

10. Utility Service Element

10.1 VISION STATEMENT

Utility infrastructure is critical to the health, safety, and welfare of the community. Water, sewer, electric, natural gas, and telecommunications facilities are relied upon by residents and businesses for day-to-date activity and contribute to the Town's economic wellbeing. Utilities should continue to be expanded to meet Riverhead's growing needs. At the same time, the Town should strive to limit any potential negative impacts from new infrastructure on the natural environment or Riverhead's historic or scenic resources.

10.2 SUMMARY OF BACKGROUND RESEARCH

ELECTRICITY AND NATURAL GAS

Since the breakup of the Long Island Lighting Company (LILCO), the Long Island Power Authority (LIPA), as a public entity, has been responsible for electric distribution. Gas distribution has been the responsibility of LILCO's successor company, Keyspan, a private, regulated corporation.

LIPA operates and maintains the power grid that serves Riverhead and hooks up new users into the system. While LIPA is responsible for delivering electricity to homes and business, residents and employers have the option of purchasing these energy sources from other suppliers. This flexibility in the energy market was made possible by federal deregulation of the energy sector in the late 1990s. Since LIPA is a public entity of the State of New York, power supply and distribution are still closely regulated by the State.

As of 2001, the combined forces of utility deregulation and aging power plants have raised the specter of a nationwide energy crisis. So far, Riverhead has not experienced chronic blackouts or brownouts. If the New York City metropolitan region is afflicted by an energy crisis, it is conceivable that Riverhead could experience rolling blackouts or energy shortages, along with other communities. LIPA is currently undertaking several projects to secure a more reliable power supply. These include the Cross Sound Cable project (high voltage underwater cable that would connect the electric transmission grids of new England and Long Island), the installation of new turbines at LIPA plants, the use of portable generators for emergency backup, and the development of a program for off-shore wind power. Either power plant expansions and/or conservation measures may be needed in the future to serve the Long Island's growing economy and population.

Keyspan has been more active in the expansion of its natural gas infrastructure than had LILCO. Service in Riverhead has been expanding. As a general rule, Keyspan will install 100 feet of new main at no cost for each new prospective customer. Recently, the company has indicated it would embark upon a more aggressive expansion plan, to the point that it would make installation more favorable to residents. During focus groups, participants have indicated an interest in maximizing the availability of natural gas service in Riverhead.

SANITARY SEWERS

The Town has a sanitary sewer district with a full sewage treatment plant. This facility provides sanitary waste treatment and disposal for the area around downtown Riverhead, including most of the Route 58 corridor. The facility recently underwent an \$8.5 million upgrade. It is sized at 1.3 million gallons per day (gpd) and provides a 100,000 gpd scavenger waste disposal point which is one of the only two such disposal points available in Suffolk County, the other being at Bergan Point in the Town of Babylon, near the southwestern end of the County.

The Riverhead plant has tertiary treatment, but only for nitrates. Plant effluent is discharged into the Peconic River. The Suffolk County Department of Health Services (SCDHS) believes that this effluent does not adequately dissipate since the extreme west end of the Peconic Estuary is not adequately flushed due to its small size and the distance to the mouth. The Riverhead Town Board, as the sewer district commissioners, and the SCDHS are exploring the possibility of using the Indian Island Golf Course for recharge after treatment (i.e. application of gray water to the ground).

The Riverhead Town Board extended the appurtenances of the Riverhead Sewer District westerly within the bed of County Route 58 to the terminus of the LIE. Due to forecasted sanitary flows emanating from the development of this area, the District is currently at full capacity. The conclusions of the Peconic Estuary Study indicate that there are no plans for increasing the capacity of the district treatment facility without certain technological changes.

However, the Town Board has established the Calverton Sewer District to collect and treat industrial wastewater and sanitary sewage generated by the development of the real property within Enterprise Park at Calverton (“EPCAL”). The existing treatment facility serving EPCAL was originally constructed to serve the Calverton Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant (NWIRP) and has a capacity of 62,000 gallons per day. The Calverton Sewer District will eventually expand to serve all users within EPCAL.

