

# TOWN OF RIVERHEAD PECONIC RIVER/ROUTE 25 CORRIDOR

Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA)  
Step II Nomination Study

## Creative Placemaking Supplement

Town of Riverhead  
Suffolk County, New York



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## General BOA Introduction

### Lead Project Sponsors

On April 20, 2011, the NYS Department of State announced that the Town of Riverhead had been awarded a grant through the New York State Department of State (NYS DOS) for the preparation of a Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Step II Nomination Study. On May 24, 2012, the Town of Riverhead Town Board (Town Board) issued a Request for Proposals and on February 5, 2013 the Town Board resolved to authorize the Supervisor to sign a contract with Nelson, Pope & Voorhis, LLC (NP&V) to prepare the BOA Step II Nomination Study.

The primary purpose of the New York State BOA Program is to conduct an area-wide and community-supported planning process for brownfield redevelopment. As the study progressed, additional elements were added to the work program based upon input received from the community and Town, including the preparation of a Creative Placemaking Plan by WaterFire International to provide insight into making Riverhead conducive to hosting large scale placemaking events with a possible WaterFire event in the future. This report is the result of that expansion of the study.

The lead project sponsor is the Town of Riverhead with guidance and funding provided by the New York State Department of State (DOS) through its BOA grant program. The Town of Riverhead Community Development Agency is the agency overseeing the project and the Town Board and DOS are responsible for final review and approval.

This Creative Placemaking supplement is designed to build on the many planning efforts that have been initiated previously by the Town of Riverhead and the findings of the Step II BOA Nomination Study. As this report was prepared in parallel with the Step II BOA Nomination study there are some overlaps.

As stated in section 0.1 of the Step II BOA Nomination Study, only portions of these plans have been implemented -- and none have achieved the desired level of momentum required to achieve revitalization of the downtown and gateway areas. This exploration of the potential offered by Creative Placemaking practices seeks to enhance Riverhead's downtown revitalization.







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### Project Overview and Description

- The purpose of the Town of Riverhead Peconic River/Route 25 Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area project is to overcome several major obstacles to redevelopment and to identify key strategic sites/areas where redevelopment (or preservation and related improvements) will act as catalysts for revitalization of the area as a whole.
- The Town of Riverhead is situated along the northeasterly end of Long Island in Suffolk County, New York. The 201.3 square mile Town extends from the middle of Long Island Sound to the north, to the Peconic River and Flanders Bay to the south. Riverhead adjoins: the Town of Brookhaven to the west, the Town of Southampton to the south, and the Town of Southold to the east. The Community Context Map (**Figure 1-1**) shows the location of the Town of Riverhead Peconic River/Route 25 Corridor BOA Study Area and its relationship to the greater Riverhead community and surrounding region. It is located centrally along the Town's southerly border with the Town of Southampton.
- The Study Area Context Map (**Figure 1-2**) provides a generalized view of the Study Area's relationship with its environs. The Study Area is a linear corridor extending from the easterly terminus of I-495, known as the Long Island Expressway, to the Riverhead hamlet, located along the Peconic River. The Study Area is located advantageously where Long Island splits into the North and South Forks. New York State Route 25, which travels through the Study Area, is a major arterial roadways providing access to communities along the North Fork. Development within the Town and region, including within the Study Area, has been influenced by the presence of post-World War II complexes on Long Island, including the former Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant in nearby Calverton, now the site of EPCAL. The plant operated from 1956 until 1996, and encompassed approximately 6,000 acres along NYS Route 25. The Study Area is also served by the Long Island Rail Road's Main Line, and includes the Riverhead train station.

**Figure 1-3** provides a map of the proposed BOA Boundary and Study Area which is generally described as being located:

- East of the I-495 Interchange 72 which ends at NYS Route 25 and parcels with frontage on the north side of the Long Island Rail Road along River Road<sup>1</sup> to a distance of approximately 1,500 feet west of Route 25; and

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<sup>1</sup> Not including two parcels which front on River Road which are not adjacent to the LIRR tracks.





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- North of the Peconic River;
- South of NYS Route 25 at its westerly end, until the road intersects with the Long Island Rail Road Main Line, where it follows the rail right-of-way through the Riverhead downtown. The boundary continues east where it follows the rear property lines of lots within frontage on East Main Street, and then includes properties on the south side of Hubbard Avenue for a distance of approximately 1,200 feet; and,
- Approximately 200 feet west of the southerly terminus of Sunrise Avenue on Hubbard Avenue.

The BOA Study Area is approximately 495 acres in size (about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a square mile) and stretches approximately 1.03 miles from west to east generally from the eastern end of the Long Island Expressway (LIE) east to Hubbard Avenue and also encompasses an area north of Main Street in downtown Riverhead. The Study Area includes downtown Riverhead, which is an older, traditional downtown which fronts on Main Street (with Peconic Avenue and Roanoke Avenue providing the delineating roadway for West Main Street and East Main Street). It is surrounded by adjacent traditional residential neighborhoods and the Peconic River where it adjoins the Study Area to the south. Approximately one-third of the Study Area encompasses the downtown and the easternmost portion of the Study Area, with two-thirds of the Study Area located to the west of downtown. It is noted that the Study Area boundary was modified twice since the BOA grant application was first submitted.





## **The Creative Placemaking Plan for the Town of Riverhead**

Creative Placemaking has emerged as a successful and much discussed tool to advance the economic revitalization of communities. Creative Placemaking has been defined as “a discipline within the practice [of Placemaking] that is intentionally using or employing arts, culture and creativity as a driver for transformation, growth and change in a way that builds quality, character and identity of place.”

- This document includes research, analysis, detailed planning tools and suggestions regarding nearly 150 Creative Placemaking sites in Riverhead, including covered venues, open venues, areas of interest, hotels and restaurants that are useful in terms of event planning, utilizing the entire downtown as a flexible venue.
- It describes numerous physical improvements that can be made in the Peconic River Corridor and programming and suggestions for Main Street and the East Second Street to leverage the unique beauty and position of these natural and architectural treasures, including specific recommendations requested for preparing a WaterFire on the Peconic River at Riverhead.
- It provides suggestions for improving the community’s vibrancy on a daily basis through knowledge of its physical assets and human resources, an assessment of its distinctiveness and the promotion of these aspects of the community in a concerted unified fashion via a single website.
- It includes information on the enormous economic opportunity represented by nearby populations and ideas to explore regarding capturing economic lift through temporary increases in the offer of hospitality services via alternative lodging options and temporary food services during events.
- The content is useful to event organizers, artists, community leaders, residents, investors, non profit agencies, property owners, anyone interested in Riverhead and looking to contribute to its vibrancy by connecting to a holistic vision of the community.

The first section, 1.0 Introduction to Creative Placemaking Core Concepts reviews the origins and literature on the subject. To begin with the assessments of Riverhead assets, please turn directly to Section 2.0 on page 40 which continues to page 144 and see the separate Appendices and Maps. For a concentrated set of recommendations derived from and built on the research, analysis and considerations in Sections 2.0-6.0 please turn to page 148, Recommendations.





## 1.0 Introduction to Creative Placemaking Core Concepts

### **What is Creative Placemaking?**

**If you are a planner or designer, it is about physical redevelopment.**

**If you are an economic developer, it is about new economic opportunities.**

**If you are a social worker, it is about healthy living and social justice.**

**If you are a marketing specialist, it is about branding.**

**If you are a community organizer, it is about visioning and consensus about the future.**

**If you are an artist, it is about connecting with people in a profound and soulful way, bring new audiences to the arts.**

**If you are a citizen, it is about a better community in which to live.**

**If you are a civic leader, it is about bringing your town to a new secure future.**

Building upon area-wide analysis and planning efforts, this Creative Placemaking analysis draws from and relates to the BOA Step II Nomination Study, serves to advance implementation of revitalization of strategic sites and achieving the overall goals for the Peconic River BOA area.

This document is intended to form the foundation to allow the Town of Riverhead to engage in a Creative Placemaking process to work together as a community to reimagine its future in a bold way that can be informed by an interactive engagement with its citizens, with art and artists, and with the community. The document includes an introduction to the field of Creative Placemaking; a review of the components of successful Creative Placemaking Plan, observations on the most effective type of Creative Placemaking for a community such as Riverhead, an inventory and analysis of regional place-related assets and sites; relevant demographic analyses and projections; compounded observations from the community based on interviews with community stakeholders and political representatives; an inventory of regional partners for Creative Placemaking; suggested site interventions; planning overview related to large-scale events, and a preliminary analysis related to the general feasibility of the Riverhead site for a placemaking opportunity currently under consideration by the Town of Riverhead — WaterFire on the Peconic.





## **Introduction to Creative Placemaking Supplement**

Creative Placemaking has emerged as a successful and much discussed tool to advance the economic revitalization of communities. Creative Placemaking has been defined as “a discipline within the practice [of Placemaking] that is intentionally using or employing arts, culture and creativity as a driver for transformation, growth and change in a way that builds quality, character and identity of place.”<sup>2</sup>

Creative Placemaking was developed in response to the widespread observation that the natural occurring artist migrations to inexpensive space have a particularly revitalizing effect that serves as a force multiplier for urban redevelopment.<sup>3</sup> In response urban theorists began to explore ways to strategically deploy artists and the arts as an effective way to initiate, direct and catalyze economic development.

Creative Placemaking is a collection of many quite different strategies and approaches rather than a single fixed doctrine and consists in practice of a very wide range of potential solutions, methods, partnerships and interventions. The NEA documents over seventy projects in nine project types as a resource on its Our Town website<sup>4</sup> and writes that “there are a healthy variety of different theories, perspectives, and interpretations.”<sup>5</sup> ArtPlace lists 262 different types of projects in ten fields and ten different sectors.<sup>6</sup>

The core of Creative Placemaking as a practice is its recognition of art as being one of the most effective and powerful tools to transform communities and its commitment to empower individual artists as leaders and change-makers in this process. Yet ‘art’ is a notoriously wide-ranging, ill-defined, controversial, and even polarizing concept. [Marshall McLuhan famously said “Art is anything you can get away with.”<sup>7</sup>]

With this much variation in strategy, approach and even definition, the early choice of the right project, approach and solution and the right art and artist to work with is a complex decision dependent on a community’s scale, type, resources, site, and temperament. The following

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<sup>2</sup> Tim Jones interview, Director of Artscape

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Currid, *Bohemia as Subculture*, <http://jpl.sagepub.com/content/23/4/368.abstract>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.arts.gov/exploring-our-town/showcase>

<sup>5</sup> Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa, “Creative Placemaking”, National Endowment for the Arts, 2010; pg. 5-6.

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.artplaceamerica.org/grantees?search\\_api\\_views\\_fulltext=](http://www.artplaceamerica.org/grantees?search_api_views_fulltext=)

<sup>7</sup> Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 1964. <http://ardeilpadenom.blogspot.com/2011/05/art-is-anything-you-can-get-away-with.html>





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analysis is intended to inform and assist the Town of Riverhead in making their potential entry into Creative Placemaking.

Creative Placemaking is foremost a process that involves members of the community, civic leadership, local engagement with the concept and investment in its outcome and success, and community consensus about the possible art interventions and artists involved. This report outlines some of the many assets of the Riverhead community—outlining relevant physical, cultural, and human assets, along with suggestions for utilizing these strengths to best achieve the community's goals. This Section outlines the components of a successful Creative Placemaking Plan and best practices as identified by the National Endowment for the Arts [NEA], Artplace and others; the benefits that Riverhead can realize by Creative Placemaking; and some examples of other cities who have found success with Creative Placemaking techniques.

During the analysis extensive interviews with the following groups occurred:

- residents
- elected leaders in Riverhead, Southampton, and Suffolk County
- Town of Riverhead staff
- business people, downtown Riverhead and beyond
- leaders of the civic, arts, education, community development and environmental nonprofits that operate in the region
- visitors walking in Riverhead
- potential visitors elsewhere in Long Island and beyond
- restauranteurs and hoteliers in Riverhead and beyond
- transportation workers
- other observers and experts in the wider community

Their input was combined with reviews of many documents and media and with direct site visits and walking tours of Riverhead, the Peconic River and its surrounding areas.

### **A note on the Riverhead site**

One observation to be made here in the introduction relates to the definition of the 'place' under study. The technical site of this report is the Town of Riverhead and the BOA Study Area. However no analysis can ever be effective if it does not also examine the larger context and the surrounding areas. It is pertinent to note that the long-standing political boundaries were based on seeing the Peconic River as a political boundary, but that there is much to be gained and accomplished by widening the perspective to look at the Peconic River as a major asset that unites





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the towns on each shore into a region centered on the Peconic River that encompasses the larger environmental watershed of the river. While much has been accomplished with extensive cooperative interactions between the two towns, a deliberate shift in perspective to see the River as a shared, generative opportunity would lead to an enhanced strategy of coordinated co-development of the Peconic River valley as a valuable environmental and cultural asset, unique to the Long Island region.

Interview subjects on both sides of the river, already see this as a single indivisible area with an integrated local economy. Supporting their view, the areas share a postal code, school district and fire district and this viewpoint is reinforced by the existing geography, geomorphology, and environmental conditions.

The map below Figure 1 - The Peconic River Watershed shows the general environs of the Peconic River, the Town of Riverhead (north of the river, and Southampton (south of the river). The river is more important as the central unifying natural feature of the environment, rather than as a political boundary. Restrictions on river edge development (natural, historic and statutory) have resulted in preserving a significant area of unused, largely natural land that can be celebrated and featured in Creative Placemaking projects.

Community discussions about the possibility of WaterFire has continued the interest begun with the completion of the Riverhead River Walk and Grangebél Park and has reanimated several cross-river groups<sup>8</sup> working to enhance community engagement in connecting the two sides of the river. These groups and their constituencies will be useful partners in transforming this area.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://riversiderediscovered.com/2015/06/05/recent-riverside-milestones/>





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**Figure 1 - The Peconic River Watershed shows the River as the natural center of the community. Map indicating publicly accessible land**





“The arts can connect us, they can weave communities together, and they can infuse our lives with a deeper sense of place and purpose. The arts have the power to change where we live, and who we are, for the better. To that end ... we are provid[ing] the essential tools to ... undertaking the important work of Creative Placemaking and community development around an arts-based project.”

— Jane Chu, Chairman<sup>9</sup>  
National Endowment for the Arts

This section contains background and information on the aspects of Creative Placemaking as a developing practice that are most relevant as a basis for the empirical aspects of this plan and that would be most helpful for the Town of Riverhead to achieve success.

## **1.0 Overview of the field of Creative Placemaking**

Artists have long been creating and transforming places, forging connections across the community, expressing the larger aspirations of people, coalescing meaning and coherence against uncertainty and doubt. The arts and artwork has long been a significant component of the economy (see sidebar of historical importance of the arts in ancient cultures as an example).

### **1.1 Creative Placemaking established at the National Endowment for the Arts**

“Creative Placemaking” is a relatively recently coined term that articulates a focus for newly deploying artists and the arts into urban design and community development to better achieve success in the creation of vibrant and successful places. “This is in no way a new phenomenon, but its prominence in planning shows recognition that for the last century, the arts have been





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displaced from their former central role in the civic design of the public realm and that there is great value in bringing the arts back as a major component in the process.”<sup>9</sup>

The concept of a deliberate re-engagement between artists and urban planning and government-planned community revitalization and intervention was developed under the name of “Creative Placemaking” in a formal white paper<sup>10</sup> written by Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa, commissioned in 2010 by Rocco Landesman, the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. Creative Placemaking was developed in response to four observations:

- The widespread observation that the natural occurring artist migrations to inexpensive space have a particularly revitalizing effect that serves as a force multiplier for urban redevelopment.<sup>11</sup> It has been dubbed “the SoHo Effect” by urban historians.<sup>12</sup> In response urban theorists began to explore ways to strategically deploy artists and the arts as an effective way to initiate, direct and catalyze economic development.
- The general observation that the traditional established art forms were encountering an aging of their audiences, a perception in some circles of these arts not being relevant to major sectors of the nation, and that community vitality was occurring best away from the formal arts centers. This was coupled with a search for methods to build new audiences among new demographic populations.<sup>13</sup>
- The digital economy was freeing workers to be able to work remotely, and thus as they were free to live where ever they pleased, their “quality of place” and “quality of life” assessments were gaining new importance in determining where they wished to live.<sup>14</sup>
- The challenge of reduced arts spending at the national level, led the NEA to seek partnerships with joint projects with other federal agencies.

Creative Placemaking is an evolving field and it has been variously defined. Here are several useful definitions. Further definitions are included in Appendix B. Defining Creative Placemaking.

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<sup>9</sup> Authors Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa are both noted researchers on the economic impact of the arts.  
<https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/CreativePlacemaking-Paper.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa, Creative Placemaking, National Endowment for the Arts, 2010  
<https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/CreativePlacemaking-Paper.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth Currid, Bohemia as Subculture, <http://jpl.sagepub.com/content/23/4/368.abstract>

<sup>12</sup> Mariko Azis, commenting on E. Currid’s impact, <http://blogs.cornell.edu/art2701mja245/2013/06/16/the-soho-effect/>

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.metlife.com/assets/cao/foundation/Culture\\_Connects\\_MetLifeFoundationFundedReportCREATIVITY.pdf](https://www.metlife.com/assets/cao/foundation/Culture_Connects_MetLifeFoundationFundedReportCREATIVITY.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Richard Florida, The Rise of the Creative Class, 2004; [www.creativeclass.com](http://www.creativeclass.com)





## **1.2 A Brief History of Art and Placemaking in Civic Life**

The phenomena of the power of the arts to transform connect, and build communities and nations is broadly known and widely acknowledged. Indeed, at a sufficient remove, as one looks back in time, the study of history tends to become more and more focused on the arts, music, architecture and culture of the ancient civilization under study.

The Athenians were intensely engaged in deliberate Creative Placemaking with a complex program of art, architecture, theatre, and urban design. The ancient Greeks were so convinced of the necessity of the full engagement of the arts in all aspects of civic life that they deemed the concept of Creative Placemaking to be the earliest of the three forms of communicative formal Rhetoric, specifically Epideictic Rhetoric.<sup>15</sup> Aristotle, in the Poetics, considered the city's primary functions to be security and beauty, so as to serve its purpose to assure the happiness of its citizens.<sup>16</sup>

With this basis in art and beauty, humanity routinely made Creative Placemaking the focus of urban design in most civilizations, as is evidenced in:

- The monumental temples and monuments of ancient Egypt
- The buildings and places of Athens and the construction of Rome
- Renaissance city-states like Florence, Padua and the Vatican,
- The elaborate cathedrals all across Europe, and equivalent places of worship with highly developed civic/religious structures around the world, e.g.
  - Angkor Wat (Cambodia)
  - Machu Picchu (Peru),
  - Borobudur (Indonesia)
  - The Temple of Ise (Japan)

Jane Jacobs started the national movement about improving the quality of place in America with her articles beginning in 1954 in Architectural Forum.<sup>17</sup> The point of her resulting book<sup>18</sup> was that urban planning needed to better reflect the experienced quality of life of those who lived in the communities and that the city and its residents could no longer be held hostage to the needs of automobiles. Jacobs wrote of the human interactions that made a city successful: “the ballet of the

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<sup>15</sup>Jerry Blitefield, WaterFire and the Epideictic Sublime, <http://waterfire.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Jerry-Blitefield-Waterfires-Epideictic-Sublime.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Aristotle, “The end of all action in individual happiness, the good of the state lies in the happiness of its citizens”: The Poetics, second book

<sup>17</sup> Alice Sparberg Alexiou, Jane Jacobs: Urban Visionary, 2006

<sup>18</sup> Jane Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities, 1961





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sidewalks, ...a concentration of people, ...mingle buildings that vary in age and condition, ... stage sets for people.”<sup>19</sup>

Starting in the 1960s contemporary artists began to produce artworks that were deliberately outside of the gallery system as part of the Land Art Movement. These works were installed outdoors, where all could attend for free, were specifically placed-based and designed for a particular site, and were often very large scale. Examples include Robert Smithson’s Spiral Jetty (1970) and the temporary works of Christo and Jeanne-Claude, e.g. Running Fence (1972).



**Figure 2 - Jeanne-Claude & Christo, Running Fence, Marin County, CA 1972**

The groundwork for recognizing and praising successful placemaking had been a series of movements first inspired by a reaction against the deprecations of massive urban demolition done in the name of urban renewal or highway construction in the 1950s.

As established neighborhoods of smaller scale, older, close-knit communities were moved and buildings razed in the name of new modern skyscrapers, a new appreciation for what was being lost was found in the beginnings of the Architectural Historic Building Preservation movement, the articulate writings of Jane Jacobs and many others have all contributed to the ongoing discussion on Creative Placemaking. Recognizing the power of art to connect, inform, motivate and inspire wide segments of the community has now become a hallmark of the field.

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<sup>19</sup> Jane Jacobs, *ibid*





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Also key has been the recognition of the power of art to establish a symbolic language of identity and hope, and to establish a sense of participatory engagement with the creation of the community's future. One of the major realizations promoted by the NEA was the need for a new recognition of the skill, agency and innovative power of artists as creative problem solvers and the need for the early incorporation of artists and artistic thinking and visioning into all aspects of planning, development and urban renewal projects across the country.

### 1.3 NEA's Expansion of Creative Placemaking

The NEA codification of Creative Placemaking led to a variety of partnerships and joint funding across Federal Agencies. The NEA established a grant making program to encourage artist interventions in city planning and placemaking called Our Town<sup>20</sup> "as a catalytic investment tool."

An early result of the NEA's interest in Creative Placemaking was the creation of ArtPlace America, a non-profit organization co-established by the NEA and a consortium of foundation funders to be an advocate, funder, and thought leader for Creative Placemaking. The intention was for ArtPlace to remain in place for ten years to help consolidate experience and best practices, to evaluate results, and to share these insights and perspectives with other foundations "to position arts and culture as a core sector of comprehensive community planning and development in order to strengthen the social, physical, and economic fabric of communities."<sup>21</sup>

Following ArtPlace's lead, several major foundations have now shifted their community development strategies to align with the principles of Creative Placemaking, including the Ford Foundation, the Knight Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, and the Surdna Foundation.

### 1.4 The Arts are the Critical Element in Creative Placemaking

"The arts can be a fulcrum for the creative transformation of American cities."<sup>22</sup>

The original 2010 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) white paper opens with, "Creative Placemaking is a concept that is coalescing from several different areas and as such there are a healthy variety of different theories, perspectives, and interpretations in discussion."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.arts.gov/grants-organizations/our-town/introduction>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.artplaceamerica.org/about/introduction>

<sup>22</sup> Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa, *ibid*

<sup>23</sup> Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa, *ibid*





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Creative Placemaking uses the arts to add additional elements that are typically not included in traditional urban planning and design such as aesthetics, depth psychology, creativity, subjective intuition, metaphor and ritual. As Darren Walker of the Ford Foundation put it, successful urban projects have “gone from a near obsession with the hardware of place — the physical systems — to a much deeper appreciation for the role of human capital, knowledge, and creativity.”<sup>24</sup>

The NEA and ArtPlace have published several guides to help articulate the potential of the field of Creative Placemaking, but they also fully recognized the challenges that may result from suggesting that successful Creative Placemaking is a reductive process, or a recipe, or that it is easy. Often these guidepost bullet points are misunderstood or even misrepresented as fixed formal requirements, occasionally reproduced without the inclusion of the author’s extensive original caveats, warnings and notes that these are offered simply to start a dialog between the artists, the community and the planners. The reason for including the “artists and art at the center of planning, execution and activity”<sup>25</sup> is to help lead the process in unexpected and more complicated directions. Before reproducing this list, it is instructive to reiterate several of their key points. See Appendix C. The Arts are the Critical Element in Creative Placemaking.

- Successful Placemaking is complex, layered, strategic, a great deal more than adding arts, and it is not easy.
- A grounded coherent, focused and consistent artistic vision and strategic direction is needed from the start.
- as the NEA puts it:
  - Creative Placemaking involves placing “artists and art at the center of planning, execution and activity” with these “creative initiators” being critical
  - The project must be “rooted in the talents and vision of one or several collaborating initiators” into a project which “dovetails initiators’ aspirations with those of other partners.”
  - Critically, this must be an artist-led process that “mobilizes public will around its vision”, not the other way round.

<sup>24</sup> Darren Walker, “Creative Placemaking: An Interview with the Ford Foundation. Federal Reserve Bank, Community Development Investment Review, Volume 10:, Issue 2, 2014, pg. 12 <http://www.artplaceamerica.org/view/pdf?f=/sites/default/files/public/pictures/cdir-10-02-final.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> From ArtPlace America, Principles of Creative Placemaking, <http://reconnectingtoourwaterways.org/wp-content/uploads/ROW-Creative-Placemaking-handout.doc.pdf>





Creative Placemaking can devolve into crowd-sourced ideas or a confusing plurality of arts festivals of multiple independent artistic voices. The coherence of a single or focused artistic direction has a tremendous power to provide unity and momentum. As Darren Walker of the Ford Foundation points out: “It is very important for those of us who are supporters of the Creative Placemaking movement to be rigorous and to be analytical about what actually constitutes Creative Placemaking. If everything an artist does is Creative Placemaking, then nothing is. The challenge for us all is to be bring some rigor to our understanding.”<sup>26</sup>

Another key NEA imperative is “designing about distinctiveness”<sup>27</sup> which includes both a sensitivity to and “a commitment to a particular place and its distinctive qualities” and a concurrent commitment to excellence in terms of aesthetic principles and arts and design practice. The NEA administers a rigorous program of sited art works and public art that is professionally juried and curated by deeply knowledgeable arts and museum professionals. The original NEA overtures were seeking ways to bring the power and richness of the arts into the more general design process of creating civic places in neighborhoods all across the nation. They recognized that these places were often designed within a closeted set of engineering focused professions and that the resulting places suffered without creative input from artists.

Another separate goal was to create recognition of the value and importance of crossing “boundaries to leverage support and funds from other functional agencies (transportation, housing, environmental, parks and recreation, workforce development, small business) and [other] levels of government.” This is a frank acknowledgement that the funding priorities in other federal programs have sidelined the inclusion of the arts to a damaging extent.

### **1.5 Components of a Creative Placemaking Plan**

A Creative Placemaking Plan is an approach occasionally used to build community support, understanding, solidarity, and engagement with the idea of a town adopting a Creative Placemaking approach to revitalization and renewal. In other communities, such an approach might have been proposed by the arts community, an arts non-profit, or a particular artist or artist team with a specific idea. [In Providence, this is how WaterFire came about, as a specific project proposed by an artist.] In the absence of specific proposals, the process of citizens coming together to form a Creative Placemaking Plan allows community members to develop their own understanding of the challenges and opportunities and to get involved in identifying the positive assets they are in place and with helping to create a shared vision for future improvement.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid. pg.13

<sup>27</sup> quotes here and following in this paragraph from the NEA white paper “Creative Placemaking” by Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa [Nicomemus], 2010 <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/CreativePlacemaking-Paper.pdf>





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In Riverhead's case, initial citizen enthusiasm about the idea of WaterFire has led to a series of well attended public forums and discussions that have already familiarized many citizens with the goals and potential benefits of taking a Creative Placemaking approach to revitalization and how it might benefit the town. These discussions and general public interest led the Town of Riverhead to invest in this plan as a part of the BOA.

The development of a Creative Placemaking Plan is a process of community consensus building and civic engagement that is conducted by interested members of the community. The process begins with an inventory of assets and a process of imagining how these assets can be best deployed, activated and coordinated to achieve greater impact. The process can be completed by a group led by volunteers in the community or by a facilitator. Or the entire review can be done by a consultant or artist's group with less direct citizen input. The more common path is to have the art project suggested by an artists or the arts community. In the community meeting approach, once the challenges, assets and intended outcome are determined, then ways to involve artists are begun. The resources, research and recommendations in this report accomplish many of these goals.

For reference, the following steps recommended to form a community based consensus conversation on what the citizens wish to do to revitalize the town. They are adapted from the outline developed by Tom Borrup in *The Creative Community Builder's Handbook*.<sup>28</sup> An online resource with a similar set of procedures has been developed for towns in New Jersey.<sup>29</sup>

The table provides both a description of the activity as well as observations of Riverhead's progress on the same.

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<sup>28</sup> Material from Tom Borrup, *The Creative Community Builder's Handbook: How to Transform Communities Using Local Assets, Arts, and Culture*, 2006

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.sustainablejersey.com/actions-certification/actions/#open/action/512>





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Step	Activity	Progress and opportunities in Riverhead
1	Define and engage the community	Riverhead has already discovered the power in gathering the community and with engaging Riverside and Flanders in the definition of place as the Peconic River is shared between them.
2	Identify community assets  Much of this is included in this report.	Riverhead already embraces its historic Main Street and has developed the Peconic River Walk and Grangebel Park and begun programming. The evolving definition of the community is emphasizing the importance of both sides of the River and the realization that the epicenter of the 'place' is between the communities of Riverhead and Southampton(Riverside Flanders); and that engaging the wider community can lead to the best progress.
3.	Identify and Recruit Effective Community Partners:  Disciplines might include: Social and Civic partners, Economic Development partners, Environmental partners, Education /Youth partners, Cultural/Artists partners	Riverhead has a wealth of resources: across all disciplines in position within the community  a unique geographical position that it shares and is strengthened by its evolving 'partnerships' with northern Southampton:  -as gateway to the South Fork  -as gateway to the entire East End  -at the end of the LIE  -on Long Island  -in NY State  -near NYC – with many assets including the largest center of non-profit headquarters in the USA (As per Appendices Q and R of this report)  Full advantage should be taken of potential partners within this broader definition of community
4	Jointly develop a map of community assets	A first approach has been made via this report. Further projects considering the points 1 &2 above are next steps toward completing this.
5	Develop strategies and the climate for individual creativity and collective cultural expression for as many people as possible in Riverhead through arts and culture	Based on the community assets and vision designed to enhance the quality of life, economic opportunity and prosperity, consider embracing a major Creative Placemaking initiative such as WaterFire which will support the development of these strategies.

Riverhead has already had many of these discussions and there has been much support for the idea of WaterFire. Similar discussions have also been occurring on the south bank of the Peconic





River in the neighboring communities of Riverside and Flanders, with area non-profits and with the leadership of Southampton and Suffolk County.

### **1.6 Strategic Ways that Creative Placemaking Can Achieve Community Impact**

There are many good reasons for a community to wish to explore and launch a Creative Placemaking project. In convening a community discussion as part of a Creative Placemaking Plan, or in advancing an artistic proposal these development goals are often identified by community members as important outcomes the project can help achieve.<sup>30</sup> A major art installation that attracts new visitors to Riverhead can accomplish many of these goals.

#### **Strengthen Economic Development**

- Create interest in new businesses moving into town
- Drive economic resilience and diversity by attracting new kinds of businesses,
- Find new investors for the Town to develop a range of developments
- Create new ways for businesses to participate in growing economies
- Expand job training and opportunities for work
- Build a culture of mutual citizen activities to increase safety

#### **Create Arts-focused or Placed-based Tourism Attractions for Riverhead**

- Develop unique features and arts assets that cannot be found in the adjacent market areas (such as the Peconic River, Main Street, or an arts event like WaterFire)
- Create events with sufficient media appeal to ensure editorial coverage
- Develop social media strategies that can feature the excitement of new events downtown to highlight the new attractions in the community
- Feature new arts experiences that are powerful, placed-based, and inspiring

#### **Build Civic Engagement**

- Connect community members to one another
- Establish residents as volunteers and stewards
- Create a shared sense of a new exciting future for the community
- Build networking and face-to-face connections among residents while working
- on cultural and arts projects that build social capital
- Cultural participation leads to civic participation
- Involvement can encourage residents to become stewards of place

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<sup>30</sup> Laura Callanan, ed. Community Development Investment Review, Vol. 10, Issue 2, 2014  
<http://www.artplaceamerica.org/view/pdf?f=/sites/default/files/public/pictures/cdir-10-02-final.pdf>





**Inspire Community Vision, Identity and Resiliency**

- Help establish a common vision and identity
- Work to re-establish normalcy for all community members
- Create a community ethos of support for all community members
- Articulate the shared vision of the community via the asset mapping process
- Share cultural heritage and history thru arts and create an affirmative group identity
- Cultural activities can help create social capital and bridge boundaries of difference

**Improve the Quality of Life for Visitors and Residents**

- Create new art works and environments for shared connections and relaxation
- Increase access to public spaces, resources, and infrastructure
- Arts can build improvements in the built environment
- Build mechanisms (thru arts projects and experiences) to build connections across the entire community
- Improve the aesthetic experience of Riverhead
- Create ways to increase local attachment to place
- Improve walking and biking transit options to promote more community interactions
- Develop opportunities for arts and new businesses in downtown

**Rebrand the Town of Riverhead as an innovative, fun community**

- Work to establish a new brand for the future success of Riverhead
- Create a metaphorical, visual and symbolic way to capture the future
- Establish local and regional alignment with the new brand
- Build social media support and strategies
- Seek new partnerships and continued arts projects and expansions

The following techniques and interventions can leverage the impact of the arts to have outsized influence and economic impact:

**Anchoring**

- Art can provide a new identity for Riverhead
- Art can act as an anchoring institution or attraction to bring visitors to the Town and other businesses
- Art can create jobs
- Art can generate foot traffic
- Art can attract tourists and patrons, who will support area businesses





### **Activating**

- Using arts performances or installations to activate public sites and places
- Use art to build social media traffic
- Coordinate new events to support other businesses and events
- Develop activating arts events to encourage broader interacting
- Capitalize on the distinctive history of Riverhead and Grangebél Park
- Create new attractions for residents and new visitors
- Build a project that instills pride and hope in residents
- Build fun and surprise back into downtown

### **Transforming**

- Use art to ameliorate unfavorable conditions (place band stages in front of empty building sites; locate pop-up gallery spaces in empty stores)
- Use the arts to redesign or reimagine spaces or uses downtown
- Use art projects for beautification, spectacle and branding
- Use art projects to build reengagement to lead people to connect with each other
- Use art projects for building pride, connection, joy and identity with Riverhead

### **Special note: Core Elements of Livability of Place**

- One resource that can be of use in helping a Creative Placemaking community meeting achieve understanding and focus is to look at the following graphic showing “core elements of livability of place.” In order to better understand the elements that impact people’s decisions about the livability and desirability of their communities, the NEA convened “forty experts in the fields of urban planning, community development, design, arts, cultural policy and research, sociology, and economics to consider ways to measure livability, presence and the impact of arts, design, and cultural assets in U.S. communities.” The following graphic was adapted and generated from the attributes selected at the summit, as reported in an NEA whitepaper by Jane Pierson.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Jane Pierson, Arts and Livability: The Road to Better Metrics, June 7, 2010; <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/Arts-and-Livability-Whitepaper.pdf>





### **Core Elements of Livability of Place**

- Economic conditions:
  - · Accessibility to quality community services and amenities
    - · Transit systems
    - · Schools
    - · Medical Care
  - · Sustainability (and economic)
  - · Job security and satisfaction
  - · Economic stability (businesses, housing prices, jobs)
  
- Physical Attributes:
  - · Walkability and access to bike paths
  - · Private spaces
  - · Public and personal safety
  - · Quality of physical environment
  - · Good and interesting urban design and texture
  - · Good architecture
  - · Landscape, gardens, public parks, beautification
  - · Pet friendly and dog parks
  - · Recreational activities
  
- Environmental Quality:
  - · Sustainability (environmental)
  - · Farm-based, fresh food options
  - · Environmental quality (air and water quality)

## **1.7 Examples and Case Studies of Creative Placemaking**

### **1.7.1 Database Sources of Comparative Creative Placemaking Projects**

To understand how other communities have approached their challenges, reviewing multiple case studies can be very helpful. The NEA makes available extensive documentation on over seventy projects in nine project types as a resource on its Our Town Project Showcase website.<sup>32</sup> The web resource lists the projects by five project settings (large urban, mid-sized urban, small urban, rural, tribe); by project type (asset mapping, community arts engagement, community design, creative economy, cultural district planning, cultural facilities and spaces, festivals and performances, public art, and public space); and by location. Each write up consists of a detailed

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.arts.gov/exploring-our-town/showcase>





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reporting of a map, and short reports covering Place, Community, Local Needs, Vision, Partnerships, Logistics, Anticipated Impacts, Unexpected Impacts, Lessons Learned, Resources, and Contact Information. The link is <https://www.arts.gov/exploring-our-town/showcase> <sup>33</sup>

Equally valuable at the NEA's Our Town website are the Project Insight reports which provides more general strategic information related to approaches to a wide variety of public art projects in general, divided by Project Process, Project Setting, and Project Type, includes lessons learned, relevant case studies, and many additional resources. The link is <https://www.arts.gov/exploring-our-town/insights>. <sup>34</sup>

ArtPlace lists 262 different types of projects in ten fields and ten different sectors. Each project has photographs, descriptions, media links, contact information, website, social media, reports on the organization and the community, and frequently lessons learned or blog postings by the project team. The link is [http://www.artplaceamerica.org/grantees?search\\_api\\_views\\_fulltext=](http://www.artplaceamerica.org/grantees?search_api_views_fulltext=) <sup>35</sup>

The Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco's Community Development Investment Review, fall 2014 issue also included sixty pages of profiles and analysis of sixteen successful Creative Placemaking projects. The link is <http://www.artplaceamerica.org/view/pdf?f=/sites/default/files/public/pictures/cdir-10-02-final.pdf> <sup>36</sup>

### 1.7.2 Exemplary Examples of Successful Creative Placemaking projects

A detailed review of three exemplary Creative Placemaking projects is in Appendix D. The projects are described, with key elements noted, their impact, and lessons learned for Riverhead. The projects reviewed are:

- **The High Line, New York City, New York**
- **Project Row Houses, Houston, Texas**
- **Mass MOCA, North Adams, Massachusetts**

### 1.8 Case study of WaterFire Outcomes and Benefits in Providence, RI

Creative Placemaking was formulated as a concept and a policy by the NEA only in 2010, but WaterFire, first designed and presented in Providence six years earlier in 1994, has been widely

<sup>33</sup> NEA Our Town Project Showcase; <https://www.arts.gov/exploring-our-town/showcase>

<sup>34</sup> NEA Our Town Project Insights; <https://www.arts.gov/exploring-our-town/insights>

<sup>35</sup> ArtPlace Grantee Reports; [http://www.artplaceamerica.org/grantees?search\\_api\\_views\\_fulltext=](http://www.artplaceamerica.org/grantees?search_api_views_fulltext=)

<sup>36</sup> Laura Callanan, ed. Community Development Investment Review, Vol. 10, Issue 2, 2014  
<http://www.artplaceamerica.org/view/pdf?f=/sites/default/files/public/pictures/cdir-10-02-final.pdf>. pg 82-141.





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recognized as a preeminent and leading early example of Creative Placemaking. WaterFire has shown the power of Creative Placemaking in many ways. Individual outcomes and benefits are listed, occasionally with direct quotes of from supporting evidence

- WaterFire changed the citizens' attitude about their city. Twenty years ago people were embarrassed to say they were from Providence, now people are proud and want to have their family reunions at WaterFire. "WaterFire Providence is the star player on this urban stage, radically changing the perception of Providence. New pride and investment abound."<sup>37</sup> From the 2003 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence awarded to WaterFire in 2003.<sup>38</sup>
- WaterFire was a major force in rebranding the City of Providence, once considered too dangerous and dull to visit, in to a celebrated destination; 67% of the visitors to WaterFire are from out of state; 95% of the out of state visitors cite WaterFire as the primary reason for their visit to the State. The city has won many travel awards as a great destination; most featuring WaterFire. "A city that had fallen into ruin now burns brightly again thanks in part to WaterFire, a burgeoning festival that combines ritual, reverence and urban vitality."<sup>39</sup>
- WaterFire is a major economic driver for the RI economy with visitors spending \$114 million a year, 80% of this spending comes into the regional economy from outside the state;<sup>40</sup> visitors fill all the hotel rooms on event nights' and three large new hotels have just announced plans to build this summer.
- WaterFire strengthens community by building empathy, engagement, and communitas within the crowd, increasing public safety, establishing community values, and promoting polite cooperative interactions between strangers. WaterFire Providence received The Kevin Lynch Award from MIT to honor the artworks close alignment with Lynch's theories on placemaking and for WaterFire's "sensitivity to the importance of place as well as the importance of people's experience of place and to balancing physical interventions with consideration for the natural environment. ... Lynch understood the delicate relationship between humans and their environment, and he worked to develop

<sup>37</sup> Jay Farbstein et. al., Creative Community Building: 2003 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence, 2003 pg. v

<sup>38</sup> [http://www.brunerfoundation.org/rba/pdfs/2003/03\\_providence.pdf](http://www.brunerfoundation.org/rba/pdfs/2003/03_providence.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> Carlo Rotella, The Washington Post Sunday Magazine, <http://waterfire.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Washington-Post-Magazine-by-Carlo-Rotella.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> US Army Corps of Engineers economic study of WaterFire: <http://waterfire.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ACoE-Exec-Summary-letterhead.pdf>





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methods of practice to better integrate individuals' perceptions ... to better explain the complex relationships among people and the built environment."<sup>41</sup>

- WaterFire triggered the public's engagement with the Providence River increasing political support for its environmental cleanup.
- WaterFire brings great joy to the city, the residents and visitors. This is seen as a key necessity for urban success by theorist Peter Kageyama.<sup>42</sup> "My joyous baptism of Fire ... "Nothing prepared me for a powerful work of art – a living ritual in which fire, water, sound and smell all play a part to reduce you to awestruck silence and (in my case) tears of joy, all for free."<sup>43</sup>
- WaterFire is an artwork of great beauty and this brings joy and satisfaction to the community.<sup>44</sup>
- WaterFire creates a cooperative and trusting social environment in which challenging issues can be thoughtfully explored and discussed. WaterFire has featured constructive and fruitful discussions on racism, cancer, hepatitis, homelessness, mental health, PTSD, and death. The project on racism and slavery, 1000 Ships, was released in 2008 as a book-long document to much support.<sup>45</sup>
- WaterFire and Providence have been recognized as a leading exemplar of Creative Placemaking.<sup>46 47</sup>
- WaterFire has been able to feature and support many local artists, arts groups, and ethnic cultural groups giving them extensive exposure and building new audiences for local arts groups.

