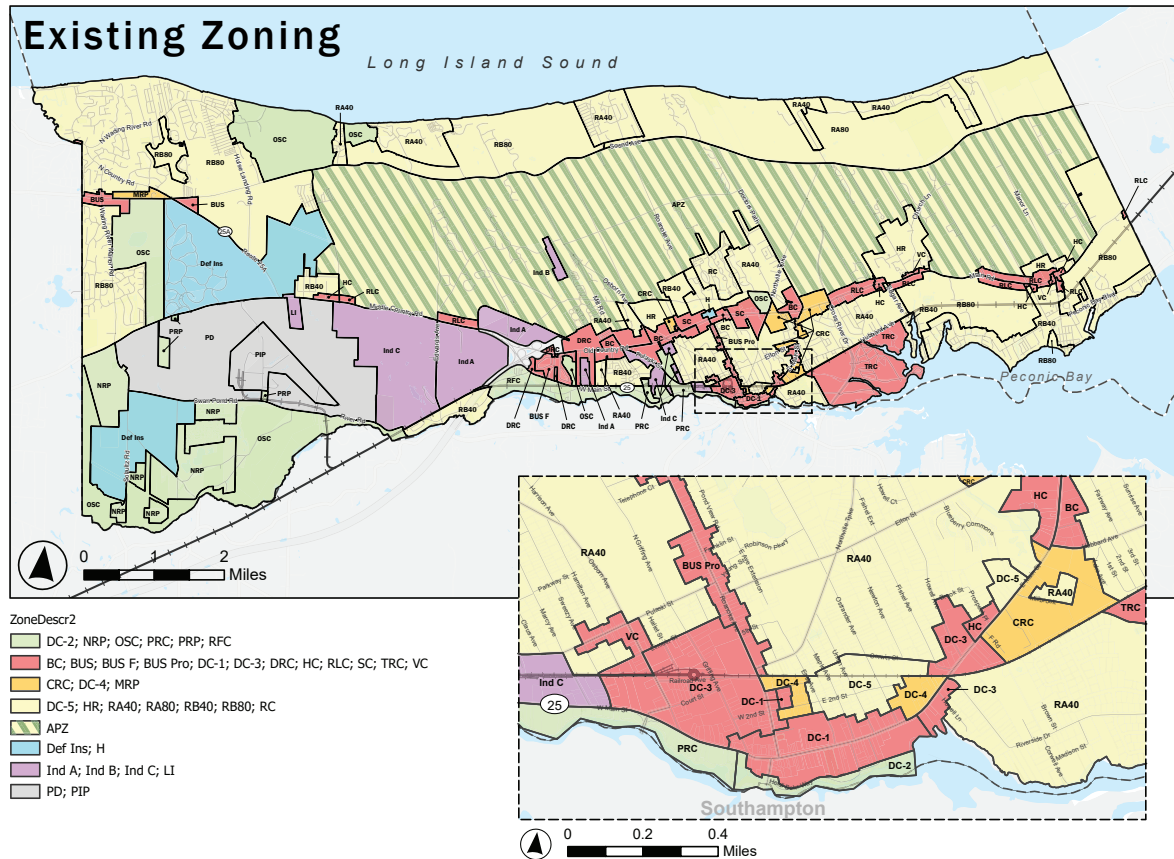
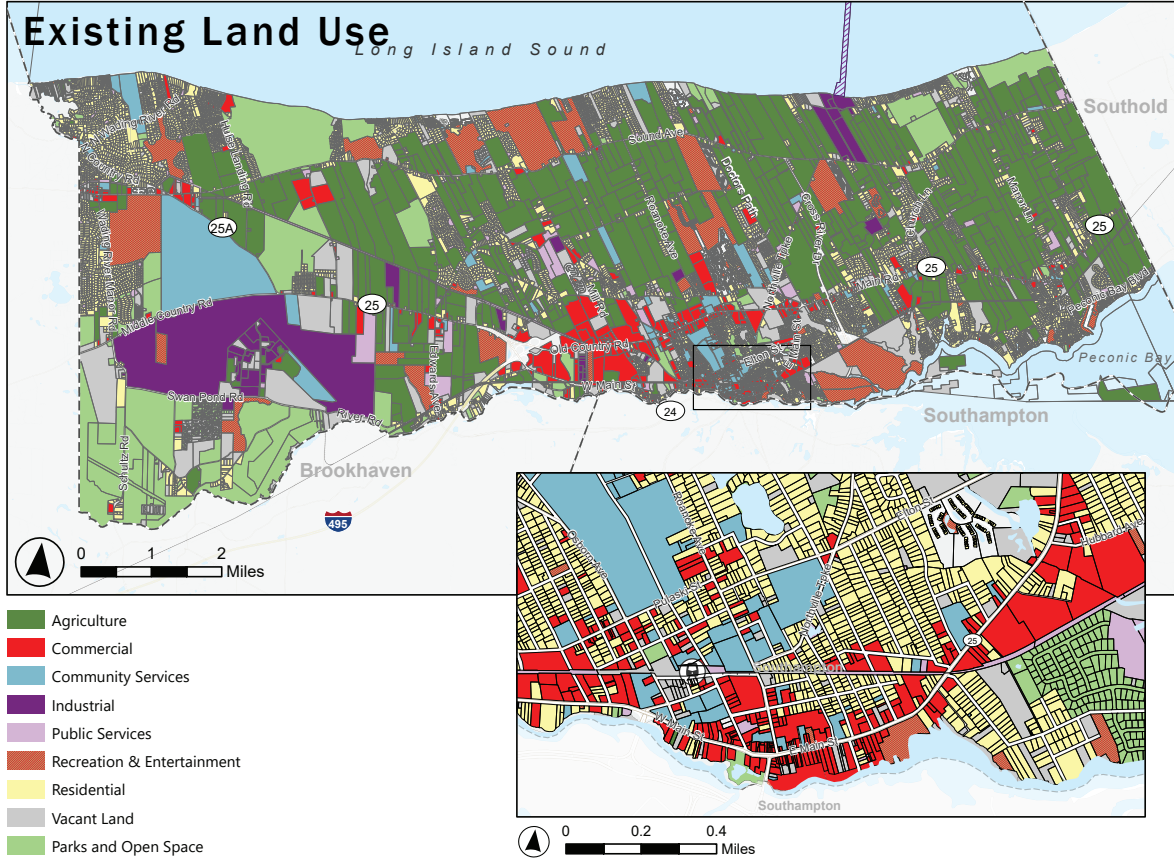
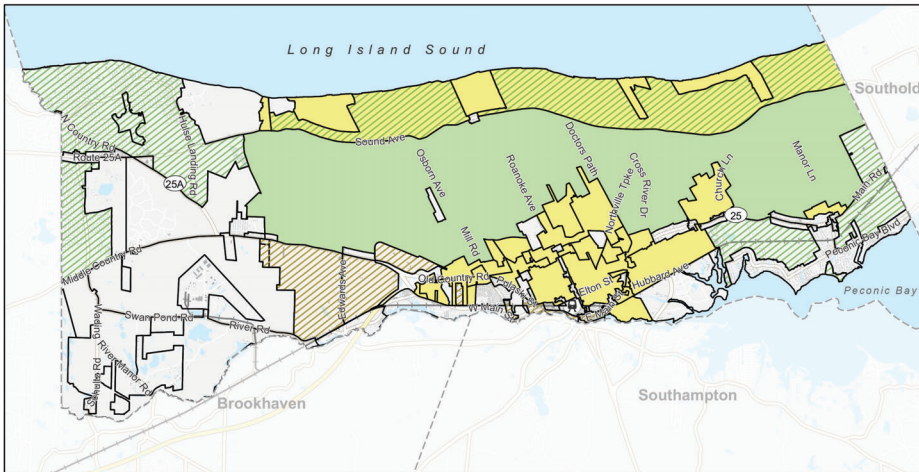


1. EXISTING LAND USE AND ZONING



2. ZONING APPROACH

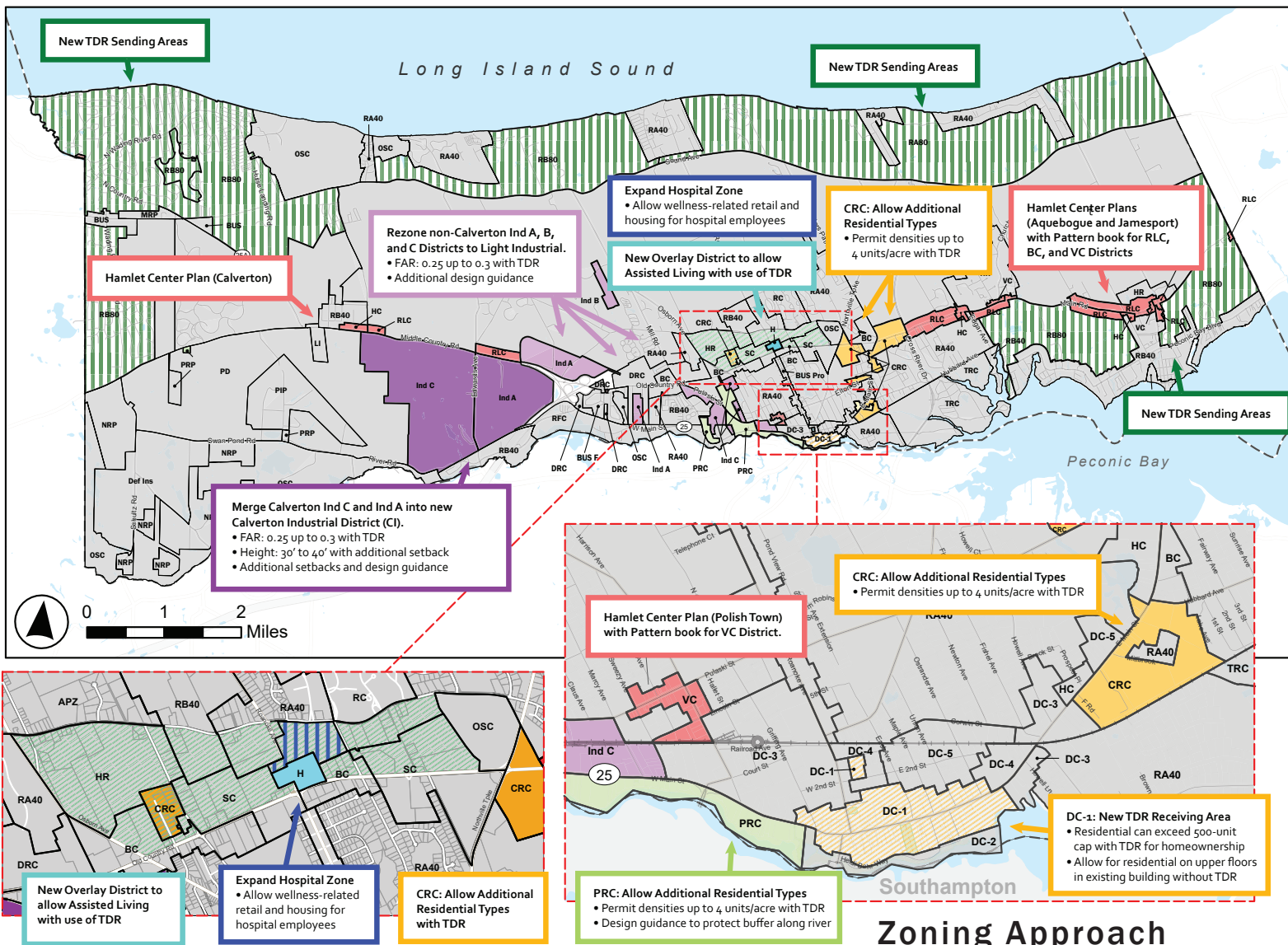


- Current TDR Sending Districts
- Current TDR Receiving Districts
- Proposed Sending Districts
- Proposed Receiving Districts

TDR Approach

Land Use	Existing Ratio	Proposed Ratio
Single Family	1 unit per TDR Credit	1 unit per credit
Attached (< 600 GFA)	1 unit per TDR Credit	2 units per credit
Attached (600-1,200 GFA)		1.5 units per credit
DC-1 Multifamily		4 bedrooms per credit
Age restricted Living (<600 GFA)	1 unit per TDR Credit	3 units per credit
Age restricted Living (600-1,200 GFA)	1 unit per TDR Credit	2 units per credit
Nursing Home		2 units per credit
Assisted Living	1 unit per TDR Credit	2.5 units per credit
Commercial	1,500 SF per Credit	Commercial: 3,000 SF/credit Hotel: 3 keys/credit Office: 2,000 SF/credit Industrial: 4,000 SF/credit

Proposed TDR Formula (draft)



Zoning Approach

3. HOUSING

Draft Goals and Recommendations



Goal 3-1: Continue to promote housing affordability and the availability of quality affordable and workforce housing in Riverhead and throughout the region.

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.

a. Regularly monitor housing dynamics and review housing policies.

The Town's affordable housing policies, including workforce housing provisions, should be evaluated on a regular basis to ensure that they are achieving the desired outcomes.

b. Monitor short-term rentals for impacts on Riverhead's housing stock.

A balance is needed between ensuring adequate availability of year-round housing and providing for some economic development. Short-term rentals may be appropriate in more touristy areas, such as near the downtown or waterfront areas, where they support local businesses and attractions.

c. 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.

d. Encourage other East End towns to provide their fair share of affordable and workforce housing.

One example is potential development in the Flanders hamlet in Southampton. Collaboration is needed to ensure that any development considers the broader impacts on neighboring communities and the Riverhead School District.

e. Ensure that workforce housing is compatible in design and quality with the surrounding neighborhood.