Riverhead currently has one (1) privately owned sewage treatment plant (STP), which serves the condominium development known as Willow Ponds, located at Sound Avenue, Roanoke. The Willow Ponds STP is rated at a capacity of 70,000 gallons per day with expected total flows of 50,355 gallons per day. Due to this under capacity, the Willow Ponds development could sustain higher development yields and is a unique parcel to accept transferred development rights.

SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING

Riverhead operated a municipal residential collection system and sanitary landfill until the mid-1990s. In 1993, the Town ceased accepting waste at its Young’s Avenue landfill but continued to utilize the transfer station at this 40-acre facility. This transfer station is now closed.

The Town has developed a solid waste management plan that identifies six (6) solid waste collection districts for residential solid waste and recycling collection. Figure 10-1 delineates the boundaries of the six collection districts in Riverhead. The Town solicits bids for each district. The selected carter(s) must provide the Town Clerk’s Office with quarterly tonnage reports for tracking quantities of residential household waste and recyclables. Table 10-1 shows the 2002 quarterly tonnage figures for the six collection districts in Riverhead. In 2002, Crown Sanitation Inc. collected approximately 5,400 tons of household municipal solid waste (MSW) in collection districts A, B and C, and Waste Management Inc. collected approximately 5,000 tons of household MSW in collection districts D, E and F.

Table 10-1: Solid Waste Collection Quarterly Data, January 1, 2002 – December 31, 2002

<i>Carting Company</i>	<i>Type of Waste</i>	<i>1/1 – 3/31</i>	<i>4/1 – 6/30</i>	<i>7/1 – 9/30</i>	<i>10/1 – 12/31</i>
<i>Crown Sanitation (Districts A, B & C)</i>	Household MSW	1263.14	1378.48	1404.39	1348.67
	Paper / Cardboard	345.19	352.98	296.45	331.54
	Commingled Glass, Metals & Plastics	151.56	123.12	151.91	142.19
	Yard Waste & Bulk	600.20	859.63	753.18	737.67
<i>Waste Management (Districts D, E & F)</i>	Household MSW	971.27	1289.79	1490.20	1247.76
	Paper / Cardboard	165.37	171.41	197.31	191.05
	Commingled Glass, Metals & Plastics	79.88	83.82	102.20	75.48
	Yard Waste & Bulk	524.13	739.26	650.33	724.41

Source: *Town of Riverhead Tax Receiver, 2003.*

The Town also provides for residential yard waste collection and residential yard waste drop-off with compost offered to Town residents. The yard waste facility is now located at the Young's Avenue site. Household hazardous waste collection is conducted quarterly under the Town's STOP program (Stop Throwing Out Pollutants), a very successful program in the Town. Riverhead has also provided its citizens with small battery disposal bins at Town Hall.

Commercial property owners must contract for private waste collection services. Under Chapter 103 of the Town code, source separated/curbside recycling is mandatory in Riverhead for both commercial and residential properties. The Town requires cardboard and newsprint and commingled materials (plastics, metals) to be recycled.

The Town completed and received NYSDEC approval for its 1999 Solid Waste Management Plan. The Town officially adopted the plan and is currently updating the plan to reflect the next five-year management approach to solid waste. Included in the update will be information on the comprehensive recycling program, updated trends in solid waste as reflected in six district tonnage reports, and identification of future solid waste collection, disposal and facility requirements.

The most significant recent change in solid waste management has been the reclamation of the Town's Young's Avenue landfill, a 40-acre site adjacent to a former municipal sand mine, used primarily for daily cover material and highway sanding. The landfill is being reclaimed pursuant to 6NYCRR Part 360 Solid Waste Management Facility Regulations. The Town selected reclamation for a number of reasons including: the growing number of residential developments in the area surrounding the landfill; cover system (cap) was installed, and long term monitoring and maintenance required for a capped landfill (currently 30-years pursuant to Part 360). The reclamation project is being funded with low interest rate bonds and the state will provide up to two-million dollars in matching funds for landfill closure projects.

