

I. SOUTHOLD HAMLET CENTER OVERVIEW:

The Hamlet of Southold is the oldest developed portion of the Town and supports the seat of Town Government. Southold's Hamlet Center is the largest in the Town covering 92.5 acres and includes 122 parcels of land. The original 1640 settlement ran from Town Creek up Young's Avenue and then west along Rte. 25 to Willow Hill.

The Hamlet's rich history is evident in numerous ways. Southold's Historic District marks the western edge of the Hamlet Center, and the Southold Free Library and Southold Historical Society Museum Park are notable features in its center. Southold's First Presbyterian church is the oldest English church society in the State of New York.

The Southold Hamlet Center is the largest and most commercially active business district on the North Fork between Riverhead and Greenport. In addition to hosting the Town's primary governmental functions, the district also supports numerous businesses, both large and small, religious institutions, civic uses, transportation facilities as well as a substantial residential population.

The hamlet of Southold is geographically and perceptually, the heart of the community (Figure S-1).

II. SOUTHOLD HAMLET VISION:

Looking toward the future, Southold's hamlet vision includes several fundamental components:

- The Southold Hamlet Center is an active, vibrant and thriving central business district, and serves as the Town's primary hub of commerce, governmental, civic and institutional activity.
- While clearly the Town's primary commercial hub, the scale and character of Hamlet Center's commercial activity must take place within a small scale context that is in keeping with the Hamlet's traditional and historic setting.
- Southold's historic character is also a vital aspect of the areas "sense of place" and should be preserved, protected and reinforced.
- 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.
- The Hamlet Center should embrace a diversity of housing types, such as townhouses, attached single family dwellings, multi-family dwellings, etc., within the overall context of the existing character of the Hamlet.
- The creation of affordable "workforce" housing is a priority.
- Opportunities for new residential development exist in Southold. The new HALO zone should be designed to accommodate a variety of housing types, at a density of between ¼ acre to 1/8 acre in certain limited locations - subject to addressing septic considerations (1 dwelling/10,000 square feet of lot area – 1/5,000 square feet).

Figure S-2 presents the effective boundary of the new HALO zone. Figure S-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*.

Southold’s quality of life, central business district and location were viewed as it’s primary strengths. Farmlands and open spaces, the hamlets quaint and charming character, walkability, diverse shops with local owners are examples of elements to be preserved.

The Stakeholders found numerous areas where improvements can be made. Specifically, enhancing the vibrancy of the Hamlet Center in the evenings was identified as was the need to create a more usable public focal point. The most notable weaknesses related to traffic conditions. Excessive speeds, poor intersections, and the need to improve pedestrian, bicycle and public transportation facilities was emphasized.

TABLE S-1 SOUTHOLD’S STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES				
GOALS	PRESERVE	ADD	REMOVE	PROHIBIT
Quality of Life				
Quaint & charming	✓	✓		
Great place to live	✓	✓		
Beautiful farms, vineyards & open spaces	✓			
Walkable	✓	✓		
Nice trees	✓	✓		
Not overdeveloped	✓			
Not too crowded, peaceful	✓			
Disappearing open spaces				✓
Control tourism so it does not overwhelm the quality of life of year-round residents		✓		
Provide incentives for maintenance and upgrade of signage, façade, etc. on stores in the Hamlet Center.		✓		
Litter, initiate fines, supply attractive trash cans/recycling bins				✓
Encourage social gatherings, events & programs at the gazebo, library, high school & churches. Promote quiet evening socializing (e.g. café), encourage stores to stay open later.		✓		
Sprawl				✓
Management of beaches	✓	✓		
Teen & Adult recreational facilities. Add evening programs at School & Rec Center, Indoor swimming.		✓		
Location				
Proximity to other hamlets for other services	✓			
Proximity to waterfront	✓			
Rural atmosphere	✓			
Central Business District				
Diverse stores	✓	✓		
Main Street focal point. More intensive use of Gazebo Park & Historical Society grounds	✓			
Adequate infrastructure		✓		

