

■ Revitalization Strategy for Downtown Riverhead

Prepared for the
Town of Riverhead, New York

Abeles Phillips Preiss & Shapiro, Inc.
August 2000

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Prepared for:
Town of Riverhead, New York

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1. Vision Statement

Building on its historic character and its waterfront location at the mouth of the Peconic River, Downtown Riverhead should be the cultural and institutional center of the East End of Long Island, drawing tourists, residents, and local employees year-round. Main Street should become a specialty- and entertainment-oriented shopping district, building off of downtown attractions. The waterfront park should be expanded and better linked to Main Street, becoming a major recreational attraction and enhancing the character of downtown.

- Promote specialty food markets and restaurants.
 - Specifically, pursue an indoor public market or a specialty supermarket on the north side of Main Street.
 - Pursue specialty or ethnic food markets.
 - Encourage outdoor dining.
- Promote stores and restaurants oriented to children and families.
- Promote antique stores and furniture stores.
- Promote music stores and develop music programs for both adults and children.
- Preserve eclectic specialty stores and convenience shopping.
- Support the growth of downtown attractions and foster development of the arts.
- Encourage coordinated marketing and programming for downtown destinations, in order to promote longer visits..

Develop Tourist and Specialty Shopping Niches and a Variety of Tourist Attractions

- Expand the waterfront park west to the Court Street bridge and establish a continuous waterfront trail.
- Work with the Town of Southampton to expand park uses and protect open space on the south side of the Peconic River.
- Establish areas for recreational concessions and consider installing public restroom facilities in the park.
- Preserve and enhance pedestrian and view corridors between East Main Street and the Peconic River.
- Limit polluted runoff from draining into the Peconic River.

Expand and Improve the Waterfront Park

- Maintain ground-floor retail along Main Street, with apartments and offices on the upper floors.
- Encourage cultural attractions to expand onto adjacent lots.
- Maintain the pattern of small, dispersed parking lots, and ensure that any new parking lots are built according to the same pattern.
- Encourage the development of mixed-use buildings on infill sites throughout the downtown area.
- Establish park uses all along the edges of the waterfront, and situate water-dependent uses at the major entrances to the downtown area.

Establish a Land Use Framework, while Preserving and Promoting a Fine-Grain Mix of Uses

- Concentrate office uses in the Office/Court District.
- In the Office/Court District, create large parking lots in the center of the blocks, and line the edges of the blocks with office, retail, and institutional buildings.
- Establish mixed office and residential districts on both sides of the residential neighborhood located north of Main Street, where residential-to-office conversions would be allowed.
- In the residential area located north of Main Street, establish a residential zone that prohibits stand-alone commercial uses, but still allow home occupations and artist studios and galleries.
- As part of the zoning ordinance update, establish setback, buffer, landscaping, and other standards that minimize land use impacts while maintaining mixed uses.

Promote Housing Revitalization and Artist Housing

- Preserve downtown housing by limiting the area in which office conversions are permitted.
- Limit the impacts of group homes in the downtown area.
- Work with the Business Improvement District to make downtown housing available to artists.
- Provide assistance to artists seeking housing in the downtown area, and provide incentives for landlords to lease space to artists.
- Expand the boundaries of the downtown Arts District, and allow more flexibility in artist housing, studios, and galleries.
 - Expand the definition of an "artist" to include persons practicing any of the applied arts, and eliminate Town Board approval of artist certification.
- Allow home occupations in the downtown area, on condition of meeting stringent performance standards, sign regulations, and locational requirements.
 - Allow ancillary residences in commercial space in the downtown area, on condition that living space meets normal building code requirements.
 - Allow home occupations to occupy detached structures on residential sites.
- Provide property tax incentives for housing rehabilitation.
- Allow retirement housing in the downtown area.

Preserve and Enhance Historic Character

- Identify historically significant sites and buildings, and implement historic preservation regulations as part of the zoning code update.
- Encourage renovation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings, by exempting them from inappropriate or overly stringent standards in the zoning ordinance and building code.
- Provide opportunities for relocating historic houses in downtown Riverhead.

- Seek and provide financial incentives for historic preservation.
- Establish maximum setbacks and requirements for pedestrian-oriented design.
- Require ground-floor retail along Main Street.
- Establish detailed downtown design standards.
- Prohibit auto-oriented land uses in the downtown area.
- Ensure that sign regulations allow variety in downtown signage.
- Establish minimum and maximum residential lot sizes that resemble existing lots in the downtown area.
- As part of the zoning ordinance update, establish parking standards that take into account the traditional building and space constraints.

Preserve and Promote Traditional Building Layouts and Development Patterns, while Allowing Variety in Building Design

- Implement continuous streetscape and façade improvements.
- Build pedestrian walkways between Main Street and the waterfront.
- Establish crosswalks and sidewalk bulbs at all key intersections, and improve pedestrian safety at the Peconic-Roanoke-Main Street intersection.
- Keep all existing connections across the LIRR tracks.
- Establish a continuous bicycle trail along the Peconic River waterfront, and work with Southampton to preserve and extend the existing bicycle trail on the south bank of the river.
- Work with the Parking District to install bicycle racks in Parking District lots. Require property owners outside the Parking District to provide bicycle racks on-site.

Promote Pedestrian Access and Circulation

- Keep all streets two-way and prohibit street closures.
- Relieve traffic congestion on Main Street and at the Peconic-Roanoke-Main Street intersection by installing directional signs that divert cars into parking lots before they reach the core Main Street area.
- Extend Court Street to Roanoke Avenue.
- Increase opportunities for reaching downtown Riverhead via transit, and support plans for the Transportation Center.

Manage Traffic Circulation while Maintaining Auto Access

- Assess the parking impacts created by Phase I of the Aquarium.
- Consider expanding the Parking District boundaries to include all downtown shops, offices, and attractions.
- Work with the Parking District to pursue shared parking agreements.
- Redesign the configuration of on-street parking on all downtown streets, in order to maximize the supply of on-street parking.

Ensure Adequate Parking

- If new parking lots are necessary, build them in the Office/Court district and near the Transportation Center.
- Prohibit use of the Building Supply site as a stand-alone parking lot; allow housing development on the site.
- Establish a shuttle that runs back and forth along Main Street between the Office/Court district parking lots and the Atlantis Aquarium on weekends.
- If a parking garage is necessary, build a recessed parking deck behind the County Court buildings.
- Require downtown attractions to provide adequate bus drop-off areas and facilities, and ensure that Parking District lots have space for bus parking.
- Allow the Parking District to review and submit advisory comments on proposed projects in the downtown area.

**Design Parking Lots that are Walkable,
Attractive, and Integrated with
Downtown Buildings**

- Preserve the pattern of small, dispersed parking lots.
- Design parking lots with identifiable pedestrian walkways, trees, planting beds, marked entrances, and clear edges.
- Expand the use of the parking lots along the Peconic River for special events.
- Keep sight lines open between Roanoke Avenue and the County Court building, allowing a mix of public plazas and landscaped parking lots in the area.

Enhance Gateways and Arrival Points

- Implement streetscape and landscape improvements.
- Install edifice lighting on the facades of major downtown landmarks, and install holiday lights and decorations along Main Street from Thanksgiving to New Year's Day.
- Work with the Business Improvement District to establish maintenance plans for gateways and arrival points.
- Create a public greenway that links the Transportation Center to Court Street.



■ 2. Findings

Like many historic downtowns in New York and around the country, downtown Riverhead experienced a decline from the 1960's and through the 1990's. Most convenience shopping (i.e., groceries) moved from downtown to Route 58, where new shopping centers provide large chain stores with abundant, convenient parking. Most comparison, brand name shopping (i.e. apparel) moved to either Route 58 or the Tanger Outlet Mall. Downtown was left with vacant buildings, a general lack of vitality, and a sense of abandonment.

Yet downtown held on, with a major department store (Swezey's), two major hardware stores, and numerous specialty stores and restaurants. According to surveys and focus groups, residents, merchants, and Town leaders put a priority on revitalizing downtown. This strategy establishes a framework for revitalization that will be refined in the Master Plan update.

Shifting the Focus to Entertainment

For several years, the Town has been working to shift the focus of downtown from convenience and comparison shopping to entertainment, tourism, and cultural activities. In the downtown focus group conducted in July 1999, in the resident surveys conducted in June and July 1999, and in the merchant surveys conducted in October and November 1999, there was general agreement expressed with this approach.

This strategy has been successful in small, historic downtowns throughout the country. Easton, Pennsylvania attracted new business and vitality with the introduction of the Crayola Crayon Museum. Mystic, Connecticut has become a major tourist attraction through its aquarium and historic seaport village. North Adams, Massachusetts has been revitalized with the Mass MoCA Museum and Jacob's Pillow performance center.

In downtown Riverhead, the new Atlantis Aquarium is a tourist "anchor" that is attracting thousands of visitors to downtown. However, the Aquarium in and of itself is not enough to revitalize the downtown area. It will succeed in revitalizing downtown only if visitors can be encouraged to visit the other parts of downtown during their trips.

Creating a Unified Downtown Experience

Because there are so many new projects right now, Riverhead has an ideal opportunity to establish a framework for downtown revitalization. Aside from the Aquarium, other major projects in downtown Riverhead include the planned County Court expansion, the long-awaited re-opening of the Suffolk Theater, and the proposed Science Center children's museum. Existing attractions include the East End Arts Council, the Suffolk County Historical Society, and the Long Island Railroad Museum. The Country Fair, the Polish Fair, the Blues Festival, and the Community Mosaic are major summertime events in eastern Long Island. The strategy can help weave together the different attractions physically and otherwise.

Creating a unified look and feel through landscaping and streetscapes, for example, can encourage visitors to explore the downtown area on foot. Visitors would then have the opportunity to patronize local shops and restaurants and visit

2.1 Introduction

Approach to Downtown Strategy

other attractions, rather than feeling compelled to return to their cars and leaving. In addition, the strategy can help minimize parking, traffic, and urban design impacts, so that existing shops and attractions do not suffer, and so that visitors have a seamless, problem-free experience.

Sticking to a Market-Based Strategy

Having a "market-based" strategy does not mean "anything goes". It means that specific market niches will be developed, so that downtown offers shops, restaurants, and a shopping experience that appeal to tourists.

Creating a pleasant specialty shopping experience is a key component of a market-based strategy. Tourists are attracted to locales that have convenient parking, interesting shops and restaurants, safe and walkable streets, and attractive buildings, parks, and public spaces. Thus, the downtown strategy addresses not only the type and mix of uses in the downtown area, but also issues like parking, urban design, signage, and circulation, which influence the shopping experience.

But developing tourism and entertainment does not mean that downtown will or should become a tourist trap. Instead, downtown should maintain an eclectic mix of shops and restaurants that serve both tourists and locals. Existing shops provide a wide range of goods and services that are often difficult to find in standard shopping centers or malls. The most successful downtowns have this eclectic mix.

Planning Area

This report focuses on the geographic area that includes the shops and institutional buildings along Main Street, the County Courts, and the immediately adjacent office and residential areas. The boundaries of the planning area are generally defined as the Peconic River to the south, the LIRR tracks to the north, the Court Street bridge and the Riverhead Free Library to the west, and Riverside Drive to the east. Sites located immediately outside these boundaries are referenced and considered wherever relevant, but they are not the focus of this report.

Relationship to the Master Plan Update

The downtown strategy is being prepared as part of the Master Plan update. In focus groups and surveys that were conducted in 1999, townspeople said that one of the biggest issues in Riverhead was how to revitalize downtown. Because downtown is such a major concern, and because downtown has been depressed for so long, this strategy was prepared first, before other parts of the Master Plan. As the Master Plan is prepared, the recommendations in this report will be refined and integrated into the Plan. The zoning ordinance will be revised after completion of the Master Plan update and implement the recommendations of the Plan.

Recommendations in this report are based on an analysis of planning issues and a market analysis. Planning issues were identified through focus groups and surveys, stakeholder interviews, and visits to downtown. The market analysis examined demographic information, considers trade areas and competition, and assesses the potential for convenience, comparison, specialty, and tourist shopping. Sources of information can be summarized as follows:

- *Demographics.* Population, income, and other statistics were collected and summarized, for use in the market analysis.
- *Focus Group.* In July 1999, a downtown focus group was convened, in order to identify downtown's assets, opportunities, and challenges. Additional focus groups on other topics, like the waterfront, were conducted at about the same time.
- *Merchant and resident surveys.* Conducted in summer and fall 1999, these surveys asked detailed questions regarding downtown shopping behavior and perceptions of downtown.
- *Interviews.* Key stakeholders in the downtown area were interviewed. Their perspectives, concerns, aspirations, and plans regarding downtown were noted and considered in preparation of this report.
- *Site Visits.* Consultant team members—including John Shapiro, Joseph Ferrucci, and Norman Mintz—toured and photographed buildings, streets, parking lots, and park space through downtown.

2.2 Planning Issues

Retail Mix and Vitality



Route 58 competes with downtown, providing convenience products, national chain stores, and ample parking.



Tanger Mall, another downtown competitor, offers brand-name clothing and household goods at discounted prices.

Like historic downtowns throughout the country, downtown Riverhead has suffered from competition with auto-oriented shopping centers and malls. Route 58 provides much of the convenience shopping in the area, and both Route 58 and the Tanger Outlet Mall provide comparison shopping for brand-name goods. More and more, mail order and e-commerce allow people to do convenience and comparison shopping from home. Yet the homogenization of mass consumerism has created new opportunities for specialty retail stores, where fun and service take precedence over price and convenience.

One of the main objectives of the downtown strategy is to fill vacancies and improve retailing in downtown Riverhead. About 28 percent of surveyed residents said the worst quality of downtown was that there were vacant buildings, and 13 percent said that there were not enough shopping opportunities. Nearly one third of surveyed residents said that they visited downtown Riverhead less than three years ago, and most of them cited the loss or lack of stores as the main reason. About 22 percent of surveyed merchants said that filling vacancies and attracting more businesses is the way to improve the business climate.

The great majority of surveyed residents (74 percent) have said that they would like to see more businesses downtown, while about 70 percent said that they want no more shopping centers or highway-oriented businesses. This suggests that downtown is still a viable retail center. The challenge is how to reorient downtown, so that it is not competing directly with Route 58, Tanger Mall, mail-order catalogues, or the internet, but appeals to customers that are not served by those shopping areas: tourists, day-trippers, local employees, Court visitors, and shoppers seeking specialty goods.

Specialty Stores

Stores currently located in downtown tend to provide goods and services that are highly specialized and may be difficult to find elsewhere. For example, a particular brand of lawn mower at the Sears store, an ice cream at Star Confectionery, or imported foods at the Polish deli can be considered specialty goods. Even Swezey's is more of a specialty store; although it offers many of the same products as the Tanger Mall, it is a unique family-owned, local department store that provides a high degree of customer service. Local and East End residents would be willing to make the occasional special trip to purchase such specialty goods, but they would not be likely to make frequent trips.

These specialty stores have survived in downtown, because they generally do not compete directly with Route 58, Tanger Mall, mail order, or e-commerce. About 25 percent of surveyed residents said that they shop for clothing and furnishings downtown (really at Swezey's), and 20 percent said that they go downtown for window-shopping. Although most residents go to Tanger Mall for this type of comparison shopping, downtown Riverhead remains a major draw, because no other place in town combines an eclectic mix of service-oriented shops. As new tourists are brought to downtown, the resultant types of stores will complement this specialty retail mix. About 26 percent of surveyed residents and 70

percent of surveyed merchants said that they would like to see more boutiques, specialty stores, clothing, and shoe stores downtown.

Restaurants and Weekend Shopping

For example, most downtown restaurants and eateries cater to local employees and Court visitors. These local workers spend money on lunch, dinner, and convenience products (i.e., film at Camera Concepts, paper products at Ben Franklin's), because downtown eateries are conveniently located to the County offices, courts, etc. Some local residents also come downtown for lunch and dinner. These workers and residents generate a small but solid market for restaurants in downtown. Notable eateries include Digger's, Maggie Maguire's, the Star Confectionery, the Riverhead Grill, and Polonez.

Yet Downtown Riverhead's restaurants do not yet have a regional draw, meaning that they have relatively little evening or weekend business. Most of their business is during weekday lunch, when local businesses are open. Tapping into the regional tourist market could help make restaurants even more successful by attracting nighttime and weekend activity to downtown.

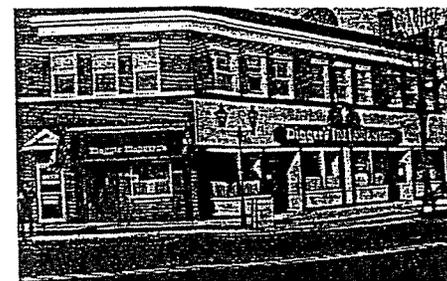
Restaurants flourish when they can amortize their sizable decorating, staff and spoilage expenses with dinner and lunch, seven days a week, all four seasons. Surveyed residents and merchants agree that restaurants are the top retail category to recruit for downtown. About 27 percent of surveyed residents and 39 percent of surveyed merchants said that they would like to see more restaurants and cafes downtown. According to our land use survey, about 10 percent of the storefronts were occupied by eateries. Based on our experience in other historic downtowns, this figure could go to as high as 40 percent. If marketed in the right way, downtown Riverhead could gain a reputation as a restaurant destination.

The lack of evening and weekend patronage hurts stores as well as eateries. During the Downtown Focus Group conducted in July 1999, meeting participants said that one of the major problems with downtown is that it does not cater to evening and weekend clientele.

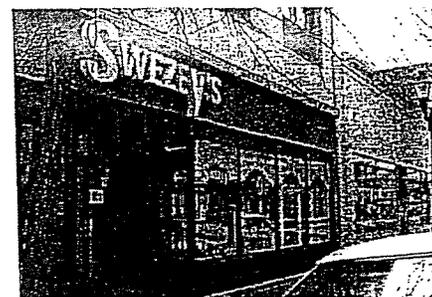
Vacancies

Despite impressions otherwise, there have been few storefront vacancies in downtown Riverhead, which is quite stable. The merchant survey indicated that the median age of downtown businesses was more than 20 years. Current vacancies include several ground-floor shops on the south side of East Main Street near Peconic Avenue, and the building at One East Main Street (which was closed in spring 2000 for building code violations).¹ But when Swezey's moves into its new building near the corner of Roanoke Avenue, it will vacate about 50,000 to 60,000 square feet of storefront space along East Main Street. The large floorplates of the existing Swezey's buildings are not suitable for small shops, cafes, or restaurants, so one major issue is what uses will fill the spaces once they are vacated.

Turnover of retail space is a constant and healthy process, allowing opportunities for new business ventures. For instance, the old Bull & Bear Pub is being



Downtown has a variety of specialty food stores and restaurants.



Swezey's will vacate several storefronts along Main Street when it moves into its new store.

1. Tim Kelly, "A Motel, or Someone's Home?: Jamesport, Riverhead Businesses Strapped with Building Violations," *The News-Review*, vol. XCVIII, no. 30, April 6, 2000, pp. 3, 21.

planned for a new restaurant and hotel venture, and the former shoe store on East Main Street is being planned for a new coffee bar.² These new ventures are intended to cater to tourists and day-trippers, who are being attracted to Riverhead by the Aquarium and summertime events. Restaurants and coffee bars also cater to local employees and Court visitors. Any future uses that occupy the Swezey's spaces should also tap into the tourist and employee markets.

Thus, existing vacancies are not a sign of eminent decay. But the Town and business community should be prepared for a crisis once Swezey's consolidates, when there will be a sudden glut of available space.

Ground-floor Offices

Worse than vacancies, too many storefronts are being filled with ground-floor offices. About 10 percent of downtown storefronts have already been converted to offices. The risk is that the vacuum created by the Swezey's consolidation will prompt many more offices in ground floor spaces, as an expedient way to fill vacancies with reliable long-term tenants (like Swezey's).

Offices detract from the shopping experience, because they create gaps in the retail frontage. Creating a seamless shopping experience is a key strategy in attracting tourists, because tourists—like all shoppers—want to stroll along pleasant streets, see attractive window displays, and browse in eclectic, interesting stores. Storefront offices interrupt the visual experience of Main Street, and they attract less activity than shops.

Attractions and Activities

For a long time, there has been no single, major attraction downtown. When the Aquarium opened in May 2000, it quickly became the major anchor and attraction. It is unclear yet whether the Aquarium will reach its original visitor estimates, but it will continue to be a major attraction, even if it draws only half of its projected average annual visitors (i.e., 500,000, compared for 1,000,000 projected visitors).

Other smaller downtown attractions include: the proposed Science Center children's museum, the Historical Society, the East End Arts Council, the Riverhead Library, the Railroad Museum, the Suffolk Theater, the Vail Leavitt Theater the waterfront park, the marina, and the shops along Main Street. If coordinated in the right way, this collection of small attractions could make downtown Riverhead a major cultural, recreational, and entertainment destination.

Opportunities for Coordination

There are many opportunities for coordination among the downtown attractions. Coordination in programming is one opportunity. For example, "satellite" attractions could build off the Aquarium's maritime themes in order to draw Aquarium visitors. The Riverhead Library could offer related readings and workshops; the Science Center children's museum could install exhibits on maritime technology; the Historical Society could organize a whaling exhibit; interpretive signs about

2. Tim Kelly, "Tavern Reclaims its History: Old Bull & Bear Reborn Under a New Partnership," *The News-Review*, vol. XCVIII, no. 32, April 20, 2000, p. 2.

the riparian habitat can be installed along the waterfront park; a new seafood restaurant could be added to the retail mix on Main Street. The Historical Society and Library have coordinated their programming in the past with great success.

Similarly, programs could be coordinated to appeal to particular customers. For example, the Aquarium, the Historical Society, and the Library are already major attractions for children and their parents. Additional stores, attractions, exhibits, programs, and events with a child-orientation can be added to the mix.

The Aquarium does not always have to be the focus of a coordinated program. For example, an artistic program on filmmaking could be successfully organized among the other cultural attractions in downtown. Such a program could combine lectures at the Library, exhibits at the Science Center, showings at the Suffolk Theater and Vail Leavitt Theater, and children's workshops at the Arts Council.

Coordination in marketing, ticketing, and excursion trips is another opportunity. In particular, the Suffolk Theater and the Vail Leavitt Theater could coordinate to offer day passes to cinematic shows or musical performances. This would help reduce costs for individual venues and encourage visitors to do visit multiple attractions in downtown. Coordination related to parking, physical linkages, circulation, and design are also key issues, and they are discussed in forthcoming subsections.

