

RIVERHEAD Comprehensive Plan Update



Public Workshop
April 22, 2023



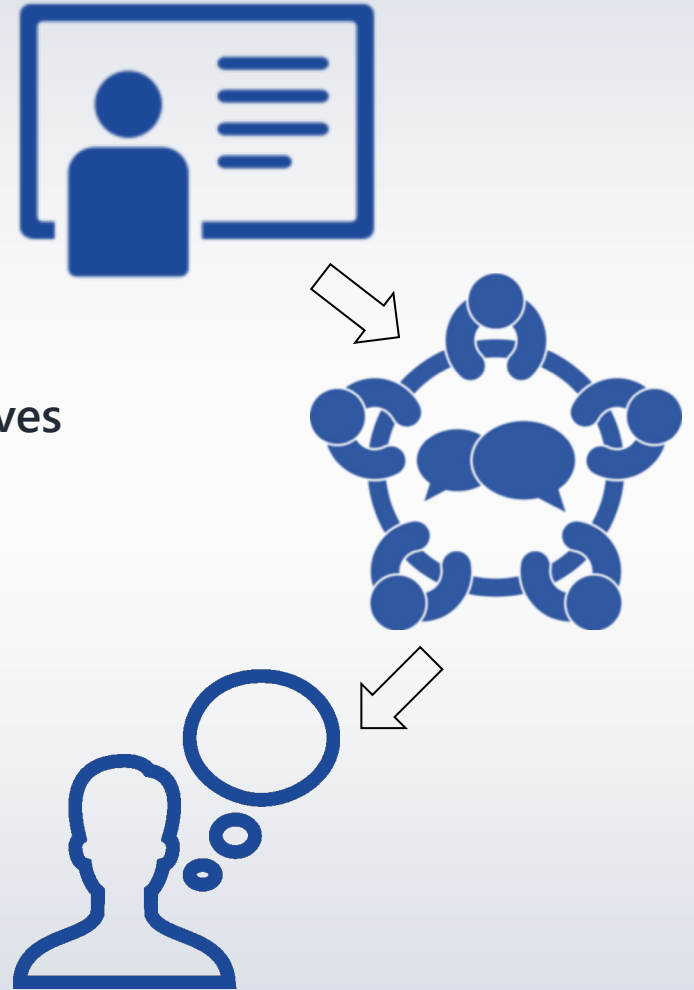
Agenda

1. Presentation (40 mins)

- Introductions and Team Overview
- Summary of Project Timeline
- Summary of Prior Work
- Discussion of Priority Issues and Objectives

2. Roundtable Discussions (40 mins)

3. Report Back (30 mins)



Introduction Project Team

BFJ Planning

Core Team

Noah Levine, AICP, PP
Principal-in-Charge

Emily Junker
Project Manager

Frank Fish, FAICP
Resource Principal –
Land Use and Zoning

Sarah Yackel
Resource Principal –
SEQR

Resources

Jonathan Martin, Ph.D., AICP
Urban Design

Georges Jacquemart, P.E., AICP, PP
Transportation

Silvia Del Fava, LEED AP ND, AICP
Sustainability & Resilience

Thomas Madden, AICP
Economic Development

Urbanomics (Economic Analysis)

Tina Lund
Principal

Peter Furst
Senior Associate

LKMA (Transportation & Infrastructure)

Raymond DiBiase,
PE, PTOE, PTP

Vincent A. Corrado, PE

Comprehensive Plan Update Steering Committee

Members:

- Yvette Aguiar, Supervisor
- Devon Higgins, Deputy Supervisor
- Tim Hubbard, Councilman
- Robert Kern, Councilman
- Joann Waski, Planning Board
- Dawn Thomas, Community Development Department
- Sid Bail, Community Liaison
- Robert Carpenter, Long Island Farm Bureau
- Mark Haubner, Environmental Advisory Committee
- Andrew Mitchell, Peconic Bay Medical Center
- Amy Loeb, Peconic Bay Medical Center and Peconic Bay Medical Center Foundation
- Mitch Pally
- Michael Florio, Long Island Builders Institute
- Patrick Fedun

Comprehensive Plan Update Steering Committee

- Role of Committee:
 - Guide comprehensive plan process and monitor timelines
 - Help plan for public outreach activities
 - Provide input on issues and opportunities
 - Help to ensure plan is representative of wider community
 - Review draft deliverables
- Working groups
 - Advise on technical subjects and review specific materials*
 - Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources
 - Housing and Economic Development
 - Transportation, Utilities and Community Facilities

What is a Comprehensive Plan?



- **An expression of the community’s shared vision of the future.**

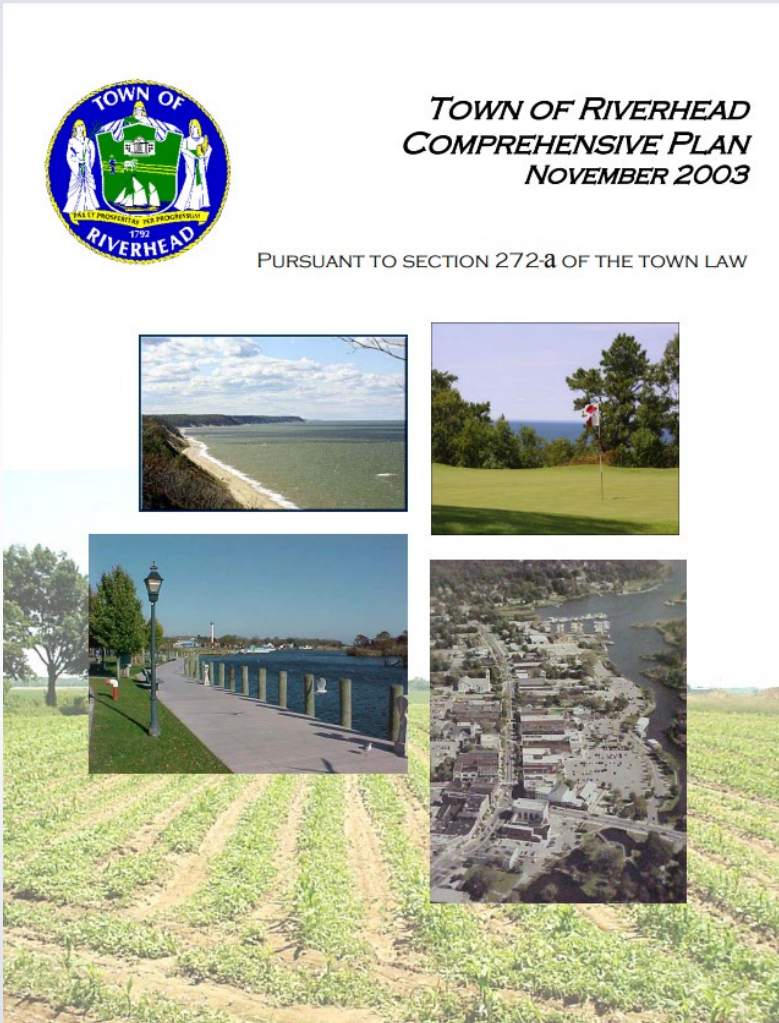


- **It is public policy guide for plans, initiatives, and investments. It lays the foundation for decisions related to zoning code, capital budget, and general policy.**



