

## **5. Scenic and Historic Resources Preservation Element**

### **5.1 VISION STATEMENT**

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Riverhead has a distinctive scenic and historic character, comprised of farmland, open space, historic hamlet centers (including downtown Riverhead), historic structures and sites, and unique natural resource areas such as the Pine Barrens. Because these resources play a key role in maintaining Riverhead as a desirable tourist destination and as an attractive place to live and work, these resources should be protected and carried forward into the Town's future, as development continues to occur.

Riverhead possesses a variety of important scenic and historic resources, ranging from expansive views of working agricultural landscapes; to scenic roadways like Sound Avenue; the historic structures and landscape of the Hallock Homestead; the scenic bluffs along Long Island Sound; historic hamlet centers like South Jamesport, as well as the historic buildings and compact layout of downtown Riverhead. These resources and features reflect the richness and diversity of the East End's historic, cultural and natural landscape. They also contribute strongly to Riverhead's long-term economic vitality and business development due to their ability to attract visitors and tourists.

Though often treated separately, scenic and historic resources are in fact intertwined and best addressed jointly. Historic structures contribute to the visual quality of the community, and areas that are valued for their visual quality — such as hamlet areas, downtown centers, and agricultural zones — may be historically important as well. Because of this interrelationship, Riverhead's scenic and historic resources are considered here together in a single chapter. Elements of the scenic landscape are also discussed in Chapter 3, the Agriculture Element, and Chapter 4, the Natural Resources Conservation Element. Historic preservation in downtown and the hamlet centers is also discussed in Chapter 6, the Business Districts Element.

## 5.2 SUMMARY OF BACKGROUND RESEARCH

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### SCENIC RESOURCES

Because Riverhead's scenic character helps maintain the Town's economic vitality and overall quality-of-life, it is important to understand the factors that contribute to the scenic character. These include:

- **Natural Features.** Riverhead has unique natural features that are visible from many locations and which contribute to the Town's character. Generally, these include:
  - *Hills and Contours.* The picturesque bluffs along Long Island Sound, for example, are part of the natural landscape and give a unique and special feeling to the northern part of Riverhead.
  - *Trees and Woodlands.* Areas such as the Pine Barrens and other wooded areas throughout the Town contribute to the feeling of open space. There are many old growth trees throughout Riverhead, including many notable stands along Sound Avenue.
  - *Meadows.* Some former farms lie fallow and have reverted into meadows. These tend to become reforested over time if left untouched.
  - *Shorelines, Rivers, Streams, Ponds, and Wetlands.* Major water bodies and their shorelines or banks serve as scenic vistas in and of themselves: Long Island Sound, Flanders Bay, the Great Peconic Bay, and the Peconic River.

Views of and access to water bodies are important in defining Riverhead as a coastal community.

- *Native Plants*. Also of importance are areas with significant expanses of native vegetation, which can be found in woodlands, wetlands, or meadows. Native plants are valuable not only from an ecological point of view but also as historic elements of the Town's landscape. Strategies for protecting and promoting native plants are discussed in Chapter 4, the Natural Resources Conservation Element.
- ***Agricultural Landscape***. The agricultural landscape, characterized by cultivated fields, vineyards and orchards, pastures, and farm stands, is crisscrossed by a network of rural roads. The area where this scenic quality is predominant is in the central part of Riverhead and is still relatively intact. These agricultural views are integral to Riverhead's identity as a rural community and play an important role in attracting tourists who support a growing number of agriculture-associated retail businesses.
- ***Scenic Roads and Corridors***. Many people experience the Town's rural and natural landscape from the Town's roads, whether they are traveling by car, by bus, on foot, or via bicycle. Also, people who hike or bike on off-road trails or who go canoeing or kayaking on the Peconic River experience the scenic qualities of those corridors.
- ***Historic Structures and Sites***. Older homes, barns, and churches, whether found on individual sites or in small clusters, can contribute to scenic views, particularly in rural areas and along scenic corridors. For example, an historic home or church situated at a crossroads can endow that place with a special character. An old farmhouse, cemetery, or stone wall adds to the rural character of a farm as much as the presence of cultivated fields or grazing farm animals.

