

**FINAL GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
STATEMENT**

FOR THE

**TOWN OF RIVERHEAD
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

TOWN OF RIVERHEAD

SUFFOLK COUNTY, NY

RIVERHEAD TOWN BOARD AND PLANNING BOARD

DAVID J. S. EMILITA, AICP

October 21, 2003

FINAL GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

FOR THE

TOWN OF RIVERHEAD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

TOWN OF RIVERHEAD

SUFFOLK COUNTY, NEW YORK

Final EIS Required By and
Prepared For the Lead Agency:
Riverhead Town Board
200 Howell Avenue
Riverhead, NY 11901

Final EIS Prepared By:
David J. S. Emilita, AICP
PO Box 1501
Southampton, NY 11969

Lead Agency Contact Person:
Richard Hanley, Planning Director
Riverhead Town Planning Department
(631) 727-3200 ext. 267

Date Submitted: October 21, 2003

Final EIS Acceptance Date: _____

INTRODUCTION

This document is the Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) prepared by the Riverhead Town Board (the “Lead Agency”) in connection with the update of the Town's Comprehensive Master Plan and amendments to its Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 108 of the Town Code (the “Proposed Action”).

The Town Board caused a Draft GEIS to be prepared in connection with the Proposed Action, held public hearings on the Proposed Action and on the Draft GEIS on July 7 and July 21, 2003. Many comments were made on the Comprehensive Plan and were considered in the development of the final Plan proposed for adoption. Many comments were tangential to the GEIS but whose thrust was essentially toward the Plan itself. These comments were considered in the development of the final Plan. One substantive comment, a letter, was made with direct attention to the GEIS. It is contained and responded to herein.

The Riverhead Town Planning Board is the sole Involved Agency. Interested agencies include the following agencies of the Town of Riverhead, all of which are located at 200 Howell Avenue, Riverhead, New York 11901:

- Riverhead Zoning Board of Appeals
- Riverhead Conservation Advisory Council
- Riverhead Architectural Review Board
- Riverhead Building Department Administrator
- Riverhead Community Development Department Director
- Riverhead Police Department Chief
- Riverhead Planning Department Director
- Riverhead Recreation Department Superintendent
- Riverhead Sanitation Department Director
- Riverhead Sewer Department Director
- Riverhead Engineering Department Director
- Riverhead Water District Superintendent
- Riverhead Highway Department Superintendent
- Riverhead Tax Assessor
- Riverhead Town Attorney
- Riverhead Town Clerk
- Riverhead Senior Programs Director

Other interested agencies include:

Riverhead Central School District
700 Osborne Avenue
Riverhead, New York 11901

Shoreham-Wading River Central School
District
Shoreham High School
Route 25A
Shoreham, New York 11786

Laurel School District
475 Franklinville Road
Laurel, New York 11948

Jamesport Fire Department
Manor Lane
Jamesport, New York 11901

Wading River Fire Department
North Country Road
Wading River, New York 11792

Manorville Fire Department
14 Silas Carter Avenue
Manorville, New York 11949

Riverhead Fire Department
24 East Second Street
Riverhead, New York 11901

Riverhead Volunteer Ambulance Corps
1111 Osborne Avenue
Riverhead, New York 11901

Patrick A. Heaney, Supervisor
Town of Southampton
116 Hampton Road
Southampton, New York 11968

John Jay LaValle, Supervisor
Town of Brookhaven
3233 Route 112, Building #5
Medford, New York 11763

Joshua Y. Horton, Supervisor
Town of Southold
53095 Route 25
P.O. Box 1179
Southold, New York 11971

Suffolk County Planning Commission
H. Lee Dennison Building
100 Veterans Memorial Highway
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Central Pine Barrens Joint Planning
and Policy Commission
3525 Sunrise Highway, 2nd floor
P.O. Box 587
Great River, New York 11739-0587

New York State Department of State
Division of Coastal Resources
41 State Street
Albany, New York 12231-0001

New York State Department of
Environmental Conservation
Region One Office
SUNY Campus, Building 40
Stony Brook, New York 11790

New York State Department of
Transportation
Region Ten Office
State Office Building
250 Veterans Memorial Highway
Hauppauge, New York 11788

New York State Office of Parks,
Recreation, and Historic Preservation
Empire State Plaza
Agency Building #1, 20th floor
Albany, NY 12238

Long Island Farm Bureau
104 Edwards Avenue
Calverton, NY 11933

North Fork Environmental Council
12700 Route 25
Mattituck, NY 11952

Long Island Pine Barrens Society
547 East Main Street
Riverhead, NY 11901

SUMMARY OF THE FEIS CONTENTS

The FEIS consists of the draft GEIS incorporated by reference, the public hearing minutes of the hearings of July 7 and 21, 2003 incorporated by reference, certain revisions to the DGEIS, a copy of the substantive comment letter on the DGEIS and the Lead Agency's response to the substantive comment.

ADOPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposed Action is the adoption by the Town Board of the Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Riverhead and the regulations intended to implement the Plan in the form of amendments to Chapter 108, Zoning, of the Town Code.

Following the consideration period for the FEIS, the Lead Agency shall issue and adopt a Findings Statement. The Findings Statement shall consider the relevant environmental impacts; weigh and balance the relevant environmental impacts with social, economic and other considerations; provide a rationale for the Lead Agency's decision; certify that the requirements of SEQR have been met; and certify that the Proposed Action is one that avoids or minimizes adverse environmental impacts to the maximum extent practicable; and that adverse environmental impacts will be minimized by incorporating mitigation measures identified as practicable.

Following or concurrent with adopting such Findings, the Lead Agency will then be able to act upon the Proposed Action.

REVISIONS TO THE DGEIS

The FEIS incorporates the DGEIS dated June 26, 2003 by reference. The pages to follow are pages from the GEIS that have been revised in response to the revisions made in the draft Comprehensive Plan. These pages may be compared to the pages in the DGEIS for review.

Revisions to Chapter 2, the Land Use Element, have caused certain additional substantive changes to be made to pages in the DGEIS. The pages contained herein have also been revised to reflect the new Plan zoning district nomenclature. The revised pages of the DGEIS are contained herein as noted. It should also be noted that all references to new zoning districts in the DGEIS itself should be re-referenced to the new zoning district nomenclature as included in the final draft Comprehensive Plan. It was not deemed necessary to include these pages in the FEIS, as these changes are merely editorial.

Page 15:

Proposed Zoning Use Districts

The new zoning district nomenclature bears repeating and is shown below. A detailed description of each proposed zoning district is provided in Section 2 of the Plan.

PROPOSED ZONING USE DISTRICTS

Agriculture

APZ Agricultural Protection Zone – TDR Sending (80,000 SF/DU)

Residential

RA-80 Residence A-80 – TDR Receiving (80,000 SF/DU)

RA-40 Residence A-40 – TDR Receiving (40,000 SF/DU)

RB-80 Residence B-80 (80,000 SF/DU)

RB-40 Residence B-40 (40,000 SF/DU)

RAB-80 Residence AB-80 – TDR Sending & Receiving (80,000 SF/DU)

RRC Residence RC – Retirement Community

MRPO Multifamily Residential Professional Office

Industrial

IA Industrial A

IB Industrial B

IR Industrial/Recreational

PIP Planned Industrial Park

Institutional

Institutional

Recreation, Open space and Conservation

PRP Planned Recreational Park

NRP Natural Resources Protection

OSC Open Space Conservation

RN Recreational

Commercial

DC Downtown Center

DRC Destination Retail Center

SC Shopping Center

BC Business Center

CRC Commercial/Residential Campus

VC	Village Center
HC	Hamlet Center
RLC	Rural Corridor
TRC	Tourism/Resort Campus
CR	Business CR
BF	Business F
PB	Business PB
MFROZ	Multifamily Residential Overlay Zone

Pages 19 & 20:

Proposed Land Use Designations

The new zoning districts are explained in detail in the Land Use Element of the Plan. Each district is summarized in a single table in the Land Use Element. Each table includes a purpose statement, a list of preferred land uses, and a description of "design concepts", which includes proposed regulations for building design, parking, landscaping, open space requirements, and other factors.

The proposed zoning districts, when adopted, will provide more detailed dimensional requirements and performance standards than outlined in the tables contained in the Plan. The "design concepts" discuss only the most critical regulations necessary to achieve the desired patterns of land use and development in each district. Brief descriptions of the purposes of the commercial districts and the industrial/recreational district are repeated as follows:

Downtown Center (DC)

To make downtown the civic and cultural center of Riverhead, by providing a vital, high-density, mixed-use environment for shopping, eating out, cultural activities, entertainment, and professional services year-round.

