

# Town of Riverhead

Draft East Main Street Urban Renewal Plan Update 2008



Prepared by:  
Town of Riverhead Community Development Agency  
with assistance from  
AKRF, Inc.

May 2008

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## **East Main Street Urban Renewal Plan Update 2008**

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### **A. INTRODUCTION**

In 1993, the Town of Riverhead Community Development Agency (CDA) prepared the *East Main Street Urban Renewal Plan* (1993 Plan). The impetus for the CDA, acting as the Town's urban renewal agency, to prepare the 1993 Plan was to propose redevelopment of certain areas of the downtown that were blighted and deteriorated and where numerous structures had been vacant or underutilized for an extended period of time. Historically, the East Main Street Urban Renewal Area (EMSURA) served as a commercial downtown center for Riverhead residents. The decline of this area, as stated in the 1993 Plan, was a direct result of the development of larger commercial centers, such as shopping malls and large single-use retail stores that are situated along Suffolk County Route 58.

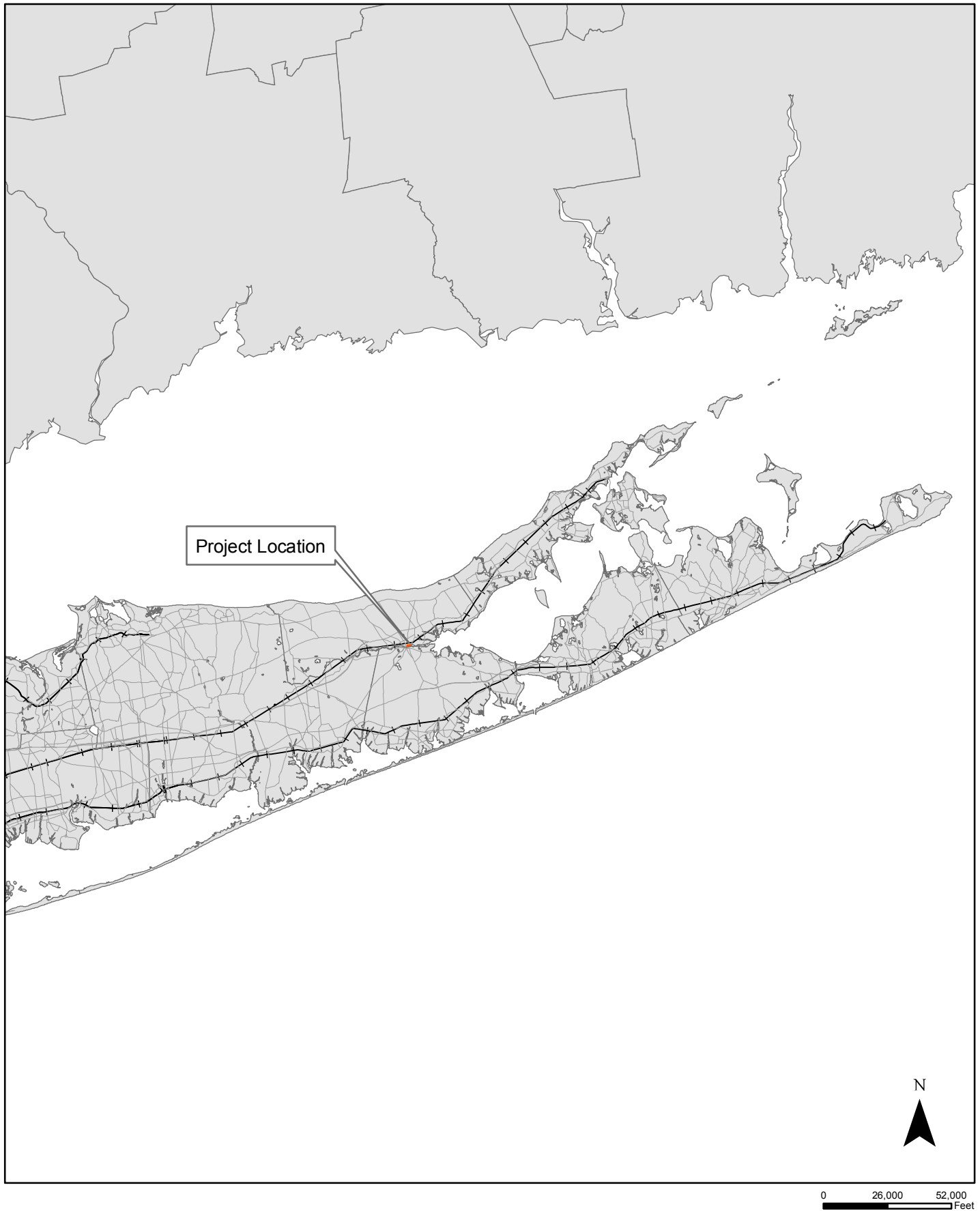
Since the adoption of the 1993 Plan, the Town has introduced various programs and improvements to the downtown area in conformance with the recommendations of the plan. Some of these improvements include the development of new and attractive structures, elimination of blighted buildings, and several land use and zoning changes, including the development of the waterfront park. Notwithstanding these improvements, the area continues to be plagued with blight and vacancy as a result of the decline of commercial retail uses, and therefore, further redevelopment should be encouraged. However, since 1993, there have been several land use and public policy changes within the EMSURA that impact the character and intent of the EMSURA. Such changes include the development of a key commercial anchor—Atlantis Marine World Aquarium; the adoption of several planning documents, including the *Town of Riverhead 2003 Comprehensive Plan* (2003 Comprehensive Plan); and a change in the zoning within the EMSURA from Business D District to the Downtown Center 1: Main Street (DC-1) and Downtown Center 2: Waterfront (DC-2) Districts. Further, changes in the Town's socioeconomic environment and commercial and retail development patterns also affected the land use pattern within the EMSURA. These changes, combined with the Town's intent to continue revitalization of the EMSURA, warrant an update to the 1993 Plan.

The intent of this East Main Street Urban Renewal Plan Update 2008 (2008 Update) is to assess the present day issues and conditions within the EMSURA and make recommendations that are consistent with the Town's current planning goals and objectives. Further, this 2008 Update will serve as the future roadmap to continued urban renewal and economic revitalization, lead and coordinated by the CDA.

This 2008 Update has been written in full compliance with the General Municipal Law Article 15: Urban Renewal Law.

### **EAST MAIN STREET URBAN RENEWAL AREA**

The EMSURA is located in the south-central portion of the Town of Riverhead, Suffolk County, New York (see Figure 1). The total land area, including roadways, within the EMSURA



boundary is approximately 41 acres and includes 90 separate Suffolk County Tax Map parcels. More than 98 percent of the land within the EMSURA is developed or in active use, including parking, and the remaining 2 percent is undeveloped.

Figure 2 shows the geographic boundaries of the study area. The EMSURA is bounded on the north by East Second Street, on the east by land adjacent to the eastern property boundary of the Treasure Cove Resort and Marina, on the south by the Peconic River, and on the west by Peconic and Roanoke Avenues.

## **B. LEGISLATIVE HISTORY**

### **ARTICLE 15: URBAN RENEWAL LAW**

The Article 15 of the New York State General Municipal Law grants all New York State municipalities the authority to plan and undertake urban renewal projects as well as the power to carry out or effectuate such projects. As stated, the CDA has been designated as the Town's urban renewal agency. The 1993 Plan and the 2008 Update have been prepared pursuant to the State's Urban Renewal Law.

Sections 501 through 503 of Article 15 describe the circumstances that warrant the preparation of an urban renewal plan as well as the authority granted to an urban renewal agency. According to Section 501, slum or blighted conditions occur "because of substandard, unsanitary, deteriorated, or deteriorating conditions, factors, and characteristics, without tangible physical blight." Section 502 of Article 15 defines a substandard or unsanitary area as:

*interchangeable with a slum, blighted, or deteriorated or deteriorating area, or an area which has a blighting influence on the surrounding area, whether residential, non-residential, commercial, industrial, vacant, or land in highways, railway and subway tracks, bridge and tunnel approaches and entrances, or other similar facilities, over which air rights and easements or other rights of user necessary for the use and development of such air rights, to be developed as air rights sites for the elimination of the blighting influence, or any combination thereof and may include land, buildings or improvements, or air rights and concomitant easements or other rights of user necessary for the use and development of such air rights, not in themselves substandard or unsanitary, the inclusion of which is deemed necessary for the effective undertaking of one or more urban renewal programs.*

According to Section 503(h), the Town Board has the authority to require, for a maximum period of three years, the consent of the urban renewal agency before issuing building permits, alteration permits, or certificates of occupancy for a structure or use within the urban renewal area for which the urban renewal plan has been approved. The purpose of this provision is to allow the Town to preserve and secure the integrity of the newly adopted urban renewal plan.

### **ARTICLE 15-A: MUNICIPAL URBAN RENEWAL AGENCIES, ORGANIZATION AND POWERS**

Article 15-A, Section 554 of the State's General Municipal Law provides urban renewal agencies with broad powers to plan and undertake urban renewal projects. Urban renewal agencies are given the powers "necessary or convenient" to complete urban renewal projects. Such controls include the power to prepare urban renewal plans; to sue and be sued; to use municipal employees and facilities with the municipality's permission; to enter contracts; to borrow money; to issue bonds, notes, and mortgages; to acquire and transfer property; to provide







for demolition, clearance, and improvement of property; and to accept financial assistance from public and private sources.

#### **ARTICLE 15-B: MUNICIPAL URBAN RENEWAL AGENCIES, CREATED**

Pursuant to Title 116 of Article 15-B of the General Municipal Law (Section 680-c), the CDA was designated as the urban renewal agency for the Town of Riverhead in 1982.

#### **TOWN BOARD RESOLUTION**

Since its inception, the CDA has undertaken a number of steps to implement the policies and goals of the Urban Renewal Law. Specifically, the CDA has implemented the goals and objectives of the 1993 Plan through the undertaking of several projects between 1993 and 2008. Some of these projects include:

- In the mid 1990s, the CDA acquired property along the riverfront previously utilized as a lumber yard and identified in the plan as underutilized and appropriate for redevelopment as a tourist related destination.
- After undertaking significant predevelopment, architectural, and environmental studies for the development of an aquarium, the CDA sold the property and project development plans to a private sponsor following the requisite hearings and process. The result is the Atlantis Marine World Aquarium, a thriving economic development activity in the EMSURA.
- In 1994, the Town acquired Suffolk Theatre intending to renovate and operate the facility as a performing arts theatre. After determining that public support for public financing of the endeavor was insufficient, the Town transferred the theatre to the CDA and a request for proposals followed to identify a private sponsor for purchase and renovation of the theatre. The theatre was sold in 2005 to the entity determined best suited for restoration of the 1937 structure based upon the criteria in the Urban Renewal Law and policy of the CDA for disposition of real property.
- Again in the 1990s, the Town assembled properties for the development of a flagship department store. Upon transfer by the CDA to the private company, a change in corporate policy resulted in a decision not to proceed. The CDA then held new hearings to determine a new qualified and eligible sponsor pursuant to the law, and in 2005 transfer was authorized to a private developer for the construction of a facility to house the culinary arts program of the Suffolk Community College by lease from the developer. This use serves to further the goals and objectives of the Urban Renewal Law and the 1993 Plan.

#### ***CDA RESOLUTION 7***

On May 18, 2004, the Town Board of the Town of Riverhead adopted CDA Resolution 7 setting forth the rules and procedures for designation of sponsors (pursuant to Article 15 of the General Municipal Law) for the implementation of urban renewal projects. Those rules and procedures will govern the implementation of projects within the EMSURA.

In 2005, following rezoning of the EMSURA by the Town Board, the CDA published a Request for Expressions of Interest for distribution to the development community to encourage redevelopment of this area. Several responses were received, and in October 2006 a Request for Proposals was issued by the CDA requesting additional information from three development groups including financial documentation, developer experience, and proposed plans for the

EMSURA. Responses were received in January, evaluated by the CDA and a determination to proceed was made.

*CDA RESOLUTION 2*

The Town Board, on March 7, 2006, passed CDA Resolution 2 authorizing the CDA Chairman to commence negotiations with Apollo Real Estate Advisors, LP to develop a plan to revitalize downtown Riverhead.