The Town's land use boards provide oversight on these issues and should ensure that workforce housing is indistinguishable from market rate housing, both within the context of the neighborhood as well as within a housing development itself.

f. Make the Long Island Workforce Housing Act mandatory for every subdivision, with no opt-out provision.

Revise code to ensure that developers seeking to subdivide their property cannot opt-out of providing affordable units or paying into the workforce housing fund.

g. Ensure that workforce housing remains perpetually workforce.

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.

Comments:

Goal 3-2: Encourage more diverse housing types to accommodate a wide range of income levels and to address evolving housing needs.

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.

a. Eliminate minimum home size in residential districts.

The Town's building code is sufficient to maintain health and safety. The existing 3,200 square foot minimum discourages the provision of smaller and more affordable units.

b. Utilize TDR to allow for slightly higher densities designated areas.

TDR credits could be used to exceed the 500-unit cap in the downtown (for homeownership opportunities only). Allowing for slight density increase with TDR in the CRC and PRC zones also provides for more diverse housing types such as townhouses and garden apartments.

c. Promote adaptive reuse and preservation of buildings for residential uses in DC-1 District.

Existing buildings in the downtown core area should be permitted to exceed the 500-unit cap when adaptively reusing existing upper floors for housing.

d. Evaluate the 500-unit cap for the DC-1 District.

The Town should conduct economic and fiscal cost-benefit analysis of impacts of additional development to determine whether to keep the cap or expand it. Regulations for the cap should be revised to make it more predictable for applicants and the Town.

e. Revise standards for accessory dwelling units to reduce extraneous barriers for new housing.

The Accessory Apartment code is overly burdensome. The requirement of having a 3 year minimum certificate of occupancy should be based on the principle building rather than the accessory building.

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

The Town has sufficient rental opportunities but needs reasonably priced ownership options. 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.

a. Provide resources and incentives to assist first-time homebuyers.

The Town can work with the Riverhead Community Development Department, financial institutions, non-profits such as Long Island Housing Partnership, and New York State Homes and Community Renewal (NYSHCR), to connect low- and moderate-income households to financing opportunities, low-interest or reduced-down payment mortgages, and homebuyer assistance counseling. A long-term option is to utilize CPF funds to offset costs for 1st time homebuyers. This would require a ballot referendum on the use of CPF funds (which won't be available until 2030).

b. Develop policies and procedures to utilize the affordable housing fund to support first time homebuyers.

This could include eligibility criteria, income guidelines, and application and fund-allocation processes for the use of the affordable housing fund for first-time homebuyer support, such as down payment assistance and reduced-interest loans.

c. Revise the 500-unit cap in the downtown core to promote homeownership opportunities and other housing goals.

This supports the Town's overall goal of attracting new residents to the downtown area who are committed to investing in the community's long-term well-being.

d. Change affordability thresholds for ownership vs rentals

Adjusting the affordability thresholds for the Long Island Workforce Housing provision can better allow the Town to provide affordable options for different markets and income levels.

Goal 3-4: Promote inclusive housing policies and accessible design standards to ensure that housing is available to people of all ages and abilities.

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 recommendation 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. 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.

a. Continue to support programs which provide home improvement funding for low-income senior residents.

The Community Development Department has been successful in helping to rehabilitate units occupied by lower-income senior residents, improving their quality of life, increasing resale value, and may have a positive impact in property tax revenue. The program could be enhanced with more staffing.

b. 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.

An assisted living overlay zone is proposed for parts of Route 58 near the Peconic Bay Medical Center, with TDR credits. Other locations in the Town could allow assisted living by special permit.

c. Develop Accessible Design Standards for Inclusion in the Town Code.

The standards should cover a range of aspects, including physical infrastructure, signage, public transportation, and technology.

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

One issue to address with the County is the concentration of sober homes in the Downtown area. The Town should continue code enforcement, such as occupancy standards, when needed.

e. Expand the Hospital zone to encompass adjacent properties owned by the Peconic Bay Medical Center and permit a wider variety of wellness related uses and housing for hospital staff.

The overall intent would be to provide a campus with a mix of uses that are supportive of the Hospital's overall mission. This could include fitness centers, health food, offices, childcare, and housing for staff.

Comments:

4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Draft Goals and Recommendations



Goal 4-1: Reassess the development strategy for EPCAL to ensure the economic and community benefits of proposed projects align with local needs and that impacts are proactively addressed.

Riverhead's substantial industrially zoned areas offer great opportunities for economic development. In particular, Enterprise Park (EPCAL) is uniquely suited for office, industrial, and commercial recreation development, due to its central location and convenient access from the LIE and existing essential infrastructure. The Town's ownership of the property provides it with the ability to effectuate appropriate development in emerging industries and bring the property back onto the tax rolls through its sale.

- a. Continue to promote economic development opportunities in the EPCAL Area, while creating a framework to make sure impacts are addressed.

The Town should ensure that zoning regulations and land use plans align with their vision for EPCAL. Certain intensive uses such as an air cargo terminal should be eliminated. A reevaluation of the potential impacts should ensure that roads, utilities, and public services can accommodate the increased demand from the proposed development. See the Transportation Board for related recommendations.

Goal 4-2: Encourage appropriately scaled and designed development in industrial areas which better aligns with the character and needs of the surrounding areas.

Many residents expressed the need to reduce potential impacts of industrially zoned properties, as they threaten to impact the surrounding rural and residential landscape. The Town must continue to promote economic development, whilst carefully managing and minimizing potential impacts to surrounding residential communities.

- a. Continue to promote and encourage additional opportunities for private and public indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities in Calverton, along Route 58, and Downtown.

Commercial recreational activities can energize the economy, create job opportunities, stimulate business growth, enrich the leisure options available to residents, and establish Riverhead as a destination for entertainment and relaxation.

- b. Scale back allowable density of industrial development to be more responsive to surrounding uses.

A reduction in allowable density in Ind A and IND C from a .4 FAR to 0.25 FAR with the potential to increase to 0.3 with the use of TDR credits. This measured approach will curtail excessive development and reduce associated impacts such as traffic and aesthetics.

- c. Provide some flexibility for building heights in industrial districts provided aesthetic impacts are mitigated.

To accommodate the current standards for industrial development, the Town may consider allowing slightly higher building heights (up to 40 feet). Increasing setbacks for larger buildings will help to minimize visual impacts.

- d. Strengthen design standards for industrial development to promote aesthetics, green building practices, and architectural harmony with the town's rural character.

Encourage developers to prioritize quality over quantity, focus on sustainable practices, and contribute to a community that values both economic prosperity and environmental stewardship. Design guidance is needed for industrial districts in more urbanized areas to ensure buildings are compatible with the neighborhood fabric.

- e. Transition industrial districts in more urbanized areas into light industrial transition zones with specific design and landscaping requirements to minimize visual and environmental impacts.

For industrially zoned properties outside of the core industrial area in Calverton (generally west of LIE interchange and between Route 25 and River Road), the Town may consider a shift away from heavy industrial towards more compatible light-industrial uses that are conducted within enclosed buildings.

Goal 4-3: Emphasize downtown as the civic, cultural, specialty shopping and historic center of Riverhead.

Riverhead's downtown boasts many assets including its local businesses, mixed of uses, regional attractions, historic built environment, and riverfront location. The recent 2022 Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) was a collaborative process that helped identify several issues and opportunities in the downtown including vacant properties, riverfront access, public realm improvements, diverse population needs, and an expanding tourism market. Goals and strategies from the DRI Plan are incorporated into this section.

- a. Continue to advance the vision, goals, and strategies established in the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) Plan.

These goals were crafted through a collaborative effort with the community to help achieve the implementation of the DRI vision. The projects proposed in the DRI Plan are aligned with the chosen goals.

- b. Make the Peconic River a central feature of Downtown Riverhead's identity with new connections, activities, and development (DRI Goal #1).

Specific strategies include Improving pedestrian connections to the Riverfront, creating a new Town Square to connect Main Street to the River, and creating a shared mobility path along Heidi Behr Way.

- c. Capitalize on opportunities of underutilized and blighted properties to create new catalysts Downtown (DRI Goal #2).

Specific strategies include placemaking to improve the public realm and attract new development, exploring development opportunities on Town-owned parking lots, and developing the Town Square and surrounding vacant sites into a mixed-use destination.

- d. Build on the previous outreach efforts and engage the diverse local community and organizations to address social and environmental justice needs (DRI Goal #3).

This includes the creation of new programs and activities for the Town Square area and throughout Downtown that serve to engage all populations

- e. Create opportunities for new business investment and increased tourism and economic activity (DRI Goal #4).

Specific streetscape improvement strategies include beautification and pedestrian safety improvements that make strolling more inviting, creating multi-modal linkages to connect key destinations, and improving the nighttime environment and public safety perception. It also includes the revitalization of mixed-use buildings around the train station which add to the unique draw of downtown.

- f. Create new and expand existing transit and pedestrian connections, as well as environmental, public space, and recreational improvements (DRI Goal #5).

This includes strategies to improve downtown's accessibility. The Town should continue to enhance safety and improve pedestrian and bicycle connections to the train station, which are being studied as part of MTA's First Mile/Last Mile pilot program. This strategy includes other public realm improvements and programming such as the Town Square and recreation uses along the waterfront.

- g. Implement strategies for flood mitigation integrated with the Downtown plan and new projects (DRI Goal #6).

Climate change and the prospect of higher sea levels and stronger storms presents a significant threat to the future of Downtown. Major improvements are needed to ensure that Downtown can adapt to the risks of a changing climate.

- h. Adopt the Downtown Riverhead Pattern Book and continue to advance its recommendations.

The document addresses the proper siting and massing of new buildings, the enhancement of the public realm, and the issues of resiliency and adaptability in terms of public policy. Formal adoption will give the document more authority for developers, land use boards, the Town Board, and Town staff.

Comments:

Goal 4-4: Enhance the Route 58 Corridor to create a more attractive destination, improve accessibility, and cultivate a hospitable environment for regional and local traffic.

The Route 58 Corridor is a vital commercial hub for the Town and the east end region. It is also an unpleasant gateway to Riverhead as the commercial strip generally lacks aesthetic appeal and is consistently congested. While vacancies are down in recent years, the long-term prospect for big box retail is uncertain. Zoning guidance is needed to ensure that future development contributes positively to various aspects including aesthetics, infrastructure, traffic flow, and stormwater reduction.

- a. Develop design guidelines that provide a cohesive vision for future development along Route 58's

The guidelines would enhance walkability, encourage site planning, and specify appropriate building design, landscaping, and parking lot design that is affordable and aesthetically attractive.

- b. Revisit commercial parking requirements to maximize the efficiency of land.

Current parking requirements encourage vast parking areas, much of which is underutilized. Reducing these requirements and encouraging shared parking enhances pedestrian friendliness and allows for more green space. Reducing requirements can also provide opportunities for adaptive reuse or infill development with new uses, which would help to make the corridor a more dynamic commercial center.

- c. Provide a flexible zoning framework that allows for the repurposing of vacant and underutilized properties.

Zoning flexibility should promote infill development and adaptive reuse of existing structures. This sustainable approach will maximize economic development while minimizing urban sprawl.

Comments:

4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Draft Goals and Recommendations



Goal 4-5: Guide responsible land use planning in hamlet centers.

The Town has several hamlet-oriented commercial areas where local residents can access essential goods and services without needing to travel long distances. Each hamlet has its own unique character, history, and community aspirations. The Town should coordinate economic development efforts with neighboring towns, local businesses, and non-profit agencies.

- a. Encourage the creation hamlet studies for Aquebogue, Jamesport, Calverton, and Polish Town.

Tailored hamlet studies could result in design guidelines or pattern books developed closely with residents and business owners. The studies would identify the unique needs and priorities of the hamlet and ensure future development is contextual.

- b. Balance growth and greenery along West Main Street, a gateway to Riverhead.

A tailored zoning approach to West Main Street should balance residential and small scaled commercial development with the existing patchwork of uses and respect the Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers regulations of NYDEC. This approach could include the implementation of a greenbelt program, focusing on enhancing the Peconic river waterfront vicinity.

Goal 4-6: Balance fiscal and community benefits when considering new development and zoning decisions.

Economic development initiatives are necessary to increase the tax base and fund essential public services, infrastructure improvements, and quality of life enhancements. Commercial and industrial development provide high ratables that offset residential property taxes and provide funding for the school district and other essential town services. Multi-family development can also have a positive fiscal impact on a community. Attracting investment with incentives should be balanced with community benefits that align with the Town's broader vision for sustainable growth, quality of life, economic prosperity, and the well-being of its residents.

- a. Achieve a sustainable balance between economic development and land preservation.

Given the Town's expansive amount of preserved land, targeted economic development initiatives are necessary to fund essential public services, infrastructure improvements, and quality of life enhancements.

- b. Establish a fiscal framework for the evaluation of development proposals and zoning decisions.

A systematic approach to the financial implications of zoning changes and development decisions, can ensure they align with the Town's long-term fiscal health and sustainability goals. This framework would also enhance transparency and predictability for developers and the community.

- c. Work with IDA to maximize both fiscal and community benefits.

The Town should work with the IDA to ensure that the negotiations with developers are transparent and result in substantial returns, in the form of taxes and community benefits.

Comments:

Goal 4-7: Continue to work with local partners on economic development initiatives.

The BID and Chamber of Commerce organizations serve as vital partners in the pursuit of economic development opportunities, working in unison with the local government to enhance the Town's business environment. Riverhead is also uniquely situated as the gateway to the North and South Forks and can do more to capture tourists heading further east. As a result, the Town's economic wellbeing is intricately connected to neighboring East End Towns.

