

INTRODUCTION

The Flanders/Northampton/Riverside hamlets comprise a socially and economically diverse area within the Town of Southampton. These hamlets are home to many historic and culturally significant structures, several scenic areas, various active local institutions and a populace comprised of a wide range of social and economic groups. Despite these attributes, the area suffers from a lack of strong identity, private investment, crime, pollution and a poor mix of land uses. Accordingly, in January 2002, the Town Board authorized the Department of Land Management to prepare the Flanders/Northampton/Riverside (FNR) Hamlet Revitalization Study, which was initiated in April 2002 by the Consultant team of Ferrandino & Associates Inc. with Dvirka and Bartilucci and Greenwoods Associates. The Scope of Work for this Revitalization Study clearly articulated objectives to examine land use options that would:

- Create a better sense of identity for each of these hamlets
- Accommodate tax ratable development
- Coordinate development with neighboring Riverhead
- Promote market rate housing and neighborhood enhancements
- Capture Pine Barren Credits in connection with the New York State Central Pine Barrens Plan and other efforts to protect the local environment
- Preserve maritime resources and the Peconic Estuary
- Implement plans to make Route 24 into a scenic Maritime Corridor, and not just a highway to relieve congestion in Riverhead
- Utilize proximity to adjoining natural areas including the Peconic Estuary and Central Pine Barrens, in particular – as a revitalization theme.

These objectives are to be met such that they will build upon and complement the vision and goals of the Town's *1970 Master Plan*, *the 1983 Flanders Business Corridor Study (Update to the 1970 Plan)*, *the 1999 Comprehensive Plan*,¹ *the New York State Pine Barrens Plan*, *the Peconic Estuary Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan*, *the Town's Parks and Recreation Mater Plan* (currently being prepared), *the Town of Riverhead's Downtown Revitalization Initiative* and the State Department of Transportation's improvement plan for Route 24.

Specific recommendations of the 1999 Comprehensive Plan Update include:

- Creating a better sense of identity for the Riverside/Flanders hamlets
- Accommodating tax ratable development
- Capturing Pine Barren Credits in connection with the Central Pine Barrens Plan and other efforts to protect the local environment
- Preserving maritime resources and the Peconic Estuary
- Implementing plans to make Route 24 into a scenic "Maritime Corridor," and not just a highway to relieve traffic in Riverhead
- Coordinating development with neighboring Riverhead

¹ These Plans have very specific recommendations for the Flanders/Northampton/Riverside hamlets and this study seeks to enhance and further develop implementation strategies for those recommendations, as an update to the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

- Promoting market-rate housing and neighborhood enhancements
- Utilizing proximity to adjoining natural areas – the Peconic Estuary and Central Pine Barrens in particular - as a revitalization theme

A process to develop a consensus-based revitalization plan was defined by the following six tasks.

Task 1: Citizen Involvement.

Successful planning requires eliciting and bringing together as many stakeholders as possible from the beginning to the end of the process. The Consultant worked with a broad-based Town-appointed Steering Advisory Committee and conducted several well-attended public outreach sessions and workshops to identify issues and propose solutions.

Task 2: Identification of Blighted, Deteriorated or Deteriorating Areas in the Community.²

Using a combination of on-site inspection and secondary source data, several areas within the Flanders/Northampton/Riverside Study Area were evaluated. This was not a detailed blight determination study, but rather an analysis that sets the stage for such a study and the possible preparation of a redevelopment plan which might include acquisition and clearance, as well as rehabilitation activities.

Task 3: Measurement of the Nature and Degree of Blight Factors Within Selected Areas.

Having identified potential areas of blight, properties were quantified according to the nature and degree of blight and blighting factors demonstrated.

Task 4: Identification of Potential Project Areas and What Types of Redevelopment are Contemplated.

Possible development scenarios in the area were explored and outlined, in particular Hamlet Centers, waterfront developments and recreational options.

Task 5: Determination of the Financial, Relocation, Land Use Controls and Other Resources Needed and Available to Renew Such Areas.

Based on the above tasks, specific implementation mechanisms, as well as grants procurement venues to assist in implementing the proposed recommendations, are put forward in this report.

Task 6: Schedule and Programming of Redevelopment Activities.