### **Peconic River Waterfront**

The Peconic River is a major scenic feature in Riverhead's landscape. It contributes to the character of the Pine Barrens region as well as downtown Riverhead, and the Town's name and identity is closely tied to the Peconic. In the future, visual and physical access to the waterfront will continue to be important for Town residents. Under New York State's *Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers Act*, the Peconic River is designated as "scenic" west of the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) bridge, located west of the Long Island Expressway, and "recreational" between the LIRR bridge and the dam in Grangebél Park in downtown Riverhead. Most new development along the riverfront is strictly limited, but recreational trails and paths *are* permitted. This is generally consistent with the Town's long-term vision for the waterfront, both within and outside the downtown area.

### **HISTORIC RESOURCES**

The Town of Riverhead possesses a wealth of historic resources. A detailed list of recognized historic structures and sites is included in Appendix C. This is not a definitive collection of

historic resources and information, but rather an indication of the kind of information available. In essence, these findings are intended to provide an indication of the status of present research and documentation and some directions for further research.

Ongoing research and documentation of the Town's historic resources is essential if they are to be acknowledged and integrated into the Town's planning process. Such research and documentation may best be accomplished through volunteer efforts of interested individuals and organizations, or possibly through consultants. The chronological, thematic, and locational concepts outlined in this element can provide a framework for documentation efforts.

## **General History of Riverhead**

The history of the Town of Riverhead stretches from the life and times of the Corchoug Indians — before the arrival of the first white settlers to Long Island in 1640 — through the Revolution, the Civil War, and the suburbanization of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> The following paragraphs provide an overview of the historic trajectory.

### ***Pre-1640: Indian Settlements***

The Corchougs, one of thirteen Algonquin tribes inhabiting Long Island prior to white settlement, originally occupied the limits of the Town of Riverhead.<sup>2</sup> The Corchoug “villages [were found in] places now called Aquebogue, Cutchogue, Mattituck and Hashamomuk.<sup>3</sup>” These locations at the head of the Peconic River allowed the Corchougs access to both fresh water and saltwater landings. The riverfront provided the Corchougs with ready access to food sources.

### ***1640 to 1776: White Settlements, Land Divisions, and Early Farms and Mills***

In the 1640s, white settlers from Massachusetts established a permanent settlement in Southampton.<sup>4</sup> In 1649, settlers from Southold purchased the main portion of Riverhead from the Corchougs as part the "Aquebogue Purchase".<sup>5</sup> By 1671, there was also a small settlement

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1 The history of Riverhead during the Colonial period is fairly well documented through a number of secondary sources. However, there is a lack of secondary source information from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. Those sources that exist are summarized below, providing a framework for further research into the significance of existing historic resources within the Town.

2 Hood, Peter. A History of North Sea Beach Colony.

3 The Bicentennial Book Committee. Riverhead Bicentennial Album.

4 Pelletreau, op. cit.

5 History of Suffolk County, New York, 1.

in Wading River.<sup>6</sup> In 1680, the settlers of Wading River joined with a contingent from Southold to divide up the available land between their two settlements.<sup>7</sup>

Between the late 1600s and the time of the Revolutionary War, settlers established farms for both local consumption and trade. The first farmers in the Riverhead area grew grains for trade as well as fruits, vegetables, and livestock for local consumption. As farms were established, colonists laid out roads (including King's Highway from Southold to Wading River by 1710), and established a County jail, courthouse, and seat in Riverhead. The selection of Riverhead as the seat was a compromise between Southampton and Southold.

In conjunction with farming activity, Africans were imported as slave laborers. Slave labor in Suffolk County accounted for significant contributions to the agrarian and maritime economies. After the Revolutionary War, the State passed a series of laws that gradually emancipated New York slaves by 1827.<sup>8</sup>

Riverhead's location at the mouth of the Peconic River made it an ideal site for water-powered mills. Riverhead has the oldest flour milling establishment in the State of New York — the Hallett Brothers flour mill of 1696.<sup>9</sup> By 1800, mills dotted the length of the river and included a number of sawmills, iron forges, fulling mills, and gristmills.

### ***1776 – 1870: Town Incorporation and the Growth of the Agricultural Industry***

In 1792, Riverhead separated from Southold and started to evolve into a Town in its own right with a distinct identity. Agriculture continued to be the mainstay of the local economy and way of life. Part of what fueled the growth of the agricultural industry was the expansion of the road network and the advent of the railroad. Beginning around 1800, three main roads were built along the length of Long Island: North Country Road along the north shore; South Country Road along the south shore beaches; and Middle Country Road. The first railroad line to run through Riverhead was the Greenport line in 1844.<sup>10</sup> The primary freight carried by the railroad was agricultural products, and prior to 1875, the primary agricultural product transported on the railroad was the potato. Potato production began as early as the 1700's, but did not become a standard crop until the railroad facilitated transportation.

