



Southold 2020

The New Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Southold

Below is a compilation of the public input we gathered regarding the draft Chapter. You'll need to use the draft to follow along with the comments. They are numbered to match the goals and objectives in the draft chapter.

Housing Chapter Public Input Meetings

How your input was used (and if not, why)

	Goal 1	
	Comments from 2/27/12 meeting	
1	Public education and willingness of public to make it happen. Need to gauge the willingness of public to embrace affordable housing. What are the demographics of people who need the housing.	We agree, and this effort would be done for specific project when it is proposed. We don't collect "demographics" but we know generally that the people who need housing represent a diversity of income levels and ages.
2	Working with the existing stock rather than building new does not change the landscape or community character	This is included in the chapter.
3	Facilitate development of new units by making it easier for people to get information about how to do so. Include an easy checklist that explains zoning code for the layperson	We agree. We will add as an objective two goal 2.1
4	Help people by making site visits to help assess their property for the potential for accessory apartments	We agree. We will add as an objective two goal 2.1
5	Keep in mind sewers and zoning implications. Greenport and Riverhead downtowns have sewers, other places don't.	We will do so.
	Comments from the 3/3/12 meeting	
1	Wastewater mgt – nitrogen to ground water is a problem – get tax credits to incentivize sewage treatment denitrification instead of using septic flow credits which still allow N inputs to groundwater.	Yes, we agree and will add an objective to goal 1.2 to investigate potential tax incentives to mitigate sanitary impacts.
2	New single and separate construction should be required to utilize most effective septic systems that denitrifies.	Yes, we agree and will add an objective to goal 1.2 to investigate potential tax incentives to mitigate sanitary impacts.
3	It is difficult to comment on the housing chapter when the buildout is unknown.	We are working on the buildout analysis. In the meantime we are able to understand the housing



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		need based on the data we have.
4	Adaptive reuse is preferable to new construction. They like the owner occupancy requirement for accessory apartments. Enforcement needed.	We agree, and the chapter includes this
5	Create an educational brochure to inform homeowners how to put an accessory apartment.	We agree, will add as an objective goal 2.1
6	Use adaptive reuse for senior housing also, instead of construction.	We agree that this is one way that senior housing can be created and we are also considering "naturally occurring retirement communities" see goal 1.1 #2.

Goal 2

	Comments from 2/27/12 meeting	
1	2.1 is fine the way it is	
2	2.2 is fine the way it is	
3	Yes, the objectives accomplish the goal.	
4	The incentives are not "real". Are there credible resources that make the goals credible? Resources for housing not available for rentals.	Some resources are not available now, however this is a forward-thinking document, and they could be available in future.
5	Young people need help – no rental inventory	We agree, in the chapter addresses this.
	Comments from the 3/3/12 meeting	
1	Illegal housing - no code enforcement, they need to have greater fines. This is costing residents money.	See goal 4.1 objective #1 and objective #2
2	Taxes are too high for current homeowners, combined school districts to save taxes, limit construction of new residential units because that ends up costing more money than the taxes they bring in.	School taxes are out of the town's control.
3	Is the number of units (housing) quoted accurate? It seems too high	The number of housing units quoted in the chapter is from our town Assessors and census data. This number is fairly accurate. It seems high compared to our population estimate, because much of our population are second-home owners and do not claim their primary residence here. I.e. our population is around 25,000 however in the summer the population grows to almost double that.



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4	No coordination with school districts to determine if schools can handle more students & how this affects taxes.	In the case of large developments, there is coordination with the schools.
5	Transportation (mass transit) needs improvement – so people can live farther west where there already is affordable housing, and still work here.	People that live in the town would like to remain here, although we agree that mass transit on the North Fork needs improvement.
6	Accessory apartment costs up front – educate public what they are. Have a forum on this for the public, including Assessor to help understand tax implications of the new apt.	Yes, we are adding this idea to the chapter.
7	Other subsidies for new technology for waste water management and septic system upgrades? (New ways to treat sewage? Decentralized package systems?)	Town is considering this. This is in the chapter.
	General concern about population growth in town and the limited resources.	The natural resources chapter will address sustainability & carrying capacity
	Others don't like the idea of limiting future population of the Town.	Noted