A priority matrix was developed that helps establish the hierarchy of importance for the various projects and the timing of implementing them - - a blueprint, if you will, for

² The term *blight* is used in reference to physical or aesthetic degradation. A more specific definition is provided in subsequent sections of this report.

improvement over time. This report outlines the outcome of these tasks and puts forth recommendations³ to help revitalize and rejuvenate the Flanders/Northampton/Riverside Study Area.

1.0 STUDY AREA

1.1 Geographic Context

The three hamlets that comprise the Study Area - - Flanders, Northampton and Riverside (F/N/R) - - are located in the northwestern portion of the Town of Southampton, in Suffolk County, north of Route 27 (**see Map 1**). The Peconic River defines the Study Area's northern boundary, while the southern portion is defined by the boundaries of the Central Pine Barrens Reserve. Riverside and Northampton form the western boundary (along Route 24 including the County Government Center), while the eastern border of Flanders delineates the eastern edge of the Study Area (**see Map 2**). The Study Area encompasses approximately 40 square miles or approximately 25 to 30 percent of the total area of the Town of Southampton.

Given the objectives of this study and the protected status of much of the land designated by the *New York State Central Pine Barrens Act* (the *Core Preservation Area* accounts for almost 85 percent of the land area within the Study Area and is not available for development), the analysis focused on currently developed areas or areas with potential for future development. Thus, the Study Areas are limited to more specific Focus Areas as defined by **Map 3**. This area is approximately 6 to 7 square miles or 5 percent of the total area of the Town. In general, the Focus Areas are characterized by grid pattern side streets off the main arterials of Flanders Road (State Route 24) and Riverhead Moriches Road (County Road 51).

1.2 Demographic Composition

Population

The three hamlets⁴ have a combined population of 7,808 people.⁵ This accounts for approximately 13 percent of the Town of Southampton's total population. The hamlets also have a slightly lower median age than the Town and, with the exception of Riverside, are also lower than the County. The Flanders hamlet is the most populous of the three in the Study Area and is predominantly White in racial composition. However this hamlet has the largest Hispanic population of the three hamlets and each of the minority population groups⁶ has grown at a significant rate since 1990. Northampton,

³ The report's recommendations build upon the proposed "strategic action items" identified in the 1999 *Comprehensive Plan*.

⁴ Hamlet refers to a geographic area that has generally understood boundaries, which are not defined by any unique political jurisdiction (such as a hamlet level government). The Census refers to such hamlets as "census designated places [CDP]".

⁵ Based on the 2000 U.S. Census.

⁶ As defined by the 2000 U.S. Census.

on the other hand, while having a much smaller population, is evenly represented by both White and African-American groups, while an additional 13 percent of its population is either Hispanic or of "two or more races."⁷ Finally, the hamlet of Riverside, while predominantly White, has the largest African-American population of the three hamlets in the Study Area and the population has grown significantly in each racial category since 1990. **See Tables 1, 2 and 3 below.**

Both the population growth and racial diversity in these hamlets are encouraging for a revitalization effort. The social capital generated by such diversity is conducive, and in many cases essential, for creating positive economic change.

Table 1
Total Population 1990 - 2000

	Suffolk County	Town of Southampton	Flanders	Riverside	Northampton
1990	1,409,716	46,167	3,330	1,317	N/A
2000	1,568,780	59,412	4,148	3,153	507
Percent Change	+11.28	+28.69	+24.56	+139.40	N/A

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Table 2
Median Age

	Suffolk County	Town of Southampton	Flanders	Riverside	Northampton
1990	33.40	39.00	31.60	57.70	N/A
2000	36.50	40.40	34.50	37.40	34.00
Percent Change	+8.49	+3.47	+8.41	-54.28	N/A

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Income & Labor Force

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, when compared with both the Town of Southampton and Suffolk County, each of the three hamlets has a relatively low median household income, in particular Riverside (\$28,208) **(see Table 3)**. Further, Riverside’s labor force participation rate is very low at only 32.1 percent **(see Table 4)**. On the other hand, Flanders and Northampton, while having much higher labor force participation rates, suffer from higher levels of unemployment - 5 percent compared with 2.5 percent for the Town and 3.9 percent for the County – and in the case of Flanders this represents a 3.1 percentage point increase since 1990 **(see Table 5)**.

⁷ The 1990 U.S. Census did not identify the Northampton hamlet as a Census Designated Place; thus no comparative data are available from 1990. In 1990, the Northampton area was split between the Pine Valley CDP and the Riverside CDP.