Events

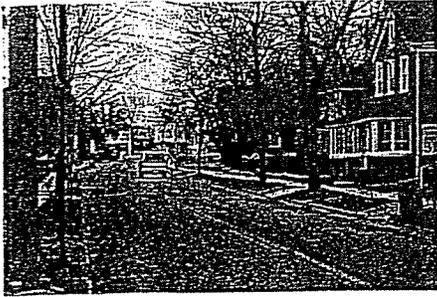
Downtown serves as forum for several special events during the course of the year. The Country Fair—held during Columbus Day weekend—draws about 75,000 people. The fair has been held for more than 25 years and has become so popular that it has been expanded from one to two days. Started in the late 1990s, the three-day Blues Festival attracts approximately 6,000 people during the month of July. Also, the summertime concert series is held on Friday evenings during the months of June, July, and August and attracts about 100 people per event. The Polish Fair—held just outside the downtown area on Pulaski Street during the third weekend in August—attracts about 100,000 people, even more people than the Country Fair. Surveyed residents overwhelmingly stated that they would like to see more cultural events in the downtown area.

Special events are an especially good vehicle to prompt coordination. They can draw crowds from a large catchment area to, and event patrons can be encouraged to visit shops, restaurants, and other attractions. The Country Fair and the Blues Festival, for example, generate some spin-off activity. Some restaurants remain open during weekend events and sponsor dinner specials and entertainment.

Fine-Grain Mix of Uses

Downtown Riverhead has a checkerboard mix of retail, office, and residential uses characteristic of many old downtown areas. It also has a concentration of cultural and institutional uses, including the Aquarium, the Historical Society, the Suffolk

Land Use



Downtown is a pedestrian-oriented environment, with traditional houses on compact-sized lots, and narrow streets and sidewalks leading down to Main Street.

Theater, Town Hall, the County Courts, and two historic churches. This pattern of uses is unique in suburban and rural areas like Riverhead. In comparison, most suburban areas are characterized by the separation of land uses. New houses are built in residential subdivisions; offices are built along commercial corridors; institutional uses like churches and schools are usually scattered; and stores are concentrated in freestanding pads or shopping centers in the same commercial corridors.

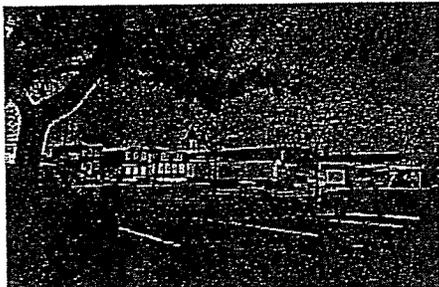
Downtown's fine-grain mix of uses evolved before the automobile, when walking was the primary mode of travel. Nowadays, even though most people have cars, downtown is one of the only places in Riverhead and the East End where people can walk from attraction to attraction. By way of comparison, Tanger Mall and Route 58 are auto-oriented, making pedestrian access virtually impossible and limiting pedestrian circulation between stores.

Small, Dispersed Parking Lots

With the ascendancy of the car, it was (and remains) essential that Riverhead retool for the convenience of drivers as well as pedestrians. Thanks to the efforts of the Town and the Parking District, Riverhead has succeeded in this task.

Downtown Riverhead has a virtually ideal configuration of parking lots. Small lots are interspersed throughout the downtown area, providing most business and cultural facilities with convenient parking, and helping disperse traffic. No matter what direction people are arriving from, they can actually turn off into a parking lot before ever reaching the core Main Street area. The urge to consolidate parking in one location would therefore be counterproductive.

The existing parking configuration is also valuable from an urban design perspective. In most suburban development, whether residential or commercial, parking is typically located in front of the building, providing convenient auto access from the street. However, in such a configuration, buildings are divorced from the street, and it becomes difficult to walk from one building to the next. In downtown Riverhead, having the parking in the rear allows buildings to be located up to the sidewalk and street, creating an attractive walking environment along Main Street.



The parking lots behind Main Street are conveniently located near downtown attractions and shops, and they provide space for special events.

Potential Traffic and Parking Impacts on Land Use

Whenever different land uses are located close together, as in downtown Riverhead, they will inevitably exert off-site impacts upon one another. Noise and traffic are the two most common impacts, but there can also be environmental and visual impacts.

The most serious impact expected in downtown Riverhead is the impact of the new Aquarium on traffic and parking. Specific traffic and parking issues are discussed in more detail in the "Access and Circulation" subsection; this section focuses specifically on the potential impacts of traffic and parking shortages on land use. Heavy traffic and parking shortages related to the Aquarium would have several potential impacts on land use—some positive, some negative:

- Businesses could suffer, because people trying to reach downtown shops and restaurants would be turned away.
- On the other hand, businesses could benefit from the new surge of people, because people walking from the interspersed parking lots to the Aquarium would potentially walk along Main Street and patronize the local establishments.
- Similarly, residential streets that are infused with heavy vehicular or pedestrian traffic would experience pressure for conversion to commercial use.

To address these challenges, parking lots and pedestrian corridors need to be appropriately located, in order to minimize pressure for housing conversion. Traffic calming measures can help preserve a village atmosphere and improve pedestrian safety. Transitional uses and buffers can also be used.

Residential-Office Conversions

Many older residences in downtown Riverhead have been converted into offices. A variety of businesses and organizations occupy this office space, including law firms, accountants, insurance agencies, real estate agencies, doctors, dentists, architects, non-profits, and others. These former residential buildings have been renovated, after many years of deferred maintenance and neglect. In many cases, the new occupants have improved the landscaping, installed antique signs, and conducted meticulous building restorations.

In the future, there may be pressure to convert additional older residences to offices. The Court expansion is expected to stimulate job growth in Court-oriented professions. As the population of Riverhead increases overall, more and more doctors, dentists, and other professionals may choose to set up offices in downtown. Also, professional self-employment in ex-urban areas has been spurred by the computer/communications revolution and an economy that emphasizes contracting out; and this trend has prompted live-work arrangements proximate to small downtowns that offer eateries, copy centers, port offices, and other amenities. All of these small-scale offices and live/work businesses can be attracted by the central location of downtown Riverhead, its proximity to major roads, and the spacious, older buildings that it offers.

Additional residential-office conversions would be acceptable in downtown, because they are compatible with the existing mix of uses, and because they help maintain the existing building stock and character. However, residential uses should not be entirely pushed aside, because the mix of residential with retail, office, and institutional uses gives downtown a unique 24-hour, 7-day-a-week character. Moreover, there is already a supply of office space in the downtown area that was built as office space and which should be tapped as well: the second and third floors above shops along Main Street, as well as some freestanding buildings.



Some historic homes have been converted into offices.

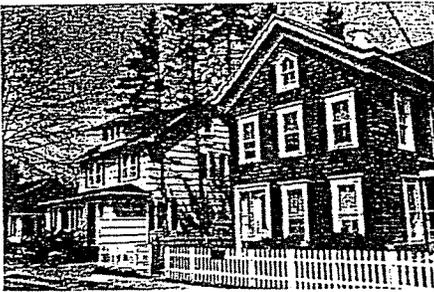
Housing

The largest concentration of housing in the downtown area is the residential neighborhood located east of Roanoke Avenue and north of Main Street. This area is a subset of a larger residential neighborhood that extends north of the LIRR tracks. Local streets cross the grade-level tracks, providing a connection to this larger neighborhood.

The neighborhood has many beautiful homes dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Fine examples of Victorian and Arts & Crafts architecture can be found in the area, and nearly all of the homes have a traditional layout and design, with front porches, small front yards, detached garages in the backyard, bay windows, wood shingles, and fine architectural details.

The layout of the neighborhood is also traditional. There is a compact street grid, allowing easy circulation. Streets are relatively narrow, and on-street parking is allowed, meaning that cars drive slowly, and pedestrians feel safe. Street trees compliment the old homes, making the neighborhood appear even more attractive and intimate.

Ironically, while traditional neighborhoods like the downtown area have suffered decline, Riverhead offers the architecture and layout that are being duplicated in "neo-traditional" neighborhoods at great expense. Places like Celebration, Florida and Kentlands, Maryland are new subdivisions that have been designed with street-grids, small yards, front porches, garages in the rear, and corner stores, like housing developments from the 1910s and 1920s. While new subdivisions can attempt to re-create a traditional atmosphere, downtown Riverhead provides an authentic older neighborhood with a truly historic scale and character. With the right regulatory incentives and public improvements, it is only a matter of time before homebuyers rediscover the charm of beauty of the downtown residential areas.



Historic houses create a "small town" ambiance.



The LIRR tracks cut through the downtown residential neighborhood.

Neighborhood "Under Stress"

While the residential neighborhood is attractive, it is under severe stress. It is surrounded by commercial and industrial uses, parking lots, and major roads, meaning that the sub-neighborhood is physically isolated. While the neighborhood is connected via local streets to the residential areas north of the LIRR tracks, the tracks serve as a psychological barrier and blighting influence on the houses that abut the tracks. The presence of old industrial uses along the tracks—in particular, the Building Supply site on Ostrander Avenue—exacerbates the separation.

Moreover, office uses and parking lots have been encroaching into the neighborhood. Many homes along Roanoke Avenue and Second Street have been converted to offices, and an office campus was carved out of the residential area east of Ostrander Avenue. Where the parking lot behind the Suffolk Theater now exists, there had once been a local street—First Street—with houses along the north side.

The entire neighborhood is zoned for business—not housing. This also promotes speculation. Because of these stresses, much of the housing stock has become marginalized. Many homes have been subdivided into apartments. Some

housing is poorly maintained, with peeling paint, broken shingles, sagging porches, litter strewn in front and side yards, and unkempt lawns and shrubs. Yet protecting the existing housing stock will not only help downtown, but can help address the pressure to develop new housing.

Group Homes

A number of group homes have moved into the neighborhood, due to the combination of affordable land, high-density zoning, and convenience to services. Residents and merchants have expressed concern about the presence of so many group homes in the area. There is the perception that the residents of group homes loiter in the area and give a "low-class" image to the neighborhood.

It is important to understand that group homes can be appropriately integrated into residential neighborhoods if they are regulated properly. While the Town is required by federal and State law to permit group homes in residential areas, the Town can still influence the size, location, and operation of group homes.

Artist Housing

Efforts to promote artist housing in downtown have had minimal success. Asking rents and prices are typically more than artists are able to afford. Landlords may also refrain from renting to artists, who may have an unstable cash flow. While a few artists have moved into the area, more have dispersed into the outlying agricultural areas of town, where rents are more affordable, and where there is plenty of open space, light, and air.

The Town's Art District legislation, which was passed in 1997, does not yet go far enough to compensate for these limitations. First, it does not cover the entire downtown area. Second, while it allows ancillary artist housing in studios and galleries, it does not allow ancillary studios and galleries in conjunction with artist housing. Under the current law, an artist would be required to make an investment in setting up a studio or gallery, but could not set up a studio in a spare room or a garage where he or she lives. Thus, the existing law does not yet provide the appropriate amount of flexibility that would make downtown Riverhead a fully attractive place for artists to live and work.

In the focus groups and meetings conducted for the Master Plan in 1999 and 2000, residents and business leaders concurred that the Peconic River waterfront is one of downtown's greatest assets. Downtown Riverhead is one of a very short list of downtowns on Long Island with a waterfront; and it is particularly unique, because it is stretched out along the length of its waterfront. Most Main Streets dead-end there, as in Port Jefferson. Thus, there are frequent views of the river all along Main Street, and all of downtown has a close physical relationship with the water. In particular, the west and south gateways into downtown both involve views of these water features, and the east gateway involves partial views of a marina.

Adding to interest, the waterfront has different characteristics along its length.

Waterfront



The boardwalk allows people to walk and relax along the waterfront.



The waterfront park is a highpoint of the downtown experience.

True to the town's name, downtown is situated at the head of the navigable part of the Peconic River. West of Peconic Avenue, the river is dammed, creating a large pond and several smaller ponds in a pastoral setting. East of Peconic Avenue, the ponds turn into a narrow yet navigable river. At the location of the Aquarium and the Marina, the river widens. This variation can be used to create different types of waterfront experiences in downtown.

Recreational Use of the Waterfront

The waterfront already serves as a recreational destination. The recently built boardwalk provides an attractive place to stroll, from Peconic Avenue to the new Aquarium. The boardwalk and waterfront provide an attractive backdrop for the summertime concert series, the Community Mosaic, the Blues Festival, and other events. Also, the Riverhead boardwalk has the only sewer-docked on the East End of Long Island, providing a great opportunity for commercial, residential, and recreational boats to dock in downtown Riverhead.

The opening of the Aquarium has already increased use of the waterfront. Many people who park in the adjacent parking lots walk to the Aquarium along the waterfront. Also, Aquarium visitors spend some of their free time strolling or relaxing along the waterfront, whether in the Aquarium's picnic area or along the boardwalk. Improved walkways and pedestrian amenities along the waterfront and the parking lots may be necessary to handle the influx of new people.

Making More Out of the Waterfront

While the waterfront is already a great recreational asset, residents and business leaders alike feel that far more could be made out of this asset. In the waterfront focus group meeting conducted in August 1999, meeting participants said that the Peconic River waterfront had poor access and incompatible land uses and that there needed to be a better connection between downtown business activity and the waterfront. Indeed, there are relatively weak pedestrian connections between the waterfront and Main Street. Improved pedestrian connections and views corridors could encourage Aquarium visitors, day-trippers, and tourists to filter back and forth, so that Main Street and the waterfront build off of one another as attractions. For instance, visitors wanting to picnic along the waterfront could buy their lunch in one of the Main Street shops.

Another way to make more out of the waterfront is to expand the waterfront park west of Peconic Avenue, where the waterfront is highly underutilized. An expanded and enhanced waterfront park would not only enhance downtown, but would fit in with Town plans to create a recreational trail along the Peconic River all the way from downtown to the Tanger Mall Outlet.

Participants in the waterfront focus group also called for better coordination between Southampton planning and the downtown strategy in Riverhead. Development and conservation on the south side of the river influence the image and accessibility of downtown Riverhead, since these areas are visible from Main Street and are situated around the Peconic Avenue gateway. Maintaining open

space and parks on the south side of the river would be consistent with the concept of an expanded waterfront park on the Riverhead side. If there is any new development on the south side of the River, it should ideally be consistent with the character of downtown Riverhead and maintain pedestrian access to the waterfront.

Downtown Riverhead has an attractive character that ought to be preserved and enhanced. The style and arrangement of buildings, the intimate local streets, and the various destinations create an inviting and eclectic small town atmosphere. Any future improvements or development in downtown should build off of these assets.

Gateways

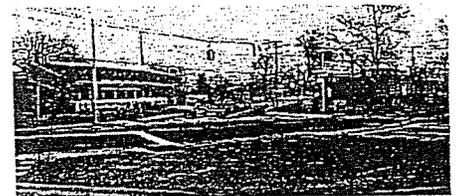
Gateways are formed where major corridors "cross the threshold" into the downtown area. Key gateways include:

- *Peconic Avenue Bridge.* This is the most important gateway, because it leads directly to the heart of downtown, the intersection of Main Street and Peconic Avenue. The cluster of two- and three-story historic buildings, the tallest in the area, is visible from the Southampton side and creates the sense of having arrived at an important activity center. From the bridge, there are views of the river to the west and east. The waterfront park is on one side, and the boardwalk and event site are on the other side. There are also canoe concessions on the Southampton side of the river.
- *Intersection of Court Street and West Main Street.* The Court Street bridge leads to Route 24 (Nugent Drive), a limited-access expressway with a planted median. Route 24 West is the most direct route between downtown Riverhead and the Long Island Expressway (LIE). West Main Street connects to both the LIE and the Tanger Mall Outlet, and it serves as an important entryway. Compared to Route 24, West Main Street is an unimproved two-lane road that typically operates at slower speeds and is therefore the less convenient way to reach the LIE. This intersection is notable for its three important civic buildings: the library, the Historical Society building, and the former hotel. Riverfront views are obstructed by trees and shrubs, and there is no access to the river from the street.
- *Intersection of LIRR tracks and East Main Street.* The easternmost gateway into downtown is not well defined. There are no civic buildings and few historic buildings in this area that denote the presence or character of the downtown. The Town Hall is located near this intersection; it is a contemporary building with a suburban layout and style: one-story, wide setbacks with trees, parking in front. Similarly, the office park on the west side of the gateway has a suburban character, with its internal parking and circulation system.
- *Intersection of LIRR tracks and Roanoke Avenue.* On the north side of this

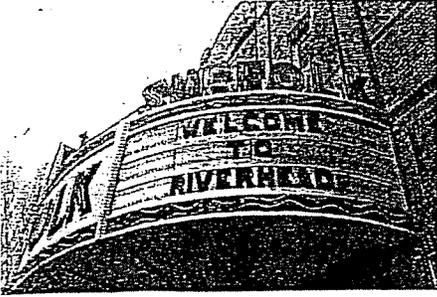
Urban Design



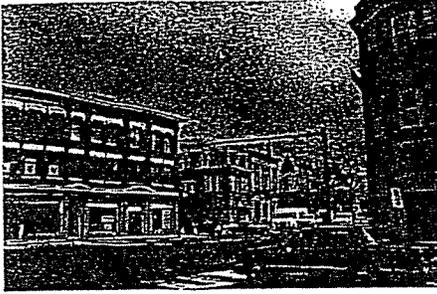
Peconic Avenue is a major gateway into downtown. Sign, landscaping, and pedestrian improvements could make the gateway more attractive.



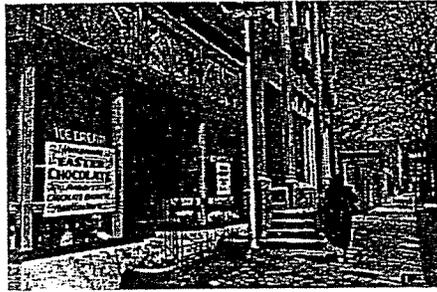
The Court/Main Street intersection, with the Riverhead Free Library and the Historical Society, is the western portal into downtown.



The Suffolk Theater is a major landmark and arrival point in downtown Riverhead.



The Peconic/Roanoke/Main Street intersection is downtown's "100 percent" corner.



Traditional buildings along Main Street are oriented to the sidewalk and have eye-catching window displays.

intersection, the classical façade of the Roanoke Avenue Elementary School provides a dramatic entrance into downtown. On the south side of the intersection, there are empty lots, and the area lacks a distinct image. These lots provide an opportunity to connect the gateway to the County Court building, with its grand columns, pediment, and stairway.

Gateways should direct visitors into downtown, convey the character of the place, and celebrate downtown's attractions. The natural and man-made "thresholds", important buildings, and signs—which define the gateways—already do this to a limited extent. Crossing the river or the railroad tracks provide a sense of arrival. As visitors approach downtown, they immediately notice a greater concentration of buildings, taller building heights, a predominance of brick and stone facades (most suburban development is wood-frame), a number of historic buildings, and civic buildings. Notably, Town Hall is located on East Main Street, near downtown's easternmost gateway, and the Historical Society building and the Riverhead Library are located at the Court Street-West Main Street gateway.

Participants of the downtown focus group suggested that physical improvements could be used to celebrate the downtown's gateways and direct people more to downtown attractions. Currently, trees and buildings at the Court Street-Main Street gateway block views of the river. These views can be opened up to enhance the sense of arriving at the head of the river.

Currently, none of these gateways have notable signs. A unified signage program can be used to direct visitors to downtown attractions and to parking lots. Signs can be situated not only at the gateways themselves, but at strategic locations outside downtown (i.e., the intersection of Roanoke Avenue and Route 58) that point toward the gateways. At the transportation focus group held in August 1999, participants suggested that signage toward downtown ought to be improved.

Arrival Points

Arrival points are downtown's major attractions and visual landmarks. While gateways are situated at the "thresholds" of downtown, arrival points are the final destinations. These include the Aquarium, the Suffolk Theater, the Roanoke Avenue-Main Street intersection, the County Court building, and others. These buildings, in and of themselves, are special destinations that give visitors a feeling of excitement and enthusiasm. Additional attention to streetscape design and high maintenance (i.e., lighting, trees, flowers, flags, banners, pavers, and awnings) can convey the message that these arrival points are special places that define the downtown experience.

Although focus group participants recognized that there is no single celebratory plaza or town green on downtown, creating a formal plaza or town green may not be necessary. The waterfront park can serve this purpose in downtown Riverhead. But in addition, the Roanoke-Peconic-Main Street intersection serves as downtown's "100 percent" intersection and ought to be celebrated as the heart of downtown Riverhead. A "100 percent" corner is a retail term that describes the primary intersection with the greatest visibility in a shopping district; as such, it

has the greatest potential for retail sales. Some of the most famous celebratory spaces in the world are not formal plazas, but rather, the intersections of major streets, Times Square in Manhattan being the prime example.

Streetscapes and Walkways

Pedestrians are highly sensitive to their environments and typically refrain from walking in areas that feel the least bit unsafe or unattractive. The best pedestrian environments, whether indoor or outdoor, are intimate and comfortable, yet visually surprising and picturesque. They also demonstrate a high level of maintenance and attention to detail in architectural design, urban design, and landscaping.

Downtown Riverhead already has many of the elements of a successful walking environment. It has attractive, historic buildings with fine details. It has an attractive waterfront and boardwalk. It has several major attractions and arrival points. Also, brick pavers, antique lighting, street trees, and decorative directional signs have been installed along Main Street, generally between Griffing and Union Avenues. These improvements help enhance the character and image of downtown and encourage pedestrian activity.

At the same time, some aspects of downtown serve as impediments to pedestrian activity and should be fixed. Currently, streetscape improvements do not extend into all of the pedestrian-oriented areas of downtown. For example, they do not extend into the Office/Courts Districts, and they do not reach as far as the new Aquarium. When visitors reach the end of the improved streetscape, they may interpret that point as the end of the safe or walkable area. Conceptually, streetscape improvements should extend into all areas where pedestrian activity exists or is expected.

Similarly, pedestrians shy away from places that are vacant or nondescript. They do not prefer to walk past vacant storefronts or ground-floor offices, because these are "dead" spaces along the street frontage; yet vacant storefronts can be filled with window displays, and offices ought to be discouraged from occupying the ground floors of buildings along Main Street. Similarly, pedestrians may be reluctant to walk past vacant lots or large parking lots, particularly at night, and they may stop walking along a commercial street with gaps between buildings or shops; yet fences or landscaping can hide vacant lots and parking lots, maintaining a continuous walkable street frontage.

Parking lots themselves ought to be designed with clear pedestrian archways, attractive landscaping, and pedestrian-scale lighting. Pedestrian entryways to Main Street are difficult to see from the Parking District parking lots. Standing in the parking lot along the Peconic River, for example, a visitor looking toward Main Street can see the rear side of Main Street buildings but no apparent walkway to the street. Improved walkways, landscaping, signs, banners, lighting and other architectural techniques can be used to make entrances more visually apparent and more easily accessible.

Finally, improved pedestrian connections and views from Main Street to the waterfront can help increase the picturesque quality of downtown for pedestrians.



Main Street sidewalks have attractive brick pavers, antique lamps, and street trees. Sign improvements can help guide pedestrians and motorists.