*CDA RESOLUTION 9*

On September 9, 2006, the Town Board of the Town of Riverhead adopted CDA Resolution 9, authorizing the CDA to update the 1993 Plan and prepare a GEIS as mandated by the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). CDA Resolution 9 is provided as Appendix A. Among the reasons given for the 2008 Update was the adoption of the Town's comprehensive plan in November 2003 and the subsequent amendment to the Town's zoning ordinance. It was determined that these two actions alone warranted an update of the 1993 Plan to ensure its consistency with the Town's recently enacted land use policies for the EMSURA.

*CDA RESOLUTION 15*

On October 17, 2006, the Town Board designated Riverhead Renaissance, LLP as the East Main Street Urban Renewal project Qualified and Eligible Sponsor, see Section F, "Proposed Land Use Plan" for additional information. According to Article 15 Section 507, a person who proposes to develop municipally owned property within an urban renewal area must be designated as a Qualified and Eligible Sponsor. A sponsor must agree to pay the minimum price or rental fee fixed by the agency for identified real property, and effectuate the proposed development within a definite and reasonable timeframe.

**C. PUBLIC POLICY**

Provided below is a discussion of public policies relevant to the EMSURA, including the 1993 Plan. Public policy serves as the basis for understanding past practices that have influenced the EMSURA as well as provides the foundation for future recommendations for the study area. In accordance with CDA Resolution 9, and as stated earlier, the public policies described below provide the purpose and need for preparing the 2008 Update.

**EAST MAIN STREET URBAN RENEWAL PLAN (1993)**

The 1993 Plan proposed a number of recommendations and implementation strategies for the EMSURA. The recommendations mainly proposed new land uses that encourage economic development consistent with the *Town of Riverhead Comprehensive Master Plan of 1973*, the zoning designation for the EMSURA, and the goals and objectives made in the 1993 Plan. Generally, the recommended land use changes were intended to fill existing vacancies with uses already permitted; encourage tourism; promote development associated with hotels, movie theaters, restaurants, and retail; promote waterfront uses; encourage maritime redevelopment of the Peconic Riverfront; foster the acquisition of deteriorated or blighted properties for clearance and redevelopment; redevelop and reuse buildings that are historically and/or culturally significant; and provide for the improvement of additional parking areas and public facilities and/or develop a multi-level parking facility.

Specifically, the 1993 Plan recommended the following land uses within the EMSURA pursuant to the Business D District (then the zoning classification of the EMSURA):

- Retail-commercial;
- Personal service-commercial;
- Office, business, professional;
- Financial institutions;
- Radio/television broadcasting studio;
- Food establishment/tavern;
- Marina;
- Theater;
- Single-family residential; and
- Recreational uses.

The 1993 Plan's density and parking recommendations for the proposed land uses were consistent with the Business D District regulations.

In addition to the uses listed above, the 1993 Plan stated that residential use of second- and third-story building space be provided by special permit. The plan also recommended the concurrent use of studio and artist residences in accordance with the following criteria: 1) artists be certified by an independent board, 2) the studio be the principal use with an accessory residential use occupying an area no less than 900 square feet, and 3) the studio may include a gallery.

The 1993 Plan identified several buildings that were used as multi-family residences, then a nonconforming use within the Business D District. All nonconforming and underperforming uses were considered "to imperil the success of the community plan and injure property values," and "offensive to the zoning ordinance due to their intensity of use." The 1993 Plan recommended that the Town consider either condemnation or amortization as a means to eliminate nonconforming and underperforming uses. Another recommendation was to encourage reuse of vacant structures.

The 1993 Plan also recommended that the Town maximize the public's visual and pedestrian access to the Peconic River by way of securing easements and air rights. The Peconic River is recognized as an invaluable resource that attracts visitors and tourists to the area. Thus, the Town created a waterfront park along the river, which is described in more detail in Section E of this report. As stated, the 1993 Plan also focused on real property acquisition of specific parcels for redevelopment of or improvement to the Riverhead Parking District as well as demolition and clearance of deteriorated structures. The CDA is the Town's lead agency for property acquisition within the EMSURA. Other recommendations set forth in the 1993 Plan included improvements to parking, lighting, signage and traffic patterns; placing overhead utilities underground; sidewalk improvements; and prohibiting the outdoor display of merchandise along East Main Street. All of these recommended improvements remain relevant and appropriate today.

Implementation strategies identified in the 1993 Plan include rehabilitation, demolition and clearance, acquisition, disposition, and redevelopment.

## **REVITALIZATION STRATEGY FOR DOWNTOWN RIVERHEAD**

The Town of Riverhead adopted the *Revitalization Strategy for Downtown Riverhead* in August 2000. This downtown strategy was developed to be incorporated into the 2003 Comprehensive Plan and relied upon public focus groups and surveys conducted for the 2003 Comprehensive Plan. The strategy set forth the following goals and policies relative to the downtown area, including the EMSURA:

- Develop tourist and specialty shopping niches and a variety of tourist attractions;
- Expand and improve the waterfront park;
- Establish a land use framework, while preserving and promoting an appropriate and improved mix of uses;
- Promote housing revitalization and artist housing;
- Preserve and enhance historic character;
- Preserve and promote traditional building layouts and development patterns, while allowing variety in building design;
- Promote pedestrian and bicycle access and circulation;
- Manage traffic circulation while maintaining auto access;
- Ensure adequate parking;
- Design parking lots that are walkable, attractive, and integrated with downtown buildings; and
- Enhance gateways and arrival points.

## **PECONIC ESTUARY PROGRAM COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The *Peconic Estuary Program Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan* (CCMP) was adopted by the Peconic Estuary Program in 2001. The Peconic Estuary comprises more than 125,000 acres of land and 158,000 acres of surface water, including those within the Towns of Riverhead (including the EMSURA), Southold, Shelter Island, Southampton, and East Hampton, as well as a small portion of the Town of Brookhaven. The CCMP was established to help preserve, protect, restore, and enhance natural resources and water quality. The plan indicates that the management of habitats and living resources in the Peconic Estuary will require a combination of education, protection of existing natural areas, and restoration or enhancement of other areas to achieve a high quality ecosystem.

The CCMP suggests that the most effective means of protecting natural resources is for government or private conservation organizations to acquire property or purchase conservation easements and manage them for preservation purposes. However, if neither of these options is viable, the plan recommends that local government work with landowners and developers to maximize protection of resources through creative land use controls. According to the CCMP, the responsible entities for carrying out this initiative include New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the Suffolk County Planning Department, the five East End towns, and the Town of Brookhaven. The plan also indicates that coordinated and comprehensive land use planning at the local level can be used to ensure protection of natural resources and habitats from cumulative impacts on the East End. Consistency and agreement among the towns in the development of the

individual plans would ensure uniform implementation of policies affecting such a large and diverse estuary. It further states that the development of a master plan in each town and minimization of allowed variances are good measures for achieving such control.

### **TOWN OF RIVERHEAD 2003 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

As a result of an intense community outreach process that involved public workshops and interviews and community surveys, the Riverhead Town Board, in November 2003, adopted the comprehensive plan update. Early in the planning process, the Town gathered input from focus groups, residents, merchants, and community leaders on their vision for Riverhead and the issues related to land use and development in the Town. With regard to the downtown area, there was a general agreement that emphasis should be placed on the revitalization of the downtown as a critical issue in the overall improvement of the Town. It was recommended that the downtown be primarily developed as an entertainment, tourism, and cultural center.

The 2003 Comprehensive Plan set forth recommendations and policies specific to the area in and around the EMSURA, including the Peconic River waterfront. As a result of the adoption of the 2003 Comprehensive Plan, the Town amended their zoning code in accordance with the recommendations in the plan. This included rezoning the EMSURA from the Business D District to the Downtown Center (DC) District. This district was separated into five distinct categories (DC-1 through -5), “each tailored to a distinct part of the downtown area, intended to carefully balance downtown land uses and development patterns in a manner that fits into the historic and natural context of the area.”

The intent of the DC district is to limit sprawl, thereby protecting open space; promote and develop the downtown as the cultural, civic, and tourist center of Riverhead by providing a vital, high-density, mixed-use environment; accentuate the visual quality of the waterfront as well as increase public access to the waterfront; promote transit, pedestrian, and bicycle use; embrace the historic character of the area through preservation of significant historic structures and architectural review of new structures; and provide community facilities.

### **CODE OF THE TOWN OF RIVERHEAD**

#### *CHAPTER 108: ZONING*

Subsequent to the adoption of the 2003 Comprehensive Plan, the Town Board held a series of public hearings and special meetings in the spring and fall of 2004 to receive public comment on each of the new districts proposed in the plan. The outcome was an amended zoning ordinance that rezoned the EMSURA to the Downtown Center District. The majority of the EMSURA was rezoned to DC-1 while a small swath of land along the Peconic River waterfront was rezoned as DC-2 (see Figure 3). The DC-1 district was intended to foster a traditional downtown character along East Main Street with a mix of uses and a pedestrian friendly streetscape. The full DC-1 zoning code is included as Appendix B. The DC-2 district similarly encourages walkability as well as pedestrian access to the waterfront and open space and watershed protection. See Section D, “Existing Conditions,” below for a detailed discussion of the use and bulk restrictions within the DC-1 zone.



## **CHAPTER 73: LANDMARKS PRESERVATION**

### *Article III: Designation of Landmarks and Historic Districts*

On July 5, 2006, the Town of Riverhead designated an area encompassing East Main Street and nearby neighborhoods as the Town's first historic district (see Figure 4). The newly formed historic district covers the entire EMSURA as well as the areas to the north and west. As shown in Figure 4, the district extends from the railroad crossing at Riverside Drive (the easternmost border) to just west of Osborn Avenue (the westernmost border), to Pulaski Street between Roanoke and Osborn Avenues (on the north), and to the Peconic River (on the south).

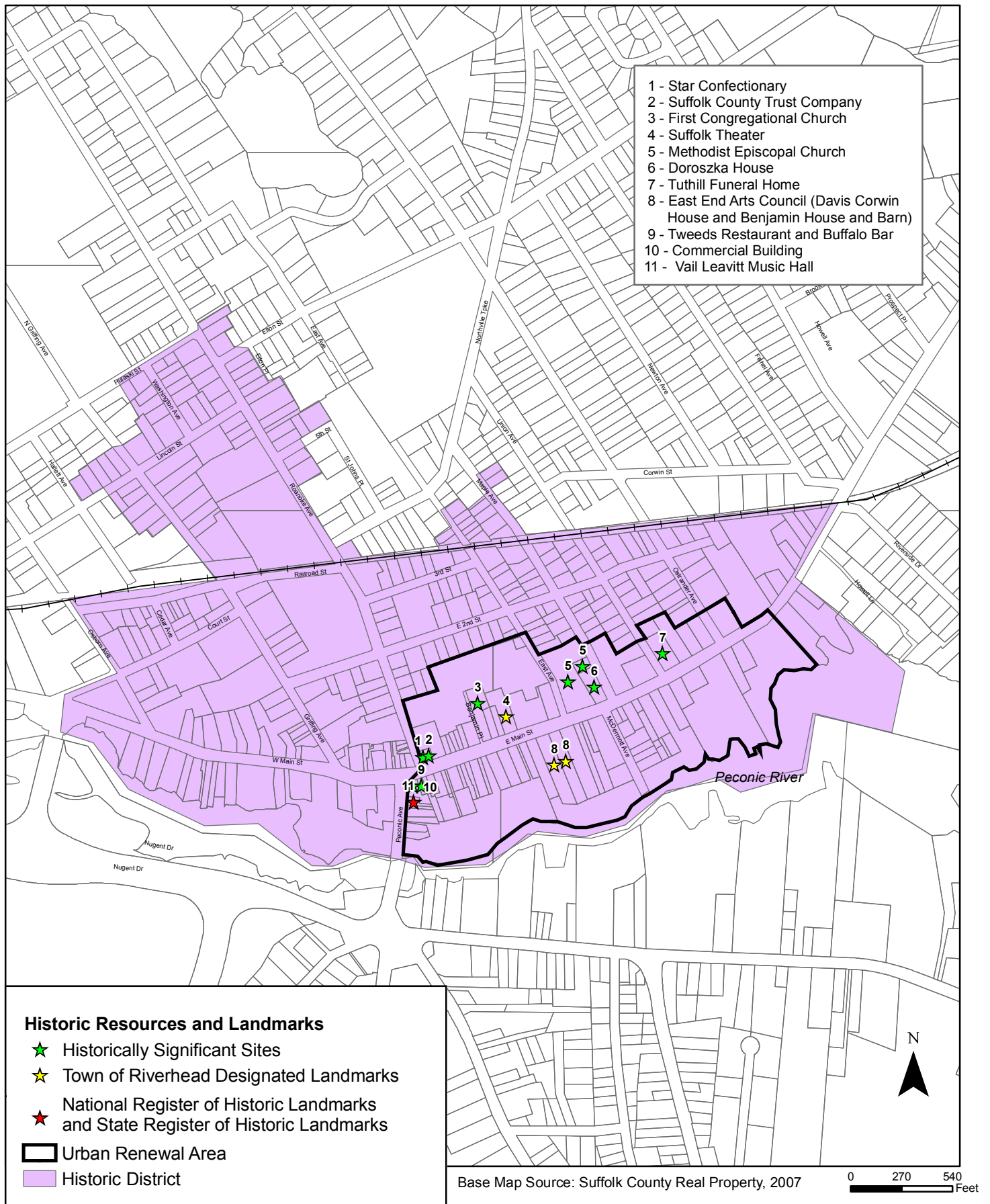
The historic district is regulated by Chapter 73, "Landmarks Preservation," of the *Code of the Town of Riverhead*, which states that the "protection, enhancement, and perpetuation of landmarks and historic districts is necessary to promote the economic, cultural, educational, and general welfare of the public." This legislation, which was revised on June 20, 2006, gives the Town's Landmark Preservation Commission the authority to oversee and provide input on all alterations, demolition, construction, repairs, or relocation of structures within the district. Owners of individual landmarks or structures within the historic district do not face any additional notification requirements. The Town's building department maintains a map showing all designated landmarks and historic districts. Whenever a property owner requests a building or demolition permit for a structure in a historic district or a designated structure, the building department automatically notifies the Landmark Preservation Commission. The Landmark Preservation Commission has 60 days to approve, modify or disapprove the application. The Town Board may call a hearing to review the Landmark Preservation Commission actions.

