjacent structures and properties for context.

## Goal 4. Protect historic resources from destruction or neglect and encourage the restoration and adaptive reuse of historic structures.

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Our community is committed to the preservation and sustainable use of our historic resources and protecting these irreplaceable assets from destruction or neglect. By implementing robust preservation policies and regulations, we aim to safeguard historic structures, ensuring they remain integral to the cultural fabric of Riverhead. Adaptive reuse is another key strategy, as it preserves the architectural integrity of these structures but also contributes to economic revitalization. Incentive programs, streamlined approval processes, and collaboration with developers will be explored to foster the responsible and innovative repurposing of historic properties, striking a harmonious balance between preservation and progress.

### 4.1. Establish an official watch list and map of buildings that have potential for landmark preservation but have not been designated.

The LPC maintains a "Watch List" of threatened buildings to encourage their restoration. Several buildings previously on the list have been restored, in part as the result of LPC efforts. Alteration, construction, and demolition permit applications for watch list resources should be referred to the LPC for their recommendation. The Building Department should be aware of the watch list and other historic structures outside of mapped historic districts so they can make a referral to the LPC prior to the issuance of any building permits. The current watch list is included in the existing conditions section of this Chapter.

### 4.2. Prevent demolition of historic structures.

The Town should consider requiring referral of demolition permit applications to the LPC to review for potential historic significance, particularly for structures over 75-years old and buildings on the official watch list. The Building Department should provide the Landmarks Preservation Commission with prompt notification of building or demolition permits affecting potentially historic or cultural properties and give them ample time (30 days) to review and respond with a recommendation. Following the Model Landmarks Preservation Local Law for New York State Municipalities, economic hardship provisions can be incorporated into the code.

## ***Working Draft 1/26/2024***

Demolition review should also be coordinated with the SHPO to ensure that properties that are designated or eligible for State and National landmark and historic district designation are evaluated prior to issuance of a demolition permit.

To prevent “demolition by neglect” of Town landmarks or structures within local historic districts, the Property Maintenance and Unsafe Structures and Conditions (Chapter 217 Parts IV and V) sections of the Town Code should be reviewed.

### **4.3. Provide flexibility to historic property owners who seek variances for the purpose of protecting the historic character of the property.**

Consider a streamlined land use review to encourage the adaptive reuse of eligible buildings. Area variances (i.e. for parking, bulk, and setbacks) for historic and cultural landmarks and structures within historic districts should be given some flexibility when the variance is necessary to maintain the historic or cultural aspects of the property. In the past, the LPC has worked with property owners to obtain reasonable variances when they are willing to designate their properties as town landmarks. The Town and LPC should continue to monitor State initiatives to update the Building Code to be more flexible toward historic structures.

### **4.4. Ensure enforcement of the Landmarks and Historic Districts Chapter of the Town Code is undertaken.**

At present, the building inspector can issue a stop-work order and the Town can fine the offender \$1,000. The Town should continue to monitor the effectiveness of landmarks and historic districts code enforcement and make adjustments as appropriate. The code should be revised to allow all code enforcement officials to issue stop-work orders as well to expand enforcement capacity.

### **4.5. Promote and facilitate adaptive reuse of historically and architecturally significant buildings.**

The Town should consider a flexible and streamlined land use review to encourage the adaptive reuse of eligible buildings. The LPC could develop a list of eligible buildings and can help property owners find compatible uses and resources to appropriately retrofit the building for its new purpose.

### **4.6. Consider Pursuing Certified Local Government (CLG) status.**

Certified Local Governments (CLGs) meet standard best practices established by the National Park Service and New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). CLG status gives increased access to federal survey and planning funds, which are distributed annually, and support from SHPO. To be eligible, Riverhead may need to revisit its Landmarks Preservation Law to ensure it complies.

### **4.7. Educate property owners on financial incentives for historic preservation.**

Riverhead has implemented a tax abatement program to incentivize property owners to rehabilitate historic properties. Riverhead also provides a special permit in the RLC zone to enlarge existing structures for professional offices if they are designated a Town landmark. Other incentives to encourage historic preservation include state and federal rehabilitation tax credits, historic preservation easements that may provide tax benefits, and other preservation grants.

**4.8. Identify, promote, and apply for preservation grants and funding opportunities.**

In addition to opportunities available to private property owners, grants and funding opportunities may be available at the municipal level. The Town should explore opportunities including, but not limited to, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Preservation League of New York, New York State Council for the Arts, and NYS Community Preservation Fund legislation.