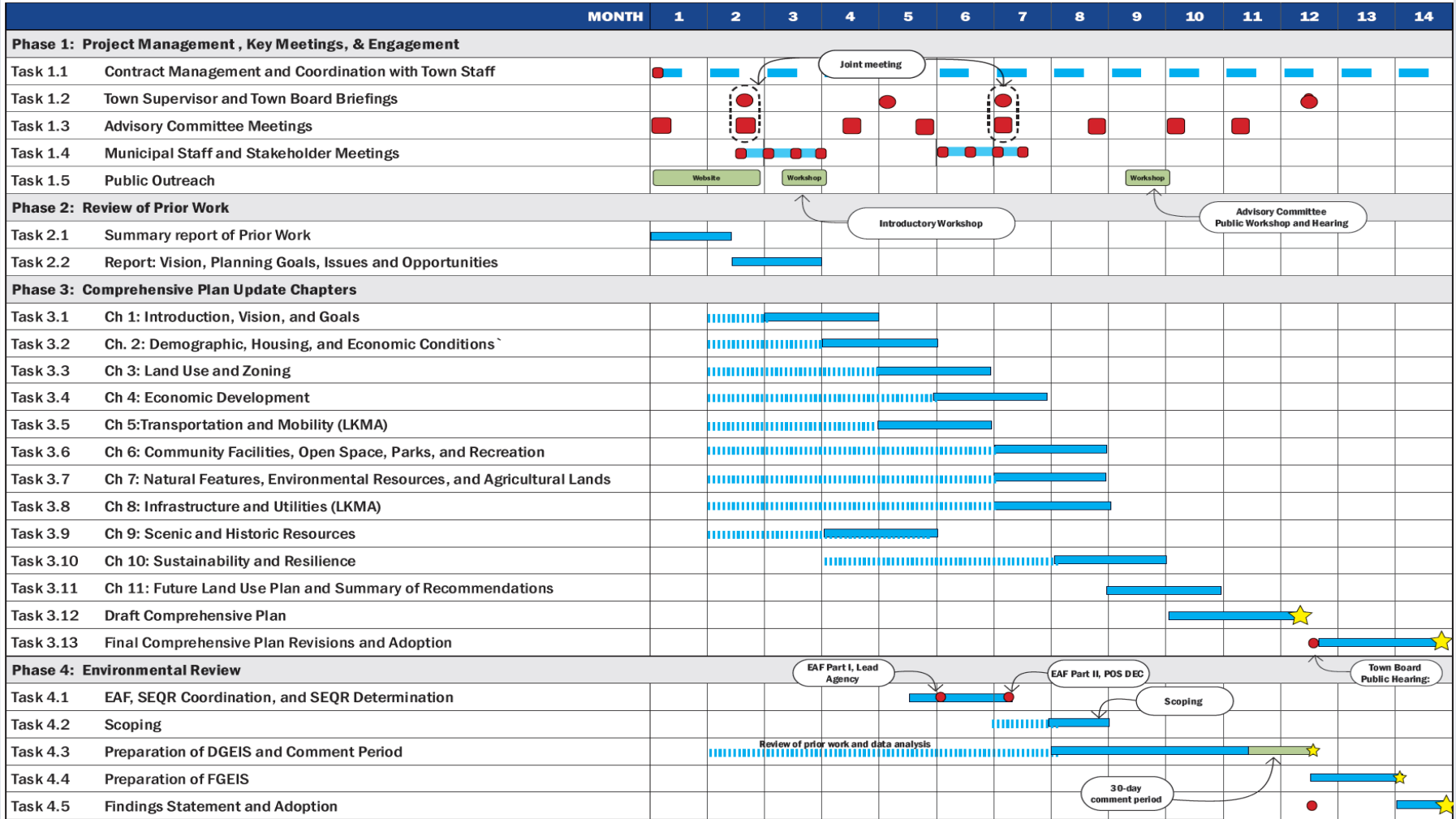
- **Zoning decisions must be based on a “well-considered plan”**
- **A “to do” list for the Town to track implementation of short, medium, and long-term goals.**

Why Update the Plan?



- The prior Plan was adopted in 2003.
- A lot has happened in the last 20 years...

Overview Timeline (14-Months)



LEGEND

- Major work on Task
- Meetings with Town Board, Steering Committee, or Stakeholders
- Review of prior work and data analysis
- ★ Interim and Major Deliverable

The timeline and scope of work include the preparation and adoption of a Comprehensive Plan. Implementation of other action items such as the adoption of an Official Map, a Capital Budget, or zoning changes would be covered under a separate scope, if desired.

Timeline – Milestones in Next 4 Months (Feb-May)



Riverhead is Updating its Comprehensive Plan!



What is a Comprehensive Plan?

The Comprehensive Plan is an official, long-range 'blueprint' for the future of the Town. It details the community's vision for the future and guides Riverhead on a wide range of issues such as future decisions on land use and development, capital spending, and general policy direction. The Comprehensive Plan also provides strategies addressing economic development, farmland preservation and the agricultural economy, housing, revitalization of Main Street and Hamlet centers, transportation, sustainable development, climate resiliency, and natural resource preservation and water quality.

The Comprehensive Plan reflects changes that have taken place since the prior plan was adopted in 2003. It also incorporates policies from the Downtown Revitalization Initiative, the Downtown Riverhead Pattern Book, and other recent plans. Links to relevant planning documents can be found here:

<https://townofriverheadcomprehensiveplanupdate.com/>

Comments: compplan@townofriverheadny.gov

This planning effort builds off of research and public engagement completed by the Town and its

Prior Outreach (AKRF)

- Periodic meetings with an Advisory Committee,
- Work sessions with the Town Board,
- Hamlet-focused public meetings,
- Topic-oriented public meetings,
- A public survey (closed for comment),
- An online interactive map (closed for comment), and
- Interviews with Town staff and other stakeholders.