Figure 10-1

Back of Figure

To date the reclamation project has been refined into a major materials separation project with approximately 80 percent of the materials recovered for recycling. The balance of the waste is disposed of at an out of state landfill. There have been no hazardous materials found and there have been no odors generated largely because the putridcides have decomposed. The project is currently within budget, and slightly ahead of its scheduled completion (2006), with one-third of the landfill's reclamation nearing completion. One of the by-products of the reclamation project is aggregate (stone, gravels and sands). This material is being used in the manufacture of hot-mix asphalt after a Beneficial Use Determination (BUD) for the aggregates was made by the NYSDEC. The asphalt plant is located on the adjacent former sand mine has also been restored in accordance with the NYSDEC mining permit requirements.

Upon completion of the reclamation project and the use of the reclaimed aggregates as feedstock for the portable plant, consideration has been given to utilize the entire 70-acre site as a Town park, among other. New applications and requests for expanding existing solid waste facilities within the Town are being studied. It is expected that the Master Plan and the Updated Solid Waste Management Plan will provide the recommendations necessary to consider these applications.

DRINKING WATER

The Town of Riverhead has demonstrated a strong commitment to providing high-quality drinking water and fire flow protection to its residents. The Riverhead Water District has been expanding its boundaries over the last 20 years from just within the hamlet of downtown Riverhead to approximately 90 percent of the Town. The district now includes a substantial portion of the Town, covering 44.3 square miles using 214.17 miles of water main to supply both domestic and firematic use. Currently there are 1,526 fire hydrants within the district. The Riverhead Water District currently serves over 36,000 customers, 30,000 in Riverhead and 6,000 in the Towns of Southold and Southampton. In addition to the Water District, there are two small private suppliers serving manufactured homes located off Forge Road. All other residents and businesses are supplied by private wells.

The Riverhead Water District maintains 12 supply wells that have a total pumping capacity of 19 million gallons per day. In addition, it maintains five storage facilities that have a combined storage capacity of 4.25 million gallons. The quality of the water is considered to be very good, as it meets all federal and state drinking water standards. The saltwater intrusion problems of the North and South Forks of Long Island are not a problem in Riverhead.

As the district has continued to expand and grow, it has planned on the construction of additional water supply and storage facilities. The aquifer system beneath the Town is of sufficient size to allow for the continued growth within the Town. Additional supply wells will be needed in the future. These wells will need to be located in the western portion of the Town where the aquifer system is deeper allowing full sized wells to be built.

The Riverhead Water District has been able to expand its boundaries and increase its water supply capabilities without increasing the cost of water to its customers. The cost of water has remained unchanged for the past 17 years at \$1.00 per thousand gallons. The water rate is one of the lowest on Long Island. The District has been able to maintain this low cost of water by continuing to operate as a very efficient utility and by establishing a key money fee for all new development within the district. The key money fee is used to construct new water supply facilities for new consumers without placing the added cost on the existing District residents.

Currently, the SCWA and the Riverhead Water District work together to assist each other on a need basis. There are already two metered cross-connects which allow interchange of water, the Southold part of the SCWA being the major beneficiary. The SCWA would like to add two cross-connects to the existing system: one at the Brookhaven-Riverhead border on Route 25; the other at the Southold-Riverhead border on Sound Avenue. This would assist the SCWA in serving Southold.

Nationally, the trend is toward consolidation of water services. Small water districts are being absorbed into large entities. Larger organizations have a greater competitive advantage, because of lower per-unit administrative and capital costs. Also, because of more restrictive National Water Standards, all districts have increasing costs related to testing-monitoring, treatment, and technology. These costs are relatively easier to absorb for a larger entity. As an example of the consolidation trend, American Water Works has grown into a major national water purveyor that serves 16 million people in 29 states. American Water itself is currently being purchased by RWEAG.