Well-maintained storefronts have an inviting appearance.



Awnings, signs, and flowers help advertise storefronts. Outdoor dining can make the sidewalk a lively place.



Downtown streets are lined with tall, graceful trees that create a pleasant walking environment.

On West Main Street, views and buildings could make way for improved physical and visual access to the waterfront. Along East Main Street, improved landscaping and expansion of retail uses toward the waterfront could help link Main Street with the Peconic River.

Historic Character

Downtown Riverhead has distinctive historic buildings from the late 19th century and from the early and mid-20th century. In a townwide community meeting held in January 1999, participants identified the historic quality of downtown as one of Riverhead's key strengths.

What is particularly noteworthy about downtown Riverhead is the variety of architectural styles. There are examples of various architectural styles, including Victorian, Neo-Classical, Georgian, Arts & Crafts, and Modern. Many of the buildings have fine masonry, wood, ironwork. It is also important to note that architecturally notable buildings include commercial, residential, and institutional structures. Examples of historic buildings include:

- *Churches on East Main Street.* Featuring detailing woodcarvings, steeples, wood shingles, and stained glass, the two downtown churches date from the late 19th century.
- *Star Confectionery Building at the corner of Main Street and Roanoke Avenue.* The building dates from about the 1880s and has traditional Victorian architectural features: detailed masonry work, stained glass windows, wrought iron railings, and a paneled cornice.
- *Neo-Classical Court Buildings.* The court building resembles a Roman or Greek temple, with large columns, a pediment, a grand staircase, detailed stonework, and other classical features. The Bank of New York building, while more modest, has some of the same attributes. These buildings were built around the turn of the twentieth century in the tradition of monumental civic buildings like the New York Public Library and Grand Central Station.
- *Historical Society.* Built in the Georgian style of architecture, and inspired by American colonial buildings like Monticello, the Historical Society building is a landmark in downtown Riverhead.
- *Suffolk Theater and Vail Leavitt Theater.* Both buildings, while having very different styles of architecture, are notable. The Suffolk Theater was built in the Art Deco style of the 1920s and 1930s. It features frosted glass windows, gold-leaf decorations, carved panels, and antique light fixtures in the interior, and the exterior has detailed masonry and an old marquee. While the music hall does not have a distinctive façade, it has baroque details on the interior.
- *Arts & Crafts Cottages.* Located in the residential neighborhood north of Main Street, east of Roanoke Avenue, these residences date from the 1910s and 1920s. These small, informal houses have graceful sloping rooflines, front porches, cedar shingles, grated or latticed windows, gables, and bay windows. In its heyday, the Arts & Crafts style became popular as an alternative to the more formal Victorian style of architecture.

- Woolworth Building.* Built in the 1950s, the Woolworth building is an example of the streamlined modern architecture that became popular after World War II. It currently houses the Swezey's furniture store, as well as offices. This variety and detail are unique in suburban and rural locales, where new development tends to be simplified and standardized. Unfortunately, Long Island has developed a particularly negative image for bland architecture, due to the sprawling development pattern of places like Levittown and Route 58. In this context, downtown Riverhead is particularly refreshing, surprising, and welcome.

The downtown street pattern has a unique blend of a grid pattern and cross-cutting through streets. The through-streets, like Main Street and Roanoke Avenue, provide the most direct connections throughout the downtown area, and as a result, they tend to attract more traffic congestion than other streets. The street grid, in contrast, diffuses traffic onto side streets and puts traffic pressure on the residential uses on those streets.

Currently, traffic flows relatively smoothly through most of downtown Riverhead. Most streets and intersections experience relatively low traffic volumes. However, the Roanoke/Peconic intersection with Main Street experiences traffic congestion throughout the day during weekdays. Traffic backs up along all four legs of the intersection. Traffic results primarily from local residents, employees, and shoppers; motorists traveling to more distant locations are more likely to drive around downtown Riverhead on Route 58, Route 24, and Cross-River Drive, where they can travel at higher speeds.

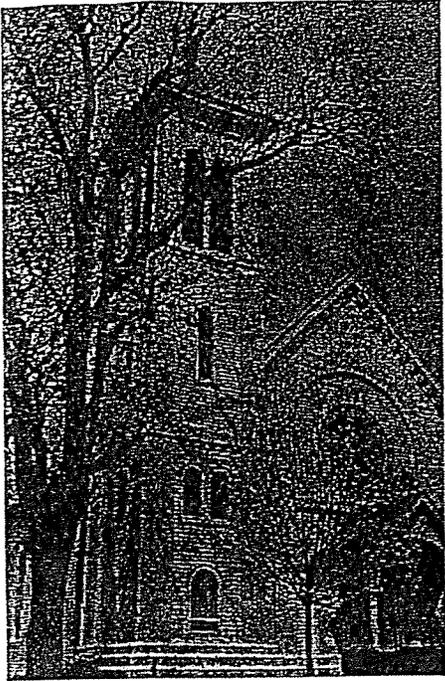
Downtown has experienced more traffic as a result of the Aquarium opening. The area in front of the Aquarium and along Main Street has the worst congestion. Without directional signage that diverts motorists, most Aquarium visitors probably drive up to the front of the building, realize there is no parking, and then drive back to a parking lot. This double-back movement pushes some of the congestion onto the local side streets.

Routes leading into downtown have also experienced some additional congestion. Most tourists and visitors arrive from the west and the south, where there are concentrations of both year-round and seasonal residents. Traffic along West Main Street has increased, because motorists exiting from the LIE reach downtown via Main Street or Route 24/Court Street bridge. Also, the Peconic Avenue entrance has been impacted, due to motorists arriving from Southampton and East Hampton. Drivers at the Roanoke-Peconic-Main Street intersection are experiencing delays.

Street Connections

Over the years, and especially in anticipation of the Aquarium, a number of roadway improvements have been made that deserve discussion. In particular, roadway closures and one-way streets have been considered. Cities and towns through-

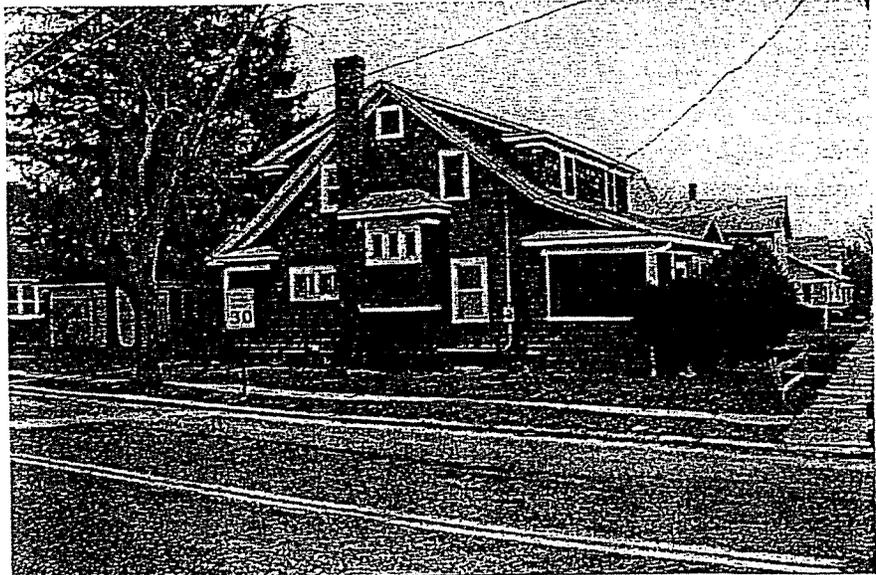
Roadways and Traffic



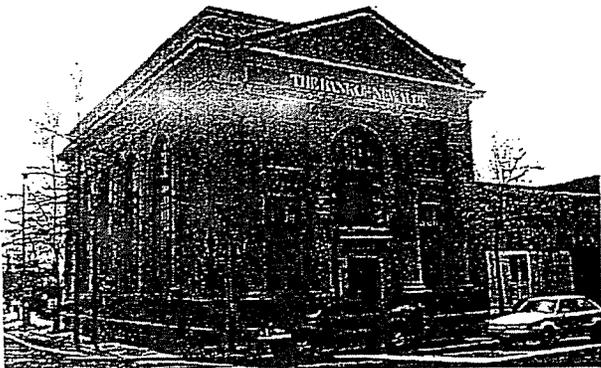
A 19th century-church on East Main Street.



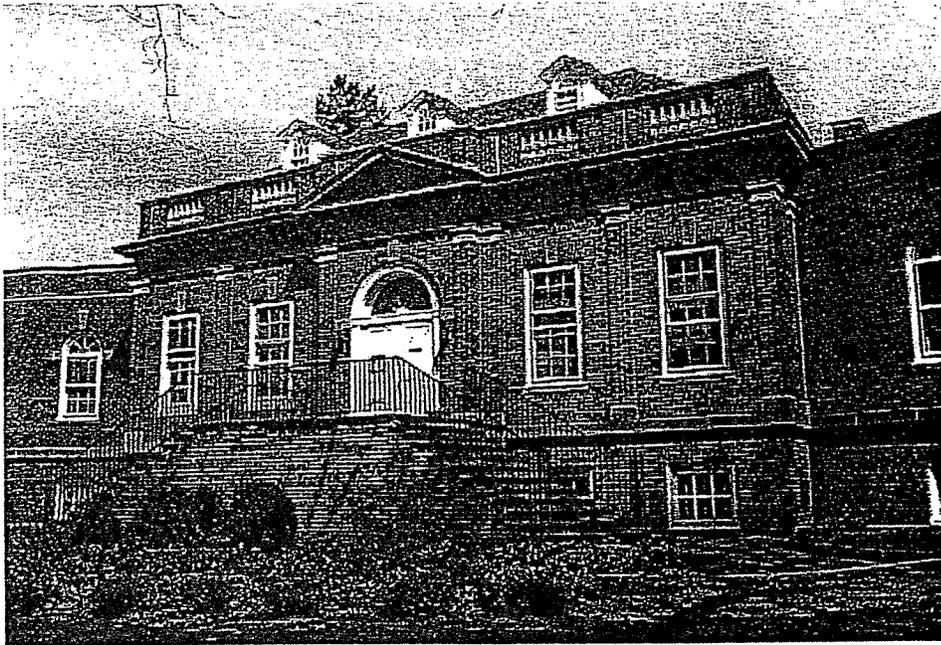
Victorian buildings at the Main Street/Roanoke intersection.



Arts and Crafts cottages.



Bank of New York building.



Suffolk County Historical Society building.



Suffolk Theater and the Woolworth Building.



Vail Leavitt Theater.

out the country have experimented with street closures and one-way streets with little success.

Street closures—usually proposed in order to create an outdoor pedestrian mall—have almost always sapped the shopping street of activity and have made access and loading more problematic. While cars can be a nuisance, they also add activity to downtown streets. Also, motorists who can drive by interesting shops and restaurants during off-peak hours are more likely to stop and visit. As an alternative to street closures, traffic-calming devices can be used to create a pedestrian-friendly environment, while keeping cars as part of the mix and allowing for curbside loading.

Many towns that established one-way streets over the last 30 years are now going back to two-way streets, because they double the visibility of local stores, have slower traffic speeds, and are more pedestrian-friendly. For example, New Haven, Connecticut—one of the first cities in the country to convert their downtown streets to one-way—is currently considering proposals to eliminate their one-way streets.

One traffic management recommendation for downtown Riverhead has been the conversion of Roanoke and Peconic Avenues from a two-way street to one-way southbound. However, altering the direction of these streets would have serious negative impacts on downtown business. Roanoke and Peconic Avenues provide a connection through downtown toward Southampton and north to agricultural areas. Creation of a one-way street would potentially push motorists onto alternative routes, diverting potential visitors and customers. Preserving access to downtown was an idea expressed by the participants of the transportation focus group meeting held in August 1999. Also, a one-way street could frustrate motorists trying to find parking and thus create more traffic in other parts of downtown, as motorists attempt to find their way around. Moreover, one-way streets tend to have higher traffic speeds, reducing pedestrian safety.

The proposed Riverwalk development has called for closing the Peconic Avenue bridge during summer evenings and using the space for outdoor music and theater performances. While event-based street closures may be acceptable, closing Peconic Avenue on a regular basis would hurt downtown. Peconic Avenue is a major gateway, and motorists unable to enter from this direction may avoid downtown altogether. Also, the intersection of Main Street and Peconic Avenue is downtown's "100 percent" corner. If one leg of the "100 percent" corner is cut off, then the corner loses much of its visibility and retail strength. In fact, the "100 percent" corner would shift to the intersection of Main Street and Court Street, too far to the west to serve as an anchor for downtown.

In the Downtown Design Guidelines report, closure of Main Street in front of the Historical Society was also tested as an idea. This would be coupled with another proposal to create a downtown bypass route along the LIRR tracks, in order to channel traffic to the Aquarium. It would also create a direct physical connection and civic plaza between the Historical Society building and the riverfront.

The proposed bypass route is problematic, however, because it would put

pressure on adjacent properties for conversion to commercial and parking uses, the residential area north of Main Street. Without the bypass route, the closure of Main Street would make downtown less convenient to reach and would diminish its character as the downtown spine. Traffic-calming along Main Street can be used to create the desired connection between the riverfront and the Historical Society while still allowing easy access to downtown.

The downtown Parking District was organized in order to create municipal parking lots and to provide shared parking for downtown businesses. Until now, the Parking District lots have provided more than enough parking spaces for downtown shops, offices, and institutional uses.

Parking

Most downtown businesses belong to the Parking District, and members pay taxes in order to pay for operation and maintenance of the lots. Members of the Parking District have expressed time and time again that their taxes are too high. With the introduction of the Aquarium and the expected need for additional parking, the Parking District has faced the grim possibility of even higher taxes to build new parking lots or a garage. Shared agreements, as an alternative to building new lots or a garage, can limit cost and tax increases.

Future Parking Demand

Downtown is expected to experience ever-greater demands on its parking supply in the future, with buildout of currently planned projects and retail space, including the Aquarium, the new Swezey's, the Long Island Science Center, and the Suffolk Theater.

Table 2-1 shows a comprehensive estimate of parking spaces in the downtown area.³ In the Parking District lots, there are about 1,150 public parking spaces, as well as another 150 private parking spaces. Certain downtown businesses own these private spaces and have priority to use them as employee and client parking. Outside the Parking District, there are 950 parking spaces in the parking lots of entities outside the Parking District, including the County Courts, the East Main Street office campus, the Free Library, and several other small lots. The expansion of the County Court will occupy a portion of the parking lot, but these parking spaces will be replaced, and additional spaces may be added offsite in the surrounding area. In addition, Suffolk County National Bank may add more parking spaces, in connection with its consolidation project. Approximately 430 on-street parking spaces are also available. According to the resident survey, few people use on-street parking spaces, because the District lots are easy to reach and rarely full.

Completion of new projects (the new Courts, the new Aquarium, the new Science Center, the new Swezey's, and reuse of the old Swezey's buildings) will increase the total number of visitors, employees, and customers expected in downtown Riverhead. Table 2-2 provides a summary of peak parking demand for

3. Many parking studies have been conducted in conjunction with the Aquarium project. The study conducted by Dunn Engineering Associates and the follow-up study conducted by Buckhurst Fish & Jacquemart for the Town of Riverhead both based their analysis only on the public parking spaces located in the Parking District.

downtown. (The detailed methodology for the parking estimate is described in the appendix to this report.)

After completion of the major planned projects, neither weekday nor weekend parking demand is expected to exceed the total number of parking spaces in the downtown area. This finding suggests that shared parking agreements could eliminate the need for additional parking lots or a parking garage. Alternatively,

Table 2-1: Total Existing Parking Spaces in the Downtown Riverhead

Parking Lots	
Parking District - Public Spaces	1,150
Parking District - Private Spaces	150
Other Parking Lots ¹	950
On-Street Parking	
Parking District	80
Town	350
Total	2,680

1. Does not include parking for small, freestanding office buildings, but does include the large parking lot for the office campus located on East Main Street.

Note: Parking spaces in the Parking District were counted on the Town maps. Other on-street spaces were estimated from linear feet of street frontage, and other off-street spaces were determined based on the area of the parking lots.

Table 2-2: Estimated Peak Summer Parking Demand in Downtown Riverhead

	Existing	Future Weekday	Future Weekend
Cultural Visitors	50	350	850
Employees	1,300	1,300	1,000
Retail Customers	500	550	800
Court Visitors	150	200	0
Total	2,000	2,400	2,650

Note: Numbers rounded to nearest 50.

Source: Abeles Phillips Preiss & Shapiro, Inc.

an additional surface parking lot can be opened, if shared parking agreements are not feasible.

Parking Lots versus Parking Garages

In order to meet future parking demand, several new parking lots have been planned or considered, in addition to those noted above:

- The Town recently cleared a parcel on Osborn Avenue north of Court Street, and it plans to use the site for additional Court-related parking. The lot could also eventually serve as spill-over parking for the adjacent library.
- The Building Supply site, on either side of Ostrander north of the LIRR tracks, has been considered for additional parking for the Aquarium.
- As part of the Business District Master Plan prepared by Gary Jacquemin in 1995, a three-story parking garage was proposed for the parking lot behind the Suffolk Theater. The garage would have provided replacement parking for the parking lots proposed to be eliminated along the Peconic River. In that

plan, the waterfront would have become the setting for a Town Square and an expanded waterfront park.

Several principles should be considered for these and other parking strategies. First, construction of new lots should avoid the concentration of large parking fields in a single location. Currently, parking lots are dispersed throughout downtown, and provide easy, convenient parking adjacent to most businesses and destinations, as motorists can usually pull into a lot before reaching the principal shopping area along Main Street. Elimination of any existing parking lots behind Main Street would make the downtown shops less convenient to reach.

Second, new parking lots should be located in places where they can serve more than one attraction, so that visitors going to one locale can also easily visit other attractions or shops on their way to and from their cars. The problem with the Building Supply site as a potential parking lot is that it would only serve the Aquarium. Visitors parking there could walk directly to and from the Aquarium and would have less reason to walk through downtown. Developing at that site would also place stress on the residential area located between the site and the Aquarium.

Third, newly developed parking lots should give particular attention to urban design. Parking lots create gaps in the urban fabric, reducing the intimacy and continuity of the streetscape. If they lack planting beds, decorative paving and especially trees, large parking lots also become ugly, sun-baked expanses of asphalt.

Fourth, a large garage would be out of scale and character with the historic downtown, with its one-, two-, and three-story, narrow-front, masonry buildings lining Main Street. People traveling to Riverhead would be expecting a quaint, charming rural village only to find a very urban-style parking garage. Most likely, visitors would park in the garage grudgingly. Parking garages are more successful when built in conjunction with employment centers or major institutions like hospitals.

Shared Parking

Shared parking is a strategy for making existing parking more accessible, as an alternative to building additional parking. Shared parking is linked to the concept of differential peak periods. As a hypothetical example, the office parking lot that is full during the day is underutilized at night and can be reused for nighttime uses, like restaurants and theaters.

Downtown Riverhead is an ideal place to implement shared parking, due to its mix of land uses. The Courts and Main Street offices would have high demand during the weekday, whereas, the Aquarium and other cultural institutions have higher weekend day demand. Parents driving in with their young children would be expected in high volumes on weekends from Memorial Day to Labor Day. The Suffolk Theater would be expected to have more demand during evenings and weekends. During the school year, the Aquarium, the Science Center, and the Historical Society would attract school trips, with children arriving by school bus,

but would be expected to have relatively little demand for automobile parking. Because land uses have different peaks, parking spaces used during the weekday for one use could be used for evenings and weekends for other uses. While there still may be a shortage of parking during the times when the peak demands overlap, the differences in peak demand still reduces to the total number of spaces that will be needed at any given time.

On-Street Parking

On-street parking is not only the ultimate form of shared parking, it is key to downtown shopping parking. On-street parking allows customers the possibility of parking right in front of the store. Even if they are never actually able to find an available space on the street, motorists like to believe that on-street parking right in front of their downtown destination is an option (just as they like to believe that parking right in front of their favorite mall or supermarket is an option, when it generally is not!).

One recent decision of the Parking District was to eliminate meters on downtown streets. A parking attendant circulates along the street and issues summonses if cars exceed their time limit. In the municipal lots, there is a combination of two-hour and unlimited time parking spaces. The parking attendant oversees these two-hour limited spaces in the District parking lots, as well as the Main Street spaces. This system functions similar to parking meters and encourages some turnover in the on-street spaces. This regulatory framework is to good purpose.

Long Island Railroad

Riverhead is located on the Greenport Branch of the Long Island Railroad (LIRR). Trains pass through Riverhead several times each day on their way between New York's Penn Station and Greenport. The following summarizes train service to and from Riverhead:

- From Riverhead:
 - Weekdays, four trains to New York City; two trains to Greenport, plus an extra Friday train;
 - Weekends, two trains to New York City; two trains to Greenport;
- Toward Riverhead:
 - Weekdays, three trains from New York City, plus an extra Friday train; three trains from Greenport;
 - Weekends, two trains from New York City; two trains from Greenport.

Current service provides a bare minimum of transit mobility, but does not offer frequent or convenient train travel. No additional summertime service is provided on the Greenport branch. Participants at the transportation focus group identified the LIRR as a major asset to Riverhead, and they expressed interest in having more frequent train service.

Increased train service during the summer could provide greater opportunities for tourists and visitors to use transit. The Aquarium has already coordinated \$40 excursion trips (\$30 for children) on the LIRR from New York City; excursion

4. <http://www.mta.nyc.ny.us/lirr/>

trips would occur in conjunction with Long Island Game Farm Wildlife Park. Also, Tanger Mall has set up \$25 excursion trips from New York City.⁴ Similarly, there could be excursion trains running east from Riverhead along the North Fork to Greenport. Tourists could also take advantage of increased train service as a cost-effective way to reach the attractions in downtown Riverhead.

Riverhead Station

There is a proposal to transform the existing LIRR station into a "Transportation Center" offering rail service, trolley, taxi, bus, jitney and bicycle modes of transportation. The Community Development office has been working closely with the LIRR to identify and commit funding in the amount of one million dollars for improvements to the station. The proposed improvements—which include historically-appropriate interior moldings, seating, and ticket window, and improved exterior lighting, irrigation, walkways and benches—will create not only a more functional facility, but a more attractive building that serves as an architectural landmark in downtown.

Creation of a multi-modal "transportation facility" is consistent with federal policy to better coordinate different modes of travel. A multi-modal station would particularly benefit transit-dependent populations (i.e., seniors, teenagers and low-income people without cars) and would increase travel opportunities for all people, including residents, commuters and visitors. Located adjacent to the County Court complex, it would provide a convenient way for Court employees and visitors to reach their destination. Also, located within 800 feet of the site of the new Cornell Cooperative Extension and within walking distance of downtown attractions and Main Street, the Transportation Center could serve students, tourists, and shoppers.