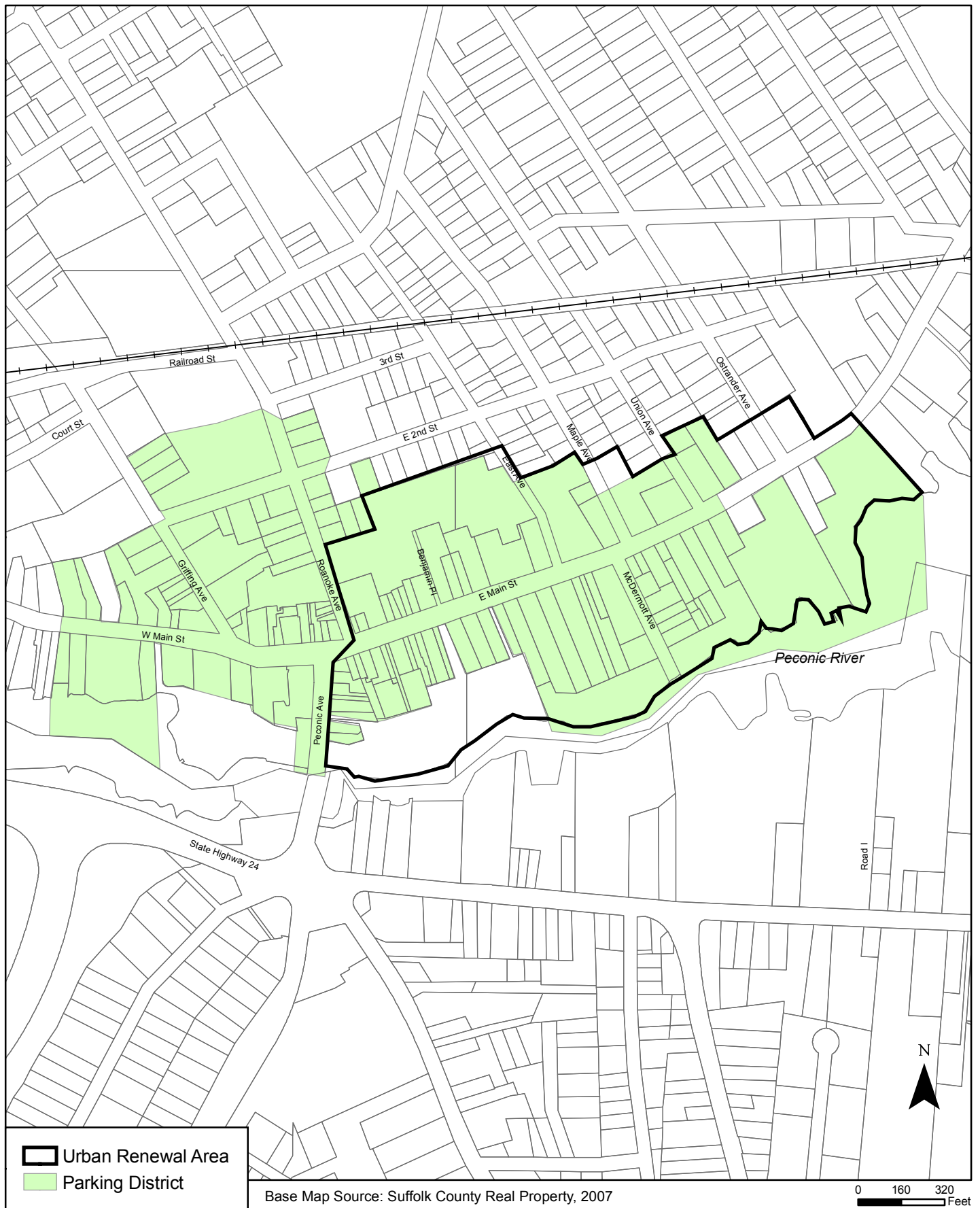
Figure 4 also depicts a number of parcels that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the State Register of Historic Places, and the Town's designated landmarks inventory. In addition, Figure 4 identifies properties of historic significance within the EMSURA. Sites of historic significance are those sites that have been nominated by the Town of Riverhead Landmarks Commission for potential landmark status and are recognized by the CDA as contributing to the historical quality of the EMSURA. These structures are a part of the Town's development history and include Vail Leavitt Music Hall, Suffolk Theater, Davis-Corwin House, Benjamin House and Barn, Star Confectionary building, Suffolk County Trust Company building, First Congregational Church, Methodist Episcopal Church, Tuthill Funeral Home, Tweeds Restaurant and Buffalo Bar, a single-family home owned by the Doroszka family, and a commercial structure located on the corner of Peconic Avenue and East Main Street.

## **PARKING DISTRICT**

The Riverhead Parking District No. 1 was adopted as an official Town of Riverhead Special District regulated by Article 12, Section 190 of the New York State Town Law. The district is a taxing jurisdiction that levies taxes on all property owners within the district on an ad valorem basis. Figure 5 depicts the geographic boundaries of the district, which have been extended since its inception. The district is not required to provide parking for all uses located downtown. Rather, the purpose of the district is to demand and create additional parking spaces that serve the downtown area. According to §108-60(I) of the *Code of the Town of Riverhead*, owners of property within a parking district do not have to provide off-street parking. The Town Board, which serves as the regulating board of the district, may vote on issues including changing the district boundaries and maintenance and improvement projects. An extension of the district







requires a public hearing prior to a vote by the Town Board. Decisions made must be based on the overall benefit of the district to downtown.

## **NEW YORK STATE EMPIRE ZONE PROGRAM**

In 2003, the Town of Riverhead received approval for the designation of 61 acres as eligible for tax credits under the New York State Empire Zone program. The boundary amendment, effective September 18, 2003, designated five distinct geographic areas within the Suffolk County/Town of Riverhead Empire Zone, including the EMSURA (see Figure 6). The *Suffolk County/Town of Riverhead Empire Zone Development Policy* found that

*...the high cost of operating a business and the substantial increase in property taxes in this area creates a hurdle for small businesses to remain competitive. The ability to provide incentives for development in this area makes it more attractive to entrepreneurs in the tourist industry opening small businesses that compete with big box retail in the surrounding area, and provides existing businesses the ability to compete and expand. By further using this policy to benefit real estate investors, the Zone Administrative Board intends on encouraging the rehabilitation of blighted and/or vacant buildings for mixed use.<sup>1</sup>*

The EMSURA is referred to as Sub Zone 2: Downtown Riverhead, and encompasses 61 acres. The stated objective for Sub Zone 2 is to reduce vacancy rates; encourage redevelopment; revitalize deteriorated and underutilized space and structures; revitalize the East Main Street corridor; encourage small business growth and affordable housing; and increase entrepreneurship.

## **D. EXISTING CONDITIONS**

### **LAND USE AND ZONING**

This section provides a discussion of land uses that presently exist within the EMSURA, as well as presents an inventory of blighted properties. It is important to note that not all properties within the EMSURA need to exhibit blight for the area to be considered blighted. Assessing the extent of blight within the EMSURA requires an evaluation of the area's existing land uses, soundness of building structures, and underutilization of properties; identification of vacancy rates; and consideration of the effect that the blight may have on the area's economic stability as well as public health and safety issues.

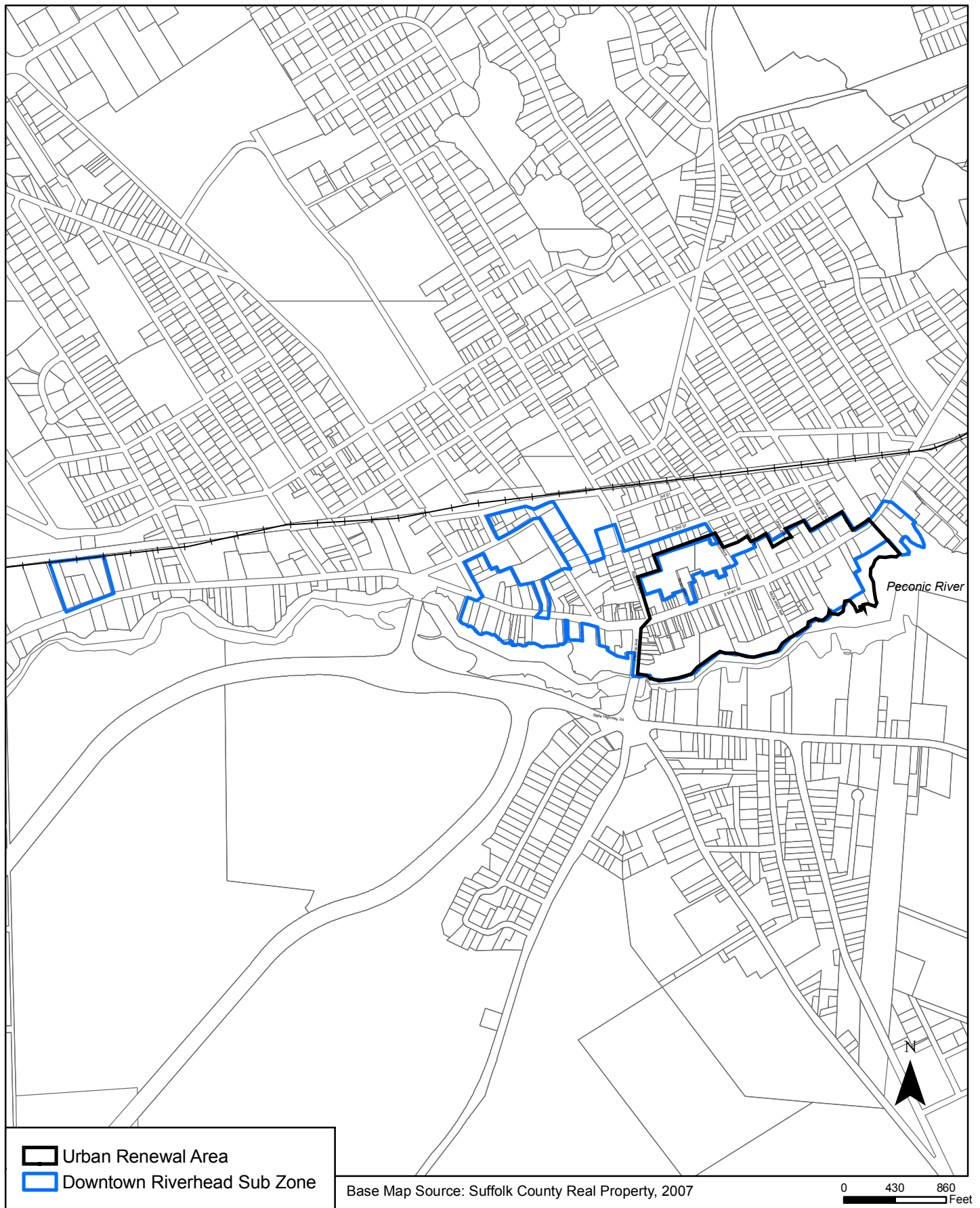
#### *LAND USE*

The EMSURA is largely characterized by commercial uses (such as retail, office, and restaurants) with some residential units interspersed throughout the area (see Figure 7). Outside the EMSURA, commercial development, primarily big-box stores and shopping centers on Suffolk County Road 58 (CR 58), has increased significantly in the last several years, changing CR 58 into a regional commercial corridor for the East End of Long Island. This increased development outside of the EMSURA has resulted in a deterioration of the downtown area.