The major advantage of a small, local water district is that it can be more attuned to local needs. Because it is directly accountable to Town government, and thus local constituents and voters, the Riverhead Water District has a special interest in providing a reliable, high-quality supply of water to its residents. The Riverhead Water District has been, and will continue to be able to meet the water supply needs of the entire Town over the next 20 years.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Telephone and the Internet

As a former Bell Company, Verizon operates and maintains the telephone wires that run throughout Riverhead and is responsible for delivering basic telephone service (i.e., dial tone) and dial-up internet service to the Town's households and businesses. As new buildings are built, Verizon is required to link new buildings into the telephone system. As a result of the deregulation of the telecommunications industry in the 1990s, telephone customers can now choose different service providers for both local and long-distance calling.

A number of companies, such as Easy Access and Direct TV, are now also offering high-speed DSL connections in the Riverhead area. The DSL network is still in the process of being expanded nationwide, and there may be parts of Riverhead (as in every city and town) where DSL is not currently available. DSL speeds can vary widely, depending on the service package,

but residential DSL is typically about 30 kb/second, whereas business DSL can reach as high as 125 kb/second.¹

Cable

Riverhead's primary cable provider is Cablevision, which offers both basic cable (with multiple television channels) and digital cable (offering a larger number of channels at a higher quality). However, digital cable is not currently available everywhere in the Cablevision system, and some parts of Riverhead may not yet be serviceable. Cablevision and other companies also offer internet cable service in some parts of the Town. Cable internet connections can typically upload data at speeds of 150 kb/second, consistently one of the fastest connections available. By way of comparison, a typical residential DSL line has a speed of about 30 kb/second, and a dial-up 56k modem has a speed of 6 kb/sec.

Cellular Communications

Over the last decade, cities and towns nationwide have been inundated with applications for cellular antennae, which are used to provide continuous service to the users of cell phones and other wireless devices. Cellular companies have particularly targeted areas in major metropolitan centers and along major highways, where their customers travel. Although cellular antennas have been installed primarily upon towers on private property, the Town has recently encouraged installation upon water district water towers and standpipes. The Town expects to receive more and more applications for cellular towers in coming years, particularly for areas along the Route 58, Route 25, and Sound Avenue corridors. As such, the Town has and will continue to encourage the co-location of antennas on existing towers.

Because cellular technology is relatively new, its potential health impacts are uncertain. Reports were circulated in the late 1990s suggesting that cell phone use could be linked to cancer or other health problems, but those reports were never confirmed. It is unknown whether residents living in proximity to a cell tower could be subject to some of the same health hazards, if such hazards do in fact exist.

¹ www.cable-modem.net.

10.3 GOALS & POLICIES

Goal 10.1: Ensure that Riverhead's homes, businesses, and institutions are provided with adequate, reliable, high-quality electric, natural gas, cable, and telecommunications services.

Policy 10.1A: Continue to require new subdivisions to install electric, natural gas, telephone, and cable television lines in the beds of new roadways and to provide new lots with connections.

This policy is already standard practice for the Town and ensures a basic level of utility service to Town residents and businesses.

Policy 10.1B: Strongly encourage the expansion of the latest internet technologies throughout Riverhead.

High-speed internet services provide residents and businesses with crucial connections to the World Wide Web, which provides a wealth of information, services, and business opportunities. Through high-speed services, the ability of residents and businesses to take full advantage of the internet is increased.

Policy 10.1C: Pursue the construction of an electric power generator at EPCAL to provide less expensive electric power at EPCAL and to customers town-wide.

Goal 10.2: Ensure that Riverhead's homes, businesses, and institutions are provided with an adequate, reliable, high-quality supply of drinking water.

Policy 10.2A: Continue to expand the Riverhead Water District and the district's capacity, as necessary, to serve current and future Riverhead residents.

Policy 10.2B: Continue to monitor the water supply provided through the Riverhead Water District and strive for high standard of water quality.

Currently, the Town's water district is considered to have high-quality water. The Town should continue to ensure that this high standard is maintained into the future.