<sup>41</sup> Since its establishment in 1988 by Kevin Lynch, the MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning has granted The Kevin Lynch Award every two years to an individual or organization whose work embodies and advances Kevin Lynch's research, as developed in his seminal works, *Image of the City* (1960), *What Time is this Place?* (1972), *Good City Form* (1981) and *Site Planning* (1984) <https://smandhan.wordpress.com/about/>

<sup>42</sup> Peter Kageyama, *For the Love of Cities: The Love Affair Between People and Their Places and Love Where You Live: Creating Emotionally Engaging Places*;

<sup>43</sup> London, <http://waterfire.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/London-Daily-Mail-Article-by-Bel-Mooney-9,19,08.pdf>

<sup>44</sup> Jerry Blitefield: <http://waterfire.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Jerry-Blitefield-Waterfires-Epideictic-Sublime.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> <http://waterfire.org/thousand-ships/>

<sup>46</sup> CityLab Conference: "Creating Civic Identity Through Art", 2014 <https://vimeo.com/144374647>

<sup>47</sup> WaterFire Received an ArtPlace grant; <http://waterfire.org/blog/artplace-award/>





### **1.9 Case study of WaterFire outcomes and benefits in Sharon, PA**

Sharon, PA is potentially comparable to Riverhead in size, population, physical condition, physical relationship to the river site, social challenges, and economic conditions.

Similar outcomes and benefits from Creative Placemaking have been achieved in Sharon, PA, as have been documented in Providence. Sharon is in many ways a remarkable analog for Riverhead. Both towns have a largely intact, underused, historic downtown Main Street lined by preserved, low buildings that is one half mile long and about 70' wide from façade to façade (approximately 65' wide in Sharon and a more helpful 72' wide in Riverhead).



**Figure 3 - Historic postcard photograph of State Street in Sharon, PA showing the similar scale and architecture to Main Street, Riverhead, NY**

Riverhead journalist Denise Civiletti of Riverhead Local interviewed residents, leaders, and business owners there to get their own independent assessment of the impact of WaterFire after two years of the arts intervention. “Transformation and renewal: What Riverhead can expect from WaterFire, as seen from a small town in western Pa” reports on how effective WaterFire was in changing the perception, branding, economy, and future of the small, struggling town of





Sharon.<sup>48</sup> Sharon, PA is potentially comparable to Riverhead in size, population, physical condition, physical relationship to the river site, social challenges, and economic conditions.

**Transformation and renewal: What Riverhead can expect from WaterFire, as seen from a small town in western Pa. by Denise Civiletti Oct 29, 2014, 10:32 am Excerpts**

When she stepped out of her diner and took in the sight of 100 flaming torches held aloft across the span of the State Street bridge, the focal point of an utterly silent crowd of tens of thousands of onlookers, and heard the voice of opera singer Angela Grace ring out through the entire city, Laura Ackley began to weep.

“I just sobbed and sobbed.” Ackley, 51, the general manager of Donna’s Diner in downtown Sharon, Pennsylvania, recalled the opening ceremony of the first WaterFire-Sharon on Aug. 3, 2013. “There were thousands of people... everywhere... and you could have heard a pin drop,” Ackley said. “The voice of this live opera singer pumped throughout the entire city...”

More than a year and six WaterFire-Sharon events later, the experience still takes Ackley’s breath away. One by one, 50 floating bonfires on the Shenango River, which courses through downtown Sharon, were ignited.

“Everyone was completely enraptured by this experience,” she recalled. “No one had ever seen anything like it — experienced anything like it. Because it’s not something you just see. It’s something you experience. And you can’t explain that to somebody. You have to experience it.”  
...

WaterFire is widely credited with Providence’s turnaround over the past two decades from a depressed “dark smudge on the map on the way to Cape Cod from New York City” to a happening small city that’s a desirable place to live. Evans’ resume boasts a long list of awards and honors for both his art and the impacts of his biggest project on the state’s largest city, home to 178,000 people on the banks of the Providence and Seekonk rivers. The scope of the twice-monthly Providence festival in the city’s bustling “Down City Arts District” is enormous. There are 100 braziers filled with crackling firewood flaming on the rivers, and the performances, music and art stretch out from the river itself to blocks beyond it in every direction. ...

The City of Sharon, Pennsylvania, located on the Ohio border 75 miles north of Pittsburgh, lost about half its population over the past two decades, since the collapse of the American steel

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<sup>48</sup> <http://www.riverheadlocal.com/2014/10/29/transformation-renewal-riverhead-can-expect-waterfire-seen-small-town-western-pa/>





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industry. The city's two main employers, a steel mill and a Westinghouse plant, both folded. Homes were abandoned. Businesses were shuttered. Its once-thriving downtown, which had been the retail and commercial hub of largely agricultural Mercer County in the Shenango River Valley, became a ghost town. Most surviving retailers moved to strip shopping centers and malls in a nearby town.

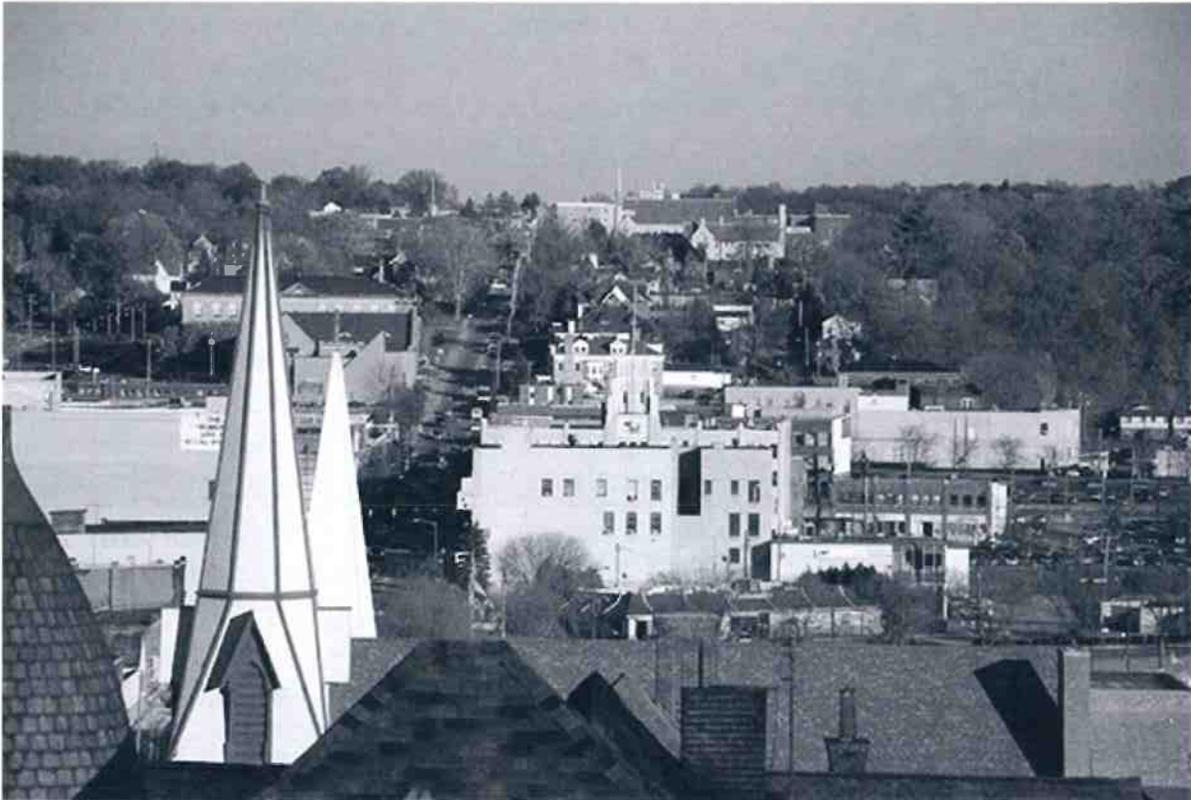
"Our downtown has struggled with its identity," said Sharon city manager Scott Andrejchak. "We're not going to have retail any more. What are we going to be? We are a blue-collar town and a hard-drinking town to tell you the truth," Adrejchak said in a phone interview Monday.

The city had eyed the arts as a possible way to revive its flagging downtown business district, Sharon City Council President Edward Palanski said yesterday. And three years ago — before WaterFire, now such a defining moment in the city's history that everything is placed on a timeline in those terms, "before" and "after" WaterFire — things were just beginning to percolate, Palanski said.

"Before the first WaterFire, there were four or five new businesses downtown," Palanski said. "But now, in the past year, things have just taken off." ...

Since WaterFire, dozens of new businesses have opened downtown, he said. There aren't many vacancies left. And second-floor apartments are being filled at rents considered astronomical in a place where homes can still be bought for under \$100,000.





**Figure 4 - Contemporary photograph of State Street in Sharon, PA showing the similar scale and architecture to Main Street, Riverhead, NY <sup>49</sup>**

“Some are going for \$2,000 a month,” Palanski said, incredulity in his voice. “Doctors and such are renting them,” he added. A new five-story medical facility is currently being built downtown. It will employ about 150 people.

The city has made improvements to its riverfront park and is planning more, including a bike trail. “A kayak outfit is looking at us. They’d like to set up a kayaking course in the river,” Palanski said.

Sharon has attracted businesses from outside the area, such as a newly opened Haitian coffee shop. A hotel chain that specializes in micro hotels is scouting out the city, Palanski said.

“Some people from Cleveland are looking at sites downtown,” the councilman said.

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<sup>49</sup> City of Sharon, PA





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Sharon's got a buzz now. People who came for WaterFire are coming back to shop and stay, he said. ...

"The mentality of people has switched. People realize you need community. ...

"People need a sense of place, a sense of community. WaterFire creates that," Ackley said.

WaterFire relies on hundreds of volunteers and that's part of the magic, agrees all who are involved.

"These people have formed a family," Ackley observed. "They never knew each other before. Now they hang out all year long. They've become so close. You can't walk down the street without seeing people hugging each other.

"There's this sense of belonging, of community, of pride. That has been as much of a game-changer in our town as economic development," she said.

"Business owners are painting their stores. You hear people talking about wanting to have this or that done in time for WaterFire," Ackley said.

"If all of a sudden you've got 35,000 people visiting your town — hey, you're putting on a big party, you're inviting the world. Let's get out the good china! It's contagious."

WaterFire has created an awareness of downtown Sharon that didn't exist before, Ackley said, observing, like the city council president, that visitors are returning to shop and stay at other times. In addition to Donna's Diner, Ackley also runs Buhl Mansion Guesthouse & Spa in Sharon and serves as marketing director for Tara - A Country Inn. All three are family businesses.

"WaterFire has created a synergy that has helped grow the downtown year-round," she said.

"People who've left are coming home because of WaterFire," Ackley said. "Families around here are making WaterFire weekends into family reunion weekends. Sharon High School had an all-class reunion here this last WaterFire weekend," she said.





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“It’s been a catalyst for the revitalization of Sharon” City manager Andrejchak agrees.

“Three years ago, I wouldn’t have believed it,” Andrejchak said. “I went to Providence and I was very skeptical that we could pull this off,” he said.

“It was beautiful — stunning really. The level of volunteerism, the whole experience of it. Nobody here knew it and it was a big learning curve to explain what it is to the public. I think a lot of people didn’t get it at first.”

WaterFire has been “transformative,” Andrejchak said.

“From a local government point of view,” he added, “there’s no down side to it.”

The city has had no problems with hosting the event. Over the course of six productions — three during each of the past two years — city police did not make a single arrest, Andrejchak said.

The city does not waive its ban on open alcohol containers during the festivals, city council president Palanski said.

“Any time you have a big crowd and alcohol you have trouble,” Palanski said.

The event is all about culture and the arts, Ackley said. “Barnaby is insistent that it not become a carnival.” The vendors, for example, are all artists. It’s a family friendly event.

“It’s all about community — a community that wants to engage to transform itself,” Evans said. The community has to be willing to do the difficult negotiations within itself to make it happen, he said. ...

Riverhead and Sharon have a lot of similarities, Evans said. “Sharon gets into the genuine healing interaction of turning a community around.”





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“The effort of transforming the riverfront was laudatory and interesting and the site itself has possibilities,” he said. “We liked that people are investing in the two theaters downtown, the hotels, the restaurants... It reminded us a lot of Sharon,” he said.

Tomorrow’s meeting is “a general inquiry,” Evans said.

“We need to do a lot of research with the community,” Evans said. “We don’t want to go to places where people don’t want to do it. We sort of wait for them to build a momentum.”

WaterFire has created a Facebook page for Riverhead called ‘WaterFire Riverhead: Building Renewal Together.’

Evans said they’ve found people in the local community here “very enthusiastic for anything that will help turn Riverhead around” and said he was “very encouraged by their positive response.”

WaterFire Sharon has an annual budget of a half-million dollars. It is funded through grants, private sponsorships and donations. Admission to all events is free and it gets no funding from the city. ...

### **1.10 Benefits of innovative Creative Placemaking as a catalyst for change**

Creative Placemaking deliberately uses artists and the arts as catalysts for place-based, community wide change. The benefits are synergistic and mutually self-supporting and combine the goals and practices of economic development, urban planning, cultural investment, civic leadership, and community development with the imaginative vitality and power of the arts. Creative Placemaking is avowedly place-based and not space-based—meaning that it combines a concern with the psychological, social, cultural and aesthetic elements that define a place to all the physical aspects of a space that are addressed in planning, engineering and architecture. Creative Placemaking stimulates civic vitality and can create a growing “virtuous circle” of investment, improvement, collaboration, expanded involvement, and reward leading to new investments and attracting more investors.

Creative Placemaking can lead to:

- improved livability,
- enriched aesthetic experience,
- increased citizen satisfaction,





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- expanded economic success,
- increased employment,
- improved civic engagement,
- promotion of local pride of place,
- enhanced municipal revenue,
- celebration of diversity,
- expanded social mobility,
- greater public safety,
- building bridges between social groups,
- expansion of the arts,
- greater branding awareness,
- improvements in citizen's physical activity and hence public health,
- expanded civic voluntarism,
- improvements in student educational commitment and accomplishment,
- increased awareness and participation in environmental stewardship,
- enhanced local character and distinctiveness,
- retention of young jobseekers,
- improved public, civic, and park spaces,
- build synergy with local food resources and providers (farmers and chefs)

The importance and potential of Creative Placemaking is best highlighted in the following potential interactions cataloged in the NEA white paper<sup>50</sup> below:

- Creative Placemaking serves livability, diversity and economic development goals.
- Livability outcomes include heightened public safety, community identity, environmental quality, increased affordable housing and workplace options for creative workers, more beautiful and reliable transportation choices, and increased collaboration between civic, non-profit, and for-profit partners.
- Economic development quickens because arts and cultural investments help a locality capture a higher share of expenditures from local income. Instead of traveling elsewhere for entertainment and culture, or going to a big-box retailer or shopping mall, residents are patrons of local talent and venues, earnings that re-circulate at a higher rate in the local economy.
- Re-using vacant space generates local property and sales tax revenues that can be devoted to streets, lighting, sanitation, greenery, and police and fire.

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<sup>50</sup> [www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/CreativePlacemaking-Paper.pdf](http://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/CreativePlacemaking-Paper.pdf)





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- Additional jobs and incomes are generated in construction, retail businesses, and arts and cultural production.
- New businesses, in the creative industries and others, are attracted to these communities.
- As cultural industry incubators, creative places make valuable contributions to the national economy. ... “Creative Placemakers confront daunting challenges. Our research finds that through Creative Placemaking, arts and culture make substantial contributions to local economic development, livability, and cultural industry competitiveness. These contributions have not been given their due in public policy. Many city and small-town leaders are beginning to understand these connections. Some are modeling their initiatives on pathbreakers elsewhere, tailoring them to their own distinctive assets and challenges.
- Exemplary cases of Creative Placemaking suggest that a collaborative policy platform can be developed across agencies, levels of government and public/non-profit/private sector organizations. ...
- Arts and culture at this historic juncture are proving their power as economic and social catalysts. Through smart collaborations with other sectors—government, private business, foundations—they are creating opportunities for rejuvenation and economic development, anchored in and tailored to diverse communities.”<sup>51</sup>

ArtPlace’s guidelines [bold type is in the original]:

“Successful Creative Placemaking...”<sup>52</sup>

- Places artists and art at the center of planning, execution and activity.
- Leverages the creative potential already present in a place. All places have creative potential just waiting to flourish. Even while drawing on resources from outside, leveraging local artistic and organizational talent and assets increases the value in, and commitment to, the local community.
- While nurturing an enduring sense of place. [this is referring to the authenticity and texture of the specific site]
- Creates opportunities for people of all income levels and backgrounds to thrive in place. As its value increases, a place that is intentionally inclusive and connected is more likely to spur economic opportunity and allow people to succeed where they are.

<sup>51</sup> Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa, “Creative Placemaking”, National Endowment for the Arts, 2010; pg. 5-6

<sup>52</sup> Original from ArtPlace; best accessed here [http://www.surdna.org/dev/images/stories/content\\_img/docs/pubs/Principles-of-Creative-Placemaking.pdf](http://www.surdna.org/dev/images/stories/content_img/docs/pubs/Principles-of-Creative-Placemaking.pdf)





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- Supports economic diversity in the community, providing multiple points of entry and interaction for people of all incomes. The more economically integrated a community is, the more access to opportunity exists for all. [One of the concerns is that the arts activities do not have real or perceived barriers to entry, whether economic or social.]
- Creates interesting places that capitalize on distinctiveness. A creative approach improves the aesthetics of a place, whether it is the look, feel, sound or even smell. The difference sets that place apart as more interesting than others. A place that expresses its distinctiveness and resists commodification and sameness is more likely to have long-term appeal. [An acknowledgment of the importance of sensual appeal, originality, avoiding repetition or safe, mundane, or predictable solutions or art.]
- Creates a place where people want to go and linger. Successful places attract people beyond those required to be there. People lingering is an investment of time in a place and is apt to lead to additional investments. [This is addressing the critical need to add vibrancy, jobs and economic impact to our communities and that often this is best accomplished with attracting new audiences to a region, in response to the art and the renewed place.]
- Contributes to a mix of uses and people that makes places more diverse, more interesting and more active, thus making spontaneous interaction more likely. Intensifying and mixing activities creates the promise that visitors can stumble onto the fun, mingle with other people, or happen upon opportunity. [The New York based Project for Public Spaces suggests that there should always be at least ten or more different activities or nodes of interest and engagement to make a place successful.]
- Fosters connections among people and across cultures. The relationships built among diverse groups of people create safer, more open places that create more opportunity and foster a sense that everyone is welcome. [This is referring to both Jane Jacob's observations and also references the need for the artwork to be widely inclusive and not a work focused on a particular viewpoint.]
- Is always presenting itself to the public and encouraging pedestrian activity. Whether open or closed, a place that is a consistently interesting and active presence to the street promotes more pedestrian activity and creates the public perception that the place is safer and more animated. More pedestrians mean more prospective customers on the street to support more small businesses. [Beyond perception, as many have observed, activity of a diverse community walking on the street is an active element of making places safer. this





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is a key observation with respect to Riverhead. This also addresses the challenge of creating a single day festival or event and expecting it to have significant impact.]

- Creates a place where business wants to be. As a place becomes more active, commerce is likely to respond, thus giving people even more reasons to be there.
- Convinces people that a place can have a different and better future. [The symbolic power of an inspiring work of public art to build a sense of community, engagement, hope, and belonging all contribute to building citizen's understanding of their ability to create active change in the community and thus that there is a better future for themselves and their loved ones. Without developing this critical sense of engagement, community progress is difficult.]

### 1.11 Next Steps

The data and recommendations in this study can be used to support and realize a coherent, imaginative Creative Placemaking strategy built to complement and strengthen the physical, economic, social, cultural and environmental features and assets of the Town of Riverhead.

Main Street is under-utilized and under-capitalized and its physical scale and charm and inventory of historic buildings are a tremendous asset. There is not currently a resident artist population or an arts based institution that is attracting large enough regional attendance at sufficient numbers to sustain economic activity or justify investment by private partners. Thus it is recommended that an art-based Creative Placemaking strategy be based on a major art project capable of inspiring residents, building the towns' identify and brand, and capable of gaining sufficient regional interest to attract new visitors to the Town of Riverhead to expand, stimulate and sustain the local economy.

Facilitating the process, via strategic outreach (conducting focus groups, and making information available on line as well in paper documentation), the town should encourage dissemination of the principles in this report to help build consensus.

There are many reasons to believe that the successes seen in other communities using Creative Placemaking techniques can have similar impact and results in Riverhead — the site is conducive, there are abundant resources and cultural riches with which to build partnerships, there is a large population of potential visitors in the region, the town and the business community has committed





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leadership in place, and adjacent communities on a town and a county level are already engaged in a cooperative discussion.

The particular value of Creative Placemaking is its capacity to completely transform the social dynamics of a physical space into a vital and compelling place. A Creative Placemaking public art project can harness the community's spirit for change in a way that can capture the regional imagination and transform the Town's perception, reputation and branding, both internally and externally, to generate significant tourism traffic to benefit the economy, and catalyze and sustain a citizen-led effort to unite, rebuild and restore the community and the Town of Riverhead.





## 2.0 INVENTORY OF RIVERHEAD ASSETS

### 2.1 Physical Site Review and Analysis for Creative Placemaking

This section evaluates 14 major physical sites, supportive assembly areas and features in Riverhead for use in creative placemaking initiatives. The recommendations are included in this section. Due to the number of relevant sites in the community, Appendix G: Inventory of Major Creative Placemaking Assets also includes the *Description, Distinctiveness, and Challenges* for each site.

- *Description* gives relevant data including historic information that informs Creative Placemaking professionals about the site.
- *Distinctiveness* highlights the relevant aspects of the site that make it a strong feature for the town in terms of attracting visitors to Creative Placemaking events in Riverhead as opposed to another community, and help determine that the site be included in the inventory as a Creative Placemaking site.
- *Recommendations* outlines the practical suggestions needed for Creative Placemaking for each site.
- *Challenges* highlights potential challenges and issues to be aware of whose resolution will improve the site's prospects and possibly bring extra advantages to the Town in implementing Creative Placemaking projects and events.

### Summary of Recommendations for Major Creative Placemaking Sites in Riverhead

#### The Peconic River Corridor (from Bay to Stream):

Development of this area is critical to avoiding congestion during events, encouraging exploration of the entire community on a daily basis and rebranding Riverhead via enhanced access to the water features downtown. Specific recommendations:

- A separation of the traffic between the road traffic on Rt. 25 and the pedestrian path will enhance safety, reduce noise, provide a more comfortable passageway, and allow the recapturing of needed area for the walk width.
- A second pathway system should be established at the water level passing on a right of way negotiated and established near the water's edge.





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- Where grade will allow interconnections between the lower river path and the upper walkway along Rt. 25, they should be installed.
- Several lots and houses have become public parks or holdings and they can be developed for additional amenities and will allow the path to be further away from the highway edge.
- There are also several undeveloped lots and peninsulas of considerable area and interest that should be integrated into the river park walkway system.
- Farm houses along the river and the walkway should be encouraged to convert to light hospitality uses, such as Farm Country Kitchen and the Art Site Gallery.
- The unique asset of the Peconic River could be greatly augmented by building this larger parkway system. With these improvements the Peconic River Park Walkway and Canoe site could become a much larger and popular attraction for much of Eastern Long Island, where it would remain a unique experience and asset.

### **Suffolk County Courthouse complex on Griffing Ave**

The courthouses and contiguous sidewalks and portion of Griffing Avenue make an interesting venue for large performances, dancing or other activities benefitting from a ready-made backdrop, large venue space, and access to food vendors and sanitary facilities (that can be placed in the parking across the street).

### **Grangebel Park**

To support creative placemaking efforts, via development of a walking/bike loop, the park should be strengthened as a connector to points west and south. This will avoid congestion during events and encourage the use of the parking area on the weekend at County Center and during the week, the exploration of Main street by County Center visitors. It should also be further improved as a feature by improving services north and south east of the park in the 'special interest areas' and by enhancing the 'garden' aspect to attract visitors also in shoulder season (spring) building vibrancy. Specific recommendations:

- The new park has interesting views and a variety of passageways, vistas and elevations and is ideally suited to be a good site for events and other creative placemaking.
- The original intent of Judge Griffing in his gift to the city has been substantially lost, with the elimination of the gardens, park land, and pathways along the north side of the Peconic, and with overgrowth and weeds filling in the area on the south side of the river. An effort should be made to regain as much as possible of these lost areas and to develop a circumnavigating river edge path around the entire pond.
- All future development should be focused on regaining back the surrounding edge and re-establishing public rights of way along the riverfront shore line.





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- A 'loop' that can be either biked or walked will increase usage of the area, bringing vibrancy which can help encourage people to further utilize the park which appears to suffer primarily from a self-perpetuating lack of use.
- The expanded loop would also encourage and support an expanded pedestrian connection between Riverhead, Grangebel Park and the Suffolk County Court Complex, the Evans K. Griffing County Center. The loop would be away from the roadway, close to the proposed WaterFire and create a lunchtime walk on the site of the original Griffing public gardens.
- The restoration of the original gardens is also an interesting historical project to explore further attracting both daily visitors as well as becoming a spring and multi-seasonal feature of the event calendar.

### **The Peconic River Walk Park and the connections to the opposing natural shore on the south bank**

Encourage utilization of the River Walk and the expansion of reclaimed areas around it. The reclaimed historic riverbank of the old commercial Peconic River Walk is a very successful urban project that builds connections to Riverhead's history and to the natural resource of the Peconic River. The River Walk docks provide boat access bringing this additional interest to the site. The linear walk is inviting and the vista of the river and the opposite shore regrowth is soothing and valuable.

- Encourage the continued presentation of large scale public arts events on the site to attract audiences and build familiarity.
- Cross-marketing activities and coordination between activities to ensure critical mass and participation via a creative placemaking strategy and plan.
- Redouble efforts to reclaim the areas described above on the Riverhead side.
- Explore the idea of the recreation of the original pleasure garden as part of a Garden district in Downtown Riverhead, extending this idea throughout the entire Riverfront.
- More presence of 'beat' police officers (not in cruisers) in the park.
- Improve access to south shore and its use for viewing of Riverhead activities such as the cardboard boat race and other river-base events by working with the County and the Town of Southampton to create a series of interconnected pathways around the river, supporting efforts to reclaim lands on the opposing shore as accessible park lands, further bringing visitors to the shoreline, building attendance and creating vibrancy.





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### **The opposing natural shore on the south bank**

While this land is not controlled by the Town of Riverhead and the suggestions and recommendations therefore must be implemented via the Town of Southampton, at county level or via other organizations that are present on both sides of the Peconic River (such as PRCDA) to develop a joint plan, the opposing shore should be considered a prime asset of Riverhead. Specific recommendations:

- All along the Peconic at Riverhead, a well installed and curated natural walk upon raised boardwalks can be a peaceful interlude with nature and also a valuable opportunity to educate the community about the importance and delicacy of wetlands via the introduction of signage and programming in conjunction with the local environmental agencies and partners. Developing appropriate plans will require the careful further study of the existing topography, water features, flora and fauna, soil conditions, specimen trees and exiting waterways.
- There are many examples of beautiful and successful parks installed in the visually and scientifically interesting inter-zone regions of tidal wetlands.
- There may be an opportunity as part of the park development to install, on the landward side, an active denitrifying bio-reactive barrier, for example plantings to absorb ground water nitrates moving towards the endangered watershed.
- Fishing, canoe and pier access to the water can be included in the park plans.

### **Proposed Peconic River Bridge**

- The pedestrian bridge would create a valuable loop trail when combined with development of the south riverbank.
- The bridge would provide an attractive higher vantage point to see the town and the river and be a benefit for all river based events.
- The sloped ramps up to the required bridge height, which must clear both the Riverwalk and the boat channel, will create an opportunity to address the needed infill of the adjacent land to the River Walk to avoid it being flooded and to adjust for expected sea level rise. This can also address the desire to have more sloping land.
- Study the proposed bridge within the concept of the river as an active 'water-venue' and as an opportunity to remediate some of the tidal limitations of the River Walk area.





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- Work together with the town of Southampton and organizations present on both sides of the river, such as PRCDAs to ensure that the project meets all possible goals of the communities living on both sides of the river.

### East End Arts

East End Arts has been and will continue to be a vitally important arts resource and a potential partner for all creative placemaking projects in the area.

### East End farm community & Agritourism

Parallels have been drawn between the offer of the North Fork and that of other regions around the world where agriculture, aquaculture, farming, water-based recreation and vineyards are present such as some touristic regions of Europe where farm-stays and guests meals represent up to 50% of farmers income<sup>53</sup>. This contrasts with Riverhead where opportunities for farm stays could not be identified within the township. Specific recommendations:

- In the context of driving overnight tourism growth in Riverhead Township and considering the relative lack of lodging availability locally, this points to an important specific opportunity for Riverhead and Riverhead farmers with cross-marketing potential for local attractions. Local farm-related agencies can contribute to developing a farm-stay movement in the Town of Riverhead<sup>54</sup>.
- There is an opportunity to strengthen the connection between Agritourism opportunities (including hospitality which is not necessarily within the Township) and the rest of the activities in the community via unified on-line marketing of the community in Riverhead.

### Riverhead LIRR Railroad Station and contiguous area

As a major potential gateway to Riverhead and therefore to the East End, an area with unleveraged architectural interest and a history of serving as an area for families to gather, the Railroad Station offers another opportunity to encourage participation via rail travel in local events, to encourage broader economic vibrancy by encouraging commuters and to serve as a hub of daily family community activity for the population living downtown. Specific recommendations:

- Improve sight lines from the station building toward Polish Town and points south.
- Encourage investments on behalf of the LIRR itself in beautification and lighting around the station to improve the Station's appeal. Abandoned rolling stock, stored materials and

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<sup>53</sup> Meeting with Ed Avalos at Grapes and Greens, October 2014

<sup>54</sup> See Appendices G: Major CPM Assets and V: Survey of the development of Agritourism in Riverhead for more information





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temporary office structures should all be removed. The landscaping should connect with the Polish Pavilion and even permit the development of a south gate to the Pavilion.

- Rolling stock located behind the Station as part of the Railroad museum's exhibits should be situated, lit, identified via signage and other visual cues to render it welcoming and engaging.
- Increase security patrols
- Improve the lighting
- Address changes in the usage of the Railroad Station building and adjacent building with an emphasis on activities that will be open for a maximum number of hours, including after-dark hours.
- Build partnership with LIRR to increase rail frequency and convenience.

### **Historic Riverhead Downtown**

Leverage the primary assets of Downtown in the form of the collection of buildings of period architecture on Main Street and the proximity to the river. Specific recommendations:

- Build upon the beauty of the historic atmosphere and the interesting environment for pedestrians by eliminating on street parking spaces and engaging street front facing restaurants to develop outdoor seating expansions for visitors to experience this unusual historic setting with less intrusion of the 21st century in the form of parked cars.
- Encourage businesses along the south side of main street to develop entrances/access facing the river both for better leverage of the river as an attraction as well as to facilitate customer access via the river-side parking lot.
- Encourage businesses along the north side of main street to develop entrances/access facing the northern parking lots.

### **Suffolk Theater and Vail-Leavitt Music Hall**

Each of the theaters offers multiple resources for the community beyond their attractiveness as anchors for the cultural calendar. They are superb venues for performances and music and they are appropriate venues for other meetings, presentations and food events and they should be included in all plans for the area.





### **Long Island Aquarium**

The Aquarium is a remarkable asset for the community. From a physical perspective, it needs stronger visibility from the street, integrating it into East Main Street and compensating for its setback from the street. On-the-street interviews with area visitors during events showed they often were not aware the Aquarium was in Riverhead.

### **East Second Street and the area north of the Aquarium**

East Second Street is a collection of historic homes and structures in proximity to East Main Street, the River and the Railroad station . This area is a great opportunity for Riverhead to lift the entire downtown from the perspective of Creative Placemaking. Specific recommendations:

- Considering the recommendation in the BOA study for the creation of an historic district, historical preservation of residential houses is often difficult to start as a single, one-off, isolated project. A coordinated program among several owners to start this preservation effort is often the most effective way to start. Invitations to a workshop can facilitate this. A kick off event in the form of a festival for the community including featured speakers from other communities, multiple workshops on other concepts in this document, if adopted, such as peer-to-peer hosting, the garden district, etc. Sponsors could include banks/government programs for loans or equity lines for renovations as well as 'garden district sponsors'.
- The empty lots just northeast of the area are large enough to host a wide variety of potential Creative Placemaking events and should be targeted for activities to lift the area.
- Community cohesion can be built by an external program like an effort to restore the historic buildings or the Garden District idea. The Garden District can involve a wider variety of citizens, at lower costs, and at a lower skill set or commitment. The advantage of adding the Garden District idea to the area is that this would be a community project that could involve and include the non-historical houses in the neighborhood.

### **Polish Town (including Polish Town Civic Association Pavilion, Polish Hall, and local businesses of note)**

- Work with the well-established Polish community to expand the offerings of the Polish Fair, working on expanding the celebration to draw additional outside visitors eager to learn more about Polish culture.





- Enlarge the event to include businesses and spaces on Main street in Downtown Riverhead.
- Create visual connections to the area by the Railroad Station, linking Polish Town to the rest of downtown.

## **2.2 Inventory of Human Resources, Agencies and Partners with Suggestions for Involvement and Engagement**

This section explains how and why a broad range of local partners should be included to support the work of any lead partner in a creative placemaking event. While Creative Placemaking takes place around an artistic vision as a core strategy for a community's coherence and branding, the emphasis should always be on methods to build engagement and participation with the entire community and visitors. Events and public art should be designed to welcome and include everyone.

This section reviews a range of local non-profit organizations that are not directly involved in the arts, but whose efforts are important to the community. Their inclusion and participation can make critical and important contributions to successful Creative Placemaking efforts and projects. This section is about how to encourage direct engagement and partnerships based on mutual benefit and shared community objectives and outlines some strategies for how to identify partners for this engagement. Many companies and organizations may not see themselves as natural partners with an 'arts project', but traditionally their view of the arts is much narrower than what is meant by Creative Placemaking. After initial hesitation they are likely to see the great potential for these partnerships and shared interests emerge.

Economic, marketing and inspirational benefits for sponsors: It is important to note that from the perspective of sponsoring projects, 'non-arts' non-profits often find relationships formed with arts organizations via Creative Placemaking are opportunities to leverage their own exposure in ways that are more valuable than many more traditional, paid marketing channels. This is only partially due to the savings realized via free press coverage, expanded visitor attendance, etc. There is an inspirational aspect that comes from broad community engagement and placemaking that has a very real impact on their business, mission, employees, and clients. Everyone desires to feel that they are part of "Making a difference."

Specific initial observations of potential alignment are noted to assist in advancing the discussions with these sectors and organizations beginning on the next page in Table 2-1: Individual Suggestions for Creative Placemaking Involvement and Engagement by Specific Organization.





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Leveraging the information and suggestions regarding engagement and involvement will help generate non-arts interest in Creative Placemaking initiatives, partnerships or inter-disciplinary task forces.

**Table 2-1: Suggestions for Creative Placemaking Involvement by Organization**

<b>Human Resources, agencies and other Non Profit Organizations in the Town of Riverhead</b>	<b>Individual Suggestions for Creative Placemaking Involvement and Engagement by Specific Organization</b>
Aid To The Developmentally Disabled Inc.	Possibility to engage the populations they serve/assist in creative placemaking initiatives
American Federation Of Teachers	Creative placemaking initiatives are excellent opportunities to incorporate school projects and to encourage student engagement, and also to honor top students, programs, schools, and teachers publicly
American Legion	Veterans organizations can benefit in many ways from creative placemaking: the celebration of their service, creating forums to present services to them as well as involving them with volunteer; good source for projects which can engage and interest youth and young adults.
Benevolent & Protective Order Of Elks Of The USA	Service organizations can build volunteer projects around creative placemaking
Corey Foundation	Local foundation that could support creative placemaking investments or programming costs. Likely very good alignment with the core mission of advancing the East End region.
Council For The Vail-Leavitt Music Hall Inc.	Ideal partner for musical or theatrical elements of creative placemaking activities. Bob Barta also has relationships with New Orleans based musicians who could be invited to participate in Riverhead's new creative placemaking initiatives and is ready to collaborate.
East End Arts	Ideal partner for visual arts and music projects as part of a creative placemaking activities. Great gallery, great programming, extensive contacts, and great facility, grounds, with great access to Main Street and the Peconic River Walk
East End Disability Associates Inc.	Possibility to engage the populations they serve/assist in creative placemaking initiatives
East End Full Gospel	Religious organizations are excellent channels for outreach and volunteerism. Those with active cultural programs can collaborate on many levels including performing and programming as well. Gospel festivals are a popular way to both spread their word and engage the community in a high spirited and successful partnership.
East End Tourism Alliance Inc.	Partner for marketing creative placemaking initiatives. Bryan DeLuca is a contact for Riverhead Creative Placemaking initiatives.