GOAL 3

	Comments from 2/27/12 meeting	
1	What resources? Define them	Objectives and goal three identify nonprofits as the resources.
2	Seniors who can't afford taxes??	We agree property taxes are an issue in the affordability equation.
3	Affordable, user-friendly accessory apartment law.	Yes, this is in the plan
4	Multi-tenant zoning – convert existing buildings to apartments – use tools like adaptive reuse and new types of sewage treatment.	yes, this is in the plan
5	It is cost prohibitive to invest in accessory apartments because the cost of septic systems upgrades and other costs are too high. People can't get a return on the investment.	The Housing chapter does call for finding ways to make it easier to create an accessory apartment for people.

GOAL 4

	Comments from 3/3/12 meeting	
1	Concept is to revisit existing housing stock	Yes, we agree and this is in the chapter.



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2	Also, new housing should be able to be smaller than the minimum size now required. (850s.f. to 600 s.f.). cost of land & house will create an affordable house. Will allow a house that currently exists at <850 s.f. to get a c.o. when they can't now without ZBA.	Yes, we changed the chapter to consider this as an option.
3	Revisit old-filed maps to develop the small lots. At the same time devise a pyramid law so it won't cut off light from neighbor. Old-filed map lots aren't buildable (this is the idea from this person).	Southold actually has many small single and separate lots that are buildable and available for small houses.
4	Accessory Apartments Law – can we change the law to allow them to not be owner occupied?	Public sentiment has been to encourage owner occupancy to ensure the upkeep of rental properties.
5	Can the minimum size of apartments be reduced to 450 ft. ²	We are considering this for feasibility.
6	Can town buy short sale or foreclosed homes, clean them up and then sell them	Yes, this is a good idea that we can explore further. We added an objective to this effect in goal 1.1 objective #9
7	Address the cause rather than the problem itself in goal 4.2. Workforce housing. Rental law? Check Southhampton's experience with this.	We feel the chapter already addresses this goal.
8	Multigenerational housing. Can you build new housing that allows for the baby boomer parents with their elderly parents and their kids all living in the same place	This is already allowed in town code.
9	Mansion housing. It looks like a mansion but it actually has apartments and so it doesn't look like your building affordable housing because it fits in a neighborhood with big houses and be done through form-based zoning to fit the scale of the neighborhood	Interesting idea. In certain zones this could already be done (HB, for example).
10	LEED certification. Because the actual certification costs a lot of money, consider having the standards for construction, but not actually having buildings be certified.	Yes, we'll add this to goal 5.1 objective #3



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GOAL 5

No specific comments received

GENERAL COMMENTS

Comments from 2/27/12 meeting		
1	Southold needs apartments, such as garden apartments. Need incentives for developers because the economics for rentals is not good. Also density is not popular. Could there be a grant to fund small package sewage plants for these? Could modular construction be used to reduce costs?	Goal 5.1 objective #2 suggests the Town consider a pilot study to explore the potential to use the newest technology in sewage treatment to increase potential for apartments being developed, especially in the downtown areas.
2	Renovate existing houses into apartments because it's less costly, however it would not increase the inventory significantly	Yes, this is addressed in the chapter. Every bit helps, even if it doesn't solve the entire problem.
3	55 and over development is counterproductive to creating housing for young people. That being said, if 55 and overs move out of their existing homes that will open up older stock that might be priced for young people to afford. Also, large retirement communities that include many services like assisted-living and nursing home beds such as Peconic Landing create good jobs	Okay, thank you.
Written comments submitted		
1	The housing chapter is just too general. It lacks specific actions to be taken. What types of housing units would be ideal? Were the 400 people who applied for affordable housing asked about what they really wanted? How many units of housing will really be needed and where would they be located? The idea, for example that a blanket recommendation was given for four units per acre in Affordable Housing Districts seems totally arbitrary. But do we really need these districts at all? What are the criteria for targeting land for AHD?	The chapter is as specific as we can make it. We realize that it will take all different types of housing to help the situation, so no one type is ideal. We agree that identifying good locations for affordable housing is important and we've added to the chapter.
2	Should Southold advance the concept of decentralized wastewater sewerage systems to create even denser development using less land. Look at the projects of the Cottage Company out in the Seattle area as an example.	We added the concept of decentralized wastewater septic systems exploring the feasibility of the newest technology to the chapter.
3	There is no reason for Southold to become a geriatric community. There appears to be an underlying political motivation here with the big push for elder housing-the town is saying that it does not want any more families	Thank you for your view on this. We do not feel that the objectives in this chapter favor senior housing over housing for families.