Long Island's shorelines are well-suited for building small sea-faring vessels, and the outfitting of ships became a thriving industry in the towns of Northport, Sag Harbor, Port Jefferson, and Greenport starting in the early 1800s. A small shipyard located near the public beach in Wading River built many of the produce sloops active along the Sound coast.

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6 The Riverhead Story, 9.

7 Long Island, A history of Two Great counties, Nassau and Suffolk, 1949, 183-184.

8 Marcus, Grania, B., A Forgotten People: Discovering the Black Experience in Suffolk County (NY).

9 The Boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens, Counties of Nassau and Suffolk, Long Island 1609-1924, 727.

10 Kramer, Frederick, Long Island Rail Road.

Riverhead shipyards along the north bank of the Peconic built larger boats, many of which carried passengers to and from eastern Long Island.<sup>11</sup>

In this period, Riverhead grew in terms of population and in the number of civic and cultural institutions. Some of the major landmarks built during this time frame include: the Female Seminary (1834), the First Methodist Church (1834), the First Congregational Church (1841), and the County Clerk's Office (1846).<sup>12</sup> By 1875, Riverhead had six churches, two grist mills, two moulding and planing mills, a paper mill, three hotels, twenty stores, a cigar factory, a wagon jack factory, an organ factory, many shops and offices, and a population of 1,600.

### ***1870 to 1945: Thriving Agricultural Industry and a Small Town Character***

Riverhead continued to grow into a thriving agricultural community in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1867, John W. Duryee of Mattituck introduced cauliflower to Suffolk County. Cauliflower production grew rapidly and eventually peaked in 1949 with 5,500 acres planted.<sup>13</sup> In 1873, the first seven Peking Ducks were imported from China, and within twenty years, Long Island (Riverhead in particular) became the center of duck production in the U.S. By 1898, Riverhead boasted the world's largest duck farm.<sup>14</sup> Duck production eventually reached its peak just after World War II, when there were approximately 788 duck farms in Suffolk County, raising two-thirds of all ducks produced in the U.S. Like the potato, the duck and cauliflower industries were able to build off the availability of railroad transportation.

The railroad also allowed farmers to grow and sell vegetables and fruits that required rapid transport to market, such as cabbage, beets, sprouts, and cranberries. Return shipments on the rail lines contained tubs of manure from New York City streets and stables for Long Island farmers to use as fertilizer. By about the 1920s, truck farming was on the rise as well. Trucks allowed even faster, more flexible transport of produce to market and freed farmers from railroad schedules and costs.

Another important industry on eastern Long Island in the second half of the nineteenth century was the cordwood business. Firewood was in great demand, not only in New York City, but all along the Hudson River. Much of the cutting was done during the winter months, hauled to the Wading River Landing by sled, and transferred to sloops.<sup>15</sup> Ice was also in demand, for use in cooling perishables as well as making ice cream. The Peconic River, with

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11 Wading River, founded in 1671.

12 The Boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens, Counties of Nassau and Suffolk, Long Island 1609-1924, 727.

13 Journey Through Time, 29.

14 Between Ocean and Empire: An Illustrated History of Long Island.

15 Wading River, founded in 1671.

its large quantity of clean, clear water was a great source of ice. Many icehouses were built near the millponds along the Peconic River. In 1886, the Suffolk County Ice Company built the largest icehouse on the Peconic River.<sup>16</sup>

With the enormous growth and industrialization of New York City after the Civil War, eastern Long Island, particularly the South Fork, started to become a popular summer destination for families eager to escape the city during the hottest months of the year. Tourism was facilitated by train service to the East End. It was at during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that the Hamptons first became a well-known vacation destination for wealthy New Yorkers. As more and more people purchased personal automobiles, many seasonal residents and visitors eschewed the railroad and drove their cars instead.

#### ***1945 to Present: Suburbanization, North Fork Tourism, and their Impacts***

Between World War II and the present day, Riverhead has remained the center of Long Island's agricultural industry. In the early 1990s, the Town had 20,000 acres in production. While potato, cauliflower, and duck production have declined, crops such as grapes, sod, and greenhouse growing, which require fewer acres but yield higher profits, have maintained Suffolk County as the leading agricultural producer in New York State.