Other Major Recent Initiatives

- DRI Strategic Investment Plan (2022)
- Downtown Riverfront Activation Plan (2022)
- Downtown Riverhead Pattern Book (2021)
- Town Square Design Process and Market Study (2021)
- Riverhead Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plan (2020)

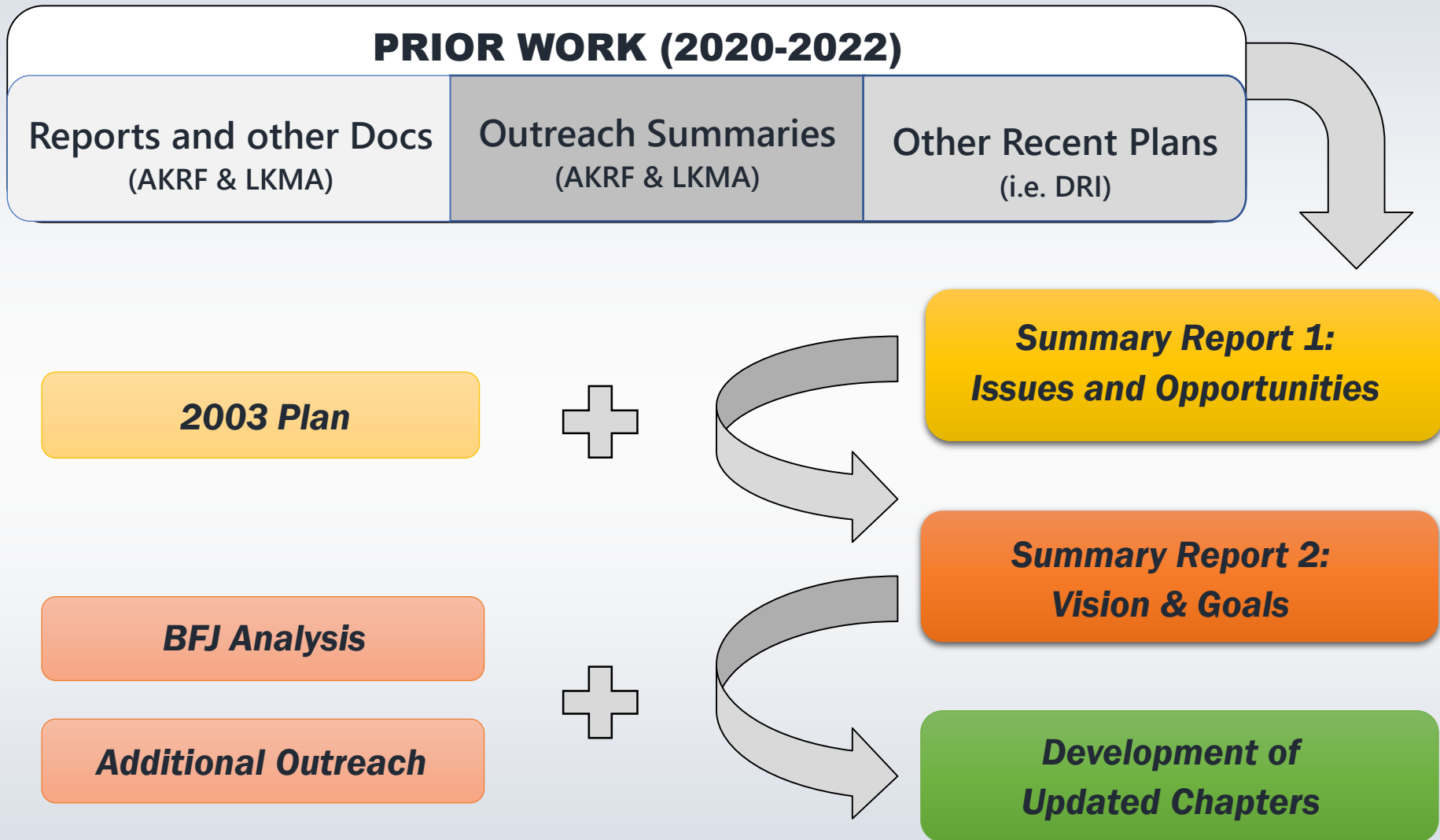


*Proposed mixed-use building at train station
Source: Torti Gallas + Partners*



*Proposed plan for Town Square
Source: UDA*

Building Off of Prior Planning Effort



Summary of Prior Work



Summary Report of Prior Work

An Interim Document for the
Riverhead Comprehensive Plan Update

Working Draft: March 2023

Prepared by:
BFJ Planning
115 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10003

BFJ Planning

- Interim working document intended to be a starting point.
- Synthesis of issues and opportunities identified in previously completed work (by AKRF and others).
- Indicates topics where we understand that further study is needed.

Interim Draft to be posted website on May 1

RIVERHEAD Comprehensive Plan Update

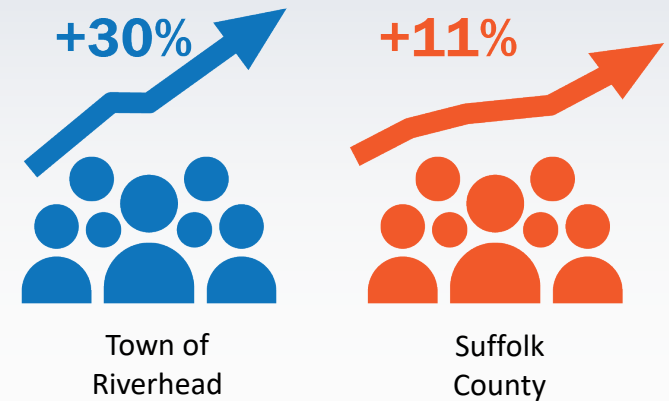


*Housing
Trends, Issues, & Opportunities*

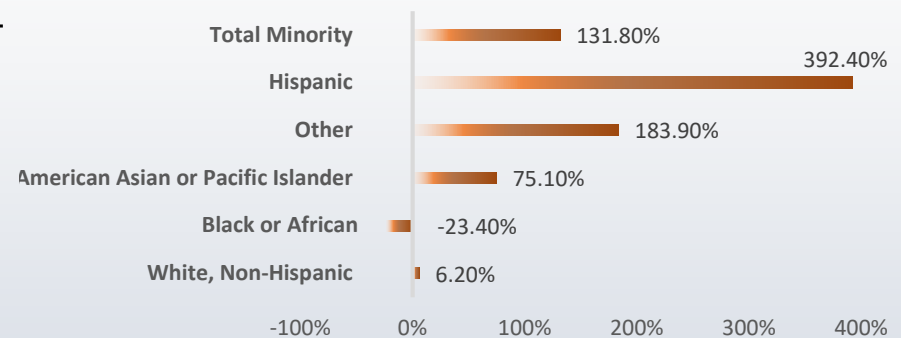
Housing Demographic Trends

- **Population is growing:** Town's population grew by 30% in last 20 years, a much faster rate than Suffolk County.
- **Population growth is projected to continue** (NYMTC forecast to 2040)
- **Population is aging.**
- **Decline in younger population** (school-age children)
- **Riverhead is more diverse.** Minority population increased 132% from 2000-2020. Hispanic population increased almost 5X during this period.