Destination Retail Center (DRC)

To provide a location for large retail centers along Route 58 that attract customers from the East End, Long Island, and beyond, while linking development to open space protection along the Route 58 corridor and in Agricultural zones.

Shopping Center (SC)

To provide adequate locations for medium-size convenience shopping centers, mainly on Route 58, where residents can purchase daily necessities like groceries, in central locations that are accessible by car, transit, walking, and biking from adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Business Center (BC)

To allow for small, freestanding, roadside commercial uses, mainly along Route 58, between Destination Retail Centers and Shopping Centers.

Commercial/Residential Campus (CRC)

To provide locations for offices, which offer essential legal, medical, accounting, real estate, travel, and other services to Riverhead residents; to provide additional housing alternatives convenient to services and arterials.

Village Center (VC)

To make village commercial nodes into vibrant "Main Streets" with small shops, restaurants, and professional services and a traditional pattern of development and design in a compact, pedestrian-oriented setting.

Hamlet Center (HC)

To provide a small cluster of shops and professional services in a rural setting with a rural and residential character.

Rural Corridor (RLC)

To allow a very limited range of roadside shops and services in a rural setting along a corridor leading into Downtown, a Village Center, or a Hamlet Center (mainly along Route 25).

Tourism/Resort Campus (TRC)

To provide opportunities for overnight accommodations and recreational amenities in a campus setting surrounded by picturesque open space preserves.

Industrial/Recreational

To allow a mix of light industrial and commercial recreation uses in the area between Enterprise Park and the terminus of the Long Island Expressway.

Multifamily Residential Professional Office

To allow a mix of multifamily and office uses without retail/commercial influences.

Multifamily Residential Overlay District

To allow high-density residential use for sale or lease on appropriate sized parcels with frontage upon major thoroughfares and served by necessary infrastructure.

Pages 24 - 26:

Future Baseline and the Effect of the Plan - General Land Use

Of utmost importance to land use planning is the total land that is developable, for it is this resource that will cast the future of Riverhead. Developable land is land classified as vacant or underutilized land with "transient" uses plus agricultural land with development rights intact. In 1999, developable land amounted to over 48% of the entire land area in Town. In addition to that existing land so designated on the Land Use Map, all of the agriculturally used, vacant or residentially used and residentially zoned subdividable parcels shown on the Land Available for Development Map would be converted to residential use. This would result in what the GEIS has termed as "the future baseline," or in other terminology used in this type of analysis, the "No Action Alternative."

The table below was developed by the Riverhead Planning Department and shows that adoption of the Proposed Land Use Plan would reduce the anticipated build-out by about 3,800 to 4,000 housing units and would lower the saturation population of the Town by 8,000 to 10,000 year-round residents. The reduced-density zoning of the APZ and several of the residential zoning districts is the primary factor contributing for this reduction.

Residential Build-out under Current Zoning & the Proposed Land Use Plan

	2000 U.S. Census	2003 Housing & Demographic Data ³	Current Zoning Build-out ³	Build-out under Proposed Land Use Plan ³	
				<i>No TDR</i>	<i>Full TDR⁴</i>
Total Housing Units	12,479	14,323 ¹	23,800	20,000	19,000
- Year-Round Units	11,314	13,034	21,658	18,200	17,290
- Year-Round Households ²	10,749	12,382	20,575	17,290	16,426
Total Year-Round Population ²	27,680	30,956	51,438	43,225	41,064

1. *The total amount of housing units was calculated by adding 1,844 new privately owned estimated residential units, which were authorized by building permits from January 2000 through April 2003, to the 12,479 units reported by the 2000 U.S. Census.*
2. *According to the LIPA 2002 Long Island Population Survey, November 2002, Riverhead had 11,223 year-round households and a total year-round population of 28,862.*
3. *It was assumed that the percentages of seasonal housing units, year-round households, and average household size would be the same at saturation as it was in 2000.*
4. *The "Full TDR" assumes that one-third of all transferred development rights will be residentially absorbed and two thirds will be commercially absorbed through height, coverage and floor area increases. Similarly, the "Full TDR" scenario assumes that one-half of the development rights in the Residence AB-80 district are sent and one-half of the rights are received on parcels in the district.*

Sources: Town of Riverhead Planning Department, 2003; Suffolk County planning Department, 2000; U.S. Census Bureau, 2000-2003; LIPA Long Island Population Survey, 2002.