Riverhead underwent an important transformation in the 1950s and 1960s with the construction of the Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant (NWIRP) in Calverton. The NWIRP was a major employment center for many years until being closed by the federal government in 1995. The site is now being planned for development with a mix of office, industrial, recreational, hotel and related uses, which will add another component to the growing local economy.

Construction of the LIE made Riverhead easily accessible to the rest of the New York metropolitan region, further facilitating truck farming but also opening up the Town to new development pressures. Because the LIE made the Town so accessible, Riverhead also started changing into a fringe suburb of the job centers in Nassau County and western Suffolk County. Low-density subdivisions were built throughout the Town, particularly in the Wading River area and around downtown Riverhead, and strip-style shopping centers were constructed along Route 58. Downtown and the hamlet centers lost much of their pedestrian activity and commercial vitality.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the North Fork wine industry emerged and the East End started gaining both national and international recognition as an important wine-producing region. This trend not only added a new element to the agricultural industry, but also introduced the concept of agro-tourism to the East End. Following the model of Napa Valley, wine makers now offer wine tasting, tours, shops, and banquet facilities to attract tourists and visitors. In

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16 The icehouse burned to the ground in 1922. Lapham, Elisabeth. *Echoes From the Past*, 7.

addition, many vacationers are being priced out of the exclusive Hamptons and exploring the North Fork as an alternative destination.

Within an increasing population and more tourist traffic, there has been increasing concern about the impacts of sprawl, such as the loss of open space, threats to the natural environment, worsening traffic congestion, and loss of the Town's rural character. With the preparation of this Comprehensive Plan, the Town has a unique opportunity to channel and direct the prevalent growth pressures in an appropriate way, so as to ensure that the Town maintains a high quality of life.

### **Inventory of Historic Resources**

As noted earlier, the Town of Riverhead possesses a wealth of historic resources. The Town's Landmarks Preservation Committee has officially designated 36 buildings and sites as Riverhead Town Landmarks. In addition, five properties within the Town of Riverhead are currently listed on the National and State Register of Historic Places.

- Vail-Leavitt Music Hall, in downtown Riverhead
- Hallock Homestead, in Northville
- U.S. Post Office, in downtown Riverhead
- Suffolk County Historical Society building, in downtown Riverhead
- Lemuel B. Hallock Homestead (Red Barn Bed & Breakfast), in Northville

A database maintained by the State's Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation contains the Survey Listing of Historic Sites throughout the Town of Riverhead. These include houses, commercial and civic buildings, churches, farms, cemeteries, and other notable sites. Historic sites are concentrated in the hamlets of Wading River, Jamesport, and Aquebogue, as well as downtown Riverhead. The full listing, which can be found in Appendix C, can be summarized as follows:

- **South Jamesport:** approximately 25 houses; 1 prehistoric site; several other buildings and sites, including a schoolhouse and a store.
- **Jamesport:** approximately 46 houses; 2 cemeteries; 1 prehistoric site; a number of other buildings and sites, 8 farms and a camp meeting district with 15 cottages.
- **Aquebogue:** approximately 48 houses; 3 prehistoric sites; 1 cemetery; a number of other buildings, sites and structures including a windmill base, a post office and a former schoolhouse
- **Northville:** approximately 20 houses; 1 prehistoric site; 1 cemetery; a number of other buildings and sites, including a church and 2 schoolhouses;
- **Manorville:** approximately 6 houses; 1 prehistoric site; 1 historic site; several other structures and sites, including a "cranberry bogs district".

- **Wading River:** approximately 31 houses; 2 cemeteries; numerous other structures and sites, including 2 churches, 2 parsonages, an old post office, a school and the Wildwood State Park Survey District
- **Calverton:** approximately 19 houses, 2 prehistoric sites; a number of other structures and sites, including the site of a pickle factory, several farms, and a hotel/inn
- **Baiting Hollow:** approximately 19 houses; 1 prehistoric site; several other structures and sites, including several water towers, a church, a pond and a number of farms.
- **Riverhead:** approximately 210 houses; 2 prehistoric sites; 1 historic site; 1 cemetery; many other structures and sites, including a wide assortment of historic commercial and civic buildings and sites, churches, and farms.

Due to its location along the Peconic River and Flanders Bay, Riverhead was — in pre-colonial times — an attractive fishing, hunting, and gathering grounds for local Indians. Many archeological sites have been identified since the nineteenth century and are recorded in the State's Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation.