- a. Continue to work with the Business Improvement District (BID) and the Chamber of Commerce on Economic Development Opportunities.

By continuing to build upon these partnerships, Riverhead can leverage collective expertise, resources, and community engagement to drive growth and prosperity.

- b. Foster synergy help coordinate economic development in the North Fork.

One approach could involve the participation in a North Fork Cooperative, which would be a collaborative platform to plan collective programs such as a "2-Day Fun Pass" which captures businesses and destinations in the region.

- c. Actively Market Development/Redevelopment Sites Aligned with the Town's Vision.

A unique Riverhead brand should emphasize its distinct character and heritage and make it stand out as a desirable place to invest, live, and visit.

Goal 4-8: Promote sustainable economic growth and development and foster the creation of employment opportunities.

Investing in workforce development is vital for the economic growth and sustainability of Riverhead. Regional institutions such as Suffolk County Community College and Cornell Cooperative extension, and local employers including Peconic Bay Medical Center, are partners in the growth and development of a diverse job market. The development of EPCAL also has the potential further diversify the job market in fields such as technology, sustainability, and other industries.

- a. Partner with local educational institutions and workforce development agencies to provide training programs and resources.

Work with employers and institutions of higher learning to include and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) to develop continuing education and certificate programs that align with expected job growth in emerging industries such as health care, senior services, and renewable energy.

- b. Promote apprenticeship programs and partnerships between local businesses and educational institutions to create a pipeline of skilled workers.

The Town should partner with local businesses, such as Peconic Bay Medical Center, to establish apprenticeship programs that offer hands-on experience and training aligned with the needs of local industries.

- c. Enhance digital infrastructure, including high-speed internet access, to support the growth of employment and knowledge-based industries.

Robust digital infrastructure and high-speed internet is fundamental for economic development and the promotion of knowledge-based industries and a competitive economy.

- d. Carefully consider EPCAL development proposals to maximize living wage job creation and workforce training opportunities.

The Town and IDA should give priority to projects that create jobs and training opportunities for Riverhead residents in emerging industries.

Goal 4-9: Achieve a harmonious blend of tourism and rural charm, making Riverhead an attractive destination while upholding residents' quality of life.

Agritourism activities, including tastings at wineries and pick-your own fruits and vegetables, have grown popular in Riverhead, especially during the fall months. It is important for the Town to support agrotourism as a source of alternative income for farms, while ensuring that regulations prevent negative impacts such as traffic and noise. Private events, such as weddings, and short-term rentals bring visitors to Riverhead, but can present noise, light, and safety concerns.

- a. Continue to promote agriculture and agrotourism but strengthen monitoring to minimize impacts.

The Town should develop a permitting process and transparent regulations that address private event space and size to mitigate traffic and safety issues.

- b. Regulate short term rentals to balance the benefits of tourism with the impacts on residential areas.

Short-term rentals may be appropriate in more touristy areas, such as near the downtown, where they support local businesses and attractions. However, regulations should regularly reviewed to ensure they do not unduly impact the full-time housing market.

Goal 4-10: Promote more environmentally friendly businesses.

Aligning economic growth with environmental stewardship creates a sustainable and balanced framework that benefits businesses, residents, and the environment.

- a. Encourage industries to adopt environmentally friendly practices, such as recycling, waste reduction, and energy efficiency measures.

These practices can help protect the local environment, conserve resources, and enhance the long-term resilience of the community.

- b. Promote more sustainable design.

Developments in industrial and business zones should use green building design, construction, and features, and incorporate natural vegetation, permeable surfaces, and effective stormwater management systems, to enhance water quality, reduce flooding risks, preserve ecological health, and conserve resources.

Comments:

5. AGRICULTURAL LANDS

Draft Goals and Recommendations



Goal 5-1: Improve the marketplace for the TDR program.

This goal addresses the need to bolster the effectiveness of the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program, focusing on creating a more robust marketplace to encourage TDR participation. The plan recommends additional receiving areas where responsible and sustainable development can be accommodated. Another key strategy is to stimulate the marketplace by increasing the value of TDR credits. This multi-faceted approach will promote balanced growth while preserving the unique character, agricultural heritage, and natural resources that define the community.

a. Designate additional receiving areas where some increased development can be accommodated.

This recommendation identifies new areas where TDR credits can be utilized, to effectively create new demand for preservation credits where it does not currently exist. Several areas that can support increased residential or commercial growth are proposed (see map of proposed sending and receiving areas). The proposed areas were vetted with the community and with the TDR committee to help ensure that growth occurs in a planned and controlled manner, preventing urban sprawl and preserving open space.

Single Family Districts (RB-80, RA-80)

Consider sending areas in all RB-80 and RA-80 districts. Areas in RA-80 north of Sound Ave are both sending and receiving districts, allowing for some flexibility for property owners and developers.

Industrial areas in Calverton (IND A, IND C)

This plan contemplates a slight reduction in FAR for these areas with an allowance for a slight increase with TDR credits (i.e. reduction of FAR from 0.4 to 0.25 up to 0.3 with TDR).

Industrial areas in other parts of Riverhead

As discussed later in this section, this plan contemplates a slight reduction in FAR for these areas with an allowance for a slight increase with TDR credits.

Downtown Area

Consider allowing buildings to exceed the 500-unit cap only if TDR credits are provided for additional housing units. The housing units achieved with TDR must be for homeownership opportunities only.

Assisted Living Overlay or Floating Zone

Consider permitting assisted living in new overlay zone in areas near route 88 and the Peconic Bay Medical Center. In addition, this use may be appropriate in other areas as determined by the Town Board, provided water and wastewater infrastructure is in place and environmental impacts are addressed. All assisted living units would require the use of TDR credits.

CRC and Peconic River Community (PRC) Districts

Both of these districts are intended to allow for a variety of housing types; however, the existing zoning standards only permit one dwelling unit per acre (single-family). It would be reasonable to accommodate slightly higher densities in this area – given their proximity to the urban core. TDR could be used in this district to achieve a maximum density of 4 units per acre provided that 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 PRC areas, design guidance should be established to push buildings away from the Peconic River and ensure that riparian areas are maintained.

Golf Cottages

Consider allowing for "Golf Cottages" as an accessory use on golf courses (in any zoning district) with the use of TDR credits. This short-term lodging would be used for golfers or visitors to the golf course. Each golf cottage would require a TDR credit and would be limited to one bedroom per unit with kitchenette, not to exceed 600 sq. ft., with additional design standards to minimize visual impact on surrounding community.

Agritourism Resort

This recommendation aims to strike a balance between supporting agritourism, conservation, and the active preservation of agricultural lands. This use could be allowed with the use of TDR's for agritourism lodging within RA-80, RB-80, RA-40, and RB-40 districts under specific conditions. The agritourism hotel would only be allowed as part of a conservation subdivision, where a substantial portion of land (70 percent minimum), is preserved and active farming are encouraged in these areas.

Community Benefit Overlay District

This district is a floating zone which could be applied to parcels provided certain criteria are met. The district permits clustered multifamily rental dwelling units on large lots (10+ acres) on the condition that the proposed project includes an on-site community center and nonresidential use(s). The Town may consider allowing residential densities similar to what is allowed in the Retirement Community (RC) district, provided TDR credits are used and adequate wastewater infrastructure is in place.

b. Increase the value of TDR credits through revisions of the transfer formula.

The TDR program is currently set on a one-to-one basis, where 1 TDR credit equals one residential unit in a receiving district, irrespective of unit size or type. The proposed revisions create a more dynamic market by considering factors such as transfers from low-density to high-density areas, where the infrastructure cost impacts differ. Addressing market conditions is crucial, and potential adjustments to the TDR ratio should ensure financial feasibility and fair compensation for property owners in sending districts. The proposed formula attempts to be a more equitable valuation of TDR credits by incorporating factors like coverage unit size, traffic generation rates, and sanitary sewer demand. Recognizing the evolving market dynamics, the town should proactively review and monitor these formulas to ensure ongoing effectiveness and responsiveness to changing conditions. The presented formulas remain preliminary and are subject to continued evaluation by the town.

Goal 5-2: Increase use of TDR through administrative improvements and access to new funding mechanisms.

The effectiveness of the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program can be improved through the implementation of several administrative improvements and facilitating access to new funding mechanisms. This goal is aligned with the town's commitment to balanced growth and preservation of vital resources. It is also acknowledged that the Town has limited capacity to address the unique challenges involved with administering a complex program like TDR. The small-town context necessitates strategic approaches that balance program effectiveness with administrative feasibility.

a. Establish a TDR Bank to facilitate transactions.

A TDR bank would serve as a central, trusted repository for developers and landowners to deposit, purchase, and trade development rights, simplifying the complex process. Establishing a TDR Bank does come with administrative considerations; additional resources and funding would be needed for the bank's establishment and ongoing long-term management.

b. Support TDR administrative efforts and leverage community resources to connect buyers and sellers.

The Town is an essential partner in ensuring the TDR program is successful. Administrative resources are needed to document and track conservation credits in the program. The Town should work with other partners such as the Long Island Farm Bureau, to assist with connecting buyers and sellers. The Town has an active list of interested buyers, but more can be done to track interested sellers.

c. Continue to work with the TDR Committee to revise regulations as needed to better facilitate preservation of agricultural lands.

The TDR program should be reevaluated on a regular basis. The market may change, and the Town will need to ensure that the ratios remain attractive to developers and equitable to landowners.

Comments:

Agricultural Lands



Goal 5-3: Safeguard agricultural land through diverse approaches to preservation.

Preserving Riverhead's agricultural heritage requires a multifaceted approach. This goal addresses the need for a holistic and sustainable framework that combines financial collaboration, strategic land-use planning, and dedicated administrative oversight to ensure the long-term preservation of the Town's valuable agricultural lands.

a. Continue to plan for and coordinate efforts to permanently preserve farmland.

It is understood that CPF funding will not be available until 2030. In the meantime, the Town should initiate early planning efforts to identify the specific parcels of land to be preserved, in consultation with local environmental organizations and conservation experts. The Town should also continue to identify grants and collaborate with county, state, and federal agencies, as well as non-profit organizations, to explore additional funding sources and partnership opportunities.

b. Continue to promote cluster development subdivisions to preserve agricultural lands.

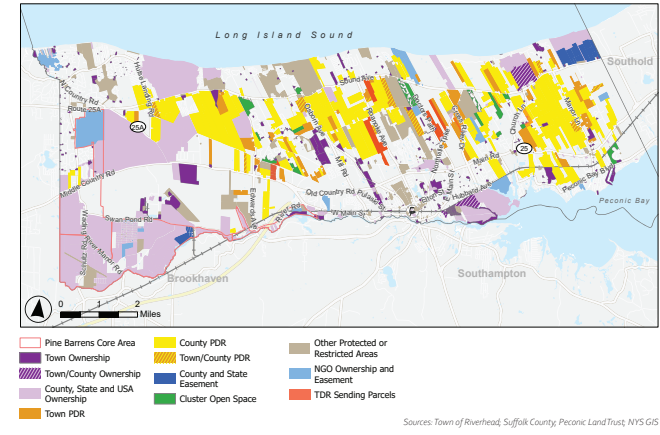
Cluster developments can be an effective land-use strategy for preserving agricultural lands while accommodating population growth and development. This approach involves concentrating housing and infrastructure in specific areas, and leaving a significant portion of the land for agricultural use or open space (see Natural Resources and Open Space for more details).

c. Establish a CPF Management Division in the Town to administer the program.

The Town should establish a CPF Management Division to administer the CPF program once available (see Natural Resources and Open Space for more details).

Comments:

Preserved Lands



5. AGRICULTURAL LANDS

Draft Goals and Recommendations



Goal 5-4: Cultivate Agricultural Resilience and Innovation for a Sustainable Future

This goal centers on preserving and enhancing Riverhead's agricultural legacy while supporting the economic vitality of local farmers. The recommendations address opportunities to foster collaboration amongst the community, promote innovation and streamline the zoning code to ensure that it provides clarity, reduces obstacles, and facilitates the growth of the local agricultural sector.

a. Provide information to farmers that may help improve the efficiency, productivity, or profitability of their farm operations.

These resources and educational materials could encompass a wide array of topics, including the use of TDR, financial incentives, sustainable farming practices, innovative technologies, crop management, market insights, and other programs. These materials could also promote participation in local farmers markets, CSAs, and other farm-to-market initiatives.

b. Consider flexibility in the zoning code to allow for agricultural innovation.

Recognizing that farming will continue to evolve, providing flexibility in the zoning code can help the Town and farmers adapt to changing demands and techniques in the agricultural industry.

Conditional use permits could allow unique uses that are not covered in the zoning code to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Agrovoltaics (colocation of solar panels and agriculture) is another potential accessory use. The coverage for agrovoltaics should be limited what is currently permitted for non-commercial solar facilities.

Vertical farming can complement traditional farming methods by allowing for year-round cultivation of crops and also crop diversification. The Town should consider clear guidance for the total size, setbacks, landscaping, etc. to minimize the visual impact of these structures.

c. Flexibility for adaptive reuse of agricultural structures for permitted uses.

Zoning regulations should be flexible enough to not overly burden applications for permitted uses within pre-existing agricultural structures. One example would be to ensure an expedited zoning board review process for the reuse of pre-existing non-conforming structures used for agricultural purposes.

d. Cleanup the zoning code to address inconsistencies and make sure farming activities are supported.

There may be some instances where the zoning code could be revised to explicitly support farm operations that are already occurring and should continue to be allowed to do so.

e. Support aquaculture in Town waters.

