

INTRODUCTION

Need for a New Comprehensive Plan

Between 1990 and 2000, East Hampton was the fastest growing Town in Suffolk County and subsequent growth trends give reason to project this high growth rate into the future. Under present zoning, the number of dwellings existing in 2004 in East Hampton Town can increase by 33% and the year-round population by almost 50%.

Accompanying this high amount and rate of residential growth have been pressures on East Hampton's roads, schools, infrastructure in general, and the environment. Growth in traffic and school age population has increased at a greater rate than the population and number of new households. Growth in traffic compared to houses, for example increases at a ten to one ratio. In other words, for every new house, there is projected to be ten new car trips on the roads every day¹. Whereas Town-wide population in East Hampton increased by 22% between 1990 and 2000, enrollment in the East Hampton School District increased by 61%² during this same time frame.

Many studies document the fact that most residential development burdens the community with more expenses than the taxes it generates. Merely comparing the average 2004 East Hampton homeowner tax bill of approximately \$5,000 to the 2004 East Hampton School District "per pupil expense" of \$19,916³ shows how every new house with one or more school-aged children is a tax burden to the community. Bear in mind that approximately 58.5% of each tax bill in the East Hampton School District covers non-school expenses associated with County, Fire Districts, Town and other services⁴.

Despite this high growth rate and the associated costs of development, East Hampton has the second lowest tax rate as a percentage of median value of real estate in all of Long Island. Only Shelter Island has lower than the 1.1% tax rate as a percent of median real estate value of East Hampton⁵. Three factors contribute to this low tax rate: a large number of second home owners (54 % according to Census 2000), a large percentage of seniors (approximately 20% are 65 or older according to US 2000 Census), and a high percentage (40%) of preserved open space and farmland. Second homeowners and seniors generally do not send children to school; farmland and protected open space require even fewer services and do not send children to school. While the age and seasonal composition of the Town are not factors that the Town controls, the desirability of the community as a second home and retirement area are affected by Town programs. The quality and quantity of the Town's protected open space contributes greatly to the natural beauty and the desirability of East Hampton Town.

East Hampton's natural and cultural resources have regional, statewide, national and even international significance. While East Hampton's long history of successful open space

¹ From the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) figures

² East Hampton Union Free School District Figures

³ East Hampton Union Free School Figures

⁴ Personal conversation with Roy Fedelem, Suffolk County Planning Department.

⁵ Suffolk County Planning Department, Long Island Towns and Cities by Median Home Value and Median Taxes-2000 Report.

preservation is expected to continue, it is unlikely that all of the remaining land with important natural and cultural features meriting protection will be acquired.

In order to assess these changing conditions, to protect what is so special about East Hampton, and to prevent deterioration in living conditions and the natural environment, an updated comprehensive land use plan and zoning map has been prepared. This *Town of East Hampton Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Map* sets forth recommendations to reduce impacts to the Town's groundwater resources, natural resources (other than groundwater), scenic resources, historic and pre-historic resources and existing character. While protecting these features, the Plan will also help to reduce over-all residential build-out, which also will reduce ultimate impacts on the Town's roadways, schools, and infrastructure in general. Adopting the revised zoning is a necessary pre-requisite for determining revised potential build-out and the need for community services and infrastructure. It is anticipated that further planning and evaluation of the Town's community and infrastructure needs will be conducted immediately following the adoption of this *Town of East Hampton Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Map*. Subjects to be addressed include Transportation, Recreation, Infrastructure, Commercial Needs, Hamlet Studies and other topics identified in the Recommendations to Meet the Goals Section of this Plan. This further work may be considered Phase II of the Town of East Hampton Comprehensive Plan Update.

The last full overhaul of the East Hampton Town Comprehensive Plan was conducted and adopted in 1984, with 21 updates and amendments made during the intervening 20 years. All of these plans, as well as other documents have been reviewed in the preparation of this Comprehensive Plan and are listed as references. The following five plans which have previously been adopted as elements of the Town of East Hampton Comprehensive Plan, are incorporated by reference in their entirety, are summarized in the appendix, and will remain in effect as Components of this *Town of East Hampton Comprehensive Plan, May 2005*:

- Historic Preservation Report, Town of East Hampton, Phase One and Phase Two, 1989 and 1990, prepared by Robert Hefner
- Town of East Hampton Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element, 1997, prepared by L.K. McLean Associates
- Town of East Hampton Draft Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, 1999, prepared by East Hampton Planning Department and Waterfront Advisory Committee
- Town of East Hampton Final Wireless Master Plan, September 24, 2001, prepared by Kreines & Kreines, Inc.
- Town of East Hampton Community Preservation Project Plan, August 5, 2003, as amended, prepared by East Hampton Planning Department