Population Growth 2000-2019

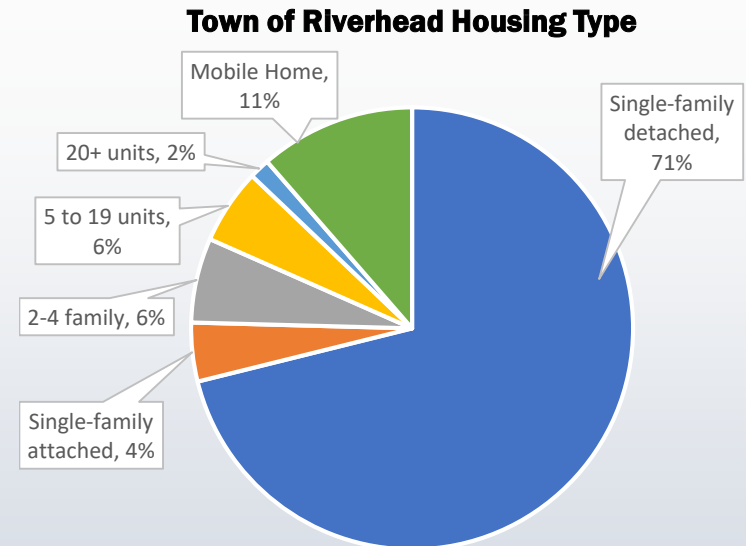
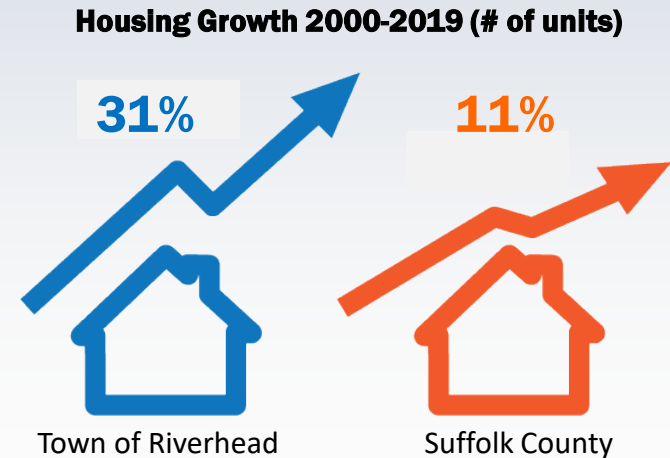


Riverhead Race and Ethnicity



Housing Housing Trends

- **Housing growth has been strong.**
Number of units in the town grew by 31% in past 20 years, compared to 11% in the County.
- **Share of single-family attached, 2-family, and 3-4 family homes increased substantially.**
- **Mobile & manufactured homes make up 2nd largest share of housing.**
- **Multi-family housing (5+ units) grew, but at a slower rate than the County.**
- **Significant amount of new residential expected downtown.**



Housing

Housing Trends – Home Value

- **Market was volatile during the COVID Pandemic.**
- **Riverhead's Median Housing Value is slightly less than the County's value of \$397,400.**
- **Riverhead has substantially more housing valued below \$100,000 than the County**
- **Riverhead has a larger share of rental units than Suffolk County**
- **Riverhead has lower median gross rents compared to the County**
- **About half of renters spend over 30% of their income on housing costs.**

Median Housing Value (2019)

\$369,000



Town of Riverhead

\$397,400



Suffolk County

Median Rent (2019)

\$
\$
\$1,441



Town of Riverhead

\$
\$
\$
\$1,742

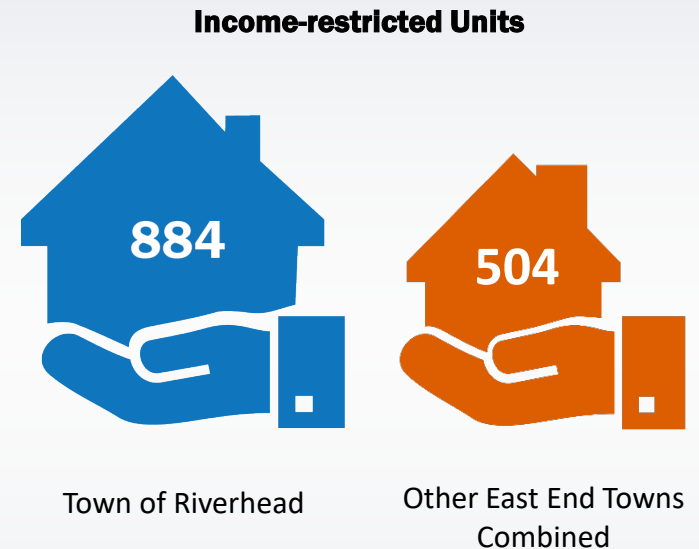


Suffolk County

Housing

Affordable Housing

- **Affordable housing is a regional issue.** Income-restricted units are needed (throughout region) to meet the projections for lower-income and workforce populations through 2040.
- **Riverhead has been the workforce housing alternative for the East End.**
- **Additional data from surrounding East End Towns will be looked at to better determine Riverhead’s “fair share”.**
- **All 3,133 rental units in the Town are considered “naturally affordable”**
- **Riverhead has a significant inventory of age-restricted housing.**



Housing Comments from Public

- **Support for increased market-rate homes, including:**
 - Home ownership opportunities for young people to invest in community and build wealth.
 - Homes in the downtown area to support local businesses
 - Small, single-family units with 2- or 3-BRs
 - Low-maintenance options such as rental and condo apartments
- **Workforce housing (130% AMI)**
- **Assisted living developments**
- **Senior housing**