#### **LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

For nearly 30 years, Riverhead has had a Landmarks Preservation Commission, which is appointed by the Town Board and serves in an advisory capacity to that body. The Commission may entertain applications designating a structure or place as a landmark, landmark site, or historic district, and can either approve or deny applications. Town Board approval is also necessary for the place to be recorded as a landmark, landmark site, or historic district with the Building Department and the Assessor's office. The Landmarks Commission is responsible for reviewing plans for the moving and alteration, construction, alteration or repair, landscaping or demolition of designated structures or sites. The Commission must ensure that changes are visually consistent with historic materials and architectural styles.

#### **ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD**

The Architectural Review Board (ARB) is appointed by the Town Board upon the recommendation of the Planning Director. It is responsible for reviewing certain commercial projects (i.e., those subject to site plan review) for the quality of their exterior design. ARB decisions are currently advisory. The body has no specific design standards to follow in conducting its reviews.

### 5.3 GOALS & POLICIES

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**Goal 5.1: Protect farmland, woodlands, grasslands, wetlands, riparian corridors, waterfront areas, geological features, old-growth trees, and other open space areas and natural features that contribute to Riverhead's scenic quality.**

*Policy 5.1A: Undertake a study to identify locations throughout Riverhead with significant views.*

*Policy 5.1B: Support and partner with local non-profit advocacy organizations to protect open space areas that contribute to Riverhead's scenic quality.*

In eastern Long Island, organizations such as the Long Island Chapter of The Nature Conservancy and the Peconic Land Trust work with landowners to protect natural resources, scenic vistas, water quality, and productive farmland through various mechanisms. Since these organizations help maintain the scenic character and quality of life in Riverhead, the Town should cooperate with these organizations, facilitating their work wherever possible.

*Policy 5.1C: Develop a scenic easement provision to allow a tax abatement (i.e., a tax credit) for property owners.*

Easements are an effective tool for protecting scenic and natural resources. In order to preserve priority scenic and natural resources, the recording of 247 Conservation Easements on appropriate private parcels should be encouraged by the Town. This would provide the ability for landowners to place a scenic easement on their property voluntarily in exchange for a reduction in tax valuation for the property under easement.

*Policy 5.1D: Coordinate scenic preservation initiatives with other community enhancement programs, including open space acquisition, natural resource conservation, park and recreation development, and business district improvement efforts.*

Many policies throughout the Comprehensive Plan are intended to help preserve open space areas and natural features of the landscape. Farmland preservation efforts are discussed in detail in Chapter 3, the Agriculture Element. Additional policies for protecting natural features (such as the bluffs overlooking Long Island Sound) are expressed in Chapter 4, the Natural Resources Conservation Element. In Chapter 6, the Business Districts Element, the design standards and guidelines proposed for downtown, the hamlet centers, and Route 58 are intended to reduce the proliferation of unattractive strip-style commercial development. These initiatives should take into account the existence of scenic vistas, and should help protect such scenic vistas, wherever possible.

***Policy 5.1E: Establish design guidelines and subdivision standards for cluster development, such that scenic views are protected to the greatest possible extent.***

Cluster development, in and of itself, helps to preserve scenic views, by keeping large land areas undeveloped. However, scenic views can be further protected and enhanced through high-quality design, which can be encouraged through appropriate development and design standards.

A number of elements make up a scenic view, including such natural and agricultural features as woodlands, meadows, cultivated fields, vineyards and orchards, pastures, stone walls, streams, ponds, hills and contours, and wetlands. Historic farm buildings can also contribute to a scenic view. Notably, each individual site is different in terms its particular scenic characteristics. Also, it is important to recognize that not all the scenic elements of a site may be able to be preserved while still accommodating the development and meeting State and federal environmental requirements (particularly regarding wetland protection). Thus, development and design standards should be flexible enough to (1) deal with the unique qualities of different sites; and (2) not hamstring development. The main idea, in the end, is to make the resulting development seem like it fits comfortably into the landscape, respecting those elements that contribute to its scenic views. The allowing of increased heights of multi-family residential buildings (condominiums and homeowners associations) with transferred development rights would provide for scenic views and result in fewer disturbances of natural resources where applicable.

The preferred approach is to require the applicant of a cluster subdivision to submit a map that identifies those site characteristics that contribute to the vistas existing upon and from the property. The applicant must also demonstrate how the proposed subdivision plan takes those elements into account. That is, on some sites, the dominant landscape element may be a meadow, in which case the building lots may best be located within the wooded areas of the site. On another site, a grove of trees and a pond may be more dominant, suggesting that development outside the woodland would be preferred. As another example, on a site with sweeping views, clustering all lots into one location, out of sight, may be preferable. On a site with smaller, intermittent views, creating a few separate clusters may be better. The Town should prepare a series of guidelines instructing applicants as to what visual features should be considered in conducting their evaluation of the site and preparing their map. This effort should occur subsequent to the study proposed in Policy 5.1A of this section.

