

I. CUTCHOGUE HAMLET CENTER OVERVIEW:

Cutchogue's *Hamlet Center* is the commercial and public use core of the community, and is an area of Southold steeped in history. Cutchogue, originally known as *Corchaug*, or "principal place" by the Indians-was settled by the English, beginning in 1667. This was Southold's first colony. The western end of the Hamlet Center encompasses the Village Green along Case's Lane and Rte. 25, which supports the oldest English-style houses in New York State built in 1649, the Wickham Farmhouse (ca. 1740), the Old Schoolhouse Museum and the Cutchogue Library, part of which was built in 1862 as a Congregational church.

Cutchogue's Hamlet Center is one of the Town's three largest commercial areas (along with Mattituck and Southold), yet the areas retains a distinct small scale, intimate character. The Hamlet Center covers 38.2 acres and includes 41 separate tax parcels (Figure C-1).

II. CUTCHOGUE HAMLET VISION:

Looking toward the future, Cutchogue’s hamlet vision includes several fundamental components:

- Cutchogue’s commercial activity must be characteristic of, and take place within a small scale context that is in keeping with the Hamlet’s traditional setting.
- Cutchogue’s roots reach deep into the hamlet’s agricultural heritage. In order to preserve Cutchogue’s uniqueness, efforts to strengthen and reinforce the rural agricultural character of the Hamlet must be made.
- Preserve the small scale nature of the Hamlet Center as the focus of community life.
- Larger scale commercial development is clearly inconsistent with the Hamlet Center’s character. Large scale in this context not only refers to the square footage of a given facility, but also to the intensity of use, the volume of traffic generated, the nature of the intended market (i.e. targeting a larger market, and not simply the hamlet itself), the extent of site improvements, like off-street parking lots or sewage disposal systems, etc.
- Embrace a diversity of housing types, within the overall context of the existing character of the Hamlet including townhouses and condominiums. Mansions and large scale homes are not appropriate.
- Opportunities for new residential development exist in Cutchogue. A new HALO zone is recommended to facilitate this goal. The parameters of this new zoning, should be designed to accommodate a variety of housing types, at a density of ¼ acre (1 dwelling/10,000 square feet of lot area).
- Cutchogue’s historic character is also a vital aspect of the area’s “sense of place” and should be reinforced.

Figure C-2 presents the effective boundary of the new HALO zone. Figure C-3 displays lands within the HALO boundary where development cannot take place due to the presence of environmental constraints, or as a result of previous land protection efforts.

III. HAMLET STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES:

Early in the process, the Stakeholders conducted a “strengths and weaknesses” exercise. Stakeholders identified major issues, some of which were viewed as strengths while others were viewed as hamlet weaknesses. These were compiled in the matrix below, and each issue was then carefully evaluated and an action assigned to each: *preserve, add, remove* or *prohibit*.

Cutchogue’s quality of life, its sense of community and sense of place, bucolic character and convenient “walkable” shopping district that supports historical and religious uses, are examples of the hamlet’s strengths that are recommended to be preserved.

The Stakeholders found that several weaknesses needed to be addressed, specifically, the hamlet lacked an affordable and diverse housing stock, requires a greater emphasis on code enforcement activities, suffers from traffic congestion, excessive volumes and speeds, as well as the inherent problem of Route 25 splitting the Hamlet Center, an unsustainable dependence on individual automobiles, the need to improve pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks, and a lack or recreational facilities.

Table C-1 summarizes the a “strengths and weakness” exercise results.

TABLE C-1 CUTCHOGUE’S STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES				
GOALS	PRESERVE	ADD	REMOVE	PROHIBIT
Quality of Life				
Maintain sense of community	✓			
Maintain strong sense of place	✓			
Bucolic character	✓			
Code enforcement		✓		
Housing				
diversity of housing types needed to support local business.		✓		
affordable housing		✓		
Real estate values are too high			✓	
Traffic/Transportation				
Excessive traffic volumes			✓	
public transportation/transit		✓		
Poor traffic control			✓	
Summer & weekend traffic volumes			✓	
Maintain adequate parking levels	✓			
Route 25 disrupts north/south pedestrian movements				✓
Railroad by-passes Cutchogue			✓	
Too much reliance on automobiles			✓	
Business				
Nice commercial area	✓			
Good shopping	✓			
Supermarket and main shops are outside Hamlet Center			✓	
Little room for commercial expansion		✓		
Services				
Library/School/Post Office conveniently located within the Hamlet Center	✓			

Historical religious uses located within the Hamlet Center	✓			
Need more recreation facilities		✓		
Location				
Village Green	✓			
Well concentrated "older" hamlet	✓			
Easy walking distances	✓			
Need more sidewalks/bikeways.		✓		

IV. SPECIFIC HAMLET IMPROVEMENT PROJECT RECOMENDATIONS:

Throughout the course of the Hamlet Study, the Stakeholders were asked to compile lists of specific improvements or projects they may wish to see implemented. One of the final exercises involved refining these lists to reflect the consensus of the Stakeholders.

The following recommendations are organized according to the *Hamlet Sustainability Principles* described in Section III of the Town-wide analysis.