The Shipyard

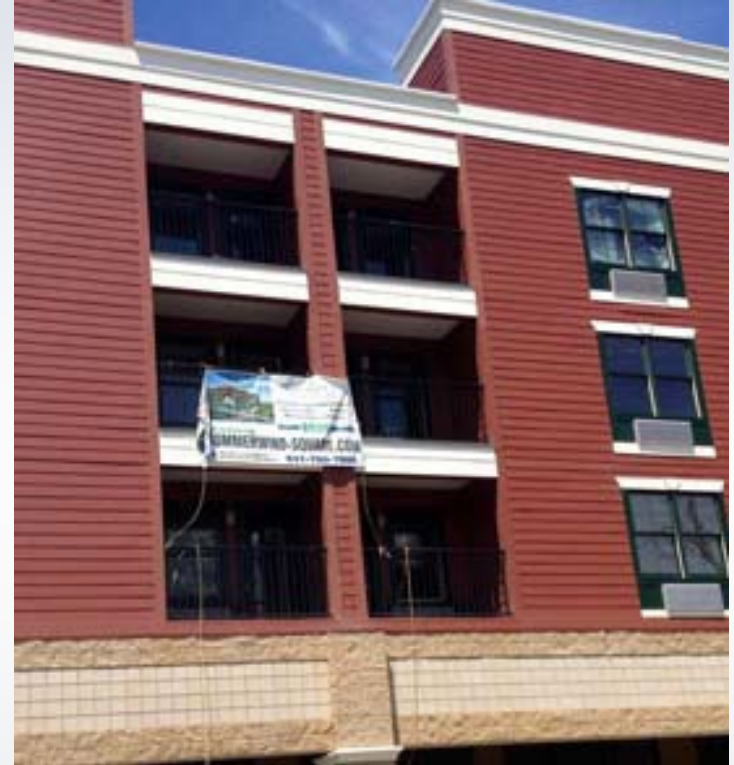


Peconic Crossing

Images: DRI Strategic Investment Plan

Housing Code Enforcement and Quality of Life Issues

- **Overcrowded Housing - Short-term Rentals**
- **Saturation of transitional and sober housing**
- **Concern about unhoused population and lack of programs/services for them.**
- **Construction Quality and Sustainability**



RIVERHEAD Comprehensive Plan Update



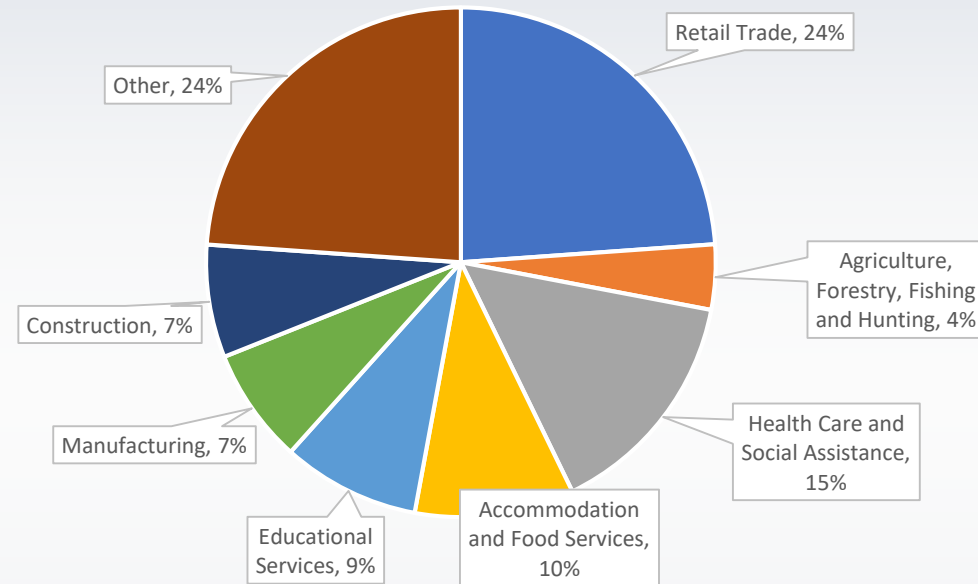
*Economic Development
Trends, Issues, & Opportunities*

Economic Development (Commercial and Industrial Areas)

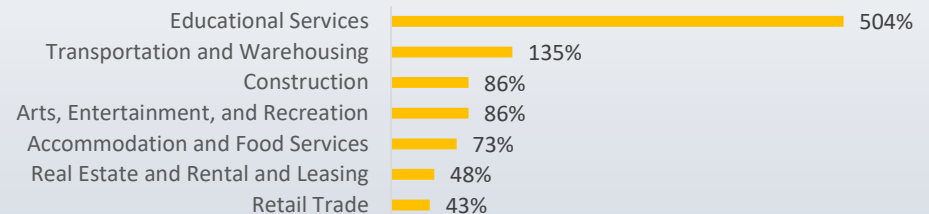
Socioeconomic Trends

- **There are 18,499 jobs in the Town.**
20% of jobs are held by residents
- **Job growth has been strong** (34% job growth in Riverhead compared to 11% growth in the County between 2003-2020)
- **The employment rate was 94.8%.**
Since 2000, employment is down, both in Riverhead Town and Suffolk County.
- **There is a need for job growth in the Town,** particularly in high-paying professional and finance jobs that can retain young professionals (AKRF's Market Trends Analysis report).

Riverhead Jobs by Employment Sector



Riverhead Industries by Growth (2003 - 2019)



Economic Development (Commercial and Industrial Areas) Downtown

- **Assets: Waterfront, lively main street corridor, entertainment venues, and cultural institutions**
- **Significant amount of anticipated development**
- **Public realm improvements**



Rendering of the Riverhead Town Square



Rendering of The Landmark, a planned housing development

Images: Downtown Activation Plan; DRI Strategic Investment Plan

Economic Development (Commercial and Industrial Areas) Downtown

- **Concern about the viability of downtown businesses**
- **Quality of life issues**
- **Pedestrian safety and congestion**
- **Work needed to improve fringe areas (Route 25 west to Tanger Outlets, and East Main Street from Town Hall to Route 58.)**

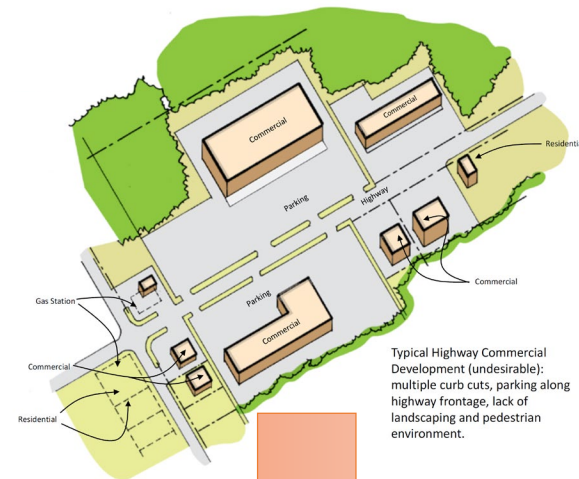


Image : New York Times

Economic Development (Commercial and Industrial Areas) Route 58

- **Several new developments in past few years.** Vacancy rate appears to have gone down, but Comp plan will study this further
- **More people shop on Route 58 compared to Downtown** (survey results). Need to direct more people downtown and make sure uses on 58 do not compete with downtown.
- **Need improved zoning guidance to improve architecture, landscaping, site design, and traffic mitigation.**
- **Potential for mix of uses: No consensus on whether inclusion of some residential (i.e. on upper floors) should be permitted on Route 58.**

Typical Highway Commercial Development



Typical Highway Commercial Development (undesirable): multiple curb cuts, parking along highway frontage, lack of landscaping and pedestrian environment.