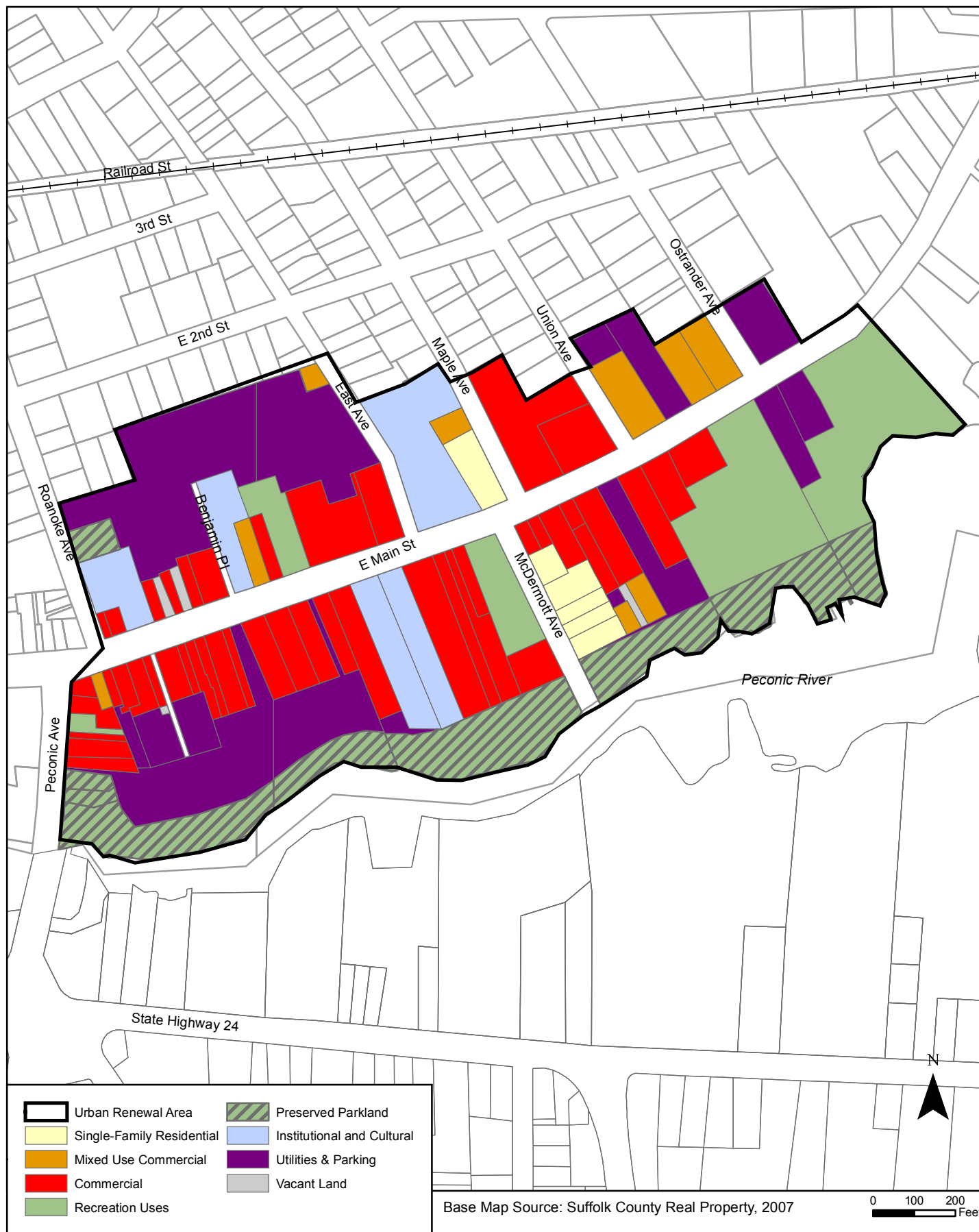
Although land uses within the EMSURA are primarily commercial in nature, recent land use trends in the area show a growth in cultural and recreation oriented uses, including Atlantis

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<sup>1</sup>Town of Riverhead Empire Zone, <http://www.riverheadzone.com/development-policy.pdf>







Marine World Aquarium, East End Arts Council, Suffolk County Community College Culinary Art Institute, the Dinosaur Museum, restoration of the Vail Leavitt Music Hall, and development of the John Lombardi and Grangebelle Parks and the waterfront boardwalk.

Limited residential uses are found within the EMSURA. Currently, there are five single-family units on individual lots and at least five apartments on second and third floors above commercial space. These uses constitute the smallest overall proportion of land uses that characterize the area.

Provided as Appendix C is a land use inventory for the EMSURA, organized by section, block and lot and presented in table format (Tables C-1 through C-5). The inventory was derived from a combination of sources, including field surveys as well as data provided by the Town of Riverhead Tax Receiver and Assessor. Tables C-1 through C-5 denote the tax parcels that had and/or currently have a vacant and/or deteriorated structure. The data presented in the tables is based on information presented in the 1993 Plan and/or on recent field surveys of existing conditions.

### *Architecture and Design*

Architecture and design have a direct relationship on the overall streetscape of an area. The following paragraphs describe the façade and building orientation by specific blocks on East Main Street and area side streets. Photographs depicting the blocks as discussed below are provided as Appendix D.

#### *South Side of East Main Street from Peconic Avenue to McDermott Avenue*

Exhibits D-1 through D-18 in Appendix D provide a visual depiction of this section of the EMSURA. Peconic Avenue, the western boundary of the EMSURA, serves as the primary access point into the public parking lot (south of East Main Street) and the waterfront park. Building façades along Peconic Avenue include brick, shingle, and vinyl siding, while roof styles vary from pitched and mansard with dormers to flat roofs. Building heights range from one to three stories and buildings abut the sidewalk and form a common street wall.

On East Main Street, the attached structures located in the western portion of this block form an urban type streetscape. Building heights range from one to three stories and form a common street wall. The interior of ground floor uses are visible by way of large glass windows.

In the eastern portion of this block, there is increased vacancy, free standing structures, and several alleys. Within this portion of the block, the area is occupied by a strip of single-story structures that are currently vacant. The variety of rooflines and building façades gives the appearance of a fragmented and disjointed architectural style.

#### *South Side of East Main Street from McDermott Avenue to the Treasure Cove Resort Marina*

The east side of McDermott Avenue comprises single-family residential units built in colonial revival architecture with associated landscaped front and side yards.

On East Main Street, buildings are free standing with relatively large single-occupancy stores with varying layouts and designs. The condition of buildings ranges from poor to good. The eastern end of this block is occupied by Atlantis Marine World Aquarium and Treasure Cove Resort Marina, which are vital anchors within the EMSURA. The streetscape on this block is lacking in cohesive design due to the disconnected building setbacks, façades, and uses. See Exhibits D-19 through D-36 for a visual depiction of this section of the EMSURA.

*North Side of East Main Street from Eastern End of EMSURA to Maple Avenue*

Buildings on this row of blocks are predominantly converted residences that now serve as office space and a funeral home. The architectural style of these buildings is colonial revival. Buildings are set back from the road, buffered by landscaped lawns. A Town parking lot is situated between the two converted residences and the funeral home. Within this section, there are a total of three parcels utilized for parking, with two of the parcels owned by the Town of Riverhead.

The western portion of this section is occupied by a single-story multi-occupant commercial use, a large bank, and associated parking lots. The building materials are brick and concrete. Glass windows allow passersby to view the interior of each use.

Exhibits D-37 through D-46 are the photographs that represent this section of the EMSURA.

*North Side of East Main Street from Maple Avenue to East Avenue*

Exhibits D-47 through D-52 provide a visual depiction of this section of the EMSURA. A large church, an associated parish house, and a large single-family residence, all with white exteriors, front East Main Street and are set back from this roadway. The properties on this block are elevated above the sidewalk where a stone retaining wall divides the property and the sidewalk.

*North Side of East Main Street from East Avenue to Roanoke Avenue*

This area maintains a variety of uses and structures (see Exhibits D-53 through D-69). The building types vary from single-story detached single-occupancy to multi-story attached buildings. The façades of these buildings are almost a mirror image of the south side of East Main Street just east of Peconic Avenue. Some buildings on this block are free standing with greenspace dividing the buildings.

On the east side of Roanoke Avenue, within the EMSURA, is the future location of Suffolk County Community College Culinary Institute, which is currently under construction. Behind this use, along Roanoke Avenue, is a Town park with a wooden gazebo and an access point to the Town owned parking lot.

*Peconic River Waterfront*

Exhibits D-70 through D-80 provide a visual depiction of this section of the EMSURA. The Peconic River waterfront is located at the southern border of the EMSURA, behind the buildings on the south side of East Main Street. Along the waterfront is a recently constructed park and boardwalk and further north is an extensive area of public parking owned by the Town. Contiguous to and north of the parking lot are the rear of the buildings, which form an unattractive view from the waterfront.

*Vacancy Rates*

According to page 7 of the 1993 Plan, the EMSURA contained approximately 350,000 square feet of total building area, of which approximately 54,000 square feet was identified as vacant. This represents a vacancy rate of 15 percent. Specifically, Appendix C of the 1993 Plan identified 8 of the 90 tax parcels within the EMSURA as having vacant structures. Those parcels have been depicted in Figure 8.