The table also updates the 1999 Suffolk County Planning Department statistical analyses regarding saturation housing units and population. It shows a potential 9,477 additional dwelling units are possible at saturation under current zoning densities for a total of 23,800 dwelling units. This compares to 12,479 dwelling units existing in the year 2000 and 14,323 today. Thus an increase of 66 percent in the number of dwelling units is possible if all the developable land in Riverhead were to actually be developed. This is of course a theoretical number, but it does dramatically illustrate the order of growth facing the Town. Later sections of the GEIS further discuss development at saturation for each land use topic.

In the column "Build-out under Proposed Land Use Plan," two build-out estimates are shown. One of the key recommendations of the Proposed Land Use Plan is to establish an Agricultural Protection Zone (APZ) that would result either in: (1) on-site cluster development based on 80,000 square foot lots; or (2) the transfer of development rights, where one development right equals 43,560 square feet of real property. The number on the left assumes that all landowners

in the APZ choose to build on-site and do not transfer their development rights. The number on the right assumes that all landowners in the APZ would choose to transfer their development rights and fully participate in the TDR program.

The “Full TDR” scenario of the Proposed Land Use Plan results in a slightly lower build-out estimate than the “No TDR” scenario. This is because the Plan assumes that approximately 70 percent of the development rights would be translated into commercial floor area in Enterprise Park and the Town’s business districts, and 30 percent of the development rights would be absorbed into the residential receiving areas. In general, a “Full TDR” build-out estimate would be higher than a “No-TDR” scenario because property owners in the APZ would be granted a higher development yield calculation for TDR than they would otherwise by being permitted to build on-site within the APZ.

The Plan is not dependent on percentage assumptions however. There is sufficient flexibility in the sending area/receiving area ratios to absorb the full capacity of development rights in the APZ, so that a wide range of scenarios are achievable. The potential to convert residential development rights into commercial or industrial floor areas or recreational space in the Planned Industrial Park and Planned Recreational Park Districts and into increased floor area in the Destination Retail Center and Commercial Residential Campus Districts provides excess capacity to absorb the full number of development rights.

The Plan further states that based on a population of 27,860 in 2000 and at an average annual growth rate of 2 percent, the Town would reach its saturation population, the future baseline, by no later than 2023 under the Proposed Land Use Plan. However, if the population growth rate slows down to 1 percent a year, which is more consistent with the County average annual growth rate of 0.7 percent, then Riverhead would not reach its saturation population by no later than 2043. In the year 2013, one decade after the completion of this Plan, saturation population would fall in the range of approximately 31,700 at a 1 percent growth rate and 36,000 at a 2 percent growth rate.

Assuming that the Proposed Action is taken, the population in 2013 may even be somewhat less, depending on the amount of development rights that would be transferred or purchased for preservation to that point. Recognizing the current (or soon to be current) population to be 30,956 people, the one-decade projected growth looks moderate.

Although, as stated, it is very difficult to project with precision the future rate at which development will occur in the Town due to cycles in the housing market currently stimulated by the relative ease of housing financing now at

generational lows, and by land availability. It is relatively safe to assume that Riverhead will grow as rapidly, if not more so than any of the other four east end towns.

Regional conditions such as increasing developable land scarcity and traffic concerns on the South Fork, the relative remoteness to (further easterly location) of Southold and Shelter Island, beyond regional major highway access, all place Riverhead in the position of being the first east end town within a commutable distance of all of Suffolk and most of Nassau County. The Long Island Expressway pierces the Pine Barrens to reach the employment centers of central and western Long Island. Development has been forced to leapfrog the Core Preservation Area of the Central Pine Barrens in Brookhaven to the Compatible Growth Area and beyond, probably an unforeseen and unintended impact of the State legislation, into the farmlands of Riverhead. Also, as the Town develops its Enterprise Park industrial base and destination retail shopping along Route 58 and its diversifying downtown business district, it will also become more attractive as a place to live, shop and work.

Pages 29 - 31:

Probable Impacts - General Land Use

It bears repeating that the probable impacts of the Proposed Action reflect the expected environmental setting as of the year 2022 with the Proposed Action in place as compared to the future baseline condition (without the Proposed Action).

Under the Proposed Land Use Plan, the concentration and distribution of future development would be different from current Town zoning patterns. Under the "No-TDR" scenario, future development in the APZ would be poly-nucleated (cluster subdivisions in nodes). Under the "Full TDR" scenario, the build-out of the APZ would be theoretically ended, with corresponding increases in development north of Sound Avenue (see later discussion), in and around hamlet centers, in and around downtown, along Route 58, and in Enterprise Park.