Appendix: Table 9-1. Riverhead Landmarks

Map ID	Landmark	Address	Built Date	Local Listing	National Listing
1	United States Post Office-Riverhead	23 W Second St	c. 1929	N/A	1989
2	Vail-Leavitt Music Hall	18 Peconic Ave	1881	1979	1983
3	Hallock Homestead	6038 Sound Ave	c. 1765 and 19th century additions	2005	1984
4	Eugene Hallock House	6142 Sound Ave	1859	2005	1984
5	Suffolk County Historical Society Building	300 W Main St	1930-1931	N/A	1994
6	Hallock-Bilunas Farmstead	733 Herricks Ln	1880 house, late 19th - early 20th century outbuildings	N/A	2003
7	Jamesport Meeting House	1590 Main Rd	1731	1979	2009
8	Benjamin King Woodhull House	126 Sound Rd	mid-18th century, and enlarged circa 1843	1982	2008
9	Jedediah Hawkins House	400 S Jamesport Ave	1864	2003	2008
10	Tuthill-Lapham House (Friendly Hall)	324 Sound Rd	c. 1820, and additions 1838, 1869, and the 1920s	1982	2009
11	Daniel and Henry Tuthill Farm Complex	1146 Main Rd	c. 1890	N/A	2015
12	Harrison Downs House & Farm	5793 Sound Ave	c. 1874, early 20th century outbuildings	N/A	2016
13	Wading River Radio Station	408 North Side Rd	1912	N/A	2018
14	Bank Building	34-38-42 W Main St	1892	1981	NA
15	Benjamin House and Barn, Fresh Pond School House	141 E Main St	c. 1860 1822	1976	NA
16	Capt. Austin Penny House	2014 Main Rd	c. 1872	2004	NA
17	Captain Dimon House (Jamesport Manor)	370 Manor Ln	Late 18th-Mid 19th Century, Rebuilt 2007	2000	NA
18	Centerville Chapel	3718 Sound Ave	1888	1976	NA
19	Charles Hallett House	218 Griffing Ave	Mid-Late 19th Century	1985	NA
20	Conklin House	216 Lincoln St	Late 19th Century	1994	NA
21	Corwin-Davis-McGrath House (Old Riverhead News Building)	215 Roanoke Ave	Early-Mid 19th Century	1983	NA
22	Corwin-Terry House ("East Lawn")	536-540 E Main St	1855	1988	NA
23	Corwin-Young House	445 Griffing Ave	1891	unknown	NA
24	David Wells House	5120 Sound Ave	c. 1790	1987	NA
25	Davis-Corwin House	133 E Main St	c. 1840	1976	NA
26	District # 10 School	86 Winds Way	1872	2003	NA
27	Elks Lodge	1239 E Main St	1921	2017	NA
28	Ellsworth Tuthill House ("1812 House")	144 Sound Rd	1812	1982	NA
29	Everett Conklin House	206 Lincoln St	1892	unknown	NA
30	Fletcher Booker Homestead	1185-87-89 Northville Tpke	1939	2007	NA
31	Granite Stone from "Octagon" Jail	200 Howell Ave	1854	1981	NA
32	Griffing-Wells House	396 Main Rd	1758	2006	NA
33	Howell House	533 E Main St	1929	2004	NA

## Working Draft 1/26/2024

34	Irving Hulse House	790 Hulse Landing Rd	1822	1981	NA
35	J. Victor Wilson Barn	977 Main Rd	1908	2017	NA
36	Jeremiah Edwards House	193 Griffing Ave	c. 1870	1976	NA
37	John Luce House	5298 Sound Ave	c. 1800	1988	NA
38	Luther Moore house	486 Main Rd	c. 1865	2007	NA
39	Meyer House	18 1st St	c. 1890	unknown	NA
40	Modern Snack Bar Sign	628 Main Rd	1956	2007	NA
41	Moore-Barnes House	224 Griffing Ave	Mid-Late 19th Century	1982	NA
42	Oliver's Hill Cemetery	Sound Rd	1696	2006	NA
43	Paine Family House Site and Cemetery	2730 N Wading River Rd	18th Century	2007	NA
44	Paul Hulse House	3060 N Wading River Rd	c. 1812	1983	NA
45	Perkins Carriage House (a.k.a., the Yellow Barn)	330 Court St	c. 1880	2017	NA
46	Peters-Kimmel Cottage	11 Kimmel Ln	1911	2011	NA
47	Pump House	73-79 Peconic Ave	pre-1900	1979	NA
NA	Reeve/Corwin House (Roswell Corwin)*	Main Rd	c. 1700	1977	NA
48	Roanoke Avenue School	573 Roanoke Ave	1924	2005	NA
49	Salem Wells House	5412 Sound Ave	c. 1760	1988	NA
50	Second Street Fire House	24 E Second St	1931	2017	NA
51	Sheldon Downs House & District #11 School	941 Manor Ln	1860 & 1834	unknown	NA
52	Slade-Hallett House	214 Griffing Ave	Mid-Late 19th Century	1982	NA
53	Sound Avenue Congregational Church	5267 Sound Ave	1904	1981	NA
54	Sound Avenue Hall	5268 Sound Ave	1831	1981	NA
55	Suffolk Theater	118 E Main St	1933	2004	NA
56	Taft Candy Store	48-52 Peconic Ave	1898	1988	NA
57	The Witch's Hat	347 Main Rd	c. 1927	1987	NA
58	Tuthill-Davis House	179 Sound Rd	c. 1790	1982	NA
59	Wading River Cemetery	2289 N Wading River Rd	1849	2006	NA
60	Wading River Congregational Church	2057-2059 N Country Rd	1837	1981	NA
61	Washington Young House	890 Peconic Bay Blvd	c. 1880	2005	NA
62	Wells-Hutchinson House	939 Main Rd	c. 1770	1988	NA
63	Wilbur-Fanning House	73 Winds Way	c. 1790/1836	1982	NA
64	Zophar Miller Cottage	2078 N Wading River Rd	1832	1982	NA
65	Zophar Miller Homestead	2098 N Wading River Rd	1799	1982	NA

\*Demolished

Sources: Riverhead Landmarks Commission, 2023; New York State Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHS) Cultural Resource Information System (CRIS); National Register of Historic Places, 2023