

INTRODUCTION: OVERVIEW OF WORK PROCESS

The Water Mill Development Strategy is one of a series of projects (including the recent Hampton Bays Hamlet Center Strategy) to implement through detailed studies the Town of Southampton Comprehensive Plan Update approved by the Town Board in March 1999. This comprehensive planning process included extensive public participation in defining its policies and proposals.

The further process for developing the Water Mill Development Strategy was designed in conjunction with the Town and the local community, and also involved a variety of participants:

- meetings with a broad-based advisory committee appointed by the Town Board;*
- individual and group interviews and conversations with key stakeholders and landowners;*
- public presentations to the Town Board and Planning Commission;*
- followup meetings with town officials, not-for-profit participants, property owners and private real estate interests.*

In response to this input, the consultant team—made up of urban designers, landscape architects, economic planners, transportation engineers and zoning/ regulatory specialists— has established a balanced development approach for the center area and criteria for how this development should occur.

This planning process took place simultaneously with a number of other projects, which have helped inform its conclusions. These include:

- State DOT transportation refinements to the Montauk Highway right-of-way,*
- creation of new hamlet office (HO) and hamlet commercial (HC) zoning districts for the Town,*
- creation of a new design review board with an emphasis on review of commercial and hamlet center projects, and*
- ongoing private development proposals.*

The process began in mid 2000 with a series of meetings and individual interviews with the Project Advisory Committee and key stakeholders: landowners and representatives of the community and local institutions. Inventory and analysis of local issues identified from these meetings was facilitated by assistance from Advisory Committee members. A series of options for related transportation and land use improvements were prepared and reviewed with the client and Project Advisory Committee. Based on this review, the options were refined and again discussed with Town officials and various stakeholders, including the Project Advisory Committee. Throughout the process, the Advisory Committee in turn reported project status and progress on a regular basis to the larger Community Advisory Committee.

The product of the work includes the following elements:

- *a long-term 'vision plan' and short-term strategy for the hamlet center, focusing on the central core where preservation or refinements to already developed property, improvements to transportation, and feasible open space or development on undeveloped property can result in an attractive and integrated center.*
- *an implementation framework, including a phasing strategy that suggests what actions, and by whom, will lead to desired responses.*
- *a set of design and beautification guidelines for the plan, defining both public sector and private or community improvements that can be made to enhance the image and function of the hamlet center.*

In addition, the work includes revised zoning and design criteria that establish rules for new development, including new Hamlet Office (HO) and Hamlet Commercial (HC) zoning districts to encourage residentially- scaled use. These town-wide district regulations were prepared as a separate work item, based on the policies and approaches described in this document and in the Town of Southampton 1999 Comprehensive Plan Update.