Density Reductions and Transfers of Development Rights (TDR)

All new as-of-right development in the APZ, RA-80, and RAB-80 Districts will decrease in density by one-half from 40,000 square feet per dwelling to 80,000 square feet per dwelling. This will affect the entire 14,136 acres in the APZ according to the data calculated by the Riverhead Planning Department for sending and receiving areas. The Town Planning Department calculates that today 7,037 acres of this land are actually developable. The density reduction in

these districts will reduce ultimate build-out by some 3,000 to 4,000 dwellings and ultimate population by 8,000 to 10,000 people.

The Agricultural Protection Zone (APZ) - A TDR program is a central recommendation of the Plan. In the most extreme case, up to 9,197 rights (one right per 43,560 square feet) can be transferred from the sending areas into the several receiving zones according to the Plan. They may wind up anywhere without some limits built into the process to prevent significant adverse impacts in the receiving zones.

It is recognized that not all potentially transferable development rights will actually be transferred. It is also recognized that some will be converted into commercial and industrial floor area. The Plan assumes that two-thirds of these rights will be so converted. As the section to follow on agricultural land use touches upon, some farmland owners will still prefer to develop the land they own, in whole or in part. Farmland development rights for transfer may originate from anywhere within the APZ. The danger is that by a patchy and significantly incomplete application of the TDR technique, even when coupled with clustering of residential developments to preserve farmland, particular locations may look neither like cohesive residential neighborhoods nor like part of a farming region.

Therefore upon adoption of the Proposed Action, the Town Planning Department should embark on a "block study" program. This program would sketch out a logical configuration of development for each contiguous block of unprotected farmland, building upon already protected farmland within the block to arrive at a maximum contiguous farmland acreage with residential nodes comprised of residential clusters both adjacent to each other and to protected farmland or open space. This would put the Town in a pro-active position with respect to a TDR program in the real world.

Residence AB-80 (North of Sound Avenue) - Land available for development in this area now totals 2,160 acres according to the Town Planning Department. Density reduction recommended by the Plan would lower the as-of-right increase in this receiving area from approximately 2,200 dwellings (the future baseline) to 864 dwellings. (The future baseline density is the existing zoning density in the Residence A and Residence C Districts of 40,000 and 20,000 square feet of land area per dwelling respectively; the Proposed Action would reduce the base density in half in the RAB-80 District before receiving transferred development rights).

The maximum theoretical TDR shift into this receiving area (the "worst case" analysis) would add an additional 864 dwellings to the 864 dwellings for a total

of 1,728 dwellings. This number results because the potential receiving area density is stated in the Plan not to exceed 40,000 square feet of land per dwelling. It should also be noted that this area is in Hydrogeologic Zone VIII, which allows residential dwelling densities up to the equivalent of one dwelling per 20,000 square feet. This would allow for transfer without Health Department approval. (Article 6 of the Suffolk County Sanitary Code would permit higher densities only with a sewage treatment facility. Sewage treatment in this receiving area is not proposed by the Plan or assumed in this analysis for this district. Individual projects may propose it in the future. Such proposals would be subject to SEQR review at that time).

The decrease of dwellings between the TDR scenario in the Plan and the future baseline represents the upzoning of the proposed zoning districts and the shift of development potential from the APZ to north of Sound Avenue. The density will be generally spread across this receiving area in the RAB-80 District at the theoretical maximum. However, it is likely that this theoretical maximum will not occur because this area is also designated as a sending area. This is a significant change of the Plan's recommendations. Farmland owners north of Sound Avenue may wish to sell development rights and continue farming. This of course would reduce the increase in dwellings versus the future baseline and also versus the full amount of transferred development rights into the area north of Sound Avenue.

Nevertheless, should significant transfers into the area north of Sound Avenue occur in the future it may create impacts in certain locations. For example, commuting and shopping traffic to and from north of Sound Avenue to Route 58 and downtown Riverhead could be expected to congest at weekday peak hours and on Saturday mornings at intersections with Middle Road. The Roanoke Avenue and Osborn Avenue intersections with Middle Road will likely need safety and/or turning lane improvements. Church Lane, already used as a connector to Sound Avenue, would also see increased traffic. Its intersections with Phillips and Tuthills Lane will probably need improvements. The preservation of the Keyspan property makes traffic impacts further east unlikely. Northville Turnpike and CR 105 would continue to be major traffic movers with sufficient capacity to withstand this increase. The intersection of Northville Turnpike and Route 58 may need to be studied however. Sound Avenue improvements are already discussed in the Plan and later in the GEIS.