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Eeda Foundation Inc.	Possibility to engage the populations they serve/assist in creative placemaking initiatives or as a funder
Family Community Life Center Inc.	Religious organizations are excellent channels for outreach and volunteerism. The Family Community Life Center is a project related to the First Baptist Church. Those religious organizations with active social programs can collaborate on many levels including programming and performing as well. Rev and Mrs. Coverdales are a contact for Riverhead Creative Placemaking initiatives.
Flanders Village Historical Society	Historical societies and museums are excellent partners for discovering, leveraging, programming and funding local content for cultural programs.
Gwen L Kosinski Foundation Inc.	Local non profits can be excellent partners in sponsoring creative placemaking events as they leverage the opportunity to raise awareness of their mission
Hallock Charitable Remainder Unitrust I	No more information was readily available however this trust has nearly \$700,000 in assets. Outreach is suggested.
Hallockville Inc.	Agricultural museums are excellent partners for discovering and programming local content for programs.
Harvest East End Inc.	Organizations working in the 'food/drink' space are excellent partners for hospitality opportunities in creative placemaking
Iglesia Apostolica Eden Efesios 220	This religious organization across the river is an excellent channel for outreach to the Latino community.
Independent Order Of Odd Fellows	Possibility to engage the populations they serve/assist in creative placemaking initiatives
Indian Network Of Eastern Long Island Inc.	No further information is available. follow up is merited to establish contact.
John Wesley Village LI Inc.	Possibility to engage the populations they serve/assist in creative placemaking initiatives
Laurents Hatcher Foundation Inc.	This literary organization, based locally, awards prizes on a national level. There could be content synergies on many levels.
Long Island Community Foundation	Ideal partner for Riverhead for Creative Placemaking and also for multiple entities on Long Island to attract funding to participate in creative placemaking, Mary Beth Gunther is a contact person for Riverhead Creative Placemaking initiatives.
Long Island Wine Council Inc.	The vibrancy of this organizations working in the 'food/drink/agri-tourism space is an excellent partner for hospitality opportunities in creative placemaking
Lovem Inc.	Possibility to engage the populations they serve/assist in creative placemaking initiatives





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Lt Michael P Murphy USN Memorial Scholarship Foundation	Local educational scholarship programs can use creative placemaking to honor students, promote their scholarship and have excellent networks for outreach and volunteerism.
Mercy High School	Schools are an excellent source of outreach channels via teachers, staff, students, parents, alumni. Their own initiatives can be leveraged via creative placemaking.
North Fork Breast Health Coalition Inc.	Local health-oriented non profits are excellent partners for creative placemaking initiatives in general. Specifically, breast cancer survivors as honorees for public events build community.
Northwell Health (Peconic Bay Medical Center)	Peconic Bay Medical Center has just become part of Northwell Health. This is an opportunity to assist in rebranding via sponsorship of Creative Placemaking initiatives. Also the public park amenities suggested are well aligned with programs to increase public health by increased walking and social dancing and similar programs
Northwell Health Foundation (Peconic Bay Medical Center Foundation*)	Possibility to engage the populations they serve/assist in creative placemaking initiatives. Also the public park amenities suggested are well aligned with programs to increase public health by increased walking and social dancing and similar programs
Open Arms Care Center Inc.	Another program of the First Baptist Church. Possibility to engage the populations they serve/assist in creative placemaking initiatives
Peconic Community Council	Possibility to engage the populations they serve/assist in creative placemaking initiatives
Peconic Green Growth Inc.	A non profit with a hybrid 'environmental-art' mission. Its founder, Glynis Berry, is a city planner by training, has innovated projects in other communities and is a resource for content for Riverhead creative placemaking initiatives.
Peconic River Community Development Alliance	The Peconic River Community Development Alliance, Inc. (PRCDA) is a community based organization whose goal is to facilitate social change and economic development in the adjacent communities of the Hamlet of Riverside in the Town of Southampton and the Riverhead community joined together by the Peconic River
Riverhead After School Child Active Learning Rascal Inc.	Schools are an excellent source of outreach channels via teachers, staff, students, parents, alumni. Their own initiatives can be leveraged via creative placemaking. They can participate in many ways with volunteers co-developed programming, etc.
Riverhead Business Improvement District Management Assoc. Inc.	The BID is actively invested in building toward creative placemaking initiatives. Ray Pickersgill and Steve Shauger are ready to assist projects.
Riverhead Central Faculty Association Benefit Trust Fund	Teachers are a wonderful local resource for creative placemaking. There are opportunities to honor them and engage them, leveraging content of specific





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Riverhead Chamber Of Commerce	Chambers of commerce in general are excellent partners for creative placemaking initiatives. Outreach for sponsorship and collaboration for development of hospitality are two areas.
Riverhead Chapter No 1118 Women Of The Moose	Service organizations can build volunteer projects around creative placemaking and participate in active development of new programs.
Riverhead Community Awareness Program Inc.	There is a desire expressed across several groups in Riverhead/Riverside to create creative placemaking events centered on substance abuse prevention. This is a key potential partner.
Riverhead Development Corp	Creative placemaking should build on and contribute to local economic development programs. The Riverhead Development Corp is an important resource and partner.
Riverhead Foundation For Marine Research And Preservation	Environmental advocacy organizations are excellent partners for many levels of creative placemaking initiatives including outreach, content, volunteers, design partners, event advocates, marine restoration projects, and wetland science parks, and sponsorship. The relationship with the Aquarium and the location on main street are excellent further support elements for creative placemaking initiatives
Riverhead Free Library	Libraries, like museums and historical societies have excellent resources for developing content and building outreach. Programs developed based on local history and culture are especially useful.
Riverhead Lodge No 1742 Loyal Order Of Moose Woman's division #1118	Service organizations can build volunteer projects around creative placemaking
Riverhead Mtas Inc.	Local organizations supporting animal rights can be involved in creative placemaking events on many levels including active events to sensitize the public to animal cruelty, animal adoption, etc. Coordinating their efforts in events with 'animal/ecology' themes is a strategy. Also pet placements, volunteers, and ecosystem protection.
Riverhead Police Benevolent Association Inc.	Associations of public servants are often involved in volunteerism. They are excellent outlets for outreach. First responders are also a great resource for advising on creative placemaking needs for the community.
Riverhead Rotary Charities Inc.	Service organizations can build volunteer projects around creative placemaking. Riverhead Rotary has invited creative placemakers to address them.
Riverhead Townscape Inc.	This organization's beautification projects and mission naturally dovetail with creative placemaking. They can be involved with outreach, volunteerism.
Riverhead Volunteer Ambulance Corps Inc.	Associations of first responders are often involved in volunteerism. They are excellent outlets for outreach. First responders are also a great resource for advising on creative placemaking needs for the community.
Rotary International	Service organizations can build volunteer projects around creative placemaking. Riverhead Rotary has invited creative placemakers to address them.
Spay Alter Vaccinate Every Stray Inc.	Local organizations supporting animal rights can be involved in creative placemaking events on many levels including active events to sensitize the public to animal cruelty, animal adoption, etc. Coordinating their efforts in events with 'animal/ecology' themes is a strategy.





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Spirits Promise Equine Rescue Corp	Local organizations supporting animal rights can be involved in creative placemaking events on many levels including active events to sensitize the public to animal cruelty, animal adoption, etc. Coordinating their efforts in events with ‘animal/ecology’ themes is a strategy.
Suffolk County Correction Officers Benevolent Association Inc.	Associations of public servants are often involved in volunteerism. They are excellent outlets for outreach. First responders are also a great resource for advising on creative placemaking needs for the community.
Suffolk County Historical Society	Historical societies and museums are excellent partners for discovering local content for cultural programs.
Tara L Stevens Memorial Scholarship Fund	Local educational scholarship programs can use creative placemaking to honor students, promote their scholarship and have excellent networks for outreach and volunteerism.
The Flanders Northampton Volunteer Ambulance Company Inc.	Associations of first responders are often involved in volunteerism. They are excellent outlets for outreach. First responders are also a great resource for advising on creative placemaking needs for the community. Notable is the fact that they are more a part of the Riverhead community than the Southampton community and should be included in initiatives
The Hill Charitable Trust	Possibility to engage the populations they serve/assist in creative placemaking initiatives. Boys 10-21 have different needs. Depending on the type of program, the older boys can be trained in job training. All boys can be engaged in events.
The Long Island Pine Barrens Society	Environmental advocacy organizations are excellent partners for many levels of creative placemaking initiatives including outreach, content and sponsorship. A partnership to help address the Southern Pine Beetle infestations in the Barrens would seem much worthwhile. Current eradication efforts are generating pine tree debris that could be recycled as firewood
The Place For Learning Inc.	The Long Island Science Center is supported by ‘The Place for Learning’. Science museums are excellent partners for creative placemaking initiatives. They are points of reference for content and outreach.
Through An Angels Eyes Foundation Inc.	Possibility to engage the populations they serve/assist in creative placemaking initiatives
Timothy Foundation Inc.	Possibility to engage the populations they serve/assist in creative placemaking initiatives. Boys 10-21 have different needs. The older boys can be trained in job training programs. All boys can be engaged in the events.
Timothy Hill Children's Ranch Inc.	Possibility to engage the populations they serve/assist in creative placemaking initiatives. Boys 10-21 have different needs. The older boys can be trained in job training programs. All boys can be engaged in the events.
Veterans Of Foreign Wars Post 2476	Veterans organizations can benefit in many ways from creative placemaking: the celebration of their service, creating forums to present services to them as well as involving them volunteer projects also with youth.

Beyond the recommendations above, Appendix H: Human resources & Agencies also contains additional information useful to engage the many relevant organizations in the community including funding themes and objectives, locations and web presence for each organization.





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Suggestions regarding evaluating partnerships and relative roles in Creative Placemaking initiatives, are presented by category in Table 2-2: Preferred Characteristics of Participating Organizations Involved in Creative Placemaking below.

Characteristic	Explanation of Preference
Leadership ability	Regardless of an organization’s stated mission, Creative Placemaking initiatives require leadership or they do not materialize. Leadership can apply to many different areas
Flexibility in interpreting marketing opportunities	Organizations that need exposure to the public can benefit from relationships with event organizers and Creative Placemaking and can be valuable partners. Successful Creative Placemaking often involves collaborations between several non-profits whose activities complement each other, including arts-based mission and non-arts based mission (social, educational, for example) organizations, as well as the larger community.
Goals of the organization and of individual members	Organizations whose mission is, for example, service oriented (ex: rotary, churches, some veterans organizations) can be excellent partners, but different groups in different communities are active in different ways and to different degrees.
Vibrancy/dynamism of board	The vibrancy or dynamism of a board as defined by the success, reputation, outcomes and growth of their funded programs
Capacity and skill of board	The capacity of a board as defined by their leadership, innovative capacity, success, impact, and expansion of their areas of activity and their collaborations with others
Geographic location targeted for impact	Explore their interest in access to special events and attendees, including visibility on the East End, social impact in specific populations etc., support for economic, social, environmental development

**Table 2-2: Characteristics of participating organizations involved in Creative Placemaking**

Utilizing the organizations and the suggestions for role selection in this section, two processes can be activated in parallel:

- Creative Placemakers and artists can build these teams and guide their development of specific activities. Successful results will help inspire new partnerships over time.
- Discussion can lead to the discovery of areas for programmatic overlap, identify new individual stakeholders and volunteers among staff or clientele, and connect to other potential businesses or funders.

The ‘network’ of organizations that exists in and around a community is generated by individuals and organizations in the community, their interests and needs and the connections that are formed organically. Often these networks are somewhat submerged and the logical partnerships or shared





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resources, issues, and problems may not be obvious. One of the strengths of Creative Placemaking is that community wide activities can help surface these linkages and partnerships can grow over successful events, building social capital and strengthening community cohesion.

Preconceptions as to what makes an organization appropriate to take a lead role or a participatory or programmatic role in Creative Placemaking initiatives can often prematurely sidetrack possible partners. Note that for profit companies and groups whose Missions are not arts related should not be excluded from consideration for participation or even leadership roles. There are likely many shared goals, opportunities, and potential alignments. Organizations that are not non-profits have valuable clients, contacts and employees, as well as internal departments, special budgets, business partnerships, professional expertise and expectations of their employees (in terms of volunteer activities or philanthropy, including matching donations). Many companies are open to partnering with arts or Creative Placemaking as a means of expanded marketing, building company awareness, or expanding or changing their brand. As the benefits go far beyond those to the arts community for whom resources are already a challenge, non-arts organizations may be better suited to leading initiatives.

Suggestions regarding potential building work for some initial groups across common interests within the community, with ideas for the breadth of engagement and support of organizations also from outside of the community are provided in Table 2-3 Examples of Intra-Sector and Inter-Sector engagement and involvement within specific sectors (see next page). These are initial suggestions for seeking areas of common focus for event conception and some specific strategies for engagement and involvement, though each situation will evolve in its own way. These initiatives can be born within or beyond the community and involve any entity.

Table 2-4. Groups to Consult and Involve in any Creative Placemaking Event lists further non-arts groups that should be considered for engagement in the Creative Placemaking process for project design, logistics and project initiation. Regarding all of these tables, the iterative process of gathering information, improving the Town's connectedness and self-assessments of its image, and actively building partnerships is at the heart of Creative Placemaking and these creative discussions should continue on an ongoing basis.





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Sector	Intra Sector	Greater community/opportunity
Animal rights	coordinated shelters and neutering campaigns; animal research foundations; joint research projects, shared data, coordinated lost animal searches; create more dog parks;	Schools, science museums and local universities relevant departments and activities, environmental groups, law enforcement, public involvement, education and information campaigns; involve artists' statements and build engagement projects; prisoner training guide dogs partnerships, animal enrichment programs, therapy dog programs in area hospitals, nursing homes, classrooms; dog sanitation education;
Environment	environmental groups, regional cooperation, shared branding and messaging, strategic planning	storm water drain safe disposal education campaigns, invasive species eradication projects, promotion of aquaculture and habitat management; feral cat information campaign;
Health	specific local non-profits focused on health issues, physician/public health/hospital joint projects	schools, hospitals, govt. agencies, national non-profits, university depts., branding projects, public walking, exercise and diet campaigns, artist statements and engagement projects
Veterans	local veterans organizations seeking common cause; community-wide joint projects and recognition programs;	organizations to assist the elderly, disabled, other service organizations, dept. of defense, VA hospital, national non-profits to support veterans, vets as leadership mentors to youth, vets as volunteers
Culinary	leading non-profits promoting local farmers and aquaculture;	every non-profit and any for-profit; creating better dietary understanding; promoting local, fresh food sources;
Education	different schools joined in coordinated projects;	one book programs; reading programs with prisoners reading to their children via tape; regional history projects; oral history partnerships between students and retirees;

**Table 2-3: Community-wide engagement potential by specific sectors**

Sector	Local Members
First Responders	Police, Fire Dept., ambulance corps
Business	Riverhead Development Corp, East End Tourism Alliance, Long Island Wine Council, Riverhead BID, Riverhead Chamber of Commerce

**Table 2-4: Groups to Consult and Involve in any Creative Placemaking Event**

**2.3 Inventory of Creative, Cultural, and Community Assets and Benefits**

Many factors contribute to rendering an organization appropriate for engagement and involvement in Creative Placemaking initiatives and in this regard, every community is unique. It is the subjective/interpretative characteristics of the specific organization and not the objective statements/definitions/missions of the organization that often make the difference.





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In this section the focus is on assembling the broadest range of arts organizations that are networked into Riverhead from different perspectives. Due to their attention and engagement with the community and their mission, their boards, members, staff, volunteers, and even clients, etc. will provide an important assenting ‘voice’ and following to Creative Placemaking initiatives.

Characteristics	Explanation of Preference
Leadership ability	Regardless of an organization’s stated mission, Creative Placemaking initiatives require leadership or they do not materialize
Vibrancy/dynamism of a board	The vibrancy or dynamism of a board as defined by the growth in the number/size of funded programs or its capacity to raise funds or make connections
Capacity of board	The capacity of a board as defined by the expansion of their definition of the areas of activity

**Table 2-5: Characteristics of arts organizations to lead creative placemaking**

While an organization may be local it does not necessarily mean that it is able to take a leadership role in making Creative Placemaking happen. Often organizations are challenged by the same issues that the wider community is and should be allowed to participate at the level that they are comfortable. Their role can grow with successive events. At the same time, organizations based outside the community may well see the potential for alignment and cooperation. Aspirational missions do not necessarily reflect an organization’s ability to deliver or cooperate with Creative Placemaking projects.

Hundreds of organizations within and connected to the community are appropriate partners for Creative Placemaking initiatives in Riverhead. Table 2-6: Types of arts groups and strategies for engagement with recommendations regarding potential for engagement and levels of involvement by type of entity outlines this content. It presents the group of detailed inventories that are included in Appendices J, K, L, M and N. These tables should be expanded and continuously updated and made accessible as sources for those looking to build events and partnerships. There are suggested strategies for engagement and levels of involvement that are described to encourage exploration. Email and social media communication with all of the organizations in the tables in the Appendices will help to generate a following for the Creative Placemaking initiatives which will require more careful explanation, exploration and follow through to bear results.





Appendix Listing Partner Entities in the Arts	Strategies for Engagement and Involvement
J: Galleries and Arts Organizations and Venues	Galleries that are nearby but not actually in Riverhead (or actually in downtown Riverhead) can be interested in exposure during Creative Placemaking events to represent their artists to the visitors. As part of the work done with the Creative Placemaker to mount explanatory exhibits, create opportunities for local artists to exhibit, and reach out to local galleries (beyond Riverhead). This can also generate rental fees for booths depending on the formulas year-on-year as the opportunity becomes more sought after.
K: Local educational entities and those in the Arts	Seek alignments with their students and their larger program: Internships of students, Class-focused projects, Independent study projects, Department-level integrated partnerships, Volunteering. The entities will need publicity and evidence of community engagement and endorsement
L: Organizers of events in Riverhead and nearby	Evaluate how each event reaches community goals for outreach, visitor numbers and content. Reach out to individual event organizers for one-on-one meetings. Evaluate how their existing Riverhead event can be part of a greater initiative utilizing more of the town's assets (riverfront, downtown, Polish Town) or how their existing event in another location can be brought to Riverhead explore co-marketing opportunities explore event date management issues to avoid overlaps, traffic issues or potential to share resources or artists
M:Arts Professionals, ex: Arts councils, leagues	Identify overlaps in mission, purpose and audience. See if their existing programs or exhibitions or members can resonate with a project. Find ways to mutually build audiences. Coordinated exhibitions, perhaps on site at the project. Coordinated, focused grant giving for their members to participate. Start a speaking series at their site to begin dialog between the project and their organization.
N: NYSCA members	Create mailing list of all of these organizations to update them on the activities in Riverhead. Invite them to the project to see what overlaps of interest can develop. Each of these organizations has their own funding, projects, networks, mailing lists and members who could be instrumental in developing resources for an initiative.

**Table 2-6: Types of arts groups and strategies for engagement and involvement**

### 2.4 Inventory of lodging capacity

In this section the importance of hospitality revenues as a portion of tourism spending in the US are reviewed and the connection highlighted between Creative Placemaking, tourism spending and developing vibrancy in Riverhead is outlined. The second section is a detailed analysis of current hotel capacity in Riverhead by month and by day of the week. The remaining sections outline 'alternative' strategies for the Town to support seasonal increases lodging capacity to leverage opportunities presented by Creative Placemaking. As Creative Placemaking generates greater demand for lodging, it will allow Riverhead to support more permanent lodging.





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### 2.4.1 Hospitality revenues, an important lever for capturing economic impact

In this section we explain the link between hospitality such as overnight stays within Riverhead, a range of dining options and sufficient opportunities to engage in activities, shop and eat. Creative Placemaking and building economic vitality. Creative Placemaking's goal is to create vibrant, vital and successful communities. Vibrancy and economic vitality go hand in hand. Successful creative places are fulfilling, engaging communities for their residents and also become attractive destinations that successfully attract outside visitors, whose spending supports local businesses, builds wealth and creates jobs and opportunities for residents. Economic spending impact is often the primary element that improves the ability of communities to attract public and private support & funding for Creative Placemaking initiatives.<sup>55</sup> When comparing to the data provided in the Community Survey<sup>56</sup>, these numbers are aspirational for Riverhead and the requests of the survey respondents speaks to some of the same issues we identify.

Per capita tourist spending varies widely from community to community depending upon the nature of the site and its attractions, the age of the tourists attracted, the sophistication of the travelers, regional price considerations, the quality, sophistication, and price of the accommodations and residents, the duration, season, and timing of visitors, the uniqueness of the area's attractions, and the variety, number and capacity of the hospitality venues for both accommodation and meals.

A major study showed that direct leisure travel in the US totaled \$621.4 billion in 2013, with 1.6 billion person-trips.<sup>57</sup> After visiting friends and relatives, preferred travel activities include fine dining, shopping, sightseeing, national parks, beaches, art and museums.<sup>58</sup> Average daily spending per visitor in the US varies widely. The national average for luxury travelers is \$624.37 per day; mid-range travelers is \$214.70 per day, and budget travelers is \$79.24.

Averaging between five national studies, regional visitors spend about 25% of their budget on lodging, 18% on dining, 12% on local ground transportation, 11% on entertainment, 10% on shopping, 7% on communication/internet, and 13% on other expenses. Considering Riverhead's survey data and national averages, in our experience, the most effective areas to target for investment are in sophisticated lodging accommodations, dining, and entertainment and attractions. As a note, clearly there is great regional economic benefit for a community to invest in attractions, activities, venues and accommodations that will appeal to sophisticated luxury

<sup>55</sup> Source: Budget Your Trip [http://www.budgetyourtrip.com/budgetreportadv.php?geonameid=&countrysearch=&country\\_code=US&categoryid=0&budgettype=1&triptype=0&startdate=&enddate=&travelerno=0](http://www.budgetyourtrip.com/budgetreportadv.php?geonameid=&countrysearch=&country_code=US&categoryid=0&budgettype=1&triptype=0&startdate=&enddate=&travelerno=0)

<sup>56</sup> Town of Riverhead Peconic River/Rt.25 Corridor NYS Brownfield Opportunity Area, Community Survey, February 2014

<sup>57</sup> Source: U.S. Travel Association [https://www.ustravel.org/sites/default/files/page/2009/09/US\\_Travel\\_AnswerSheet\\_June\\_2014.pdf](https://www.ustravel.org/sites/default/files/page/2009/09/US_Travel_AnswerSheet_June_2014.pdf)

<sup>58</sup> Source: U.S. Travel Association [https://www.ustravel.org/sites/default/files/page/2009/09/US\\_Travel\\_AnswerSheet\\_June\\_2014.pdf](https://www.ustravel.org/sites/default/files/page/2009/09/US_Travel_AnswerSheet_June_2014.pdf)





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travelers, however, the entire range of visitors will find Riverhead of interest and all of them result in additional boosts in the local economy.

As noted in Section 3.0 Audience and Demographic analysis, the Millennial dollar is strong and they are not spending in the luxury range on average, rather they travel often. In national tourism measures, the largest category of travel spending is often airfare (~25% of travel spending). The Riverhead tourist's airfares (if any) will not be reflected in the local economy, and thus are well beyond the scope of this study. Riverhead tourists will arrive by surface transportation by car, jitney, rental car, train, ferry, limo, and private plane.

The Town of Riverhead has already shown a commitment to the hospitality industry in the recruitment of a major luxury hotel to the downtown and the support of other hotels within the Township, and there is a need to continue the effort to creatively address issues of lodging capacity to be capable of better accommodating the large numbers of visitors expected for signature Creative Placemaking events.

An important point to realize is that for the most effective economic impact from hospitality is realized when attractions that bring visitors to Riverhead can be co-aligned with increased capacity for lodging, dining, and entertainment. If the region is at or near capacity in any of these areas, there will not be effective and/or available inventory to allow the visitor to spend their money in the Riverhead economy; in parallel with the growth as the Creative Placemaking activities draw more visitors. Further, a shortage of capacity will lead to lines and negative reviews by departing visitors. Toward addressing these concerns, it is recommended to consider flexible increases in capacity in lodging and in food services that parallel expected visitors.

Some of the indexes in which economic impact from visitors can be measured include:

- local business revenues
- job creation (which increases all forms of local spending)
- room tax collections
- sales tax collections
- increased property valuations (therefore tax base)

### **2.4.2 Inventory of Hospitality Lodging Capacity and Recommendations**

During Creative Placemaking events, or during visits to Riverhead, if there are not enough rooms to stay in, appropriately priced meals to be had without long waits or open shops in which to make purchases, not only will the revenue and job creation opportunities be affected negatively,





but visitors will be discouraged from returning to the venue. This section of the report is only concerned with lodging.

Looking at the examples in other communities such as Sharon, PA and Providence, RI the challenge/opportunity for Riverhead is to find ways to facilitate rapid, flexible, seasonal expansion of the offer of rooms for visitors leveraging demand that will be generated by successful Creative Placemaking events. There are structural limitations in expanding hotel inventory because of issues such as: zoning limitations and restrictions due to limited access to the sewage treatment network, historic nitrogen loading and seasonality, to name only a few.

#### **2.4.3 Audit of lodging including hotels and short term ‘peer-to-peer’ rentals in Riverhead**

The objective of research in this section is to identify trends in capacity in the hotel room inventories and provide suggestions for leveraging the opportunity represented by excess capacity by generating corresponding demand via Creative Placemaking.

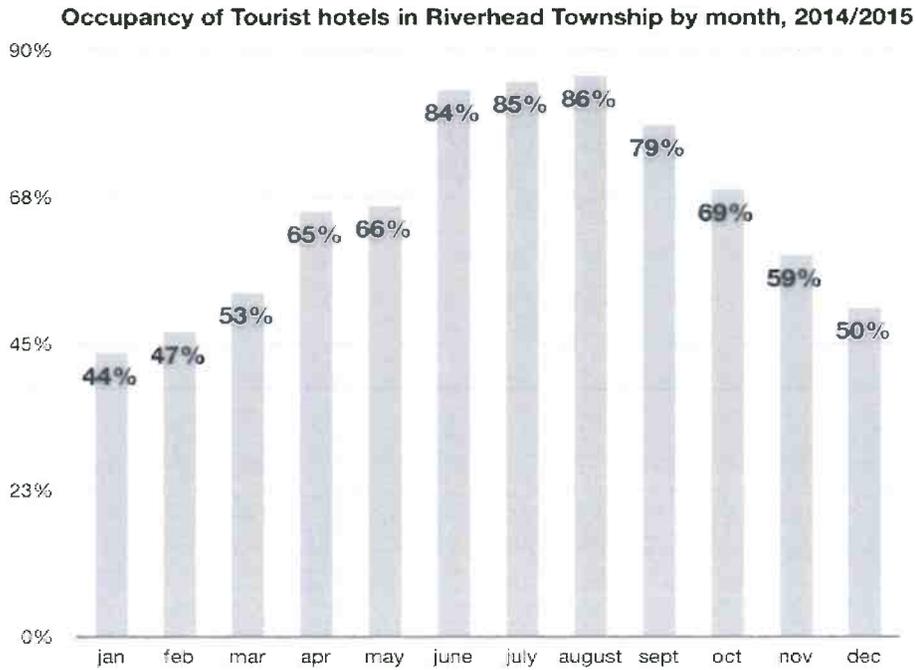
There are eight ‘tourist quality’ properties within Riverhead. The study’s surveys did not include hotels used for workforce housing, summer cottages with long stays or for ‘other purposes’. In-depth interviews were conducted with 5 of the eight properties representing 453 rooms or over 80% of the quality room inventory. Hotel occupancy is an excellent proxy for visitor attendance as well as a primary resource for understanding how to improve the local offer to increase attendance and leverage the existing hotels. The data shows averages for the 2014/2015 seasons. Month on month demand strengthened between 2014 and 2015.

The aggregate patterns of capacity are showed in the chart on the next page, Occupancy of Tourist hotels in Riverhead Township by month 2014/2015. The median occupancies were nearly exactly the same as the average occupancies, rendering the aggregate data representative. The hotels are all experiencing similar periods of high and low capacity and this can be a guideline for the town in terms of building revenue via the introduction of Creative Placemaking events by coordinating the events with nightly, weekly and monthly patterns in surplus hospitality room inventory.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Average and median hotel occupancy for Riverhead Township as per aggregate data from interviews with hotel managers. Fall 2015





**Occupancy of Tourist hotels in Riverhead Township by Month, 2014/2015**

Occupancy data has been aggregated as managers asked their occupancy numbers not to be revealed individually. A detailed audit of other data has been included in Appendix P: Lodging Inventory.





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Period of the Year	Observations of Hotelier regarding occupancy of their hotel
January February March	An important trend that several of the larger hotels explained that off-season they were relying heavily on major construction projects that brought additional occupancy from out of town contractors and that otherwise the winter months would be 'even weaker' than they already are.
April	April bookings in the smaller venues is very dependent on weather patterns, with larger venues offering discounts to fill the hotels with wedding guests. Smaller hotels indicated that April activities would extend their season.
May	Anecdotally, people reported that May 'gets busy' but the data shows that there is definitely weaker occupancy than high season indicating that activities in this period could extend the season. It seemed to one interviewer that the managers were remarking more about their own schedules, preparing for the summer than about the actual room occupancy rates.
June July August	All weekends were strong, no particularly weak weekends. Mid-week was very strong particularly when school is out.
September October November	Fall was reported as a 'strong season' on the weekends due to season-related events, notably including some which are created at the Hyatt, benefiting all area hotels. Smaller venues drop off mid-November.
December	Larger venues drop off mid-December, even with discounting which is managed in different ways locally with some hotels more conscious of under-selling their brand.

**Table 2-7: Observations on hotel occupancy by month in Riverhead** (source: interviews with hoteliers)

Table 2-7: Observations on hotel occupancy by month in Riverhead, above, highlights hotel managers evaluations of supply and demand on a nightly, weekly and seasonal basis. Hotel managers were asked to explain how their surplus capacity could be characterized in terms of general trends with respect to days of the week or periods of the year and points to an opportunity to fill excess hotel room supply in the town with Creative Placemaking events.





**Observations Regarding Hotel Managers Interviews and Occupancy Data and Opportunities for Increasing Demand for Capacity Lodging Inventory via Creative Placemaking:**

- Trends in business travelers: Based on interviews with hotel management, the hotels find that the various types of business travelers stay in the rooms from Sunday or Monday to Thursday which is coherent with other communities.
- Non-business travelers: Recurrent was the description of the ‘wedding party stay’ phenomenon: Weddings on the East End are often an overnight affair lasting only one night. Wedding parties arrive at the hotel on Saturday, have a rehearsal dinner, often in the hotel, and the wedding happens the next day. This means that ‘weekend’ bookings are challenged by the lack of the normal ‘two-night’ stay availability with these one-night large party bookings occupying up to 70% of the hotel’s rooms on a given Saturday night.
- Friday night occupancy is very weak, for a tourist destination, even in the peak seasons.
- Even where Friday nights are not an issue, it was suggested that during the highest season, Thursday night event/cultural programming could extend/increase weekend occupancy rates (“long weekend” stays).
- There are several small hotels changing hands and about to undergo renovations which will add to existing hotel quality and capacity.
- All hotels demonstrated a willingness to provide free shuttle services to other areas in Riverhead if there were demand.
- All hotels spoke of the lack of visitor knowledge of the broad attractions of the area
- Often the advantage of the relative ‘lack of traffic’ (in comparison to the South Fork) on the North Fork was spoken of as an unknown advantage of the area.
- Increased awareness of these last two advantages, many felt, would increase the number of potential visitors to the North Fork, beyond those drawn primarily by the more publicized attraction of the North Fork vineyards.
- Friday night events from April to mid-December would take advantage of several situations including hotel capacity as indicated in this report. As well as encouraging visitors to stop (even overnight) and discover Riverhead on their way east to both forks.





**2.4.4 Alternative lodging: ‘Instant resort’ or ‘glamping’ [glamorous camping] as an opportunity for Riverhead to respond to seasonal demand for lodging.**

In the case of Riverhead Township, the occupancy of the hotels in the township is at capacity during peak periods while it is far below capacity in off-peak periods,<sup>60</sup> limiting guest accommodations when most needed, reducing the Town’s capacity to benefit from tourism, challenging the hotels’ profitability and contributing to challenges in terms of justifying expanding the inventory of traditional hotel rooms.

A suggestion for a light, fast development of a series of potential usages for appropriate parcels could include multiple ‘glamping’ locations (alternative, managed, full-service ‘luxury or glamorous camping’ hospitality venues.)

“Glamping is a new trend where you can have a one of a kind experience in nature with the best amenities and plush interiors for all your needed creature comforts. It’s a tempting option for those who want to escape the big city and get closer to the great outdoors without sacrificing the city’s comforts. This new trend has been gaining popularity, and many local destinations are offering some sort of glamping experience for their guests. If you enjoy the outdoors and want a weekend away, luxury camping is the best option for those willing to spend the money.”<sup>61</sup>

Glamping’s popularity is growing exponentially as part of the world-wide trend in outdoor luxury vacations and the sale of luxury RV’s demonstrated by the renewed popularity of Airstream trailers, another popular alternative.<sup>62 63</sup> This type of service is available at Burning Man and other festivals and there are concessionaires that are available to assist in exploring the requirements and contractual obligations of both parties.<sup>64 65</sup>

Additionally, engaging services of this type serves as an introduction to their elite clientele. Interviews with Manhattan residents who have vacation homes in the Hamptons determined that the glamping experience was so intriguing it could add considerable interest to the weekend offerings if there were an associated event, to the point where they would stay at least one night in

<sup>60</sup> Aggregated Hotel Occupancy by weekend for Riverhead Township - interviews from October 2015

<sup>61</sup> Glamping.com October 2015. <http://www.glamping.com/blog/camping-isnt-for-everyone-try-glamping-instead/>

<sup>62</sup> Lux Travel Trend: Glamping - Penta Daily - Barrons.com  
Yurt Glamping in Upstate New York | Luxury Camping in Upstate New York

<sup>63</sup> End-users Drive RV Market—2 Trends Secure It - Accessa

<sup>64</sup> <http://gawker.com/5837145/how-rich-people-do-burning-man>  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/21/fashion/at-burning-man-the-tech-elite-one-up-one-another.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/21/fashion/at-burning-man-the-tech-elite-one-up-one-another.html?_r=1)

<sup>65</sup> <http://www.classicadventuresrv.com/index.html>

<http://festivalsconciierge.com/contact-us/> (wrote)

<http://festivalsconciierge.com/festivals/>





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Riverhead, though the respondents reported that they would not consider staying at any of the current hotels.<sup>66</sup> Additionally, research shows that the East End has very few glamping locations.<sup>67</sup>

It is beyond the scope of this document to conduct a feasibility study for Glamping. The intent of this section is to provide a basis for further exploration:

- Specialized concessionaires of this type of lodging can provide guidelines and be strong partners for further evaluating feasibility. More research is needed to find and attract concessionaires much like finding development partners for more conventional real estate projects. The concessionaire should have experience providing concierge services for the higher end camper looking for a unique experience. Existing hotel companies or other businesses could also set this activity up locally in concert with suppliers of these services from outside of the community. The glamping industry should be referred to for focused proposals and fee structures devised to cover build out, joint marketing, site cleanup, and other operating costs. Local partners already have teams in place and know the area.
- benchmark against other communities that have glamping activities.
- evaluating its feasibility with regard to County regulations and the special attention that the County Executive<sup>68</sup> has offered to work on Creative Placemaking initiatives with the Town.

From the perspective of Creative Placemaking for the Town of Riverhead, one of the greatest challenges to capturing the full economic value of the people attracted to the area by large scale events is to assure there is ample lodging offerings for those that wish to stay overnight and which reflect a broadly varying range of budgets and tastes.

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<sup>66</sup> Interviews with residents of NYC who vacation in the Hamptons during the summer, September 2015. Based on the fact that Glamping facilities can be very upscale, with private toilets and showers (similar to yacht bathrooms) that look like ordinary facilities - or may even have a spa feeling. In addition, there is a cache to Glamping; it is considered "cool" to a sophisticated demographic that values "experiences" over materialism but are willing to pay not to have to give up creature comforts (e.g. the growth of lodging options at the Burning Man event)

<sup>67</sup> Map of Glamping locations on long island, results of searches on [glamping.com](http://glamping.com), [glamblinghub.com](http://glamblinghub.com), [goglamping.net](http://goglamping.net),

<sup>68</sup> Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone at community leaders meeting July 2015 at East End Arts





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Some of the advantages of “Glamping Villages” as they relate to Riverhead are provided below:

- They are temporary. Some elements such as tent platforms and other non-invasive installations can be installed for the season, but are easily removed. The construction can be installed for months or even for a single weekend while multiple-year leases can justify start up costs.
- They can be set up quickly to be able to meet demand. There are specialized, mobile purveyors of these opportunities.
- They have low impacts on the land and utility resources.
- These can be set up in a way that mitigates sewage impact via numerous types of self-contained waste management systems (e.g. bathrooms on luxury campers).
- Much lower start up/fixed costs and much higher percentage of variable costs.
- There is room for creativity. For example, each site or campground can have a theme (examples of target populations: paddlers, foodies, art enthusiasts, ecologists, youth groups, birders) and likewise linked (where appropriate) to features and opportunities available on the parcel. This renders the experience even more attractive to selective travelers looking for unique and memorable experiences and could appeal to travel groups catering to the specific needs of groups with such interest.
- A single body of regulation/ordinances can be established to cover generically the concept and thus a series of sites even if all of those sites are not put up immediately for operation.
- Sites could be developed in cooperation with the owners, community, designers, and in light of environmental regulations.

Where to put Glamping facilities in Riverhead: There are large areas targeted for redevelopment in Riverhead as well as private underutilized properties which could provide multiple potential glamping locations. Some characteristics of these locations are determined according to the following criteria:

- They are in areas that would normally be considered prime real estate in a resort area, with superior vistas directly overlooking waterways.





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- They are in settings that have at once a natural appeal but at the same time commercial zoning.
- A total of nearly 40 acres has been identified that could potentially be considered for this activity subject to County regulations. One company was contacted regarding identifying requirements for glamping concessions. This would be a suggested further research project.<sup>69</sup>
- They can be sited on private, public, park, or land trust properties.

### **2.4.5 Alternative Lodging: Short term rental market hospitality models; ‘peer-to-peer’ lodging marketing, development and suggestions**

Creative Placemaking projects will attract visitors to the area easily filling the available hotel rooms in Riverhead Township summarized in Section 2.4 as well as the ‘peer-to-peer’ listings shown online which number only 74 and are shown on Figure 5 on the next page: Lodging Potential within 5 mile radius of downtown Riverhead.<sup>70 71</sup> In this section are suggestions as to how to best leverage the on-line short term rental market, also known as ‘home-sharing’ or peer-to-peer hospitality, providing lodging, local employment and tax revenues (and possibly other revenue sources) for the Town.

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<sup>69</sup> <http://www.costanoa.com/tent-bungalows.html>

<sup>70</sup> See Appendix P: ‘Lodging inventory for Riverhead Township.

<sup>71</sup> Sources of data for ‘Map of short term rentals in 5 mile radius of downtown Riverhead, October 2015 were gathered from Airbnb.com, vrbo.com, homeaway.com’





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**Figure 5: Lodging Potential 5 mile radius of downtown Riverhead, traditional and alternative**

Nationally and internationally, web-based peer-to-peer short-term rental business has grown exponentially creating regulatory complications, code enforcement issues and challenges from the hotel lobby.<sup>72</sup>

The new industry provides employment opportunities and news articles reporting its benefits and how this ‘new economy’ industry is building community, enhancing economic and social vibrancy in neighborhoods and towns that are otherwise challenged in attracting tourism or offering sufficient lodging accommodation.<sup>73</sup> In fact, many cities in the country, known for their cultural vibrancy such as San Francisco, Philadelphia and Providence, RI (the entire state of RI) are legalizing this activity, working with the on-line businesses to regulate the industry and creating incorporated mechanisms to collect sales and hotel taxes for the benefit of the community.

Where the practice has not been creatively and constructively embraced, this type of lodging has proven to be hard to control. Even in the face of clear guidelines from a regulatory perspective, enforcement is problematic and the existing consequences of breaking the rules are not robust enough to spontaneously dissuade homeowners from violating the regulations, putting pressure on

<sup>72</sup><http://www.hotelmanagement.net/operations-management/airbnb-sees-push-back-from-major-cities-29676?webSvncID=94c39387-4e82-5ed0-0389-6b1d254b9c30&sessionGUID=34802969-1434-dac7-1d10-236b57c36ade>

<sup>73</sup><http://www.internationalmeetingsreview.com/hotel/new-york-city-debates-airbnb-pros-and-cons-100951>





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code enforcement. To mitigate the situation, the peer-to-peer on-line businesses themselves are actively engaging in conversations and negotiations with communities nationwide to find solutions. In a number of cases this is leading to the creation of agreements between government and the on-line businesses which reflect economic and other benefits for participating communities paralleling hotel tax collections and site inspections, regulation and supervision.<sup>74</sup>

While large markets with concentrated ‘peer-to-peer’ activity and hosts are already ‘on-the-radar’ of these online businesses, a small community with a low percentage of home-sharing offers, such as Riverhead, is not. Vice versa, with the low demand for accommodation of this type in Riverhead, a relatively low percentage of the housing stock is currently represented on these sites but as has happened in other communities, this is destined to grow, perhaps without collateral benefits for the Town. The peer-to-peer market tends to expand in a ‘viral’ pattern with neighborhoods reaching consensus and converting to the practice in response to demand. In fact, in northern Riverhead township there is a cluster of properties offered online along a stretch of beach whereas in an analogous position further down, in a separate neighborhood, there are none.

When the listings appear within the same season or over a short period of time, this can reflect a positive mechanism of word-of-mouth knowledge. In cases where it is season to season, such as in Southold Township, this can reflect a negative mechanism of a ‘creeping’ compromise of the neighborhood’s quality of life as evidence by the public debate, concern, conversations and town hearings regarding this industry there which are creating controversy<sup>75</sup>. The suggestion of imposition of regulations, restrictions, and taxes well after the activity is well-entrenched is unpopular with homeowners engaged in peer-to-peer home sharing.

### **Suggestions:**

- Explore best practices in other communities, nationwide and internationally.
- Reach out to the industry, especially the industry leader Airbnb (the most pro-active of the businesses in the industry) requesting engagement with the Town.