Currently, the land uses around the train station are marginal, and buildings show signs of deferred maintenance. The two blocks bounded by Railroad Avenue, Court Street, Osborn Avenue, and Griffing Avenue cut off the train station from the rest of the downtown area. Demolishing or reconfiguring some of these buildings area could help improve the connection between the station and downtown and provide more parking. The Town has already demolished some of the buildings located on Osborn Avenue for future use as a parking lot.

1973 Master Plan

The 1973 Master Plan is out of date, hence the current update. The 1973 Plan referred to downtown as the "Riverhead Business Center" and envisioned downtown as a major office and shopping center that "would be promoted as the economic focus of the office and service businesses for eastern Long Island." Recommendations called for a mix of retail, office, and marine business uses in downtown proper, with high-density housing (up to 10 units per acre) around the edges of downtown. A waterfront park was also proposed.

The new Master Plan will now determine how downtown revitalization is integrated with development and conservation in other parts of Riverhead.



The train station may be converted into a multi-modal transportation center.

Existing Regulations

Zoning

Appendix A lists permitted uses and existing development standards in the four zones located in downtown Riverhead. Existing zoning regulations reflect the 1973 Master Plan's vision of an office and shopping center, but do not reflect existing downtown uses, character, or development intensities. As a result, regulations could potentially result in inappropriate development. For example, existing regulations would technically not permit churches in most areas of downtown, even though existing churches are an integral part of downtown life and character.

The zoning code will be updated after the Master Plan is completed, and the new code needs to establish regulations that implement the recommendations in this strategy. In particular, regulations will be needed to:

- Promote traditional commercial and residential development, consistent with existing historic buildings;
- Encourage uses and building design that are consistent with the retail and entertainment focus being developed for downtown; and
- Allow a mix of uses while minimizing impacts, particularly with regard to traffic, noise, and design.

Downtown Management and Planning

Four entities have played a role in managing and planning for downtown Riverhead: the Town Planning Department, the Town Community Development Agency, the Business Improvement District (BID), and the Parking District. These entities will play a strong role in the implementation of the downtown strategy. The relative roles and responsibilities of these groups can be described as follows.

Town Planning

The Planning Department, together with the Planning Board, is overseeing preparation of the downtown strategy, the new Master Plan, and the update of the zoning ordinance. The Planning Department has worked for the last several years to shift the focus of downtown to tourism and to bring the Atlantis Aquarium project to fruition. On a day to day basis, this department processes permits for all new development and business activity in Riverhead, including the downtown area. The Town Board will adopt the plan, pending recommendation of the Planning Board. Zoning approvals will be based on the new Master Plan, once it is adopted.

Community Development

The Community Development Agency (CDA) is the community and economic development arm of the Town of Riverhead. In its additional capacity as an Urban Renewal Agency, the CDA has developed and implemented NYS Urban Renewal Law and its mechanisms to achieve identified revitalization goals. The CDA initiated the Aquarium development as a revitalization project to create a tourist generator in downtown Riverhead and has funded millions of dollars of improvements in the hamlet through loans and grants obtained from numerous federal and state

programs. Historic preservation, facade improvements, sidewalk and other infrastructure improvements, lighting beautification, park improvements, economic development loans and riverfront amenities have been provided as a result of community and economic development projects financed by grants from other levels of government and procured by this department. Continued emphasis in the efforts of the CDA staff on downtown strategies and projects is strongly encouraged.

Business Improvement District

The BID is a non-profit association of downtown business owners, and like the CDA, its mission is to build business in the downtown area. Riverhead is fortunate to have such a proactive BID. The association has sponsored numerous events—from the farmer's markets, to the Community Mosaic, to the Blues Festival, to the Halloween Festival, to the Summer Concert Series—and has successfully encouraged Riverhead business, like Tanger Mall, to contribute to downtown events.

It has worked closely with artists and property owners to secure artist housing and studio space, and it has sponsored and arts and crafts fairs to make downtown a destination for art connoisseurs. The BID has also worked closely with the boards of the Suffolk Theater and the Vail Leavitt Theater, in order to help turn those venues into major attractions. A portion of the BID's budget also goes toward beautification projects in the downtown area. The BID's participation will be critical for successful implementation of the downtown strategy.

Parking District

As discussed in the Parking section, the Parking District was created in order to establish and operate public parking lots in the downtown area. Property owners in the district are not required to provide on-site parking, but are entitled to use the Parking District lots for all their parking needs. A Parking District is a good tool for managing parking in a place like downtown Riverhead, where there are many property owners, small lots, a compact village setting, and a large need for parking. Downtown business owners belong to the Parking District and pay taxes into the District for maintenance and operation.

One critical issue now facing the Parking District is that, in order to service the new Aquarium, the Parking District may be required to provide more parking. This is a costly endeavor that could increase district taxes. Shared parking agreements on summer weekends may be a cost-effective alternative, however.



Comprehensive Master Plan 1973

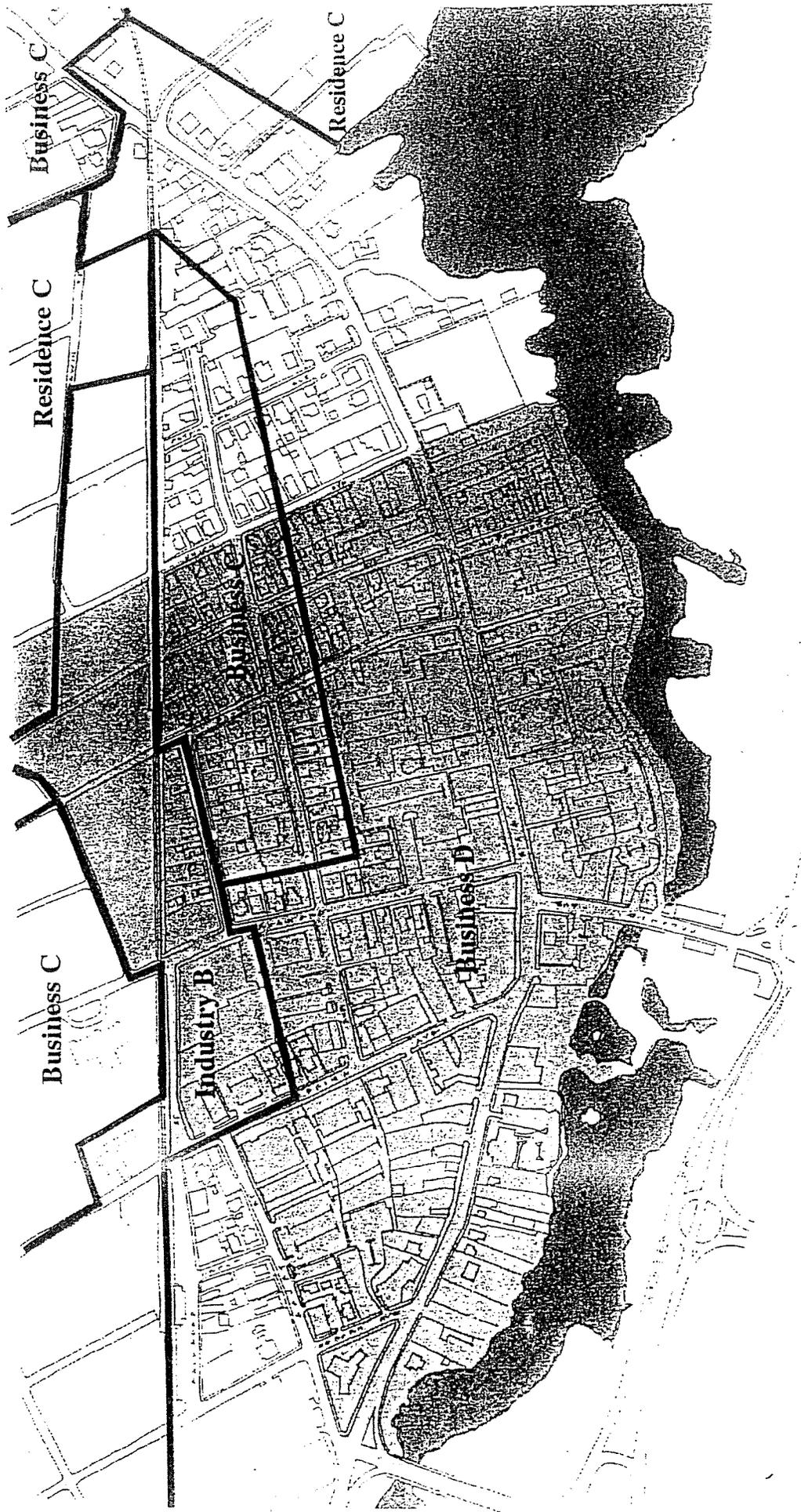
-  General Business Center
-  Public/Semi-Public Lands
-  Office Building
-  General Business Center
-  Environmental Protection Area
-  Special Industry

**Revitalization Strategy
for Downtown Riverhead**

Approx. Scale
0 100' 200'

Abeltes Phillips Prells & Shapiro, Inc. 2000

Source: McCrosky-Renter 1973 Comprehensive Master Plan.



Zoning Use Districts, 1969

▬ Zoning District Boundaries

▬ Arts Overlay District

**Revitalization Strategy
for Downtown Riverhead**

Graphic Scale
0 100' 200'

Abel's Planning Press & Studio, Inc. 2000



This section presents an analysis of the market for retail goods in downtown Riverhead. It analyzes trade areas for various types of goods, examines demographics for the area, and considers the potential for expanding tourist and entertainment oriented shopping.

2.3 Market Analysis

Currently, Riverhead has a mix of convenience and comparison shopping. Convenience shopping is defined as shopping for daily necessities, for which people generally prefer to make short, frequent trips. Comparison shopping is shopping for interchangeable goods, such as apparel or furniture. For those types of items, customers are generally willing to travel farther but less frequently, and they will generally go to places with a wide selection. The trade areas for convenience and comparison shopping are slightly different.

Trade Areas

As discussed in Section 2, there has been an historical shift in convenience shopping from downtown to Route 58, and a shift in comparison shopping from downtown to Route 58 and the Tanger Mall. Route 58 and the Tanger Mall provide such convenient auto access and parking and such a wide selection, that downtown has lost business to them and generally has a difficult time competing for convenience and comparison customers. Table 2-3 shows that more surveyed residents shop along Route 58 for groceries and convenience goods, compared to downtown, and more go to Tanger Outlet for clothes, furniture, and window shopping.

Table 2-3: Residents Who Shop in Downtown Riverhead and Elsewhere

	Downtown Riverhead	Tanger Outlet	Route 58	Other Riverhead	Other
Groceries	4%	—	68%	11%	25%
Quick Errand Shopping	11%	5%	52%	21%	19%
Clothing, Furnishings	26%	46%	14%	4%	32%
Movies	—	—	—	—	94%
Window Shopping	20%	48%	5%	—	36%
Doctors, Lawyers	14%	—	19%	30%	46%

"—" indicates a response of 3% or less, not considered statistically significant.

Note: Numbers may add to more than 100% because respondents could chose more than one location. Source: Residents Survey, July 1999, n=610.

Convenience Shopping

The primary trade area for convenience shopping in downtown Riverhead is limited to the immediate area around downtown. Even so, because Route 58 is so close to downtown and has such a wide selection of stores, many people who live within a mile of Main Street would still do much of their convenience shopping in the Route 58 shopping centers.

Comparison Shopping

For comparison shopping, the primary trade area would be somewhat larger than for convenience goods. While Route 58 and the Tanger Mall also offer comparison goods, downtown Riverhead does manage to attract some customers seeking a particular store or type of product that may be difficult to find elsewhere.

For example, someone who trusts the Sears name may be willing to go to downtown Riverhead to buy new garden tools, rather than going to a comparable store elsewhere. Similarly, someone would be willing to travel downtown if she is seeking antique furniture, or a particular product at the arts supply store, a special outfit at the uniform shop, or professional photographic equipment at the camera store. Swezey's Department Store is a particular anchor for comparison shopping in downtown, offering the high service associated with smaller specialty stores.

Dining and Entertainment Shopping

Currently, downtown has little in the way of entertainment or tourist-oriented shopping. For this type of shopping, customers travel as much for the shopping experience as for the particular goods. Since the completion of the Aquarium, thousands of tourists have been drawn to downtown, representing a new market for entertainment-oriented retail. Also, downtown employees and Court visitors (attorneys, witnesses, jurors, etc.) have a strong inclination to do some shopping and eat meals downtown.

Conclusions Regarding Trade Areas

Overall, most downtown customers now come from the immediately surrounding areas and from the Town of Riverhead. A smaller proportion of customers from other parts of the East End and Brookhaven also patronize downtown for comparison goods, as shown in Table 2-4. Also, consistent with this finding, most customers are local, year-round residents. Table 2-5 indicates that downtown currently draws very few seasonal residents or tourists, because until now it has had

Table 2-4: Residence of Downtown Customers

Riverhead	47%
South Fork	26%
North Fork	15%
Brookhaven	6%
Other	6%
Total	100%

Source: Merchants Survey, August 1999, n=40.

Table 2-5: Permanent and Seasonal Customers

Year-Round Residents	78%
Seasonal Residents	12%
Tourists and Day-Trippers	5%
Local Employees	2%
Other	3%
Total	100%

Source: Merchants Survey, November 1999, n=40.

relatively undeveloped tourist attractions.

The trade area could be greatly expanded with a further orientation toward tourists and visitors. Whereas residents and employees are willing to travel relatively short distances, tourists are willing to make longer trips. More specifically, tourists and other entertainment-seekers are generally willing to travel a round-trip travel time of up to 50 percent of their expected time at the destination. Thus, a two-hour Aquarium visit would be expected to draw people from about a half-hour or 25 to 30 miles away. If other downtown attractions can keep visitors in downtown even longer, then the trade area would be expanded even more.

Population and Density

Downtown Riverhead has a small residential population and a relatively minor proportion of the town's overall population, as shown in Table 2-6. The downtown planning area is estimated to have about a population of about 400 people. The residential neighborhood north of Main Street and east of Roanoke Avenue has a density of about 7 dwelling units per net acre. This generates a population density of about 18 persons per acre. This is more dense than many other residential areas of Riverhead, and some new residential subdivisions are being developed at densities of 1 unit per acre or less. Compact residential development in the downtown area contributes to its character and charm, and by encouraging walking, it promotes street life throughout downtown.

At the same time, downtown has a relatively small population and low intensity, compared to other towns and cities with a significant retail sector. The population is not big enough to support large amounts of convenience or comparison retail in the downtown area. Downtown retail relies more on the local employment base and on customers (from Riverhead and the East End) seeking specialty goods. Shifting to tourist and entertainment-oriented retail would capture even more residents living on the East End. In 1999, the East End had approximately 197,000 residents, of whom 157,000 or 80 percent lived within the logical trade area of downtown.

Although the analysis of trade areas suggests that most Riverhead residents go

Downtown Population, Employment, and Visitors

Table 2-6: Year-Round Population

	1980	1990	1999	Average Annual % Increase, 1980-1999
Downtown Riverhead	n.a.	n.a.	4001	n.a.
Downtown - Route 58 (Tract 1698)	4,800	4,850	5,700	0.9%
Town of Riverhead	20,200	23,010	25,300	1.2%
Logical Trade Area ²	123,400	143,590	157,000	1.3%
East End	n.a.	181,270	196,900	0.9% ³
Suffolk County	1,284,200	1,321,900	1,376,800	0.4%

1. Downtown has approximately 150 housing units. Riverhead households were estimated to have approximately 2.57 persons per household in 1999.

2. Includes Riverhead, Southold, Southampton (west of the Shinnecock Canal), and Brookhaven (east of the William Floyd Parkway).

3. 1990-99.

n.a. - not available

Source: Claritas Inc., Marketview Comparison Reports.

elsewhere for their convenience shopping, downtown residents are very likely to walk downtown for convenience shopping. The density, street patterns, and fine-grain mixed use are highly conducive for local convenience shopping trips, particularly for essential items like milk or toothpaste. According to Table 2-7, median income in the downtown area was about \$36,300 in 1999, lower than the Town or County. Such low-income residents would be expected to spend about 50 percent of their household income on consumer goods. Thus, the total spending power of downtown residents is about \$7.3 million.

Residents living in the logical trade area would have a far larger total spending power. With a higher income, they would be expected to spend about one-third of their income on retail goods. Thus, they have a spending power of approximately \$3.4 billion. Given the competition from Route 58 and Tanger Mall, as well as other shopping districts, a 5 percent capture rate would represent a reasonable goal for downtown Riverhead. This would yield a retail expenditure of about \$170 million.

Seasonal Population

As shown in Table 2-8, Riverhead had a seasonal summertime population of about 14,000 in 1998, more than half the permanent year-round population. About 14 percent of the seasonal population is found in downtown and the area between

Table 2-7: Median Household Income

	1990	1999	Annual % Increase, 1990-99
Downtown Riverhead (Tract 1698)	29,200	36,100	2.1%
Town of Riverhead	32,500	40,200	2.1%
Suffolk County	49,200	65,400	2.9%

Source: Claritas Inc., Marketview Comparison Reports.

Table 2-8: Seasonal and Tourist Population, 1998

	Downtown - Route 58 ¹	Town of Riverhead	Logical Trade Area ²	East End ³
Seasonal Guests ⁴	700	4,100	22,100	40,700
Seasonal Residents ⁵	200	6,500	65,400	139,800
Campground Guests	600	2,100	3,100	4,800
Motel Guests	400	1,200	6,400	16,900
Total	1,900	13,900	97,000	202,200

1. Estimated by using 1990 numbers and increasing them by the same rate that townwide numbers increased between 1990 and 1998.

2. Includes Riverhead, Southold, Southampton (west of the Shinnecock Canal), and Brookhaven (east of the William Floyd Parkway). Estimated by using 1990 numbers and increasing them by the same rate that East End numbers increased between 1990 and 1998.

3. Includes Towns of East Hampton, Riverhead, Shelter Island, Southampton, Southold, and Brookhaven (east of the William Floyd Parkway).

4. Persons staying in occupied, year-round households.

5. Persons staying in seasonal or vacation homes.

Source: Suffolk County Planning Department

downtown and Route 58. This local seasonal population can be tapped into for tourism and entertainment-oriented attractions and retail.

Only a small proportion of East End seasonal residents and tourists go to Riverhead. Southampton, East Hampton, and Southold have the largest seasonal populations. Beaches and other water-oriented recreation are major attractions in those towns. At the same time, nearly 97,000 seasonal residents live within the logical trade area of downtown. This regional seasonal population means that downtown Riverhead has enormous potential as a tourism destination.

Many seasonal residents in Riverhead and other towns may become permanent residents in the future. In the late 1980s, the federal government eliminated income tax deductions for home improvements. As a result, the cost of maintaining a second home became too expensive for some people, and they have either sold their second homes or turned their second home into a permanent residence. More and more wealthy retirees are moving into their old vacation homes. One-third of season residents responding to the residents' survey said that they are planning to become year-round residents within five years.

This change is not expected to diminish the potential for tourism and entertainment-oriented retail. The seasonal population continued to increase between 1990 and 1998. Also, former seasonal residents who have not moved out to the East End may still visit the area, staying with friends or relatives as house guests, or staying in hotel rooms or bed and breakfasts.

Seasonal residents and other visitors have a higher income than downtown residents. Incomes for seasonal residents and their guests can be estimated from housing value. In 1990, median housing values for areas within the logical trade area ranged from about \$130,000 to \$180,000. Assuming that second-home values were at the higher end of the spectrum and that values increased 10 percent between 1990 and 2000, a rough estimate of second-home value is about \$200,000. This would require a minimum annual household income of about \$170,000.⁵ Based on 15,200 seasonal households,⁶ and assuming that high-income households spend one third of their income on retail goods, these households have a spending power of about \$861 million.

However, just as second-home residents split their time between their primary and secondary residences, they split their spending too. Second-home residents can do most of their shopping near their primary residence, but during the summer weekends, they would also be more likely to do more shopping on the East End. Assuming that people make half their annual expenditures on the weekend and that second-home residents spend 16 weekends out of 52 on the East End, their spending power in the East End would be approximately \$132.5 million. This number is just the base minimum. Seasonal residents could potentially spend more on recreational activities, since they are not just living in the East End, but vacationing as well.

Seasonal, campground, and motel guests, would be spending short vacations on the East End, as opposed to entire summer. Assuming that each person spends

5. Assuming that the primary residence is on average the same in value; a down payment of 20 percent; that no more than 28 percent of income for principal, interest, taxes, and insurance.

6. Based on 4.3 persons per seasonal household, as estimated for eastern Suffolk County in 1998.

approximately \$500 during their visit for food and other retail items, then they would have a spending power of about \$16 million. Altogether, seasonal residents and guests would have a total spending power of about \$148.3 million.

Employment

Currently, there are about 2,400 employees in the downtown planning area, based on existing retail, office, and institutional uses. Employees working in downtown are a small fraction of total town and county employment levels, as shown in Table 2-9. New projects in downtown (Court expansion, Aquarium, reopening of Suffolk Theater, opening of new Swezey's, and occupation of old Swezey's space) would only be expected to create an additional 400 jobs in the downtown area. An employment base of 2,800 jobs cannot support many employee-oriented shops.

Employee-oriented restaurants and convenience retail can be an important part of the proposed entertainment-oriented retail mix. Employees in and around downtown already patronize downtown shops and restaurants during the day, and an entertainment-oriented retail strategy can draw even more employees in the area to downtown, both during the day and in the evenings. Employees located in the areas immediately around downtown may make an occasional trip to Main Street for lunch or to shop at a particular store. Immediately outside the downtown area, major employers include the Tanger Outlet Mall, Central Suffolk Hospital, and the offices and Town Hall located along East Main Street. Unlike tourists or people looking for specialty goods, however, employees located outside the immediate downtown area would not be expected to patronize downtown.

Table 2-9: Employment, 1999

	Downtown	Riverhead	Suffolk County
Agricultural/Mining	0	360	6,770
Construction	0	510	34,480
Manufacturing	0	2,100	76,720
Trans/Comm/Util	0	1,040	32,890
Wholesale	0	840	64,450
Retail	830	4,000	128,000
Finance/Ins/Real Estate	820	1,620	41,400
Services	820	5,830	239,620
Public/Institutional	330	1,210	27,620
Other	0	760	20,460
Total	2,800	13,270	672,410

Source: Claritas, Inc., Summary Business Data Reports; Abeles Phillips Preiss & Shapiro, Inc.

Over the course of a year, downtown employees would be expected to spend about \$3,000 in the downtown area, about half on dining and half on sundries and clothing. With the new projects being constructed, a total of 2,800 employees would have a spending power of about \$8.4 million. This represents a significant contribution to downtown retail establishments, especially eateries.