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	with children. The chief reason being that property taxes will go up with more kids stressing the limited resources of the school system. So deliberately nurturing the growth of an old-age community is a way of keeping property taxes down. And it's a cynical and reprehensible approach to achieve what will be an intended, but seemingly unintended consequence.	
4	A Housing Advisory Commission/Authority will be a very important entity. Who will serve on this commission and what should their qualifications be? How will they be appointed? Will the members of this commission be required to demonstrate the ability to be plans? Should the Commission be composed of architects, engineers, landscape architects, real estate professionals, planners, a historian, residential builders, bankers and lending professionals, are rental management consulting, a special needs population consultant and representatives of the targeted user groups among others?	The town currently has a Housing Advisory Commission, composed of citizens with a variety of expertise and experience.
5	Zoning should be changed to allow minimum house size to go from 850 ft. ² to 600 ft. ² (East Hamptons minimum 600 ft. ²), which would make a difference in the cost of homes for young people, singles and empty-nesters. There should be grant mechanisms in place for property purchases deemed "affordable" since it is the purchase price of property itself that makes affordable building prohibitive.	This was addressed earlier in this comments document, and the town will explore this is a possibility.
6	It might be very difficult to keep houses of portable in perpetuity. The idea that the owner of such house could not realize a profit from the sale equal to that of houses not designated "affordable" is a real turnoff. Perhaps, it would be much better to just keep rentals in the perpetual affordability market instead	Noted.
7	There is no mention whatsoever of multigenerational housing. Three generations under one roof-the boomerang kids the baby boomers and the elderly parents. Allow for this typology in new construction and changes zoning in the existing code to allow for the multigenerational use an existing houses with the option of installing a second kitchen. Reference provided: space space http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2010/03/18/the-return-of-the-multi-generational-family-household/	We believe the code already allows for this.
8	The Danish model of Co-housing has not been mentioned as a possible response to the lack of affordable housing. In collaborative housing like this, residents participate in the design and conception of their community, there is	Interesting idea though probably a little outside the ability of the town to create.



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	<p>always shared open space, facilities in addition to private residences, resident management of the cohousing community and self governance by consensus. The cohousing community doesn't generate income. Rather, members contribute to the shared responsibility of running the complex.</p>	
9	<p>Allow for the conversion of garage attics and portions of existing houses into apartments so long as the existing septic systems are large enough to accommodate the flow rates. Using existing stock will help maintain community character. The greenest buildings, after all, are the ones that already exist</p>	<p>Yes, we agree. The Town Code already allows this.</p>
10.	<p>A very important driver of Southold policy is the Peconic Bay Estuary Program. As the 28th most important United States Estuary, our own Peconic Bay system is a very important to not only Southold, but the entire country. Also, to magnify the importance of doing the right thing; along our Northern border is another threatened estuary, the Long Island Sound. All our Southold planning must take these Estuaries into account. And this is not easy. Our policy must be to apply the scientific data stemming from our Peconic Bay Estuary program. This program is a living document that is fleshing out as we learn more and more about the effects of septic pollution, agricultural runoff, the slow migration of underground water, the loss of wetlands through bulk heading, groins and jetties, land filling and commercial and residential land use.</p> <p>The Great South Bay and Moriches Bay are already extremely damaged by human activity. We must learn from our mistakes as we move forward. This is the point of the Estuary Program. Though it is still a work in progress, we must keep it right in front of us and not do things that are damaging, but worse, are irreversible.</p> <p>We know that the current SCHD maximum nitrate limits on drinking water are much higher than the nitrates allowance for the estuary. This is a concern. The coliform bacteria and other contaminants from septic systems are known to be very damaging. The new septic designs that keep nitrate levels much lower must be required for all</p>	<p>These issues will be addressed in the Natural Resources Chapter.</p>



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new development. We must also use community type anti nitrate systems for hamlet and halo denser development. There are limits to the amount of sanitary credits that can be taken from open land and added to already dense development. Too much density can stress septic systems beyond their ability to properly perform.