The 1984 Plan together with 16 of the 21 amendments to the plan, are proposed to be superseded by the adoption of this Plan for one or more of the following reasons: they provide data which has now been updated by the new Plan; the recommendations have been implemented; the recommendations are contained within this new updated Comprehensive

Plan; the recommendations are no longer valid due to changed circumstances. The previously adopted Plans which are superseded by this Plan include the following:

- The Town of East Hampton Comprehensive Plan Update “A Guide for Public Action”, 1984, prepared by the East Hampton Planning Department (including the 11 previously adopted plans incorporated by reference)
- Trails Plan, Town of East Hampton, 1983, prepared by Lisa M. Liquori
- Amendments to Chapter XII of the Comprehensive Plan, 1986, prepared by East Hampton Planning Department
- Montauk Traffic Study, 1986, prepared by L.K. McLean Associates
- Water Resources Management Report, 1987, prepared by East Hampton Planning and Natural Resources Departments
- Montauk Central Business Area Study and Downtown Design Concept Plan/Drainage Plan, 1987, prepared by East Hampton Planning Department
- Accabonac Harbor Area Study, 1988, prepared by Suffolk County Planning Department
- The Northwest Path, 1991, prepared by East Hampton Planning Department
- Flora and Fauna of the Waterfront, 1991, prepared by East Hampton Planning Department
- Public Access to the Waterfront, 1991, prepared by East Hampton Planning Department
- Southampton to East Hampton Bicycle Path, 1993, prepared by East Hampton Planning Department
- Amendment to the Future Land Use Plan Component, 1994, prepared by East Hampton Planning Department
- Superblock III Land Use Study, 1995, prepared by East Hampton Planning Department
- Open Space Plan, 1996, prepared by East Hampton Planning Department

Over the years, the 1984 Plan and updates have worked reasonably well to protect the character of the Town including its sensitive natural resources. However, every 10 to 20 years, it is important to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the existing and projected conditions to incorporate and evaluate new data, statistics, studies, regulations and conditions and to determine whether the community has adequate tools to protect what it deems is important. As described above, many conditions have changed since 1984, which help form the basis for this updated plan.

Brief Overview of Process to Develop this Plan

The *Town of East Hampton Comprehensive Plan*, May 2005 is the product of a four-and-a-half year effort involving two administrations of the Town Board, several planning consultants, the Town Planning Department, the Town Department of Natural Resources, the Town Office of Housing and Community Development, the Town Attorney’s Office and special counsel, Seventeen Comprehensive Plan Subcommittees, numerous business, civic, citizen, professional and environmental organizations and the community at large. The extensive effort to obtain community input was done to prevent an “ivory tower” approach by consultant planners which can be insensitive to the needs of the community.

Numerous studies, reports and data have been incorporated into this report. In particular this report has built upon, developed and refined the concepts set forth in the 2002 Comprehensive Plan Recommendations of Dr. Lee E. Koppelman and the July 2003 Horne Rose LLC, Joel Russell & Lee Weintraub report, A Comprehensive Plan from 2003-2020 for the Town of East Hampton. During the summer of 2000, Dr. Koppelman developed and mailed a detailed survey questionnaire, including 112 questions to all the property owners and renters in East Hampton (more than 13,000). The overwhelming public response to these surveys indicated that the highest priority among all the issues in East Hampton was protecting East Hampton's water supply and the quality of the environment. This citizen input was important for the development of the Plan. In addition, seventeen citizen subcommittees were formed covering a wide spectrum of issues including: Agriculture, Business, Economic Development, Fishing, Environment, Historic Preservation, Recreation, Arts and Culture, Education, Families/Youth, Healthcare, Housing, Seniors, Emergency Services, Energy/Utilities/Communication, Transportation, and Villages and Hamlets. The reports, recommendations, meeting minutes and suggestions from these 17 Subcommittees (convened between 2000 and 2002) were also heavily relied upon.

In January 2004, the East Hampton Town Board established a Vision Statement and eleven goals which guided the development of this Plan. The Vision Statement and Goals established by the Town Board were a refinement of the ones developed by Horne Rose after numerous public workshops and public hearings conducted in 2003. Updates on the second Tuesday of each month in 2004 were conducted by the Town Board during public work sessions. A Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement was prepared to evaluate the potential environmental impacts resulting from the adoption of the Plan and the Proposed Zoning Map.