***Policy 5.1F: Consider shifting responsibility for site plan review from the Town Board to the Planning Board.***

The Planning Board as a body is particularly well-suited to the review of site plans. It is currently authorized to review land subdivision approvals only, with site plan review requiring a similar understanding of basic site design as well as State, County, and Town regulations. The Planning Board could also be well equipped to implement the more detailed design, parking, and landscaping requirements that will be added to the zoning code after the completion of the new Comprehensive Plan. Attention to such features is critical in order to

protect and enhance the visual quality of the Town's corridors and scenic views. Though this change is conceptually desirable, the policy must be logistically refined with regard to Planning Board and Planning Department time management issues.

**Goal 5.2: Maintain and increase waterfront access and views.**

Riverhead is a community in many ways defined by its proximity to significant water features. Access to and views of the water are important in determining and maintaining the Town's overall quality of life. Public access to and views of water currently exist at certain points throughout Riverhead. The Town should work to increase public access to and views of water even further. Recommendations for improved waterfront access are presented in Chapter 11, the Parks and Recreation Element.

*Policy 5.2A: Undertake a study to identify locations throughout Riverhead with significant waterfront views.*

Shoreline areas as well as stream corridors should be examined.

*Policy 5.2B: Consider waterfront views when contemplating open space acquisition for preservation or recreation purposes.*

Waterfront views are only one factor to consider in prioritizing open space preservation initiatives. The presence of farmland or natural resources, the need to provide critical linkages in the proposed greenway system (see Chapter 11, the Parks and Recreation Element), the imminence of a parcel's development, and the presence of a willing landowner are some of the other factors that should be considered.

*Policy 5.2C: Support and facilitate the efforts of non-profit organizations like The Nature Conservancy and the Peconic Land Trust to acquire lands in coastal areas for the purpose of increasing public access to or views of water.*

Specific areas that should be targeted for acquisition include South Jamesport and areas along the Peconic River. Waterfront acquisition can not only increase scenic quality, but help maintain the ecological integrity of fragile coastal areas as well, by decreasing the potential for development near the water's edge.

**Goal 5.3: Continue to identify and document historic resources in Riverhead, and promote public awareness of historic resources.**

The first step toward ensuring the long-term survival of the Town's historic assets is to identify and document those resources. Awareness of such resources by the public helps ingrain them into the Town's identity and help create interest in and enthusiasm for preservation.

***Policy 5.3A: Update the comprehensive survey of historic resources in Riverhead.***

Identified resources should include individual buildings, groups of buildings (such as a hamlet area), and sites and landscapes (e.g. cemeteries, archaeological sites) that are important to the historic character of the Town. Updating the comprehensive survey of historic resources and identifying historic districts may make the Town eligible for Certified Local Government (CLG) status through the State Historic Preservation Office. CLG status carries with it increased access to federal survey and planning funds, which are distributed annually. This updated survey will supplement the list of officially designated town landmarks maintained by the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

***Policy 5.3B: Coordinate local research initiatives on historic resources with State and federal programs, as well as the initiatives of individual researchers, academic institutions, independent volunteer groups, and non-profit historical associations.***

Information on local historic places may have already been compiled under the auspices of the National and State Registers. Historical scholars and architectural experts may be able to provide insights into local historical resources. The Suffolk County Historical Society and other organizations may also have valuable historical information.

***Policy 5.3C: Develop an integrated public signage program that identifies and explains the scenic, historic, and natural resources of the Town.***

Such signs should be located along scenic corridors, in front of or attached to historic structures, and posted in public areas within historic districts. These signs will allow residents and visitors to recognize, understand, and better appreciate the various points of historic, scenic, and natural interest throughout the Town.

**Goal 5.4: Protect identified historic resources from destruction, neglect, or diminishment of character, and encourage the faithful restoration and adaptive reuse of historic structures.**

***Policy 5.4A: Building off of the comprehensive survey of historic resources (see Policy 5.3A), prepare a Town Register of Historic Places.***

The comprehensive survey can be christened — in whole or in part — as the Town's Register of Historic Places. By using the State's documentation forms, the Town Register can be coordinated with the State's Register of Historic Places. Parameters for demolition and modification of properties listed on the Register should be developed.