A vacancy survey of the EMSURA was performed for the 2008 Update in November and December of 2006. For the purposes of this analysis, buildings identified during field reconnaissance as being partially vacant were classified as being entirely vacant. The existing vacancy rate is comparatively higher than the 1993 rate of 15 percent. As shown in Figure 8,

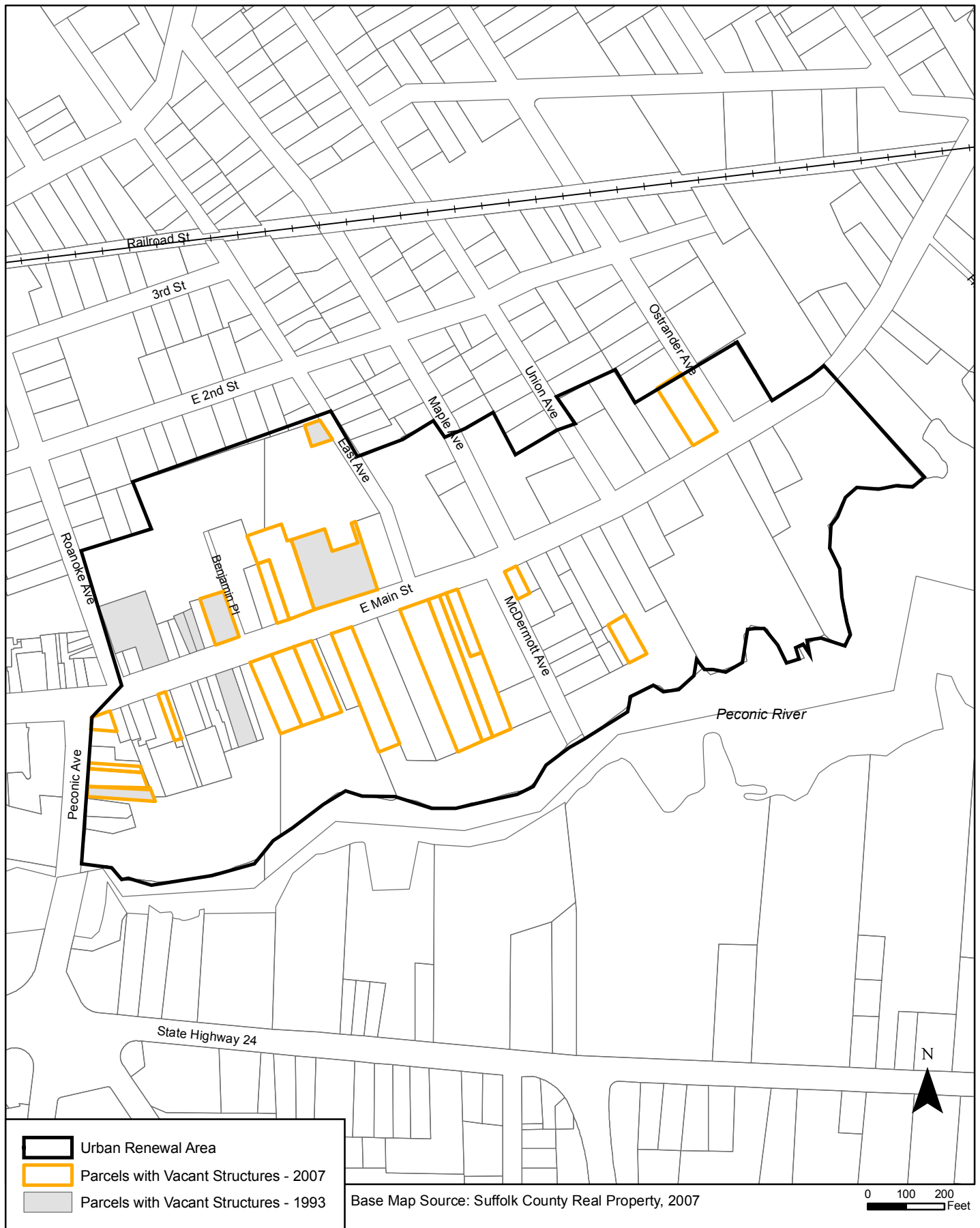


Figure 8  
Parcels with Vacant  
Structures in 1993 and 2007



buildings that are partially or entirely vacant in 2008 were situated on 23 of the 90 developed Suffolk County Tax parcels. According to the Town's property record cards, provided by the Assessor's office in December 2006, there are 465,252 square feet of building area in the EMSURA, an increase of 124,982 square feet over the 1993 condition. Of the total existing 465,252 square feet existing, approximately 178,982 square feet are either partially or entirely vacant. This represents a vacancy rate of 38 percent, an increase of 23 percent over the 1993 condition. This increase may be attributed to the increase in commercial development in other areas of the Town, including development along the CR 58 corridor. For comparative purposes, vacancy rates in 1993 and 2008 are provided by tax parcel in Appendix C and in Figure 8. Additionally, provided in Appendix D are photographic illustrations of several of the vacant structures within the EMSURA. Examples of vacant structures within the EMSURA are shown in Exhibits D-2, D-17, D-28, D-38, and D-57.

### *Deteriorated (Substandard) Structures*

According to the 1993 Plan, 31 of the tax parcels in the EMSURA had deteriorated buildings or structures (see Figure 9). A recent survey of the existing building condition was performed in November and December of 2006. Several of the deteriorated buildings identified have either structural damage or are in need of façade and building design improvement. Buildings identified as having structural damage were photographed and have been included in Appendix E. These buildings are situated on 18 of the 90 parcels in the EMSURA (see Figure 9), and were identified by the presence of cracks in the structure, boarded-up windows or doors, roof damage, rusting, and other safety or structural issues. Figure 9 also identifies those parcels with buildings that are found to be aesthetically unsound or in need of overall improvement but do not necessarily have structural damage. These structures impede the economic viability of the area, and contribute to the overall blight and are situated on 13 of the 90 parcels in the EMSURA.

For comparative purposes, the number of tax parcels with deteriorated or substandard structures in 1993 and 2008, have been provided in a table format in Appendix C. Based on the recent field survey, the number of deteriorated structures since 1993 have remained the same.

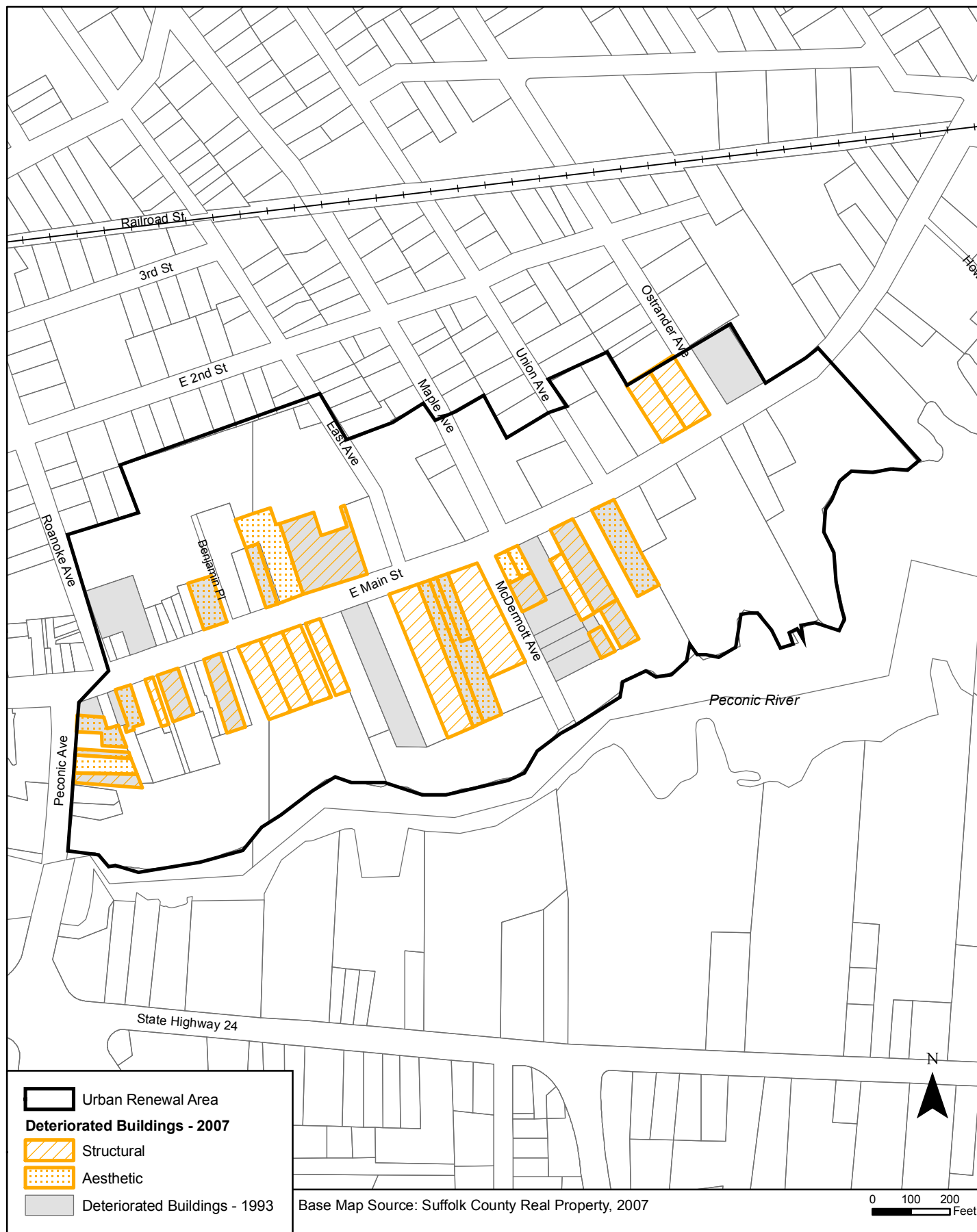
### *Alleys and Narrow Access Streets*

Approximately 18 alleys, driveways to parking lots, and narrow areas were identified between structures found throughout the EMSURA, including 12 alleys/driveways that are poorly lit. Field investigations also found that several alleys/driveways contained garbage and debris. The condition of these "spaces" poses a health and safety concern, especially for pedestrians. Alleys are present on the north and south side of East Main Street as well as behind buildings located on the south side of East Main Street north of the parking area with three alleys closed on one end or gated. Photographs depicting these spaces are included in Appendix D, see Exhibits D-6, D-12, D-14, D-24a and 24b, and D-33.

### *Nonconforming Uses*

As stated in the 1993 Plan, nonconforming uses are a violation of the zoning ordinance, and hinder the success of the urban renewal project. Based on the DC-1 code, the predominant nonconforming uses within the EMSURA are buildings entirely dedicated to office space and single-family residential structures.

Article XXIII, Section 108-51, "Supplementary Use Regulations," of the *Code of the Town of Riverhead* addresses the issue of nonconforming buildings and uses. The code provides regulations for alterations to all nonconforming uses, lots, and buildings in the Town and states



that these uses, lots, and buildings may continue to exist, and even expand with various approvals, dependent on the nature of the alteration.

#### *Solid Waste Management*

The Town of Riverhead provides solid waste pick-up services to residential uses with the exception of large multi-housing complexes. Currently, all uses with the exception of single-family residential uses in the EMSURA have on their property individual dumpsters for the temporary storage of refuse. Solid waste collection in the EMSURA is currently handled by private carters that are hired or contracted by individual property owners and/or tenants. Nonresidential uses maintain individual dumpsters in the rear or side yard of their property. The presence and frequency of these dumpsters creates a negative aesthetic component in the EMSURA, especially near the Peconic River waterfront. Other issues presented by the current collection method include lack of coordinated collection days and times and lack of tonnage information needed to assess and monitor the quantity and type of solid waste.