This Estuary Program is not yet fully developed into hard and fast development regulations. But we must draw our plans as we move forward with constant attention to the program regulations and where the limits are.

We are the custodians of the most magnificent real estate on Long Island one of the most beautiful and productive water bodies in the State, and we cannot take this lightly.

11	<p>A discussion of the Draft Chapter on Housing, Southold 2020 Comprehensive Plan</p> <p>While Southold’s Planning Department is doing a good job of surveying approaches to affordable housing for middle income residents in their draft Housing Chapter, their work raises other questions that are worth considering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Can the conversation include the variety of housing options, sizes and residency models that will meet the needs of not only middle income residents, but everyone from the homeless to seasonal residents? Can we do this in a cost-effective and eco-sensible ways? (b) Since Southold is a tourist community, what is the need for seasonal housing? The labor working on farms and serving local restaurants and tourist industries swells each summer and autumn. (c) What is the role of the employers in supplying these facilities? (d) Should designs for temporary housing be explored and/or permitted? (e) Would a registry of people willing to rent out a bedroom or accessory apartment help? (Colleges do this for off-campus housing.) (f) Rightfully so, the housing chapter discusses the difficulty of median income owners facing a changing social context, where the increase in housing values outstrips residents’ means to purchase homes in their 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Town addresses the need of homelessness The Community Development Block Grant funding-this is the best we can manage financially in this area. (b) the Town's focus is on the year-round population. (c) The Town cannot account for absolutely all the people who need housing. (d)Some employers do supply labor housing but it is not the role of the town to provide employee housing for seasonal employers. Town Code and other agencies already
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own communities. When coupled with rising carrying costs, staying in place becomes burdensome. So what is the rate of ownership turn-over versus the overall rate of population change?

- (g) And more importantly, what affects affordability and how can these costs be managed reasonably?

The following are some thoughts for further consideration and discussion based on the breakdown of housing costs:

1. Density and Wastewater

In order to lower the cost of land for housing, the chapter focuses on allowing increased density. Since currently Suffolk County Health Department regulations control density for on-site wastewater treatment, the transfer of sanitary credits from preserved land is the main recommendation advocated by the Town. But this solution degrades local aquifers and fragile estuaries, as pollutants are too concentrated. A land use pattern that provides higher densities in walkable hamlets with large, open tracts surrounding these centers is a traditional pattern worth emulating and preserving, but not at the expense of wastewater pollution. Instead advanced on-site treatment and clustered approaches to wastewater treatment can address existing and proposed density issues while protecting the waters that define Southold's very special character.

2. Cost of Construction/Existing Buildings

Costs of construction can be controlled by limiting size, having multiple units in one building, or using shared wall configurations, such as duplexes. The Town of Islip finds that controlling unit size is an easy way of ensuring continued affordability. Taking advantage of decreased real estate prices, a program focused on the renovation, reconfiguration, and the resale of existing housing stock would both upgrade old structures and help people needing to sell their homes, without changing the architectural integrity of our neighborhoods. On February 29, 2012 there were 99 homes in the Town of Southold listed on mlsl.com with prices below \$500,000. Some of these might be appropriate for rentals and affordable sales, ideally handled by a not-for-profit with some Town incentives.

When new construction is preferable, previously developed parcels should be targeted instead of vacant land, as the natural landscape both defines North Fork's rural character and protects the health of our environment. A combination of incentives and regulations might help rehabilitation efforts, such

provide for temporary housing and regulated.

(e) Town works with Family Service League on this

(f) good idea however we do not have this data.