***Policy 5.4B: Coordinate review of building or demolition permits affecting historic structures on the Town Register of Historic Places with the Landmarks Preservation Committee.***

A provision should be added to the Town Code that requires all sites on the comprehensive survey and the proposed Town Register of Historic Places to be coded in the Building and Tax Departments' databases. The Building Department should provide the Landmarks Preservation Commission with prompt notification of any building or demolition permits affecting structures listed on the Town Register. In addition, the Commission should be granted two months to review and advise on such applications.

***Policy 5.4C: Strengthen the role of the Landmarks Preservation Commission by allowing that body to develop design standards for historic districts.***

Currently, the Landmarks Preservation Commission only determines whether architectural styles of proposed development projects are consistent with historic styles. The Commission should also be allowed to examine and comment upon the proposed use, orientation, and location of structures, particularly proposals in an historic district. The proposed standards would have to be approved by the Town Board and then could be used by the Landmarks Preservation Commission to review proposed projects related to historic districts.

***Policy 5.4D: Allow historic sites to obtain variances that protect their historic character.***

Variances for land use, parking, bulk, and other requirements should be permitted for threatened historic and cultural landmarks. Also, continue to monitor State initiatives to update the Building Code to be more flexible toward historic structures.

***Policy 5.4E: Establish subdivision and site planning guidelines and standards to protect scenic and historic resources when development is planned on scenic and historic properties or in historic districts.***

***Policy 5.4F: Provide tax abatement for the protection of any property designated as a Town landmark or part of a designated historic district.***

This is a particularly effective strategy for commercial or mixed-use developments to encourage the protection of historic assets.

***Policy 5.4G: Strengthen the role of the Architectural Review Board by implementing design guidelines and review standards.***

During the CAC meeting, there was a suggestion that ARB decisions should be made binding rather than advisory, but others argued that binding decisions would create excessive unpredictability for applicants, wildly increasing costs and delays associated with development. The compromise reached during the CAC meeting was to keep the ARB

advisory, but to establish design guidelines and review standards in order to create continuity of building design on a hamlet basis. This would create more predictability for applicants, by clarifying what aspects of design the ARB should focus on and base its decisions upon. Different guidelines and standards specific to each district should be adopted. They should be developed through a public outreach process that solicits ideas from local businesses and residents. Guidelines should indicate which design elements are mandatory and which are advisory.

***Policy 5.4H: Maintain required ARB review for development in Enterprise Park, as well as for large-scale single-family residential subdivisions and large-size single-family homes at the request of the Planning Board in land subdivision review.***

Each large project greatly affects the character of the Town and individual neighborhoods. ARB review may be appropriate in such cases.

***Policy 5.4I: Amend the Town's Landmarks Preservation code to bring it into conformity with the State's current model code.***

By amending the Town's Landmarks Preservation code in light of the State's current model code, the Town would become more eligible to achieve Certified Local Government (CLG) status through the State Historic Preservation Office. As Policy 5.3A states, CLG status carries with it increased access to federal survey and planning funds, which are distributed annually.

***Policy 5.4J: Expand historic districts throughout Riverhead.***

The Town should designate historic parts of the hamlets of South Jamesport, Jamesport and Wading River, along with historic parts of downtown Riverhead and the areas immediately to its north, as official Town historic districts.

**Goal 5.5: Protect the visual quality of scenic corridors throughout Riverhead, and work to improve the scenery along other roads.**

Scenic corridors are roads, streams, trails, and other linear paths that are characterized by an exceptional visual quality along the sides of the corridor. Many factors may contribute to their visual quality: views of agricultural landscapes; forested tree cover; the presence of historical sites; vistas of bluffs, wetlands, water bodies, or other natural features; and so on. These corridors attract tourists and visitors, who enjoy driving, walking, biking, or traveling through Riverhead's scenic landscape. These corridors are the vantage points from which most people — residents and visitors alike — experience Riverhead's rural landscape.