Aquarium Visitors

Annual visitors to the 40,000 square foot Aquarium have been estimated at about 640,000. This is significantly less than the 800,000 visitors originally estimated for the Okeanos Aquarium. A study completed by the firm Buckhurst Fish & Jacquemart (BF&J) in 1994 concluded that the original 800,000 estimate was high, because it did not take into account the size of the Aquarium or the accessibility constraints of Long Island. Also, it was based on a high estimate of market penetration in New York City. BF&J reduced the estimate by 20 percent to 640,000, after considering the size and number of visitors at the Mystic Aquarium, a comparable facility.

At the time of the BF&J study, the size of the proposed Aquarium was 75,000 square feet, with 35,000 square feet of display and visitor areas. Subsequently, the size of the Aquarium has been reduced to 40,000 square feet of total building area, but a larger outdoor display space has been added to the facility. The resulting indoor and outdoor display area total approximately 75,000 square feet, roughly equivalent to the size of the original Okeanos building. Because this outdoor space could not be utilized during winter months, potentially reducing off-season attendance, a 500,000 estimate is still a reasonable order-of-magnitude estimate of average year-round attendance.

Since the Aquarium has a gift shop and cafeteria, visitors would be likely to spend at least some additional money in the downtown area. It is reasonable to assume that half of Aquarium visitors are school children who do not spend additional money, but that the other half, consisting of tourists, would spend \$10 on average. This suggests that Aquarium visitors would have a spending power of \$2.5 million. This estimate represents a bare minimum. If Aquarium visitors are encouraged to visit shops and restaurants in downtown, then their spending power could be even higher.

Other Attractions and Special Events

Other downtown attractions would be expected to draw approximately 400,000 to 500,000 visitors per year (we adopt the lower figure to account for trips to multiple attractions). These attractions include the Science Center, the Railroad Museum, the Historical Society, the Suffolk Theater, the Vail Leavitt Theater, the Library, and the East End Arts Council. It also includes about 80,000 annual visitors to the Courts, such as jurors, witnesses, attorneys, litigants, and others. Annual events like the Country Fair and the Blues Festival attract additional visitors each year; event visitors are discussed in greater detail in the next section.

Like the Aquarium, about half of the cultural visitors would be expected to spend about \$10 on average, representing a spending power of about \$1.9 million. Court visitors would spend about the same amount, primarily on lunch and other convenience items; their spending power would be about \$800,000 annually. Event visitors would probably spend more in the downtown area, since events takes place outdoors and visitors filter throughout downtown streets. Assuming they spend approximately \$20 each, they would attract nearly \$1.7 million to downtown.

Market Base

Table 2-10 provides a summary of the market base. While the market base consists of several components—population, employment, Aquarium visitors, and other visitors—the market segment with the largest spending power are year-round and seasonal residents living within the logical trade area. This area includes all of Riverhead and Southold, as well as Southampton, west of the Shinnecock Canal and Brookhaven east of the William Floyd Parkway. Downtown residents and employees make up a relatively small proportion of the market base.

Any retail strategy for downtown must tap into the large spending power of East End residents seasonal residents. At the same time, there is fierce competition for this group. Aside from Tanger Mall and Route 58, villages like Westhampton Beach provide the type of unique shopping experience that downtown Riverhead can become. Riverhead would never to be able to draw the entire spending power of year-round and seasonal residents, but it would be able to draw a portion of it.

Even drawing a small portion of that large spending power would be a great boon for downtown. Based on the capture rates shown in Table 2-10, downtown could experience an influx of about \$186 million in annual retail sales.

Table 2-10: Market Base

	Population or Employment	Percent of Total	Spending Power (in millions)	Downtown Capture Rate	Estimated Spending in Spending in (in millions)
Population in the					
Logical Trade Area					
Downtown Residents	400	0.2%	\$7.3	20%	\$1.5
Other Residents	156,600	61.0%	\$3,415.1	5%	\$170.8
Seasonal Residents	65,400	25.5%	\$132.5	5%	\$6.6
Guests and Tourists	31,500	12.3%	\$15.8	5%	\$0.8
Employment in Downtown	2,8001	1.1%	\$8.4	80%	\$6.7
Total	256,700	100%	\$3,579.1		\$186.4

*1. Estimated employment, under building of currently proposed projects.
Source: Abeles Phillips Preiss & Shapiro, Inc.*

Annual Visitors

Most residents, workers, weekenders, etc. will be in Downtown Riverhead as part of their daily or weekly commuting, travel or shopping. But many will be in Downtown Riverhead as part of a special trip to the Aquarium, other cultural facilities, and the Courts. The Aquarium attracts the single largest group of visitors with great spending potential, as shown in Table 2-11. The potential spending from these annual visitors is only a fraction of the potential from residents and tourists in the trade area. Thus, while visitors will be important contributors to the health of downtown retail, the role of residents and tourists in the trade area is potentially even greater.

Table 2-11: Estimated Annual Visitors to Downtown Riverhead

	Visitors	Percent of Total	Spending Power (in millions)	Percent of Total
Aquarium Visitors	500,000	47.8%	\$2.5	36.2%
Other Cultural Visitors	465,000	44.5%	\$3.6	52.2%
Court Visitors	80,000	7.7%	\$0.8	11.6%
Total	1,045,000	100.0%	\$6.9	100.0%

Source: Abeles Phillips Preiss & Shapiro, Inc.

Table 2-12: Estimated Summer Visitors to Downtown Riverhead

	Daily		
	Weekly	Weekday	Weekend
Cultural Visitors	2,100	5,000	20,500
Employees	2,800	1,000	2800
Retail Customers	1,600	2,400	12,800
Court Visitors	300	0	1,500
Total	6,800	8,400	37,600

Source: Abeles Phillips Preiss & Shapiro, Inc.

One-Day Total Employees, Shoppers, and Visitors

The market base and annual visitors represent the theoretical retail market for downtown Riverhead, but do not express the number of people who are expected on a given weekday or weekend day during the summer months. Table 2-12 shows that there would be more weekend visitors than weekday visitors in downtown, but that the increase in weekend visitors would be partly offset by the decrease in office employees and Court employees and visitors. Retail customers (not including attraction visitors and employees) would also be expected to increase on weekends, because more people tend to make specialty shopping trips during non-work days.

On weekdays, there are more employees downtown than retail customers or attraction visitors, but that condition reverses on the weekends. This suggests that the character and retail demand will change slightly during the course of the week. Convenience-oriented stores and restaurants serving lunch will have more business Mondays through Fridays, while specialty stores and nighttime restaurants and clubs will be busier on weekends. This range of shops and restaurants will attract activity to downtown Riverhead over the course of the whole week. Currently, there is relatively little activity in downtown during the weekends.

The convenience shopping in downtown Riverhead has difficulty competing with Route 58 and cannot serve as the focus of downtown revitalization. The size of the convenience trade area is small, and the population and spending power within this area is limited. In contrast, the spending power of seasonal residents within the expanded trade area is enormous and has great potential. The best strategy would

Market Implications

be one that attempts to capture these customers and other tourists and visitors for specialty or tourist-oriented shopping, while maintaining some convenience shopping that can appeal to local workers as well as residents.

Currently, the least developed niches in downtown are the entertainment and tourist niches, and these should receive the focus of attention in the downtown strategy. In order to building tourist patronage, downtown needs to develop focused niches that build off of cultural facilities and activities, including the Aquarium, the Suffolk Theater, the Science Center, and the Country Fair.

At the same time, the best downtowns have more than one niche, because downtowns should be diverse, interesting places with more than one type of use. In Riverhead, several niches can coexist. In addition to the various tourist niches, one important niche can be having eclectic, specialty stores that provide comparison goods difficult to find elsewhere. Unlike the tourist niches, specialty stores can have appeal even during the off-season. A mix of uses and attractions would help make downtown Riverhead a vital, energetic place that serves a wide range of people.

Niches

The key to extending downtown Riverhead's trade area is to develop market niches that help draw customers, despite the greater convenience of competing and conventional shopping areas, including Route 58 and Tanger Mall. Currently, there are no strong market niches, but the existing retail selection can be used to build niches. Downtown has the potential to develop the following types of niche markets:

- *Special Stores and Products.* Downtown already offers special stores and products that draw loyal customers. Despite competition from Route 58 and Tanger Outlet, downtown businesses have been there for many years, and few are planning major changes (See Tables 2-13 and 2-14), suggesting reliable if not enormous patronage. While a certain specific product types can be developed into their own niches (i.e., antiques), having a collection of eclectic stores can become a niche in itself. Thus, the uniform shop, the camera shop, the antique store, the confectionery, and other shops can coexist, and additional unique shops can be added to the mix.
- *Employment-oriented Services.* Restaurants and stores serve employees who work in the downtown area. Financial, legal, and medical offices make up nearly 30 percent of downtown business, according to the merchant survey, and the courts are one of largest downtown employers. The Hospital, Route 58, and other offices also employ many workers nearby. A fully developed employee-oriented niche can provide essential shops to workers (i.e., dry cleaners, pet stores, restaurants, and cafes) and help attract more workers from nearby.
- *Riparian and Waterfront.* The Aquarium, the marina, the boat tours, and the waterfront create a riparian theme, and shops and restaurants can

Table 2-13: Longevity of Businesses in Downtown Riverhead

	Years
Mean	28
Median	21
Minimum	1
Maximum	107

Source: Merchant Survey, November 1999, n=40.

Table 2-14: Plans of Businesses in Downtown Riverhead

No changes planned	45%
Expand in Riverhead	19%
Relocate in Riverhead	12%
Storefront or sign improvements	10%
Decrease business size, volume	2%
Other	12%
Total	100%

Source: Merchant Survey, November 1999, n=40.

build off this theme. For example, a seafood restaurant or a fishing goods store would fit with the theme.

- *Agro-tourism.* The nearby agricultural areas and wine country give Riverhead a unique rural character that can be reflected in downtown. Locally grown products and wine can be sold in a public market, or individual stores can be set up.
- *Children.* The Aquarium, the Science Museum, and the Historical Society would all be children-oriented activities, and additional children's stores could be added to downtown. These include toy stores, party stores and spaces, children's clothing, and family restaurants.
- *Music.* Building off the Summertime Concert Series and the Blues Festival, the Suffolk Theater and the music hall could provide additional musical performances. Music stores, like the existing guitar shop, could be encouraged.
- *Antiques and Furniture.* Downtown already has an antique store, as well as the Swezey's furniture store. Once Swezey's moves into its new building, the large floor plates in the old Swezey's buildings can be also be used for selling furniture, which is an ideal use for buildings with large floor plates.
- *Restaurants.* Like specialty stores, an assortment of good-quality restaurants can serve as a niche. Downtown can become known as a dinner destination, where people can choose from a wide assortment of foods and dining atmospheres.



3. Goals and Policies

Downtown is envisioned as a cultural and entertainment-oriented center, with a fine-grain mix of uses, a diverse retail base, and strong connections to the waterfront. A broad range of goals, policies, and action items are outlined in this section, reflecting the complex, multi-faceted nature of downtown Riverhead. Three maps—Urban Structure, Urban Design, and Land Use—provide a visual depiction of the major proposals.

Market niches are groups of stores or products that attract a certain type of customer. Currently, downtown Riverhead provides a mix of convenience and specialty shopping that caters to local residents, downtown employees, and shoppers seeking specific specialty items. As part of a shift toward to tourism and entertainment, the Town should work to further develop market niches and attractions that appeal to tourists, while still maintaining shops that serve local residents and workers.

Promote specialty food markets and restaurants.

Specialty food markets and restaurants can provide lunch and dinner opportunities for downtown visitors. While Route 58 has fast-food restaurants, downtown can provide a more attractive dining atmosphere that is located in proximity to both the downtown attractions and the waterfront. Specialty food markets and restaurants would cater to tourists throughout the entire summer and particularly on weekends; they would also serve local employees during the week.

A range of markets and restaurants should be provided. Some visitors would like to buy sandwiches and snacks and eat outdoors, perhaps by the waterfront. Others would prefer to eat at a sit-down restaurant. Some prefer eating outdoors, while others would prefer to stay out of the sun and the heat.

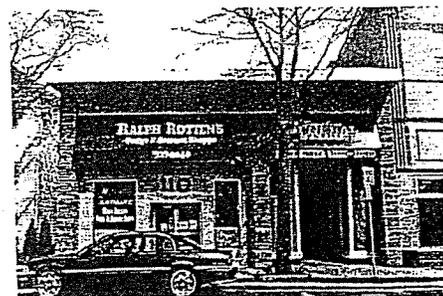
Specifically, pursue an indoor public market or specialty supermarket on the north side of Main Street.

An indoor public market provides not only a great variety of unique foods, but also an exciting activity center. Currently, downtown has an outdoor farmer's market during summer, has achieved moderate success. The indoor public market would also feature local growers, but would be different for several reasons: (1) it could be open all year, since it would be indoors; and (2) it could be designed not to compete directly with farm stands.

Part of the reason why the outdoor farmer's market has not been as successful as others is that it provides many of the same products as popular farm stands along rural roads. The indoor public market should provide fewer vegetables and fruits and more "high-end" products like wine, duck, fish, cheese, and grapes. It could also feature products from other parts of New York (i.e., the Hudson Valley) and New England, not just from the local area. If retained, the outdoor farmers market could be staged next to the indoor public market.

The ideal place for an indoor public market would be the existing Swezey's

3.1 Develop Tourist and Specialty Shopping Niches and a Variety of Tourist Attractions



Downtown already has several specialty food stores.

furniture store. Swezey's intends to vacate the space, once the new Swezey's building is completed, and it provides a large open floor plate with front and back entrances, suitable for a public market. If the new Swezey's building does not materialize, and the furniture store remains in its current location, then a new public market building could be built on the site of the proposed new Swezey's building or another site on the north side of Main Street. Either way, a location on the north side of the street is preferable, because it can have front and back entrances, one on Main Street a second one on the parking lot. In the summer months, an expanded public market could spill out into the parking lot.

An indoor public market would need a sponsor to sign the lease and manage the space. The sponsor would function like the manager of a shopping mall, who operates the space as a whole and leases stalls to individual vendors. A private-sector sponsor would be best, because they would have a profit incentive and the management expertise to make the public market work. The Town or the BID, however, could help by lining up the sponsor and contributing start-up funds. A specialty supermarket could provide an alternative to the public market and would eliminate the need for a sponsor or manager.

Pursue specialty or ethnic food markets.

While a grocery store in downtown could probably not compete with supermarkets on Route 58, downtown could have specialty or ethnic food markets that require less space than a supermarket and provide unique items difficult to find elsewhere. Wista Deli, for example, is an extremely successful Polish food store that provides imported dry goods, freshly bakes breads and cakes, and other unique items. The Star Confectionery is another unique shop that is attractive not only for its sweets, but also for its historic and beautifully preserved storefront. Similar stores—bakeries, wine shops, organic food markets, other ethnic markets—could be very successful. This concept could be integrated with the public market, much like the former Barefoot Contessa reuse of a Westhampton Beach supermarket.

Encourage outdoor dining.

Outdoor dining creates activity along the street and takes advantage of the warm summer weather. While Main Street sidewalks too narrow to accommodate sidewalk seating, outdoor tables and chairs could be set up to the rear of buildings in or on alleyways between Main Street and the waterfront.

Promote stores and restaurants oriented to children and families.

The Aquarium, the Historical Society, and the Science Center are major child and family destinations. Toy stores, child-friendly music stores, family restaurants, and children's programs at the Arts Council or the Library would build off of this emerging "children" theme and encourage families to spend the entire day in downtown Riverhead. The Aquarium visit lasts one to two hours, and these ancillary activities could help lengthen their stay and encourage families to patronize stores and restaurants.

Promote antique stores and furniture stores.

Downtown already only has several such stores. Additional stores of this type are ideal to fill the large spaces being vacated by Swezey's. Approximately 60,000 square feet of Main Street retail space will be vacated once Swezey's moves into its new store. Furniture and antiques are a specialty product, and people are generally willing to make special trips to particular stores in order to find the perfect additions to their homes. Thus, these types of stores dovetail with the specialty niche recommended for Downtown. The large Swezey's spaces can be used by a large individual retailer, or by a series of individual vendors that share the space. In fact, the owner(s) of these spaces will be hard-pressed to find many other retailers who would prefer and fill these large, often multi-story spaces.

Promote music stores and develop music programs for both adults and children.

With the annual summertime concert series and the Blues Festival, and the potential for using the Suffolk Theater and the Vail Leavitt Theater as performance spaces, downtown is becoming known as a center for music. Music stores and programs in conjunction with the local elementary school (i.e., music and dance lessons) could help develop music as a specialty niche.

Preserve eclectic specialty stores and convenience shopping.

While attracting new tourist-oriented uses, existing eclectic stores in the downtown area ought to be retained to the extent practical. Stores like the camera shop, the uniform store, and Ben Franklin do not belong any particular specialty niche, but they do provide a variety of interesting products that draw customers from a large trade area. This variety of products is an asset to the downtown. New shops and restaurants should be steered toward vacant storefronts and infill sites, so that existing shops remain in place.

Convenience shopping serves some local residents and downtown employees. While convenience shopping cannot be a major part of the downtown retail mix, there can and should be shops and services that meet the everyday needs of the people who are in or pass by Downtown every day. These include dry cleaners, delis, stationery stores, and other similar enterprises.

Support the growth of downtown attractions and foster development of the arts.

Downtown attractions like the Aquarium, the East End Arts Council, the Historical Society, and the Science Center children's museum attract potential customers to Main Street shops and restaurants. Downtown is better off having a wide variety of attractions rather than a single major destination. The more downtown has to offer, the more likely visitors are to spend the entire day, and the more likely they are to make return trips. Having a variety of small attractions also encourages people to walk throughout downtown between destinations and to patronize shops along the way. The Town should offer financial and political support to new attractions, like the Science Center, and should support the efforts of existing attractions to offer new exhibits, programs, and events.

Development of the arts ought to be a focus of Town efforts, because of the widespread interest and patronage of the arts on the East End. With the presence of the East End Arts Council, the success of the Blues Festival and the summertime concert series, and the planned reopening of the Suffolk Theater, downtown already has the elements of an artistic center. To build on this strong basis, the Town, the BID and others should undertake the following tasks:

- Provide technical and financial assistance for artists who are seeking housing, studios, and gallery space;
- Pursue shops that cater to artists (such as music stores, art supply shops, film stores, etc.);
- Commission public art installations, providing work for local artists and making Riverhead identifiable as an artistic center to the occasional visitor;
- In conjunction with the BID, the East End Arts Council, the Suffolk Theater, and the Vail Leavitt Theater, sponsor additional art festivals, music performances, and craft shows to showcase local artists and draw tourists;
- Encourage local restaurants, shops, and cafes to display the art of local artists; and
- Encourage the East End Arts Council to remain open on summer weekends and sponsor weekend programs, particularly for young children.

Encourage coordinated marketing and programming for downtown destinations, in order to promote longer visits.

Coordinated marketing could include ticket packaging, such as unified one-day passes to the Aquarium, the Science Center children's museum, the Historical Museum, the Arts Center, and the Railroad Museum. Similarly, programming could be coordinated between different venues. For instance, picking up on the Aquarium's aquatic theme, the Historical Society could offer a whaling exhibit and the Library could offer related readings. Local shops and restaurants could build off the Blues Festival by providing "piano bar" performances and dinner and lunch specials. This would help extend the Blues Festival into the late evening hours.

By providing a set of activities that last an entire day, downtown Riverhead can draw families from a much larger trade area. People are generally willing to endure two-way travel times that are about half as long as the length of the visit. If a family can plan on a six-hour visit, they would be willing to travel from as far away as an hour and a half in one direction. Moreover, people who stay the whole day will spend more money in local shops and restaurants, as they filter between attractions.



Eclectic specialty stores give downtown a unique mix of shopping choices, distinct from Tanger Mall and Route 58.

The Peconic River waterfront is one of downtown's greatest assets, and is increasingly important with the recent opening of the Aquarium. The existing boardwalk and waterfront park serve as a major recreational attraction, where people can stroll, relax, and picnic. It also provides space for circulation between parking lots and downtown destinations.

Expand the waterfront park west to the Court Street bridge and establish a continuous waterfront trail.

The waterfront park should be expanded westward, so that the entire Peconic River waterfront up until the Court Street bridge becomes part of the park. An expanded waterfront park with better Main Street connections would also provide a physical linkage between most of downtown's destinations. This action would also remove unseemly uses and substitute an uninterrupted waterfront view from some of the most important gateways into downtown.

Pedestrian and bicycle trails should be extended through the waterfront park, so that there is a continuous riverfront trail. The waterfront park should eventually connect to a trail that runs the westward the Peconic River, providing an attractive linkage between downtown and the Tanger Outlet Mall.

Building off the aquatic theme created by the Aquarium, the waterfront trail can be designed as an interpretive walk. The waterfront can be planted with native vegetation, and signs can describe the natural habitat, the fish and bird species living in the area, and changes to the waterfront habitat over time.

Expansion of the park would require the Town to purchase properties (or portions thereof) located along the waterfront. Some of the Town funds have already been set aside for purchasing land for parks and open space. The Town should make a commitment to use this fund for buying waterfront property between downtown and the Court Street bridge. As a second priority, the funds should also be used to buy property west of the Court Street bridge, all the way to Tanger Mall, with the intent of creating a linear trail.

Work with the Town of Southampton to expand park uses and protect open space on the south side of the Peconic River.

The south side of the Peconic River is located within the Town of Southampton, but exerts a strong influence on the functioning and image of downtown Riverhead. Preserving the south edge of the river as parks and open space would be consistent with the expanded waterfront concept, but more than that, it would create a "town and country" context for downtown. The south of side of the river, like the north side, could contain pedestrian and bicycle trails, as well as recreational concessions. This recommendation is consistent with what is already spelled out in the new Southampton Master Plan.

Establish areas for recreational concessions and consider installing public restroom facilities in the park.

Recreational concessions and uses could be situated in the park, and at the gate-

3.2 Expand and Improve the Waterfront Park



The waterfront park can be expanded westward to the Court Street bridge.

ways into downtown, on Peconic Avenue, East Main Street, and West Main Street. These include canoe and paddleboat rentals, bed-and-breakfasts, fishing supply stores, etc. Such concessions and uses would beckon visitors to the waterfront. Also, a theme children's playground could be added to the park, building off the Science Center and/or Aquarium as children's attractions.

Public restrooms could be included in the park in conjunction with recreational uses. Public restrooms should be installed only if there is a plan for maintenance, operation, and security and funding sources are secured for the bathrooms. The Town should work with concession merchants to develop and execute a plan.

Preserve and enhance pedestrian and view corridors between East Main Street and the Peconic River.

Some parts of the waterfront are difficult to see from West Main Street, because trees, undergrowth, and buildings block the views. As properties are procured for park expansion, the Town should redesign the enlarged park design to create and preserve view corridors from Main Street, particularly at gateway locations. Similarly, the park design should establish frequent and easy pedestrian connections from Main Street, particularly from the Court Street, Osborn Avenue, and Griffing Avenue intersections.