Alternate Highway Commercial Development (Recommended)



Alternate Highway Commercial Development (recommended): buildings closer to roadway frontage, parking provided in the rear and side of buildings, landscaped buffers between highway and buildings and within parking areas, clearly demarcated pedestrian and bicycle paths

Economic Development (Commercial and Industrial Areas)

Industrial Development

- **High-Cube Warehousing and Fulfillment Uses:**
 - Existing industrial districts allow for a wide range of uses.
 - Warehouse fulfillment and logistics centers (e.g. Amazon) could generate significant traffic.
- **Critical issue: Redevelopment of the EPCAL property.**
 - Substantial transportation improvements needed to support phased build out.
- **Comp Plan will address industrially zoned areas – which may include:**
 - Allowable densities and heights
 - Where high cube warehousing and distribution centers are appropriate
 - Permitting process for proposed spec buildings
 - Solar farms
 - Vertical Farming

RIVERHEAD Comprehensive Plan Update



*Agriculture
Trends, Issues, & Opportunities*

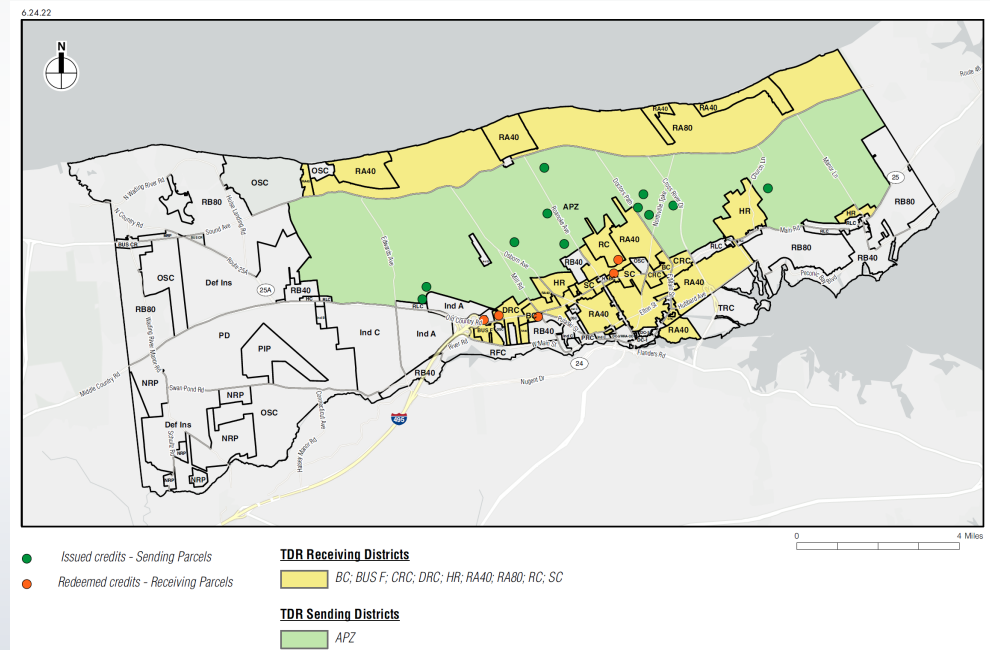
Agriculture

Priority Issues and Challenges

- **Preserve Town's agricultural and rural character.** Ensure that farms are economically viable, preserve prime agricultural soils, and retain Riverhead's bucolic and scenic look.
- **The public expressed the importance of the agriculture industry for generating employment in the Town.** Support for expansion of farm to table and healthy food options, specialty crop businesses, and improved product distribution.
- **Different interpretations of what it means to “preserve agricultural character.” Preserving bucolic open space and agricultural vistas doesn't always align with needs of the agricultural industry.**
 - Farmland reuse and open space preservation was the top priority for most survey respondents, while Solar Farms most survey respondents said renewable energy/solar farms was the least priority/need.
 - Respondents divided on whether agritourism and agricultural events should be expanded.

Agriculture Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

- **Stakeholders expressed that changes are needed to make the program work better.** Since 2003, ~313 acres have been preserved and ~163 residential credits have been redeemed. 93 TDR credits redeemed for commercial use.
- **Working with TDR Committee to develop recommendations, which may include:**
 - Strategies to expand TDR in downtown and hamlet centers.
 - New sending areas north of Sound Avenue, in Laurel, and in Wading River.
 - Using other tools such as cluster subdivisions, planned development district, voluntary preservation, and a TDR bank.



Current TDR Sending and Receiving Areas

Agriculture Economics of Farming Industry

- **Farmers looking for supplemental income to support industry**
 - Agritainment and Agritourism are economic drivers in the Town.
 - Survey respondents generally in favor of expanding agritourism and events.
 - HOWEVER, there is a need to balance the adverse effects such as traffic, light and noise.
- **Other Options for Farmers**
 - Solar
 - Agrovoltaics
 - Agricultural Manufacturing and Vertical Farming



RIVERHEAD Comprehensive Plan Update



*Transportation & Mobility
Trends, Issues, & Opportunities*

Transportation and Mobility

Major Issues

- **Seasonal / tourist related traffic, especially on NY25 and Sound Ave**
- **Hot spots with recurring traffic congestion:**
 - Roanoke Avenue at Main Street in the downtown area,
 - NY 25/Edwards Avenue intersection (scheduled to be rebuilt in 2025)
 - CR105 at NY25 intersection,
 - and the commercial corridor of CR58 in general.
- **Need for more public transit options**
- **Need for improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure**