Extensive efforts were made to obtain public and agency input not only during the preparation of the Plan, but on the draft Plan itself. Two separate town-wide mailings, dated September 1, 2004 and October 1, 2004 were made by the Town Board to every resident and property owner inviting comment on the Plan; the Draft Plan and Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS) were posted on the Town of East Hampton website and were filed in all the local libraries; local newspapers carried several detailed articles covering sections of the Plan as they were presented in 2004; the Local TV station broadcast presentations of each of the sections of the Draft Plan as they were presented in 2004; legal ads were placed in the newspaper of record to announce the public hearings; direct mailings were sent to every property owner whose property was proposed to be rezoned; the Draft Plan and DGEIS were routed to over two dozen federal, state, county and local agencies, departments, commissions, boards and divisions.

Simultaneous public hearings on the Draft Plan, the DGEIS and the proposed rezonings were conducted during the day and in the evening of November 4, 2004. There was extensive public comment submitted both orally and in writing: 78 speakers during the over eight hours of public hearings and over 214 articles of written correspondence and e-mails. Over a five month time period, the Town Board collectively reviewed all the public comments and formulated responses recorded in the Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement and decided on modifications to the Draft Plan. All these deliberations were

conducted during public work sessions broadcast by the Local TV station and covered by the local newspapers.

Organization of the Plan

This *Town of East Hampton Comprehensive Plan* is comprised of six main sections, in addition to this introduction and the appendices.

- **Vision and Goals-** The Vision Statement articulates the overall image of what the community would like to be in the future. The Goals are the broad statements of intent which form the basis for the recommendations in the Plan.
- **Existing Conditions-** The Existing Conditions Section provides a summary of the geography, environment, history, demographics, land use and residential build-out.
- **Affordable Housing-** The Affordable Housing Section is a special, intensive study devoted solely to the subject of affordable housing in East Hampton. This section includes a description of existing housing conditions, affordable housing needs, existing affordable housing programs and existing legislation and programs for affordable housing. Recommendations suitable to East Hampton are offered to help meet these documented affordable housing needs.
- **Urban Renewal Map Study-** The Urban Renewal Map Study is a special, intensive study devoted solely to the 38 Urban Renewal Maps in East Hampton. This section provides an inventory and analysis of existing conditions, including land use and build-out and the existing Urban Renewal Program. Recommendations are offered to protect natural and cultural features, provide necessary roads and infrastructure, reduce ultimate density and provide affordable housing opportunities within these Urban Renewal Maps.
- **Water Plan-** The Water Plan is a special intensive study devoted solely to evaluating ground and surface waters in East Hampton. Only the 42 Recommendations and the Executive Summary of the East Hampton Town Water Resources Management Plan, prepared by Larry Penny, Natural Resources Director, and others, is included in this report.
- **Recommendations-** The Recommendations Section of the report includes a compilation of the Town-wide recommendations to meet the goals of the Plan. Two of the most significant means to meet several of the goals are proposed to be achieved through land acquisition and rezoning. Narrative text, charts and maps describing the proposed zoning and other land-based recommendations are provided for each of the five hamlets, also referred to as Planning Areas.

Five appendices, each providing an executive summary of a previously adopted component of the Comprehensive Plan, are included. These reports incorporated by reference in their

entirety into this *Town of East Hampton Comprehensive Plan* supplement and reinforce the findings and recommendations in the Plan pertaining to the following areas:

- Historic Preservation
- Transportation
- Coastal Management
- Wireless Service Facilities
- Open Space Preservation

The *Town of East Hampton Comprehensive Plan*, May 2005, will provide a guide for land use development in the Town for future years. Planning is a continuous process and all planning documents are subject to periodic review and revisions. Accordingly, it is anticipated that the Comprehensive Plan will be amended as needed over the next 10 to 15 years after which a complete overhaul will be conducted.

East Hampton is especially rich in its natural, scenic, historic and cultural character. Although dramatic changes have taken place since East Hampton was settled in 1648, many of the natural and cultural features, no longer evident in other places on Long Island, New York State and the Country, have been protected in East Hampton. East Hampton has a long history of innovative planning and was the first municipality in New York State to adopt open space subdivision regulations mandating clustering. Continued efforts are needed to protect and preserve East Hampton, both its land and its people.