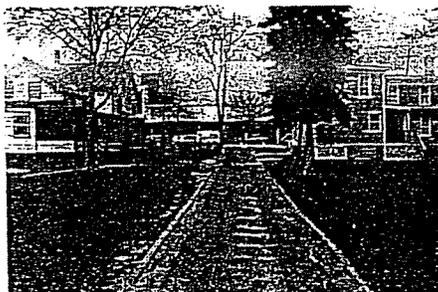
In the center of downtown, alleyways and streets already provide view corridors down to the waterfront. However, pedestrian linkages are weak. Alleyways and streets provide access to the parking lots behind Main Street, but do not lead all the way down to the waterfront. Landscaping, walkways, and lighting should be redesigned so that there are safe, direct, and visible connections between the waterfront and Main Street. River "identifiers" or beacons (i.e., banners, bollards, flowering shrubs, etc.) could be placed along the waterfront to call attention to the water's edge. Also, these view corridors could be extended north of East Main Street, to increase the visual connection between downtown and the waterfront.

Further east on Main Street, there are no views of the marina facilities. The Town should work with the Treasure Cove marina to open up views to and through the marina to the water. The visual image of the marina would help enhance the visual gateway into the village. This Town should pursue this action in conjunction with the potential expansion of the marina, as shown on the proposed Urban Design map.

Limit polluted runoff from draining into the Peconic River.

Runoff of polluted surface water into the river is a potential threat. Parking lot surfaces collect particulate matter, oil, salt, and dirt from automobiles and snowplows, and during heavy rains, the pollutants bubble to the surface and contaminate the surface water runoff. There is a natural grade from Main Street to the waterfront, so contaminated surface water would tend to flow into the river.

The primary way to prevent surface water from flowing into the river would



Connections between Main Street and the waterfront can be improved and celebrated with benches, trees, walkways, and other inviting amenities.

be to install storm drains in the parking lot and channeling the storm water runoff to a water treatment facility. This is a potentially expensive undertaking and may not be warranted, given the relatively small level of pollutants expected in the runoff. Installation of storm drains should be considered only if studies show that contaminant levels in the parking lot runoff are significant.

As a more economical alternative, trees, shrubs, and grass can help trap water and limit runoff. Adding additional landscaped areas to the parking lots can therefore prevent contaminants from flowing into the river. Purchasing additional land for park expansion would be consistent with this proposal. This may mean that surface pollutants will collect in soils, but as with the water, the low levels of pollutant would not be expected to create significant contamination.

3.3 Establish a Land Use Framework, While Preserving and Promoting a Fine-Grain Mix of uses

Downtown's intricate mix of uses is one of its most unique and charming characteristics and ought to be preserved. The best downtowns have a variety of functions: cultural center, tourist attraction, residential enclave, office center, and shopping district. Keeping a mix of uses will help maintain the variety and vitality of downtown Riverhead. At the same time, establishing a more ordered land use framework can group together compatible uses and minimize conflicts between adjacent land uses. The proposed land use map reflects the concepts laid out on the Urban Structure and Urban Design maps. The following concepts are illustrated on the map:

Maintain ground-floor retail along Main Street, with apartments and offices on the upper floors..

Like existing buildings, new development along Main Street should have ground-floor retail uses, with office or residential uses on the upper floors. Mixed-use buildings encourage local walking trips, because office and residential uses are integrated into the downtown shopping area.

Encourage cultural attractions to expand into adjacent buildings or lots.

Cultural attractions are arranged in a linear fashion along Main Street and the waterfront. As downtown Riverhead grows into a major cultural attraction, there will be pressure to expand the activities and programs offered. When the Aquarium is fully built, it will have no more room on its property for expansion. The East End Arts Council already has a need for additional classroom space. The Science Center (and the Marina) may require space for expansion in the future.

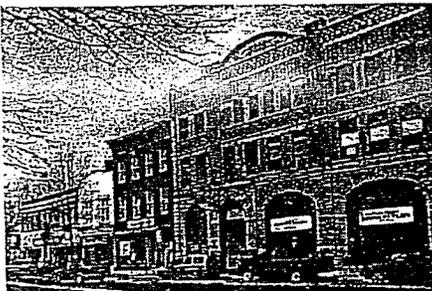
In order to keep these uses in downtown, the Town should work with cultural attractions in order to provide opportunities to expand into adjacent locations. As a prime example, the Swezey's space next to the Arts Council property will be vacated once the new Swezey's building is completed and can provide a convenient adjacent space for expansion.

Maintain the pattern of small, dispersed parking lots, and ensure that any new parking lots are built according to the same pattern.

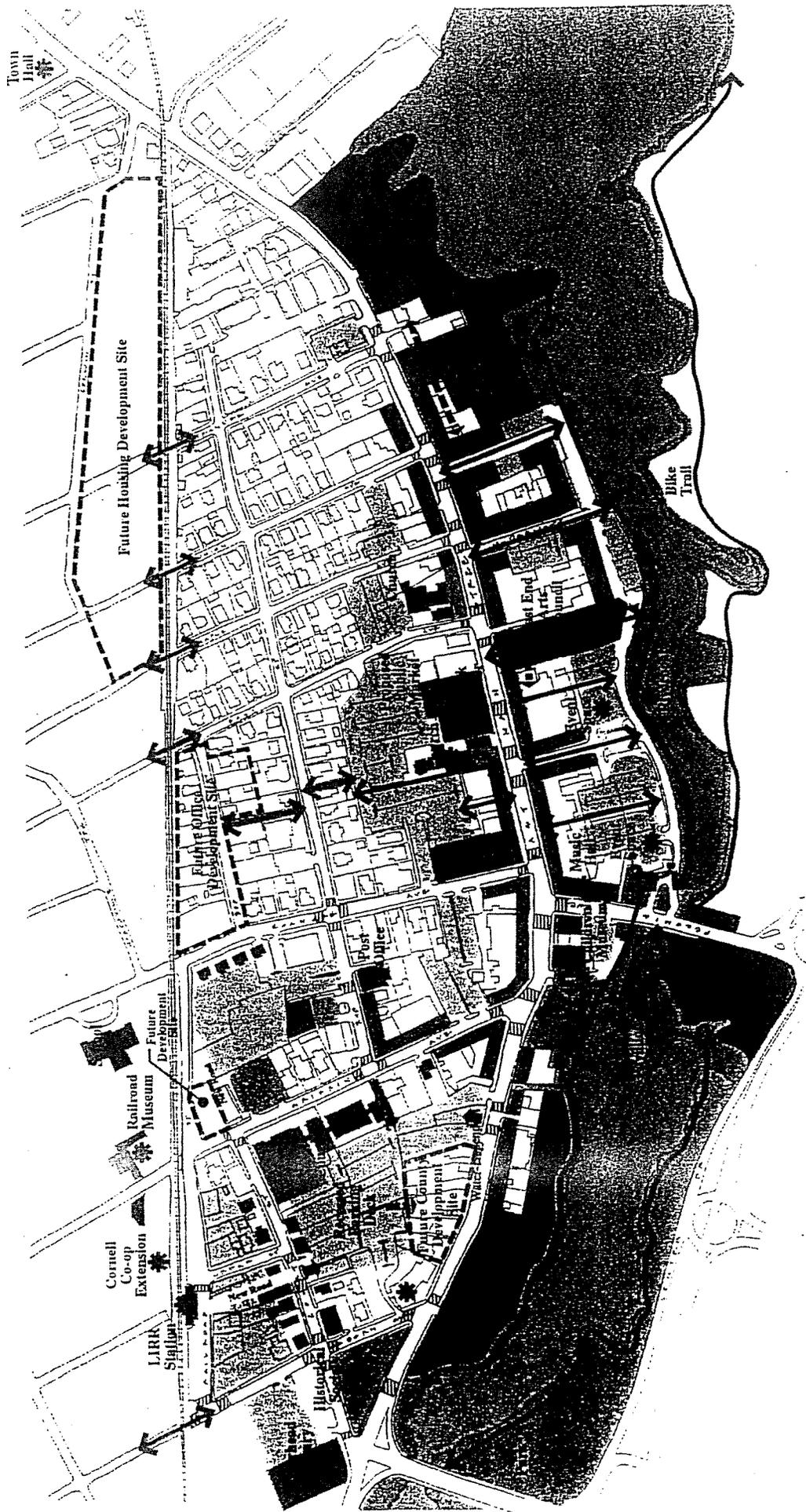
Small, dispersed parking lots provide convenient access to all buildings throughout the downtown area and help disperse traffic. A centralized parking structure would be inconvenient for downtown shops and attractions, which are situated in a linear pattern along Main Street and the waterfront, and would create an intense traffic pocket around the garage. Likewise, the existing parking lots along the waterfront ought to be maintained and used as outdoor event space.

Encourage the development of mixed-use buildings on infill sites throughout the downtown area.

Along Main Street and side streets, there are vacant lots that should be targeted for infill development. Infill development will help create a continuous street frontage. As part of the zoning ordinance update, the Town should adopt mixed-



Downtown has a traditional mix of land uses, with ground-floor retail and upper-floor offices and apartments.



Proposed Urban Design

-  Parks/Open Space
-  Water-Dependent Uses
-  Landmarks/Activity Centers
-  Shared Parking
-  Ground Floor Shops
-  Infill Buildings
-  Priority Crosswalks
-  Possible Expansion
-  Streetscape Improvements
-  Pedestrian Corridors

Revitalization Strategy for Downtown Riverhead

Approx. Scale
0 100' 200'

Ablett Phillips Pratts & Shapiro, Inc. 2000

use requirements or incentives for new buildings along Main Street.

Establish park uses all along the edges of the waterfront, and situate water-dependent uses at the major entrances to the downtown area.

Water-dependent uses—such as recreational concessions, bed and breakfasts, marinas, and related shops—should be situated at the gateways into downtown, calling attention to the waterfront and enticing visitors and tourists. Whereas parks require public purchase, water-dependent uses could be privately owned and operated. This ensures that not all waterfront lands need to be taken, though the easements or rights-of-way may need to be secured in order to create a continuous pedestrian path along the water's edge west of Peconic Avenue.

Concentrate office uses in the Office/Court District.

Offices are already and should continue to be concentrated in the vicinity of the County Court building. Offices typically have higher real estate value than retail and residential buildings, and could potentially create pressure for site assemblage, conversion of storefront space, and demolition or conversion of houses. While conversion of some houses and above-store space is desirable, conversion of ground-floor storefronts to office uses are not, and not all residential areas ought to be opened up to office conversion. The area for single-purpose conventional office buildings ought to be limited in order to prevent pressure for demolition and/or speculation on Main Street or in the adjoining residential area.

In the Office/Court District, create large parking lots in the center of the blocks, and line the edges of the blocks with office, retail and institutional buildings.

This strategy provides adequate space for desperately needed parking, while still maintaining a consistent street wall. This approach mimics the existing pattern of parking lots and buildings along Main Street and thus creates a consistent character throughout the downtown area. The proposed bank building, which is being designed by Gary Jacquemin, is consistent with this pattern.

Specifically, Court Street is targeted for infill office development along the street, with parking behind the buildings on both sides. The area between Court Street and the LIRR station could be cleared for additional parking lots, providing convenient parking for not only the station, but also the library, the Historical Society, and the Courts. As an alternative to new development, historic buildings in danger of demolition elsewhere in downtown could be moved to these sites, rehabilitated, and converted to offices. In the Village of Roslyn, Long Island, the relocation of historic homes to the village center enhanced the character of the place and property values. In the Court/Office district, these relocated historic buildings would compliment other converted offices in the area, as well as the historic character of the area.

When the currently proposed Court expansion takes place, it will most likely be built in back of the existing Court building. However, if there is ever the need for another Court expansion, a set of buildings and parcels on West Main Street

ought to be the prime site for consideration. This site would give the Courts a Main Street presence, while staying in close proximity to the existing Court building. The block bounded by Osborn Avenue, Court Street, Griffing Avenue, and Main Street would therefore become a Court "campus."

Establish mixed office and residential districts on both sides of the residential neighborhood located north of Main Street, where residential-to-office conversions would be allowed.

These areas would allow a mix of offices and residences, providing a transition between the more intensively used Office/Court district and the relatively quiet residential neighborhood. In this area, additional residences could be converted to offices.

Residential uses located on Third Street are marginal and negatively impacted from railroad noise; they ought to be reconfigured and redeveloped. Closing Third Street and consolidating several lots would create a larger, more buildable development parcel. Office uses are preferred for the site, because of the adjacent noise impacts, but residential uses could be permitted with the appropriate setbacks and buffers.

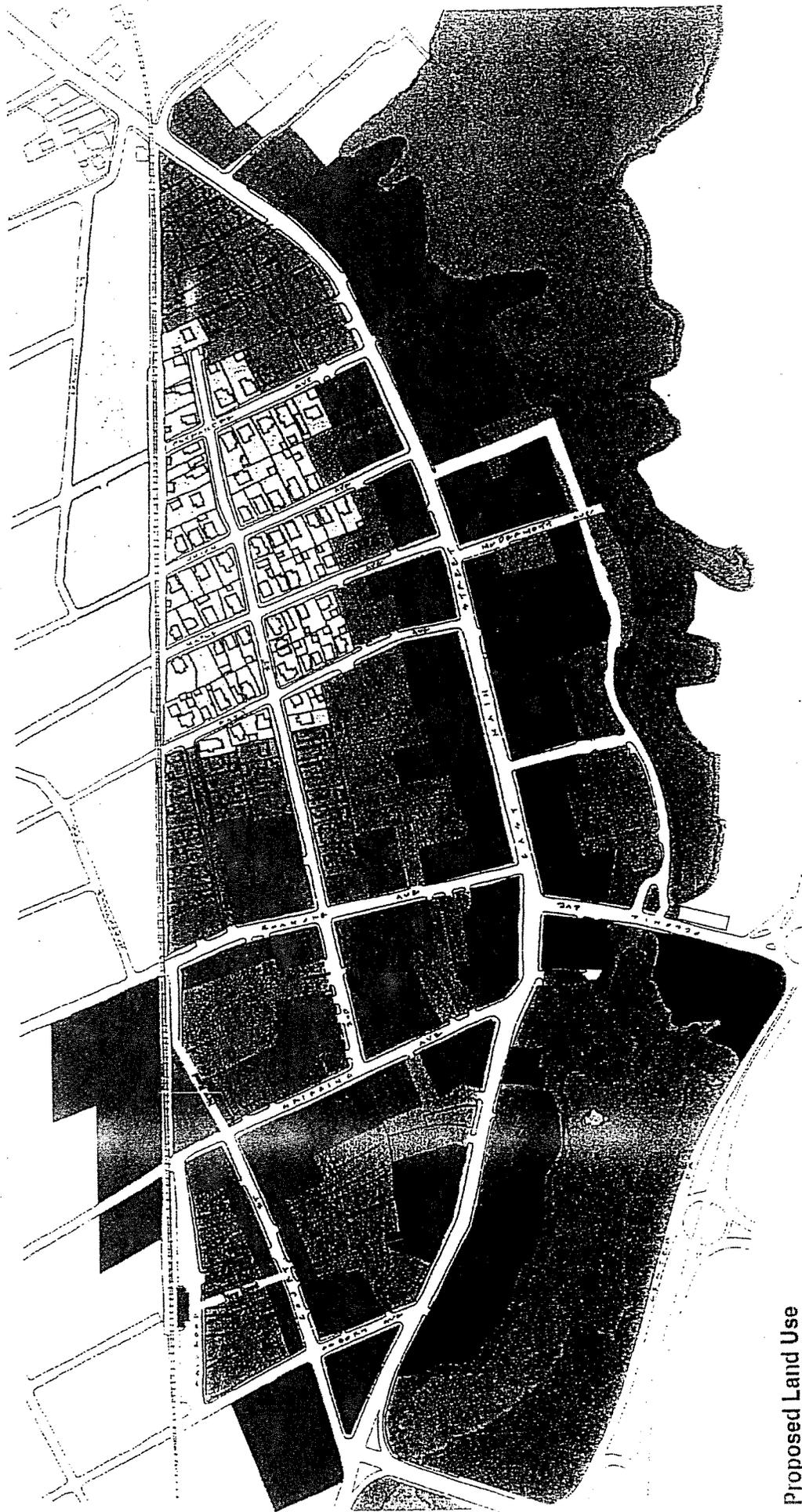
In the residential area located north of Main Street, establish a residential zone that prohibits stand-alone commercial uses, but still allows home occupations and artist studios and galleries.

Non-residential uses ought to be prohibited in the core area of the residential neighborhood. The neighborhood is under pressure for conversion to office uses and parking lots, and this prohibition would help protect the historic housing stock.

A limited area around the edges of the residential area would allow office conversions. Within the neighborhood itself, home occupations would be permitted, subject to performance standards, and artists would be allowed to set up studios and galleries, either in spare rooms or in detached ancillary buildings. These commercial uses would be permitted only as an ancillary use to a residence.

As part of the zoning ordinance update, establish setback, buffer, landscaping, and other standards that minimize land use impacts while maintaining mixed uses.

In any location where two different land uses are located next to one another, there are bound to be off-site negative impacts. For example, morning deliveries to businesses within the residential neighborhood could generate noise that disturbs adjacent or upper-floor residences. In less dense suburban locations, these impacts are avoided through wide setbacks and heavily landscaped buffers, but in downtown Riverhead, there may be other strategies that are more appropriate to the compact, mixed use setting. Options include prohibition of parking in front of buildings, fences and landscaped buffers around parking lots, and restrictions on the operation of businesses (e.g., opening and closing times, noise generation, etc.).



Proposed Land Use

-  Parks/Open Space/
-  Water-Dependent Uses
-  Residential
-  Public/Institutional
-  Ground Floor Retail
-  Office
-  Mixed Office/Residential
-  Parking

**Revitalization Strategy
for Downtown Riverhead**

Approx. Scale
0 100' 200'

Abelco Phillips Press & Shapiro, Inc. 2000



Preserving the downtown housing stock requires more than just limiting encroaching uses. It requires active promotion and protection of downtown housing. Limiting group homes and attracting artists to the area will help bolster property values.

Preserve downtown housing by limiting the area in which office conversions are permitted.

While office conversions have provided necessary commercial space and helped revitalize old homes in the downtown, it is critical to maintain the overall residential character of the area just north of East Main Street. This area is under stress from surrounding office, retail, and parking uses.

The neighborhood will remain viable in the future only if the land uses around its edges are stabilized. If non-residential uses continue to encroach into the neighborhood, the remaining housing will become more and more marginal. Single-family homes will be divided into apartments, and maintenance will be deferred, like some existing homes along Second and Third Streets. The proposed Land Use map establishes a core area for exclusive residential use, with mixed residential and office uses on its edges, where additional conversions or redevelopment may occur.

Limit the impacts of group homes in the downtown area.

Municipalities are required by federal and State law to allow group homes in residential areas. Yet a group home that is far more dense than the surrounding housing can have negative impacts on the area, as can a concentration of several group homes in an area. Group homes have employees who assist residents with day-to-day living, and products like food, medicine, and household items may need to be delivered. As a result, group homes have parking and loading needs that differ from other residences.

The size of a group home can be limited to be consistent with the density of other homes in the area, so that the potential impacts are reduced. Federal and state law may allow municipalities to impose additional regulations or conditions on group homes. This complex area of land use law will be examined in detail as part of the affordable housing chapter of the Master Plan.

Work with the Business Improvement District to make downtown housing available to artists.

Towns that successfully attracted artists have developed a concerted marketing scheme to attract them to their areas. Some towns, like Peekskill, have relied upon planning staff to connect artists with the housing and studio space they require. The Town and the BID should work together to develop a marketing scheme that aims to attract artists to downtown Riverhead. The strategy should take into account the needs of artists and their families and should provide technical assistance to artists who are looking for housing. A member of Town staff or the BID should function as the primary contact for artists and potential landlords.

In addition, the Town and the BID should work with the downtown cultural institutions—including the Suffolk Theater, the Vail Leavitt Theater, and the East End

3.4 Promote Housing Revitalization and Artist Housing



The downtown housing stock can be protected from encroaching uses.

Arts Council—to explore the possibility of creating temporary accommodations for its associated artists. As an example, the Goodspeed Opera House in East Haddam, Connecticut provides dormitory space for its performers. Artists would be allowed to reside in such housing for the duration of their performances, from one night to several months.

Provide assistance to visual and performance artists seeking housing in the downtown area, and provide incentives for landlords to lease space to artists.

Artists are an ideal population to target for downtown living and working. Artists often engage in renovation, and their presence helps increase the image and interest of a residential area. Because many artists may have minimal or inconsistent sources of income, they may require assistance in renting and buying homes in the downtown area. The Town should provide a reduction in property tax for any registered home-owning artists living in the downtown area. This reduction is justifiable, because artists can provide a unique amenity and attraction to the downtown area. The Town should also provide artists with the technical assistance to find an apartment and sign a lease.

Similarly, the Town should provide incentives for landlords to lease space to artists. In this scenario, for landlords with artist tenants, real estate taxes are frozen for the first five years and then undergo a five-year graduated return to the proper level, thereby adding immunity to the affects of inflation. Another option is encourage landlords and artists to develop renovation agreements, where the artist would pay a lower rent in exchange for doing renovations on their living space. Many artists seek flexible space that they can improve and upgrade to suit their own needs and artistic expression.

Expand the boundaries of the downtown Arts District, and allow greater flexibility in artist housing, studios, and galleries.

In 1997, the Town passed the "Riverhead Arts District Law," which permitted studios, galleries, and ancillary artist housing in a portion of the downtown area. Unfortunately, few artists have taken advantage of this policy.

Based on experience in other cities, artists generally choose their place of residence first (based on schools, environment, cost, and other basic factors), and the presence of a studio space is a secondary factor. Therefore, in addition to permitting studios, galleries, and ancillary artist housing, the regulations should be amended to allow ancillary studios or galleries and retail sales of art on all of downtown's single-family residential lots and in all residential apartments in excess of a certain minimal size. This would allow the artist to choose their place of residence first and then have the option to set up an adhoc studio or small gallery in a garage or spare room. The Town should also expand the boundary of the Arts District east of Union Street to include the entire downtown area.

Ancillary studio and gallery space in downtown's residential areas could create some negative impacts, such as additional visits, parking, odd work hours, and generation of heat, noise, or fumes. Performance standards could limit the hours of

heavy studio work (i.e., welding), require buffering or screening, or impose other regulations to minimize impacts.

Expand the definition of an "artist" to include persons practicing any of the applied arts, and eliminate Town Board approval of artist certification.