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<sup>74</sup> <http://publicpolicy.airbnb.com/rhode-island-welcomes-home-sharing/>  
<http://fortune.com/2015/07/07/philadelphia-airbnb-legal/>

<sup>75</sup> <http://southoldlocal.com/2015/03/25/town-weighs-new-draft-short-term-rentals-alternative/>





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- Consider how economic benefits for the town that can be ‘built-into’ the on-line billing system via collection, reporting or a combination of the two. Collecting sales and hotel tax is something that Airbnb is already automatically collecting and filing in some jurisdictions.
- Explore how via the Airbnb ‘concierge’ program, improved resources for visitors to the area can be generated. (Airbnb as a company stimulates and guides their local hosts to develop their own information, highlighting the best that their community has to offer, thereby providing content promoting the ‘local attractions’ to all potential visitors.
- Locally based knowledge and individual authorship (content) can then be utilized by the various chambers and specifically the local hospitality industry dominated by national chains without specific local knowledge who, in documented focus groups with Nelson Pope & Voorhis, have indicated that a lack of organized, updated information of this type about Riverhead and the area attractions challenges the vendors and the home owners to best serve their guests.<sup>76</sup>
- Leverage Airbnb’s desire to engage locally and ‘give back’ and also their desire to increase billings in a Township that appear on their sites to be at the lowest end of engagement, propose the development of a local ‘hospitality course’ for potential hosts including all elements of appropriate and successful host behavior, content for which is already offered on the website.
- The Town’s own regulations should be reviewed both internally and also with the assistance of Airbnb’s team suggesting counterparts in other communities. In this way, benchmarking data can be used to determine how to best dovetail the opportunities with recent legislation enacted to deal with this market.
- A public-private policy initiative addressing the evolution in this market prior to the disruption of the quality of life of local residents and the challenges of the hotel lobby will save the town time, energy and possibly position the town to build-in a tax revenue stream in anticipation of growth in Creative Placemaking activities. Tax policy will likely be subject to state and county review.<sup>77</sup> Engage Suffolk County.

<sup>76</sup> See Nelson Pope Voorhis BOA interviews: Hospitality Focus groups results

<sup>77</sup> <http://www.eastendbeacon.com/2015/06/03/southold-divided-on-short-term-rentals/>





Long term: While Southampton is making plans to develop the Riverside hamlet, review of that area of northern Southampton Township clearly indicates that the area will not absorb this overflow (in terms of the need for additional lodging to support major events), while annual updates to the results of this project should include reviewing progress on the RRAP<sup>78</sup> and how new accommodation possibilities evolve and emerge.

### 3.0 Audience Analysis - Interest in Creative Placemaking Opportunities

#### 3.1 Assessment of Community Support for Creative Placemaking

Following first exposure to the concept of WaterFire, local community representatives and stakeholders’ reactions were overwhelmingly positive. Both Riverhead and Southampton Town Councils<sup>79</sup> have autonomously passed resolutions supporting the creation of the Creative Placemaking initiative and have embraced Creative Placemaking’s ability to draw visitors to the area. Southampton and Riverhead have also begun conducting promotional events to raise awareness.<sup>80</sup>

##### 3.1.1 Video Testimonials

“It’s very important that all of these groups in the five towns come together as one in one single effort, and I think that effort is Waterfire.” (Sean McLean, Renaissance Downtowns, Masterdeveloper Southampton)

Local civic, business and other leaders at many levels on both sides of the Peconic (Riverhead and Southampton) have been interviewed on the subject, demonstrating enthusiasm for the concept and its potential for positive impact in their communities. Testimonials have been recorded with:

- Chris Kempner, Riverhead Community Development Agency
- Steve Shauger, Hyatt Place East End
- Bryan DeLuca, Atlantis Holdings and Hyatt Place East End
- Sean McLean, Renaissance Downtowns
- Patricia Drake Snyder, East End Arts
- Sean Walter, Town of Riverhead
- Denise Civiletti, Publisher, RiverheadLocal
- Anna Throne-Holst, Former Supervisor, Town of Southampton

<sup>78</sup> See Appendix Riverside Revitalization Action Plan (RRAP) 7-25-15 -FINAL  
<sup>79</sup> <http://www.southamptontownny.gov/Search/Results?searchPhrase=WaterFire+On+The+Peconic>  
<sup>80</sup> <http://www.southamptontownny.gov/documentcenter/view/3412>





- Frank Zappone, Deputy Supervisor, Town of Southampton and Chairman, PRCDA



Figure 6: Community stakeholders and advocates react positively to WaterFire  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqpMtyAbLE8>

### 3.1.2 Social Media: Facebook

A Facebook page has been created for Waterfire on the Peconic, garnering widespread support across a vital social platform. The page has 759 ‘likes’, with an excellent penetration of new posts on a weekly basis. Local residents who have attended WaterFire have positively commented on Facebook that the event could become local.





Figure 7: WaterFire on the Peconic Facebook page showing support for Creative Placemaking in Riverhead

### 3.1.3 Renaissance Downtowns/Riverside Rediscovered

Across the Peconic in the Riverside section of Southampton, the master developer Renaissance Downtowns promotes the concept of Creative Placemaking as part of the fabric of their process, and has embraced WaterFire at all levels, weaving its presence and imagery throughout its proposal for the area, the Riverside Revitalization Action Plan (RRAP). Through its partner project, Riverside Rediscovered and their “crowdsourced placemaking” program, a grass roots in-person, door-knocking, phone-tree and social media effort has enabled local residents and stakeholders to express their opinions and engage in change in their community, several Creative

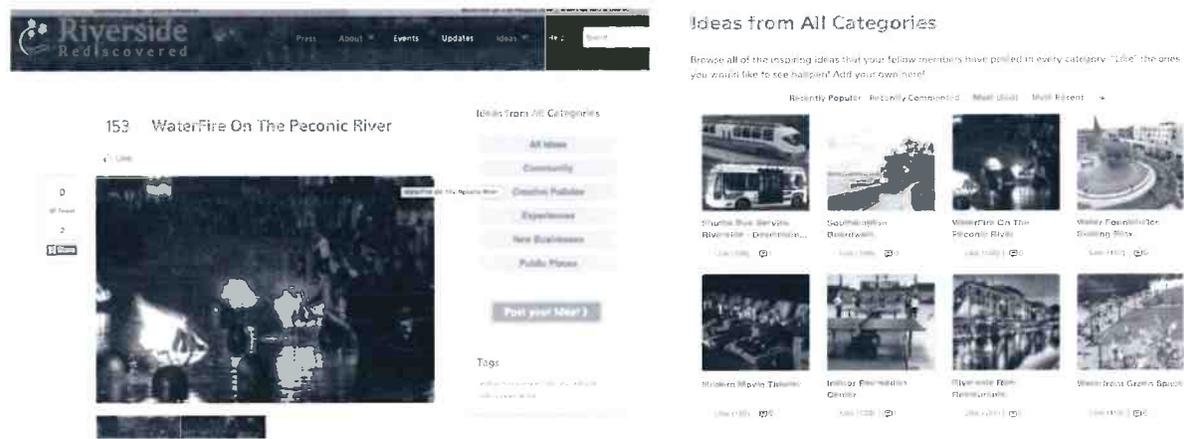


Figure 8: Riverside Rediscovered website showing support for WaterFire as one of several examples of Creative Placemaking in the community

Placemaking concepts are presented and supported with Waterfire on the Peconic rating one of the “Most Liked” projects, as voted on by this community.





## 9 WaterFire on the Peconic

"It's very exciting and plays in very well with the vision of all the things we're trying to accomplish. We're more than prepared to make that commitment to a partnership with Riverhead."

*Southampton Deputy Supervisor Frank Zappone at the Riverhead Town Board meeting on October 30th, after presentation by WaterFire representative Lisa Lowenstein*



A POTENTIAL MILE LONG PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION WITH WATERFIRE VIEWING FROM BOTH BANKS OF PECONIC RIVER

Existing Riverhead Boardwalk    Proposed Boardwalk    Possible location of Peconic Pedestrian Bridge    WaterFire Potential Area    Trail Connections

A resolution by the Southampton Town Board received unanimous support in December to bring WaterFire to the Peconic River with decision to work corroboratively on the project with the Town of Riverhead. The board noted that the proposal has earned broad support from community members in both towns, from Renaissance Downtowns, from the Suffolk County Office of Economic Development, as well as from civic and not-for-profit organizations in both communities, including the Peconic Land Trust and East End Arts. Riverside Rediscovered community liaison Siris Barrios has been gathering input from the Riverside residents who overwhelmingly support the project, and has been part of the steering committee organized by the Town of Riverhead.

A close working relationship between two Towns is essential to the success of the efforts to revitalize Riverside. WaterFire is a public art installation that incorporates a body of water, a series of floating bonfires, music, dance and visual art created by Providence artist Barnaby Evans. He originated the event in Providence in 1994 and it has been credited as a key factor in the city's revitalization and renewal. Evans has brought WaterFire to a number of other cities around the world, including the small city of Sharon, Pennsylvania, located about 70 miles outside of Pittsburgh. WaterFire — held three times a year — has been a boon to the local economy and helped transform its lagging downtown business district into an up-and-coming arts district. The Riverhead Town Board has authorized a \$350,000 grant application to ArtPlace America at

### Map of proposed WaterFire site on the Peconic River as part of Renaissance Rediscovered's RRAP<sup>81</sup>

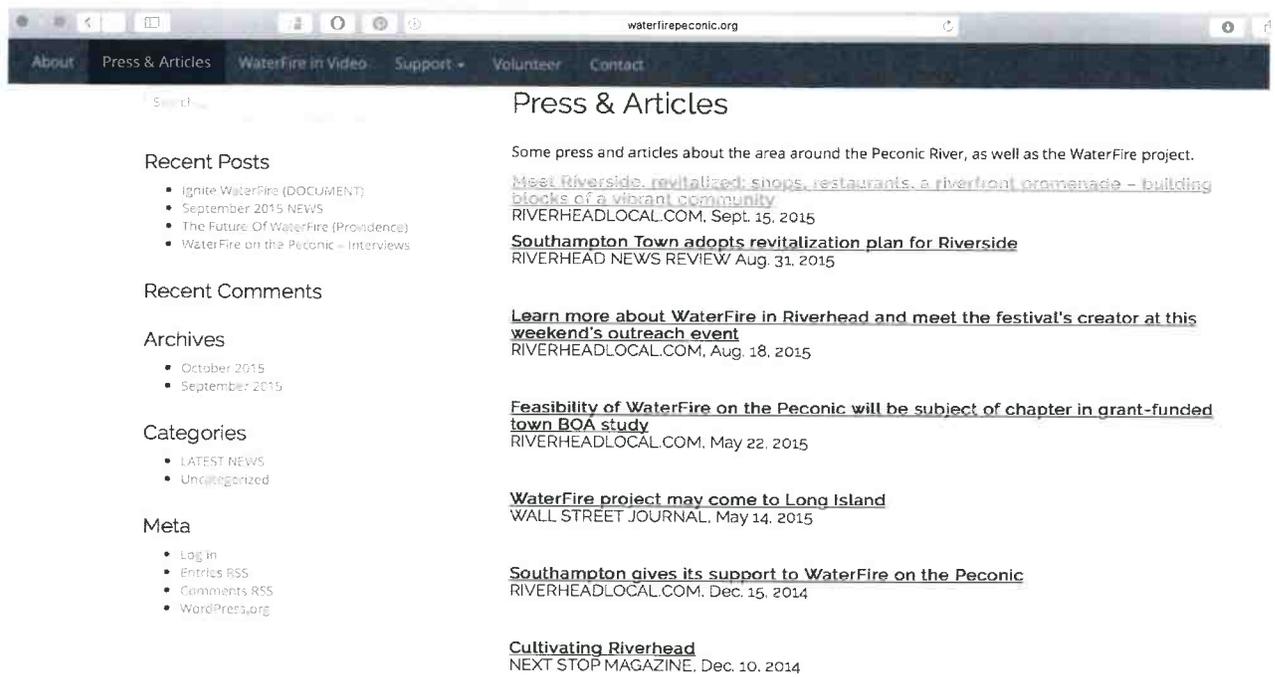
<sup>81</sup> <http://www.southamptontownny.gov/documentcenter/view/4881>





### 3.1.4 Press and Media in support of Creative Placemaking in the Community

Press has been enthusiastic and continues to cover the Creative Placemaking project ‘WaterFire on the Peconic’ as it advances.



### Community Press on the WaterFire on the Peconic website as an indication of support for Creative Placemaking<sup>82</sup>

In clear support of Creative Placemaking as well as the Waterfire on the Peconic initiative is the formation of a local community-based organization, Peconic River Community Development Alliance (PRCDA), with its own Board and a mission to embrace and serve the communities on both sides of the river. PRCDA’s Board of Directors include vibrant leaders in the community:

- Frank Zappone, President (Deputy Town Supervisor, Southampton, NY)
- Vincent Taldone, Treasurer (President of FRNCA)
- Diane Tucci, Secretary (former director of marketing, Suffolk Theater)
- Chris Kempner, Trustee (Community Development Agency Director)
- Siris Barrios, Trustee (Director, Riverside Rediscovered)

<sup>82</sup> <http://waterfirepeconic.org/press/>





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- Larry Oxman, Local businessman, member Riverhead Chamber of Commerce



Peconic River Community Development Alliance home page<sup>83</sup>

### 3.2 Potential Visitors to Riverhead and their Economic Capacity

Based on Section 3.1, a large local level of participation is expected. Successful Creative Placemaking events appeal across the board. Access is the only limiting factor, making drive time a vital component to study in terms of potential visitors. In this section numerous comparisons are made to other successful Creative Placemaking activities in other communities vs. the demographics of their regions.

#### **Day-trippers and their relative economic impact in Riverhead, several examples:**

To estimate visitor numbers, we can make comparison to attendance at WaterFires in other communities. Given that Riverhead does not yet have a large number of hotel rooms, the preponderance of visitors to the first events will come for a 'day-trip', or stop on their way to or from destinations out East. While one highly sought objective from the perspective of Creative Placemaking is local economic impact from out-of-region travelers via hotel stays, this study uses a conservative approach that allows for consideration of Creative Placemaking planning in the

<sup>83</sup> [www.prcda.org](http://www.prcda.org)





absence of development of lodging infrastructure and focuses the estimates therefore only on the impact of day-trippers as they are readily accessible.

Based on data shown in Figure 11 below, over 450,000 people live within a 30-minute drive of Riverhead and the median household income of \$75,000 (as documented in 2011), and expected \$83,000 in 2016, is an extremely strong economic power to tap into.

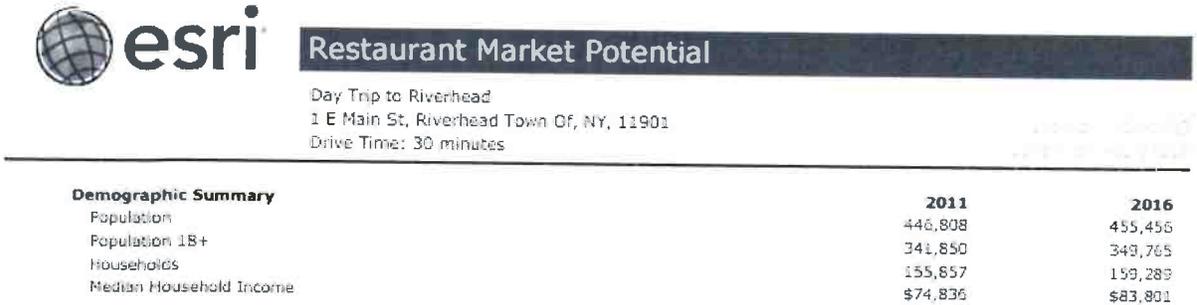


Figure 11: Demographic Data Showing Potential for Day-Tripper Visitors

These compare very favorably (are more powerful than) the demographics of another successful Creative Placemaking initiative generating economic vibrancy (in Rhode Island). Here median household income averaged just \$55,000 in the period 2011-2013<sup>84</sup>, and annual income growth outside of pockets (such as select parts of Providence) is minimal as the economy is depressed statewide. This data, in comparison to those on Long Island, bode well for the implementation of WaterFire and other Creative Placemaking endeavors in Riverhead.

This data can then be compared with the actual economic impact of successful Creative Placemaking in Providence, where WaterFire has been attributed with a \$114 million annual uptick in the local economy; 1,000,000 average visitors per year; and \$9 million in sales tax alone, averaging over \$120 estimated spend per visitor.

**Population density, another measurement of potential for day tripper visitors**

Comparing driving distances, populations and density between Riverhead, NY, Providence, RI and Sharon, PA, there are strong indications supporting a large visitor potential for Riverhead based.

<sup>84</sup> US Census data





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Figures 12/13 showing Regional Population Densities  
Near Providence, RI (top)<sup>85</sup>  
Near Riverhead, NY (bottom)<sup>86</sup>

<sup>85</sup> [http://www.census.gov/population/metro/data/thematic\\_maps.html](http://www.census.gov/population/metro/data/thematic_maps.html)

<sup>86</sup> [http://www.census.gov/population/metro/data/thematic\\_maps.html](http://www.census.gov/population/metro/data/thematic_maps.html)





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Furthermore, estimates show that the average revenue boost per visitor is already \$100 in the recently inaugurated Waterfire installation in Sharon, PA. In their second year, with a town approximately 1/3 the size of Riverhead, a metropolitan area 20% the size of Riverhead, and in a depressed rust belt area, Sharon, Pennsylvania has already attracts 10,000 visitors per Waterfire event.

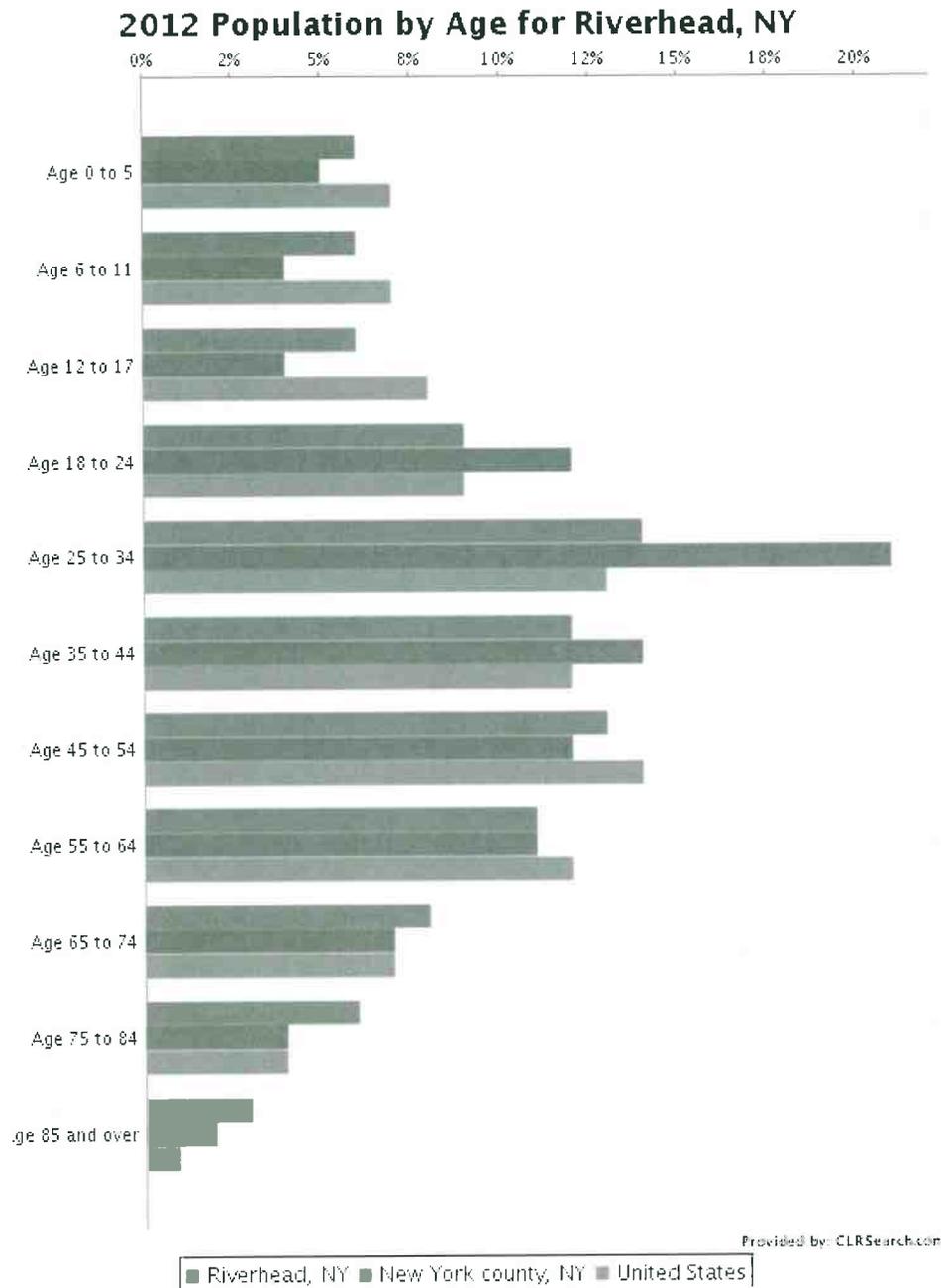
While estimates vary greatly depending on the source consulted, the buying power of the seasonal residential population and wealth of tourism on Long Island will only positively augment these numbers.

### **Population Density near Providence, RI vs. Riverhead, NY**

Population density is visualized in Figures 12/13 on the previous page with darker areas representing more densely populated areas. The metropolitan area of reference for WaterFire Providence includes Eastern Connecticut and Eastern Massachusetts (Metropolitan Boston), which amounts to approximately 9 million inhabitants. While slightly geographically larger in terms of distance from Riverhead, the metropolitan area of reference for Riverhead for Creative Placemaking initiatives includes all of Long Island and greater New York City due to seasonal travel patterns to the East End from this area and better public transport access. Compared to 9 million inhabitants accessing WaterFire Providence, approximately 20 million have comparable access to Riverhead.

Finally, as shown in Figure 14: Comparative Population Distribution by Age on the next page, not only is the potential market many times that of other successful locations, but due to the disproportionately high numbers of New York City Millennials (18-35 year olds) that have access to Riverhead (and their propensity to travel for Creative Placemaking events such as WaterFire), Riverhead is uniquely positioned to benefit from investments in Creative Placemaking that will attract these populations.





**Figure 14: Comparative Population Distribution by Age for Riverhead, NY (2012) with relative percentage of Millennials in Riverhead compared to New York County.<sup>87</sup>**

<sup>87</sup> <http://www.clrsearch.com>





### 3.3 Review of traffic, travel patterns, events and seasonal considerations

#### 3.3.1 Daily traffic

The traffic circle project, with recommendations for one-way northbound traffic, may make closing Peconic Avenue for special events less problematic as half of the traffic will be detoured permanently.

#### 3.3.2 Local event traffic

During the Country Fair, traffic backing up along Rt. 24 (Flanders road) in both directions was particularly problematic. The shuttle plan in section 5.3 provides a plan of action, with shuttle stops well marked and publicized. By implementing a shuttle plan, visitors will organize their travel in advance with the expectation that they will be able to utilize this service, avoiding the issues experienced during the Country fair.

#### 3.3.3 Seasonal traffic

The relevant traffic patterns are:

East bound on Friday nights from Manhattan toward the East End north and south, with local traffic in south fork on Saturday nights.

Traffic moving East bound on Friday nights is a potential advantage as visitors destined out toward the north or south forks can utilize WaterFire's Friday evening events as a way of avoiding evening traffic and taking a much needed break from their travel. Prior to changes such as the introduction of the Sunrise Highway and the creation of the shopping area on Rt. 58, Downtown Riverhead enjoyed economic benefits of being along the route East toward the resort areas. With a Creative Placemaking event on Friday evenings or Sundays and the use of shuttles, regular visitors who spend the weekend on the East End will be enticed to stop and take advantage of the event.

Local traffic in the South Fork on the weekend is a potential disadvantage to attracting visitors from that area Creative Placemaking events unless visitors are already destined to pass through or Riverhead. Over time, as Riverhead rebrands and hospitality options increase, Riverhead's appeal as a destination will justify more events on Saturday and Saturday evening.





### 3.4 Analysis of Potential Funding Mechanisms

**Introduction:** It is important to avoid preconceived limitations about there being a single or few sectors (ex: aligning Creative Placemaking solely with the arts) that can be attracted to financially support Creative Placemaking activities. Many for-profit and non-profit entities find that Creative Placemaking is an opportunity for better leverage of their marketing investment, opening up the possibilities for funding exponentially. Effective Creative Placemaking results in more media attention and public messaging in any number of areas that would also bring advantages to the community. Strategic partnerships in many sectors can be achieved.

In addition, field of Creative Placemaking is in a major growth area in community development since established by a National Endowment for the Arts' white paper in 2010, which featured WaterFire as an early exemplar.<sup>88</sup> This led a major shift among major private foundations and funders, who formed a consortium called ArtPlace America to help articulate the power of this new phenomenon.



**Figure 15: Examples of funders for Creative Placemaking from the WaterFire experience**  
Funding can come from:

<sup>88</sup> Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa, Creative Placemaking, 2010, <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/CreativePlacemaking-Paper.pdf>





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- Private individuals for special events, through fundraising campaigns and as part of philanthropic partnerships
- Local, regional and national companies of any size, based on their interests in exposure in the area
- Private foundations for philanthropic projects
- Private corporations for marketing exposure, as part of their community philanthropy or as part of a special promotion or product launch.
- Other non-profits (See Appendices H, M, N and K for lists of arts and non arts local non-profits that could be engaged as partners for events from the perspective of content and resources, sponsors, or both)
- Government entities with the NY Consolidated Funding Application are an advantageous source. For an evaluation of recent programs and ideas for funding with respect to Creative Placemaking initiatives, see Table 4-1: Examples of NY CFA Programs with Suggested Grant Projects on the next page. Appendix S contains more detailed information including Funding Maximums, Match Requirements, Eligible Applicants and Eligible Uses of Funds. Programs and requirements will vary year-to-year.





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NY CFA Program (example: 2015)	Suggestions for Creative Placemaking Grant Applications for Riverhead
ESD Grant Funds	Warehouse spaces, staging, boats for water based activities
ESD Strategic Planning and Feasibility Studies	Feasibility study for Creative Placemaking projects or their extension
Market New York	all applies
NYS Council on the Arts - Arts, Culture and Heritage Initiatives	all applies
HCR - Community Development Block Grant	Riverhead meets the population requirement. All four eligible uses of funds apply
HCR New York Main Street	beautification projects for creative placemaking, n.b. you have to have been active for one year before you apply
HCR- New York Main Street Technical Assistance	related to the grant above
Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation - Environmental Protection Fund Municipal Grant Program	All applies for extending the area around the Peconic River in Downtown Riverhead, buildings for use by Creative Placemaking projects
Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation - Recreational Trails Program	Development of a trail around the Peconic River
DOS - Local Waterfront Revitalization Program	Redevelopment of Riverhead and Riverside waterfronts
NYS DEC - Water Quality Improvement Project Program	Invasive species removal
Environmental Facilities Corp - Green Innovation Grant Program	Installation of biobarriers to absorb nitrogen at the same time/place where the new trails could be installed
DOL - Workforce Development	Training program can be implemented as part of the development of staff for creative placemaking

**Table 4-1: Examples of NY CFA Programs with Suggested Grant Projects**





**Observations**

Creative Placemaking positively impacts its targeted geographic area across a myriad of sectors, and as such, can be leveraged for funding opportunities in a multitude of ways. Potential areas of focus include funding focused on social justice, youth programs, environmental justice, the arts, and more.

Of the top 40 private nationwide grantmaking foundations, 32 have a geographical focus related to NY State or NYC (due to the large overlap in target population (for marketing messages) for Riverhead Creative Placemaking events, particularly during the tourist season and the possibility to involve NY residents, youth, arts initiatives, etc. All are based in NYC, giving the Riverhead area greater exposure over other areas in the state and country. For a detailed evaluation of the top national funders operating in NY State and the Analysis of Funding Themes and Objectives see Appendix Q: National Foundations.

Organization	Website	Description of Activity/Mission
The Chronicle of Philanthropy	<a href="http://philanthropy.com">philanthropy.com</a>	Serves as a print and online news source for foundation leaders, fund-raisers, grant makers, and others involved in philanthropic enterprises.
Foundation Center	<a href="http://foundationcenter.org">foundationcenter.org</a>	Strengthens the sector advancing knowledge about US philanthropy.
Grantmakers for Effective Organizations	<a href="http://geofunders.org">geofunders.org</a>	Community of grant makers providing resources and connections to promote strategic/effective practices contributing to grantee success.
Network for Good	<a href="http://networkforgood.com">networkforgood.com</a>	Training and tools, such as selection of social networks, using RSS, creating blogs about critical issues, raising funds effectively online.
NYC Youth Funders	<a href="http://nycyouthfunders.org">nycyouthfunders.org</a>	A coalition of philanthropic organizations seeking to improve the quality of life for young people living in New York City.
Philanthropy New York	<a href="http://philanthropynewyork.org">philanthropynewyork.org</a>	A community of philanthropic foundations based in the New York City region supporting thousands of nonprofits and nongovernmental organizations located in New York, the United States, and around the world that dedicate their work to social justice issues.

**Table 4-2: A List of other Media Sources to Monitor for Funding Possibilities**





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110 major companies/corporations funding non-profit activity in NY State were identified, and again entities whose geographical focus was NYC still present an opportunity due to the overlap in target population (for marketing messages) for Riverhead Creative Placemaking events during the tourist season. All but 18 of the foundations are based in NYC or on Long Island, again giving the Riverhead area (due to the traffic to the tourist areas on the East End) greater exposure over other areas in the state. For an evaluation of major operating in NY State and the Analysis of Funding Themes and Objectives see Appendix R: Major Funders. Monitor the sources in Table 4-2: A List of other Media Sources to Monitor for Funding Possibilities.





## 4.0 Peconic River Corridor as an Asset and Attraction

### 4.1 Ways to connect Peconic Corridor Activity to downtown Riverhead

The Peconic River is an extraordinary asset, unique in a downtown context and undervalued with respect to downtown Riverhead. This section includes suggestions to prepare better connections between water and land-based recreation around the Peconic River to the Town of Riverhead via Creative Placemaking around the Peconic River Corridor, designed to draw visitors to the river into the community and vice versa. The proposed areas of access along the river are contiguous and partially accessible to some areas downtown. Improving this access should be the focus of future interventions which are explored in Section 5.0.

A suggested intervention to connect the activities in the town to the Peconic River Corridor is the creation of a bicycle/paddle loop along the Peconic River, east and west of Peconic Avenue which would bring water recreation directly to downtown Riverhead. The Figure shows detailed information including proposed exchanges, proposed sites to visit and suggested cycle path, paddle routes and walkways, while respecting regulated wetlands. Proposed WaterFire Installations are also included, highlighting the way that programming on the Peconic River Corridor facilitates the connection provided by programming.



Figure 16: Proposed Peconic River Bicycle and Canoe Paddle Loop





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Please reference ‘The Peconic River Corridor (from Bay to Stream)’ and ‘Grangebel Park’ for in Sections 2.0 and Appendix G for descriptions of proposed interventions.

The Figures below show how the proposed River activities are then linked to the community. Given the actual current overall capacity of the pathways and parks along the Peconic on the Riverhead side (developed) at approximately 21,000 with current viewing area of river-based activities at a maximum of approximately 12,800 currently (including spaces along the River Walk, Grangebel Park and Peconic avenue), there is a need to connect the River Corridor to the rest of the town in order to ensure decongested enjoyable events and maximize economic uplift via businesses throughout the community. The analysis below explains the relative ‘weight’ of the proposed locations connected to the river corridor via wayfinding which is further explained in Section 5.0.



**Figure 17 Showing Creative Placemaking Sites South of East Main Street along Riverwalk**

Whether visitors to the community utilize the Peconic River Corridor for walking, picnicking, paddling or bicycling, improvements in accessibility to connect the Corridor to the town by leading visitors away from the River are necessary. In the figure above, we show areas normally utilized for parking that can be considered primary locations supporting this objective. The analysis presented in Appendix T: Capacity and Occupancy demonstrates that these six locations





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represent nearly 134,000 square feet of usable space supporting almost 6,700 visitors at one time, supporting a total of 45 food vendors or 67 non-food vendors or a combination of the two. Appendix T shows suggested usage and other details on each individual numbered location for use by event organizers. Given the opportunity represented by these locations, their proximity to the riverfront and ability to entice visitors to the riverfront to spend more time in Riverhead, permanent attractions should be considered for these spaces and, as suggested in other areas of this report, the businesses on the south side of Main street should be encouraged to open entrances and venues facing the river.



**Figure 18: Potential road closures during events in downtown Riverhead**

Based on evaluations of traffic patterns, one way streets, the inventory of Creative Placemaking sites in the BOA area including ‘special interest areas’ the following road closures are suggested for use during Creative Placemaking planning. Experimentation with events and exploration of semi-permanent seasonal closures or parking bans will help expand the road closure options to further contiguous portions of West Main Street. The choice of roads near the existing ‘hub’ of potential activity on the River Walk is a first step in the process.





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**Figure 19 Connecting the Peconic River corridor to downtown (central & west)**

Figure 19 shows how the areas near the river in downtown Riverhead should be connected to the Railroad station and Polish Town. Comparing the wayfinding map above to the road closures shows how the creative place-making sites make the connections.

The analysis presented in Appendix T: Capacity and Occupancy demonstrates that the locations at 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 21 and 22 (1 and 3 are subsets of 2 and 9 is not completely open space, so it is not considered in this calculation) represent approximately 194,000 square feet of usable space supporting almost 9,700 visitors at one time, supporting a total of 64 food vendors or 98 non-food vendors or a combination of the two. Appendix T shows suggested usage and other details on each individual numbered location for use by event organizers. Location 9, the Railroad Museum is shown on this map as a functional part of the wayfinding, though it can also be considered a venue.





**Figure 20 Connecting the Peconic River corridor to downtown (east)**

Figure 20 shows how the areas near the river in downtown Riverhead could be connected to the East Second Street neighborhood following road closures to lead visitors to the empty lots north east of the neighborhood. Comparing the wayfinding map above to the road closures shows how the creative place-making sites make the connections.

The analysis presented in Appendix T: Capacity and Occupancy demonstrates that the locations at 16,17,18,19, 23 and 24 (20 is a suggested entrance) represent approximately 127,000 square feet of usable space supporting approximately 6,300 visitors at one time, supporting a total of 44 food vendors or 64 non-food vendors or a combination of the two. Appendix T shows suggested usage and other details on each individual numbered location for use by event organizers. In Section 5.0 we complete the connectivity of the Railroad station to this neighborhood via Figure 40.

**4.2 Downtown Riverhead, the market for Cultural Tourism and consumer internet behavior**

As a recent OECD report (2014) underlines, a radical realignment of the relationship between the creative industries and tourism is producing important changes in the way in which ‘cultural tourism’ is produced for, discovered and consumed by tourists.<sup>89</sup> Residents also appreciate and

<sup>89</sup> OECD (2014) Tourism and the Creative Economy. OECD: Paris





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benefit from many aspects of cultural tourism.<sup>90</sup> A unified approach to marketing is the most advantageous policy.

Riverhead must reflect the evolution of tourism over the last two decades from an individual sector of the local economy based on simplistic assumptions of core, standardized amenities to a community-wide experience that is increasingly developing around programming in culture and the arts, quality of place, engagement in place, and authenticity. Cultural tourists utilize the internet for researching potential trips—a survey showed that in 2014, 85.5% of travelers prefer the internet over all offline resources for trip planning.<sup>91</sup>

At the same time, and crucially, coordinated internet based unified marketing approaches also have benefits within the community and amplify the ability of local individuals, for-profits and non-profits to align their activities to take advantage of Creative Placemaking projects. WaterFire in Providence has developed both online resources and placed based coordinated approaches on site to serve as part of the marketing and experiential cohesion that is important as part of cultural tourism development<sup>92</sup>

Motivation for community leaders to develop cultural tourism on the supply side include: Valorizing and preserving heritage, economic development and employment, physical regeneration, strengthening and/or diversifying tourism, retaining population, developing cultural understanding, re-branding opportunities, quality of place improvements to increase resident satisfaction and attracting new residents and businesses

Market-based drivers pushing Cultural Tourism on the demand side include: Increased number of vacations with ‘cultural’ focus, rising socio-economic levels and sophistication in the market, more visitors to cultural events and festivals driven by increased supply, more visitors to cultural events and festivals due to satisfaction with prior such experiences and a desire for ‘co-presence’ (being together with other people).

Figure 21 ‘Building blocks of collaboration within a ‘Tourism Business Ecosystem’ (TBE)<sup>93</sup> below shows the steps toward the building of joint identity. This table is based on recent research into emerging collaborative networks, at the basis of TBEs of which East End Getaway<sup>94</sup> is an excellent example, representing a portion of the service providers in the area.

<sup>90</sup> Richards, G. (2014) Tourism trends: The convergence of culture and tourism

<sup>91</sup> Xiang, Z. et al (2014) Adapting to the Internet: Trends in Travelers’ Use of the Web for Trip Planning

<sup>92</sup> [www.waterfire.org](http://www.waterfire.org) and [www.goprovidence.com](http://www.goprovidence.com).

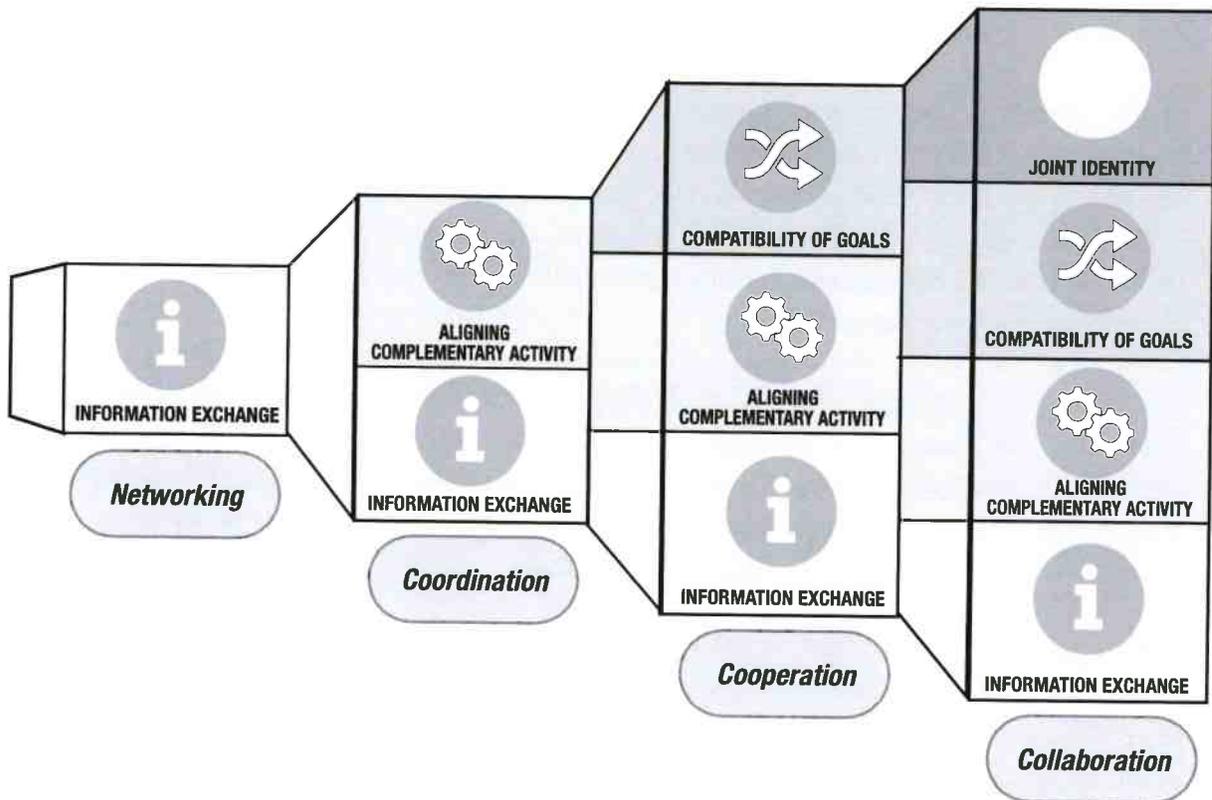
<sup>93</sup> Ammirato, S. et al (2015) Knowledge Management and Emerging collaborative networks in Tourism Business Ecosystems. Conference: ECKM 2015 - 16th European Conference on Knowledge Management, At Udine (Italy)

<sup>94</sup> [Eastendgetaway.com](http://Eastendgetaway.com)





A unified marketing approach around a single website serves as the first step, the creation of the ‘information exchange’. Below is information and a checklist for creating this information exchange in a way that serves this purpose. The creation of a parallel Creative Placemaking initiative (which includes alignment, cohesive visioning and compatibility among local service providers) will enhance this effort and lead to building coordination, cooperation and then collaboration -- all leading to the creation of a joint identity.