Aquaculture and commercial fishing and working waterfronts are disappearing as marinas are developed. In the future, the Town could consider the use of CPF funds to protect areas where commercial fishing and shell fishing occur to maintain this local industry.

Comments:

Goal 5-5: Cultivate Agrotourism as a Sustainable Income Source, Balancing Economic Growth and Community Well-being.

Riverhead recognizes the potential of agrotourism to bolster local farm incomes while being mindful of mitigating negative impacts such as traffic and noise.

a. Define agrotourism.

The agrotourism label is an umbrella term which can apply to a wide range of agricultural and rural tourism activities. Creating clear definitions will help the Town to monitor and regulate activities in a consistent framework.

b. Regulate events through a permitting process and size restrictions.

It is important for the Town to address and balance the benefits of agrotourism with the potential impacts on agricultural operations, public safety, and the surrounding community. This could include limiting agrotourism events with a permitting process and imposing size restrictions. The permitting process can help to identify traffic and safety concerns and provide a funding mechanism for traffic control when needed. In addition, the Town should develop more transparent regulations that address event space.

c. Support efforts to enforce the Town's existing noise ordinance during events.

In 2022, the Town update its noise ordinance which should continue to be supported. The regulations allow code enforcement officers and police to issue violations for loud music, without needing to do a comprehensive sound study.

d. Continue to allow bed and breakfast by special permit in the APZ, RA-80, RB-80 zones.

Bed and breakfasts are currently allowed in the zones by special permit where most of Riverhead's agriculture is concentrated: APZ, RA-80, and RB-80. Allowing B&B on farms can provide farmers with an additional source of income.

Comments:

Goal 5-6: Goal 6. Help promote Riverhead's agricultural industry and products.

This goal strives to create a vibrant and interconnected ecosystem that champions Riverhead's agricultural industry, ensuring its continued growth and prosperity.

a. Improve enforcement of farm stand regulations to ensure that they do not sell a higher-than-permitted amounts of non-local goods.

There is an ongoing discussion about the need to better regulate farm stands. The Farm Stand Review ordinance limits sales of non-local produce to 40%, which should continue to be enforced.

b. Partner with the local farmers market to promote the sale and purchase of local produce and products.

East End Foods provides an indoor farmers market in Riverhead that is open seasonally and for holidays. With the revitalization of the Downtown, there may be opportunities to expand the local farmers market to reach additional audiences. For example, the Town could partner with East End Foods to host farmers markets in the new Town Square.

c. Encourage public and private entities to buy and sell local produce.

Consider partnerships between farmers and Town Hall, the School District, and other institutions to provide local produce for food service. A partnership with the BID could help promote the use of local produce and products in downtown restaurants and specialty stores.

Comments:

6. NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

Draft Goals and Recommendations



Goal 6-1: Protect and preserve the ecological integrity of Riverhead's Central Pine Barrens area and the water quality of Long Island's sole source aquifer.

The Central Pine Barrens area and the aquifer beneath are among the most critical natural resource areas in the Town from both a natural resource and public health point of view. The aquifer is part of a more extensive system providing millions of people drinking water. The State, County, Town, the Nature Conservancy, and others have acquired lands in the Pine Barrens Core Preservation Area for permanent preservation. Additionally, private property owners in these areas have transferred development rights through the Pine Barrens Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program.

- a. Continue to implement the Central Pine Barrens Comprehensive Land Use Plan and meet its development standards and guidelines.

Following the Plan's directives is essential to help protect natural resources critical to Riverhead and the region for the long term. This Plan is anticipated to be amended in 2024.

- b. Cooperate with local non-profit organizations, the County, and the State working to acquire and protect lands in the Central Pine Barrens area.

Encourage private property owners within the Core Preservation Area to use the Pine Barrens TDR program. Through a coordinated effort, the State, County, Town, or nonprofits should acquire any lands that become vacant or available for sale.

Comments:

Goal 6-2: Protect the quality of ground water and surface waters throughout the Town.

Watershed management is essential for protecting and preserving the Town's water resources, including groundwater and surface water. Stormwater runoff, fertilizer and pesticide usage, improper disposal of hazardous waste, household chemicals, and pharmaceuticals, and sanitary systems contribute to water quality issues. Nitrogen pollution is one of the most significant concerns for Riverhead and the Long Island region. Poor surface water quality leads to the loss of habitats for plant and animal species and the closure of waters for swimming or shell-fishing due to biotoxins.

Groundwater quality and quantity are essential for safe and sustainable access to drinking water. Groundwater pollution, saltwater intrusion, rising sea levels, and future water supply demands all impact the aquifer's ability to provide drinking water.

- a. Consider the creation of a Comprehensive Water Management Plan With identified targets

The Plan should establish targets to address issues raised in the Suffolk County Subwatersheds Wastewater Plan and identify specific water quality improvement and nitrogen (or other contaminant) load reduction targets that will allow the Town to access funding better.

- b. Encourage the use of I/A Systems and work to limit inputs of nitrogen, other nutrients, and toxic materials from sewage treatment plants.

Suffolk County's Septic Improvement Program and New York State Septic System Replacement Programs award homeowners grants and low-interest financing options to transition to Innovative and Alternative Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (I/A OWTs or I/A). The Town should inform property owners about these grants and waive or reduce permit fees for installing I/A systems to incentivize their use.

- c. Encourage the use of Permeable Reactive Barriers and other means of cleaning contaminated ground water.

Permeable reactive barriers are an inexpensive method to trap a range of contaminants. They can be used on brownfield sites, properties near the Central Pine Barrens Special Groundwater Protection Area, shoreline properties, and other locations where groundwater contamination is present.

- d. Improve enforcement of requirements for proper waste discharge from boats and houseboats and evaluate the need for additional pump-out facilities or vessels.

The Town should evaluate whether pump-out vessels and stations are adequate and if more facilities are needed. The Town should also notify houseboat owners about requirements for wastewater holding and disposal systems.

- e. Develop a best practice manual that instructing owners and operators about proper vessel discharge practices.

Through a partnership with Sea Grant, the Bay Constable, and the Parks and Recreation Department, the Town should develop a manual outlining appropriate vessel discharge with resources for more information.

- f. Carry out dredging projects where needed.

Determine whether flushing, dredging, and other improvements can improve small water bodies adjacent to the Sound and Peconic Bay, including but not limited to Baiting Hollow, Iron Pier, Wading River, and East Creek Marina or other docking facilities in Riverhead.

Comments:

Goal 6-3: Limit future increases in impervious surfaces and stormwater runoff to help reduce flood impacts and surface water pollution.

Climate change is anticipated to bring increased frequency and intensity of storms. Existing stormwater infrastructure needs to be improved to address these risks. Reducing the coverage of impervious surfaces will also enable the ground to absorb rainwater. Constant vigilance is required by the Town's Engineering Department and Highway Department to keep infrastructure in working order and to proactively maintain and enhance the system when needed.

- a. Continue to update regulations, ensuring they incorporate the latest stormwater best management practices (BMPs).

Revise the Town Code to increase stormwater storage capacities in parking areas to mitigate overflow and flooding. For projects that do not need a SWP, increasing the required storage capacity for self-contained stormwater management is recommended to be consistent with the International Building Code.

- b. Reevaluate Impervious coverage limits in commercial zones.

Reduce coverage limits in commercial zones and encourage pervious surfaces and stormwater runoff improvements. On Route 58, the Town should consider reducing parking requirements (to meet current standards), and developing design guidelines to require landscaped islands and other green areas.

- c. Continue maintenance of Town-owned drainage systems.

The Engineering Department and Highway Department should continue to carry out their duties to ensure the proper functioning of the stormwater system.

Goal 6-4: Conserve the coastal features of the Long Island Sound including bluffs, shoreline, and dunes.

Riverhead has seen its coastline recede year after year. Changing sea levels, increasing storm frequency and surges, clearing of trees, and development near the Long Island Sound have all contributed to the erosion of bluffs and the coastline.

- a. Clarify and Strengthen the Coastal Erosion Hazard Code regulations.

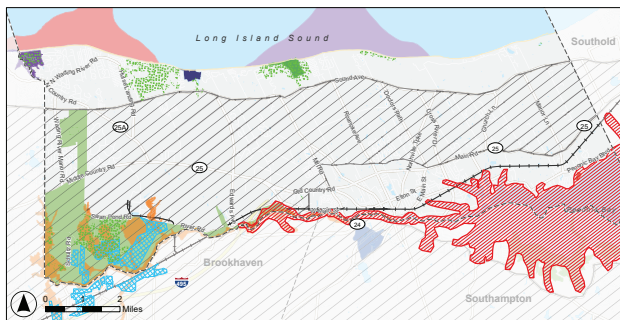
Additional guidance could be added to the code for the Zoning Board of Appeals to reference when reviewing applications in coastal erosion hazard areas.

- b. Track receding bluffs and shoreline.

Lidar data could be used to map and track where the land is receding along the coastline and bluffs. This information would be useful for the public, planning board, and zoning board of appeals when making decisions about development on coastal properties.

Comments:

Significant Coastal Habitats, Critical Environmental Areas, Central Pine Barrens Core Preservation Area, and Natural Heritage Areas



- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NY DOS Significant Coastal Habitats Baiting Hollow Wetlands and Beach Grandfolia Sandhills Herod Point Shoals Jamesport Town Beach Peconic River Roanoke Shoals Wading River Marsh and Beach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NY DEC Critical Environmental Areas Central Suffolk Pine Barrens and Special Groundwater Protection Area Peconic Bay and Environs Peconic River addition Central Pine Barrens Core Protection Area NY DEC Natural Heritage Areas Maritime Beach |
|---|---|

Sources: NYS DOS, NYS DEC, Suffolk County, NYS GIS

6. NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

Draft Goals and Recommendations



Goal 6-5: Protect and restore environmentally sensitive lands, wetlands, and marine habitats.

Animal and plant communities, wetlands, and marine habitats are critical to Riverhead and the region's ecosystems. For example, trees provide a range of benefits, including improving air quality, reducing stormwater runoff, providing habitat for wildlife, and enhancing property values. Significant threats to Riverhead's environment include the loss of trees, displacement of species caused by development, disconnected wildlife habitat areas, spread of invasive species, coastal erosion, alterations in hydrology, and climate change.

There is a need for more local knowledge and resources to address on-the-ground conditions in Riverhead. Fortunately, several regional institutions and conservation organizations are studying wetlands, marine, and other habitats and implementing restorative measures. These include the Nature Conservancy, Peconic Estuary Partnership, Long Island Sound Study, Save the Sound, Cornell Cooperative Extension Marine Program, and Stony Brook Sea Grant.

a. Consider a Tree Preservation Local Law to protect woodlands and historic, significant, and scenic trees important to the community.

A tree preservation code can regulate removing, pruning, and planting trees on public and private property. It could require developers to identify mature trees in setback areas in site plans and demolition permit applications. It would provide clear guidance on requirements for tree removal with tree replacement policies.

b. Conduct a tree inventory to assess the health and condition of the Town's urban forest.

This inventory would provide information on the types and locations of trees throughout the community and help the Town make informed decisions about tree management and preservation. The inventory would focus on trees along roadways as well as in town-owned open spaces.

c. Document and protect wildlife corridors.

This study would help to document scattered wildlife areas corridors and determine how to connect and preserve them. The study could identify preservation mechanisms, such as easements or purchase of development rights, and make the planning board aware of them when reviewing site plans.

d. Establish formal standards around water bodies and wetlands.

Guidelines for permitted development in regulated areas should be clarified in the Town code.

e. Comprehensively inventory and map wetlands.

To supplement the County and State wetlands maps that rely on satellite or aerial data sources, Riverhead should incorporate on-the-ground field surveys, vegetation and soil sampling, and hydrology assessments to provide updated information to inform wetland protection and restoration decisions.

f. Partner with environmental conservation groups and experts on a wetlands restoration initiative.

The comprehensive wetland inventory and mapping process could be part of a wetlands restoration plan that the Town could develop with experts at conservation organizations and educational institutions.

g. Encourage sustainable fishing and shell fishing practices.

The Town could work with the Conservation Advisory Committee and Sea Grant to develop educational materials that inform fishers about sustainable practices, such as use of bycatch reducing gear and bird friendly fishing lines, and shell recycling.

h. Continue to support and collaborate with the State, County, and institutions to protect significant coastal habitats and critical environmental areas.

There are nine NYDOS-designated significant coastal habitats and several NYDEC-designated critical environmental areas in Riverhead. The Town should continue to follow the State's recommendations and support efforts of partner institutions to protect them.

Goal 6-6: Encourage ecofriendly landscaping and maintenance techniques.

Ecofriendly landscaping projects include planting native plant species, removing invasive species, creating pollinator gardens, rain gardens, bioswales, and more. Native species work together to enhance the local ecosystem, provide food sources to native animals and microorganisms, require less irrigation, and are easier to grow. Nature-based stormwater management techniques, such as rain gardens, are an attractive solution that private property owners can easily implement and help reduce flooding, filter pollutants, and recharge groundwater.

a. Establish and showcase best practices for eco-friendly landscaping and stormwater management on public property.

The Town, Highway Department, and relevant committees should identify appropriate locations to implement ecofriendly landscaping projects, train town landscaping staff to maintain them, and recruit volunteers to help. Landscaping materials and plants should be sourced from local nurseries and farms.

b. Inform private property owners about available grants and programs to implement their own eco-friendly gardens and green infrastructure.

Grants and programs through Suffolk County, Long Island Regional Planning Council, Long Island Sound Study, and Peconic Estuary Partnership are available for interventions such as rain barrels and gardens. The Town could also provide incentives to encourage homeowner participation.

c. Work with non-profit and academic research institutions to develop an educational campaign promoting best practices for natural resource conservation.