Policy 10.2C: Require adequate buffers around public wells, in order to reduce the potential for negative impacts on well systems or groundwater.

Policy 10.2D: Require that private wells are sited and built so as to avoid the risk of being negatively impacted from nearby development.

Policy 10.2E: Require that septic systems, package treatment plants, and other discharge-to-ground wastewater systems are sited and built so as to avoid the risk of negatively impacting public or private wells.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the Natural Resources Conservation Element, the location and design of septic systems should also be such that groundwater and surface water resources are protected.

Goal 10.3: If possible, expand areas around downtown Riverhead, Enterprise Park, and the hamlet centers that can be served by sewer.

Policy 10.3A: With changes to zoning districts in downtown Riverhead and along Route 58, explore the feasibility of expanding the boundaries of the Town's sewer district.

It has been determined that the land area within the sewer district boundaries, if built out under current zoning, would use up the remaining capacity of the sewage treatment plant. The Proposed Land Use Plan in Chapter 2, the Land Use Element, includes a rezoning for certain areas within the sewer district, possibly resulting in reduced sanitary sewer flow from those flows forecasted by Malcolm Pirnie, Inc. in 1990. The Malcolm Pirnie forecast should be revisited to discover potential excess sewer district capacity.

Policy 10.3B: Consider the feasibility of expanding the Town's sewage treatment, taking into account the nitrate flushing dynamic in the western end of the Peconic Estuary.

As noted, Riverhead's treatment plant discharges effluent into the Peconic River. Nitrates are not as effectively flushed from this area as compared to others, due to its location at the western edge of the estuary. Another option is to explore the expansion of sewage capacity using a combination of ground and surface water discharge.

Policy 10.3C: Continue to explore the need and feasibility of an expanded sewage treatment plant for Enterprise Park.

The Town has established a second sewer district to collect and treat effluent from Enterprise Park. The Town is exploring the possibility of expanding the former facility that served the original site from a capacity of 62,000 gallons per day (gpd) to 500,000 gpd.

Policy 10.3D: Suspend the collection and treatment of wastewater generated by out-of-district users.

By contrast, the Riverhead Sewer District currently collects and treats wastewater generated by Suffolk County facilities located within the Town of Southampton. The average daily flow processed from these facilities is estimated at 200,000 gallons per day.

The Riverhead Sewer District should convince the County of Suffolk to be in a position to collect and treat this wastewater by the end of the contract term, which would provide capacity for necessary development within the Town of Riverhead, particularly work force housing.

Goal 10.4: Encourage energy conservation and efficient use of utility infrastructure and services.

Policy 10.4A: Encourage water saving plumbing devices to be utilized town-wide.

This would make more efficient use of the capacity of the Town's sewage treatment plant or private package treatment plants.

Goal 10.5: Ensure that the physical infrastructure associated with utility services is respectful of the Town's natural, scenic, and historic resources.

Policy 10.5A: Require all new utility lines to be installed underground.

This is intended not only to reduce visual blight, but to promote public safety. Overhead wires, in particular, can pose safety hazards to residents.

Policy 10.5B: Work with utility providers to underground existing above-ground utility lines.

Although this is a costly undertaking, there may be cost-effective ways to move utility lines underground over time. As roadway widening and improvement projects occur, requiring the movement of utility poles, utility providers could take advantage of the roadway work to underground the lines. Facilitating access to underground lines for maintenance purposes should also be addressed.

Policy 10.5C: Add cellular towers to the Type I list pursuant to § 61-14 of the Town Code and require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to support special permit petitions for new cellular towers.

The addition of new cellular telephone antennas to the existing network is necessary to fill service gaps. In the review of special permit petitions for the construction of cell towers to house new antennas, the Town Board should determine the dimension and location of service gaps and verify the public need to fill such gaps through the SEQR process.

Policy 10.5D: Strive for increased gray water irrigation on active recreational fields and golf courses.