**Figure 21 Building blocks of collaboration within a ‘Tourism Business Ecosystem’**

Via this process, the service providers downtown and in the broader area will be united into a single Riverhead-focused collaborative network contributing to creating the most comprehensive ‘aggregate tourism offer’ for the area. This will stimulate the building of both an internet-based and a real-world collaboration locally in the form of a Tourism Business Ecosystem (TBEs). The creation of a functioning TBE will give local tourism service providers leverage for economic growth.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>95</sup> Ammirato, S. et al (2015)





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Based on reviews of the literature regarding best practice and considering the guidelines above, a single website delivers higher levels of cultural tourism via the creation and reinforcement of an identity and therefore better Creative Placemaking activities, some specific goals/benefits include:

- Offering a single source for hospitality providers to represent the area's assets to guests
- Creating visibility, focus, and convenience for the traveler in the process of planning a trip to the area.
- Communicating the area as having a rich set of resources across numerous venues and assets rendering it more attractive to a prospective visitor
- Leveraging media spending by any single service provider
- Improving the site to better serve as a resource for blogging, creating social-media content on behalf of the website itself
- Highlighting activities corresponding to current consumption patterns for cultural tourism, providing a platform to present local activities in relation to current trends for journalists & press releases, for the creation of unified marketing content for other channels: print & radio advertising and joint via partner organizations.
- Highlighting relevance of activities to specific demographics via search options (examples: Millennials, Christmas, kid-friendly)
- Encouraging cross-marketing on behalf of local entities
- Encouraging collaborations on behalf of local entities contributing to more effective Creative Placemaking projects and programming.

The fundamental building block for this type of project is a regular periodic process for gathering information across the community. This regular-proactive outreach out to organizations and entities will encourage their participation in bringing their projects and events to the forefront.

Supervision should be by an individual with social media, graphic design, photographic and media background. Ideally locally based and having a deep knowledge of the community, this individual would not only gather information but facilitate cross-marketing opportunities.

As a guideline, see the Cultural Tourism Travel Destination Website Checklist below (with remarks with respect to promoting Riverhead). The implementation of these aspects facilitates the four building blocks contributing to collaboration of TBEs.

These recommendations were prepared studying best practice and in parallel, reviewing the different ways that various entities operating in Riverhead already embrace some of these objectives/goals/missions as they are expressed on their websites. The websites are listed with some observations in Appendix W: Local websites involved in marketing Riverhead's cultural





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tourism activities. In evaluating the 'events' sections of these websites and interviewing members of the organizations it became apparent that there is an opportunity to create a single internet-based marketing approach across the area's cultural assets.

The development of this site should be supported by a unified process that not only gathers information across the various entities in the community, but also fosters collaboration across the same entities.

### **Cultural Tourism Travel Destination Website Checklist**

- A comprehensive site means you must show a complete range of categories of types of activities: from lodging, attractions, restaurants, activities, transport, etc. Consider every event on every one of the local sites listed in Appendix W. as a starting point.
- Include full, consistent listings of activities under the categories: for example, include calendars, descriptions, google maps, contact information. This information is important for meta tagging the website to keep it relevant on searches.
- Check that there are active, updated links to the specific pages of the websites for the activities represented.
- Ensure each service provider is encouraged to provide information to keep the site regularly updated (bi-weekly or monthly).
- Provide a broad range of activities in Riverhead. Studies show a broad potential demographic range of consumers.
- An internal search function and searchable listings will help avoid trying to solve complicated navigational issues within the site.
- Allows social media users to add photographs, reviews of activities, suggestions.
- For the evolution of the process towards a collaboration around a 'joint identity', meetings of the service providers is essential. A useful tool is their own internal 'Facebook' page as a point of reference for coordination and review of other elements contributing to cross marketing, alignment and identifying areas of compatibility in goals.





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### 4.3 Identify potential new events to contribute to a more flourishing street scene

A key element in using events to attract people to animate a streetscape is the challenge of assembling sufficient audience to reach critical mass to be successful and to make a sufficient economic impact. Live events now compete with a wide array of digital entertainment options and it can difficult to reach, motivate, and assemble live audience members. One of the best strategies is to deploy a variety of smaller acts/activities in the context of a larger festival or public arts event.

The following ideas to improve the Riverhead street scene would be most effective when combined together into larger events, inserted into existing activities in Riverhead, or carefully integrated into a larger Creative Placemaking arts event, for example, WaterFire.

There are different target markets that should be researched in terms of the best way to leverage each event and best promote each event to reach and engage each demographic. Crossover events with appeal to all three demographics are most effective:

- Millennials are particularly seeking engaging, authentic placed-based Creative Placemaking initiatives. They are a key target. They are informed, mobile and seek quality events.
- Family activities will keep area families in town on the weekends. They tend to favor events with convenient access to cars, parking, and food.
- North and South Fork seasonal and year-round residents

#### **This selection New Ideas:**

- Expanded Farmer's Market adding event programs such as enhanced programs (educational, cooking classes), cook-off competitions, themed days, etc., more services.
- Street art festival. While buildings are a typical canvas and can be explored, a festival could be about painting other 'things' (boats is a theme in the community and there is access to old boats to paint as was already experimented with Chris Dyer in the summer of 2015. Another concept could be a juried show with the winners' work installed permanently or temporarily in the town. Winners work could be donated and auctioned off (live, on line) to benefit nonprofit sponsors or local charities. They could be part of a mobile exhibit, installed in other communities temporarily for example in the South Fork,





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as mobile 'street art' representing Riverhead. Old cars could be painted with a donation/auction formula or even donors offering a donation have their car painted, which could then be exhibited and eventually returned to the donor)

- Dia de Muertos [Day of the Dead] festival with performance, exhibits, food and vendors. A beloved festival that culturally reaches street level and everything in between. (Dates are flexible as the celebrations originally in midsummer, but now are typically in alignment with Halloween and held from October 31 to November 2). Note: this is a central and south Mexican event and is celebrated in some other Hispanic countries; notably Guatemala where it is celebrated with kites and the serving of the dish Fiambre. There are Bolivian, Ecuadorian, Brazilian and Antiguan analogs, but sometimes on other dates and with other traditions. There is also a cross over with the Goth and tattoo cultures, so there is a growing interest in Dia de Muertos among hipsters and Millennials and several museums (Harvard and Kansas City, etc.) are inviting local artists to interpret the event.
- Children's activities like town-wide treasure hunt based on a theme such as get to know the town's natural history - parents are seeking such activities to do as a family.
- Historical Treasure hunt for adults - get to know the town's history, stories and assets (to promote the town). A great way to share new stories and assets from historical residents with new immigrants and thus a way to introduce and socialize the community's various groups.
- Revive and expand the Polish Town Polka Festival by adding culture back into the fair, involve Main Street into a far larger Polish Festival with polka and Polish food also on Main Street etc. Also, consider a parallel expansion to include other local cultures too in various parts of town. This will bring a larger number of visitors allowing for cross-marketing.
- Create a Makers Fair drawing people from South Fork as well. There is a strong argument for Riverhead sharing many positive attributes associated with Brooklyn in the perception of a target market of visitors. There are many of these established in NYC and elsewhere. Great way to include local makers, existing circuits of makers that travel to venues, students and local schools including programs to expose students to opportunities to learn about artisan careers. Makers Fairs do well alongside Farmers Markets.





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- Resuscitate the Riverhead Blues & Music Festival with a 'free' formula connected to a series of high level food/drink tents that pay for the concession and this pays for the festival.
- Enlarge number of river-based competitive sports activities - kayak championships, standing board races, canoe races, etc.
- Micro-brew, local cheese and local meats fall festival. Additionally, where people can participate in costume (Victorian era costume. Themed to match the community envisioning downtown without cars and with installations to transport visitors back to the Victorian era).
- Annual local talent contests with paid tickets at each of the local theaters. (Interviews revealed many potential performers, this could be an excellent local charity event to raise funds for broader Creative Placemaking activities.)
- Kids talent contest with the Peconic Ballet, local schools serving as portals. Prizes can include scholarships sponsored by local businesses of all sized. Many national chains present on Rt. 58 are interested in sponsoring community activities if approached and have established at corporate level for supporting the communities where they are present.
- Expand the current cardboard boat races to allow many separate heats in different areas to accommodate more of an audience over the day. Reach out to other spheres to increase participation to fill the heats (university departments at a local school, rival school sports teams within or across schools), local bank branches of competing banks, etc. Strengthen the focus about water quality in the Peconic Bay to improve environmental education.
- Sponsor a 'run' (FRNCA has a 5k benefit) followed by some kind of a food event that evening. Leverage the wayfinding maps to bring runners (their supporters and the public) into the 'special interest areas'.
- Dancing events: A formula offering lessons prior to the event and then a caller at night on Main Street – square, polka, tango, salsa, merengue; oddly the more 'square' the event the greater there is hipster (hipsters are a subsection of Millennials) interest-if there is authenticity; there is a nexus between renewed interest in polka, microbreweries, beer, artisan charcuterie (sausage), beards, accordion playing and intensely local farming.





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- Christmas in July. This can include any number of Christmas related cultural activities such as caroling as well as an opportunity to sell local Christmas related crafts to a public not normally present in the community prior to the holidays.
- 'Chair-ity' event and or similar coordinated artmaking activities: Anyone can donate old chairs (or flower pots, end tables, lamps) and anyone could pick them up and turn them into "works of art." The donation process gets the community involved long before the auction which makes it a success. There can be one or more themes and prizes. This should not be billed as an event for artists, rather an event for people to do a craft.
- Pancake & sausage contest cook-off and town wide breakfast-for-dinner on Main Street or a long common table festival down the middle of Main Street. Or a huge common table pot luck dinner. Again, as a charity event supporting Creative Placemaking on a larger scale, this could be combined with the talent contests, the Cardboard Boat Race or other events to build attendance.
- Annual town-wide collective joint garage and junk sale with everyone getting a spot for a table on Main Street for \$10. This works in Sea Cliff a town much closer to New York but evidence shows that residents from south and west of Riverhead attend garage sales along the North Fork and might come to buy and sell.
- Kids parade and contest for decorated bikes and hats. This can be combined with other events such as the Cardboard Boat Race.
- Chalk on the block with a theme. Main Street made into a grid, everyone given finite amount of time, a theme and/or a palette of colors. Art Direction like this could lead to a giant gorgeous 'quilt' that could be photographed to great effect for promotional purposes.
- Barbecue, chili and rice and beans contest with booths & prizes. Make it a food festival bringing together all of the communities and contributing to a large potluck meal.
- Oldies dance on Main Street (choose period with costume? 50's/60's/70's/80's with dance contest.
- Create a festival downtown around gardens with featured seasonal plantings. Solicit participation from local businesses to donate or discount supplies. Give numerous superlative prizes for the best display on the block, best garden in town with signs that get





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posted for the season on their lawn and listed on a website with professional photography of the winners gardens (this benefit can be included as part of the prize package).

- A major art festival featuring Theo Jansen's moving kinetic wind beast wind structures (Strandbeests) This is complex to manage but a very cool fun thing to add to another event— perhaps possible at the old runways at EPCAL.
- Consider using under utilized strip malls with empty stores and large parking lots to create major themed temporary art installations with corresponding environmental-art festivals. Environmental awareness and sustainability are themes that attracts funding, sponsorship and visitors. Peconic Green Growth and the Riverhead Foundation are already looking at projects that bridge the environmental-art connection.
- Consider creating an 'eastern outpost' for one of the prominent contemporary art museums nationwide that has a large collection and cannot display it all. Semi-permanent or rotating exhibits on themes would create a museum that would give an anchor to more cultural activities in the community.





#### 4.4 Volunteer Engagement, Structure, Management and Costs

Creative Placemaking is concerned with connecting and engaging the community in as broad a way as possible. One way to do this is to work with volunteers to increase your contact points with the community.

##### 4.4.1 Volunteerism and Community Engagement: the ‘value’ of volunteers

**Engagement:** Creating a public art intervention with volunteers is not about free labor, though volunteers do provide much useful and valuable work and do allow the work to be done with success at a bigger scale. Using volunteers is a deliberate act of inclusion and connection. Public art is presented in public for the public to enjoy. By inviting the community inside to help in its creation, one is empowering people in a profound way. One is making the statement that they belong, that their voices matter, that they are welcome. The work is further enriched when another layer of public participation is added, not only is it presented in public and created for the public but it is ‘by the public’, i.e. made by members of a community for other members of a community.

**Retention:** It is important to engage volunteers with a wide range of responsibilities and not just use them for the easy tasks or the back of stage details. One of the best ways to learn is for managers of a non profit to try doing the volunteer’s tasks themselves. This is revealing and empowering. People love to learn new things and one of the great values of working as a volunteer is that you can be pushed to cross some boundaries. The act of volunteering increases one’s sense of ownership and belonging and this invitation in itself can build trust and establish connections between members of a community. Deep volunteer relationships are helpful to the project and are an additional way to accomplish and support the larger mission of rebuilding community cohesion and pride and are the best way to promote vital volunteer retention. Giving competent volunteers permission to take on real responsibility is the best way to reward and motivate volunteers. They must never be considered to be free staff.

**Leveraging your community’s skills, ideas and resources:** Volunteers can also provide real expertise, new connections, important insights and original ideas. Any community is full of citizens with good ideas for how to improve things. The challenge is that many of these ideas go unrealized because there is no easy way to connect with people, no way to provide oversight or even to extend an invitation to get involved. There are issues of insurance, training, tools, permissions, and oversight. Often a good idea is not put into practice just because there is no mechanism to be the interface between the citizen and the municipality. A non-profit Creative Placemaker can serve this role — providing guidance, oversight, insurance, tools, permitting, and





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providing the liaison connections to the right municipal departments. The more citizens can get constructively involved and rewarded by the changes they can accomplish, the more the spirit of volunteerism will grow.

Benefits of the volunteer experience: Volunteering can be tremendously rewarding and fulfilling. Working together builds friendships and teams and these teams can be effectively deployed to solve many problems in a community, adding further to the positive sense of achievement via contribution.

### 4.4.2 Volunteer Structure and Management

Volunteer programs have similarities and differences in terms of structure and management with respect to paid employment as described in the tables below.<sup>96,97,98</sup>

**Similarities between Volunteers and Paid Employees:** Just like regular employees, volunteers need structure, oversight, management, training, coordination, scheduling, recruiting, clear workplace structure, reasonable working conditions, functioning equipment, relationships oversight, job descriptions and thanking. It is a full-time job and responsibility just to accomplish this. While the skills and techniques for managing volunteers are the same as for personnel management and for job site leadership, there is the added complexity that you cannot 'fire' them if there is not an appropriate fit, and you do not have the incentive of salaries to assure reliability, follow through, or loyalty.

### Differences of Volunteers and Paid Employees:

The differences lie along the lines of recruitment and retention methods. Paid employees are recruited via entire range of traditional and contemporary work channels while volunteers for non-profits are often most successfully recruited via word of mouth with current volunteers, or by them witnessing a Creative Placemaking event and wanting to be part of it. Paid workplaces have a series of tools that an organization can leverage to motivate and retain employees: compensation, promotions, bonuses, recognition and benefits. Considering the challenges in recruiting volunteers, retention is a priority and can be accomplished through skill development, personal growth, ensuring challenges, contact with 'clients' of non-profits and recognition of service via public and peer recognition and rewards (non-monetary).

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<sup>96</sup> <http://www.volunteerhub.com/blog/volunteers-part-i-what-makes-them-stay/>

<sup>97</sup> <http://www.volunteerhub.com/blog/volunteers-part-ii-what-makes-them-leave/>

<sup>98</sup> <http://www.volunteerhub.com/frec-trial/>





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In the United States, statistically, the numbers of people volunteering are on the rise, with rural and suburban contexts showing stronger rates of volunteerism than urban centers.<sup>99</sup> Paid staff and volunteer staff need to have clear assignments and roles so that the two roles do not undermine or confuse operational oversight and responsibilities. Training for OSHA, code compliance, safety, and other factors (including the arts elements) are always required.

### **4.4.3 Volunteer Insurance Issues**

Labor law varies state by state, but in general volunteers deserve the same respect and attention as employees. They and their actions will have to be covered in the liability insurance policies. Some roles, such as site foreman or being a boat captain with a crew under your care and direction may entail the assumption of personal responsibility and liability by the volunteer. Understanding the details of how state law and insurance coverage in place covers and interacts with volunteers is the responsibility of the producing non-profit organization, as is informing the volunteer of these details. Written policies and training are required.

### **4.4.4 Job Training Partnerships and Opportunities**

Job Training programs have many regulatory and insurance requirements as well as certification, accreditation, record keeping, liability, testing, teaching facility needs, equipment, infrastructure and tool needs, cost and management issues and other responsibilities. For these reasons it is recommended that job training programs be accomplished in partnership with established, existing job training programs in the Riverhead area such as BOCES or Timothy Hill. Additionally, there is a movement to create opportunities for former convicts in the area and a collaboration on physical activities to support Creative Placemaking such as setting up staging or Phragmites removal and elimination of Southern Pine Beetle (SPB), where once trained there will likely be additional work needed.

The resulting trainees from these programs can be effectively and helpfully integrated into the community programs and they can become an important and reliable asset for labor and production needs. Job training is a tremendous boon to the larger community and to those receiving training.

Types of contracts, sources are funding: Job trainees can be paid while they are learning; others are part of an educational or internship program. There are Federal and State job training funds available that might be able to be coordinated with the skills and tasks needing completion. There are environmental funds for work like SPB eradication in the Pine Barrens. To create a

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<sup>99</sup> <http://eleventygroup.com/site/2013/01/22/14-facts-and-statistics-about-the-state-of-nonprofit-volunteer-recruitment/>





sustainable program, the organization must ensure that job training partners design programs that remain focused on training the candidate in marketable skills.

**4.4.5 Costs/Benefits of a Volunteer Program Utilizing WaterFire Providence as an Example**

Every volunteer program has different costs/benefits based on the needs of the organization and the ability of the organization to handle all of the activities listed above. For example, the easier it is to recruit volunteers, the fewer resources are dedicated to this activity. Another example, the better the retention rate, the lower the training costs. Utilizing WaterFire Providence as an example, we can evaluate a specific situation:

**Costs:**

Staff for volunteer oversight  
Responsibilities: recruit, train, motivate and coordinate volunteers  
Three Staff members (FTE), total salary .....\$103,000

All taxes & assigned portion of Healthcare.....\$20,600

Materials, meals, expenses ..... \$20,000

Total cost = \$143,600

**Benefits:**

This yielded 5,294 volunteers working 15,881 hours producing office work and field work at and in preparation/clean up for 14 events in 2015. The IRS valued this work is \$23.56/hour or \$374,155 or a difference of over \$230,000.

If this work had been paid for from the WaterFire’s budget, one would also have to associate fundraising costs further raising the cost of \$374,155 in labor.

Volunteers are excellent ambassadors for Creative Placemaking encouraging attendance from their friends, family and co-workers and recruiting other volunteers.

This example does not include interns or board time or overheads associated with workspaces with the assumption that the same workspace would be necessary for paid employees.





## 5.0 Planning Overview for Large Scale Events

This section review detailed needs and opportunities for restaurants, other food offers, non food vendors, restrooms, music and performance areas and gives examples of costs for policing, traffic management, road closures and litter cleaning operations.

Ideal planning is about optimizing flows of visitors throughout the downtown, linking the major assets of the community to guarantee: visitor enjoyment of the largest portion of the community, visitor access to broad range of activities during events, adequate services for visitors, optimal commercial exposure of town for maximizing economic impact and attention to avoiding congestion.

**A note on overall capacity:** The selected venues described have an approximate combined capacity without congestion of 45,000. Adding in wayfinding paths, restaurants, Polish Town, western and southern undeveloped river parks and pathways around Grangebél Park and along the opposing shore of the River Walk, the numbers easily reach 120,000-150,000 or more with the visitors comfortably creating a vibrant festival site without the Town's resources being overwhelmed.

In **Appendix T: Capacity and Occupancy**, 12 data points are evaluated related each of dozens of individual sites in strategic areas of the town, providing the backbone for a flexible structure for Creative Placemaking event planners to develop a usage plan to accommodate their event. Definitions of the 12 data points:

1. District: refers to the primary areas of importance to Creative Placemaking in the town that are divided (according to the maps provided) into three areas:

- Downtown West (approximately Polish Town, Railroad station and surrounding area, courthouses)
- Downtown/Riverfront including (Grangebél, Peconic Avenue, Peconic River Walk and contiguous areas and Main Street from Griffing Ave to Union)
- Downtown East: East Second Street area from Main Street to the Fire Department land and the western parking lot managed by Long Island Aquarium.





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2. Description of Area/Section for Creative Placemaking: Each area has been selected for its potential usefulness to Creative Placemaking.

3. Specific use as part of a Creative Placemaking Plan: The uses are divided into four types.

- Destination venue - this is a larger venue, away from areas of potential congestion and centered in areas needing ‘vibrancy building’
- Wayfinding activity venue - this is a venue that is meant to be a ‘living sign-post’ enticing visitors toward the destination venues.
- Primary congregation area for water based events and recreation - these venues are the ‘natural’ centers of Creative Placemaking events where visitors will tend to congregate. Due to the natural congestion profile considering the configuration of the town, avoid any additional activities in these areas (vendors, additional cultural activities, etc.) during large events that could contribute to the congestion.
- Secondary congregation area for water based events and recreation - these venues are contiguous to the ‘natural’ centers of Creative Placemaking events and can be used to pull visitors from the primary congregation areas to mitigate congestion.

4. Map ID refers to the maps

5. Strategic Objectives: How do the utilizations in number 3. above serve the objectives of building flows throughout the community to reach Creative Placemaking objectives

6. View of River: visibility of events staged on the river (Cardboard Boat Race, WaterFire, races). Visibility makes a location more valuable from the perspective of the event’s content but the sightlines of the river park constrict viewing of events on the river and will lead to congestion during an event. Section 6.0 suggests some infrastructure improvements to improve these sightlines.

7. Maximum visitor capacity. This will vary by the type of event, but this is based on a dense open use, such as standing concert; and not an event with tents, tables, etc. This is capacity based on comfort without feeling congestion, not public safety constraints on crowding.

8. Portion of area that is accessible/usable (Size in Square Feet)





9. Food Venue - this number represents the number of average sized (10'x10') food vendors that could be located in this space, should this space be included in the event.
10. Portable Toilets - this number represents the number of public toilets that could be located in this space, should this space be included in the event. See Appendix Y.
11. Commercial (sales non food) this number represents the number of average sized non-food vendors (10'x10') that could be located in this space, should this space be included in the event.
12. Specific Music / Performance venue - this number represents the appropriateness of the space for this usage

### 5.1 Review Space Availability For Events: Restaurants



Figure 22 downtown Riverhead food venues by price range

In this section estimates are provided regarding existing and extending capacity to feed visitors at Creative Placemaking events evaluating supply and demand. Beautifying Main Street enhancing downtown Riverhead as a destination for dining is reviewed.





### Restaurant Capacity and Demand:

**Demand:** Based on experiences at Creative Placemaking events, approximately 80% of visitors will consume a meal or snack purchasing it from a restaurant dine-in, take-away, outdoor vendor or shop. This data is comparable to the results of the Community Survey referred to in other sections of this report. Percentages of visitors who will eat is actually higher than 80% as with meals purchased for parents are shared (with children, etc.) and visitors supplementing their food/drink purchases with things they have brought with them. Approximately 60% of visitors will eat in a restaurant if there available at the price point preferred.

Interviews of 31 restaurants around Riverhead were conducted including the McDonald's in Riverside<sup>100</sup>. A rough calculation yields a seat capacity of approximately 1500 spots internally on and around Main Street, with potentially an additional 575 outdoor alfresco seats including the use of several adjacent 'side lots' along Main Street. Permitting should be revised if needed to allow this type of seating.<sup>101</sup>

It is worth noting that the recently renovated Birchwood in Polish town now has 250 of the indoor seats and is also considered an 'indoor venue' in the evaluation of community assets in Section 2.0.

With respect to total number of meals that can be served in a given period, standard industry metrics (event-planning) support an average of 85% capacity to allow for turnover of tables and an average of 3 to 5 turns. On this basis, the current restaurants that are in downtown Riverhead could offer up to 7000 meals seated meals during peak visitation hours at an event lasting a portion of a day where the expectation is that visitors will eat a single meal. Of this, the McDonald's on Flanders road is very busy during Country Fair, and is capable of serving upwards of 300 meals per hour or approximately 1200 meals during the peak visitation hours.

**Calculating relevant capacity (supply):** In the case of events in Polish Town or other areas of the community where there are fewer restaurants, these calculations can be revised as follows: number of seats of restaurants within 1 block of the event x 85% average utilization to allow for turns x 3 - 5 (maximum) turns during an average event schedule.

The additional facility of the 'black room' at the Vail Leavitt theater provides the capacity to host diners; for example they have used the 'black room' for a chef's private culinary event; and the Suffolk Theater serves food to take away as well as have 'chef's events', tasting events with

<sup>100</sup> Appendix U: Riverhead Restaurant Survey

<sup>101</sup> <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/pedestrians/streetseats.shtml>





music. Assuming the theaters would have fewer 'turns' yields an estimate of an additional 900-1200 meals in the same period. Table 5-1 shows estimated demand by spending profiles for three levels of visitors demonstrating numbers of restaurant meals to serve during an event.

Demand by Price Point at Creative Placemaking Events <sup>102</sup>	Visitor numbers		
	Restaurant Meal demand		
(restaurant demand = 60% of visitors)	20,000	50,000	80,000
High	7%	840	2,100
Moderate-High	13%	1,560	3,900
Moderate	35%	4,200	10,500
Affordable	45%	5,400	13,500

**Table 5-1: Estimated demand by spending profiles for restaurant meals during events**

**Expanding capacity to meet demand while building Creative Placemaking initiatives:** Comparison of the total number of meals to be served versus the demand shows that a key need is expanded capacity to feed the visitors who will be attracted to successful placemaking initiatives with large numbers of visitors. The challenge is that this growth in clientele business is episodic, so the solutions need to be responsive to the event schedule, weather contingencies and inexpensive. The continuous, related streetscape of historic building facades on downtown Main Street is a great asset. This setting is a popular and much favored exterior environment for food events, expansion of existing restaurant seating with al fresco seating, and pop-up temporary cafe seating events.

This section contains numerous suggestions for increasing meal-serving capacity while developing interesting attractive Creative Placemaking venues.

For major events Main Street should be closed to traffic and the entire area used as a pedestrian space. For existing restaurants this will permit the sidewalks to be used for exterior cafe seating, with the pedestrians now walking in the street. This will work with contiguous restaurant spaces along the street.

<sup>102</sup> Based on data gathered from sources at WaterFire Providence





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An alternative arrangement where the existing buildings are housing retail or gallery space where the window space is used is to reverse this arrangement and have pedestrians use the sidewalks and place the cafe seating in the now closed street space, which affords great views of the historic building facades. This has the advantage of making a continue cafe seating area down the middle of the street which can be connected to anchor restaurants on either side of the street. It is critical to leave lanes for pass through of pedestrians and to leave the area open enough for freedom to travel by foot.

The outdoor seating area should be cleanly laid out, formally organized, and coordinated across all restaurants in terms of its siting, seating, and table options. A consistent look to the seated dining areas will bring a great deal of continuity and visual unity to the streetscape, contrasting the order of the seating with the charm of the individual buildings. This can be achieved with similar or coordinated seating, table clothes, parasols, and shade covers. This can create an attractive downtown space with a capacious and attractive 'restaurant' scene, improving vibrancy and vitality and featuring East End food providers.

Italian-style 'Sagra' or festival of the harvest: This street dining scene can become an attraction in and of itself and scheduled for logical dates around the growing season, such as harvest festivals focused on certain local crops.

There are other combinations of tactical urbanism installations in the street that could be created in conjunction with the restaurants, such as tented art festivals and Creative Placemaking interventions such as street performers, chalk street drawing competitions drawn live while people watch, with a prize for various winners. The winners are selected by tokens deposited in a container by the drawing by the observing visitors. (see Section 4.0 for other programming ideas). All of this will make a fun destination, build an exciting street-scape, provide visual appeal and can provide some shade and rain protection.

In either arrangement, the restaurant zones should be strategically be arranged around outdoor stages with music and performances, dance, and spoken work arts. These performance venues should be spaced sufficiently far apart to allow the performances to be acoustically isolated to avoid cross-talk between different performers, also or alternatively make use of a staggered performance schedule to allow uninterrupted acoustic performances between adjacent stages. The downtime of such an arrangement can allow for breakdown and change over setups and audio engineering for successive bands. The stages should also be established with an eye towards emphasizing an appropriate historic building facade that can be a featured background. The two existing theatres should also be used for performances.





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One technique used in tactical urbanism is the creation of raised ‘Streetseat’<sup>[2]</sup> curbside seating modules such as that approved in NY and California where ‘platforms’ accommodating seating is created in the curb lane. This is usually used in situations where traffic is still going to be passing by in the street lanes and there is a need for a better way to isolate and protect the seated patrons from the traffic. The platform has added height and a stronger barrier (both physical and visual) on the street side. If car traffic is stopped, the Streetseat model is not needed and not recommended. Placing tables and chairs directly on the sidewalks and streets is much preferable for many reasons:

- less expensive to make
- less expensive and faster to set up
- far more flexible and allow a wide range of sizes and openings
- less cumbersome to set up and move
- the Streetseat flooring and curbs create a new insurance liability

Most restaurants on Main Street could put several tables directly along their storefronts on the sidewalks; expand down the street and use side lots and side streets to build capacity. This would add an average of 16 to 24 additional seats in addition to their regular internal capacity. Additionally, additional seats and tables could also be set up in front of other types of shops on Main Street next to participating restaurants. In this way approximately 600 to 700 more outdoor seats could be provided right on Main Street from eastern corner at Griffing Ave to the western corner at Union. This yields approximately 3000 meals.

Street kiosks are addressed further in another section, but along Main Street, businesses are engaged and a project is developed to establish and promote short term trial shop occupancies for new businesses or else pop-up shops and galleries for event nights to assure seamless street front activity in the stores. There is a short term need to underwrite occupancy, pop-ups or engaging store window displays to achieve continuous storefront activation. It is important to not undercut store occupancy by promoting street kiosks while the shops are empty. A portion of the McDonald’s parking lot toward the River could also be transformed into a larger dining area.

The restaurants of Riverhead offer a broad range of typical food offers found in northeastern towns in the US. Importantly, when considering large events, these restaurants offer take-out. Information geared toward informing restaurants of the opportunities in Creative Placemaking initiatives should focus on estimates of the visitor numbers to enable the businesses to gear up also to offer perhaps a special menu of meals that require a short wait or are ‘summer dinner boxes’ ready-to-to.





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As per Appendix U: Restaurant Survey and Capacity, the preponderance of the offer is in the affordable to moderate range with only 4 out of 31 surveyed restaurants in the moderate-high price range and one in the 'high' price range. To achieve the highest revenues in the town, food offerings need to reflect demand and successful Creative Placemaking projects will promote culinary interest and attract customers for more higher-end price offerings. A series of different formulas for the equivalent of 'pop-ups' or temporary additions to the food offering could be arranged with different groups, accommodating larger crowds, offering greater variety, assuring shorter lines and dividing the responsibility for organization.

### 5.2 Other Food Opportunities

Another concept for feeding the visitors is to create an area for a food truck derby, in conjunction with Edible Long Island who has a successful summer derby every August.<sup>103</sup> Note that most gourmet food trucks pride themselves on serving "slow food" and are thus not capable of feeding large numbers so attention must be paid to calculating how many meals are expected of this type of venue.

Data on Food trucks (predominantly used for lunchtime consumers) shows that during the three peak 'meal' hours at lunchtime service of 200 dishes is average. More than one food truck derby can be set up at an event, to and taking advantage of their 'mobile' nature to provide food in areas of the event not directly connected to Main Street. At an all-day event, the data is based on the assumption that 50 meals can be served per hour. Feeding approximately 5000 people at an event, one derby set up this way consists of a corral of 15-20 food trucks surrounding gazebos covering 30 picnic tables. Set-ups of this size will fit in several venues as analyzed in Appendix T: Capacity and Occupancy, and should be chosen depending on the event and with the following criteria:

- Food trucks should not be parked on the sides of streets that have not been closed to traffic
- They should be parked in lots in a 'regular' formation (like a food court) surrounding the space.

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<sup>103</sup> <http://www.ediblelongisland.com/event/the-great-food-truck-derby-2015/>





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- Seating for 10-20 people via picnic benches, tables and chairs, stand up height bar tables or the equivalent should be set out for every food truck you engage, seating should be arranged together, and depending on the season, some can be under a tenting structure in shoulder season.
- The trucks should be oriented (facing left or right to the customer) according to how they are used by the proprietor to ensure they function optimally.
- Garbage pails should be placed near the exits of the food truck derby court but ideally not very visible as you approach the space.
- Live music in proximity to the food truck derby will ensure that the venue draws traffic.

The venues that should be considered for each event depend on the street closures. Sight lines are important and the tables, tents and truck positions should be studied to attract the eye of visitors from the furthest distance possible. Potential locations for Food Truck Derbies include:

- The parking lot run by the Aquarium to the left and right of Union Avenue. Interview with the Hyatt has confirmed that they would make these spaces available during events. The lot marked as 'Fire Dept. jurisdiction' was confirmed in interviews with Town officials as being available for events.
- Griffing Avenue: the parking lot across from the courts.
- In Riverside: County Center. The location should be very visible from anyone traveling from the west toward the traffic circle to bring them off of the road.
- The Long Island Cauliflower Association on Marcy Avenue which is also an excellent option for a music venue.
- The Polish Pavilion

Food trucks should not be placed on the parking lots along the river walk nor should they be positioned to compete with restaurants on Main Street. Restaurants in Riverhead who do not have locations along Main Street should be considered as priority vendors for kiosks, tents or food truck options.





**Creation of Taste of Long Island/Taste of the City/Brooklyn food festival/Flushing meets west/Taste of Tribeca**

Many restaurants and chefs in the greater area would welcome the opportunity for exposure to the public that will attend Creative Placemaking events in Riverhead. Existing and new events could be coordinated that would be held under tenting (open sided) or in some of the currently closed Main Street buildings. Depending on the size of the venue.

Slow Food East End suggested that they could coordinate local chefs who have their own followings and could create pop-up food offerings using local ingredients, with high-end tasting menus and advance sales of timed tickets, also promoting the activity through their own networks.<sup>104</sup> Areas zoned for high-end food pop-ups are indicated on the map. Each of these venues could feed approximately 50-200 guests at a time, depending on the type of food offered, and should be scaled according to the number of visitors expected at the event. These same venues can provide large canopies, parasols or gazebos to cover the guests providing shade or cover to encourage leisurely ‘tasting’ experiences. The Polish Pavilion also marked as a venue can accommodate 200 diners.

In order to involve the local farmers in a retail project that would engage them directly, leadership at the Farmers Market suggested that they organize a selection of a variety of ‘boxed meals’ that could be ordered ahead of time or simply purchased on demand at the farmers market, offering a high-quality and fast meal for visitors.<sup>105</sup> The new town policy of providing bracelets for identifying those who are 21-year old and over will facilitate the hospitality industry in taking advantage of the Creative Placemaking events. There should be several price points studied by the farmers market with some ‘luxury’ add-ons available including local wines.<sup>106</sup>

Additionally, an idea to create the worlds’ largest potluck dinner could be a theme, the Guinness Book of World Records currently is only 1275 attendees<sup>107</sup> and it could be an event very much oriented around local residents coordinated with local church and civic groups to embrace different local cuisines and seasonal dishes (Polish, Central American, soul food, etc.) with Guinness record aspect adding a sense of excitement and also creatively staged to bring attention to the mix of cultures for the delight of visitors.

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<sup>104</sup> Interviews with Judiann Carmack-Fayyaz in 2014 and 2015.

<sup>105</sup> Interviews with Holly Browder in 2014 and 2015.

<sup>106</sup> <http://www.eastendbeacon.com/2015/05/28/riverhead-revamps-alcohol-policy-for-public-events/>

<sup>107</sup> <http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/largest-potluck-party/>





Along the lines of the many festivals worldwide that are focused on harvest, for example the Italian ‘Sagra’ concept mentioned above, there are tremendous crops of local produce that should be featured in food-oriented festivals that highlight:

- Local production (food, wine, aquaculture, etc.)
- Local ‘celebrity’ chefs
- Outside chefs that bring ‘cachet’
- Local cultures and how they work with the local production in their cuisine
- Moderately priced ‘street-foods’ made with the same ingredients
- Sustainable farming practices
- How these local productions relate to the history of the East End.

The importance of festivals of this nature to Agritourism was raised by WaterFire International in a farm-bureau forum with the relevant representative of the USDA<sup>108</sup>. Follow up indicated that there are funds and interest to support these activities. Suffolk County can participate in coordinating activating these funds as they have a comprehensive handle on the industry and market and its promotion.<sup>109</sup>

An important area for consideration is a series of collected concession fees from food providers out in the street and for alcohol sales so that some of this commercial activity can be harnessed to provide sustainable financial support for the costs both of the town and of any non-profit involved in supporting Creative Placemaking projects. In order to encourage participation from the least commercial entities, those that will make the event rich with ‘genuine’ products, the first time around, events should try to provide sponsorship or a sort of ‘rebate’ program for small businesses/artist whereby the vendors are asked to make a financial commitment to participate, but only to ensure that ‘free spaces’ do not go empty. Upon participating, the fees could be returned all or in part. This applies to non-food vendors as well.

### **5.3 Evaluation of Parking Locations and proposed Shuttle routes**

There is considerable parking right in downtown Riverhead and much more in the larger BOA area and beyond into adjacent Southampton. The Parking study included in the BOA confirmed that there are a total of 2,710 parking spaces in the downtown area, of which 236 are on the street, 2,121 are public or institutional and 353 spaces are private. At peak weekday occupancy only 1,290 spaces are used, leaving 1,420 unused spaces (1,311 of these are public spaces). Of greater significance is that the peak observed weekend parking load is only 516 spaces; leaving 2,194 spaces (of these 1,915 are public spaces). This peak observed weekend parking load is further

<sup>108</sup> Meeting with Ed Avalos at Grapes and Greens, October 2014

<sup>109</sup> Augie Ruckdeschel provided and reporting from the DED comprehensive data





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reduced on weekend evenings, so there is significant parking capacity to support Creative Placemaking projects in the immediate vicinity of downtown Riverhead and for large events, considerable additional parking beyond downtown.

These parking space inventory totals for downtown Riverhead do not include the significant amounts of parking surrounding the downtown area. The undeveloped lots and streets north of 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave, the parking in Polish Town and all the areas west of the Nugent Drive Bridge are all not included. The Evan Griffing and Suffolk County Court Complex just south of the Peconic River has 1,975 public parking spaces available on weekends and evenings. Street parking in Riverside is available as well.

The proposed shuttle routes to downtown proposed in Figure 23 connect with additional large parking sites to the west at Tanger Outlets, Riverhead Raceway, and can be expanded to even reach the Calverton Airpark providing more than 2,500 additional parking spaces. Shuttle routes to the South could include stops at the Suffolk County Court Complex (if an event is distant from this location) and the Suffolk County Community College, Eastern Campus. In discussions with Tanger Outlets, for a large event they would plan on offering parking services, trolley services for the 2.8-mile distance to Riverhead. They discussed keeping their shops open late, even until midnight.<sup>110</sup> Considering the number of additional parking spaces along route 58, this approach makes sense commercially and logistically and enables the town to also negotiate with the landlords/shopkeepers of the stores along Rt. 58 to support the cost of the trolleys which could be co-branded to show sponsorship.

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<sup>110</sup> From conversation with Tanger Management





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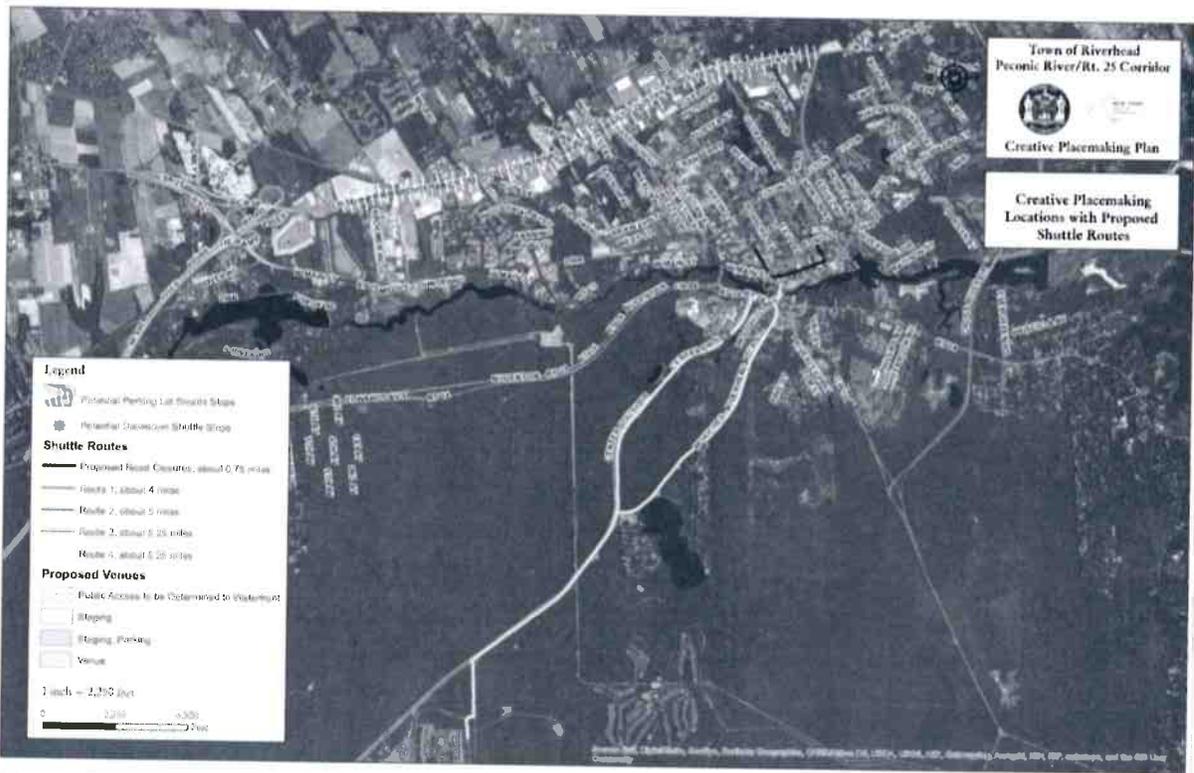


Figure 23 showing concept for locations with proposed shuttle routes.