Currently, the "Riverhead Arts District Law" defines an artist as "a person who is regularly engaged in the fine arts... or in the performing or creative arts... or in the composition of music on a professional basis." This definition excludes any person involved in the applied arts, such as pottery-making, jewelry-making, or graphic design. The applied arts would be equally appropriate in the Arts District and should be added to the definition.

In addition, Town Board approval of artist certification creates an unnecessary level of bureaucracy to the artist certification process and potentially discourages artists from coming into town. Also, Town Boards generally do not need to be concerned with such routine certifications, but should focus on more controversial zoning approvals. Town staff can more quickly and easily certify artists. If the Town Board still wishes to have input in the approval process, it can establish more specific approval parameters to be followed by staff.

Allow home occupations in the downtown area, on condition of meeting stringent performance standards, sign regulations, and locational requirements.

With the dawn of the high-speed telecommunications and the internet, telecommuting has become a real option for many workers. People who work at home are attracted to places like downtown Riverhead, which have a variety of local services and shops within walking distance. They are also attracted to the larger, older homes—like those found throughout the downtown area—with their spare rooms or detached garages that can be converted into small offices. Downtown Riverhead can capitalize on this growing trend by allowing more flexibility in living and working arrangements.

However, not all home occupations would be appropriate for the downtown area. For example, while a computer programmer could set up a home office with virtually no impact on the neighborhood, a plumbing contractor working out of home would have greater impacts. Contractors require indoor and outdoor storage for materials and equipment and attract truck activity. Similarly, artist live-work space may involve off-site impacts that ought to be regulated.

Rather than prohibiting specific types of home occupations, home occupations should be subject to specific performance standards. Outdoor storage should be prohibited; the size of detached buildings (for storage or other use) should be limited; signs should be restricted in size and number; on-site parking should be limited; the number of employees living off-site should be constrained to one or two; and on-site production or deliveries should be subject to stringent standards for noise, emissions, and glare. This approach allows greater flexibility than strict prohibitions. Under this scheme, a contractor or any one else would be allowed to work at home as long as the performance standards were met.

Allow ancillary residences in commercial space in the downtown area, on condition that living space meets normal residential building code requirements.

Ancillary residences that are attached to normally allowed shops and offices should be permitted in the downtown area. For example, a doctor with a downtown office can live in an apartment behind or above the office. The apartment would not be allowed as a stand-alone use, or to be rented out to a second party. The residence would have to be a habitable space with a bathroom and kitchen and would need to meet other requirements in the building code.

Allow home occupations to occupy detached structures on residential sites.

Currently, home occupations are allowed only in the primary building on a residential property, not in a detached garage or other ancillary building. This limits the ability of residents to work at home, due to space constraints. As long as total lot coverage is regulated, and the size of ancillary structures is limited to maintain adequate yard space, home occupations in detached structures ought to be permitted.

Provide property tax incentives for housing rehabilitation.

Residential development currently does not have the opportunity to take advantage of tax incentives offered to commercial development in the downtown area. Commercial development can abate taxes for ten years for investments in excess of \$50,000. This tax abatement incentive should be expanded to include downtown residential development artist live/work space and home occupation as well.

Allow retirement housing in the downtown area.

Retirees have different housing needs and expectations than families. They need less space, greater affordability (to accommodate a limited retirement income), low maintenance (to accommodate poorer physical agility), and proximity to medical services and convenience shops (as driving long distances becomes more difficult with age). Downtown is an ideal location for retirees, as they would be located close to downtown shops and doctor's offices, and within 5 minutes driving distance of convenience shopping on Route 58 and the Central Suffolk Hospital.

The Town should develop zoning regulations that allow retirement housing in the downtown area. Currently, retirement housing is permitted in the Residential Retirement Community RC zone, but not in the Residential C or other residential zones. Moreover, even if portions of downtown were rezoned RC, the high minimum lot size (15 acres) would make it impossible to develop retirement housing downtown without complicated lot consolidations. Retirement housing should be allowed in downtown, at densities and building scales that are compatible with the existing residential neighborhood.

Downtown has unique buildings in a variety of architectural styles. The building styles are distinct from the bland character of much new suburban development, particularly Route 58 and the Tanger Outlet Mall. Preserving downtown buildings and ensuring compatible new development will help attract tourists who are seeking unique and charming places to visit.

Identify historically significant sites and buildings, and implement historic preservation regulations as part of the zoning code update.

As part of the Master Plan update, the Town should identify sites and buildings in the downtown area that have local historical value. These buildings shall be subject to special regulations, in order to protect the buildings from demolition, and to ensure that alterations are consistent with the character of the original building. Indeed, the Main Street area should be designated as an historic district.

Encourage renovation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings, by exempting them from inappropriate or overly stringent standards in the zoning ordinance and building code.

Rehabilitation of historic buildings often involves costly and difficult procedures to bring the buildings up to code. Narrow hallways may need to be widened; steep staircases may need to be rebuilt; fire sprinklers may need to be installed; doors and windows may need to be replaced or moved; electrical, plumbing, and heating systems may require repair or replacement; ramps or elevators may be required for handicapped access. Standards can be so strict that that rehabilitation becomes prohibitively expensive and tampers with the very historic character of the building.

As part of the Zoning Code update, the Town should develop special exemptions for designated historic buildings with regard to such development standards. The level of exemption permitted shall be determined by the amount of money being invested in the property. In conjunction with these exemptions, absolute minimum standards shall be established to protect the basic health and safety of occupants. The proposed rehabilitation work can potentially be subject to a separate process that examines whether the exemptions are working. In states like New Jersey, exemptions for historic buildings are already being permitted, and the experience of municipalities with those exemptions can be examined as part of the Code update.

Provide opportunities for relocating historic houses in downtown Riverhead.

The Proposed Urban Design map identifies infill development sites where historic homes can be relocated, as was done in Roslyn. The Town of Riverhead, as part of the Master Plan, should consider establishing a program for relocating historic homes from other downtown and Riverhead locations to these infill sites. Specifically, houses abutting the railroad or along the river could be relocated to infill sites to create a more suitable setback from the tracks or implement the proposed riverside park.

3.5 Preserve and Enhance Historic Character



The East End Arts Council is housed in two beautifully restored historic residences.

Seek and provide financial incentives for historic preservation.

Multifamily rental housing that is listed in (or eligible for listing) in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) has the potential to take advantage of the Historic Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit (ITC) for rehabilitation purposes.

Currently, the ITC is 20 percent for "certified rehabilitation of certified historic structures". Certification for the ITC would allow a dollar-for-dollar reduction of federal income taxes. Thus for \$30 million of rehab costs, a tax credit of \$6 million would be generated. The ITC is allowed in the year the building is placed in service, and can be carried back one year and forward up to 20 years; the owner must retain the property for a minimum of five years to avoid recapture. A certified historic structure is individually listed or located in a listed historic district in the NRHP. It is also for buildings designated at the state or local level whereby the designation law is certified as conforming to the NRHP criteria. A certified rehabilitation is rehab work that must meet the Secretary of the Interior's "Standards for Rehabilitation" as determined by the National Park Service.

In addition, New York State has authorized local jurisdictions to provide tax relief and incentives to property owners making improvements to buildings within the district. The Town of Riverhead could also set aside money may for grants for restoration projects. Grants may also be available from various outside sources for the improvement of historic properties within the district. An historic preservation committee can provide guidelines to property owners and comment on proposals for new development or alterations in the historic district.

It is not enough to preserve historic buildings. New buildings built in the downtown area should have a design that is consistent with older downtown buildings. In particular, the design of new building should be oriented to pedestrians, in order to maintain the compact, walkable atmosphere of the downtown, and it should have design details that are consistent with other buildings. The Town of Riverhead can establish regulations for compatible design, as part of the zoning ordinance.

This is not to say that all buildings should have a specific style, such as Victorian or Arts and Crafts. On the contrary, downtowns should have buildings that represent a variety of architectural styles, because that mix gives downtown an eclectic and refreshing character. Promoting "traditional" building layouts means that buildings should be compact and oriented to pedestrians, but modern-looking buildings can do achieve that layout just as well as older-looking buildings.

Establish maximum setbacks and requirements for pedestrian-oriented design.

Excessive setbacks create gaps in the street wall and reduce the walkability of streets. Traditional residential setbacks in the downtown area are about five to fifteen feet, and along Main Street, buildings are built right up to the property line. In the zoning ordinance, buildings should be required to built up to the line the is comparable to the setbacks of other downtown buildings.

In addition, the main entrance of each building should be required to be oriented to the street, rather than the parking lot. This provision also helps maintain the vitality and walkability of the street. In residential areas, garages can be required to be setback behind the rest of the house, so that auto access is made secondary to pedestrian access.

Require ground-floor retail along Main Street.

Retail should be the only permitted use on the ground-floor along Main Street. Retail stores create a visually stimulating, active storefront, whereas offices and residential uses draw far less activity. Maintaining a solid strip of retail on the ground floor also encourages pedestrians to keep walking along the street. This continuous retail experience is a key element of successful retailing.

The closing of Swezey's will suddenly create a glut of large-scale retail space on Main Street, and the retail space could very easily be converted to offices, which can utilize the larger floor spaces. This is a serious risk to the retail vitality of downtown, because the Swezey's spaces occupy large stretches of street frontage in the middle of the downtown shopping area. Before Swezey's vacates its current space, regulations need to be established to require retail use for all ground-floor spaces along Main Street.

Establish detailed downtown design standards.

Architectural design standards can help maintain and enhance the character of downtown. Design standards do not imply that architectural styles will be strictly controlled. Instead, design standards can ensure the new buildings have the bare minimum elements of well-designed buildings, such as minimum window area and

3.6 Preserve and Promote Traditional Building Layouts and Development Patterns While Allowing Variety in Building Design



The Met Life Building is a relatively new structure that fits into the traditional pedestrian-oriented fabric of downtown.

appropriate exterior materials. Standards can also be established to ensure that building additions or alterations are consistent with the original building design. Including design standards in the zoning ordinance ensures that they will be implemented in conjunction with new development.

Prohibit auto-oriented land uses in the downtown area.

Auto-oriented uses like drive-throughs, gas stations, car rental agencies, and auto repair shops should be prohibited from downtown. This ensures that any future infill development is consistent with the pedestrian orientation of older downtown buildings.

Ensure that sign regulations allow variety in downtown signage.

Sign regulations should establish appropriate limits on the size and type of signs allowed in the downtown area. For example, billboards, roof signs, or other large signs ought to be prohibited. Similarly, specific types of illuminated signs (i.e., internally illuminated signs, flashing signs) ought to be prohibited or strictly limited. However, a wide variety of signs should still be permitted, in order to give the downtown a vibrant and eclectic character. Awning signs, wall signs, signs hanging over the sidewalk, banners and even some types of neon signs can be permitted.

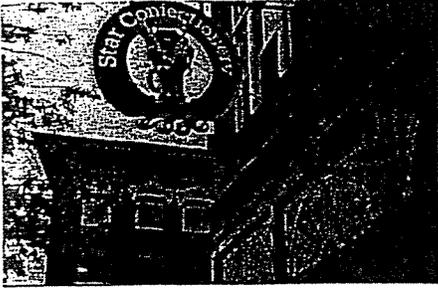
The recommended approach is to prohibit a few specific sign types that are clearly inappropriate and then to allow all other types of signs, with limitations on size, materials, height, and location. This approach promises to allow the greatest variety, while still excluding signs that are out of scale or character.

Establish minimum and maximum residential lot sizes that resemble existing lots in the downtown area.

The smallest residential lot size allowed under Riverhead Zoning Code is 20,000 square feet, about a half-acre, in the Residential C zone. Most existing residential lots in the downtown area, however, are 6,000 to 10,000 square feet, about one-eighth to one-quarter acre. Residential zoning regulations should allow single-family residential lots that are compatible in size with existing development. This would help maintain the compact scale and traditional ambiance of the neighborhood.

As part of the zoning ordinance update, establish parking standards that take into account the traditional buildings and space constraints.

Property owners outside the Parking District are required to provide their own parking spaces. In some cases, parking requirements may be excessive or overly restrictive. In some cases, housing being converted to offices has been required to install more parking spaces that they have room for in the front and rear yards. Parking requirements may be excessive, as on-street parking spaces are available, and additional municipal lots may be constructed. The zoning ordinance update shall include shared parking provisions, updated parking standards that are tailored to proximity to downtown's public and provisions regarding the design of small parking lots.



Regulations should allow a variety of unique signs in the downtown area.

Land uses, building design, landscaping, streetscapes, and parking lot design all influence pedestrian access and circulation. Currently, downtown Riverhead lacks critical pedestrian connections along Main Street and between Main Street and the waterfront. Improving these pedestrian gaps is critical to the success of downtown as a tourist attraction.

Implement continuous streetscape and façade improvements.

As shown in the Urban Structure map, downtown Riverhead consists of several different zones: Main Street, the waterfront, the Office/Court district, and others. Along most of Main Street, the Town has already implemented a series of streetscape improvements which included brick pavers and antique street lamps; but this streetscape treatment does not yet extend as far as the new Aquarium or into the Office/Court district. Continuous, consistent streetscape improvements can help weave together the different downtown zones and expand the perceived walkable area of downtown.

Like streetscapes, façade improvements could also help bolster the image of downtown and encourage pedestrian activity. The Town should consider establishing a façade improvement program as part of the Master Plan. The program would provide a mixture of grants and tax incentives to encourage façade cleaning, door and window replacement and repair, enlarged windows, compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and installation of awnings and planters.

Wherever there are vacant lots or parking lots along all downtown streets, decorative fencing, landscaping, trees, low walls, or benches should be added in order to mask the empty space and preserve the continuity of the frontage.

Build pedestrian walkways between Main Street and the waterfront.

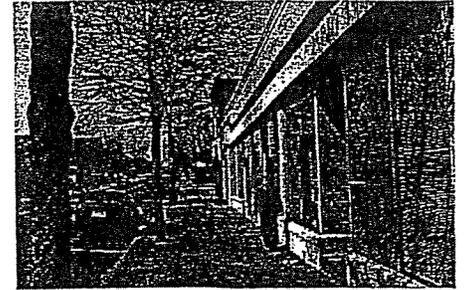
Sidewalks leading down from Main Street do not all reach the waterfront. The Town should work with the Parking District to build continuous landscaped walkways, with the consultation of a landscape architect.

Establish crosswalks and sidewalk bulbs at all key intersections, and improve pedestrian safety at the Peconic-Roanoke-Main Street intersection.

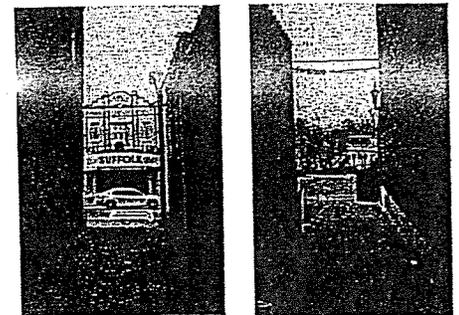
Crosswalks are critical for pedestrian circulation and are necessary at all major intersections in the downtown area. Also, sidewalk "bulbs" (a.k.a. "neckdowns") at the crosswalks can reduce the length of the walk across the street, increasing safety and making the walk more attractive. Crosswalks that are decorated with pavers or cement can help enhance the special quality of the place, but crosswalks do not need to be bricked. In fact, a brick crosswalk can become a maintenance nuisance, because they crack and break with passing cars, inclement weather, and roadway improvements.

Pedestrian improvements are particularly necessary at the Peconic-Roanoke-Main Street intersection, which experiences heavy traffic congestion. The offset intersection has poor visibility, with cars often speeding around blind corners, and

3.7 Promote Pedestrian and Bicycle Access and Circulation



Streetscape improvements, new signs, and awnings can help create a more attractive walking environment.



Alleyways linking Main Street and the waterfront can be improved with landscaping and lighting.

pedestrian crosswalks have been obscured. Sidewalks can be bulbed out, reducing the distance required to cross the street, and crosswalks can be repainted or improved with decorative pavers. Also, an "all stop" crosswalk can be installed to allow all pedestrians to cross through the intersection at once. This would prevent potential car-pedestrian conflicts at this intersection.

Keep all existing connections across the LIRR tracks.

Street connections allow for pedestrian circulation. In places like downtown Riverhead, where there is a variegated grid pattern of streets, pedestrian circulation is particularly convenient. Closing any of the streets across the LIRR tracks would impede pedestrian circulation, and cut off residents immediately north of the tracks from the downtown area. The Town should work with the LIRR to ensure that all existing street crossings are retained.

Establish a continuous bicycle trail along the Peconic River waterfront through downtown, and work with Southampton to preserve and extend the existing bicycle trail on the south bank of the river.

Bicycling is a popular form of recreation on the East End, and bicycle vacation tours have become trendy among young professionals. Eastern Long Island would be an ideal place for bicycle tours, because of its flat landscape (making for an easy ride) and its many, varied attractions: beaches, coves, wineries, farms, and small hamlets. A continuous bike trail along the Peconic River would be attractive, because of the water views and greenery. An off-road trail would be particularly attractive for cyclists, who want to avoid potential conflicts with cars and pedestrians. Cyclists riding along the Peconic River could stop off in downtown Riverhead on their East End tours, making pit stops for meals, water, snacks, and repairs.

Work with the Parking District to install bicycle racks in Parking District lots. Require property owners outside the Parking District to provide bicycle racks on-site.

The US Department of Transportation had made grant money available for installing bicycle racks. Consistent with federal policy to build and promote a multi-modal transportation network, bicycle racks would facilitate bike parking in downtown and thereby encourage biking as an alternative to driving. The absence of bicycle parking can be a deterrent to bike riding. If bike racks are present, people who might otherwise drive their cars could ride their bikes instead and be assured a safe place to lock their bicycle.

3.8 Manage Traffic Circulation While Maintaining Auto Access

Maintaining auto access to downtown is critical to its success. Most tourists and visitors will arrive by car and will need to enter and exit downtown quickly and easily. Traffic difficulties in the downtown area could keep visitors from making a return trip. At the same time, traffic circulation needs to be managed, so that traffic does not overwhelm Main Street or its Roanoke/Peconic Avenue intersection.

Keep all streets two-way and prohibit street closures.

Proposals for one-streets or street closures would detract from the vitality of Main Street. One-way streets would frustrate access into downtown and would create high-speed traffic thoroughfares unfriendly to pedestrians. Two-way streets would maintain auto access and still accommodate pedestrian activity. Street closures tend to sap life from streets; for instance, closure of Peconic Avenue in particular would detract from downtown's "100 percent" retail corner at the Peconic Avenue-Main Street intersection. The Town shall establish policies in the Master Plan to keep all streets two-way and to prohibit street closures in the downtown area.

Relieve congestion on Main Street and at the Peconic-Roanoke- Main Street intersection by installing directional signs that divert cars into parking lots before they reach the core Main Street area.

Motorists have a tendency to drive up to a building to look for the closest parking, and then double back when they don't find an available space. Diverting signs can reduce this tendency and will help keep traffic off of Main Street. For example, signs saying "Atlantis Aquarium" can be placed along Peconic Avenue, just north of the traffic circle. The signs would point into the parking lots along the river, so that motorists coming from Southampton and East Hampton would be diverted away from the Roanoke/Peconic intersection.

If traffic conditions worsen on Main Street and at the Peconic-Roanoke-Main Street intersection, the driveway leading east from Peconic Avenue into the parking lots along the riverfront should be converted into a regular roadway. The road already functions as a bypass route for Main Street. Converting the driveway into a roadway would provide an easier and more apparent way to reach the Aquarium. It would also improve access to the parking lots.

Extend Court Street to Roanoke Avenue.

The extension of Court Street to Roanoke Avenue would serve multiple purposes. First, it would help relieve traffic congestion at the Roanoke/Peconic intersection, because motorists trying to reach areas immediately north of downtown could use the Court Street bridge rather than the Peconic Avenue bridge. Second, for tourists arriving in downtown Riverhead, the Court street extension provides an alternative route to Main Street and leads directly to a series of planned parking lots. Similarly, trucks trying to reach downtown could use Court Street as an alternative to Main Street; trucks coming from the west along Route 24 already have to

use the Court Street bridge, because the bridge on Nugent Drive (west of Peconic Avenue) cannot support heavy trucks. Third, it would also provide another convenient linkage to the County Court building from points to the north. Building the street connection now, before the Court project is completed, would be very timely.

Increase opportunities for reaching downtown Riverhead via transit, and support the plans for the Transportation Center.

The Town should work with the LIRR to provide additional excursion trips to downtown Riverhead. Excursion trips can provide coordinated ticketing and access to a variety of downtown (and other Riverhead) attractions and events, including the Railroad Museum and the Polish Fair. Existing excursion trips focus solely on the Aquarium and the Tanger Outlet Mall.

Also, the Town should work with the LIRR to provide additional weekend service to downtown Riverhead during the summer months. Currently, there are only two trains on weekend and holidays in each direction (west to New York and east to Greenport).

The proposed transportation center would be a multi-modal station that would serve residents, commuters, Court visitors, and tourists. It would improve the ability to reach downtown via transit and would be consistent with the goals and recommendations of this report. The Town should encourage the occupancy of the station by either the Chamber of Commerce or the BID or both to ensure a continuous presence for security and informational purposes.

3.9 Ensure Adequate Parking

Adequate parking is critical to the success of downtown Riverhead as a tourist destination. While parking has not been problematic in the recent past, the combination of several new and proposed projects—the Aquarium, the Science Center, the Court expansion, the Suffolk Theater revitalization—will generate new parking demand. Some of these projects have different peak parking periods, so parking used for one attraction can be used for another attraction at another time. Nevertheless, a parking shortage may occur during peak summer weekends, and will occur until a shared parking arrangement or other actions are taken. The Town can take steps to ensure that adequate parking is provided.

Assess the parking impacts created by Phase I of the Aquarium.

To understand the parking needs that can be expected under full buildout of the Aquarium, the Town should study the parking impacts created by Phase I of the Aquarium. The study should focus on demand during summer months, when demand is greatest, and shall examine the changes in parking needs over the course of a typical summer weekday and weekend day. The study shall also examine the needs for bus parking, where Aquarium visitors are parking, and how far they are willing to walk.

Consider expanding the Parking District boundaries to include all downtown shops, offices, and attractions.

The Town should consult with the Parking District and downtown property owners to consider expansion of the boundaries. Currently, there are major downtown destinations—including the County Courts, the LIRR station, the LIRR Museum, the Library, and the office complex on East Main Street—that lie outside the District. Some of these destinations, like the Courts, already have parking demand that spills over into Parking District lots, meaning that they make use of the parking lots without contributing to the tax revenue. Incorporating these major destinations into the Parking District would ensure that all downtown parking users are contributing equitably to parking maintenance and monitoring.