An educational campaign could include a manual, website, and programming targeted at residents, property owners, businesses, and developers. It should address stormwater management, encourage the use of native species, discourage the use of invasive plants, discuss laws regarding environmental protection (e.g., wetland and hazardous waste disposal regulations), encourage sustainable practices such as water and energy conservation, waste reduction, on-site nitrogen reduction systems, and provide information on government grants and other incentives.

Comments:

Goal 6-7: Increase the Town's administrative capacity for working on natural resource conservation efforts.

The Town needs more staff with specialized knowledge and skills in environmental and natural resource conservation and the ability to coordinate and enforce environmental policies. Monitoring of open space areas is required to ensure that wetland and water buffer areas, coastal erosion hazard areas, and open space set-asides in cluster subdivisions are not being cleared, developed, or otherwise inappropriately used. The State also requires the Town's help to enforce the provisions of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Regional projects related to natural resource conservation efforts must be coordinated between government agencies, research institutions, conservation organizations, and Town committees.

a. Provide the human resources necessary to help implement the goals and recommendations of this chapter.

An Environmental Planner/Analyst position within the Planning Department would help the Town coordinate environmental and natural resource conservation efforts with other entities.

b. Improve enforcement of environmental regulations in Riverhead.

The Town may consider employing an additional Code Enforcement Officer to work exclusively on the environmental regulations and private covenant restrictions. The Town should review penalties for violations and application fees to ensure that they are effective and can offset enforcement costs.

Goal 6-8: Protect persons from risk of injury or harm from wildfires and ticks.

Due to human activity and dry weather conditions, the Central Pine Barrens region occasionally experiences wildfires. The Central Pine Barrens Commission has a Wildfire Task Force and a Fire Management Plan, updated in 2012 following a particularly destructive fire in Manorville. In addition, the Task Force has worked with local communities such as Calverton to develop Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs). CWPPs increase community awareness and involvement in wildfire management and open federal funding opportunities.

Another natural threat to residents and visitors of Riverhead is tick-borne illnesses. Throughout the region, tick populations have proliferated, carrying diseases that can have long-term impacts.

a. Utilize the expertise of the Central Pine Barrens Wildfire Task Force to protect properties, residents, employees, and visitors from wildfires.

The Town should work with the Task Force, fire districts, and communities to determine actions to take. These could be additional CWPPs, educational programs, and fire risk reduction projects.

b. Manage and promote awareness about tick-borne illnesses.

Strategies to manage tick-borne illnesses include managing the deer and rodent populations, managing landscaping debris, supporting research institutions and the County's efforts to monitor tick populations, and educating the public about their risk and treatment access.

Comments:

7. TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

Draft Goals and Recommendations



Goal 7-1: Preserve and enhance historic and scenic corridors while improving traffic flow and safety.

The Scenic and Historic Resources chapter of this plan focuses on safeguarding Riverhead's scenic views. Zoning recommendations aim to maintain corridor character through adjustments in allowable density and setbacks. Simultaneously, the plan advocates for roadways that provide accessibility to these areas without compromising their unique features or community context. The goal is to protect significant views and scenic viewsheds, ensuring they remain unaffected by transportation changes while enhancing mobility and access for the community.

a. Conduct corridor studies to identify context sensitive short- and long-term improvement strategies.

Along identified or designated corridors, studies should be conducted to determine the appropriate balance between mobility and preservation of the historic features of the corridors. These studies should be reflective of the public's desires for the future of the corridors, and not simply accommodate projected increased demand.

b. Develop design criteria for designated corridors.

Design criteria, essentially a style book for transportation improvements, should be developed for scenic corridors. The design criteria would address signage, striping, materials, lighting, landscaping, and other elements in the right-of-way.

Goal 7-2: Support economic growth at EPCAL through a well-defined transportation plan.

Due to the cancellation of the Town's contract with Calverton Aviation & Technology in October 2023, future EPCAL development appears to be in "reset," i.e. a "new look" can be taken at the proposed development, including potential Land Uses and proactive strategies to ensure potential impacts are addressed.

a. Review and update off-site improvements needed to mitigate EPCAL traffic.

The FGEIS prepared for the 2016 EPCAL Reuse and Revitalization Plan identified substantial improvements to the transportation system that would be necessitated by phased build-out of the 2,324-acre EPCAL parcel. A similar process should be undertaken for any new proposals considered by the Town.

b. Identify parties responsible for mitigation.

The ultimate outcome for the property remains in flux, however, regardless of the final plan for the property, a plan should be put in place that identifies parties responsible for traffic mitigation, explores potential funding sources, and has a realistic implementation schedule. A significant majority of the responsibility for implementing the mitigation should be borne by the developer, which should be documented at the outset of development.

c. Initiate needed roadway improvements by other agencies.

The 2016 traffic mitigation plan identified the need for widening NY25 from William Floyd Parkway in the west to I-495/I Expressway in the east to provide two travel lanes in each direction, regardless of the ultimate development of EPCAL. NYS DOT's five-year Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) contains no plans to implement this improvement. Discussions should be held with NYS DOT to initiate the planning and design process in this regard.

An alternative to some of the improvements needed on NY25 could be the construction of an access road to the south from EPCAL, generally following Connecticut Avenue and Halsey Manor Road to the Long Island Expressway, and extension of service roads to the west to CR123/Eastport Manor Road (Exit 70). That alternative would need to address the presence of Long Island Pine Barrens lands, freshwater wetlands, and residences, primarily along the north-south portion of its route.

d. Explore expanded use of rail transportation for EPCAL, for both people and freight.

The existing rail spur connecting the LIRR main branch track to the EPCAL property should be an integral part of the transportation solution for the property. The spur currently carries freight only.

Development plans should include use of the spur, and consideration should be given to utilizing the spur for passengers as well as freight. Passenger service could be provided from the Ronkonkoma LIRR Station east to Riverhead, with a transfer at Riverhead to a shuttle service to EPCAL. Any required upgrades to the spur should be included in the solution.

e. Alleviate congestion, elevate safety, and improve mobility on current infrastructure without excessive expansion.

The objective is to optimize the efficiency of existing facilities, ensuring a balanced approach that meets the community's transportation needs without unnecessary expansion.

f. Develop capacity and safety improvements through management strategies.

Planning-level capacity analyses conducted along major roadways in the Town indicate that for the most part, roadways in Riverhead can provide adequate capacity to accommodate anticipated growth. While areas of local congestion exist, large scale capacity improvements are not necessary. One exception is NY25 (see Goal 2). Some specific intersection improvements identified include:

- NY25/Middle Country Road and County Road 105/Cross River Drive: Consider extension of the eastbound right turn lane on NY25 and the installation of a second northbound-to-westbound left turn lane.
- Sound Avenue at Edwards Avenue: Consider a dedicated westbound-to-southbound left turn lane to prevent westbound traffic queues.

g. Develop/Implement Town-wide access management and complete streets policies

Access management can increase capacity on existing facilities by limiting the number of vehicular conflict points where vehicles enter and exit roadside development. By combining access points, restricting access points to side streets, and limiting allowable turning movements, access management strategies reduce delay-causing crashes, as well as increase safety for pedestrians.

Complete Streets are streets designed and operated to enable safe use and support mobility for all users. Complete Streets may address a wide range of elements, such as sidewalks, bicycle lanes, bus lanes, public transportation stops, roadway crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, modified vehicle travel lanes, streetscape, and landscape treatments.

h. Utilize roundabouts to increase capacity while reducing crashes.

Roundabouts more efficiently distribute capacity to intersection approaches while reducing speeds and lowering the number of high severity crashes. Rather than installing new traffic signals, the Town should consider roundabouts first as NYS DOT already does. The Osborn Road/Middle Road/Horton Avenue intersection is an example of a constructed roundabout serving Town roads.

i. Work with Suffolk County Department of Public Works to improve CR58.

The \$8 Million improvement to CR58 in 2010 by SCDPW, which included an additional travel lane throughout much of its length, lacks continuous ADA compliant sidewalks, has no bus shelters or turnouts, and lacks sufficient shoulders. The Town should work with SCDPW to revisit this design and improve the corridor for all users. A "boulevard" design similar to NY347 could be considered.

j. Investigate high crash locations and develop mitigation.

Based on a 5-year accident history (2018-2022) using CLEAR, "High Crash" intersections on major (County or State) roadways, along with the total number of crashes, include the following:

- CR58/Old Country Road at CR73/Roanoke Avenue (Roundabout).
- CR58 at Mill Road.
- CR58 at Kraemer Avenue.
- NY25 at CR205.
- CR58 and CR123/Northville Turnpike.

Recommendations at these intersections should be discussed with NYS DOT and Suffolk County DPW representatives. SCDPW is contacted to ensure that high crash locations on County roads, including CR58, are included in SCDPW's upcoming Strategic Highway Safety Action Plan. Two locations where Town roads intersect and have high crash totals, when overall traffic volumes are considered, are on Sound Avenue:

- Sound Avenue at CR 43/Northville Turnpike.
- Sound Avenue at NY 25A.

CRASH MAP



7. TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

Draft Goals and Recommendations



Goal 7-3: Foster increased use of public transportation.

The goal includes recommendations to enhance accessibility, awareness, and overall adoption of public transportation options within Riverhead. The aim is to create a community environment that fosters the convenience and benefits of utilizing public transit, contributing to a more sustainable and efficient transportation system.

- a. Consider circulator buses / trolleys in downtown, in hamlet centers and between major destinations.

Rather than relying on county or regional public transportation efforts, local public transportation solutions can provide small scale service between local destinations such as the County Center, downtown Riverhead, Sound Avenue (Seasonal) and the LIRR station. This effort may necessitate partnering with a large institution/commercial use to help with funding.

- b. Install bus turnouts on CR58 and other major bus routes.

Increased rider comfort and ease of boarding and alighting encourages bus ridership. SCDPW did not include bus facilities when CR58 was last improved, nor are shelters provided in most other areas in Town.

- c. Work with LIRR for increased service.

The LIRR has shown a willingness to increase service in conjunction with efforts by local municipalities to encourage increased use of the railroad. Riverhead participated in the MTA's First Mile/Last Mile pilot program, which resulted in a plan to improve access to the Riverhead station for bicyclists. As the Transit Oriented Development is implemented, corresponding improvements will be needed in the addition and coordinated scheduling of both new train and new bus service.

- d. Work with Suffolk County Transit to improve and implement a new bus plan.

Suffolk County Transit (SCT) has recently completed the Reimagine Transit initiative, which redesigned the agency's bus system to improve access to employment, rather than the prior focus on geographical coverage. The Town should work with SCT to determine the appropriate location for the transit hub, which was proposed for Downtown Riverhead.

Comments:

Goal 7-4: Promote alternative forms of transportation, emphasizing pedestrians and bicyclists.

The town recognizes the importance of fostering a safe and accessible environment for non-motorized travel, contributing to both the well-being of residents and the overall sustainability of the community. By creating infrastructure, policies, and awareness campaigns that prioritize pedestrian walkability and bicycle-friendly pathways, Riverhead aims to enhance the quality of life for its residents while reducing environmental impact and promoting a healthier lifestyle. This goal aligns with the Town's vision for a more inclusive, sustainable, and vibrant community.

- a. Develop a Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP).

A Pedestrian Safety Action Plan identifies areas in need of pedestrian safety improvements, develops solutions, prioritizes locations and provides a schedule for implementation. By having a PSAP in place, municipalities can leverage funding from State and Federal local sources to make needed improvements.

- b. Conduct walkability audits in hamlet centers.

Walkability audits identify gaps in accessible pedestrian paths, examine connectivity between land uses and public pedestrian facilities, and identify impediments to pedestrian use. Walkability audits can also assist in identifying needed improvements and can be used to facilitate procurement of grants.

- c. Review / Update site plan requirements for pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Installation of sidewalks along site frontages of all newly developed and redeveloped properties should be included in site plan requirements. Sidewalks should be extended beyond individual sites to nearby street crossings and sidewalk "dead ends" avoided, where feasible.

- d. Coordinate and implement bike route / bike lane improvements.

A project to implement bike facilities on NY 25/West Main Street from Mill Road to Peconic Avenue (1.4 miles) is underway. The Town should investigate a connection to the Port Jefferson – Wading River "Rails to Trails" shared-use path. Another potential connection is the newly funded Empire State Trail/ LI LI Greenway east extension, from Riverhead to Montauk Point. Bikeway connections should also be coordinated with the Suffolk County Blueway Trail, which lists the Peconic River in downtown as one of the priority locations along the route.

- e. Develop shared-use paths on town roads.

Roadways within the Town which have been identified in Suffolk County's Hike/Bike Master Plan for bicycle and shared-use path improvements include bike lanes on north-south roads such as Edwards Avenue (north of NY25), Mill Road/Osborn Avenue, Roanaoke Avenue and CR205.

- f. Review / Update Town roadway standards for compatibility with bicycle use.

On newly constructed or reconstructed Town roads, consideration should be given to bike lanes, bike bypass lanes at traffic signals, bike-friendly drainage basin grates, and other features to encourage bicycle use. Appropriate warning signs for motorists and bike route signs for bicyclists should be provided.

- g. Review Town-owned facilities for bicycle and pedestrian access.

Town office buildings should be reviewed, and bike racks installed near entrances. The Town should consider bike repair kiosks in Downtown areas and near municipal buildings.

Comments:

Goal 7-5: Coordinate transportation improvements with adjacent towns and other agencies.