The parking study's recommendation that there should be better signage marking publically available parking lots is noted and seconded.

The combination of the opportunities for shopkeepers to benefit from the additional traffic and the convenience of the proximity of the 'strip' to the exits on the LIE is ideal. Small experiments have been conducted for other events.

Several trolley routes which may be successful if 'overlapping' could be set up to avoid visitors spending too much time on the trolleys. Attention must be given to short waiting times to encourage the visitor to feel that this option is 'efficient'. The trolleys could distribute promotional maps about Creative Placemaking events and the community as well as promotional materials for the sponsor. All of the larger hotels agreed in principal that they would offer trolleys to downtown Riverhead as well. The model of the trolley system is more like Disney in that it takes the visitor to their car, as opposed to the type of jump-on-jump-off model for tourism. The point is to keep people walking through the downtown, not have them riding the trolleys. Stops from the Hampton Jitney, North Fork Express and any other coach services should also connect to downtown Riverhead on the nights of special events, enabling further connections to the west and south.





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There are several advantages to combining the stops with coordinated shopping. A few considerations:

- If there is a schedule, people can shop while they wait.
- It is a deeper integration of visitors into the community, instead of them just passing thorough.
- Having the haven of a shopping venue will add a sense of safety
- If there is hot weather or cold weather or inclement weather, they can wait inside, then they are more likely to shop as well.

The objective is multi-faceted: increase parking options, reduce congestion near downtown and create proactive conditions for the shops on Rt. 58 to sponsor the trolleys. As outlined on the map, there should be several trolley routes, keeping the trolleys on smaller 'loops' from the parking areas to the downtown (i.e. each trolley does not cover the entire route.) So for example, the trolley that picks up at home depot and best buy parking lots then drives people to western end of Main Street and the one that picks up for example at Target drives people down to the Hyatt. This also makes it easy for visitors to remember how to use the trolley system.

One advantage of seeking satellite parking with shuttle connections to downtown Riverhead south and west of downtown is that they have the capacity to redirect considerable amounts of automobile traffic headed to the event into parking lots before they reach the areas of roadway that will be most impacted by the additional traffic volume.

### **5.4 Cost estimates and logistical details for traffic management and policing; litter cleaning operations and road closures**

Detailed estimates of this type would need to be done once the event was planned and there is a better understanding of the various components of the event that influence this type of estimate:





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- Dry/alcohol
- First time event/repeat event
- Type of advertising: advertising plans and marketing
- Physical area of community to be involved and its condition: accessibility, road capacity, ground cover, power, adjacent power or gas lines)
- Number of street closures
- Meteorological conditions
- Seasonality and weather contingencies
- the nature of the event (sports vs. food vs. arts vs music vs. fireworks vs. public sculpture vs. hip-hop concert),
- natural hazards (wind, water, edges, lightning risks, fire conditions)
- venue issues (indoor vs. outdoor vs. tented)
- the audience (age, temperament, demographic and composition)
- free vs. ticketed, gated vs. open, seated vs. standing
- daylight vs. night
- timing issues (related to day of week, sunset, traffic peaks)
- the expected variability of weather and temperature,

As an example, for a free nighttime event at WaterFire in Providence, where alcohol is served, musical performances and choices are family oriented, visitor numbers expected are 100,000, most activities are outdoors, the visitors are congregated around the river site and there is no direct advertising of the event, the crowd is considered to be a relatively 'clean' crowd (the trash goes in the trash cans), the costs are as follows:

**Policing:** Police and Fire Marshal for year including up to 20 events at \$60,000. In Providence, of this, WaterFire pays \$35,000. The City of Providence donates \$25,000 in labor.

**Street closures:** WaterFire deploys six water filled barriers for certain road closures. These were a one-time purchase of \$400 each. Labor costs per barrier are about \$50 to truck, place, fill, drain, truck, and store.

**Litter/Trash.** Litter is cleaned up by City under union contract. The city donates the cleanup labor. **Trash cans:** The city collects from its 20 permanent trash cans along the river front. WaterFire adds 60 90-gallon trash cans to these 20, and is entirely responsible for their placement requiring 25 man hours of paid staff to place, remove, and empty. \$25/hour. Total \$625





### **5.5 Other venues: Music/Performance, non-food vendors and sanitary facilities**

**Appendix T: Capacity and Occupancy** analyzes multiple sites in across downtown Riverhead with recommendations for appropriate usage that can be selected based on the specific event organized.

**Music and Performance** venues have been suggested based on principles using activities to draw visitors into the entire community drawing visitors away from potential areas of congestion such as along the river walk avoiding acoustic 'pollution' between venues

#### **Non-food vendors**

Food vendors attract the people so while they should have their own areas, the shopping (non-food) opportunities should be near enough that they benefit from visitors searching for meals.

**Sanitary facilities** should be plentiful, respecting as per the guidelines supplied in Appendix Y: Portable Sanitary Facility Estimates. This enhances the visitor experience as the facilities stay cleaner and there is a shorter wait if they are provided in adequate quantities. As far as locating, they should be distributed around the event, near enough to the activities and food venues without disturbing the experience of either visually or otherwise.





### 6.0 Site Analysis of the Peconic River for WaterFire

The bulk of this study is addressing broader Creative Placemaking principles and how they might best benefit Riverhead. As there has been strong local interest in how a concept like WaterFire might impact and benefit Riverhead, this last section is an analysis of how the existing current site conditions would interact with such an event. A successive phase would be the design phase where WaterFire International would design the work to respond to Riverhead’s strengths and use various Creative Placemaking techniques to developed solutions to address site challenges. As a WaterFire on the Peconic event would also impact the adjacent town of Southampton, these observations include some review of the south shore. A review of some follow up areas for study is included in the follow up to the WaterFire Assessment at the end of this section.



Figure 24: Map of proposed WaterFire Installation (two phases) and street closures





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The map indicates with red brazier markers the areas where WaterFire would be installed on its initial installation. The red markers do not indicate the number of braziers or their exact location, but simply the section of shore that would be engaged. The yellow brazier markers indicate the areas where WaterFire would be expanded to as access improves along these shores.

### 6.1 Introduction to Design and Programming Principles for WaterFire

The Peconic River site in Riverhead is an eminently successful potential location for WaterFire, and one that has many intriguing and unique assets and possibilities. The achievement of as many of these art conditions as possible for the visitor in the site is the critical step to assure the success of WaterFire on Long Island. All sites have challenges. Creating and developing innovative solutions to these challenges will be part of the subsequent development of WaterFire in Riverhead.

As discussed in Section 1, Creative Placemaking is a collection of strategies rather than a fixed doctrine and can embody a wide range of potential solutions, methods, partnerships and interventions. The common thread is the remarkable success that is sparked by the engagement of artists and the addition of art to public places. Creative Placemaking's strength is exactly this wide variety of artists and artistic approaches. Each artist has a different focus and approach and often the best guide to finding the correct strategy for a particular site is assessing both the site's similarity to other successful projects and also gauging the community's interest, response and comfort to various potential art installations.

WaterFire is a much regarded Creative Placemaking art installation<sup>111</sup> and engagement on the rivers in downtown Providence River that was featured in the NEA's founding document on Creative Placemaking<sup>112</sup> and is often credited with playing a significant role in transforming Providence from a failure to an award-winning success.<sup>113</sup> Riverhead's historic river is the same width and is similarly adjacent to Main Street. A number of residents and civic leaders have been actively exploring the idea of bringing WaterFire to the Peconic River. Herein is a site analysis of the Peconic River's potential to be a successful site for WaterFire.

WaterFire is a work of art that is created at city scale. It is a visual and acoustic spectacle that is designed to rebrand a city, build community wide engagement and attract a large audience. As such, its design must be attentive to all of the details and responsibilities needed to ensure public safety and the professional management of large gatherings of people. The solutions to these

<sup>111</sup> "Engages and mesmerizes viewers with an emotional power very few works of art ever achieve.", WaterFire, Quix Art Quarterly, Fall, 1996

<sup>112</sup> [www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/CreativePlacemaking-Paper.pdf](http://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/CreativePlacemaking-Paper.pdf)

<sup>113</sup> Francis J. Leazes Jr. and Mark T. Motte, Providence: The Renaissance City, 2004





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problems are subject to close review to ensure that the methods and details of production are foregrounding and maintaining the important aesthetic aspects of the art experience that are essential for its success. These interactions can be less obvious and will be emphasized here with respect to what implications these requirements may have for the site.

Creation and management of the arts experience: WaterFire's success and popularity stem wholly from the content and management of the visitor's experience of the artwork and thus their response to the aesthetic, empathic, emotional, metaphoric, symbolic and spiritual dimensions of their experience.<sup>114</sup>

The challenges:

- Present a compelling arts installation that will move and intrigue a wide public
- Balance the production and design challenges with the complexities of a specific site to enhance the artwork's resonances
- Prevent the technical and quotidian details of the site, or the experience of negotiating the crowds and surrounds, from interfering or overwhelming the primacy of the art experience.

These considerations are the domain of the artist, and at the same time they necessarily shape the aspects of the technical production on site for the artwork. Please see Appendix X. Review of the Literature which contains an outline of these concepts, referencing the literature.

An important benefit for the Riverhead community will be the opportunity to directly observe, learn, and adopt some of the techniques and approaches that have proved so successful in Creative Placemaking in other places. These methods can be further reinforced with many of the collateral opportunities to build youth training programs, engage business and non-profits and other partnerships.

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<sup>114</sup> "WaterFire accomplishes what many other public installations only aspire to...we are pulled out of ourselves as well as into ourselves. It's rare for art in any medium, from performance to monumental sculpture, to attain the overwhelming impact of WaterFire." The Providence Phoenix, June 20, 1997





**6.1.1 Performance Related Site Conditions and Requirements**

In general the basic and fundamental site conditions are favorable to a WaterFire installation. Where there are challenges, they seem capable of resolution. See Table 6-1 below.

'First level' conditions/attributes for successful WaterFire installation	Providence	Riverhead
Presence of artists	▲	▲
Desire to add art to public spaces	▲	▲
Appropriate river width / speed for WaterFire	▲	▲
Proximity of the river to downtown	▲	▲
Civic engagement in the concept of WaterFire	▲	▲

**Table 6-1 Comparison of attributes for a successful WaterFire installation: Providence/Riverhead**

**Assessment and Suggestions for a WaterFire at Riverhead:** A first site assessment, rating and suggestions for a WaterFire at Riverhead' assesses the potential for WaterFire. 15 characteristics are reviewed divided in 4 categories:

- Experience & Context: Proximity, Special Features, Sightlines, Natural Forested Shore
- Safety: Public & Fire Safety, River Edge Barrier
- Urban considerations: Darkness and street light levels, Silence and ambient sound levels, Automobile Parking, Commercialism
- Water conditions: Marine traffic, Navigability, River Surface Conditions





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- **Experience & Context: Proximity, Special Features, Sightlines, Natural Forested Shore**

### **Feature adding visual interest, Grangebél Park**

**Rating: Excellent and Unique** The serpentine multi-layered layout of Grangebél Park with its bridges, rills, stage, fish ladder, and upper pond is a wonderful and unique asset and will be transformed from an area underutilized to becoming a favorite WaterFire site with visitors.

### **Proximity of visitors to the installation is critical**

**Rating: Good. On the horizontal plane, excellent proximity can be achieved on the Peconic River Walk and in Grangebél Park** Large numbers of visitors need to be able to achieve physical proximity to the bonfires and have a clear view of the performance on the water. There is a psychological need to approach closely; to have a clear view; to feel the radiant heat and to see each other in the glow of the firelight.

### **Vertical proximity to the installation.**

**Rating: Good. The close vertical proximity of the River Walk to the water surface is another excellent feature, while a similar positive condition (with some variations) also exists in Grangebél Park.** WaterFire on the Peconic will achieve its best success when performed in alignment with high tide, such that high tide occurs between sunset and two hours later.

Riverhead should make every effort to schedule events for high tide when possible. At lower tides, the visual interactions will be more distant and less effective.

### **Natural Forested Shore:**

**Rating: Excellent, Unique** The unusual combination of an urban waterfront across a narrow river from a natural forested wetlands is a wonderful resource, and a welcome situation that will also render the WaterFire at Riverhead unique amongst WaterFires worldwide. The previously discussed ideas for developing this shore into an environmentally-sensitive forest wetland park will create a valuable amenity for the Town. Subsequent design phases will develop conceptual plans for the riverside park and for subsequent special attractions in this area. There will be a magical quality to having this natural background preserved and also many opportunities for special projects in this area.

### **Sightlines are critical**

**Mixed rating: resolvable** See separate section detailing sight lines suggestions below. Optimizing sight lines is absolutely critical plus it enhances the visitors' experience, drives the paseo effect, ensures movement of visitors to guarantee the atmosphere





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- **Safety: Public & Fire Safety, River Edge Barrier**

### Edge barriers

**Rating: Excellent** Due to the configuration of the River and its banks, Riverhead will be able to easily manage crowd density to preserve barrier free conditions

**Fire safety: Fire safety can be established with a variety of event production techniques.**

**Rating: Excellent & an opportunity to make environmental improvement** There are no flammability concerns in Riverhead from surfaces, walkways, or gas utilities. Temporary structures such as tents or signage and banners must be kept out of the two parks and clear of the walkway and fire areas. To the south, on the Southampton shore there may be times when strong winds may prompt restrictions to the event, due to the invasive Phragmites reeds along the river. A project to remove the reeds following regulatory guidelines is recommended and can be facilitated.

### Public safety

**Rating: Excellent** Given the existing parameters in Riverhead, public safety with respect to the fires, the river edge and crowds can be assured with appropriately planned production protocols. During WaterFire events, WaterFire boats will be on site with rescue capability should anyone fall into the water, an occurrence that has been rare in other venues.

- **Urban Considerations: Darkness and street light levels, Silence and ambient sound levels, Automobile Parking, Commercialism**

### Automobile Parking

**Rating: Good, Manageable** On WaterFire nights travel and parking will not be permitted on McDermott Ave, adjacent to the Peconic River Walk way or in the parking lots between the river and Main Street. In other sections are documentation of many other potential parking sites that can accommodate visitors.

### Commercialism

**Rating: Good, Manageable** All commercial activities, vending, lights and noise will be sited far away from the Riverwalk area. Specifications will be provided as part of an implementation plan. The contemplative, aesthetic space where WaterFire occurs must be as free of visual interruption and clutter as possible in order to preserve the atmosphere that makes WaterFire distinctive.





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### **Darkness and street light levels**

**Rating: Excellent, Unique** All street lights and other illumination must be turned off or suitably shuttered. This appears to be entirely possible. WaterFire will specify which lights should be shuttered and how and which should be turned off so as to enhance the experience without compromising security. WaterFire is dependent upon the scene and the audience being illuminated by the firelight.

### **Silence, and ambient sound levels**

**Rating: Excellent, Unique** The site is well situated to meet this requirement. Ancillary performance sites must be placed, oriented, and produced so as to preserve the relative quiet of the riverbank areas. This can be accomplished and will be specified as part of an implementation project which will also meet many other creative placemaking objectives for the community such as visitor flow. WaterFire is a performance event that includes music at a relatively low volume. As such, it requires a quiet environment with a minimum of ambient noise.

- **Water Conditions: Marine traffic, Navigability, River Surface Conditions**

### **River surface conditions**

**Rating: Excellent** The river surface is perfectly sheltered from wind and waves by terrain and topology, making the Peconic River at Riverhead very well suited to a WaterFire Installation

### **Marine traffic**

**Rating: Good, Manageable** On event days and nights, all motorized boat traffic unrelated to the performance will have to be stopped (via a USCG Marine Event Permit or local equivalent) from traveling west (upstream) past the marina at Hyatt Place, or from docking or parking along the Peconic River Walk.

- To assure safety for all, due to potentially explosive gas vapors in holds and engine rooms
- To allow good views of the event
- To limit liability and confusion
- To allow WaterFire boats to have needed access

### **Navigability**

**Rating: Excellent** Depths for the Peconic River area east of Peconic Ave are sufficient for all boats required for WaterFire. Depths for the Peconic River in the upper pond west of Grangebél Park are sufficient for all boats required for WaterFire. The ponds inside Grangebél Park will





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require special low water solutions and will require programming to correspond to high tides. navigability of the entire site is necessary for the event.

### **Improvement in sightlines for WaterFire at Riverhead**

**There are three sightline challenges, below are the descriptions of the challenges & suggestions**

**The high wooden pilings partially occlude the view of the river when looking up and down the river, when they form a fairly dense palisade effect blocking views of the fires low in the water and the flame's reflections.** There are some improvements to this situation possible that could be developed as part of WaterFire's design phase.

**The second sightline challenge is that the naturally very flat topography of the adjacent River Walk, shore, park lawns, road and parking lots will make it difficult for the visitors behind the first two rows of people to be able to see much. Anyone seated in any of the existing benches, picnic tables, or on the lawn will not have a view. The third sightline challenge is counter intuitive, but the River Walk and river are essentially straight and thus visible all at once. Because the entire river can be "taken-in" with one view this reduces visitor's natural motivation to want to walk to exploring the hidden and unknown elements along the river, which is one of the best incentives for enticing visitors to walk.** There are a coordinated series of potential solutions to the two challenges above that can be designed — ranging from simple and immediate to more long-range structural infra-structure improvements. The first point to note is that the site will work as is, but there must be a commitment to working on improving the situation over time. Also, due to these sightline challenges which limit the areas with a good view to the first few rows, it is imperative that the initial design and installation of WaterFire on the Peconic must cover the entire length site of the Peconic River Walk and Grangebél Park to best accommodate opening crowds, or there will be a reputation established that the event is too crowded to make for an enjoyable visit. Brand correction and reputation repair after a mismanaged opening is difficult to do. It is important to start right.

There is a real need to work to improve sightlines. There are a range of solutions that can be designed to improve these sightline challenges and the overall visitor experience. These solutions are outlined below. Solutions that can be designed and implemented (varying timeframe) to improve the overall visitor experience. All of these interventions would expand audience capacity around the Peconic River in positive ways and yield many auxiliary positive benefits for Riverhead, Riverside, Southampton and the region.





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The initial WaterFire event would have to be designed to be of sufficient scale to provide sufficient viewing opportunities for the expected large crowds. WaterFire will have to be planned to maximize use of the location to accommodate the crowd along with solving programming for accessible areas, additions, traffic, and many other variables. These aspects of the project and any potential to move on the above suggestions will all be studied in detail in the design phase.

**Solutions that can be designed and implemented (varying timeframe) to improve the overall visitor experience. Suggestions/Impact:**

**Additional programming along the river edge within the crowd space/Ensure crowd movement and changeover. Create loyalty to the event. Embrace multiple social, cultural objectives**

**Careful promotion of the procession, paseo or passeggiata-like stroll elements along the river front/Ensure crowd movement and changeover**

**Additional programming sites elsewhere, such as on Main Street and beyond/Assure crowd movement and changeover**

**Raising the elevation of the park and road beyond the River Walk/Provide more natural overviews above the crowd. This would have the added advantage of solving the current high tide flooding problems and create a berm to help reduce flooding dangers of wind-driven water, rising sea levels, or hurricane surges.**

**Development of the forested south bank of the Peconic River (in Riverside ) into a green linear park, perhaps with raised-wooden walkways over the estuary areas and other features/Double prime viewing capacity and provide a much welcomed alternative experience and completeness to the site. This improvement would be a great follow-up addition to the success of the Peconic River Walk and Grangebél Park, creating more reasons to visit the area and many other benefits to the community in general, year round. Such a project would also be an ideal project to incorporate as part of a job training program to create local jobs.**

**The pedestrian bridge over the Peconic River to connect downtown to Riverside and its required ramps. It is important that this bridge be elegantly designed, of the right height, and thoughtfully sited on both shores. Further conceptual design work on the bridge and its interaction with the two parks, shore elevations and WaterFire should all be included in subsequent phases of development/Design bridge to provide significantly improved viewing and site programming opportunities. The ADA sloping access ramps on each shore can be**





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designed to also accomplish these infrastructure improvements and raise the elevation of the park and road adjacent to the River Walk. In conjunction with the development of the south shore river bank park proposal, the pedestrian bridge to Riverside would create a compelling and unusual walking loop which would yield many great spaces and benefits for WaterFire events, for other events, and for the town year round.

**The expansion of the WaterFire installation to form a complete ring in the upper pond section of the Grangebel Park area, above the fish ladder/Greatly increase visitor capacity.**

**The expansion of Grangebel Park to develop the upper southern shore of the upper Peconic River to create an expanded park area circling the river and opening the pool and opening the area towards the Evans K. Griffing County Center would be invaluable./** There is not currently enough linear distance for this to a walking park, it is a clustering park, which can cause challenges. Opening this to the large number of employees at the County Center for walking exercise, break times, and walking to downtown for lunch or the train will greatly increase the number of people in the park, with a consequent increase in safety and appeal.

### **Follow up to the WaterFire Assessment**

**South Bank development - East of Peconic Avenue** The development of the Riverside south bank of the Peconic River into a green linear park, perhaps with raised wooden walkways over the estuary areas, would provide a much welcomed completeness to the site and greatly increase viewing capacity. This would be a great benefit to the community in general and would be an ideal project to complete with job training volunteers. The opportunity is to work together with the Town of Southampton on this project, supporting their efforts.

**Advising on design of the Proposed Pedestrian Bridge** The pedestrian bridge to Riverside would support a complete walking loop which would have many great benefits at WaterFire and broadly for all river-based events and for the community in general. The opportunity is to work together with the Town of Southampton on this project, supporting their efforts and ensuring that the project meets the creative placemaking objectives of both communities. Make suggestions regarding design of the pedestrian bridge over the Peconic to connect to Riverside and its required ramps would provide significantly improved view shed opportunities. These suggestions would be specified as part of a WaterFire implementation if a bridge design is presented.

**South Bank development - East of Peconic Avenue & connections to the Proposed Pedestrian Bridge** The opportunity is to work together with the Town of Southampton on this project, supporting their efforts. Recommendations regarding the layout of the south side paths to





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join the future pedestrian bridge should be made as part of an effective Creative Placemaking plan. These suggestions would be specified as part of a WaterFire implementation if a bridge design is presented.

**Expanding the WaterFire Installation** The expansion of the WaterFire installation to form a complete ring in the upper section of the Grangebél Park area, above the fish rill.

**South Bank development - West of Peconic Avenue** The development of the Riverside south bank of the upper Peconic River to create an expanded park area expanding Grangebél Park circling the river and opening the area towards the Evans K. Griffing County Center. The opportunity is to work together with the Town of Southampton on this project, supporting their efforts.

**Modification of pilings on Riverwalk to enhance the River view** The high wooden pilings on the Riverwalk partially occlude the view of the river when looking up and down the river, when they form a fairly dense palisade effect. This would be greatly improved by adjusting heights. This project would be specified as part of a WaterFire implementation.

**Addition of permanent seating along Riverwalk** Due to limited areas with good sightline views of WaterFire, Riverhead will need to be careful to maximize density on the available footprint to accommodate the largest number of visitors. Seating will reduce some of this capacity. Specify design for a linear low river bench with correct spacing so this will both add an additional row of 750 people who will have a view of the river and prevent the view of those behind from being obstructed.

**Raise the greensward park** Specify the ideal height to raise the greensward park along the river walk so that it steps up from the walk and then slopes up to a higher level.

**WaterFire launch and development study** Study of the launch area for WaterFire and successive extensions considering the status of multiple interventions North, South, East and West of Peconic Avenue and in conjunction with Southampton and Suffolk County, considering optimization of visitor flows and installation design with WaterFire.

**Create a lighting plan for WaterFire** Streetlighting as described in this Section, by this it is intended shuttering, turning off of certain city lights and is a project that would be specified as part of a WaterFire implementation.





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**Plan for setting up correct commercial locations for different kinds of commerce** As described in this section, commercial areas need to be in crucial positions to ensure sales and public enjoyment, but not compete with the atmosphere on the river. This project that would be specified as part of a WaterFire implementation.

There is a real need to work to improve sightlines. There are a range of solutions that can be designed to improve these sightline challenges and the overall visitor experience. Solutions that can be designed and implemented (varying timeframe) to improve the overall visitor experience. All of these interventions would expand audience capacity around the Peconic River in positive ways and yield many auxiliary positive benefits for Riverhead, Riverside, Southampton and the region. The initial WaterFire event would have to be designed to be of sufficient scale to provide sufficient viewing opportunities for the expected large crowds. WaterFire will have to be planned to maximize use of the location to accommodate the crowd along with solving programming for accessible areas, additions, traffic, and many other variables. These aspects of the project and any potential to move on the above suggestions will all be studied in detail in the design phase.

### **6.1.2 Crowd Related Site Conditions and Requirements**

Previous discussions in Sections 2.0, 3.0, 4.0 and 5.0 of this report have established that there are many spaces to accommodate large crowds in the immediate area and sites for additional performance, food, and market spaces in and near the Riverhead site. The outlines below of Logistics and Timing and Seasonality address suggestions for managing and promoting movement of the visitors.

### **6.1.3 Logistical Issues: Site requirements for logistical and operational support**

While these do not need to be actually sited now, it does seem that there are a range of potential solutions to these logistical needs available and that Riverhead can be assured that WaterFire can be successfully undertaken on the Peconic River. Please refer to Table 6-2: Logistics. We include Table 6-3: Timing and Seasonality in this section as well as they are interconnected.





**Table 6-2: Logistics for WaterFire on the Peconic River at Riverhead**

Site/element/Description	Technical Specifications
<p><b>Docking and water access/The WaterFire boat fleet will consist of workboats for the anchors and braziers, workboats for the fire tenders to refuel the bonfires, and performance boats</b></p>	<p>Docking area must be in proximity to the site for water-borne performances and interactions. The number of boats will have to be determined by the scale of the installation and the budget. The larger fire tending boats will be approximately 28' in length, 8' in beam, and have a draft of 2'.</p>
<p><b>The inner Grangebel Park pond /The inner Grangebel Park pond is shallow and will require specialized boats and operations to allow water access.</b></p>	<p>Operations and events may have to be restricted to high tide.</p>
<p><b>Guest boats/There is the option of a fleet of small passenger boats for supporters and guests.</b></p>	<p>There are liability, regulatory, and insurance questions to be evaluated by the local authorities and production team.</p>
<p><b>Boat storage/All of the boats will need storage during the season and out of season .</b></p>	<p>During the season: on-water dock storage or moorings, as well as over-winter storage and work facilities to allow seasonal maintenance.</p>
<p><b>Piers, loading, boat ramps and freight yards. The operation of WaterFire will require marine resources and sites to allow launching and storage of boats, loading for boats, plus the on-water storage of supplies, equipment, and firewood. These support resources are still to be located.</b></p>	<p>As water travel is slow these should be located as close to Riverhead as possible, on the river or the bay. A pier to allow direct loading of boats with firewood, or a site for a crane to transfer these loads is critical. During the event there will be a regular need for firewood stores to be replenished on board the boats. This can be done from the main firewood site (if very nearby) or will need to be done from an auxiliary station such as a floating barge or a bridge abutment.</p>
<p><b>Firewood/Firewood must meet multiple technical requirements</b></p>	<p>The firewood for WaterFire must be all pine and should be sourced from trees that are only being felled for other reasons. The firewood must be cut and split closely to specified dimensions. Drying only occurs after the firewood is cut and split and should be done with sun and wind (and not by kiln!) for nine months before the start of the season. Firewood volume cannot be determined until the scale of the event and its frequency are determined.</p>





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**firewood storage/WaterFire will require one or two firewood storage sites depending on their size and location.**

**Firewood phytosanitary measures/ Firewood can be a vector to transport serious arboreal insect pests. WaterFire will have to be careful to observe and abide by all regulations.**

**Pine Beetle suppression & job training/Firewood procurement in association with the SPB suppression program might be an appropriate area for the development of a job training worker employment program for residents of Riverhead. The SPB infestation is centered on Riverhead.**

A laydown outdoor site is required to dry and store the firewood year round. Ideally this wood lot site is adjacent to the Peconic River for directly refilling boats as needed. Other options can be considered. Firewood woodlot storage site dimensions cannot be determined until the scale of the event and its frequency are determined. For example, WaterFire in Providence uses 2,500 SF of storage that is right adjacent to the water to facilitate direct loading into the boats.

To prevent this from happening the federal Environmental Protection Agency and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation have established phytosanitation laws which closely regulate the sale, movement and storage of firewood. NYSDEC regulation 6 CCR-NY 192.5 prohibits "the import of firewood into New York unless it has been heat treated to kill pests. The regulation also limits the transportation of untreated firewood to less than 50 miles from its source."<sup>12</sup> For Riverhead, this means that all untreated firewood must be grown and processed on Long Island, east of Levittown. There are reporting and record requirements and the firewood provider must supply a certificate of source documentation.

The trees being felled by the NYSDEC for Southern Pine Beetle suppression are cleared of the beetles by stripping the bark and they are fine for WaterFire firewood. The trees being felled near Riverhead to contain this outbreak is many orders of magnitude beyond the amount of firewood that WaterFire would ever possibly need. Beyond these efforts significant amounts of pine are being felled in the phytosanitation area for powerline and highway clearance, fire prevention, and by private landowners.





**Table 6-3: Timing and Seasonality for WaterFire on the Peconic at Riverhead**

Issue	Rating & Remarks	Observation	Suggestion / Impact
Season	It is technically possible to present WaterFire in Riverhead all year long, but the colder seasons are not likely to be successful in drawing an audience and are not recommended	Initial interviews with hospitality providers lean toward ‘extending’ their season as per The appropriate season for WaterFire will need to be determined in cooperation with the Town and the community	The precise determination of the best interaction with the visitor calendar and the seasons is beyond the scope of this report, but deserves further discussion between all parties.
Special off season events	Good prospects for some holidays;	The appropriate season for WaterFire will need to be determined in cooperation with the Town and the community.	Thanksgiving and Christmas could merit their own lightings also becoming a destination and tradition for those with holiday homes in the area
Choice of a night	There are many important reasons in Riverhead to consider a Friday night lighting, based on the local pattern of Friday night commutes east from New York City that pass by Riverhead toward the East End, local lodging 'surplus' on Friday nights vs the rest of the week .	In most communities WaterFire is performed on Saturday night for these reasons: To allow street closings to traffic during the day to accommodate tent, stage, and market setups in closed streets and areas, to avoid weekday traffic congestion that will be exaggerated by road closures for set up and to best align with the times when the most community volunteers are available to work	A detailed evaluation of these issues will be needed by the community, supplemented by eventually testing Friday and Saturday night WaterFire installations to better understand the crowd responses.
Choice of weekend	Good, Manageable	WaterFire event in Riverhead will be most effective in alignment with high tides, which cycle though a lunar cycle. Therefore weekends that have high tides will tend to (but not always) be two weeks apart.	The water depth in Riverhead will allow the event to proceed regardless of the tide, but it will be more visible and most beautiful and effective when done when the high tide is about 1.5 to 2 hours after sunset.

**6.1.4 Special Note Related to the Logistical aspect of Firewood supply**

On Long Island, the NYSDEC and the Central Pine Barrens Commission in Suffolk County are working to eradicate the Southern Pine Beetle [SPB]. The infestation is centered on Riverhead and includes forests, barrens, and parks near Shirley, Oakdale, Rocky Point, and Hampton Bays. See Figure 25 below. The NYSDEC’s recommended methods of SPB abatement involve culling, felling and/or burning of the heavily infected trees. Their preferred method is to fell the tree in early winter, and slit and debark the trunk to expose the beetles and grubs to predators and





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freezing weather. This is the perfect timing for felling for WaterFire because of low sap levels and debarking is preferred for WaterFire firewood. 8,200 pine trees were cut down in the Riverhead area last year to control for SPB. These downed pine tree trunks are a cumulative fire hazard when left in the pine barren understory, so harvesting them for use as firewood fuel for WaterFire may be a great solution. It would seem that a productive partnership can be developed between the NYSDEC and WaterFire in Riverhead.

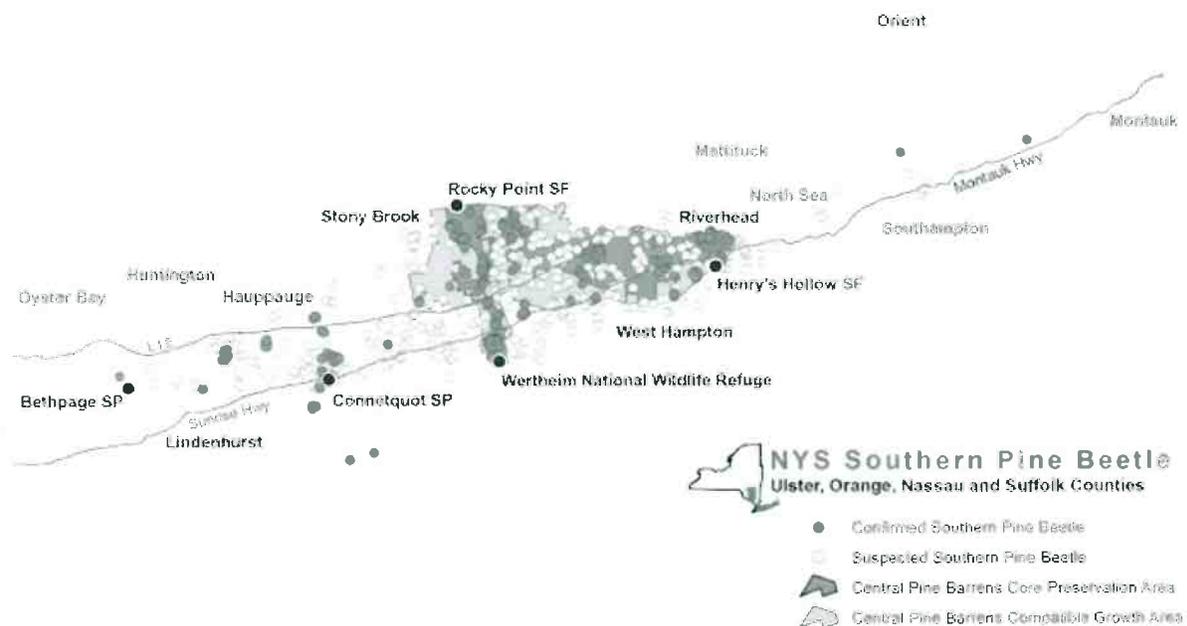


Figure 25 - Range of Southern Pine Beetle Infestation near Riverhead.<sup>115</sup>

### 6.2 Initial Regulatory and Permit Reviews

When a final design has been determined, the formal permit review can be started. Based on preliminary discussions in Riverhead and past experience in other communities, across other states and countries, the WaterFire installation in Riverhead is expected to meet regulatory and permit reviews.

<sup>115</sup> <http://www.peak-magazine.com/southern-pine-beetle.html>





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Entity	Observations
<b>Fire Marshal</b>	Initial discussions at the town level indicate that the proposed setback distance from the crowd to the bonfires is sufficient. The Fire Marshal has approved similar events, including bonfires with much closer on shore proximity. Bryan DeLuca reported that they have approved the larger plan.
<b>Police and Public Safety</b>	The police have had considerable experience with many events in the city of a similar size and impact and assuring public safety and solving transit challenges. The current Riverhead permit application process and form (in Section 5 of this report) does not have any challenges that cannot be solved. The Police have approved similar events, including bonfires, with much closer on shore proximity, in this same area and events such as Country Fair with high density of participants and activities close to water's edge.
<b>Environmental Approvals and Environmental Impact Statement –</b>	This is a temporary event and is small enough in impact and in scale to qualify as a Type II action that does not require an EIS or SEQR review. Similar events have occurred in this same site. Peter Scully, Regional Director of the Department of Environmental Conservation discussed this project with Bryan DeLuca and they do not feel there will be any DEC objections, provided that igniter fluids do not enter the water.
<b>Phytosanitation</b>	These regulations and controls will have to be observed and the project can accomplish this. More details are given in other subsections of Section 6.
<b>ADA</b>	This event and the park site meets ADA requirements.
<b>US Labor, OSHA, Electrical, Construction</b>	The stages and power, and all other installations will all comply with the appropriate codes.
<b>NYS Department of Health</b>	All food vendors will have to comply with Part 14. Subpart 14-4 requirements
<b>NY DMV Boat Registration Regulation</b>	Boats will be registered as required
<b>NY Parks Boating Regulations and Licenses</b>	Boat captains and boat operations will comply with all regulations, including the 2014 requirements on boater safety course registrations. Boat Handling is an area of job training.
<b>Riverhead Town Bay Constables</b>	WaterFire events will comply with marine regulations on Peconic Bay.
<b>US Coast Guard</b>	US Coast Guard – All USCG boat operation regulations will be observed. In other venues WaterFire has successfully been granted a Marine Special Event Permit to allow temporary restriction of boat traffic in the immediate event area. The proposed floating brazier assemblies are entirely removable and can be avoided by the light marine traffic in the area. It is likely to gain approval.

**Table 6-4: WaterFire Permit Notes**





**6.3 Assessment of Marine and Meteorological Data**

The overall site assessment is good with all important indicators either with a natural compatibility of ‘Excellent’ or easily manageable for a WaterFire installation. In Table 6.5. Marine and meteorological data covers Peconic River site width at Riverhead River Walk River bottom and bathymetric analysis, cable crossing notice marine fauna, meteorological information, tidal analysis. Flood zones, water depth conditions.

Issue	Ratings &/or Remarks	Technical Observations
Peconic River site width at Riverhead River Walk	Excellent. The Peconic River is about 110’ wide (87’ to 120’) in this area which is within the parameters for a WaterFire.	The River has a fairly straight but undulating boardwalk on the north side and forested land opposite, with older inlets, peninsulas, and old building foundations. There is a projecting dock with a ramp down to a floating dock that is overall 180’ in length. The projecting dock is 36’ long with a ramp down to a 130’ long, three part floating dock.
River bottom and bathymetric analysis	Excellent .The river bottom is flat and composed of sand, shells and deposited organic material.	This bathymetric profile is entirely compatible with temporary, surface anchoring methods where the anchors consist of ballast plates to be placed on the bottom surface with no penetration or dragging. There will be minimal disturbance to the bottom and all anchors and materials will be entirely removed at the conclusion of the project.
Cable crossing notice	Clear Inquiries and on-site inspections did not find any marked cable crossings.	Local navigation charts indicate the potential for cable and gas line crossings in the area. If they are there at all, they are buried and will not be impacted by the light surface anchoring techniques proposed.
Marine fauna	Manageable. In Grangebels Park a fish ladder was installed to help re-establish the Alewife population.	It is not anticipated that the alewife will be impacted by the art installation in any season, but their active season is from mid-March through early May.
Meteorological information	Excellent. There are no unusual meteorological challenges with the site, outside normal winter weather inconveniences.	The only exception is for possible exposure to hurricane tidal surge flooding. The installation is planned to be resilient to flooding up to +8.0’ above NOAA zero tidal datum.