(g) chapter addresses this to the extent we can.

1. We agree and this will be further addressed in the natural resources chapter

2. Yes, we changed the chapter to allow for this.



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as smaller version of Brookhaven's Blight to Light program. Small interventions and infill projects integrated within existing neighborhoods are preferable to massive projects that redefine the built landscape. Also, these smaller projects can be better handled by local contractors, thus ensuring any subsidies are reinvested locally.

3. Maintenance and Utility Expenses

Considering life-cycle costs and operational costs may mean that increased expenditures make economic sense. Durable materials, enhanced insulation, tight building construction, use of Energy Star and WaterSense fixtures, and renewable energy components where appropriate can lower future energy and maintenance costs, thereby enhancing the ongoing affordability of upgraded dwellings.

4. Mortgages

Hard-pressed residents may find financing difficult. Though mortgage rates are historically low, many cannot afford the down payment for ownership. Would a fund or program supplying no-interest loans with fees for late payment be more appropriate than building new stock? This would also allow the owner to realize gain when markets recover. If the outright ownership is limited to permanently affordable resale rates, is the new owner saddled with a property that cannot be resold in an uncertain economy due to the restrictions? What is the return on the owner's investment when compared to the other participants, such as the developer or management agency? Are permanently affordable units more suited to rental conditions?

5. Taxes

Inflated property values trigger increased taxes. An influx of wealthier owners skews values upward. While this may seem a benefit to investors considering resale options, it is a burden on residents with no intention of moving. Real estate taxes are a major cost of home ownership. Is the burden equitable? Often the poorest districts have the highest rates due to school taxes. Are there other ways of raising revenue that create more equity? For instance, Massachusetts gives a tax rebate to people when the costs of real estate taxes and fees exceed 10% of income. A local variation might help buffer residents when their primary residences escalate in value or when rental costs exceed 35% of income. Another issue is that condominiums pay lower taxes than home owners. Can the condominium ownership model be limited to a higher % of affordable units? Also, is there a way to encourage building upgrades without

3. Yes, this is in the plan and more detail on water resources will be in the natural resources chapter.

4. The chapter addresses this in Goal 1.1 Objective #1.

5. We agree, taxes influence affordability however they reflect the price of the house so a smaller less expensive house will have smaller taxes.



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incurring increased taxes, when decreased operational costs are attained?

6. Insurance

Parallel to this, people seeking to introduce accessory apartments with mixed uses often find that insurance is unobtainable or duplicative. Could a discussion with our local insurance industry lead to practices that support the plan’s vision?

7. Vision

Successful affordable housing should not look affordable. This point was repeatedly made at the Housing Summit sponsored by the Suffolk County Planning Commission this February. The buildings should be an attractive asset, designed with the same care as market housing. We need to be careful that we do not create “zones” of affordability that segregate and stigmatize economic class or ageism. Southold has a vibrant and integrated “Over 55” community. We should foster more flexibility and self-selection in solutions rather than promote isolated residential enclaves which encourage large-scaled development. Single-home renovations for accessibility could be encouraged with no-interest loans rather than local codes. Especially where we have declining school enrollment, shouldn’t we encourage younger generations to be rooted in the community?

While the housing chapter has a good discussion of middle-income affordability issues, shouldn’t the housing chapter address all residents, from the poor to the rich? Do we want to limit size, consider neighborhood context, and energy use when any residential structure is discussed? Housing policies are closely linked with other topics, such as community character, zoning, environment, economics and transportation. These interrelationships need to be reinforced with a shared vision. Let’s encourage flexibility, reuse, and integration so that all can call Southold home. We only have to look to our hamlets for inspiration. Their sense of place, varied building stock, density, and easy access to amenities have individual character while creating wonderful communities for future generations.

6. We agree. A future discussion with insurance companies is planned for the near future.

7. We agree.

12.	Avoid environmentally sensitive areas when building any affordable housing.	We agree.
13.	The Town should choose sites ahead of time that are appropriate for affordable housing that are vetted through a public process, that the public agrees with.	We added this to the draft chapter.