Residence A-40 and Downtown Riverhead Receiving Areas - Land available for development in the RA-40 receiving district located along Middle Road amounts to 260 acres. The proposed RA-40 district would lower the as-of-right development potential in this area by only 55 dwelling units compared to the future baseline. However, "Full TDR" scenario of the Proposed Land Use Plan

would bring about an increase of approximately 200 dwelling units with transferred development rights. Under this scenario, residential development would be more compact and closer to Route 58 than compared to future baseline conditions.

The Sewer District serves the Downtown Riverhead receiving area so it is possible for it to absorb more dwelling units and conversion to commercial floor space. However, only receiving area residential market conditions, or converting APZ residential development rights to downtown commercial floor area will be the ultimate determinants of how many APZ development rights will be proposed for transfer. Even this being acknowledged, it is still not anticipated that this type of transfer would create significant adverse impacts in the Riverhead hamlet due to existing infrastructure investment.

EPCAL Planned Industrial Park Receiving Area - Land available for development in this receiving area amounts to 1,150 acres. The industrially zoned developable land provides a TDR receiving area that can absorb 1,666 development rights from the sending areas. Few adverse impacts are expected because of the significant infrastructure investment already in place, its location relative to the regional highway network and rail access.

Planned Recreational Park Receiving Area - Land available for development in this receiving area amounts to 972 acres. It has the potential to absorb 1,411 residential development rights from the sending areas. It shares the same locational characteristics as the industrial receiving area.

Residence A-80 (Aquebogue and Jamesport Receiving Areas) - These receiving areas were not studied in the 2001 County Planning Department study, but figures from the Town Planning Department indicate that 274 developable acres exist and have the theoretical potential to absorb approximately 110 development rights using the same analysis methodology performed for the RAB-80 district (north of Sound Avenue). This level does not appear to create significant adverse impacts on these hamlet centers, and in fact may benefit the shopping, eating and recreational opportunities available in the hamlets, reducing the number of daily shopping trips to downtown and Route 58 or Mattituck.

Other land use recommendations will result in more compact development patterns. This overall condition in the horizon year will be more favorable than current trends extended to the future baseline. These general land use recommendations will result in a more acceptable future for Riverhead with a better quality of life for its residents. By encouraging compact development around downtown Riverhead and its hamlet centers, there will be greater opportunities for walking, biking, and transit, while reducing automobile-

dependency in the future. Through preservation efforts in agricultural areas and more concentrated business district zoning on Routes 25, 58 and elsewhere, the potential for sprawl is reduced. In general terms, no significant adverse general land use impacts are anticipated from the Proposed Action particularly in comparison to the future baseline.

Page 36:

4. Reduce the amount of development in those areas of Riverhead where agricultural activity is currently concentrated.

In order to do this, as discussed in the Comprehensive Plan and in the GEIS introductory and summary section, the minimum lot size in the existing residential districts is proposed to be increased from 40,000-square foot to 80,000-square foot lots. To encourage further density reduction for farmland preservation, it is proposed to allow fast-track review for "Agriculture Opportunity Subdivisions," in which the density yield has been voluntarily reduced and the subdivision is laid out for large-lot development.

A landowner within the APZ would have the option to choose either large-lot development with "fast track" approval or the standard subdivision review process for cluster development. For a voluntary large-lot development project, the Agriculture Opportunity Subdivision would be exempt from the clustering requirement, but would be required to have minimum lot sizes of 11 acres. Much of the procedural requirements for denser profit-driven subdivisions would be eliminated for an Agricultural Opportunity Subdivision. The Town should consider adding these subdivisions to its Type II SEQR list of actions.

5. Target farmland preservation efforts to Riverhead's existing agricultural greenbelt.

The APZ is to be based on the boundaries illustrated on the Proposed Land Use Plan. The APZ creates incentives for landowners to keep their land in an agricultural use, while making development less appealing. This is done by increasing the regulations pertaining to development, while adding flexibility to the agriculture-related regulations.

Other policies recommended are to establish an APZ Oversight Committee, which would serve in an advisory capacity to the Town Board. Because of the complexities involved with the cluster technique and the TDR program, the Town should endeavor to educate property owners about these new programs. The Town should consider a variety of outreach mechanisms in the years after the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan to keep it current.