Traffic on Sound Ave

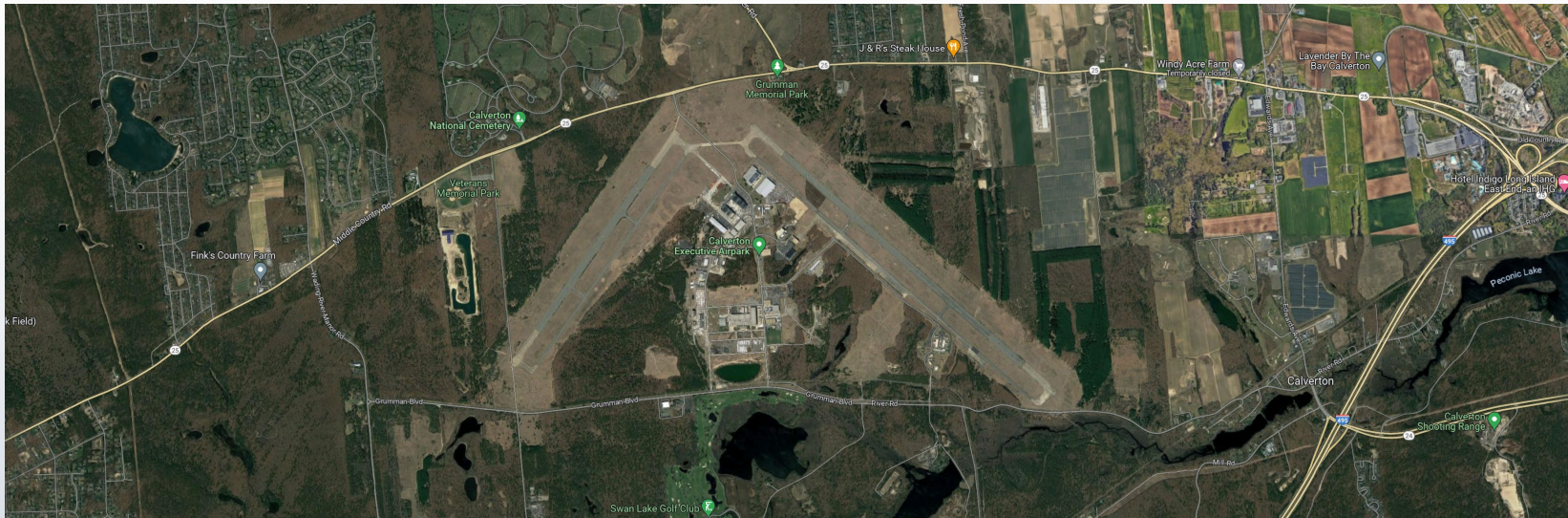


Main Rd (NY25) and Cross River Dr (CR 105)

Transportation and Mobility

Anticipated Transportation Needs – Future Development

- **Roadways have sufficient capacity for the foreseeable future** (full-scale extensive roadway widenings are not anticipated)
- **HOWEVER, an exception is the section of NY25 between Wading River Road and Manor Lane, which would be impacted by EPCAL build-out.**
- **There is a need for localized improvements in intersection capacity, changes to traffic control, safety improvements, and enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities.**



Transportation and Mobility

CR 58

- **CR 58 experienced significant development in last 20 years.**
- **Roadway reconstructed in 2010. Improvements did not provide infrastructure for bicyclists, public transit, or ADA-compliant pedestrian facilities.**
- **Long-term strategy - include shoulders, sidewalks, bus stops and shelters, and turning lanes where needed.**
- **Near-term improvements should be part of site plan approval process, including access management, cross access easements, property dedication, and pedestrian and bicycle accessibility (bike racks, sidewalk connections, ADA compliance).**



Transportation and Mobility

Sound Avenue

- **Agritourism brings a significant amount of traffic**
- **Congestion is focused at key choke points, which impacts the corridor as a whole.**
- **Public does not support typical corridor-wide capacity improvement (ie additional travel/two-way left turn lane).**
- **Preferred option to address problem spots: Strategy of spot improvements, access management restrictions, and traffic control.**
- **Tree preservation**
- **Corridor study is needed**



Transportation and Mobility

Bicycle Facilities

- **NYS Routes 24 and 25 provide wide shoulders for cyclists**
- **Recently opened Vietnam Veterans Memorial Recreation Trail at EPCAL, a 10-mile continuous loop around the perimeter**
- **MTA's pilot program for First Mile Last Mile transit accessibility focused on bicycle access and circulation Downtown.**
- **Most town roads outside downtown areas have suitable width for bike use (14' min. travel lanes)**
- **Investigate connection to existing shared-use path from Setauket to Wading River**
- **Coordinate new bike lanes/routes with proposed Long Island extension of the Empire State Trail**



RIVERHEAD Comprehensive Plan Update



*Community Facilities
and Cultural Resources
Trends, Issues, & Opportunities*

Scenic and Historic Resources - Public Concerns

- **Shorelines, Rivers, Streams, Ponds, and Wetlands**
- **Agricultural Landscapes**
- **Scenic Corridors**
- **Public concerns about light pollution**

Community Facilities, Open Space, Parks and Recreation Issues and Opportunities

- **Participation declined during COVID pandemic.**
- **Community identified needs:**
 - Improve parking areas at Wading River parks (i.e. Bayberry Park and Duck Ponds)
 - Bayberry Park in Wading River is neglected.
 - Wading River Boat ramp, canal, and parking lot need lots of attention.
 - Concerns over beach parking and access (i.e. at Meeting House Creek Lane, Reeves Beach, and Baiting Hollow)
 - South Jamesport – improve parks
- **Promote and encourage additional opportunities for private and public indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities** - particularly to complement existing uses near EPCAL, along Route 58 and in Downtown.

Community Facilities, Open Space, Parks and Recreation

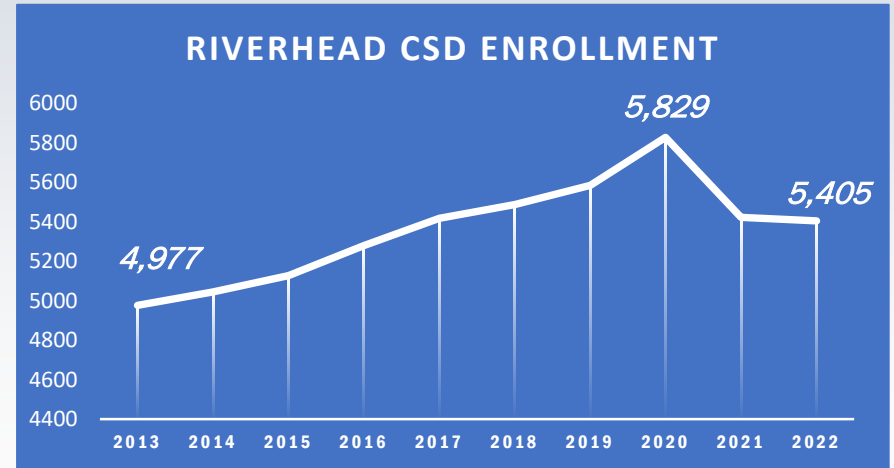
Other Issues

- **Schools**

- Population growth has put a capacity strain on the school district.
- The Town needs to collaborate with Southampton regarding new development/school district overcrowding.