Recognizing the interconnected nature of regional transportation networks, the objective is to coordinate efforts to enhance infrastructure, optimize traffic flow, and address shared challenges. By working in tandem with neighboring municipalities and relevant agencies, Riverhead aims to create a more seamless and integrated transportation system that benefits the broader community, improves connectivity, and ensures a cohesive approach to addressing regional transportation needs.

- a. The recommendations of this plan will require input and support from various entities that have jurisdiction over roads or operate public transportation in Riverhead.

Town Committees

Engage the Alternative Transportation and the Traffic Safety Committees to address road safety concerns, identify problem areas, and suggest measures to enhance traffic safety.

Adjacent Towns

Liaise with neighboring towns, including Brookhaven, Southampton, and Southold, to share information and collaborate on transportation planning efforts. The North Fork Transportation and Traffic Task Force can assist in this effort to address regional transportation challenges.

Suffolk County and NYSDOT

The Town should work closely with Suffolk County and NYSDOT as many arterial roads are within their jurisdiction. The Town should also advocate for regular maintenance and strategic upgrades to maximize efficiency, safety, and minimize disruptions. NYSDOT can also assist aligning transportation improvements with state-level initiatives, promoting regional connectivity and funding opportunities.

Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA)/Long Island Rail Road (LIRR)

Collaborate with the MTA and LIRR to enhance connectivity with regional rail systems, improving access to and from Riverhead, and promoting sustainable commuter options.

NY State Economic Development

Work with NYSEDC to ensure that transportation projects align with economic development goals and support the growth of local businesses and industries.

Comments:

8. OPEN SPACE, PARKS, AND RECREATION

Draft Goals and Recommendations



Goal 8-1: Expand recreational opportunities to address additional community interests and needs.

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

- a. Continue planning for new parks, prioritizing environmentally sensitive and or underserved areas.

The Town should continue collaborating with its committees, State and County officials, and nonprofits to prioritize parcels for acquisition and protection or park and recreation development.

- b. Implement the vision for the Town Square and other public spaces in Downtown Riverhead.

Transformative projects planned in the downtown received NYS DRI funding, including the new Town Square, an adaptable play and plaza area, and the East End Arts amphitheater.

- c. Pursue opportunities to repurpose the armory for community use.

The YMCA is considering occupying the former state armory on Route 58, which has served Riverhead as a community recreation facility in the past.

- d. Expand recreational programming.

Additional programming could address other interests, such as more passive recreational programming, such as nature walks and birding. With a growing Hispanic community, Riverhead should aim to create programming for Spanish speakers. The Town could coordinate recreational efforts with the YMCA, School District, Senior Citizens Department, and others.

Goal 8-2: Activate the Peconic Riverfront and other navigable waterways with recreation opportunities and good stewardship.

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

- a. Provide safe public access to the Peconic Riverfront.

This could include new pathways or trails along the riverbank, improved access points, designated launch sites for non-motorized watercraft, regular clean-up efforts, and educational programs on river conservation. The Town should work closely with DEC to regularly clear overgrown invasive plant species.

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

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

- c. 2.3. Develop a plan for Moorings.

The Town should create formal requirements for moorings in Town waters to ensure safety, establish locations, and provide revenues for the Town. Any discussion about the siting of moorings or other water infrastructure should include input from the aquaculture industry.

Goal 8-3: Encourage open space preservation and public access opportunities in new development.

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

- a. Conduct a comprehensive review of subdivision and cluster regulations to strengthen open space requirements.

Open space requirements can be tailored to address the need to preserve natural features (wetlands, woodlands, etc.), and the promote interconnected open spaces such as wildlife corridors.

- b. Encourage cluster development on waterfront sites in RA4o and RB4o zones.

Whereas cluster development is mandatory in APZ, RA8o, and RB8o, the planning board should be allowed to require a cluster development alternative in RA4o and RB4o to protect unique natural features and open space.

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

Public easements could be required as trails, greenways, waterfront access, and other open spaces to allow the public uninterrupted enjoyment of open spaces. Public access to the beach and the waterfront should be maintained to the greatest extent by requiring developers to maintain public water access and ensure that public right-of-ways are kept clear.

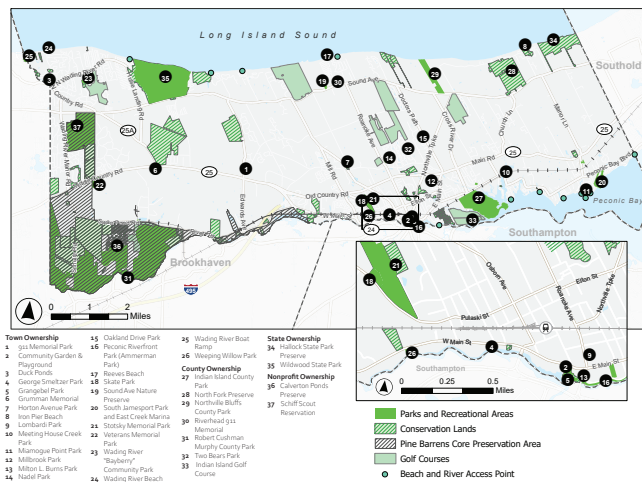
- d. Continue to employ conservation easement provisions to allow tax abatement for property owners.

To preserve priority natural and scenic resources, this provision allows landowners to place a conservation easement on their properties in exchange for a reduction in tax valuation.

Comments:

Comments:

Open Space, Parks, and Recreational Areas



Sources: Town of Riverhead, Suffolk County, NYS GIS

9. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Draft Goals and Recommendations



Goal 9-1: Ensure public services have sufficient facilities and resources.

In 2023, Riverhead moved its Town Hall to a downtown location on Second Street. This strategic move not only provides the town with a modern administrative hub but also provides opportunities for other departments to expand their spatial capacities and assess their current resource requirements. Leveraging this relocation as a catalyst, the Town can conduct a thorough evaluation of the spatial and resource needs of diverse public services, aligning them with the evolving demands of the community. The goal is to ensure that public services not only meet the present demands but also remain adaptable to the dynamic needs of the community in the future.

- a. Expand and renovate the Police Station and resources to meet the needs of a modern and growing police force.

The recent relocation of Town Hall presents an opportunity for the police station to expand to address its needs. The Plan identifies several priority items to address such as improved accessibility to the Police Station and Justice Court, an expanded communication center, a new training room, an expansion of storage areas, a marine docking facility on the Long Island Sound, and an Emergency Operations Center.

- b. Identify a long-term strategy for Riverhead Volunteer Ambulance Corps facilities.

The RTVAC and the Town should work together to develop a long-term strategy for expanding or replacing the Osborne Avenue Headquarters. Although the site may not be able to accommodate an expansion, adjacent underutilized sites could potentially be purchased.

- c. Ensure that EPCAL has adequate police, firefighting, and ambulance services and explore methods to finance the construction of substations.

When EPCAL is developed, police, RTVAC, and fire substations may be needed. The Town should work with the Police Department, RTVAC, Manorville Fire District, and Riverhead Fire District to determine needs, appropriate locations, and financing. Developers should be required to help finance these improvements.

- d. Support the expansion or new construction of firehouses to accommodate new and larger firefighting equipment.

New firefighting equipment and facilities are needed to service new development. For example, if tall buildings are built at EPCAL, the Riverhead and Manorville departments would need larger aerial devices and stations with larger bays.

Goal 9-2: Enhance Responsiveness and Service Quality of Emergency Services.

In the face of modern technological advancements, urban development, and population growth, the comprehensive plan aims to fortify the responsiveness and service excellence of Police, Fire, and Ambulance Services. The intersection of innovation and challenges poses unique considerations for emergency responders, such as addressing fire safety concerns associated with battery storage, mitigating delays caused by traffic congestion, and navigating potential lapses in services due to inadequate funding and human resources.

This goal also recognizes the need to bolster volunteerism in the facing of shifting demographics. An aging population and evolving work patterns necessitate a proactive approach to ensure adequate resources during crucial daytime hours. Strengthening collaboration through mutual aid agreements with neighboring fire districts further underscores the commitment to meeting operational requirements and optimizing emergency response capabilities in Riverhead.

- a. Plan for specialized training and equipment for firefighting at Battery Storage Facilities.

Battery storage fires require nontraditional firefighting methods, training, and equipment. The Town must support fire departments to ensure firefighters are prepared.

- b. Ensure that water supply and pressure are sufficient throughout the Town for firefighting.

The Town, Water District, Fire Departments, and developers are working together to provide better water pressure in the downtown area to meet the demands of new development. This work includes the repair or replacement of old infrastructure and dead ends. The Town must also ensure tanker trucks can access areas without public water.

- c. Implement a preemptive signal program to allow Police, Fire, and Ambulance vehicles to respond quickly in emergencies.

Preemptive signals prioritize emergency response vehicles over others at intersections during a time-critical situation. The Town should identify priority intersections and funding sources, such as FHA grants, for new signals, equipment within vehicles, and system monitors.

- d. Supplement funding mechanisms for ambulance services.

The RTVAC could consider charging patients for ambulance services and requiring senior housing and residential healthcare facilities to provide non-emergency ambulance services. These facilities are the most significant generators of non-emergency calls.

- e. Ensure that the Fire Departments and RTVAC have adequate human resources.

Support efforts to recruit and retain volunteers, such as Junior Corps and Length of Service Award Programs. Full-time employees may be required in the future to ensure consistency of coverage.

Goal 9-3: Strengthen Community Well-being through Enhanced Programming and Facilities for All Ages.

Recognizing the unique demographic challenges and evolving community needs, the comprehensive plan aims to elevate programming and facilities catering to senior citizens, youth, and the broader Riverhead community. As Riverhead's population ages at a faster pace than the County, the focus is on enhancing services provided by the Senior Citizen Department, addressing transportation concerns, and expanding the offerings at the Senior Center. Beyond the senior demographic, the plan also recognizes the growing and diverse population's needs for increased recreational programming, expanded youth services, and upgraded library facilities. By addressing these multi-faceted needs and modernizing facilities, the goal is to create a community hub that fosters inclusivity, engagement, and improved well-being for residents of all ages in Riverhead.

- a. Expand the variety of social activities, programs, meals, and support services through the Riverhead Senior Citizen Department.

Increase daily congregate meal numbers with a second location on the west end of Town. Expand transportation and Meals on Wheels services with additional staff and vehicles. Improving access to computers, tech support, and computer literacy programs could open resources and other services to Seniors.

- b. Establish a second senior center on the west side of Town.

The Town and Senior Citizen Department should identify an appropriate location for a senior center in Calverton or Wading River. While the Henry Feffer Community Center in Calverton was not successful when used as a senior center in the past, its proximity to new public amenities, coupled with a growing demand for this service, may warrant a reconsideration of this Town-owned facility.

- c. Help the Peconic YMCA identify a suitable site in Riverhead and advocate for needed amenities.

The feasibility of establishing a YMCA at the Town-owned Armory is ongoing. Alternatively, the Town should proactively seek out another centrally accessible site, considering the potential advantages of co-locating with Veteran's Memorial Park at EPCAL. The YMCA and the Town should collaborate to determine the recreational amenities and programs provided to ensure this significant facility responds to community needs.

- d. Explore the feasibility of establishing a Riverhead youth center.

A youth center could provide a location for 4-H programs, information on youth services, mentoring or big-brother/big-sister programs, counseling sessions, summer classes and activities, sports outings, and social events. The Town should explore partnerships with the YMCA, JCC, Boys and Girls Club, and other organizations.

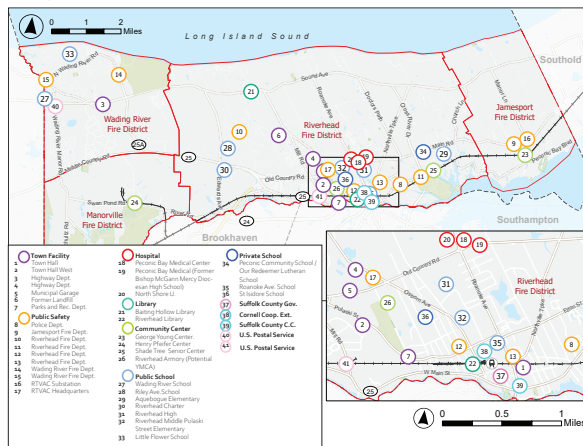
- e. Work with the Riverhead Free Library and Baiting Hollow Free Library to expand and establish branches or outposts.

There is a need to expand the current footprint of the Riverhead Free Library and establish a storefront location to provide the spaces, technologies, and programs for the growing patron base. Outposts, including a bookmobile or exchanges at the beach or parks, can help collections reach a larger population.

Comments:

Comments:

Community Facilities and Fire Districts



9. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Draft Goals and Recommendations



Goal 9-4: Support expansion of school district facilities to accommodate growing demand

Riverhead Central School District has experienced a consistent increase in enrollment over the past two decades. enrollment has steadily increased over the past 20 years. Despite this growth, critical aspects like classroom space have not been expanded to meet the rising demands. The closure of Mercy School in 2018 may have contributed to the surge in enrollment at the Middle and High School levels. With anticipated population growth and new developments in both Riverhead and the Southampton area of the school district, future enrollment is likely to rise further. A proactive approach to identify new facilities is essential to accommodate the evolving needs of the community, ensuring that the school district can effectively respond to increased enrollment and provide an optimal learning environment for students in Riverhead.

- a. **Work with the school districts to identify appropriate sites for new schools and expansions.**

The Riverhead Central School district should plan to accommodate larger class sizes by expanding existing schools or developing new facilities. The Town can identify vacant, underutilized, or publicly owned sites that could accommodate expansions or additional schools.