The Town is currently participating with Suffolk County in a study to assess the feasibility of gray water irrigation on Indian Island Golf Course. In the event that such application of treated wastewater is environmentally acceptable, a pilot program should be pursued at the golf course

and other suitable sites. Other sites that should be considered include Town parks and private and public golf courses Townwide. This policy would result in the reduced discharge of treated wastewater into the Peconic Estuary, reducing the potential for long-term environmental impacts to surface waters.

Policy 10.5E: Explore the feasibility of expanding tertiary treatment of the Town's sewage treatment plant.

The Town currently does tertiary treatment for nitrates only.

Goal 10.6: Continue to provide a high-quality solid waste disposal program.

Policy 10.6A: Continue to review the quarterly tonnage reports that track the amount of residential household waste and recyclables generated throughout the six (6) solid waste collection districts in Riverhead.

Policy 10.6B: Work with private property owners to review the annual performance of solid waste pickup done for commercial and multi-family sites by contracted haulers.

Goal 10.7: Continue to provide a high-quality recycling program that strives to reduce the amount of solid waste that Riverhead sends to landfills.

Policy 10.7A: Prepare an updated solid waste management plan to be approved by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.

Policy 10.7B: Continue curbside pick-up of newspaper, mixed paper and white paper as part of the list of recyclable items that the Town picks up in residential areas.

Policy 10.7C: Consider adding expanding the list of recyclable items that the Town will require to be picked up by private haulers on non-residential sites.

Policy 10.7D: In conjunction with the approved solid waste management plan, explore the feasibility of requiring the recycling of building debris or materials.

Policy 10.7E: Continue to review the annual performance of recycling and leaf pick-up, and if necessary, consider adjusting pick-up schedules to better serve the public.

Policy 10.7F: Continue to work with State and County officials to monitor and improve the recycling program as necessary.

New York State reached its goal of 40 to 42 percent recycling by 1997, which was established in the 1987 New York State Solid Waste Management Plan. The Town should continue to strive for a 40 to 42 percent recycling rate, consistent with statewide goals. If necessary, the Town can consider applying for State grant funding, under the Municipal Waste Reduction and Recycling Program. Examples of the types of projects that can be funded by the grant include: waste reduction capital, planning, and promotion costs; recycling equipment; and recycling structures and materials recycling facilities.

Goal 10.8: Continue to mine the former Town landfill and prepare a reclamation plan.

Policy 10.8A: Continue to pursue State funding for mining.

State funding applications have been filed for the \$2 million State matching funds. These funds are for landfill closures and landfill reclamation is an approved closure method under 6NYCRR part 360. The Riverhead site does not require any remediation as it is not a hazardous waste site and thus not a priority site by definition. The New York State DEC approved closure plan for the Town's landfill is the landfill reclamation work plan, which is being implemented.

Goal 10.9: Consider development standards for solid waste management facilities.

Policy 10.9A: Develop setback requirements between solid waste management facilities and adjacent uses.

Setbacks may be different depending on the land use, groundwater flow, wind direction, etc.

Policy 10.9B: Develop site plan requirements for solid waste management facilities.

Buffers, landscape plans, building design types, odor controls, debris controls, fencing, etc., should be considered for this type of land use.

Goal 10.10: Require special permits for all solid waste management facilities.

Policy 10.10A: Consider limiting tonnages of materials imported from outside the Town's six collection districts.

This can be done during the special permit process. Communication and coordination with the DEC would be necessary.

Goal 10.11: Ensure that the Solid Waste Management Plan identifies geographic locations which could support solid waste facilities.

Policy 10.11A: Identify locations for private facilities including transfer stations, compost operations, materials processing, etc., and do not allow applications to be made as non-nuisance industries or wholesale businesses.

Policy 10.11B: Identify possible locations for municipal facilities for leaf composting, yard waste, recycling bins and battery drop offs.

Policy 10.11C: Consider more residential STOP dates or more permanent drop off facilities.

Cooperative effort with the Fire Districts could accomplish this policy,