Local businesses with local owners	✓	✓		
Handicapped accessible sidewalks		✓		
Street lighting, Upgrade fixtures		✓		
Stores need a facelift		✓		
Gathering spot of social center		✓		
Traffic/Transportation				
Re-Design intersection at Young's and Rte 48		✓		
Decrease speed limit in Hamlet Center		✓		
Use signage on LIE & locally to encourage use of Rte 48		✓		
Parking, upgrade surfacing & signage	✓	✓		
Police coverage at school crossing	✓			
Roadway layout, better hierarchy of scale	✓			
Traffic control	✓			
Pedestrian friendly, add wider sidewalks w/ benches, trees and footpaths	✓	✓		
Pedestrian crossings, add one at Beckworth & Rte. 25	✓	✓		
Public transportation Publicize cheap S-92 & increase scheduling. Free car/van for elderly	✓	✓		
Add designated bike paths & bike stands		✓		
Economics				
Summer crowds (bring \$)	✓			
Increasing property values	✓			
Decent jobs for young people		✓		
Opportunities for new businesses		✓		
Store hours		✓		
Infrastructure				
Sewers, study alternatives		✓		
Regulations				
Architectural review	✓	✓		
Promote adaptive re-use of buildings	✓	✓		
Commercial density	✓	✓		

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 in the Town-wide analysis.

1. Gateways:

- ✓ The development of traditional gateways into the Southold Hamlet Center was found to be unnecessary due to its relatively well defined edges. However, the creation of two Town-wide Gateways, on the Main Road in Laurel (the Western Gateway) and in Orient (the Eastern Gateway) is recommended. These gateways could include signage and graphics identifying all of the Town's hamlets in geographical order, which could then be coordinated with individual hamlet signage and graphics.

2. Human Scale:

- ✓ Southold's Hamlet Center covers a large spatial area, approximately 92 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.
- ✓ Even though the Hamlet Center stretches out a significant distance along Route 25, it retains a comfortable human scale due to the abundance and diversity of small shops along the Main Road. This eclectic mix of businesses must be encouraged and preserved.
- ✓ Southold has the potential to support much more civic and social interaction as an active element of the Hamlet Center's success. Events, concerts, displays and performances are encouraged at the gazebo, Southold Free Library, the High School and the churches. These venues are currently underutilized in that capacity and with some coordination, can be made to be integral components of the Hamlet Center. The library is actively engaged in developing a strategic plan that could foster community activities in the future.

3. Streetscape:

- ✓ 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.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ The street lamps in the Hamlet Center should be improved. A new fixture, more characteristic of the area, should be selected.
 - ✓ The Southold Hamlet Center's streetscape is recognized as attractive and generally well maintained. Routine improvements and regular maintenance should be accomplished incrementally over time.
 - ✓ Extensive new public streetscape improvements are not viewed as necessary at this time. However, incentives are recommended to encourage individual property owners and merchants to upgrade facades, signage, etc.

4. Building Design:

- ✓ Diversity in building design adds a degree of excitement and uniqueness to the Hamlet Center, and it is encouraged. This diversity however, must not jeopardize the areas historic character or resources.
- ✓ It was found to be unnecessary to specifically regulate and dictate building styles and design characteristics. Reliance on the Architectural Review Board combined with civic input would suffice to assure appropriate building design in the Hamlet Center.
- ✓ The Town should work with franchised chain stores to ensure that the design is compatible with Southold's historic character, similar to the way the McDonald's in Mattituck was done.

5. Vehicular Circulation:

- ✓ Route 25 is the primary east/west thoroughfare serving the North Fork, as well as the Southold 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, cautionary signage and pavement striping, are all examples of possible traffic calming measures.
- ✓ Truck traffic along Route 25 through the Hamlet Center is a problem. An obvious solution exists to divert truck traffic up to Route 48, which would allow that traffic to by-pass the business district. Improved travel speeds and much less traffic volumes on Route 48 should provide adequate incentives for motorists to divert their traffic pattern. Signage on the LIE and at periodic intervals on Route 25 can serve to alert and inform truck drivers and motorists of the Route 48 alternative.

- ✓ Improve the geometry and configuration of the Young's Avenue/Route 48 intersection.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Explore lowering the posted speed limit through the Hamlet Center.
- ✓ The Town's current roadway standards require large rights-of-way and wide paved streets. These streets, while safe and well engineered, result in unnecessary extra impervious surfaces, and create a character that is inconsistent with historic Southold. It is recommended that, consistent with public safety and traffic engineering provisions, the Town's roadway standards be reviewed with an eye toward reducing excessively wide roads.
- ✓ The hierarchy of roadways needs to be better delineated from Routes 48 and 25 down through local residential streets. This should be accomplished through better differentiated roadway standards.

6. Pedestrian Circulation:

- ✓ Provide sidewalks throughout the Hamlet Center. 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.
- ✓ As a method to reduce dependence on individual automobiles, and to encourage fitness among residents, a bicycle friendly infrastructure should be created. The Southold 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 bike 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.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ 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.