- b. **Ensure that expansion is equitable and consistent with the demand for ESL, Special Needs, and low-income students.**

Determine how private development projects in proximity to schools can contribute funds for school expansion efforts. Ensure aid and services meet the needs of less advantaged students and their families where the School District may be lacking in resources to meet.

Comments:

Goal 9-5: Goal 5. Increase childcare options and promote affordable childcare.

Access to affordable childcare continues to be an issue in Riverhead. All efforts should be made to streamline the opening of childcare facilities and ensure they operate safely. The Town's zoning ordinance currently allows daycare facilities by special permit in most residential and commercial zones. Childcare facilities require licensing by the State.

- a. **Allow small daycare centers (six children or less) in single-family detached homes as a home occupation.**

Small daycare centers present less traffic than larger ones, negating the need for special permitting. However, they still require compliance with State regulations to ensure safety. Allowing in-home daycare as a home occupation can increase the available childcare services in Riverhead and relieve the shortage of facilities.

- b. **Allow daycare centers in places of worship as an accessory use.**

Religious facilities often have community rooms and adequate parking to support a childcare facility and many parents prefer the option to leave their children in a faith-based facility. The code should be clarified to ensure that daycare is accessory to the principal faith-based use.

Comments:

Goal 9-6: Goal 6. Strengthen the Town's capacity to address diverse community health and human service needs.

This entails developing targeted strategies to confront healthcare challenges encountered by vulnerable groups, such as seasonal farm workers lacking health insurance and adequate medical care, while also addressing the language barriers faced by a growing population in Riverhead. Special attention is directed towards the unique needs of those recovering from addiction in the high concentration of sober homes. Recognizing transportation limitations, collaborative efforts are underway, including initiatives like Peconic Bay Medical Center's health services shuttle. The plan advocates for a holistic response, encompassing the establishment of critical facilities like a detoxification clinic and addiction recovery agency. Moreover, it aims to enhance awareness and accessibility to essential programs offered by the Suffolk County Department of Social Services, spanning family and child services, financial assistance, employment support, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and temporary housing assistance, among others.

- a. **Work with Suffolk County to understand what role the Town can play in addressing community health and human service needs.**

Build on the partnership with Suffolk County to gain insights into the Town's potential role in addressing community health and human service needs. Ensure coordinated programming efforts with the County to guarantee that proposed solutions complement and enhance existing County resources. The Town can also help to expand outreach to vulnerable populations to connect them with health and mental health services. Information about these services should be available in Spanish and other languages commonly spoken in Riverhead.

- b. **Collaborate with Peconic Bay Medical Center to Enhance Community Health and Service Delivery**

The Town should be an active partner with Peconic Bay Medical Center, who plays a critical role in addressing community health needs. This strategic partnership should focus on developing and implementing initiatives that address specific health and service needs within the community. By leveraging the expertise and resources of Peconic Bay Medical Center, the Town can enhance access to quality healthcare, promote preventive measures, and provide targeted services that align with the unique requirements of the Riverhead population.

Comments:

10. SCENIC AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Draft Goals and Recommendations



Goal 10-1: 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.

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

This could include the documentation of scenic viewsheds along with recommended mechanisms for maintaining them.

b. 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.

c. 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.

d. Continue to enforce exterior lighting code violations.

Continue code enforcement efforts and be vigilant in reviewing exterior lighting on future development applications.

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

The Federal Highway Administration and the NYS Department of Transportation both have scenic byway programs that provide grant funding for designated byways and require the development of a Corridor Management Plan. As part of this project, the Town should consider designating historic landmarks or districts along the corridor.

f. 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.

Comments:

Goal 10-2: Continue to identify, document, and promote public awareness of town's historic resources.

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.

a. Update the comprehensive survey of historic resources in Riverhead.

An updated survey would supplement the list of officially designated town landmarks maintained by the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

b. 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.

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

These resources will help property owners to access funding, tax incentives, and educational materials to maintain their property correctly.

d. Designate additional historic districts.

The LPC Proposed an extensive National Register Historic District extending along Main Road in Aquebogue, Jamesport, and Laurel. Additional districts to consider nominating to the National Register include Sound Avenue; Polish Town; South Jamesport; and Jamesport Campgrounds.

e. 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.

Goal 10-3: Ensure that design of new development is compatible with its surroundings and scenic and historic resources.

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.

a. 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.

b. 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 pattern books for Jamesport, Aquebogue, Polish Town, and other areas which would identify design guidelines for new development.

c. 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 10-4: Protect historic resources from destruction or neglect, and encourage the restoration and adaptive reuse of historic structures.

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.

a. Establish an official watch list of buildings that have potential for landmark preservation but have not been designated.

Alteration, construction, and demolition permit applications for watch list resources should be referred to the LPC for their recommendation.

b. Prevent demolition of historic structures.

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 LPC watch list. Demolition review should also be coordinated with the SHPO.

c. 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.

d. Ensure enforcement of the Landmarks and Historic Districts Chapter of the Town Code is undertaken.

Continue to monitor the effectiveness of landmarks and historic districts code enforcement and make adjustments as appropriate.

e. Promote and facilitate adaptive reuse of historically and architecturally significant 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.

f. Consider Pursuing Certified Local Government (CLG) status

CLG status gives increased access to federal survey and planning funds. To be eligible, Riverhead may need to revisit its Landmarks Preservation Law to ensure it complies with the State's current model code.

g. Educate property owners on financial incentives for historic preservation.

Incentives for property owners to rehabilitate historic properties include Riverhead's tax abatement program, state and federal rehabilitation tax credits, historic preservation easements that may provide tax benefits, and other preservation grants.

h. Identify, promote, and apply for preservation grants and funding opportunities.

Explore opportunities from other groups such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Preservation League of New York, New York State Council for the Arts, and NYS Community Preservation Fund legislation.

11. INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES

Draft Goals and Recommendations



Goal 11-1: Continue to meet emerging solid waste management challenges as disposal opportunities evolve

This goal underscores Riverhead's commitment to proactively tackle contemporary challenges in solid waste management while adapting to the evolving landscape of disposal opportunities. The town recognizes the importance of staying ahead of emerging issues such as the closure of the Brookhaven Landfill, to ensure sustainable and efficient waste management practices. Ongoing evaluation and strategic planning is needed to maintain a resilient waste management system and foster innovative solutions that align with the evolving needs of the town. Emerging sustainable waste management processes and technologies are discussed in more detail in Sustainability and Resilience Chapter.

a. Continue to work toward the NYS DEC goal of 40% reduction in solid waste by 2030, and 90% BY 2024.

While the Town of Riverhead currently generates higher amounts of residential waste than average communities, on a per capita basis, the town has achieved a substantial reduction from between 2009 and 2019. The Town can continue to reduce the amount of solid waste generated by encouraging recycling, expanding food scraps and composting programs, and encouraging home composting through education and distribution of composting bins.

b. Work with regional communities to identify alternative transportation methods to dispose of ash in anticipation of the closure of the Brookhaven landfill.

The Town's SMWP includes investigation of alternative transportation methods to dispose of ash, in anticipation of the closure of Brookhaven's landfill when it reaches capacity.

Goal 11-2: Continue to Protect Groundwater through modern wastewater treatment strategies

Recognizing the vital role that groundwater plays in the town's water supply, environmental health, and overall community well-being, the objective is to implement advanced wastewater treatment methods. By staying abreast of innovative technologies and sustainable practices, Riverhead aims to minimize the environmental impact of wastewater discharge, ensuring the continued protection of the town's groundwater resources for current and future generations.

a. Improve the efficiency of the existing Town Sewer Systems and ensure the ability to address future demand.

Calverton and Riverhead are served by a public sewer system. As Riverhead grows, developers are connecting to the system and the Town may decide to extend sewer lines. The Town should monitor the capacity of the wastewater treatment facility and plan for expansions before capacity is met.

b. Continue to invest human resources to better manage wastewater systems.

Riverhead needs to attract and retain qualified Wastewater Treatment Operators (WTOs) through competitive salaries and other benefits. At present, an anticipated shortage in human resources could have an impact on operations.

c. Upgrade the pump stations in the Riverhead Sewer District.

The Town should ensure that it includes sequential upgrades to the 13 pump stations in Riverhead Sewer District in the annual budget. A capital improvements plan should identify priorities and costs.

d. Support the use of Innovative Alternative (I/A) Wastewater Treatment options in areas where sewerage is not feasible or appropriate.

There are several programs which help homeowners finance transitions to Innovative and Alternative Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (I/A OWTS or I/A). The Town should inform and encourage property owners about these grants. When CPF funds become available, the Town may also consider establishing its own grant program to supplement other programs.

Goal 11-3: Improve the efficiency of the existing Town Water Supply System, and ensure its ability to expand to address future demand

This goal focuses on optimizing the performance of Riverhead's existing water supply infrastructure while ensuring its adaptability to meet future demands. The first priority is to enhance the efficiency of the current system through strategic improvements and upgrades. Simultaneously, proactive planning is needed to accommodate the town's evolving water requirements, ensuring a resilient and scalable water supply system that can effectively serve the needs of the community now and in the future.

a. Complete the expansion of public water service to homes in Calverton and Manorville.

In areas that do not have public water service, properties rely on wells. Wells have been contaminated by the presence of PFOA/PFOS. To expand public water service to homes with contaminated wells, the Town should procure Federal funding, and coordinate the effort with those of the Suffolk County Water Authority (SCWA).

b. Improve the infrastructure and efficiency of the public water system.

The Town should use the 20 million dollars in the water District's Capital Improvement Plan to meet DEC regulations and replace antiquated components of the system. In addition, the Town should implement the "SCADA" (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) system, like that used by the Suffolk County Water Authority, which includes remote monitoring of conditions in the district.

c. Discourage unsustainable use of water resources.

One of the greatest uses of public water in Riverhead is the irrigation of private residential lawns during summer months. The Town should regulate the use of water during summer months to reduce strain on the system. The Town should also educate property owners about the unsustainable practice and encourage the use of rainwater harvesting and the planting of native species.

d. Ensure that the water system and resources can provide the quantity and quality of water needs in the future.

Long Island's sole source aquifer provides fresh water to the region. Pollution of groundwater can impact properties that are on wells and also endanger the public water supply. Alternative water supply options such as trucking water and desalination are costly and unsustainable.

e. Clarify Town code with respect to water access.

Developers should be given clear understanding of what costs for water access will be, before projects progress beyond conceptual stages.

f. Establish procedures and guidelines for working with regional partners including Riverhead Water District, Calverton Sewer District, and Riverhead Sewer District.

Establishing procedures and guidelines for working with regional partners will help to protect and fortify Town and special district assets, notably its aquifer, critical environmental areas, water supply, and infrastructure and mitigate negative impacts to residents and rate payers within those special districts. An example of such project and need for evaluation and consideration of intermunicipal cooperation is SCWA project to install a new water main within to Town of Riverhead to supply the North Fork.

Comments:

Goal 11-4: Coordinate with utilities to optimize reliability and accessibility of essential services.

This goal emphasizes the importance of strategic coordination with electric, natural gas, cellular telephone/Wi-Fi, cable TV, and internet service providers. This coordination ensures seamless connectivity, enhances infrastructure resilience, and promotes the integration of emerging technologies.

a. Improve coordination with private companies that provide electricity, natural gas, and other services.

Private companies provide Electric Service, Natural Gas Service, Cellular Telephone/Wi-Fi, Cable TV, and Internet services to Town residents and businesses. While it is the best interest for residents to have more options and more reliable options, utility companies have been non-responsive to requests for information about their short- and long-range improvement plans.

b. Investigate engaging an additional internet service provider, to help address a significant need to provide improved internet service.

Broadband and digital access is becoming a more critical issue for the public because of increased work-from-home models, greater reliance on the internet for information, and online schooling during extreme weather or other events (e.g., COVID-19). The Town should continue to monitor such services on a regular basis and meet with internet service providers (ISPs) annually, with the goal of encouraging competition which will help to lower prices and improve service.

Goal 11-5: Address localized highway flooding Issues.

This goal reflects the town's commitment to ensuring safe and reliable transportation networks, minimizing disruptions, and safeguarding the well-being of residents and businesses affected by localized highway flooding. By adopting proactive measures, such as improved drainage systems, infrastructure upgrades, and responsive maintenance, Riverhead aims to enhance resilience against flooding events.

a. Investigate chronic flooding locations, design, and install drainage infrastructure as appropriate.

Based on observations and discussions with the Town's Highway Department, a continual maintenance issue is farm field run-off during heavy rain events. A number of chronic flooding locations have been identified. Leaching basins can be deployed in isolated locations with or without measures to reduce sedimentation, petroleum-based contamination from automobiles, and other impacts. The Town should consider connected systems, with or without recharge basins for larger areas.

b. Establish a structured framework for incorporating Best Management Practices (BMPs) to address stormwater run-off.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) are a set of available methods to reduce the volume and nutrient content in stormwater run-off. Certain BMPs are more appropriate for different soil types or contexts. One approach that is generally applicable is to plant field buffers such as trees, shrubs, and grasses to help absorb run-off and filter out nutrients before they reach a water body.

Comments:

12. SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE

Draft Goals and Recommendations



Goal 12-1: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and proactively adapt to climate change.

The Town of Riverhead is already encountering significant climate change effects, which are projected to increase. Anticipated impacts include increased temperatures with more spikes and an increase in extreme weather events. In Long Island, climate change impacts will also include humidity, droughts, wildfires, flash flooding, hail, tornadoes, and degraded water and air quality. The severity of climate change impacts depends on society's ability to reduce GHG emissions. New York State has set targets to limit greenhouse gas emissions to 60% of 1990 levels by 2030 and 15% of 1990 levels by 2050.

a. Achieve Climate Smart Communities (CSC) certification and continue to act on the CSC Pledge Elements (PEs).