#### *ZONING*

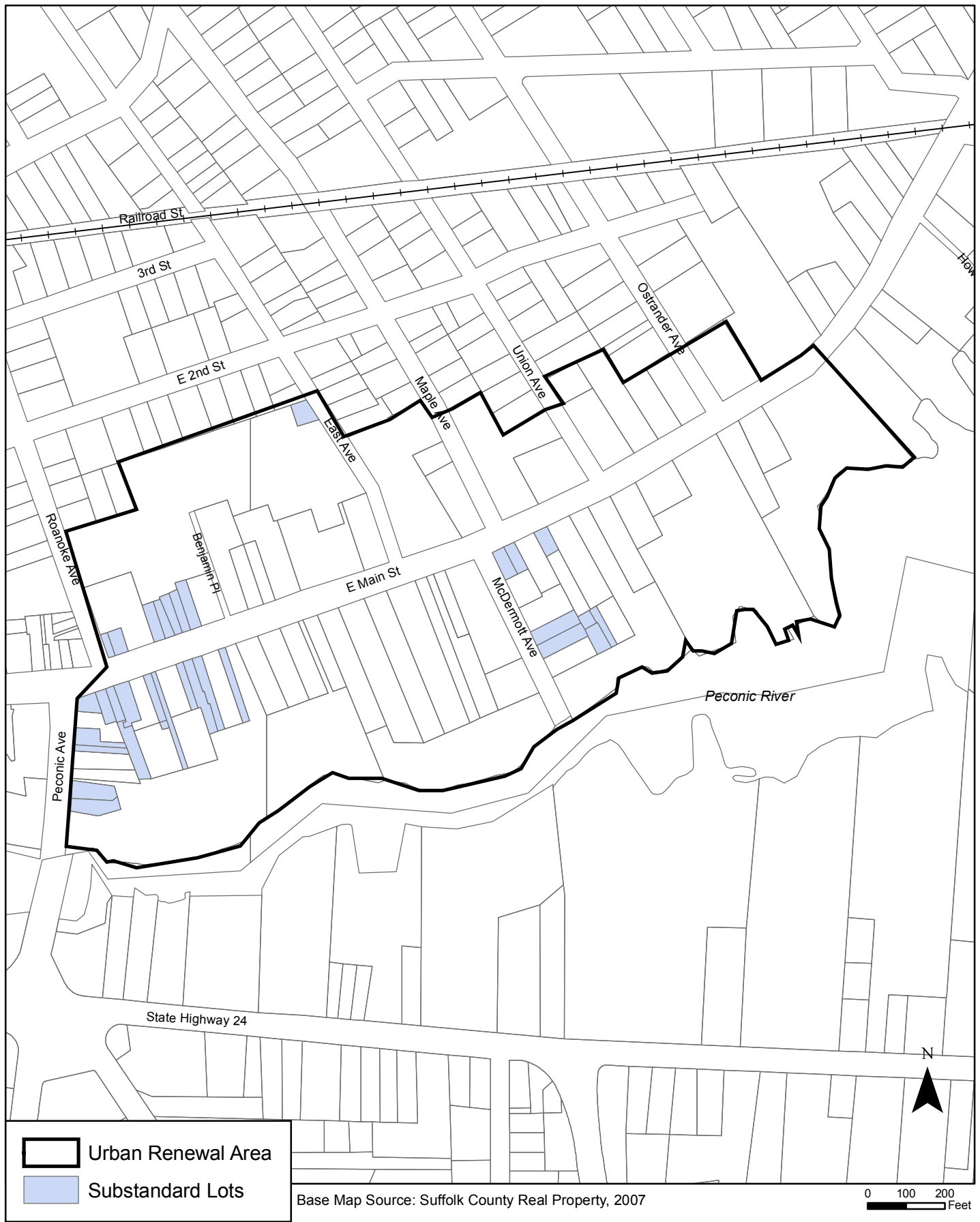
The 2003 Comprehensive Plan proposed DC zoning “to make downtown the center of Riverhead by providing a vital, high-density, mixed-use environment for shopping, eating out, cultural activity, entertainment, and professional services year-round.” There are five categories within the general DC zone: DC-1 (main street), DC-2 (waterfront), DC-3 (office), DC-4 (office and residence), and DC-5 (residential). As stated, the EMSURA is located within the DC-1 and DC-2 districts (see Figure 3). The intent of the DC-1 district is to maintain and foster a traditional downtown character along East Main Street, with a pedestrian-friendly streetscape and retail and office ground-floor uses combined with upper-story residential space of a compact, walkable scale. Table 1 provides the bulk restrictions for the DC-1 zone. The minimum lot area requirement in the DC-1 zone is 5,000 square feet. It should be noted that approximately 32 lots are less than 5,000 square feet in the EMSURA (see Figure 10).

**Table 1**  
**DC-1 District Regulations\***

Minimum Lot Area (square feet)	Maximum Lot Coverage (percent)	Minimum Lot Width (feet)	Maximum Impervious Surface (percent)	Maximum Height (feet)	Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR)
5,000	80	50	100	60	4
<b>Notes:</b> * The minimum front, rear, and side yard setbacks are zero. <b>Source:</b> Chapter 108, “Zoning,” <i>Code of the Town of Riverhead</i> .					

Permitted uses in the DC-1 district include:

- Retail stores;
- Banks;
- Personal service businesses;
- Indoor public markets;
- Art galleries and studios;
- Museums, libraries, aquariums and other cultural attractions;
- Restaurants, cafes, bakeries with retail sale on premises, banquet facilities, specialty food stores, and ice cream parlors;



- Theaters and cinemas;
- Professional offices (except for veterinary offices) on the ground floor;
- Schools (including business and secretarial);
- Places of worship;
- Residential units on upper floors with a minimum unit size of 650 square feet;
- Bed-and-breakfast establishments; and
- Townhouses on lots with frontage along public highways other than New York State Route 25.

The following uses are prohibited in the DC-1 district:

- All ground-floor offices, with the exception of real estate and professional offices;
- Office-only buildings;
- Ground-floor residential units, with the exception of townhouse uses;
- Flea markets, with the exception of farmers' markets;
- Gas stations, car washes, and other automobile-oriented uses;
- Drive-through windows for restaurants and banks; and
- Antennas for wireless providers.

The DC-2 zone is located along the southern portion of the EMSURA. The intention of the DC-2 zone is to create a downtown waterfront area that provides continuous pathways and public waterfront access, generous open space and landscaping, and watershed protection through limits on impervious surfaces. Permitted uses include marina, resort, and retail stores. Hotels, inns, and indoor recreation facilities are permitted by special exception. The uses prohibited in the DC-1 district are also prohibited in the DC-2 district. The DC-1 and DC-2 regulations were created and enacted to provide compatibility between the various permitted uses and the Peconic River waterfront.

## **E. ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE 1993 PLAN**

Significant actions taken by the Town relevant to the EMSURA include adopting the 2000 *Revitalization Strategy for Downtown Riverhead* and the 2003 Comprehensive Plan, and amending the Town zoning ordinance and Town zoning map in 2005. In addition to these actions, the Town also recently created a historic district, which includes the entire EMSURA.

Since the 1993 Plan, the CDA has implemented programs and projects intended to improve the EMSURA and fulfill the goals and objectives of the plan. The most notable of the projects and programs that occurred after the adoption of the 1993 Plan are listed below, including park improvements, acquisition and redevelopment, and beautification. These projects helped to initiate the transformation of the EMSURA into an area that is economically viable while fostering the goals and recommendations of the 1993 Plan. An assessment of the recent urban renewal projects discussed below outlines the success of the urban renewal program as a whole and demonstrates the Town's ability to promote an area that is rich in cultural, recreational, and community-based facilities.

## **PARK IMPROVEMENTS**

### *GRANGEBEL PARK*

The Grangebel Park Improvement Project Phases I and II (1990-2000) utilized State and federal funds totaling \$800,000. A Phase III project utilizing \$1 million in federal funding will complete the replacement of bulkheading, installation of lighting and pedestrian walkways, and landscaping and other amenities to improve safety and utilization of the park. The park occupies 3 acres and is situated on the Peconic River waterfront on the west side of Peconic Avenue. Although the park is located outside the EMSURA, there is a connection to the park facilities on the east side of Peconic Avenue, which is located inside the EMSURA.

### *WATERFRONT BOARDWALK*

Peconic Riverfront Pedestrian Improvement Project, completed in 2005-2006, utilized \$2 million in State and federal grant funds to replace deteriorated bulkheading, provide bicycle paths, extend the pedestrian boardwalk, and improve the public park space along the riverfront for enjoyment of residents and tourists alike.

### *JOHN LOMBARDI PARK*

This Town park is currently being restored and includes a gazebo and garden area. The park is situated 100 yards north of East Main Street on the east side of Roanoke Avenue.

## **AQUISITION AND REDEVELOPMENT**

The CDA successfully redeveloped several parcels within the EMSURA, some of which had been identified for redevelopment in the 1993 Plan. Redevelopment projects that the CDA completed pursuant to the 1993 Plan are described below.

### *SUFFOLK THEATER*

The 1937 art deco theater was acquired by the CDA in 1991 as an urban renewal project. The Town renovated the roof, façade, and marquee using State and federal grants. In 2005, the theater was sold to a private sector historic building specialist, Robert Castaldi (Castle Restoration & Construction), who intends to complete the renovations and reopen the theater as a performing arts center.

### *VAIL LEAVITT MUSIC HALL*

The CDA procured several hundred thousand dollars in grants to renovate this 1881 music hall, which is listed as a National Register Landmark site. The theater officially reopened in June 2004 and hosts community events on a regular basis.

### *ATLANTIS MARINE WORLD AQUARIUM*

The Town acquired waterfront property in the early 1990s and prepared a feasibility study, architectural design, and Environmental Impact Statement. The Town then sold the property to a private developer who opened the Atlantis Marine World Aquarium in 2000. The aquarium includes indoor and outdoor exhibits. According to the facility's estimates, the aquarium has attracted more than one million visitors since its opening.

*EAST END ARTS COUNCIL*

The CDA successfully renovated the historic Benjamin and Corwin Houses that are home to the arts and music programs offered by the East End Arts Council. Site improvements and renovations were also made to the historic Carriage House in order to provide additional year-round space for programming.

*RIMLAND (SWEZEY) PROPERTY*

The CDA acquisition of the Rimland property located on East Main Street eventually resulted in the purchase and development of the property by the Swezey's Department Store chain. After the recent closing of the regional chain, the property was resold to a private developer for the construction of the Suffolk County Community College Culinary Arts Program facility.

**BEAUTIFICATION**

The Town of Riverhead has spent several million dollars for improvements to the façades of existing buildings, building renovations, encouragement of residential uses in the downtown area, and other beautification measures. The Town has also been awarded Community Development Block Grants for town-wide improvements every year since the 1993 Plan.

**F. PROPOSED LAND USE PLAN**

Section 503(h) of Article 15 (Urban Renewal Law) of the New York State General Municipal Law gives the CDA, as the Town's urban renewal agency, the authority to implement the recommendations and implementation strategies put forth in this update. Section 503(h) states the following:

*"for the purposes of preserving the integrity of an urban renewal plan, to require, for a maximum period of three years after approval of an urban renewal plan pursuant to section five hundred five of this article, the consent of the agency to the issuance of a building construction or alteration permit or certificate of occupancy for a structure or use within the urban renewal area or within that part or portion of such area for which a plan has been so approved (except for construction, alteration or use which is necessary for the immediate protection of public health or safety). Such consent shall be based upon a determination by the agency that the proposed construction, alteration or use is not inconsistent with the plan."*

The CDA, for a period of no more than three years after the adoption of this plan, shall have an advisory role to the Town's building department on all applications for building permits and certificate of occupancies within the EMSURA. The CDA, upon being informed of an application, shall review the application for compliance with the proposed land use, recommendations, and urban renewal efforts put forth in this 2008 Update. The CDA may formally advise the Town's building department of their findings and/or opinions on such applications. As stated earlier, the Town has the authority, by Section 503(h) to require all applicants to the building department receive the consent or approval of the CDA.

**RECOMMENDATIONS AND STATEMENT OF PROPOSED LAND USES**

Existing conditions offer an opportunity to provide the kind of redevelopment proposed in the 1993 Plan and this 2008 Update. Some of the existing issues and concerns within the EMSURA include vacant and underutilized buildings, the presence of deteriorated structures, an

underutilized waterfront, a large parking lot that fronts on the waterfront, the presence of several alleyways and narrow streets, and the overall aesthetic considerations, especially near the waterfront.

It is the intent of this 2008 Update to encourage land uses that are consistent with the policies set forth in the 2003 Comprehensive Plan Update, the Town's zoning ordinance, and the *Revitalization Strategy for Downtown Riverhead*. The recommendations made in this update are intended to promote a mix of uses that foster a balance between residential, commercial, cultural, and tourist accommodations; reduce vacancy and blight; provide connectivity within the EMSURA; and incorporate the natural amenities of the area, including the waterfront. Provided below are the recommendations and proposed land uses that aim to meet the overall objectives of the Town to rehabilitate and revitalize downtown:

1. Fill and redevelop existing vacancies with uses permitted under current zoning regulations. As applications for a building permit, alteration permit, or certificate of occupancy for a structure or use are submitted, the CDA should ensure that the reuses are appropriate (e.g., uses near the waterfront should incorporate the scenic value and public space of the Peconic River and associated waterfront park as part of their overall design and use). Additionally, interaction between uses should encourage pedestrian walkability and promote shared public spaces. Buildings identified as vacant in this report should be given priority for all redevelopment projects.
2. Deteriorated and vacant structures that pose a risk to public safety and welfare, and impede economic viability should be considered for public and/or private acquisition and redevelopment. Redevelopment of these properties should be in conformance with zoning regulations and be considered for the highest and best use. Buildings identified as deteriorated in this report should be given priority for redevelopment projects.
3. Redevelop and rehabilitate dilapidated buildings using contemporary and environmentally-friendly design in conformance with Chapter 73, "Landmarks Preservation," of the *Code of the Town of Riverhead*, which gives the Town's Landmark Preservation Commission the authority to oversee and provide input on alterations, demolition, construction, repairs, or relocation of structures within a historic district.
4. Preserve and maintain buildings, sites, and structures of historical, cultural, or architectural interest. Zoning regulations should reduce permitted heights where appropriate to minimize conflicts between adjacent development and historic structures and other significant buildings. Proposed uses near historic structures should consider the cultural value of those buildings and uses.
5. The CDA and Town should review those structures that currently do not have a landmark designation but possess historic significance for potential inclusion into the Town's list of official designated landmarks.
6. Strengthen the tax base while promoting the integration of commercial and residential uses through development of multi-family residential units with ground floor commercial uses; providing a mix of uses that tie the residential and cultural components of the EMSURA, and encouraging meeting and gathering places to accommodate tourists and residents.
7. Provide multi-family residential developments that accommodate a mix of incomes. This could be accomplished through an incentive zoning program for affordable housing within multi-family developments.
8. Encourage personal service uses related to tourists and residents.