1. Human Scale:

- ✓ Cutchogue's Hamlet Center covers a fairly large spatial area (~38 acres). Commercial sprawl must be prohibited and an emphasis must be placed on fostering a human scale that encourages pedestrian activity and discourages unnecessary vehicle trips.
- ✓ A second commercial area, located outside of the Cutchogue Hamlet Center should be recognized – the area around the King Kullen Shopping Center and the Peconic Bay Winery. This area is clearly not physically or perceptually part of the Hamlet Center, yet it will likely remain a commercial node. As such, a program of enhancing and improving the area should be initiated. It is imperative that this area not be allowed to detract from the Hamlet Center itself. Immediate safety issues need to be addressed in front of the King Kullen Shopping Center – the entrance off of Route 25 is poorly lit and there is no turning lane east bound. Coordination with the NYSDOT is necessary to assure that potential traffic engineering solutions take into consideration aesthetic issues and preserve the character of the area.

2. Gateways:

- ✓ The development of traditional gateways into the Cutchogue Hamlet Center was found to be unnecessary at this time, due to an organic entrance that already exists as one approaches the Village Green (from the west). In the future however, a more defined gateway may become necessary.

3. Streetscape:

- ✓ Every effort must be made to find an alternative to constructing the sump in the middle of Cutchogue Hamlet. The new sump, if constructed, must be adequately screened and landscaped.
- ✓ One of the most visually disruptive elements of the existing streetscape are the presence of overhead utility lines. Existing overhead utility lines in the Hamlet Center should be placed underground. All new development must install all new utilities underground. This is particularly important, and should take place during the upcoming DOT project, connecting the Village Green drainage system to the new sump.

- ✓ The historic and aesthetic character of Cutchogue must not be jeopardized because of DOT's upcoming work. For example, the low lying wall in front of both the Library and the Catholic Church should not be compromised. The trees lining the inner aspect of the sidewalks must be maintained.
- ✓ One of the attractive aspects of the Hamlet Center's streetscape are its lovely street trees. Preserving these trees however, requires an on-going commitment. A street tree planting program is recommended that incorporates regular pruning and maintenance as well as the replacement of damaged or dead trees.
- ✓ Restore plantings that were removed by the Post Office.

4. Vehicular Circulation:

- ✓ Route 25 is the primary east/west thoroughfare serving the North Fork, as well as the Cutchogue Hamlet Center's pedestrian oriented main street. Traffic calming measures are necessary to slow traffic through the Hamlet Center. The full range of options should be considered including speed bumps, raised and textured crosswalks, chokers and curb extensions, pedestrian refuges, roundabouts, chicanes, cautionary signage and pavement striping, which are all examples of possible traffic calming measures.
- ✓ A median on the Main Road is a specific traffic calming recommendation.
- ✓ Widening roadways, particularly Route 25, to accommodate ever increasing volumes of traffic, should not be allowed in Cutchogue.
- ✓ Signage is recommended reading "Slow Entering Cutchogue Hamlet Center". This signage should be posted in highly visible locations, including on bollards in the center road median.
- ✓ Traffic concerns exist around the King Kullen commercial node. A comprehensive site analysis that addresses access, driveway locations, circulation and the potential for creating a rear bypass connecting to Cox Lane should be conducted.
- ✓ Evaluate all sight distance impediments at driveways and intersections and correct as required. Impediments include utility poles, signs, un-kempt landscaping and street trees, fences, etc. Often, these structures are privately owned and constructed illegally within the right-of-way.

5. Parking:

- ✓ An adequate number of off-street parking spaces are available in the Hamlet Center.
- ✓ Existing public parking areas must be continually maintained, and re-surfaced as required.

6. Pedestrian Circulation:

- ✓ Route 25 physically and perceptually splits the Hamlet Center in two. Overcoming this separation by creating safe and efficient pedestrian connections is a primary issue.
- ✓ Crosswalks should be creatively designed. Intersection sidewalks extensions (lessening the street width), pavement variations in texture, materials and color, raised pavement, signage, crosswalk bollards are all examples of potential solutions.
- ✓ Existing sidewalks that are cracked, uneven, uplifted due to tree roots, and generally in poor condition must be repaired and if necessary replaced. Maintaining safe and usable sidewalks is a major factor in fostering a walkable hamlet. Sidewalk maintenance responsibilities should be clearly established, and individual property owners should be periodically apprised of their maintenance obligations.
- ✓ Sidewalks should be extended on both sides of Route 25 for the entire length of the Hamlet Center, and should extend to Crown Land Lane in the west.
- ✓ New residential development in the HALO zone should reflect a “walkable community” that enhances and supports neighboring businesses in the Hamlet Center.
- ✓ In addition to a complete well maintained sidewalk system, it is recommended that consideration be given to the creation of new walking paths and alleys. These pedestrian connections would creatively interconnect nodes of activity by formally recognizing and improving traditional “short cuts.” Improvements might include clearing and cleaning, lighting, providing legal means of access, removing physical impediments such as gates, preparing surfaces, etc.
- ✓ As a method to reduce dependence on individual automobiles, and to encourage fitness among residents, a bicycle friendly infrastructure should be created. The Cutchogue Hamlet Center is quite flat, and bicycling is not encumbered by challenging terrain. As a result, many people currently utilize bicycles for transit and for pleasure. More would likely turn to their bikes if a more accessible infrastructure were put in place, including bike paths and lanes, efficient crosswalks, safe and convenient bike racks and storage areas etc.

7. Public Transportation:

- ✓ It is recommended that an alternate location be found for the bus stop. The new locations should provide a safe and convenient location for the bus to pull out of the flow of traffic. If it is located on the Main Road, pull-off's should be provided.
- ✓ Assist in publicizing the availability and benefits of utilizing public transportation resources and facilities.