The CSC program from NYS DEC provides a framework for municipalities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change by acting on PEs. Riverhead adopted the State's CSC Pledge in 2020 and is working towards achieving CSC Bronze status in 2023, followed by silver status in the longer term.

b. Establish a Climate Action Plan and partner with neighboring communities on a regional plan.

The Plan would evaluate current conditions, assess climate change vulnerability, identify grants, and create an actionable priorities matrix. These actions can include elements of the CSC Program, the Clean Energy Community Program, and other initiatives to set measurable targets.

Comments:

Goal 12-2: Embrace renewable energy sources to achieve the State's targets of 70% renewable sources by 2030 and 100% zero-emission electricity by 2040.

New York State has set ambitious targets in its Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA). The state has also mandated a significant increase in the state's electricity that must come from renewable sources as part of Reforming the Energy Vision (REV), with a requirement of 100 percent zero-emission electricity by 2040. In Riverhead, these programs have helped to bring four solar farms. Battery Energy Storage Systems is another technology which can help to integrate renewable energy while enhancing grid stability. While these projects offer numerous environmental benefits, their implementation can sometimes be met with local apprehensions. Addressing these concerns involves transparent communication, community engagement, and a proactive approach by local authorities and property owners.

a. Ensure that renewable energy programs are equitable and promote climate justice.

New York's Climate Justice Working Group has developed reports and recommendations to address disparities in the effects of climate change, transition, and mitigation measures on disadvantaged communities. This is one resource the Town can consult to understand how to ensure more equitable outcomes.

b. Become a regional and or state leader by taking more actions in NYSERDA's Clean Energy Communities program.

Riverhead is a NYSERDA Clean Energy Community (CEC). This program outlines actions communities can take to earn points. The program makes grants available for member communities.

c. Transition Riverhead's utilities to clean energy sources.

NYSERDA's Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) program allows local elected officials to choose clean energy sources for their community. Grants, like the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Transitions Initiative Partnership Project, are available to help communities transition to cleaner energy.

d. Revise solar regulations and incentives to ensure they are compatible with surroundings.

Tightening special permit requirements for solar farms in industrial zones, including reducing allowed coverage and requiring buffers and landscaping, would mitigate some of the negative visual impacts of solar farms and subject them to the same zoning standards as other land uses. The town should encourage rooftop solar in all zones, whether on industrial, commercial, residential, or public buildings.

e. Monitor battery storage safety and technology and revise the code as appropriate.

The Town should follow State guidelines regarding safety protocols and emergency procedures as they become available. The Town should continue to monitor this technology to assess its effectiveness for meeting renewable energy goals.

Comments:

Goal 12-3: Promote sustainable building practices, landscaping, and design.

Buildings are the number one emitter of greenhouse gases through energy use, heating and cooling, and construction. Riverhead is a growing community with more opportunities for development in the future. The community would like to see buildings built today last into the future and reduce environmental impacts through sustainable construction and building practices.

a. Strengthen the Town's Building Code with green building standards and improved energy requirements.

This could include a green building permitting process and incentives to promote energy efficiency, waste reduction, and other sustainability practices. The Town should consult the U.S. Green Building Council and the National Association of Homebuilders Green Building Initiative.

The NYStretch-Energy model code provides readily adoptable enforceable language that helps municipalities jump-start energy improvements through more stringent requirements than the State currently requires. Adopting the NYStretch Code is one of the 13 high-impact actions of the Clean Energy Community program.

b. Encourage nature-based solutions, eco-friendly landscaping, and green infrastructure.

Nature-based solutions can help mitigate many of the impacts of climate change and are more sustainable in the long-term. Requiring stormwater management, reducing impervious coverage limits, promoting the use of green infrastructure, native landscaping, can reduce flooding and heat island effects, ensure cleaner air and water, and conserve ecosystems.

c. Reduce energy and water demand in publicly owned properties and facilities.

The Town should explore sustainability measures on municipal properties, including installing solar panels, retrofitting municipal buildings with energy-efficient windows, natural heating, and cooling features, LED lights, and water and energy-conserving fixtures, and identifying potential underutilized properties for the NYSERDA and PSE&G Community Solar program.

d. Cooperate with regional institutions and non-profits on sustainable practices.

These institutions have a wealth of climate change and resiliency expertise. One recent initiative includes a pilot project by Cornell Cooperative Extension and Stony Brook University to engage high school students in addressing resiliency and erosion mitigation projects along the coastline between Iron Pier Beach and Meeting House Creek. Brookhaven National Lab has pilot programs to install heat pumps in residences.

e. Educate the public about sustainable practices and incentives for sustainability initiatives on private properties such as solar panels, electric vehicles, and green infrastructure.

A public education campaign (pamphlets, website, and programming) can highlight opportunities and benefits of energy efficiency and clean energy measures. The campaign should include information about sustainability incentives and programs for property owners. NYSERDA, PSE&G, National Grid, and other grants are available to homeowners and private property owners interested in installing solar panels. Likewise, NYSERDA and the IRS provide financial incentives for purchasing an electric vehicle. Additional grants are available to homeowners to install green infrastructure, rain barrels, and IA systems on their properties.

Comments:

12. SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE

Draft Goals and Recommendations



Goal 12-4: Promote sustainable transportation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Automobiles are one of the leading emitters of greenhouse gases. That Climate Act sets targets to reduce. The Town has been promoting the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) by installing EV charging stations in public parking lots and offering incentives for EV purchases. Riverhead is also working with MTA on a First Mile/Last Mile Pilot Study which aims to encourage travelers to use alternative modes other than single-use automobiles to access the station.

a. Promote alternative transportation.

Public transportation, biking, and walking are excellent alternatives to cars as they reduce traffic congestion and emissions. The Transportation and Mobility Chapter provides concrete recommendations to improve bike and pedestrian infrastructure and to advocate for improved public transportation in Riverhead.

b. Promote infrastructure for Electric Vehicle (EVs).

Town could add requirements for electric vehicle charging stations at new developments for certain sizes or densities.

c. Adopt a green fleet plan for Town-owned vehicles and equipment.

This approach could be phased, starting with small vehicles and electric maintenance and landscaping equipment. Heavier and more specialized equipment and vehicles can be replaced as technology improves. NYS REV2030 and NYSERDA programs provide generous grants.

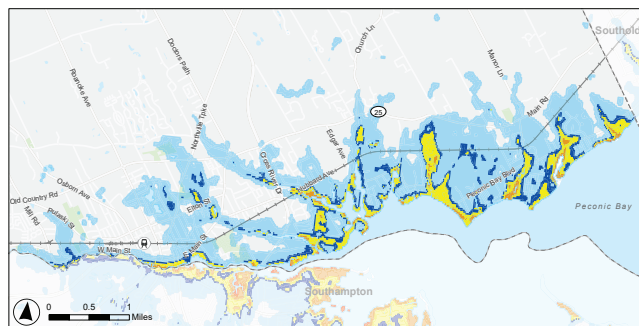
Goal 12-5: Promote a Green Economy and Green finance, technology, and jobs.

Riverhead should invest in training and skill development for green jobs. This can be achieved through strategic partnerships with educational institutions, businesses, and workforce development programs. This initiative not only addresses the pressing need for skilled professionals in renewable energy, environmental conservation, and sustainable practices but also bolsters our local economy by fostering job growth in emerging green industries.

a. Promote EPCAL and industrial sites to green technology and finance companies.

The IDA and town should be strategic about the development of EPCAL by promoting the site to green technology companies that could provide quality jobs and tax revenues, reduce climate impacts, and attract investment from related companies and into infrastructure.

Storm Surge Hazard (Peconic Bay Zoom)



Category 1 Storm Surge Hazard Area
 1-2 feet
 2-5 feet
 5-8 feet
 8-10 feet
 Category 4 Storm Surge Hazard Area
 1-20 feet

Sources: NOAA, NYS GIS

Goal 12-6: Reduce waste and promote circular economy waste management practices

With the closure of the Brookhaven landfill and the environmental impacts of waste, Riverhead needs to explore alternative solutions to waste management. Solid waste disposal has impacts ranging from pollution to emissions to exhaustion of resources. For example, plastics break down slowly and release PFAS into the environment, organic waste trapped in landfills can release methane gas into the atmosphere, trucking waste to faraway landfills or processing facilities is costly and contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, and recycling often uses excessive water and energy.

a. Implement recommendation of Riverhead's Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP) for more sustainable practices.

The Town's SWMP can maintain and exceed compliance levels and timeline targets of the CSC Program. The SWMP should be updated on a regular basis and should follow or exceed the NYS DEC's State Solid Waste Management Plan.

b. Reduce the use of single use plastics and other wasteful practices.

Riverhead should discontinue single-use plastics in Town facilities and enact regulations to reduce or eliminate their use and sale in the Town.

c. Continue to provide a recycling program and promote recycling.

The Town's SWMP encourages the expansion of the recycling program. Recycling is a critical practice to keep resources in productive use and to keep tons of waste out of the solid waste stream. Reduction and reuse are still paramount, as recycling can be costly, require lots of water and energy, and can have byproducts.

d. Implement and expand a Town-wide composting program.

The Climate Task Force and Riverhead have implemented a food scraps program diverting waste from government offices and the senior center and are seeking grant funding to expand. The Climate Task Force partnered with the community on a successful pilot program to enrich farm soils with compost. Continued research should ensure that composting does not introduce outside elements that could harm farm production or contaminate well water.

e. Explore alternative modes of waste disposal that generate renewable energy and useful byproducts.

The Region is exploring biological waste management solutions, including newer technologies such as anaerobic digesters for biodegradable wastes and pyrolyzers for construction and demolition waste. Riverhead should continue to monitor evolving waste processing technologies and regional solutions.

f. Promote the reuse of rainwater for irrigation and other purposes.

Rainwater harvesting is another sustainable option to help reduce the use of freshwater resources. Gutters, rain barrels and catchments direct stormwater to storage tanks where water can be filtered and pumped for uses including gardening and lawn irrigation.

g. Explore innovative methods to repurpose graywater.

Graywater is lightly used water that is not suitable for consumption but can still be used for other needs. For example, water used for handwashing could be reused in toilet bowls. More research is needed to determine whether graywater is safe to use in irrigation.

Comments:

Goal 12-7: Mitigate the effects of flooding, sea level rise, and storm surge.

Floodplain maps indicate many areas along the Peconic River, including Downtown Riverhead, are in flood-risk areas. Flooding and erosion from storm events is of great concern along the Long Island Sound, particularly near the bluffs. With anticipated sea level rise and increase storm intensity and frequency, responses to flooding and coastal erosion will only become more pressing. Residents have experienced roadway flooding during heavy rain. Some of the roads identified include Sound Ave, Mill Road, Fresh Pond Avenue at Route 25, and Creek Road in Wading River. This issue is especially problematic in the winter when freezing causes safety hazards.

a. Continue to implement infrastructure improvements to mitigate future flood impacts.

The Army Corps of Engineers 2021 Riverhead Flood Plain Management Services provided recommendations for downtown that the Town has begun to implement, including elevating the river bulkhead, riverfront parks, and buildings and improving stormwater interventions. These measures should continue to be implemented west of the Town Square, including raising parking areas. Numerous federal and state grants are available for resilience projects.

b. Mitigate flood impacts and coastal erosion in flood prone areas on the Long Island Sound, Peconic River, and inland, through nature-based solutions.

Nature-based features, such as floodplains, wetlands, and riparian buffers, can mitigate flooding, wave action, and erosion and should be encouraged. Preserving and restoring these natural barriers along the waterfront will help protect people, property, critical infrastructure, and the environment from damage caused by rising sea levels and storms. Features built near the coast or waterbodies intended to prevent erosion or reduce storm surge or flooding, such as bulkheads, seawalls, breakwaters, and impoundments, are costly and often exacerbate damage to neighboring properties and should be used cautiously.

c. Develop a resilience plan to assess vulnerability by location and identify context-specific solutions.

Riverhead should assess flood risk and vulnerability of critical infrastructure and the shoreline, research tailored approaches and tools, identify coastal assets and resources that require special protection, and prioritize resilience measures, which can be costly.

Goal 12-8: Ensure the safety of Riverhead residents, employees, and visitors in the event of an emergency and strengthen the Town's emergency preparedness.

One of the key climate change issues facing the town is the increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, such as hurricanes, tropical storms, and heavy rainfall events. These events can cause flooding, damage to infrastructure, and disruptions to businesses and residents. Riverhead has experienced several significant storms in recent years, including Superstorm Sandy in 2012, which caused widespread damage and flooding throughout the town. In response to these events, the town has been developing emergency response plans and investing in infrastructure improvements to enhance its resilience to future storms.

a. Promote the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Riverhead has an annex in the Suffolk County Hazard Mitigation Plan that details the Town's response to a natural disaster or emergency. Riverhead works with the County and State through an Incident Command System to coordinate responses in emergencies.

b. Update the Town of Riverhead Hurricane/Severe Storm Emergency Response Plan.

The Hurricane/Severe Storm Response Plan is used by the Town Government, Police Department, and other agencies that will participate in functional response activities during a major storm.

c. Enhance the Town's ability to provide important notifications and increase the public's awareness about emergency preparedness.

In an emergency, the Town should notify the public by text or phone calls, announcements on local TV and radio, and the Town's website. Messages should include evacuation orders and routes, locations of emergency shelters, and where to find services such as medical care or food and water. The Town should improve accessibility of emergency preparedness educational materials by including translations and graphics.