***Policy 5.5A: Identify scenic corridors.***

The Town should identify scenic corridors in Riverhead through an interactive public outreach process. By way of illustration, the following corridors should be considered:

- Edwards Avenue
- Deep Hole Road
- Flanders Bay waterfront
- Fresh Pond Avenue
- Herricks Lane
- Horton Avenue
- Long Island Sound waterfront
- Manor Lane
- Northville Turnpike, north of Doctor's Path
- Osborne Avenue
- Peconic River corridor (West Main Street)
- Reeves Avenue
- Roanoke Avenue
- Route 25
- Sound Avenue
- South Jamesport Avenue
- Tuthills Lane
- Wading River-Manorville Road
- Greenway System (see Chapter 11, the Parks and Recreation Element)

***Policy 5.5B: Develop a process for officially designating scenic corridors.***

Scenic corridors should be officially designated, so that the Town could then regulate development in those corridors more closely, ensuring that new development would be in keeping with the scenic character. The Town Board should be responsible for designating scenic corridors, based on recommendations from the Planning Board or any other group deemed suitable by the Board.

Although Sound Avenue was designated as an historic corridor by the State in 1974, this designation — according to participants in the CAC meetings — has not actually resulted in concrete protections for the roadway. Scenic corridor designation for Sound Avenue, therefore, is critical. Moreover, all scenic corridors should be regulated carefully in order to ensure appropriate development and attention to the visual quality of roadside areas.

***Policy 5.5C: Establish a framework for regulating new development along designated scenic corridors, such that new development is compatible with a corridor's character.***

Designated Scenic Corridors should have certain minimum design standards associated with them. Topical areas that should be addressed include: roadway widening and traffic control, drainage, signage, utilities, and parking lots. The Planning Board would be responsible for implementing this new regulatory framework, as new development applications come forward. Structures used for agricultural purposes should be exempt from new design standards. Nothing shall be construed to limit agricultural uses permitted by the Town zoning code and by any applicable State or County regulation.

***Policy 5.5D: Develop and adopt tailored standards for roadway widths and drainage systems along designated scenic roads.***

Roadway standards, particularly the width of the road, are extremely important for scenic corridors. As business and traffic increases along scenic roads, so will pressure to widen the road beyond two lanes. While seemingly beneficial, such a change would have significantly negative impacts on the scenic character of the road. As an alternative to widening, less drastic improvements can be undertaken to improve traffic flow, such as turn pockets at congested intersections. The width of scenic roads should be limited to two traffic lanes (one lane in each direction), with a shoulder and/or bicycle lane on each side, resulting in a total curb-to-curb width of about 25 to 40 feet. Also, stormwater runoff from these roads should be handled through natural drainage systems via swales, as opposed to the traditional curb and gutter.

***Policy 5.5E: Develop and adopt signage standards and guidelines for designated scenic corridors.***

Specific signage standards for scenic corridors should be adopted to ensure that the number, height, material, lighting, and size of the signage is not detrimental to the visual quality of the road corridor. Guidelines should be more stringent than those currently outlined in the Town's zoning regulations (e.g. monument signs only, stricter size limitations, etc.).

***Policy 5.5F: Prohibit on-street parking and adopt parking lot design standards along designated scenic roads.***

On-street parking and the proliferation of parking lots along scenic corridors will be increasingly of concern as the number of public-oriented establishments such as farmstands, pick-your-own outlets, and wineries expands along designated scenic corridors. If not handled effectively, parking can become a safety hazard and detract from the scenic. On-street parking should be prohibited. Parking lot standards that limit access points should be implemented, and parking lots should be significantly set back from the road, such that the roadway frontage remains green. Also, paved surfaces should be kept to a minimum, and trees and other plantings should dot the parking lot.

***Policy 5.5G: Coordinate with local utility companies to place utility lines underground along designated scenic corridors.***

By coordinating schedules for repaving and line replacement, the undergrounding of overhead wires can be accomplished in a cost-effective manner. The wires can be placed in the road right-of-way either at the edge of the pavement or within the shoulder. The underground utility easement should be placed in such a manner as not to harm existing trees along the road corridor.

***Policy 5.5H: Require all new development within 250 feet of any designated scenic corridor to be subject to architectural review and additional buffering requirements.***

Current regulations require architectural review and extensive landscape buffering for *residential* development within 250 feet of either side of Sound Avenue, but not for other uses. Also, no other corridors are currently subject to this requirement. The current regulations should be expanded to include all new development along Sound Avenue, and then, once scenic corridors have been identified and designated, the requirement should be extended to those additional roadway corridors as well.

***Policy 5.5I: Plant the proposed Route 58 median with native species that evoke the character of Riverhead and the East End.***

***Policy 5.5J: Maintain greenery alongside designated scenic corridors.***

In case sites are subdivided, the Town's zoning and subdivision regulations should require a 250-foot to 500-foot buffer along the roadside, in order to preserve the visual quality.