Page 41:

11. Protect the family farm.

The Town should consider allowing streamlined review for certain types of subdivisions on family farms. The Town should also consider allowing farm operations to have small secondary or accessory businesses, subject to certain restrictions, that can provide supplementary income for the farm operation.

Probable Impacts – Agricultural Land Use

Probable impacts of the Proposed Action on agricultural land uses would of course be positive. If all of the potential 8,117 development rights were transferred from all of the sending areas into the receiving areas, today's prevailing environmental setting would also portray the full implementation of the Plan. But that will not happen. Some farmland owners will choose to develop clustered residential subdivisions at an 80,000 square foot per dwelling density, at full density or at less than full density. Some will choose the agricultural opportunity subdivision option. Consequently, there inevitably will be some additional residential development within the APZ.

From a broad perspective then, the Proposed Action will not have an adverse impact on agricultural land use. However, from a locational perspective, incomplete use of the TDR technique may produce less than an optimum development relationship between protected agricultural land and new residential development as described in the earlier discussion on general land use.

Possible results of a significantly incomplete TDR program may be visual incongruities, and local traffic congestion or safety related issues at farm road intersections or farm stand locations. This situation would not exist with a total TDR program, because in theory there would be no new residential development within the APZ, so there would be no opportunity for these issues to arise. In the future baseline condition, theoretically all remaining farms would be developed; therefore residential development would predominate over farmland. The visual environment would approach suburbia, that is to say few long range or expansive farm vistas would remain, and fewer, or at least no new farm stands, would exist to create local traffic conflicts. Local street intersections would be "improved" to modern standards of capacity and safety maximization. The proactive block study technique would go far in ameliorating the potential effects of a significantly incomplete TDR program.

Page 59:

Probable Impacts - Parks and Recreation

Implementing the proposed land use plan (with no TDR) will lower saturation population to about 43,000. This would lower the park need according to NRPA standards to between 140 and 320 additional acres beyond what the Town already owns, to serve Town residents at that time. Thus the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan are expected to decrease the amount of new parkland acquisition required to meet the build-out population and the adverse impacts such as overuse, which the existing park and recreation facilities resources would experience under future baseline conditions.

Further, the Plan does recommend additional park planning efforts, improved land subdivision requirements, parkland development in existing and proposed public holdings and more efficient facility use listed above and as contained in Chapter 11 of the Plan. Thus no significant adverse impacts are expected as a result of the Proposed Action on the open space, parks and recreational facilities of Riverhead, especially when compared to the future baseline conditions.

Pages 101 & 102:

6. IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES

The Proposed Action presents a comprehensive, detailed and far-reaching program of goals and strategies, policies and recommendations for Riverhead. As such, its adoption and implementation will result in an irreversible and irretrievable commitment of public, financial and human resources. A long-term commitment will be needed by the Town's decision-makers to ensure that the Plan's goals and objectives translate into its operating policies, practices and budgets.

Irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources in the private sector also include construction materials used in road, infrastructure and utility construction; materials used in the construction of the dwellings, business and industrial structures and septic and sewerage collection systems; and in the water supply diverted from the rest of the public water supply system by consumptive use on the developed properties and recharge lost to the local aquifer.

One irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources is the designation of the area north of Sound Avenue as both a major sending and receiving area. The

2,160 acres of land available for development in this area could all be committed to residential development and development rights receiving from the APZ. Against this commitment must be measured the potential savings of up to 8,117 acres of developable farmland. To the extent that all or a portion of farmland north of Sound Avenue may also be preserved is also irretrievably and irreversibly so, some balance of objectives can be achieved.

It must also be recognized that under the future baseline condition, a commitment of 2,160 acres of farmland to development would also be the case if no additional development rights were acquired in this receiving area. Conversion of its agricultural land to other uses such as golf courses under either the Proposed Action or the future baseline condition would also be viewed as an irreversible and irretrievable commitment of this resource as well.

In conclusion, the commitments of public and private resources to implement the recommendations of the Proposed Action will pay off in a future Riverhead whose farmland and farm industry have been protected; whose open spaces and natural resources have been preserved; whose parks and recreation facilities are among the best available; where there are many employment opportunities; where it is an attractive town to live, work and shop in. Those characteristics too, are irreversible when the Town's commitment is permanent.