9. Support applications for commercial and recreation uses that are more directly related to the waterfront and incorporate site layout requirements, including minimum setback requirements from the waterfront so that public access is not inhibited.
10. Promote additional open space and community facilities for tourists and local residents. Public spaces should be strategically placed throughout the EMSURA to encourage pedestrian access, tourism, and improved scenic vistas. Additionally, within the western portion of the EMSURA, south of East Main Street across from Benjamin Street, the Town should encourage land or access easements that accommodate open areas allowing pedestrian access to the waterfront ensuring connectivity between East Main Street and the Peconic River.
11. Maintenance and enlargement of public space along the river corridor, south of East Main Street by reducing land dedicated to parking, should be considered a high priority; and the Town should seek public/private partnerships to make improvements and maintain viewsheds. Further, development other than public open space should be discouraged within this area to eliminate a conflict of use.
12. Encourage more scenic vistas along the Peconic River corridor within the DC-2 zoning district. Development in this area should be limited to and reserved for public uses, including pedestrian oriented parks, courtyards, and strategic parking areas. All uses in this area should have streetlights, signs, and demonstrate a positive aesthetic quality.
13. Although current zoning permits a building height of no more than 60 feet or five stories, future development should consider the character of existing structures in conformance with existing heights on a block by block basis. Specifically, the buildings located on the east side of McDermott Avenue do not exceed two stories while buildings west of McDermott Avenue reach three stories in height. Future development should consider these existing building heights. Waterfront vistas or views from buildings on the north side of East Main Street should also be maintained and, where possible, enhanced by ensuring that building heights on the south side are restricted and do not block access or prohibit these views.
14. Provide outside courtyards at the rear entrance of buildings along East Main Street and allow outside merchandise displays within these courtyards. This dual-entrance design would connect commercial and retail uses to the waterfront and parking areas, encouraging better designs.
15. Ensure new development provides connectivity between the eastern and western portions of the EMSURA by way of walkways, building layouts, and greenways.
16. Encourage maritime uses, including retail, restaurants, boat and canoe rentals, and commercial use of the Peconic River, in the portion of the EMSURA that is west of Atlantis Marine World Aquarium. This block could also include workforce housing for employees of maritime trade and a museum dedicated to the history of the waterfront.
17. Minimize the occurrence of alleyways and hidden spaces that pose a risk to public safety (e.g., alleyways could be reused as pedestrian access points to the waterfront). The Town should ensure that design standards address line of sight issues and encourage building clarity that identifies pedestrian access points by incorporating the use of lighting and signage that better identifies these spaces.
18. Improve the overall safety of the area by enhancing the design, layout, and lighting of alleys, streets, and parking areas as well as provide safe road crossings.

19. Implement beautification projects that address façade, landscape, and streetscape improvements as well as encourage an aesthetically pleasing and functional transition between public spaces and parking areas.
20. Establish additional parking areas within the eastern end of the EMSURA where a tourist information center, public amenities, and police substation could be developed.
21. All uses and development in the EMSURA should incorporate designs that consider pedestrian use and safety. Give priority to uses that create minimum conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles by creating a pedestrian-oriented street design, including roadway markings and signage, and provide pedestrian spaces, including benches and safe walkways.
22. Adopt and incorporate building design guidelines that reflect unity and coherence within the EMSURA and maintain the intended integrity of the downtown atmosphere. Standards would include signage, streetscape, and landscape regulations and should provide increased corner lot setbacks to increase vehicular visibility and eliminate and/or reduce gaps in building facades to reduce commercial inactivity.
23. Due to the important nature of encouraging redevelopment activities within the EMSURA, the Town should ensure that applications are responded to in a timely fashion and handled in such a way that avoids unnecessary delays. Specifically, applications that require more than one agency or commission involvement should be coordinated in advance. Advisory commissions and agencies (e.g., the Landmarks Commission) should accommodate and encourage pre-submission meetings prior to, or simultaneously with, building department application submissions.
24. Promote sustainable development in the downtown area to redevelop existing structures while conserving resources. Buildings should be constructed to provide a long life span and a flexible design to accommodate future uses. Multi-family residential developments of four units or less must be consistent with federal Energy Star standards. Further, green building designs should be promoted in conformance with the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards.

#### *INFRASTRUCTURE*

25. Continue test well program and construct production wells to meet additional demand.
26. Increase connection fees to mitigate costs associated with supplying additional capacity.
27. Encourage or mandate water conservation throughout the water district.
28. In the event of development on the East First Street right-of-way, the existing 6-inch water main and existing 8-inch sewer line must be relocated.
29. Investigate existing flows and capacities of the sanitary sewer piping within the EMSURA and of the DeFriest Pump Station to determine whether any upgrades are necessary to handle anticipated additional flows. This effort should consist of the preparation of a “Map and Plan” similar to that which has been recently developed for the Howell Avenue Pump Station.
30. Monitor actual treatment plant flows and compare to projected flows to determine the need for a State Pollution Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permit modification. Consider restricting sanitary flow from Suffolk County facilities outside the district’s boundaries to reduce the current flow.

31. Conduct a thorough inventory to determine where/whether roof drains are connected to the sewer system, and require property owners to provide alternative means for handling flows from roof drains.
32. Consider options for improving effluent quality in anticipation of potential nitrogen Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) limits imposed as conditions of SPDES permit.
33. The sewer district should consider relocating the 8-inch main located beneath the parking area south of Main Street. This main is subject to the influence of groundwater, and is likely subject to considerable groundwater infiltration.
34. Consider limiting intake of septage from areas outside the Town of Riverhead to reduce the impact of flows from the Scavenger Waste District.
35. Support the County Executive's initiative to provide sewers to a significantly greater portion of Suffolk County, including expansion of the Riverhead Sewer District to include more of the unsewered areas of the Town.
36. Investigate the ability of the Advanced Wastewater Treatment Facility (AWTF) to improve effluent quality, specifically to reduce nitrogen concentrations. As a result of any flow increase from the EMSURA or elsewhere within the sewer district, at current treatment capabilities, the daily nitrogen load from the plant will exceed those levels recommended in the TMDL report for nitrogen prepared for the AWTF.
37. Reconcile conflict between 100 percent lot coverage and 2-inch rainfall storage requirement. If drainage is to be the controlling factor, then 2-inch rainfall storage is not possible combined with 100 percent lot coverage. Existing zoning should be revised to provide coverage allowances that better accommodate drainage issues.
38. Explore the possibility of creating a storm drainage district to provide common storm drainage facilities located on public property.
39. Collect impact/mitigation fees to be utilized to handle excess runoff from on-site drainage facilities.
40. Encourage or mandate green stormwater management techniques such as roof gardens and the installation of cisterns.
41. Incorporate drainage improvements into any new parkland/green space provided by elimination of parking along the riverfront, maximizing pervious surfaces that allow percolation.
42. Investigate and inventory those existing facilities that direct stormwater flows to the drainage system, either directly piped or flowing across sidewalks, streets, and parking areas.
43. Initiate a program to encourage retrofitting properties with such conditions to contain some or all of their stormwater on-site.
44. Investigate the opportunity to upgrade or eliminate direct stormwater outfalls to the Peconic River during future development, similar to the ongoing Suffolk County project at Peconic Avenue.

***TRAFFIC, TRANSPORTATION, AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESS***

45. Change operation of Roanoke Avenue between Second Street and Main Street to provide one-way southbound operation and restripe to provide two southbound lanes.
46. Revise lane use at the intersection of Roanoke Avenue at Main Street to reflect the one-way operation. Two southbound lanes should be carried through the intersection and onto

- southbound Peconic Avenue. The rightmost lane should transition to a separate right turn lane at the traffic circle.
47. Provide one-way northbound operation on East Avenue between Second Street and Main Street. This will provide the northbound compliment to the southbound operation of Roanoke Avenue.
  48. Prohibit parking on both sides of East Avenue, due to the narrow right-of-way, so that two travel lanes can be provided.
  49. Revise the operation of the traffic signal at Roanoke Avenue at Main Street.
  50. Provide a separate eastbound left turn lane on Main Street at East Avenue to accommodate the additional demand due to the one-way operation of Roanoke Avenue, as well as the increase in traffic due to the location of the proposed parking facility (see below). Signalization of the intersection of East Avenue at Main Street should be considered.
  51. Construct a parking garage to serve the EMSURA that would result in a net increase in parking supply of approximately 1,100 spaces.
  52. Install a traffic signal at the intersection of CR 94 at County Center Spur.
  53. Revise the *Code of the Town of Riverhead* and/or to the Parking District guidelines to require that any development with a residential component of more than four units provide parking for those units on-site at a rate of at least one parking space per unit. Commercial components of mixed-use developments could be accommodated in the Town-owned parking provided by the Parking District.
  54. Evaluate the potential impact on the Parking District due to proposed intensification of use on parcels already included in the Parking District. Under current DC-1 zoning, properties already in the Parking District could add significant parking demand through redevelopment. Revise the Parking District guidelines such that projects that result in significant intensification of use evaluate their parking impact.
  55. Upgrade all mid-block pedestrian crossing locations to provide signing requiring motorists to yield to pedestrians.
  56. Upgrade the pedestrian crossing at East Avenue and at Atlantis Marine World Aquarium to provide overhead signing requiring motorists to yield to pedestrians, contrasting pedestrian crosswalk material, and pavement markings, and pedestrian bumpouts to enhance pedestrian safety.
  57. Install full pedestrian signals at all existing and proposed signalized intersection locations. Pedestrian signals should be equipped with countdown timers for crossing arterials.
  58. Provide a mid-block pedestrian crossing between Grangebél Park on the west side of Peconic Avenue and Riverfront Park on the east side of Peconic Avenue with overhead signing requiring motorists to yield to pedestrians, contrasting pedestrian crosswalk material, and pavement markings.
  59. Encourage installation/maintenance of sidewalks with a comfortable, uniform, accessible cross-section with a minimum of street furniture on private development plans, and adopt such a policy when sidewalks are installed by the Town.
  60. Investigate funding sources for additional traffic calming measures within the EMSURA. In recent years, New York State Department of Transportation administered the Local Safe Streets and Traffic Calming Program, which provided funding to local governments to investigate and implement pedestrian safety improvements. This program was not funded for the current fiscal year, but is expected to be funded in the future.

61. Construction of a new parking garage coupled with the reduction in parking south of East Main Street would cause a significant number of pedestrians to cross Main Street to walk to and from their vehicles between Main Street and the parking garage. Explore opportunities for the construction of a pedestrian bridge during the site plan review process, perhaps in conjunction with the design and construction of the parking garage. This would help to maintain the flow of pedestrian traffic between the new garage and the south side of East Main Street.
62. Work with Suffolk Transit to ensure they are kept abreast of increasing demand due to development in the EMSURA to make appropriate adjustments to routes and schedules as needed.
63. Provide bus shelters at all bus stops within the EMSURA. Bus shelters should be provided with copies of schedules, at a minimum. Investigate funding sources and the availability of real time information technology to provide information on route conditions and delays.
64. Encourage private developers to provide incentives for patrons and employees to use public transportation to travel to and from the EMSURA. Movie and hotel discounts, free or discounted merchandise, shuttle service between the EMSURA and the LIRR station should be considered.
65. Engage the LIRR in discussion on the possibility of shuttle service between the LIRR station and the EMSURA, similar to the program on the South Fork. Funding opportunities should be examined also.