Expansion of the Parking District would allow visitors to use all downtown parking lots, while ensuring that all the lots are monitored and maintained. Properties added to the Parking District would be required to pay taxes into the district, but they would also be exempt from on-site parking requirements, meaning that property owners would potentially gain the right for additional on-site development, depending on the zoning regulations applicable to the property. If the Parking District wanted to keep an on-site parking lot as parking, such as the County Court lot, the District would have to purchase or lease that portion of the property. This strategy could be used to implement the parking deck proposed for the Court parking lot, as discussed later in this section.

Work with the Parking District to pursue shared parking agreements.

In addition, as an alternative to expanding the Parking District, there are several large parking lots outside the Parking District that can be used for shared parking.

In particular, the parking lot behind the County Court building and the parking lot for the East Main Street office center are not used during weekends and evenings, when offices are closed. The Aquarium and other cultural attractions experience the greatest parking demand during weekends, and the Suffolk Theater and the Vail Leavitt Theater would experience the greatest demand during evenings. There are enough parking spaces in these and other private parking lots to accommodate much of the parking demand for the entire downtown area.

Shared parking agreements are a cost-effective and sensible way to avoid the cost of building new parking lots or garages. Also, private property owners can use shared parking agreements to regulate when and where their parking lots are used by downtown visitors. Without parking agreements, people visiting downtown and desperate for parking may try to park illegally in non-District lots anyway.

Redesign the configuration of on-street parking on all downtown streets, in order to maximize the supply of on-street parking.

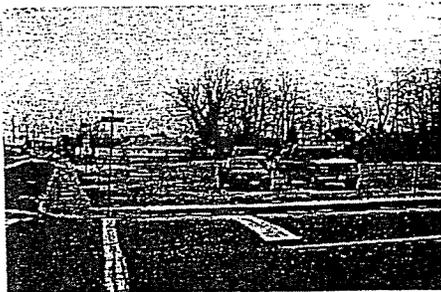
Downtown already has several hundred on-street parking spaces. Additional spaces could be added to the street by making simple adjustments. For example, bus stops could be co-located with fire hydrants, so fewer spaces are lost to such uses. Also, parallel parking can be added to some of the driveways connecting Main Street with the parking lots along the Peconic River. The Town should work with the landscape architect to undertake a comprehensive, detailed redesign of on-street parking and parking lot configuration and design.

If new parking lots are necessary, build them in the Office/Court district and near the transportation center.

In time, additional Parking District lots may be necessary. Any new lots should be built in the Office/Court district near the Transportation Center. There is currently a large vacant lot at the corner of Roanoke and Railroad Avenues that could easily be converted to surface parking. Also, there are marginal buildings and uses adjacent to the LIRR station that could also be converted to parking lots.

Parking lots in this area would serve multiple functions. It would provide daytime parking for Court employees. It would provide spillover parking for the Library and downtown events. It would serve as commuter parking associated with the Transportation Center/train station. It would provide parking for the Historical Society, which currently lacks parking. Finally, it would serve as an interceptor for most motorists on their way to the Aquarium, who are expected to come from the west of downtown. These motorists would enter downtown one of three ways: from the Nugent Drive and the Court Street bridge, from West Main Street, or from Route 58 and Osborn Avenue. Signs could channel these visitors into the Office/Court district parking lots.

New parking lots in this area would require relocating several business and households. There are a few shops located on Railroad Avenue across from the LIRR station, including downtown's only remaining shoe store and toy store. In



New parking lots should be concentrated in the Office/Courts district.

their current location, these stores cannot achieve their full potential, because the area has little foot traffic and poor visibility. The businesses could be relocated to superior Main Street locations, improving their own business prospects while providing additional retail variety to the downtown retail core.

Prohibit use of the Building Supply site as a stand-alone parking lot; allow housing development on the site.

The Building Supply site has been considered as an additional parking lot for the Aquarium. But this lot would be less than ideal for two reasons. First, because of its location, it would fail to encourage Aquarium visitors to patronize downtown shops and restaurants. Second, it would place additional stress on the residential neighborhood located east of Roanoke Avenue: people parking at the Building Supply site would walk back and forth to the Aquarium along Ostrander Avenue, and there would be pressure to convert the residences along that street to commercial uses. Thus, the Building Supply site is not proposed for parking. (Instead, it is designated as a future housing site, and as such, it would help connect the residential uses north and south of the LIRR tracks.)

The appropriate density, configuration, setbacks, yards, and buffering—taking into account the adjacent LIRR tracks—can be considered as part of the Master Plan and zoning ordinance updates. Retirement housing would be an acceptable use for the site, although retirement housing is not required.

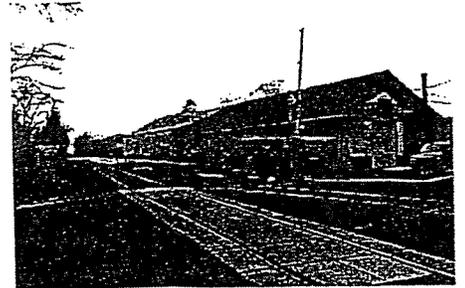
Establish a shuttle that runs back and forth along Main Street between the Office/Court district parking lots and the Atlantis Aquarium on weekends.

A summer weekend shuttle service should link the Office/Court district lots with the Aquarium. A weekday shuttle could run on an expanded route, connecting the transportation center, the library, the Town Hall, and points along Main Street. Studies have shown that people are generally willing to wait no more than nine minutes for a shuttle. The proposed shuttle should run every five to eight minutes for truly convenient service. Assuming that a single loop takes 15 minutes, accounting for pick-up, travel time, and drop-off, the shuttle service would require two or three continually circulating buses in order to maintain five- to eight-minute headways (or wait time). The proposed trolley buses would be similar to those that were employed by Tanger Mall. (During the week, the same shuttle could be used to meet rail commuters/travelers whose destinations are either the County offices in Southampton or Tanger Mall.)

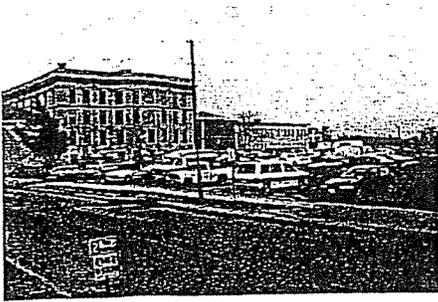
If a parking garage is necessary, build a recessed parking deck behind the County Court buildings.

While most shoppers and tourists shy away from using a parking garage, employees are usually more willing to park there. Employees want to park the closest to their offices as possible and are generally not concerned with the aesthetics of the parking lot, unlike shoppers and tourists.

The County Courts currently generate a large parking demand. The Court



The Building Supply site could be redeveloped into housing.



The Court parking lot could be the site of a two-level parking deck.

parking is always full during a work day, and Court-related parking spills over into the adjacent Parking District lots. Building a parking deck behind the County Courts would help alleviate this highly concentrated demand. A deck in this location would probably be used during the course of the entire year.

A parking garage, if built, should also be limited in size and visually hidden from downtown streetscapes. An elevated parking deck built behind the County Court building would be hidden behind the large Court building itself. The design of the deck could take advantage of the slope, so that the lower portion is level with West Maine and then partially submerged, and the upper portion appears like a surface parking lot from Court Street.

Require downtown attractions to provide adequate bus drop-off areas and facilities, and ensure that Parking District lots have space for bus parking.

Downtown attractions such as the Aquarium, the proposed Science Center, and the Historical Society attract school field trips. Bus drop-off areas are required in order to ensure child safety and to keep buses out of traffic lanes along Main Street. The Aquarium is already outfitted with a bus drop-off area in front, and other attractions can be required to build similar facilities.

Parking District lots ought to be designed so as to accommodate buses. Buses ought to be able to negotiate curves in the circulation lanes, and they should be able to park across two face-to-face parking spaces, as buses are roughly twice as long as normal-sized cars. Thus, head-to-head spaces should not be obstructed by landscaping or wheel stops.

Allow the Parking District to review and submit advisory comments on proposed projects in the downtown area.

New development in downtown would potentially increase parking demand in Parking District lots and reduce parking availability for existing shops, offices, and attractions. As new projects are proposed, the Town should request that the Parking District review the project proposals and submit written comments. The comments would then be taken into account in the normal decision-making procedures for the project.

All too often, suburban parking lots are vast expanses of asphalt. Downtown already has relatively small, dispersed lots that provide convenient access to Main Street shops. The proposed downtown Land Use plan preserves this pattern. The Town should take initiatives to redesign lots, so that they are friendly to pedestrians and encourage pedestrian circulation patterns that benefit Main Street businesses and attractions.

3.10 Design Parking Lots that are Walkable, Attractive, and Integrated with Downtown Buildings

Preserve the pattern of small, dispersed parking lots.

The pattern of small, dispersed lots is preferable to large parking lots or a parking garage. The existing small lots are integrated with downtown buildings, which are arranged in a traditional, compact form. They are also largely hidden from view, behind buildings, so that they do not interrupt the charming downtown streetscapes. Moreover, small lots provide convenient access to downtown shops.

Consolidation of existing parking into a garage would result in less convenient parking and a visually obtrusive structure. Moreover, motorists tend to avoid parking garages if they can easily park on the street or on surface lots. A parking garage could fill up during summer peaks, but would probably lie vacant most of the rest of the year. Building a parking structure should be absolutely avoided, except maybe at the Courthouse.

If any new parking lots are developed, they should be built according to the same pattern as the existing parking lots. As part of the zoning ordinance, the Town should establish a maximum lot size for stand-alone parking lots in the downtown area. In addition, the Town should prohibit street closures and block consolidation for the purpose of creating large parking fields.

Design parking lots with identifiable pedestrian walkways, trees, planting beds, marked entrances, and clear edges.

Currently, the parking lots behind Main Street have little in the way of landscaping or lighting, and pedestrian walkways and entrances are not clearly marked. Pedestrian circulation could be improved by improving walkways from the parking lots to Main Street. Archways, decorative pavers, trees, shrubs and flowers, lighting, monuments, and signs can help create more identifiable walkways.

Expand the use of the parking lots along the Peconic River for special events.

The parking lots along the Peconic River are currently used for outdoor performances during the annual Blues Festival and other summertime events. This site is particularly attractive for outdoor performances, because the waterfront provides a visual backdrop, and there is convenient pedestrian and auto access from both Main Street and Peconic Avenue. It should continue to be used for performances and events.

This does not mean parking uses should be discontinued. In fact, the parking lots can be redesigned, so that they can easily be converted to accommodate performances. Lighting fixtures can be outfitted with durable outdoor electrical outlets, useful for powering stage lights and sound systems. Also, the actual layout

of the landscape features and parking aisles can be redesigned to create a natural stage area and audience space. Trees are necessary for shade and comfort, but at the same time, trees planted in the parking lot shall be high-branching and arranged so that they do not interrupt sight lines.

Keep sight lines open between Roanoke Avenue and the County Court building, allowing a mix of public plazas and landscaped parking lots in the area.

This proposal would enhance the Court building as an architectural landmark in the downtown area. It would also provide much-needed park space and parking in the vicinity of the Courts. A public plaza could serve as a place for workers to eat lunch outdoors, and it would also function as a celebratory civic space, which downtown currently lacks. The plaza and parking lot could be used for outdoor fairs and could serve as an adjunct festival space for the Country Fair and Blues Festival. With the grand façade of the Court building as a backdrop, the plaza and parking lots would become a special destination in downtown Riverhead. Street improvements along Griffing Avenue would help connect this plaza and festival space to Main Street and the waterfront.

Gateways and arrival points convey the character of downtown and leave indelible impressions with visitors. While all downtown streetscapes need good design treatments and maintenance, these points need particular attention.

Implement streetscape and landscape improvements.

The Town shall implement streetscape and landscaping improvements that call attention to gateways and arrival points as special places. While all of them should be friendly to pedestrians (crosswalks, decorative paving, street lamps, trees, shrubs and flowers, decorative signs), each should vary slightly. For example, the Main Street-Court Street gateway is unique in that it is adjacent to the waterfront and has three great civic buildings—the Suffolk County Historical Society, the Henry Perkins Hotel, and the Riverhead Free Library.

The design of this gateway should open up pedestrian connections and views of the water and celebrate the three civic buildings in this area. Banners, flags, and landscaping can be used to create a celebratory space. Also, the Historical Society lawn is an attractive, shady space and one of the large lawns in downtown and could serve as the setting for summer events, like an arts and crafts market or antique show. Use decorative fencing, trees, and shrubbery to screen dumpsters, garbage cans, outdoor storage areas, and utilities.

All such utilitarian amenities should be screened from view. Tourists are particularly sensitive to the quality of the visual environment, and places that seem dirty or unattractive may cause tourists to feel either unsafe or turned off. Screening is particularly important in the parking lots along Main Street, where many tourists will develop their first impressions of downtown Riverhead. Exposed garbage cans and utilities make the parking lots seem like the unattended, unsafe backyards of Main Street, and screening can help reduce this impression by making the area seem like it receives a high level of maintenance.

Install edifice lighting on the façades of major downtown landmarks, and install holiday lights and decorations along Main Street from Thanksgiving to New Year's Day.

Edifice lighting can create a dramatic and festive atmosphere in the downtown area, particularly during the winter months, when daylight is limited. It can also call attention to the unique architecture found downtown. Buildings that could be lit include the Bank of New York building, the Aquarium, the two churches, the Woolworth building, County Court building, and the Henry Perkins hotel. Holiday lighting can be installed on Main Street buildings, on lampposts, or on trees, or they can be strung across the street.

Work with the Business Improvement District to establish maintenance plans for gateways and arrival points.

Attention to detail and high maintenance is an important part of making gateways and arrival points into special places. The Business Improvement District (BID) currently provides services in the downtown area. The maintenance plan shall

3.11 Enhance Gateways and Arrival Points



The well-known seagull signs celebrate the downtown waterfront.

establish standards and develop a funding and implementation strategy.

Create a public greenway that links the Transportation Center to Court Street.

Establish a pedestrian-oriented greenway in the block between Railroad Avenue and Court Street. The greenway will be bounded by two one-way streets (i.e., the existing Cedar Street and a new road) and will have pedestrian paths, trees, landscaping, and benches. It will create a physical and visual link between the LIRR station and Court Street, giving the impression that the station is located on Court Street, one of the major entering roadways into downtown. The greenway will improve the connection between the station and the rest of downtown.

Appendix A: Existing Use Regulations in Downtown Riverhead

Table A-1: Permitted Land Uses in Downtown Riverhead Zones

P: Permitted
 SP: Special Permit Required
 N: Not Permitted
 -: Not Specified

	Business C	Business D	Industrial B	Residence C
Airport	-	-	SP	-
Agriculture	-	-	P	P ¹
Bank, Financial Institution	P	P	-	-
Bed & Breakfast	SP	SP	-	SP
Billiard Parlor	-	SP	-	-
Boat				
Repair	-	p ²	-	-
Sales	-	p ³	-	-
Broadcasting Studio	P	P	-	-
Bus Passenger Shelter	P	P	-	-
Camp	-	-	SP ⁴	-
Church	-	-	-	P
College	-	-	-	N
Community Center	P	P	-	-
Convents	-	-	-	P
Day Care	SP	SP	-	SP
Dry Cleaning	-	-	P	-
Flea Market	N	N	-	-
Fraternal Organization	-	-	-	P
Funeral Home	P	P	-	-
Golf Course	-	-	-	P ⁵
Greenhouse	-	-	P	P ⁶
Laundry Plant	-	-	P	-
Library	-	-	-	P
Marina	-	P	-	P ⁷
Motel	-	SP	-	-
Nursery	-	-	P	-
Office				
In General	-	-	P	-
Business and Professional	P	P	-	-
Newspaper	-	-	P	-
Accessory to Fraternal Organizations	P	P	-	-
Personal Service	P ⁸	P ⁸	-	-
Park/Playground	P	P	-	P ⁹
Printing and Publishing	-	-	P	-
Production, Ice Cream	-	-	P	-
Production,				
Non-nuisance	-	-	SP	-
Quarry	-	-	SP	-

	Business C	Business D	Industrial B	Residence C
Recreational Facilities	SP	SP	SP	-
Residential				
Single Family	SP	SP	-	P
Single Family Conversion to Two Family	-	-	-	N
Condominium	-	-	N	-
Garden Apartments	-	-	N	-
Multiple Family	-	-	N	-
Restaurant	P	P	P	-
Restaurant, Drive In	SP	SP	SP	-
Repair, Appliance	-	-	P	-
Retail Store				
In General	P	P	-	-
Bakery	P	P	-	-
Confectionery	P	P	-	-
Ice cream	P	P	-	-
Accessory to Craft Industry	P	P	-	-
School				
Business, Secretarial	-	P	-	-
High, Elementary	-	-	-	N
Nursery	SP	SP	-	SP
Service Station	p11	SP ¹²	SP ¹³	-
Storage Yard	-	-	p14	-
Storage and/or Equipment Yard, Contractor's	-	-	P	-
Tavern	-	SP	-	-
Theater, Indoor	P	P	-	-
Training, Dog and Horse	-	-	P	-
Vehicle				
Repair	-	p2	SP	-
Sales	-	p3	-	-
Washing	-	-	P	-
Wholesale	-	-	SP	-
Yacht Club	-	-	-	P
Any Other Use	-	-	SP	-

1. Provided that no storage of manure is located within 100 ft of any side or rear lot lines or within 150 ft of any street lines.

2. Permitted only in connection with motor vehicle and boat salesrooms and provided that all automobile and boat parts, dismantled vehicles and boats, and similar articles are stored within a building.

3. Provided that the vehicles and boats for sale are in registerable condition, according to public authorities.

4. Only "types" 1,3,4,5,6.

5. Only if erected prior to August '94.

6. Only if it is a "temporary" greenhouse and if the subject parcel is a minimum of 5 acres. Approval subject to site plan review.

7. Resorts only.

8. Dry cleaning or laundry service must be less than 4,000 sq ft in size.

9. Non-commercial only.

10. Subject to conditions of approval in § 108-20.

11. Subject to conditions of approval in § 108-14.

12. Subject to conditions of approval in § 108-44.

13. Subject to conditions of approval in § 108-50.

14. Non-hazardous material only.

Table A-2: Development Standards in Downtown Riverhead Zones

	Business C	Business D	Industrial B	Residence C
Min Lot Area (sq ft)	None	None	None	20,000 ¹
Min Lot Width (sq ft)	None	None	None	100
Floor Area Ratio	0.30 ² /1.00 ³	0.80 ² /1.00 ³	0.30 ² /1.00 ³	0.30/1.00 ³
Max Density (units/acre)	None	None	None	None ⁴
Max Height (ft)	35 ² /50 ⁵	35 ² /50 ⁵	35 ²	35
Min Yards (ft)				
Front	25 ⁶ /0 ³	12/0 ³	50/0 ³ 40/0 ³	
One Side	25	None	50	10
Both Sides	25	None	100	25
Street Side	25	2	100	25
Rear	507	None	50	40
Buffer Yards (ft)				
Adjoining:				
Public Parks	25	25	25	None
Residential Use	108	108	108	None
Required Fence (height in ft)	6 ⁹	6 ⁹	6 ⁹	None

1. Six acres for condominium development (§ 108-20).

2. Except where otherwise authorized by the Board of Appeals, as provided in this chapter.

3. In the Riverhead Parking District No. 1, with a special permit issued by the Town Board (§ 108-69).

4. Condominiums have a sliding scale maximum density: 0.77 units/acre for 3 bedroom units, 1.75 units/acre for 2 bedroom units, and 7.0 units/acre for 1 bedroom units.

5. Where public water system has been installed with a hydrant located within 1000 ft of the building capable of delivering 700 gallons per minute at a pressure of 20 pounds per sq in.

6. Fifteen feet of the required yard shall be an unoccupied area.

7. If lot is a through lot, fifteen feet of the required yard shall be an unoccupied area.

8. Required for business or industrial uses.

9. Wherever a buffer yard is required to protect residential properties.

Appendix B: Parking Estimates

The following tables explain the methodology used to estimate summertime peak parking demand, based on the estimated number of visitors in downtown Riverhead. These estimates assume full buildout of the Aquarium, the Science Center, the Court expansion, the new Swezey's, and reuse of the former Swezey's space. The estimates do not take into account new office space, because most office development is expected to be small in scale, relying on on-site and on-street parking spaces.

Table B-1: Summertime Visitors

	Weekday	Weekend
Cultural Visitors	2,100	5,000
Employees	2,800	1,000
Retail Customers	1,600	2,400
Court Visitors	300	0
Total	6,800	8,400

The number of daily cars and trips to downtown was estimated by estimating the number of visitors per car. Cultural visitors would be likely to arrive in groups, and a minimum of 3 persons per car was assumed. This estimate could be much higher, as families are the primary clientele of downtown attractions like the Aquarium. Employees would be expected to drive to their jobs. Retail customers and Court visitors would be expected to drive either alone or in pairs, so 1.5 persons per car is a reasonable estimate.

Table B-2: Summertime Daily Cars/Trips

	Weekday	Weekend
Cultural Visitors (3 per car)	700	1,670
Employees (1 per car)	2,800	1,000
Retail Customers (1.5 per car)	1,070	1,600
Court Visitors (1.5 per car)	200	0
Total	4,770	4,270

From Table B-2, the next step is to estimate the number of cars that would require parking spaces in downtown at midday. In other words, it is an estimate of the number of cars that would arrive in downtown before midday and stay through the midday period. Midday or noon is typically the busiest time for parking demand during the course of the day.

It is estimated that about half of cultural visitors and retail customers would arrive in the morning, with the rest arriving in the afternoon or evening. On average, all employees and Court visitors are assumed to arrive before midday. Some employees are retailers and the Courts, which are daytime employers, so assuming that nearly all employees arrive in the morning provides a reasonable order-of-magnitude estimate.

Table B-3: Summertime Midday Parking Demand

	Weekday	Weekend
Cultural Visitors	350	835
Employees	2,800	1,000
Retail Customers	535	800
Court Visitors	200	0
Total	3,885	2,635

The summertime midday parking, as shown in Table B-3, includes parking demand for the existing small office buildings scattered throughout downtown. This explains why the weekday parking demand is so high, compared to the weekend demand. Most of small offices have on-site parking lots or use on-street parking for their needs. These small offices do not require use of Parking District lots or other large parking lots that could be available for shared parking (i.e., the Court parking lots, the lot associated with the East Main Street office complex). Thus, the demand associated with these small offices is subtracted out.

Table B-4: Summertime Midday Parking Demand, Minus Demand for Small Office

	Weekday	Weekend
Cultural Visitors	350	835
Employees	1,300	1,000
Retail Customers	535	800
Court Visitors	200	0
Total	2,385	2,635

The resulting table is an estimate of the number of parking spaces that would be required in conjunction with major attractions, including the Aquarium and other cultural facilities, downtown retail, the Courts, and the East Main Street office complex. There could be additional parking demand, over and above this amount, in conjunction with the LIRR station and new office development. Also, parking demand during special events would exceed the amounts in Table B-4.