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Tidal Analysis	<p>Manageable. Tides are remarkably mild at the mouth of the Peconic River and they will not present a difficult problem for the installation. In an annual cycle the highest tide recorded by NOAA is +3.8' and the lowest is -0.4'. This is an overall difference of 4.2'.</p>	<p>In an annual cycle the highest tide recorded by NOAA is +3.8' and the lowest is -0.4'. This is an overall difference of 4.2'. The proposed anchor system can accommodate a flooding or tide situation of 8'. WaterFire events should be scheduled to occur when the high tides falls between sunset and two hours after sunset. Lightings at low tide would have the bonfires about 4' lower and this will greatly diminish both their presence and visibility. If the low road and park sites are not addressed (by elevation of the grade or the installation of flapper backflow preventers), then programming should plan for possible flooding high tide pools at particularly high tides, or the dates of such tides should be avoided when scheduling the event.</p>
River currents	<p>Excellent River currents and flooding do not present a problem at the Riverhead site.</p>	<p>The proposed anchoring system has resisted river flow rates up to 1000 CF/sec. The Peconic River has only exceeded 100 CF/sec once in the last eight years and that peaked at 200 CF/sec.</p>
Flood zones	<p>Riverhead and the mouth of the Peconic River are subject to occasional flood hazard associated with hurricane tidal surges. Potential for tidal surges are charted below to rarely exceed a 7' rise. The installation will be built to accommodate an 8' flooding tide.</p>	<p>High tides can cause localized flooding in the Riverwalk Park and adjacent street with backflooding up the storm water drains forming pools. As WaterFire will be scheduled to occur on the high tides, this may occasionally cause interruption to the event and inconvenience for the visitors. It is recommended that this be solved by installing a flapper valve to prevent backflow into the park from high tide situations. The other suggestion outlined above, of raising the park and road way height to form a berm would also be a solution</p>
Water depth conditions East of Peconic Ave and upper pond in Grangebel Park	<p>Adequately deep for the anchoring of the braziers and the 2' draft of the proposed boats for the installation.</p>	
Water depth conditions lower ponds in Grangebel Park	<p>too shallow for conventional boats</p>	<p>The two lower ponds in Grangebel Park will require a special solution.</p>

**Table 6-5: Marine and meteorological data**





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Typical Month	Max High Tide (highest)	Min High Tide (lowest)	Min Low Tide (lowest)	Max Tide Range
January	3.6	2.4	-0.4	4.0
February	3.6	2.4	-0.3	3.9
March	3.7	2.5	-0.4	4.1
April	3.8	2.6	-0.4	4.2
May	3.7	2.5	-0.3	4.0
June	3.5	2.4	-0.2	3.7
July	3.5	2.4	-0.2	3.7
August	3.5	2.5	-0.3	3.8
September	3.5	2.6	-0.4	3.9
October	3.7	2.6	-0.4	4.1
November	3.6	2.7	-0.3	3.9
December	2.6	2.6	-0.3	2.9

Figure 26 Typical Monthly Tide Extremes for Riverhead, NY

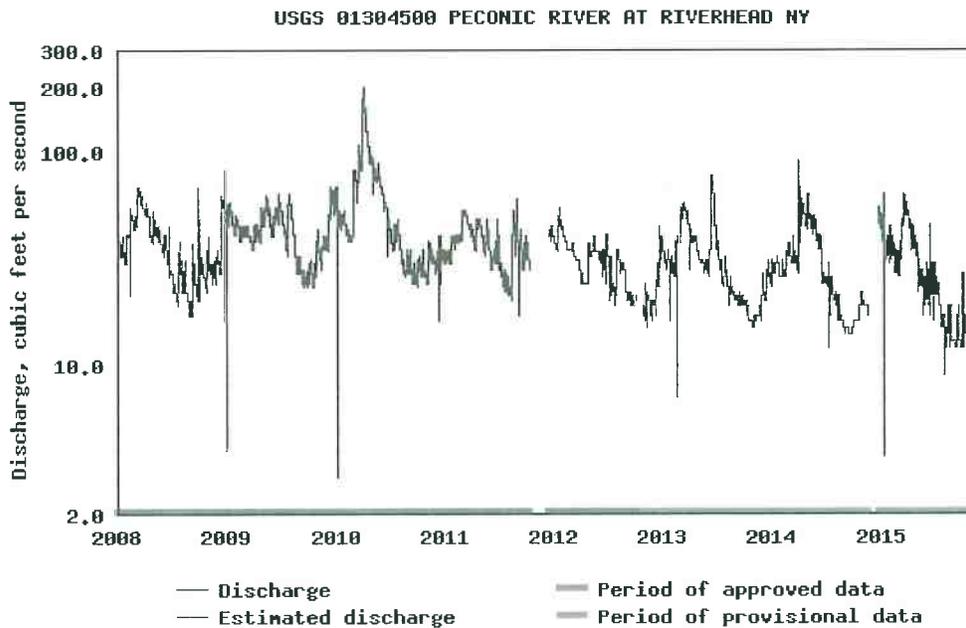


Figure 27 Peconic River Peak Water Flow Rates 2008 – 2015





Figure 28 Riverhead Flood Hazard Map

#### 6.4 Consideration of Possible Pedestrian and Park Amenities and Improvements

The potential pedestrian and park amenities for the Peconic River Walk and Grangebel Park were have been outlined above where the challenges presented by the park site topography were addressed. The range of eight potential improvements presented there also offer real value to the Town that will contribute to creating a cohesive and exciting downtown around the riverfront, far exceeding the benefits gained for the nights of WaterFire.

These improvements are all well within the range of works that can be done with existing funding and grant making programs. Additionally, in partial response to community interest in WaterFire, the County has given permission to Southampton to proceed with plans to explore a park development to increase public access to the Riverside riverbank.





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As work proceeds on both shores in coordination, joint grants or paired applications can further leverage government grants for these infrastructure improvements. The same conversations about WaterFire have led to the formal incorporation of the Peconic River Community Development Alliance — a new non-profit focused on the communities on both sides of the Peconic River, who will also be in support of many of these proposals.

The proposed pedestrian bridge between Riverhead and Riverside offers a great opportunity to address some of these challenges. The sloping approach ramps required by the ADA to allow handicap access to the bridge's higher elevation can be thoughtfully designed to be aligned with the river banks, running both upstream and downstream. These ramps should be designed to be much more than handicap ramps, but to be the opportunity to fully integrate the ADA ramp requirements into a careful series of stepped plazas with integral ramp access that can be designed to combine many other solutions and park improvements into the project.

Heights, layouts and positioning will call be developed in partnership as the bridge project progresses. More detail on the topography and slope are shown on the following transects through both the Riverhead and Riverside river banks.

Note that the vertical axis scale in the topography transect drawings is greatly magnified. Essentially the slope on the north side through the Peconic River Walk is essentially flat. This area is below the highest tide levels, has no protecting berm, no accommodation for anticipated sea level rise, and no potential for the scenic and Placemaking benefits of a gentle series of overlooking landscaped terraces. The design of these features should be part of subsequent design work.





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Figure 29: Elevations, Riverhead Downtown and Riverfront Topography

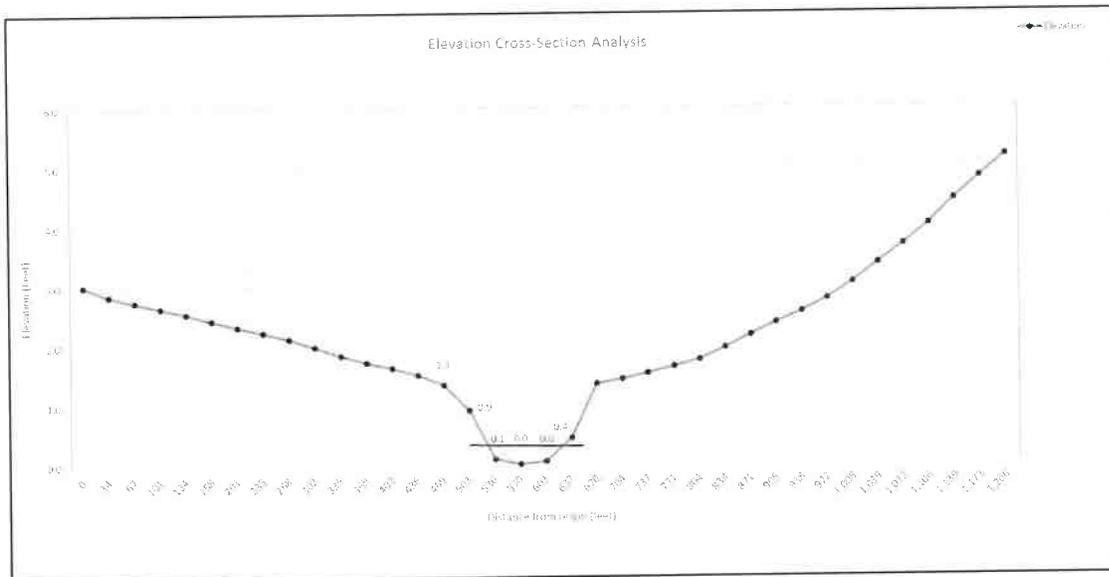
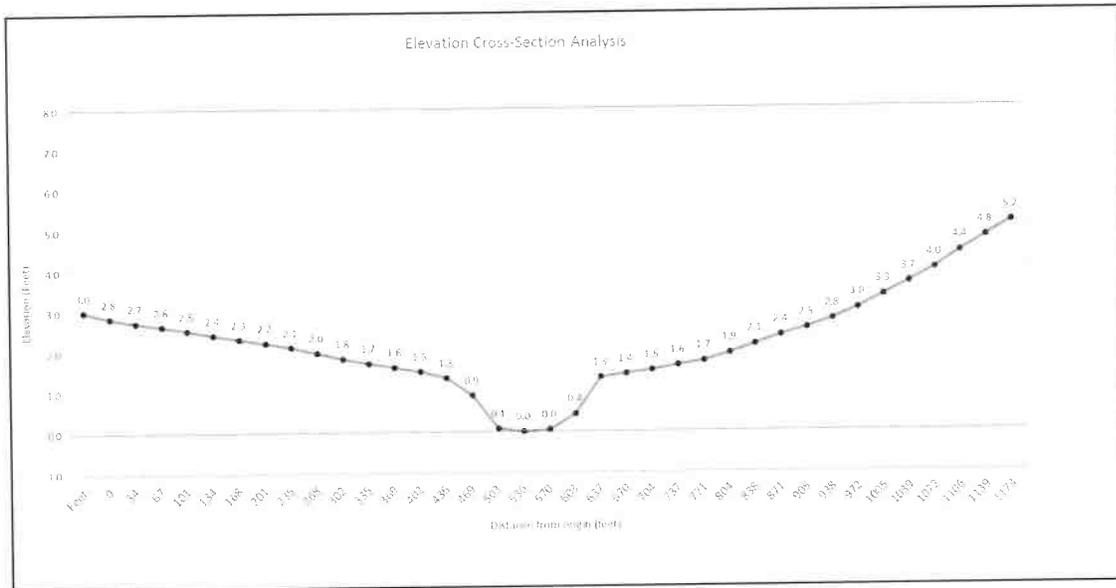


Figure 30: Peconic River Topography Transects at Riverhead





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**Figure13/Figure 14 - Peconic River Transect Elevations (West- top/East-bottom Transect) (exaggerated vertical scale)**





## 7.0 Recommendations

### Specific Creative Placemaking Recommendations for Riverhead

#### 7.1 Introduction:

This section focuses in detail on the community flows that would contribute to logistical planning gathering together some of the many recommendations throughout the report, providing a stand-alone document for in-depth familiarity with the physical context of the community and therefore repeats some concepts present in the main document. Building upon Riverhead's assets, the goal of this plan is to assist in increasing the appeal of the Town of Riverhead through Creative Placemaking and to support collateral initiatives that will make the town more vibrant. The earlier sections examine techniques often used in Creative Placemaking and inventory the assets and opportunities for the Town. This final section includes specific recommendations, observations, or approaches to improving specific areas in the town

The recommendations and the prior supporting materials may be used to inform decisions at many levels including event planning, grant applications, incentives, zoning variances, etc. to strengthen individual projects. They may also be used to prioritize improvements in specific areas to create more engaging and attractive Community Corridors aligned along major transportation routes. This approach assures that limited resources are applied in areas where they will have the largest impact on public perception to better fast track the effort to create a rich and engaging environment of multiple experiences on a human scale. The plan is a flexible guideline and should be informed and updated with practical use.

These recommendations were informed by the results reported in the Community Survey<sup>116</sup> conducted by Nelson, Pope & Voorhis which document a series of conditions and concerns identified by the community. These observations, desires and suggestions made by citizens help to identify many opportunities where desired improvements can be realized using the techniques of successful Creative Placemaking, as reviewed in the supporting materials<sup>117</sup> of this study. This report is a follow up with recommendations to address the issues identified by the community.

The goal is the transformation of Riverhead into a more vibrant community, recognized for its beautiful architecture, extensive natural context and agriculture, important history and diverse social, cultural and artistic communities. This transformation can be used to rebrand Riverhead to

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<sup>116</sup> Town of Riverhead Peconic River/Rt.25 Corridor NYS Brownfield Opportunity Area, Community Survey, February 2014

<sup>117</sup> See Section 1, Introduction to Creative Placemaking Core Concepts and Appendices A and B





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bring more visitors and business owners to town; to encourage the many people who pass ‘*through*’ Riverhead to instead come ‘*to*’ Riverhead as a destination, further contributing to reaching the goals identified in the survey. This will better leverage the resource of visitors already passing by Riverhead and attract new visitors now seeking Riverhead as a destination.

The report evaluates how to use Creative Placemaking to connect and enhance the community’s physical assets and human resources toward these objectives. The proposals include suggested improvements that leverage the existing events and the current assets and elements of Riverhead (the current residents, local businesses, buildings, features and organizations); plus proposals that involve the creation, attraction and cultivation of new creative elements (artists, artisans and new businesses and arts events). The various actions combined will contribute to promoting and enriching the authenticity and distinctiveness of both the resident’s and the visitor’s experience of Riverhead’s many assets.

Broad access to these recommendations and findings will assist in the Creative Placemaking process. Deepening the community’s knowledge of its own potential, increasing the local familiarity of Riverhead’s attractive assets, beneficial opportunities, and environmental sites, combined with the techniques of Creative Placemaking will allow these assets to be deployed to better achieve the objectives of revitalizing the Town of Riverhead.

Building upon the NEA Creative Placemaking Guidelines as well as over 20 years of experience of WaterFire International in multiple locations around the world, this plan includes recommendations for the Town of Riverhead to leverage Creative Placemaking concepts to

- improve current events
- design and add new events
- impact the town’s vibrancy on a daily basis
- improve conditions in collateral areas to support economic and social benefits
- expand the awareness, access and utilization of the unique features of the Peconic River as a region-wide asset
- improve the downtown Riverhead waterfront
- leverage the river by building a dynamic partnership with Southampton (Riverside, Flanders) to pursue coordinated improvements on the south side of the river





### 7.1.2 Recommendations Cover Seven Areas of Interest

The recommendations in this section cover seven areas of interest supporting Creative Placemaking for Riverhead, with collateral subjects and research and analysis provided in the attached documentation:



### 7.1.3 Enhancing Community Corridors for the Town of Riverhead

Creative Placemaking techniques should be used to establish enhanced Community Corridors to have maximum exposure and impact on residents and visitors. The location of the Corridors is a balance between existing traffic patterns; traffic congestion and capacity; and capitalizing on both existing and potential destinations and the on-site physical resources (architecture, natural views).

Corridors have been identified to support and improve the natural 'flow' for the community, including maps showing potential roads for occasional short term closure during special events and highlighted 'Paseo' passages revitalizing existing gangway and alleys in downtown with art experiences.) This is similar to designations of existing streets as 'A' streets (higher volume, high value, emphasis on historic facades and aesthetic experience, shopping, restaurants, store displays) and 'B' streets (lower volume, deliveries, lower aesthetic qualities, less pedestrian





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friendly). These observations reinforce the similar recommendations made in the Riverhead Step II Nomination Report.

The concept of ‘eyes on paths, light on paths, activity on paths’ is acknowledged as a key means to ensure safety and to increase foot traffic. A Town policy of encouraging or incentivizing a prioritization of investment and intervention on the identified Community Corridors (by both public and private entities) is recommended to speed the infrastructure towards achieving critical mass and visual continuity to best support vibrancy.

The development of traffic routes and Community Corridors that best link the best assets and vibrant areas of Riverhead to downtown also creates interest by adding layers and a texture of choices, variations, paths to encourage visitors to return, building visitor numbers to the BOA area. Creating a supported ‘walking’ downtown with as broad a footprint as the site amenities and visitor numbers will support will keep visitors interested and returning. Pedestrians seek an engaging streetscape of containment, safety, moderate activity, continuous interest and visual delight.

Riverhead is divided in a number of different ways creating a variety of neighborhood designations. For this report we use the following terms:

- Downtown / Riverfront
- Downtown Central West
- Downtown East

Recommendations for each neighborhood include suggested Community Corridors, significant assets, potential linkages, wayfinding elements, improved sidewalks and walkways, paseos<sup>118</sup>, and suggested temporary road closures (during events ) and are presented with their own detailed maps. The maps are provided at two scales, reference maps reduced to fit in the text and then the same map enlarged and printed at 11x17 and bound into the report as a fold out.

Figure 35 shows Creative Placemaking Physical locations across the BOA area and in selected areas nearby highlighting the following elements:

- existing venues (with capacities provided separately in Figure 34: Indoor venues and capacities including several venues south of the river)

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<sup>118</sup> Paseo is a Spanish term for an established pedestrian promenade or strolling path. The recommendation is to develop the existing narrow gangways, alleys and narrow vacant lots along Main Street into more welcoming walking passageways that for the report are called ‘paseos’.





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- destination sites, designated Community Corridors, wayfinding opportunities and other community assets (by lot or building, with capacities provided for multiple potential uses in Appendix T: Capacity and Occupancy.)
- larger 'special interest areas' where there is a specific recommendation to make a strategic improvement across several properties or blocks (noted in pink)

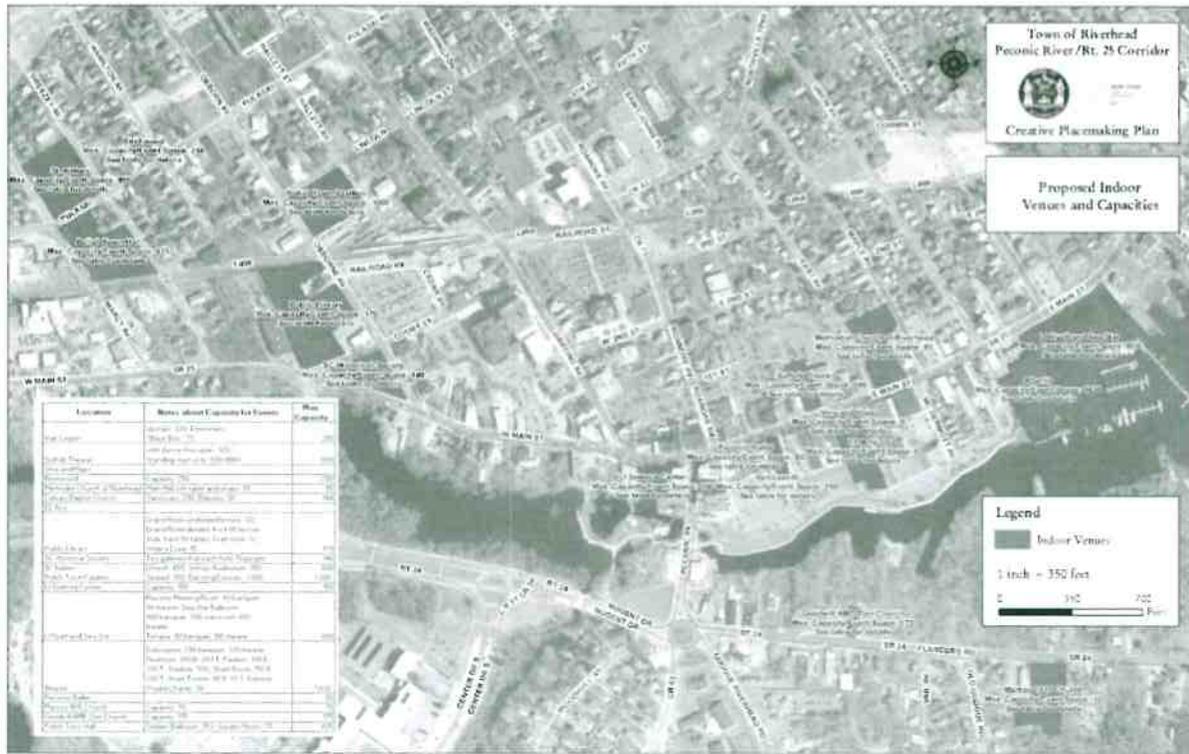


Figure 35 - Riverhead Creative Placemaking Destinations with 'special interest' areas





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**Figure 34 - Indoor Venues and Capacities**

Maps shown in Figures 35, 38, 40 and 41 correspond to the sections on recommendations that are presented by neighborhood, adding a set of critical roads, community corridors and path enhancements that link all of these physical sites together to build a cohesive sense of place. Each place or recommendation is numbered with a Location # that corresponds with the numbers appearing on the relevant neighborhood map. Enhancing the connections and encouraging or investing in improvements along these routes with build connections that will transform a linear series of assets into a coherent, memorable destination, encouraging strolling, cross-venue interactions, more exploration, and better safety. All of this will lengthen average visitor visits, increasing visitor expenditure. The following individual ‘neighborhood’ sections:

- evaluate visual quality of approaches and assets along the corridors
- outline natural community corridors and traffic routes for the neighborhood to help build critical mass in supporting private investment, investment in improving paths and event locations
- suggest usage for destinations, added wayfinding elements and designated venues (during both special events and long term, depending on the opportunity)

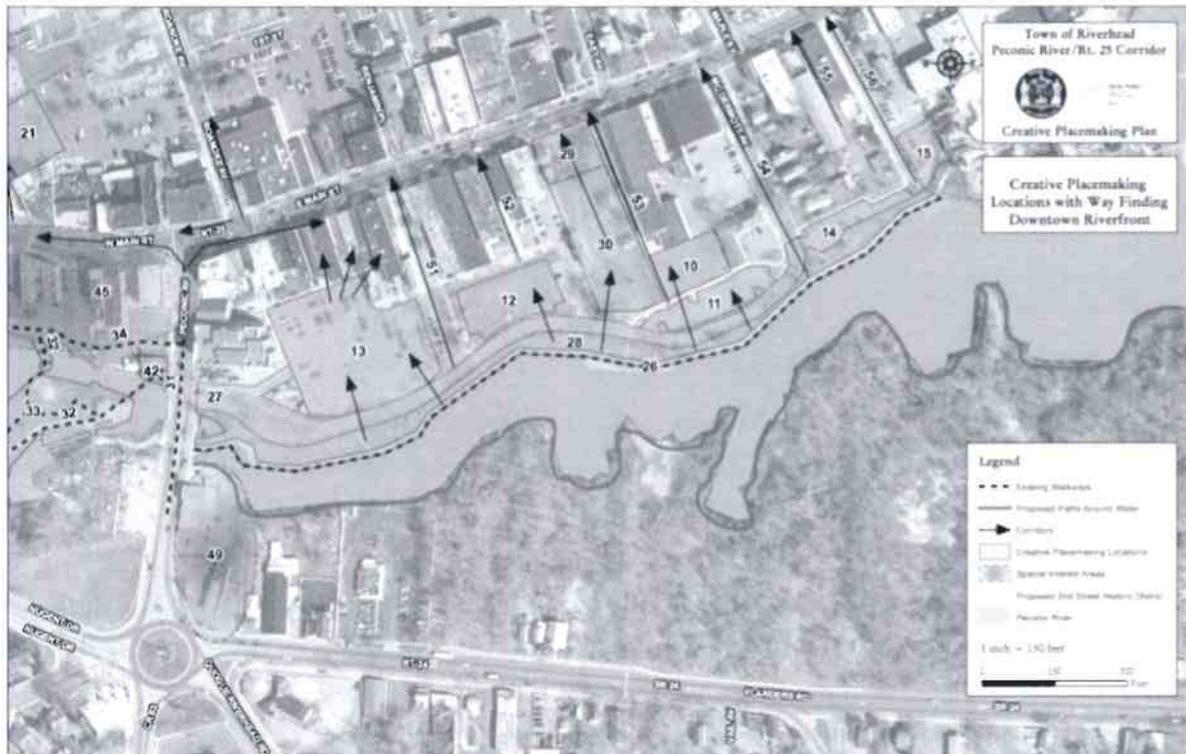




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Some of the routes described in these sections will start out primarily as event routes. In order to ensure that these routes contribute to vibrancy in the community and ensure that the potential is leveraged, it is recommended that opportunities be created to support permanent initiatives specifically along these routes to better build traffic flows and visual continuity.

## 7.1.4 Recommendations for Downtown: Main St., Grangebel & River Walk area



**Figure 35: Map of Creative Placemaking Locations with Community Corridors & Wayfinding** Location #s on map refer to text below. (also see larger map)

### 7.1.4.a Creation of Managed Program of Community Corridors

Evaluation of the perspective and visual quality of the community corridors and traffic routes for Downtown Riverfront and Main Street and recommendations

**Main Street:** One of Riverhead’s greatest assets is a contiguous collection of excellent examples of preserved historic architecture along a traditional downtown Main Street forming the heart of downtown. Such a dense, continuous assembly of large-scale, two and three-story, historic buildings in good to reasonable shape, without major modifications to their facades, is not found anywhere else in the eastern end of Long Island. The downtown Main Street area has spacious





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12' wide sidewalks; clear wide roadway (averaging 50' clear); five linear blocks of historic buildings up to three stories tall on both sides of the street, with additional adjacent preserved historic buildings on the side streets.

This historic asset is further complemented with abundant, plentiful surface parking.<sup>119</sup> The parking lots, are nearby-by, yet masked from view by the facades of the historic buildings. This is the ideal arrangement for supporting Creative Placemaking.

**Project Paseo:** There are numerous pedestrian access points to Main Street from the parking lots, primarily south of Main, but also to the north. Some of these connections are passageways that should be sites for creative improvement. For the purposes of the report, they are called paseos, a Spanish term for a pedestrian promenade. The paseos are mostly historic gangways and alleyways. There are also some empty lots. These alleys are prone to be seen by the public as abandoned and dangerous. Project Paseo is a program to cooperate with artists to make the paseos more welcoming and interesting (murals, lighting solutions, public art, gardens, sound art) should be coordinated with a program with owners to make the alleys more open and visible to the street and the public (opening display windows on to the alleys, doors to small business opportunities, or occupied shallow gallery or artist studio spaces). Mural projects should be evaluated to assure that the proposed surfaces for painting not be a historical surface that is an important part of the historical integrity of the adjacent building. If so, any murals should not be painted directly on the building, but on an easily removable substrate.

**'Café' Main Street:** Considering the amount of adjacent off street parking available, it would enhance the historic atmosphere for pedestrians to replace on-street parking on Main Street with companion café spaces for adjacent restaurants to allow outdoor seating without the intrusion of parked cars. Outside of those items when a special event closes the entire street, this expansion should be done gradually in response to growing success and attendance, in part to accommodate the established expectation that on-street parking is available. The expansion is best implemented as part of a series of well-attended special Creative Placemaking events, such as WaterFire, where an audience and demand will assure success and Main Street is already closed to automobile traffic. Another iteration might be introduced as part of a monthly gallery night stroll. Moving more parking to the adjacent lots will also have the benefit of increasing foot traffic in the Paseos.

**Access Main Street:** Encourage businesses along the south side of Main Street to each develop an entrance and outdoor space where feasible, facing the river. This would better leverage the Peconic River Walk as an asset for attracting customers year-round; would facilitate customer

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<sup>119</sup> Town of Riverhead Peconic River/Rt. 25 Corridor, NYS BOA Step II Nomination, FIGURE 3-8 Parking District





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access and improve infrastructure and connectivity to Main Street for decongesting river-based events; increase use of the river-side parking lots, and increase foot traffic to add eyes on the street (and into the parking lots) for better safety. Encourage businesses along the north side of Main Street to develop entrances/access facing the northern parking lots for similar reasons.

**Need to increase use of vacant buildings on Main Street:** As documented in the Step II BOA Nomination report<sup>120</sup>, and shown in Figure 36 below by the black dots, there are multiple vacant or under-utilized buildings in the downtown. One of the many concerns of Creative Placemaking is curating the visitor’s wayfinding. In this regard, vibrant streetscapes must have a continuous ribbon of occupied spaces to communicate safety and maintain visitor interest.



**Figure 36 - Land Use – Downtown Sub-area, black dots represent vacancies**

To mitigate the lack of permanent tenants, there are ways to attract a range of tenants from ‘pop-up’ temporary gallery spaces to a variety of longer-term shops, studios or galleries. These should be looked at from both a demand-side and a supply side perspective.

**Demand Side:** Typically, artists and craftsmen are the first to experiment with venues if the entry barriers are low. Incentives can include low or no rent, short-term leases, window exhibition galleries (no occupancy), leasehold improvements, forward buyout policies, sweat equity arrangements, coordinated or master permitting, exemptions on sales tax on art sale via recognized “Cultural Tax Districts”, and potential for a group of artists to settle and work together in shared, sub-divided or adjacent cooperative spaces. Artists and creative cultural small

<sup>120</sup> Town of Riverhead Peconic River/Rt. 25 Corridor, NYS BOA Step II Nomination, FIGURE 3-1C Land Use – Downtown Subarea as of July 2015.





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businesses bring many benefits, use local suppliers, eat in area restaurants, and attract visitors. Their presence makes the streets safer, and tenancy increases property safety. This is a virtuous circle that can yield great returns.

**Supply Side:** Arts businesses have been clearly recognized as one of the most effective ways to transform an area, yet owners can still be disinclined for various reasons. Initial participation can lead to area-wide rejuvenation and eventually higher paying tenants. Additional support for owners can come from

- a minor subsidy for participation via a grant;
- a cooperative coordinated association among owners;
- a non-profit organization to serve as middle man to perform the management, outreach, joint marketing, insurance, lease arrangements;
- a set of tax deduction benefits (via a non-profit intermediary);
- community-wide recognition for their leadership, etc.

It is important that the arrangements also be fair for the artists, if it is to be successful and well received in the arts community.



Figure 37 - Proposed Road Closures for Large Special Events





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### Special Event Road Closures:

Further supporting vibrancy on Main Street, Riverhead already has a strong tradition of creating a pedestrian venue on Main Street for special events. Studying traffic patterns, community corridors, paseos, areas of special interest and the connectivity of the community's neighborhoods, two additional areas for closure are recommended depending on the size of the event and the other Creative Placemaking destinations utilized. The three areas are shown on the map above, Figure 37.

### Detailed Site Notes:

The following specific site recommendations are keyed in to the Location #s on the map in Figure 35:

**Location # 45** Grangebel Park/Main Street: Another of Riverhead's greatest assets, the recently rejuvenated Grangebel Park is in need of more services for visitors located contiguous to and visible from the park. In this 'special interest area' encourage the development of activities for residents and visitors as prioritized in the Community Survey for river focused activities.

Grangebel Park is an exceptionally good site for the installation of an event such as WaterFire.

The recreation of the original pleasure garden both in Grangebel Park as well as along the rest of the River Walk including Raingardens such as those shown in FIGURE 4-1F<sup>121</sup> of the BOA report will contribute to creating a 'Garden District' further described in the section below,

**Location # 49** Grangebel Park/Peconic Avenue: Jurisdictionally part of Southampton/Riverside, it is worth noting however that the cluster of shops on the eastern side of Peconic Avenue just south of the Riverhead line is visually connected to the park and any activities in the park including the arts. In this 'special interest area,' work with Southampton to encourage the development of desired activities for residents and visitors as prioritized in the Community Survey such as places to eat, boutiques, etc.

**Location # 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56** 'Paseo corridors' from parking lots (**Location # 10-15**) to Main Street should be developed as described above in section 7.1.4a under 'Project Paseos'.

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<sup>121</sup> Town of Riverhead Peconic River/Rt. 25 Corridor, NYS BOA Step II Nomination, FIGURE 4-1F Green Infrastructure, Opportunities, Details.





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During and between events, make use of the destination sites, wayfinding, assets and the paseos, paths/road connecting them marked on the map (Figure 35) of the Main Street, Grangebel Park and Riverfront. Encourage development of these routes to build vibrancy and populate an area such as Main Street and to avoid pedestrian congestion in critical areas, for example such as along the River Walk and future new walkways on the river during river-based events.

Recommendations for the proposed community corridors and paseos for downtown riverfront/main street are noted on FIGURE 35 above (connecting to the community corridors paralleled by the event road closures proposed in Figure 37).

- Grangebel walkways to Main Street
- Grangebel walkways to a walkway along Rt. 25 west, past Nugent Drive toward the proposed 'West Peconic Restaurant District'
- Peconic Avenue to the Southampton side (Riverside)
- Numerous 'paseo corridors' (#51-56) of various widths to/from parking lots (#10-15) behind Main Street and Main Street
- General flow to/from the River Walk to Heidi Behr way to the lots behind main street (#10-15) to the back of the shops on main street to main street
- East End Arts campus
- East/West flow of Main Street

Recommendations for the Creative Placemaking sites:

**Location #10** Small parking area east of the back of East End Arts Campus

**Location #11** Parking lot south of both 10 and south of the East End Arts Campus (30)

**Location #12** Large town parking area west of East End Arts Campus

**Location #13** Large town parking area east of Peconic Avenue

**Location #14** Town parking area/Heidi Behr Way, east of McDermott Ave

**Location #15** Town parking area/Heidi Behr Way, west of back of the Aquarium

With the availability of parking in the rest of the Parking District, and beyond, proposed shuttle routes linking parking on Rt. 58 and in Southampton to downtown, Town parking areas #10-#15 are excellent areas for collateral events and activities with river-based events. For example: During the Cardboard Boat Race, a higher concentration of activities to engage visitors should be planned in areas #10-#15. They should be timed to both decongest the River Walk, thereby increasing daily capacity, by drawing people toward Main Street and north with multiple benefits:

- reduce overcrowding along the river bank
- stimulate visitors' interest in Riverhead downtown district





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- bring more visitors up to Main Street
- lengthen the amount of time the visitor spends in downtown Riverhead

They are also appropriate destination venues for events (such as Country Fair) leveraging the aesthetic context and proximity to Main Street.

**Location # 26** River Walk. The Peconic River Walk Park is a great reclamation of the old commercial Riverhead shore of the historic Peconic River, once a busy port for lumber, produce, oysters, and fish. In terms of Creative Placemaking, it is a tremendous improvement in the condition of an area that at one time was an industrial port.

A challenge in the River Walk Park system is that the paths and adjacent roadways are at an elevation where tides and winds can cause occasional tidal and storm-related flooding. Some surfaces are below the current River Walk dock and they are flooded by reverse flow back up through the street drains. Expected increases in sea level due to climate change will make these events more frequent and more severe. These issues are addressed in more detail in Section 6.4 of this report on the technical aspects of a WaterFire installation and regard events on the river front in broader terms.

The River Walk is a primary congregation area for river-based events and recreation. During every river-based event, activities should be held in contiguous Creative Placemaking sites north of the River Walk to encourage decongestion and bring visitors to Main Street

The re-creation of the original pleasure garden both in Grangebel Park as well as along the rest of the River Walk including Raingardens such as those shown in FIGURE 4-1F<sup>122</sup> of the BOA report would support the development of a broader 'Garden District' for downtown Riverhead as described in Section 7.1.3.1 below.

There is a great opportunity to work in concert with the County and the Town of Southampton -- both to create a series of interconnected pathways as well as supporting their efforts to reclaim lands on the opposing shore as accessible park lands, further bringing visitors to the shoreline, building attendance capacity, improving sight lines, reducing crowding and creating vibrancy. This will provide for more viewing positions for visitors of the attractive river and activities on the river helping to reduce the frustrations due to poor access or sight lines associated with the experience with the cardboard boat race and other river-base events. (See the special note at the end of this section).

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<sup>122</sup> Town of Riverhead Peconic River/Rt. 25 Corridor, NYS BOA Step II Nomination, FIGURE 4-1F Green Infrastructure, Opportunities, Details.





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Creative Placemaking is transformative and works in stages. Increase the presence of foot patrol beat' police officers (not in cruisers) in the park. Concerns for safety were raised by respondents to the Community Survey.

**Location # 27/28** Street space of riverfront road (Heidi Behr way/McDermott Avenue) and Ammermann Riverfront park lawns adjacent to the River Walk are critical ground to be used for foot traffic or for additional event sites to draw visitors attending river based events into other activities. East of McDermott Ave is a secondary congregation area for river based events and recreation

**Location # 29/30** East End Arts with its galleries, teaching spaces and historic campus (including its restored outbuildings & programming content) are a valuable resource in an ideal strategic position between downtown's Main Street and the Peconic River. EEA facilities, mission and history of cooperative projects are all perfectly in alignment to be a partner for many Creative Placemaking projects. The building complex can function both as a destination in and of itself as well as a wayfinding and connecting venue, drawing visitors from river-based events to explore Main Street and frequent its businesses and be a featured attraction in and of itself—both for its collection of buildings and for its own much respected programming. The East End Arts campus can be a focused experience in and of itself, beyond being an excellent connecting path between the River Walk and downtown; mitigating the potential for congestion further west along the River Walk toward Peconic Avenue. The Community Survey<sup>123</sup> observed that two of the most important cited venues were Main Street and the River Walk. Every major event downtown or on the River Walk should be careful to include East End Arts and should invite them to be creative partners with East End Arts creating their own programming of coordinated events and exhibitions, which will be included in the printed programs and also visible from both Main Street and the River Walk.

**Location # 31** Peconic Ave street space and sidewalks: The critical bridge across the River makes this a prime space, but also a potential area of congregation, particularly for river-based events. Large events will likely need to have this dedicated as pedestrian connection to control congestion. The bridge and route is a key for wayfinding to explore developing venues on the Southampton side (Riverside). Signage on Peconic Avenue linking to eventual venues on the Riverside side will help decongest the Riverhead-side making events more successful, and help events on both side share in parking resources on both sides of the River.

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<sup>123</sup> Town of Riverhead Peconic River/Rt.25 Corridor NYS Brownfield Opportunity Area, Community Survey, February 2014





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**Location # 32/33/34** Grangebel Park paths, north river walk & park lawns:

The new Grangebel Park has interesting views and a variety of attractive passageways, vistas and elevations and is ideally suited to be a good site for events and other Creative Placemaking, including WaterFire.

The original intent of Judge Griffing in his gift to the city has been partially lost by subsequent development, with the elimination of the gardens, park land, and pathways along the north side of the Peconic, and with overgrowth and weeds filling in the area on the south side of the river. Historic photographs show an extensive garden and path landscape on both sides of the Peconic.

Future development should be focused on regaining back the surrounding edge and re-establishing public rights of way along the riverfront shore line. The Peconic River 'loop', Figure 47 proposes a walkway/bike path loop linked to a potential return via canoe route on the water (building on the recommended bike path loop in Figure 3-12C<sup>124</sup> in the BOA study). As access improves, investment in the Peconic Park will create an great attraction that would be a river based, linear park that can be either biked or walked or paddled. Such an amenity will increase usage of the area, bringing vibrancy which can help encourage people to further utilize the park.

The expanded loop along the south shore of the park would complement developments on the Riverhead side and encourage and support an expanded pedestrian connection between Riverhead, Grangebel Park and the Southampton communities, including the Suffolk County Court Complex and the Evans K. Griffing County Center. The loop on the south bank could be away from the roadway, close to river based events, supporting events such as WaterFire. and would also create a lunchtime walking route to Riverhead from the Court Complex along the site of the original Griffing public gardens.

There is a public feeling that Grangebel Park is unsafe. This perception is caused largely by the park being too empty and unused. This can become a self-perpetuating cycle where a lack of use leads to the public feeling that the empty Park is unsafe. This cycle must be broken by concerted efforts to create activities, connections, and amenities to expand attendance, particularly focused on those who may choose to plan a visit to the park. Beautification efforts alone will not change the perceived situation and return on the investments in these projects will not be as well optimized as they can be.

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<sup>124</sup> Town of Riverhead Peconic River/Rt. 25 Corridor, NYS BOA Step II Nomination, FIGURE 3-12C Recommended Expanded Bicycle Routes





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**Location # 42** Peconic Ave entrances to Grangebel Park: During major arts festivals, particularly those near the river, the opposite challenge may appear as the Grangebel Park paths are narrow with limited connections to the streets. As a primary congregation area for river based events and recreation on the river Creative Placemaking will ‘populate’ Grangebel building vibrancy, but attention must be paid to the path capacities. During events when large numbers of visitors are expected, events should be carefully sited to encourage use of adjacent entrances as the main entrances are narrow. Further development of connections to the south and north, to provide further access beyond the entrance to the East along Peconic Ave will be helpful.

**Location # 50** Main Street (Griffing to Union) Primary congregation area for river based events and recreation destination venue and also wayfinding venue for activities leading to areas less populated such as the proposed Second Street Historic District and Railroad Station area, also to connect to Pulaski Street/Polish Town, see Figure 41 in the next section of this report.