#### ***SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT***

66. Develop a comprehensive solid waste collection strategy that uses either the local Business Improvement District (BID), in which the EMSURA is located, or a similar approach for solid waste collection and disposal. To develop the most efficient and effective strategy, the Town or BID should work with landowners and/or tenants to assess the different comprehensive collection strategies and select the best plan or approach considering cost, traffic, visual quality, equity, needs, resources, as well as the potential for future growth.
67. All containers should be kept in good repair (e.g., painted to prevent rust and deterioration), be structurally sound, leak proof, easily accessed, and vermin proof.
68. Garbage and other waste materials should be completely contained within the container. No accumulation of garbage or waste materials should be permitted outside the confines of the container, and garbage should not accumulate so that the container cover cannot be firmly closed as to prevent animals from gaining access to the container.
69. Containers should be strategically located, angled, and screened, yet still allow for removal. Containers should be screened from public view with a solid enclosure or enclosure of dense vegetation on at least three sides to a height of the container. No container should be located in or on a public right-of-way.
70. Efforts should be taken to consolidate all containers within the area, with the assistance of the BID and/or a creation of a garbage district. Such consolidation may include requirements such as the installation one litter receptacle or receptacle area for several uses placed in an inconspicuous and safe location.
71. Garbage should be removed frequently to avoid unpleasant odors.
72. Deliveries, collection of refuse, and other activities should be confined to such hours and such type as will not create any unreasonable disturbance to neighboring residential areas.

73. Heighten code enforcement of mandatory recycling.
74. Require tonnage reports describing the quantity and types of refuse generated.

### **PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION**

To achieve the objectives of the 2008 Update, the activities described below would be undertaken either by or on behalf of the CDA, in accordance with applicable federal, State, and County laws, policies, and procedures. The CDA, as the Town's designated urban renewal agency, may fund these activities in full or in part, or may seek other sources of funding for implementation. The description of projects herein provides general authority to undertake these activities. These projects may be modified or expanded upon as needed to meet the plan objectives.

### *LAND ACQUISITION*

The CDA plans to acquire a parcel located within the DC-2 zone adjacent to Town-owned property and the Peconic Avenue entrance to the waterfront park. This parcel, identified as Suffolk County Tax Map number District 0600, Section 128, Block 6, Lot 85.3, would provide additional open space in association with Riverfront Park. Public and private acquisition is recognized as an integral measure to revitalize the EMSURA and could be used to redevelop deteriorated and/or other properties for the purposes of improving overall public safety and welfare of the urban renewal area. Currently, there are properties both north and south of East Main Street and West of McDermott that are being considered for public and private acquisition. Public acquisition of additional lands, where warranted, may be necessary to foster the overall goals of this update. Public land within the EMSURA, such as areas utilized for parking, should be reviewed periodically and a determination rendered as to whether parking is the appropriate use. If not, public/private funding for reuse of parking with acceptable development or conversion to parkland should be considered. The CDA and the Town have acquired numerous sites since the 1993 Plan and would continue to do so in the future.

### *DEMOLITION AND REMOVAL OF STRUCTURES*

Deteriorated and blighted properties, whether acquired publicly or privately, deemed not appropriate for rehabilitation and reuse, should be cleared to advance one or more of the goals set forth in this 2008 Update.

### *AIR RIGHTS AND EASEMENTS*

The Town Board and Planning Board should be granted the authority to reduce permitted heights as appropriate to mitigate impacts between proposed new development and historic and other structures of local significance. In accordance with the DC-1 zone, all structures are permitted to be five stories in height, within the allowable density. Since it is the intent of this 2008 Update to preserve historic and significant structures (which are primarily one to two stories), air rights could be purchased, either publicly or privately, to increase density in other areas of the EMSURA that do not conflict with these structures or important views in the area.

The 1993 Plan recommended that preserving visual and physical access to the waterfront should be achieved through securing easements in favor of the Town of Riverhead over private property. Easements should be secured for perpetual pedestrian access in the form of a cross access between uses on East Main Street and the waterfront. Connections should be well lit and maintained as part of the landscape design.

*METHODS AND TECHNIQUES OF URBAN RENEWAL*

By initiating and sponsoring urban renewal programs and projects, the CDA would foster the goals and objectives of the update as well as the 2003 Comprehensive Plan. Such projects would revitalize the economy; improve the appearance and vitality of the EMSURA; and promote the health, safety, and welfare of the general public. To accomplish these goals, the CDA may participate—through loans, grants, or both—in assisting development of new public and private buildings and facilities in the project area, and in maintaining and improving interior and exterior conditions of existing buildings within the EMSURA.

Urban renewal efforts within the EMSURA would occur through new construction or rehabilitation of existing buildings, creation or improvement of public spaces, reuse of vacant buildings, and beautification projects, all of which further the intended goals of this update. All activities may be achieved by public and/or private property owners, with or without financial assistance by the CDA (Town), County, State or federal government. The CDA is authorized to set financial guidelines, establish loan programs and provide other forms of financial assistance to property owners and those that wish to acquire and redevelop property, as it may deem appropriate to achieve the objectives of this update. The CDA may also acquire property within the EMSURA by any legal means necessary (including condemnation) to achieve the objectives of this update.

Redevelopment activities should be encouraged for the deteriorated and vacant structures identified in Tables C-1 through C-5 in Appendix C. In addition to redevelopment activities, the CDA may create programs, incentives, and other measures pursuant to the Urban Renewal Law of New York State to occupy, either fully or partially, vacant structures within the EMSURA.

Coordinated review of projects, particularly redevelopment projects, should be carried out.

*Urban Renewal Actions to Date*

On June 15, 2005, the Town issued a Request for Interest and Qualifications (RFIQ) for a developer to plan, finance, construct, operate, and manage a high-quality, mixed-use development encompassing the entire EMSURA.

On October 15, 2005, the Town invited three developers to submit proposals for redevelopment of the EMSURA for review by the Town Board. The Town Board subsequently conducted a review of the responses and held a series of interviews with these developers. By Resolution dated March 7, 2006 and adopted that same date, the CDA authorized the Chairman of the CDA to commence negotiations with Apollo Real Estate Investors, LP on a proposal for a planned development to revitalize downtown Riverhead (CDA Resolution #2).

On August 10, 2006, the Town, CDA, and Riverhead Parking District No. 1 (collectively referred to as the “Municipal Entities”) entered into a Master Developer Designation Agreement (MDDA) with the Company (i.e., Riverhead Renaissance, LLP, the entity created by Apollo for the Riverhead project). Among other things, the MDDA gave the Company the first option to develop publicly owned property within the EMSURA. It identified two proposed areas within the EMSURA which the Company intended to pursue during the initial phase of its redevelopment plans and it outlined, in general terms, a framework by which the Company and the Municipal Entities would proceed on the development, permitting, and construction of projects within the EMSURA. These projects are supported by and consistent with the goals and objectives of the 1993 Plan, this 2008 Update, and are subject to the completion of this update,

the subsequent GEIS for the update, and the customary zoning and planning reviews which apply to any development project within the Town.

On October 17, 2006, the Town Board designated the Company as the Qualified and Eligible Sponsor for the two projects identified in the MDDA (CDA Resolution #15). This designation was subject to the execution of the Land Disposition Agreement or other appropriate agreements between the Company and the Municipal Entities, among other conditions.

#### *INFRASTRUCTURE/COMMUNITY FACILITIES/UTILITIES*

As stated in the 1993 Plan, future development may necessitate additional public improvements within the EMSURA. Additionally, improvements such as placing utilities underground, façade and building restoration, sidewalk improvements, and the creation of public spaces are to be implemented as funds become available.

The recommendations below call for the improvements of infrastructure, community facilities, and public utilities. These recommendations are in accordance with the proposed goals of this update. It should be noted that improvements of this kind may be sponsored, initiated, or implemented by the CDA, Town of Riverhead, or project applicant, depending on the nature and scope of the project. Further, project-specific infrastructure improvements would be provided by the applicant.

##### *Street Construction and Circulation Improvements*

The CDA may construct or require project applicants to improve streets throughout the project area. These projects would include landscaping, construction, reconstruction, repair or replacement of streets, sidewalks, bike and pedestrian amenities, and public transit facilities; and acquisition of land, right-of-ways, easements, and other land rights for street and access improvements.

##### *Infrastructure and Utilities Improvements*

The CDA may initiate or sponsor projects that include construction, reconstruction, repair, upgrading, and replacement of electric, water, sanitary sewer and storm drainage facilities; relocation of overhead lines to underground locations; and acquisition of land, right-of-ways, easements, and other land rights as may be necessary to support redevelopment of the EMSURA. As stated, the CDA could require applicants to undertake infrastructure improvements as part of the approval process.

##### *Public Facilities*

The CDA may initiate or seek funding opportunities for the purposes of the acquisition, construction or rehabilitation of public facilities within the urban renewal area. Public facilities may include public parking facilities, police facilities, recreation centers, conference facilities, community centers, and performing arts facilities.

##### *Parks, Recreation, Pedestrian, and Bike Paths*

The CDA may initiate or sponsor the development of parks and recreation facilities in addition to improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and other civic-type spaces. In so doing, the CDA may acquire and improve land or buildings for public parks, open space, bicycle and pedestrian uses, as well as construct facilities for public use.



## **East Main Street Urban Renewal Plan Update 2008**

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### *NEW CODES, ORDINANCES, AND AMENDMENTS*

The Town may adopt design standards and/or a concept plan as part of the DC-1 zoning district and amend the DC-1 zoning code to emphasize waterfront uses and connectivity as well as provide for transitional development in close proximity to the DC-1 district.

### *CODE ENFORCEMENT*

The use and development of land within the EMSURA shall be in accordance with the regulations set forth in the 2003 Comprehensive Plan, the Town's zoning ordinance, and any other applicable local, federal, State, or County laws regulating the use and development of property in an urban renewal area.

The CDA must be notified of any building or annexation application, building permit, and design review, variance, conditional use or other development permits or applications requested within the EMSURA.

### *TIME SCHEDULE*

Table 2 below is an approximate time schedule for the implementation of this update. Implementation of the 2008 Update would commence upon the completion of the SEQRA process and adoption of this plan by the Town Board. Start and completion dates for all actions, including land acquisition, clearance, disposition of property, redevelopment and rehabilitation, are subject to change as a result of funding, State loans, periodic subsidies, and capital grants.

It is strongly recommended that the implementation of this plan be carried out in three five-year consecutive phases or stages, immediately following the adoption of this report. Those phases would be as follows: short term (2012); interim (2017) and long term (2022). By focusing redevelopment and urban renewal efforts into separate and consecutive phases, the CDA would be able to ensure that the recommendations put forth in this plan are implemented in a manner that is not disruptive to the environment, protects and promotes the safety, health, and welfare of the public, and promotes the sound growth and development of the urban renewal area.

**Table 2**  
**Recommended Time Schedule**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Date of Completion</b>
Submission of Update to the Town Planning Board	May 2008	July 2008
Planning Board Determination Public Hearing	July 2008	
New York State Environmental Quality Review Process	Late 2006	August 2008
Adoption of the East Main Street Urban Renewal Plan Update 2008	Late 2006	September 2008
CDA's Advisory Role to the Building Department as per Section 503(h) of New York State Article 15 (Urban Renewal Law)	Late 2008	36 months
Reuse of Vacant Structures	September 2008	2012
Rehabilitation of Identified Deteriorated Structures	September 2008	2012
Disposition of Land	September 2008	2017
Acquisition of Land	2008	2017
Infrastructure and Public Space Improvements	September 2008	2022
Approval of Development Applications	Late 2008	2022
Private Development of Underdeveloped or Undeveloped Properties	Late 2008	2022

It is intended that the implementation of recommendations put forth in this plan will be carried out in phases or stages extending over a 20-year period from the adoption of this plan and will be subject to modification or amendment thereto by the Riverhead Town Board

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