- **Other issues**

- Health Care
- Facilities and Housing for Elderly
- High-Speed Internet
- Job Training and Vocational Resources



Source: data.nysed.gov



Source: Northwell Health

RIVERHEAD Comprehensive Plan Update

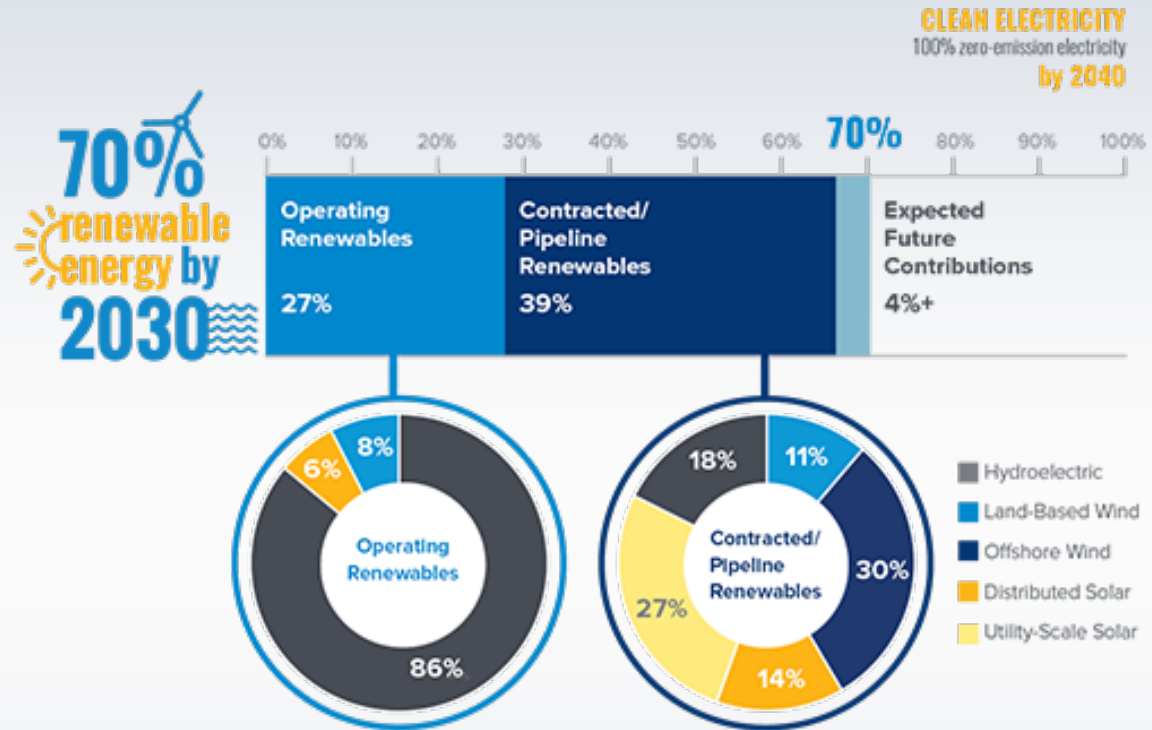


*Sustainability and Resilience
Trends, Issues, & Opportunities*

Sustainability and Resilience

Renewable Energy

- State Goals
- Solar Farms
- Battery Energy Storage Systems
- Wind Power
- Fuel Cell Storage
- Sustainable Development



Sustainability and Resilience

Natural Resource Protection

- **Surface water protections and watershed management**
- **Pine Barrens Preservation**
- **Tree Preservation (Tree preservation code, Tree inventory)**
- **Drinking Water Quality and Monitoring**



Peconic River



Pine Barrens

Sustainability and Resilience

Flooding, Sea Level Rise and Resiliency

- Waterfront Resiliency
- Current Projects
- Climate change and Emergency Preparedness



Sustainability and Resilience

Other Initiatives

- **Green Building**
- **Electric Vehicles**
- **Solar**
- **Waste Management**
- **Downtown redevelopment**



RIVERHEAD Comprehensive Plan Update

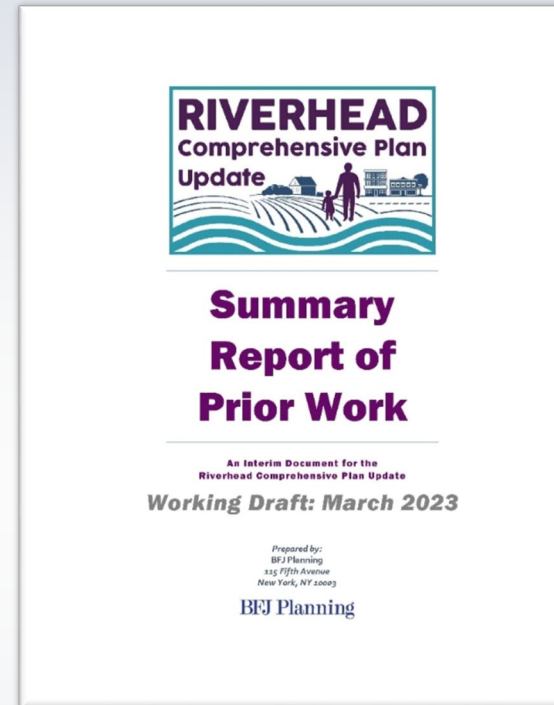


What's Next?

What's Next

To be posted on project website by May 1:

- ***Recording of this presentation***
- ***Workshop Summary***
- ***Summary Report of Prior Work (Interim Draft)***

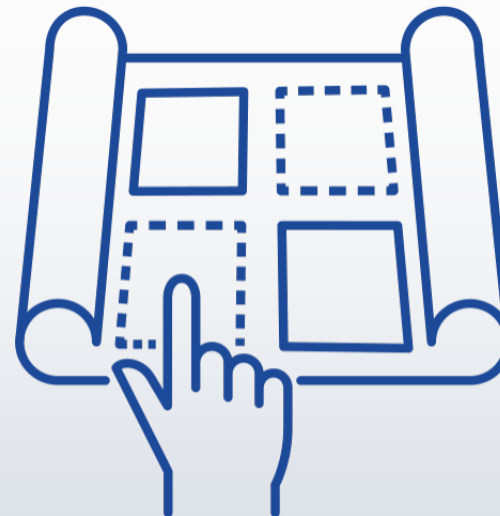


<https://townofriverheadcomprehensiveplanupdate.com/>

Comments: compplan@townofriverheadny.gov

Roundtable Discussions

- **45 Minute Discussion**
 - *1 Note Taker*
 - *1 Presenter*
- **Discussion**
- **Report Back**



Roundtable Discussions

1st Floor

Stage

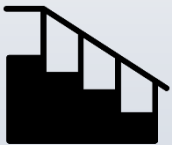
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Floor

2

Bar

3



2nd Floor

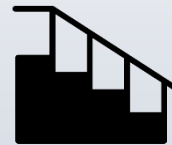
Balcony

4

5

Upstairs Bar

6



Thank you!



RIVERHEAD Comprehensive Plan Update



*Thank you for your
input and time.*