### **Special Note. The south shore of the Peconic River and leveraging Southampton’s interest in the proposed bridge:**

The natural regrowth of trees that has reclaimed the south shore of the Peconic River (in Riverside, Southampton) is a tremendous visual asset and a beautiful counterpoint to the historic architecture of Riverhead downtown. This area is now largely publicly owned in trust for the future public good and preservation. All along the Peconic River in Riverside the creation of a carefully installed and curated natural walk upon raised boardwalks would be a wonderful addition to both communities and a peaceful interlude with nature. Such a linear park is also a valuable opportunity to educate the community about the importance and fragility of wetlands via the introduction of signage and programming in conjunction with the local environmental agencies and partners. Developing appropriate plans will require the careful further study of the existing topography, water features, flora and fauna, soil conditions, specimen trees and intertwined drainage and waterways. There may be an opportunity as part of the park development to install, on the landward side, an active denitrifying bio-reactive barrier, plantings to absorb ground water borne nitrates moving towards the impacted watershed. Fishing, canoe and pier access to the water should be included in the park plans.

Despite the opportunity and potential impact in favor of Riverhead, as the land is not controlled by the Town of Riverhead, the recommendations and development must be implemented at County level in cooperation with the town of Southampton. As per recommendations in the Introduction of Section 5., community organizations such as the Peconic River Community Development Alliance can be an ally in the development of a joint plan. Riverhead will benefit from this south shore development and an additional pathway along the river will double crowd capacity for seeing events along the river.





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Proposed Peconic River Bridge. The proposed Peconic River Pedestrian Bridge is an interesting development with much potential. It would have to be at a sufficient height to accommodate navigation. It would bring several valuable advantages to Riverhead. The bridge would complete a desirable walking loop trail incorporating the proposed new park, the River Walk Park, and downtown Riverhead, enhancing the mobility of the site as well as adding a natural linear park element to the assets of Riverhead. For visitors to events, the bridge would provide a pedestrian focused connection between the towns, providing Riverhead with access to a new expanded south riverbank with boardwalks reducing congestion at Creative Placemaking events in Riverhead.

The proposed bridge builds the capacity of the river to be an active 'water-venue', a viewing point adding interest and options to the area, an asset for river and park based events like WaterFire and an opportunity to remediate some of the tidal and slope limitations of the River Walk area. Working with community organizations such as the Peconic River Community Development Alliance together with the town of Southampton is recommended to ensure that the project meets all possible goals of the communities living on both sides of the river.

The bridge access ramp ADA slope requirements would provide the opportunity to build up the grade of the park to better avoid floods and provide a better sloping venue to the river view. There will be a need to coordinate the specifications of the bridge with regard to all of the potential uses while ensuring that an aesthetic solution is achieved. Participation in the design process by a wide range of design professionals, including experience with Creative Placemaking, is recommended.





7.1.5 Recommendations for Downtown Riverhead – East



Figure 38: Map of Downtown Riverhead East

Evaluation of the Visual Quality of Community Corridors in Riverhead East

The proposed **Second Street Historic District** is the primary draw to the northeast quadrant of downtown and designating it a historic district supports Creative Placemaking initiatives both in terms of how it promotes the history of the area but also in terms of improving this transit corridor, encouraging the preservation of these historic buildings and supporting individual and community projects in the vicinity. Subsidies for restoration can also attract long-term owners who are invested in the restoration and future of the neighborhood.

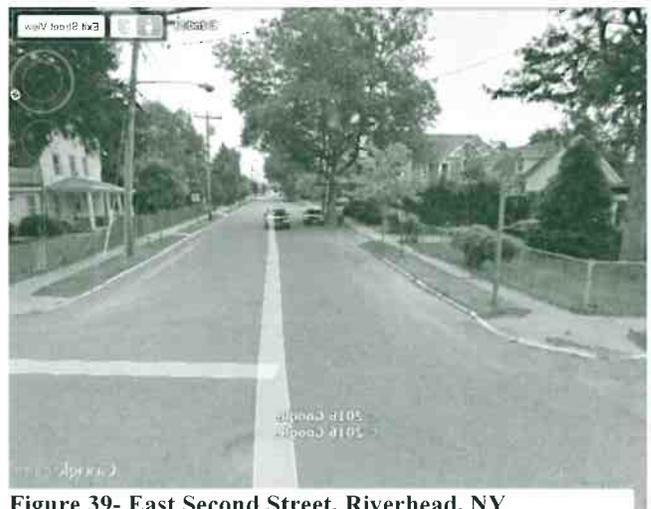


Figure 39- East Second Street, Riverhead, NY (source Google Maps)





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In addition to or as part of its denomination as an Historic District and as part of its inclusion in the Arts District, discussed below, it is further suggested that the area or subsets of the area receive two additional designations: Special Bed & Breakfast Zoning District (with variances allowing for paying guests staying less than 30 days via special regulations) and The Garden District.

**The proposed Second Street Historic District** is located strategically between multiple target areas of Riverhead including much of it being in very close proximity to the Railroad station rendering it a transit-oriented development, which is also much more attractive to millennial travelers<sup>125</sup>,<sup>126</sup> who make a life-style choice to prefer public transportation. The distance to the train station for most routes is 0.7 miles and about 8 blocks.



**Figure 40 - Map of Proposed Historic District with Walking Route to Train Station**

**‘Special Bed & Breakfast Zoning’ District:** As a ‘Special Bed & Breakfast Zoning’ District with variances for paying overnight guests, the area could turn into a series of historic house Bed & Breakfasts as are common in other historic districts of other communities such as Richmond,

<sup>125</sup> <http://www.apta.com/resources/reportsandpublications/Documents/APTA-Millennials-and-Mobility.pdf>

<sup>126</sup> The opportunity for Riverhead represented by the millennial demographics in New York City are discussed in the demographics section of this report.





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VA, Charleston, SC and Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, PA. This is further discussed in this Section as a recommendation for increasing economic impact.

**Garden District:** Beyond the noted architectural and historical reasons for the proposal as an historic district, uniquely for an urban context, almost every home in the historic district has a yard. As part of the history of Judge Griffing's Grangebel park and further leveraging the beautification aspects of the Raingarden initiatives mentioned in the BOA Nomination study, Creative Placemaking would suggest a project to create and encourage a public private partnership with a Riverhead Garden District. Such a project would yield a quadruple bottom line: historical, environmental, community development and beautification. A Garden District would provide incentives, partnerships with Long Island nurseries and technical advice from the Cornell Cooperative Extension to support individual and community efforts to design and plant gardens in every street-facing yard in the district. Such a program could be further developed with competitions, donations of time and materials, and participation with a variety of community programs of the Peconic Estuary Program such as rainwater collection for irrigation project.

Corridors through the Downtown east neighborhood help build familiarity with the neighborhood by wayfinding through the area to several potential major event destinations itemized below and build value to the neighborhood.

**Below are address specific recommendation which are keyed the Location sites numbered on the map in Figure 38 above:**

**Location # 16** Visible from Main street, the western portion (as shown on the map) of the Town Parking lot on the east side of Union Avenue, just north of east Main Street can be used for a wayfinding activity venue to lead visitors from the east end of Main Street via Union Avenue through the Second Street area to destination venues #18 and #19, facilitating decongestion and populating the Second Street neighborhood with more pedestrian traffic.

**Location # 17** Visible from Main Street, this private parking lot is located on the western side of Union Avenue. The location can be used as a wayfinding activity venue to lead visitors from the east end of Main Street via Union Avenue through the Second Street area to destination venues #18 and #19, facilitating decongestion and populating the Second Street neighborhood.

**Location # 18** Riverhead Fire Dept Property is currently in disuse and is an ideal destination venue for a special event site to engage visitors, encouraging them to walk to and pass time in the Second Street neighborhood, bringing activity and vibrancy to the area.





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**Location # 19** The Aquarium parking lot could be used as special event destination that is strategically close to Main Street, but distant enough to provide acoustic separation, but is still connected by what could become an attractive historic corridor. It could become a destination venue to for events to engage visitors, encouraging them to walk through the Second Street neighborhood, bringing activity and street life to the area. A more complete sidewalk program in the area is recommended. Atlantis holdings have confirmed that they would allow the lot to be used for events.

**Location # 20** Proposed entrance to Location #19, is a good potential destination venue. This is an entrance alternative to improve access to Lot #19 which is closer to Main Street than the actual entrance and is more visible to visitors on foot.

**Location # 23 and #24** 2nd Street & Union Avenue: When Union Avenue is closed for events, a natural wayfinding activity venue is created on the eastern and western sides of the road in the end of the closed portion of 2nd Street to lead visitors from East Main Street via Union Avenue to new destination venues in lots #18 & #19. Activity here will provide a way station and a locus of activity and engagement to provide interest at the mid-point of the walking link to downtown.

### 7.1.6 Recommendations for Central (West) Riverhead District:<sup>127</sup>

Evaluation of Visual Quality of Community Corridors and Traffic Routes and Gateways. Below are address specific recommendation which are keyed the sites numbered on the map in Figure 41 Map of Community Corridors in Central (West) Riverhead.

**West Riverhead Restaurant District Gateway:** While broader projects for the development of the ‘West’ portion of the BOA area are in the works, there is already a critical mass of restaurants, sufficient to justify the denomination of a ‘restaurant district’ that can be leveraged. Identify, coordinate and brand the ‘West Peconic River Restaurant District’ via signage to build awareness and to ensure coordinated wayfinding. Area to include Buoy One Seafood, Farm Country Kitchen, Funchos, Maple Tree Deli, Roadhouse Pizza and Snowflake Ice Cream Shoppe. This area is close to the area identified for development in the Step II BOA Nomination study called “Peconic Landing<sup>128</sup>.” As per the hierarchy of major roads shown in BOA FIGURE 3-12A<sup>129</sup>, placing this signage on principal roadways will build awareness and direct visitors to the area and encourage further exploration.

<sup>127</sup> Note the designations of West, Central, Downtown and East are used from the BOA Step II Nomination. For the purposes of this report (as the Plan is a stand-alone document that will be consulted by community members and Creative Placemakers) all activity west of downtown in the ‘central’ and ‘west’ areas as denominated by the BOA will be denominated ‘west’.

<sup>128</sup> Town of Riverhead Peconic River/Rt.25 Corridor NYS BOA Step II Nomination, FIGURE 3-9, BOA Strategic Sites, Site ‘4’

<sup>129</sup> Town of Riverhead Peconic River/Rt.25 Corridor NYS BOA Step II Nomination, FIGURE 3-12A, Transportation Network,





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**Figure 41: Map of Community Corridors in Central (West) Riverhead**

Signage recommendations:

- On Rt. 58, put signage at corners with Mill Road and Pulaski Street coming from east and west (with arrows pointing south)
- On Rt. 25, indicating the district
- West-bound from downtown put signage near intersection with Court Street (Nugent Drive) (to encourage travel west).
- East-bound from LIE/Tanger at the intersections with Kroemer and Mill (to encourage travel east).

Development of this area is not considered as part of the East Main Street Urban Renewal area<sup>130</sup> or the Business Improvement District<sup>131</sup>; however, as part of a Creative Placemaking plan, it merits consideration whenever either of these two subjects/areas are being considered.

<sup>130</sup> Town of Riverhead Peconic River/Rt.25 Corridor NYS BOA Step II Nomination, FIGURE 3-5, Urban Renewal Area





Figure 42 - Riverhead Railroad Station

#### **Riverhead Rail Road Station area recommendations:**

The Riverhead Railway Station (Location #40) is an area that needs improvement. This is an area of ‘special interest’ to Creative Placemaking in downtown Riverhead, both for its history and architectural assets but also for its function as a rail and bus terminal to bring in visitors in a way that will reduce traffic congestion. The community survey identified this area as an area that the residents considered unsafe and a negative. The safety must be assured by more regular patrols and better lighting.

The area is worthy of investment by the Town, in cooperation with the Long Island Railway. Investments in making the rail and bus connections more attractive, safer and more frequent, and hence more popular, are an important part of limiting future automobile traffic congestion which conditions the public’s enjoyment of visiting Riverhead in general, but particularly for events. Creating a vibrant, compelling and safe pedestrian community corridor to the Railroad station is an important investment. Additionally, as is addressed in other areas of this report, demand for quality, frequent public transportation is growing among millennials and other younger potential

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<sup>131</sup> Town of Riverhead Peconic River/Rt.25 Corridor NYS BOA Step II Nomination, FIGURE 3-4, Business Improvement District





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residents of Riverhead as well as being a target demographic of visitors who are interested in Creative Placemaking.<sup>132</sup>

Safety and the public perception of safety can be greatly improved by better lighting of the site and its surrounding structures. The Railroad yard and surrounding buildings are particularly poorly lit at night, as shown below in Figures 43 and 44.



**Figure 43- Railroad yard and Revco building by day<sup>133</sup>**



**Figure 44- Railroad yard and Revco building by night**

Much improvement can be made by addressing the visual quality of the site. There are good supportive structures nearby including the historic Court House complex and the well landscaped and attractive Polish Town Pavilion. Both of these are either just around the corner, or blocked

<sup>132</sup> Millennial travel is discussed in the 'Downtown East' section of this report, Section 2: Lodging and meals: capturing economic impact and the section on demographics.

<sup>133</sup> Google Maps





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from view by unlit temporary buildings. The Town should request of the Long Island Railroad a program of improvements in the station yard, by requesting removal of the abandoned rolling stock, the stacks of inert supplies behind train station and their removal of the low temporary office trailers into a landscaped public site that is visually connected and integrated with the attractive Polish Town Pavilion that they block. These elements are visible in the photograph below of the station environment in Figure 45 .



**Figure 45 - Abandoned rolling stock, stockpiled materials, and low-grade buildings mar Railroad<sup>134</sup>**

Further Recommendations include:

- Landscaping and artistic illumination of architecturally interesting and relevant buildings so they become part of a ‘Piazza’ environment linking the Polish Town Pavilion, the Railroad station building, the Revco building, the Railroad Museum building and yard and the Victorian era building formerly the Court House Restaurant (Location #40) is recommended.
- In general, as is shown in the two previous images, sight lines from the station should be considered from the perspective of the visitor to the community and the station area should be considered a critical visual area as it is the gateway to Riverhead.
- Encourage use of buildings and empty lots in the BOA ‘strategic site 5’<sup>135</sup> in front of Railroad Stations for gallery spaces, artist craft spaces, and visitor amenities as identified in the Community Survey<sup>136</sup> as this area is the first area to welcome visitors and commuters.

<sup>134</sup> Google Maps

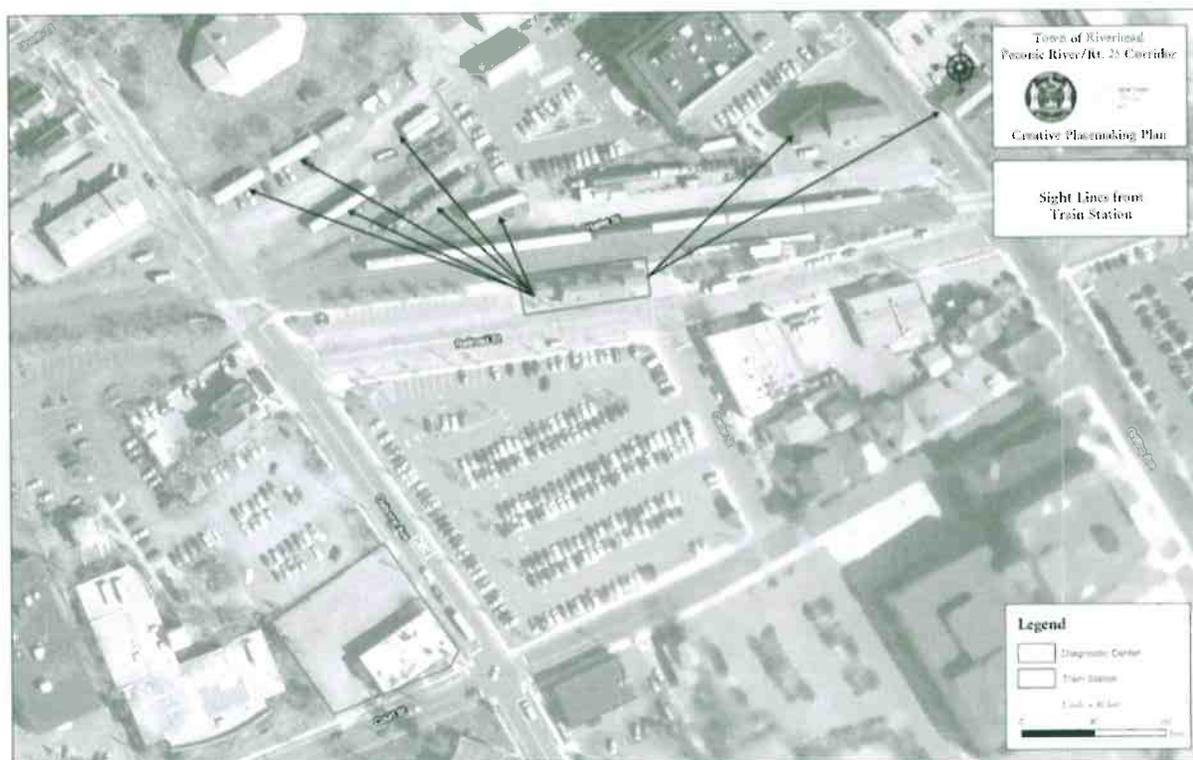
<sup>135</sup> Town of Riverhead Peconic River/Rt25 Corridor NYS BOA Step II Nomination, FIGURE 3-9, BOA Strategic Sites, Site ‘5’

<sup>136</sup> Town of Riverhead Peconic River/Rt.25 Corridor NYS Brownfield Opportunity Area, Community Survey, February 2014





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**Figure 46 - Sight lines from train station toward Polish Town.**

- **Location #41** Encourage use of empty building (former Courthouse restaurant at corner Griffing and Railroad Avenues) for a service for visitors additionally with night-time presence (restaurant, Bed & Breakfast, Inn)
- **Location #40** Encourage use of empty building (former Long Island Diagnostic Imaging at 205 Osborn Avenue) for a youth-oriented service forming a campus context with the Riverhead Free Library and as a youth support location to Creative Placemaking events on the River.

### Notes on additional Riverhead Central (West) Assets along the Community Corridor

During and between special events, make use of the destination sites, wayfinding, assets and the community corridors connecting them that are marked on the maps of the Central (western) district in Figure 41. Encourage development of sites along these community corridors to build vibrancy, populate this area and to avoid pedestrian congestion in critical areas during events. Additionally, building the wayfinding to these areas will assist in connecting the Historic Districts





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and Cultural Features<sup>137</sup> to the rest of downtown, e.g. such as the area around the Gilbert Conklin and Corwin Young houses, located north of the Railroad Area.

Recommendations for the proposed community corridors for Riverhead Central (West) are noted on Figure 41 above and support the development of sidewalks recommended in accompanying BOA study FIGURE 3-12B<sup>138</sup>:

- 
- Railroad from Griffing to Osborn
- Osborn from Pulaski to West Main
- Pulaski from Osborn to Marcy
- Marcy from Pulaski to West Main
- West Main from Osborn to Marcy and beyond
- Griffing from East Main Street to Railroad Avenue

### **7.2 Recommendations for Peconic River Bicycle and Paddle Loop Trail (Figure 47):**

Building on the Study regarding pedestrian paths (sidewalks) and bicycle paths, it is recommended to create a bicycle and paddle loop trail on the Peconic River.<sup>139</sup>

Suggested improvements along the Peconic River Corridor:

- Bicycle and Paddle loops should be created as per Figure 47, including kayak launches and bike exchanges as per the legend.
- A separation of the traffic between the road traffic on Rt. 25 and the pedestrian path will enhance safety, reduce noise, provide a more comfortable passageway, and allow the recapturing of needed area for the walk width.

<sup>137</sup> Town of Riverhead Peconic River/Rt.25 Corridor NYS BOA Step II Nomination, FIGURE 3-6, Historic Districts and Cultural Features Map

<sup>138</sup> Town of Riverhead Peconic River/Rt.25 Corridor NYS BOA Step II Nomination, FIGURE 3-12B, Sidewalks and Bicycle Routes

<sup>139</sup> Town of Riverhead Peconic River/Rt.25 Corridor NYS BOA Step II Nomination, FIGURE 3-12B, Sidewalks and Bicycle Routes







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site could become a much larger and popular attraction for much of Eastern Long Island, where it would remain a unique experience and asset.

Recommendations for use of destinations, wayfinding and architectural assets<sup>140</sup>:

- Location #1, #2, and #3 The large parking lot across from the Train Station: The parking area is bordered by (north - east - south - west: Railroad, Cedar, Osborn, Court) can be used as a destination venue, a location to engage visitors, encouraging them to spend time in the neighborhood, bringing vibrancy to the Railroad area.
- The northeast corner of railroad parking at Court and Osborn can be used as a wayfinding activity venue to lead visitors from the center of a river-based event via Main Street and Griffing Avenue toward Railroad Station area, connecting to Polish Town and the Pavilion.
- The southwest corner of the Railroad parking area at Court and Osborn can be used as a wayfinding activity venue to lead visitors from the western end to a river-based event via West Main Street and Osborn to the Railroad Station area, connecting to Polish Town.
- Location #4 The empty lot on south side of Railroad Avenue between existing retail locations at 143-151 Railroad Ave is a priority for a temporary support location for events to then lift and encourage adjacent retail.
- Connect Polish Town to the rest of downtown via wayfinding along Griffing to Main Street (including street closures of Griffing and Main Street and permanent signage year-round connecting the two areas.). (Specific Polish Town locations noted on the supplemental venues map)
- The Birchwood restaurant, noted on the supplemental venues map is another anchor in the Polish Town area, under new management which is eager to participate in coordinating and hosting programming.
- Location #25 The Cauliflower Association's campus is an ideal venue for music and performance, allowing better connectivity to the River and avoiding an industrial feeling.
- Location #38 Art Sites is a two-acre arts venue, the location of periodic arts events and the only private art gallery in Riverhead. Arts Districts often begin with a single artist or gallery taking up residence. The association with the other elements such as the 'West

<sup>140</sup> Occupancy/Capacity data for specific uses is in Appendix T: Capacity and Occupancy for Creative Placemaking venues





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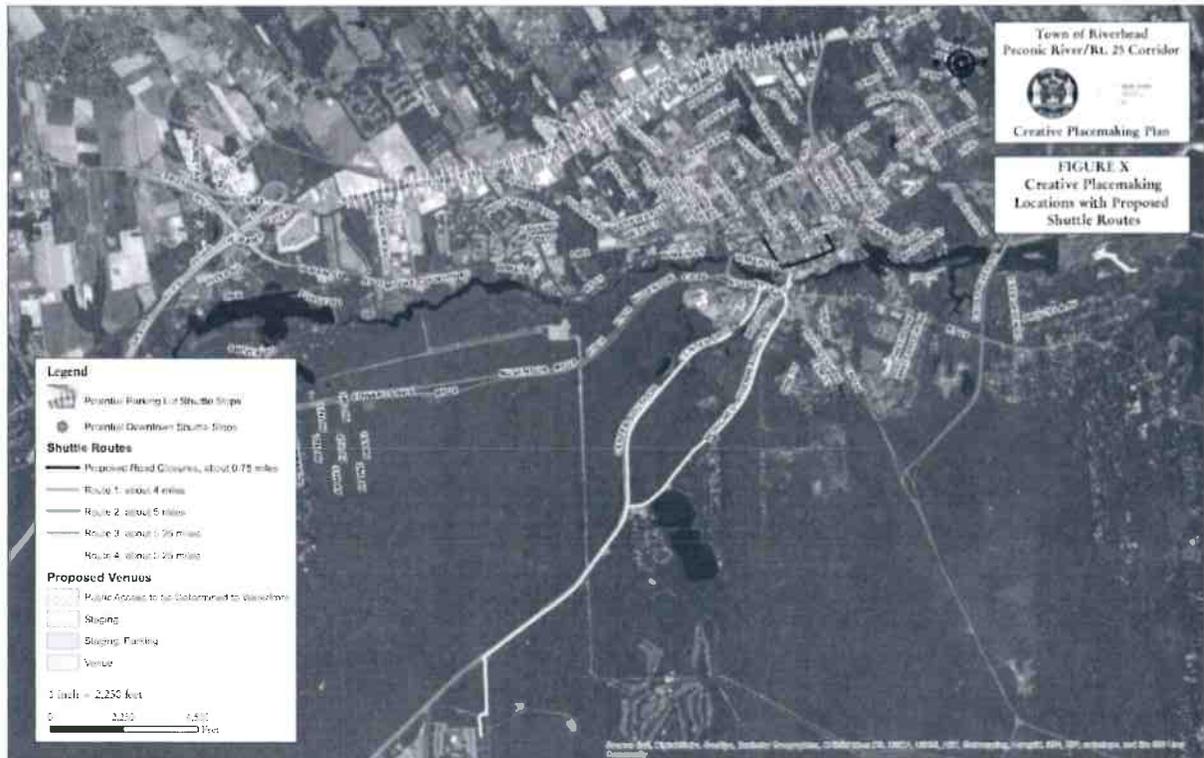
Peconic River Restaurant District' including Peconic Landing and the use of the Cauliflower Association as a venue can build upon each other. The land below Art Sites is also of great potential interest for an art event site.

- Location #46 Incentivize eventual conversion of use of the 'special interest area' to services appealing to visitors as per the Community Survey.
- Location #9 The Railroad Museum of Long Island and the yard area at the Museum (416 Griffing Avenue) can be used both as a destination venue utilizing Railroad Museum exhibit content as well as a wayfinding activity venue to lead visitors from a river-based site toward the Railroad Station area and Polish Town via Main Street via Griffing Avenue.
- Location #5, #6, #7, and #8 An elegant, engaging street façade of three historic courthouses in a row with a large ceremonial staircase opposite a large parking lot. An important part of Riverhead and Suffolk County history, the three historic courthouses are also a grand theatrical space that would lend itself to events by highlighting area architecture and building vibrancy in the area near the Railroad Station.
- Location #5 and #6 In front of the Courthouses at 169-219 and 225-235 Griffing Avenue are a key potential destination venue
- Location #7 and #8, supporting #5 and #6 with the Suffolk County Parking at Railroad Avenue and Griffing Avenue will also help lead visitors from the center of a river-based site toward the Railroad Station area and Polish Town via Main Street via Griffing Avenue.
- Location #21 and #22 The western portion of the Town Parking on east side of Griffing Ave at 118-204 Griffing Ave and the eastern portion of the Town Parking on the west side of Griffing Ave at 157-167 Griffing Avenue can be utilized either as destination venues or wayfinding activity venues. In either case the locations will lead visitors from the center of a river-based site toward the Railroad Station area and Polish Town via Main Street via Griffing Avenue.





### 7.3 Recommendations for Parking and Shuttles



**Figure 48: Map of Four Proposed Shuttle Routes**

As described in various places in the report, event destinations and ‘Café Main Street’ dining may take precedence over downtown parking during special events. Creating shuttle routes has many benefits. It reduces traffic to downtown and serves to encourage drivers coming east on the LIE or north from the South Fork to park as soon as possible.

Make use of shuttles as marked on Figure 48: Map of Four Proposed Shuttle Routes showing suggested downtown stops, utilized parking resources on Rt 58 and agreed locations in Southampton including Suffolk County Community College, Eastern Campus (shown on the map). The proposed shuttle routes to downtown Riverhead will reduce traffic downtown and also encourage exploration of the entire site on foot. Assuming a conservative average speed of 20 mph, the route timing for each of the shuttles is as follows :

- Route 1: 4 miles, 12 minutes
- Route 2: 5 miles, 15 minutes
- Route 3: 5.3 miles, 16 minutes
- Route 4: 5.3 miles, 16 minutes





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While basic signage should be placed at the end of the LIE, Rt. 24 and other routes south (Riverleigh, Quogue-Riverhead Road, etc.) the specific locations each time will depend on the number of parking lots engaged for each event.

Shuttles on the south side of the river from eastern and southern parking areas are fundamental to this plan as there is traffic congestion during Riverhead events on Rt. 24 due to the traffic circle being under capacity and continual demand for parking near the event. Frequency of the shuttle buses is a key component of consumer satisfaction and they should be staffed to assure an arrival at least every 10 minutes, with as often as every 5 minutes being preferred. The recommended shuttle routes have been deliberately designed to be short in length so that the service is quick and often to encourage use.

The routes should not overlap nor should their stops overlap in order to encourage exploration of the community. Not all of the routes need to be activated for each event, choice of routes, stops along Rt. 58, signage locations and number of shuttles per route will depend the number of visitors expected, arrangements made with specific landlords/stores on Rt. 58 permitting use of their property and even intermediate shuttle stops, closer to, but not in downtown, (not indicated). Experience will lead to the shuttle service evolving with events over time so capturing information from event-organizer to event-organizer via the 'Exit Interview' suggestions in this section is helpful.

The plan for the shuttles is an event logistics planning issue and separate from the provider of service. Supplementing shuttles hired by the event planner or the town, Tanger Outlets and all hotels interviewed confirmed that they would be willing to offer shuttle service during an event. Partial or fully 'sponsored' shuttle service provided by these companies and/or one or more of the national brands on Rt.58 should be pursued.

### **7.4 Recommendations regarding Audience and Demographics:**

Demographic analysis shows very strong potential attendance for Creative Placemaking events in Riverhead based on several factors:

- 'Permanent' population comparisons in comparable distances from Riverhead with respect to WaterFire attendance in other communities.<sup>141</sup>
- The uptick represented by North and South Fork seasonal residents

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<sup>141</sup> Interviews with organizers of WaterFire in Sharon, PA and the US Army Corps of Engineers economic study of WaterFire; <http://waterfire.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ACoE-Exec-Summary-letterhead.pdf>





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- The strength of the ‘Millennial’ demographic (18-35 year olds) in the relevant Metro area (NYC)<sup>142</sup>. Demand for Creative Placemaking both for travel as well as a criteria for settling in a community is well documented and many communities are developing Creative Placemaking specifically to target this market.<sup>143</sup>
- Millennials are particularly seeking engaging, authentic placed-based initiatives. They are a key target. They are informed, mobile and seek quality events. Their consumption patterns are aligned with patterns in social media websites so they are a very large engine behind alternative peer-to-peer service providers such as Airbnb (home stays) and Uber (peer taxi services). There is much literature available on their life-style, travel and buying habits and for multiple reasons Creative Placemaking in a site such as Riverhead is an ideal match for their consumption patterns.

Based on this research which is further analyzed in Sections 1.8, 1.9 and 3.2 of this report, comparing regional populations statistics, local event participation and the comparison with other WaterFire experiences, it can be estimated that audiences of at least 50,000 can be expected for a first successful Creative Placemaking event such as WaterFire in Riverhead.

### **7.5 Recommendations For Capturing Economic Impact and Satisfying Demand: Lodging and Food**

To date, the largest regular event in downtown Riverhead, Country Fair (estimated attendance 30,000 reported in the press<sup>144</sup>) does not overwhelm the community’s ability via local restaurants and vendors (not necessarily local) to cover needs for food, drink and hygienic facilities. In fact, there are no long lines present at the food venues at any of the events attended in the preparation of this plan (Edgar Allan Poe Festival, JumpstArt, Antique Car meet, Cardboard Boat Race, Country Fair, etc.).

**Food:** As the events grow in size, the associated variable demand for food/beverage and the general seasonality of demand for accommodation create special pressures on local businesses to fully take advantage of the potential economic impact of Creative Placemaking events as they become more popular.

<sup>142</sup> see Figure 2012 Population by Age for Riverhead, NY, in Section II.b. which shows comparative data for NY County, Riverhead and the US.

<sup>143</sup> <http://www.realtor.org/articles/calling-all-millennials-urban-areas-lure-gen-y-with-placemaking-programs>

<sup>144</sup> <http://southholdlocal.com/2014/10/13/riverhead-country-fair-draws-thousands-downtown-39th-annual-event/>





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### Recommendations:

- In order to plan and accommodate growing demand, Appendix T: Capacity and Occupancy details locations, appropriate usage, occupancy and capacity of each Creative Placemaking location permitting accommodation of exponential growth in the number of vendors or kiosks present and the number of meals served. Detailed numbers of meals that the community can already accommodate as well as other helpful estimates and planning materials are provided in 5 of this report with data in the accompanying Appendix U: Restaurant Survey & Capacity.
- In the choice of vendors, Creative Placemaking preferences are to preserve the distinctiveness of the location with first providers for additional locations sought from existing restaurants in the community via the creation of extra kiosks or food trucks representing restaurant operators across the Town of Riverhead and the region, regardless of whether their actual place of business is already on the corridors, paseos or routes of the event.
- An experienced Creative Placemaker or special event producer can assist a team of local restaurant owners in utilizing the information in the tables combined with their experience with the local market in the preparation of an expandable plan that takes advantage of the opportunities presented by the events.

**Lodging:** The economic benefits to the community of overnight stays are enhanced if visitors sleep locally vs in the surrounding communities. To create the ability for the Town to react flexibly to increased demand for lodging, it is recommended that they research and consider ‘alternative accommodation’ options that are outlined in Section 2. Inventory of Assets as well as considering the data found in Appendix P: Lodging Inventory. From the perspective of Creative Placemaking, the benefits of a small number of people attending an event by staying in another community are helpful, but capturing an overnight guest means more than just the hotel fees, it assures more meals and longer stays and therefore more economic impact, more employment and more vibrancy.

Based on research into the audience demographics and the opportunities for Riverhead, the alternatives recommended for investigation include:

- Peer-to-peer housing in general (Airbnb, Homeaway and other sites).





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- Lengthen average visitor stays by expanding the number of activities in an event and the length of an event, partnering with other organizations brings other ideas and hybrid concepts.
- Expand parts of the community explored each visit by each visitor by using more of the town's resources and venues for each event.

Additional data on potential partnered organization is contained in the Appendices to the report, which contain hundreds of contacts, many with web/email references that should be assembled into a regularly updated Creative Placemaking Database and utilized to promote every stage of the community-based outreach and engagement process: These resources are assembled as the following Appendices.

- Appendix H: Non-profit non-arts Organizations, Human Resources and Potential Partners with individual annotations for each organization as to ideas for suggested engagement and involvement.
- Appendix J: Galleries and Arts Organizations and Venues
- Appendix K: Local Educational Entities and those in the Arts
- Appendix L: Event Organizers
- Appendix M: Arts Professionals
- Appendix N: NY Arts Organizations (affiliated with NYSCA) - To fund initiatives, there are many suggestions in Section 3 of the body of this report regarding funding mechanisms. In the Appendices below there are several databases where each individual organization has been evaluated with annotations in the database.
- Appendix Q: Major National Foundations in the Arts Active in New York State – Largest nationally present foundations active in NY State, potentially relevant to activities in Riverhead, with a brief analysis of Funding Themes and Objectives.
- Appendix R: Top Foundations and Corporations Supporting the Arts in New York State - Top foundations & corporations giving in NY State, potentially relevant to activities in Riverhead, with an analysis of Funding Themes and Objectives
- Appendix S: NY CFA Grant Program - Information regarding eligible applications, eligible uses of funds and suggestions for Creative Placemaking grant applications for Riverhead





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Some individual recommendations for existing activities:

**Polish Fair:** Working with the broader Polish community, the development of an expanded 'Polish Fair' event with more activities deeply focusing on the Polish origins of the community would be helpful to draw visitors to an event along the usual venues on Pulaski Street and in the Polish Town area, but also well connected to downtown through wayfinding and activities. Polish Fair could be expanded to include other organizations such as, for example dance troupes, dance teaching professionals, East End Arts, Suffolk County Historical Society, working together locally many ideas can be derived, contemporary chefs revisiting Polish cuisine. Borrowing from other events, a potato pancake or pierogi contest. As visitors to Polish Fair remarked 'everyone is Polish today' ... transform a greater portion of the town into a celebration of Polish culture.

**Cardboard Boat Race:** Residents embrace the idea of the Cardboard Boat Race but many remarked that the congested River Walk did not readily afford them a view of the races. Those who did participate typically left almost immediately after the end of the scheduled races. A greater number of competitive teams should be recruited (local companies, police/firemen, etc.) adding more heats to the schedule. The heats should be staged in several sites along Rive Walk , to allow more spectators to see and combined with other activities in between and following the heats to encourage people to get up from their positions on the River Walk and explore. Multiple collateral activities added in areas #10 through #15 on the Map in Figure 37 as well as some fun uses for the paseos at #51 through #56 to encourage people to explore events scheduled on Main Street. More children's activities could be added in collaboration with East End Arts and local schools. A class for school aged children and their parents using materials that readily make a simple boat could be held in the morning, leaving enough time to make a boat, wander around downtown and then come back and join a special heat of only these (all nearly identical) boats. Local businesses along Rt. 58 could be recruited to sponsor teams from their employment rolls, many of whom employ many youth who do not live in Riverhead and who in this way would be introduced to the town's center.

**The Edgar Allan Poe Festival** is doing well, broadly based and engages a wide swath of the community. Solicit the organizer to encourage them to explore other ideas for producing additional events.

**East End Arts JumpstArt** brings together a range of talented artists. The challenge to fill downtown is great. Bring together complementary activities with JumpstArt hosted by other organizations so that each organization brings its own set of visitors will build interest.





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**Antique Car Events:** The antique car meets are held in the absence of any other collateral activities and their presence down by the River Walk means that many visitors to the restaurants on Main Street do not see them. Organize a town-wide 'sock hop' (swing dance). Use the cars as the central theme of the event, they could be parked in various places in the middle of a closed Main Street, 1950's food items on the menus and a town-wide call for those more proficient to exhibit their skill at a dance off while everyone hangs out, dressed in their poodle skirts with the D.A. hairdos.

Local organizations who will benefit from the increased traffic such as The BID or the Chamber of Commerce could sponsor an outdoor 3-D movie festival in theme (Vincent Price, Creature from the Black Lagoon), a charitable organization such as Riverhead Rotary could sponsor selling the disposable 3-D glasses that are sold, donating a portion to charity. A sponsor for prizes for the cars (oldest, best condition, rarest, oddest looking, best costume of driver/companion.) Add a Beat Poets poetry slam in collaboration with Poetry Street. It could be an annual event.

**Juneteenth** happens every year in Riverside yet most Riverhead residents have no idea what Juneteenth means. *From Wikipedia* 'Juneteenth, also known as Juneteenth Independence Day or Freedom Day, is a holiday that commemorates the announcement of the abolition of slavery in Texas in June 1865, and more generally the emancipation of African-American slaves throughout the Confederate South. Celebrated on June 19, the term is a portmanteau of June and nineteenth and is recognized as a state holiday or special day of observance in most states.' The holiday is observed primarily in local celebrations. Traditions include public readings of the Emancipation Proclamation, singing traditional songs such as "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" and "Lift Every Voice and Sing", and readings by noted African-American writers such as Ralph Ellison and Maya Angelou.<sup>145</sup> Celebrations may include parades, rodeos, street fairs, cookouts, family reunions, park parties, historical reenactments, or Miss Juneteenth contests.<sup>146</sup> This event could be conducted in a bigger way perhaps with support from outside of the community?

### Events and installations around town that recount **the natural history & past of Riverhead**

Creative Placemaking builds on distinctiveness and one of the many areas of excellence of Riverhead assets is the ability of the community to foster reconnections with nature. The presence of the River downtown, the extensive estuary, the sound, all of the agricultural realities and the many important scientific and activist groups involved in defending nature should be leveraged whenever and wherever possible.

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<sup>145</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/JuneteenthCelebrations>

<sup>146</sup> <http://www.riverhead.net/HTML/pulaski04/News1314/Juneteenth.html>.





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**Past:** Riverhead’s multilayered history has numerous elements that provided a strong basis for cultural tourism. Its architecture speaks to its bustling Victorian heyday. This period appeals to Millennials, and has connections to maker fairs, micro-breweries and a whole series of related activities. The Town has a rich and diverse cultural history to celebrate.

**Epcal/Grumman** attraction and history in the community and it is also a great potential site for a variety of potential events.

**Ideas:** create signs around town at historic locations with scannable (QR codes) and websites linking to references to the website (point 4)

Create murals around town with renowned street artists with references to the community’s history

Create ‘costume’ events that leverage the Victorian facades on main street - 19th century menus, goods for sale, activities. Work with artists to leverage elements of Main Street that are not already ‘Victorian’ so they connect with the theme.

### 7.8 Recommendations For Leveraging the Plan

The Creative Placemaking guide has lots of information that individual event planners will benefit from and they can give the community feedback on their experience. Leverage the plan by working on processes to pass the information contained in the Creative Placemaking plan to help event planners to help the community make the best event. See Appendix E: Opportunities to Leverage Applications with the Chapter 90 long form for suggestions.

A great practice is to require an exit interview or on-line questionnaire be completed by event producers after their events. This can be enforced as being a requirement to receive any deposits or insurance liability sign-offs. See Appendix F: Proposed Exit Interview Procedures for Event Producer