**Table 3
Racial Composition**

	1990	2000	Percent Change
Suffolk County			
White	1,190,315	1,200,755	+0.88
American Indian	2,994	3,807	+27.15
Black (African-American)	82,910	98,553	+18.87
Asian and Pacific Islander	23,100	35,195	+52.36
Hispanic	87,852	149,411	+70.07
Other	22,545	51,875	+130.10
Two or More Races	N/A	29,184	N/A
Town of Southampton			
White	40,295	48,133	+19.45
American Indian	152	224	+47.37
Black (African-American)	4,009	3,624	-9.60
Asian and Pacific Islander	295	533	+80.68
Hispanic	1,191	4,700	+294.63
Other	225	1,249	+455.11
Two or More Races	N/A	949	N/A
Flanders			
White	2,541	2,597	+2.20
American Indian	26	50	+92.31
Black (African-American)	616	725	+17.69
Asian and Pacific Islander	28	26	-7.14
Hispanic	99	502	+407.07
Other	20	139	+595
Two or More Races	N/A	109	N/A
Riverside			
White	792	1,699	+114.52
American Indian	14	31	+121.43
Black (African-American)	490	1,023	+108.78
Asian and Pacific Islander	4	21	+425.00
Hispanic	17	278	+1,535
Other	1	39	+3,800
Two or More Races	N/A	62	N/A
Northampton			
White	N/A	217	N/A
American Indian	N/A	4	N/A
Black (African-American)	N/A	207	N/A
Asian and Pacific Islander	N/A	8	N/A
Hispanic	N/A	39	N/A
Other	N/A	11	N/A
Two or More Races	N/A	25	N/A

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Table 4
Median Household Income

	Suffolk County	Town of Southamton	Flanders	Riverside	Northampton
1990	\$49,128	\$36,859	\$37,271	\$18,393	N/A
2000	\$65,288	\$53,887	\$46,711	\$28,208	\$47,500
Percent Change	+32.89	+46.19	+25.13	+53.36	N/A

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Table 5
Labor Force Participation Rate

	Suffolk County	Town of Southamton	Flanders	Riverside	Northampton
1990	67.7 percent	59.4 percent	69.8 percent	40.5 percent	N/A
2000	65.4 percent	61.1 percent	73.2 percent	32.1 percent	71.8 percent
Percent Change	-2.3	+1.7	+3.4	-8.4	N/A

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Table 6
Unemployment Rate

	Suffolk County	Town of Southamton	Flanders	Riverside	Northampton
1990	4.8 percent	3.5 percent	1.9 percent	4.6 percent	N/A
2000	3.9 percent	2.5 percent	5.0 percent	2.5 percent	5.0 percent
Percent Change	-0.9	-1.0	+3.1	-2.1	N/A

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

1.3 Existing Land Uses

All three hamlets are predominantly residential in nature (**see Map 4**). However, existing open space, commercial and small-scale retail land uses indicate potential for a more mixed-use and vibrant area.⁸

Housing

There are 2,652 housing units in the Study Area (of which over half are in Flanders – 1,521), which is approximately 7 percent of the total housing units in the Town of Southamptton (**see Table 6**). Most of these are single family or converted single-family dwellings, both for seasonal and year-round living, and include ownership and rental units. Lot sizes range from approximately 10,000 square feet to 80,000 square feet, in accordance with the existing zoning ordinance. When accounting for seasonal housing, the number of vacant units in each hamlet is relatively low, while the condition of the housing stock ranges from very well maintained units to dilapidated and poorly maintained units (**see Figures 1 and 2**).



Figure 1. “Well” Maintained Residential Property in Study Area.

⁸ Certainly, the public outreach validated this hypothesis, as residents expressed frustration over the current lack of such resources.



Figure 2. "Fair" Maintained Residential Property in Study Area.



Figure 3. "Poorly" Maintained Property in Study Area.

**Table 7
Comparative Housing Data**

	1990	2000	Percent Change
Suffolk County			
Total Housing Units	481,317	522,323	+8.52
Occupied	424,719	469,299	+10.5
Owner	340,253	374,360	+10.02
Renter	84,466	94,939	+12.4
Vacant	56,598	53,024	-6.31
For Rent	6,327	3,293	-47.95
For Sale	6,679	3,274	-50.98
Seasonal	35,953	38,050	+5.83
Other	7,639	8,407	+10.05
Town of Southampton			
Total Housing Units	33,622	35,836	+6.58
Occupied	18,029	21,504	+19.27
Owner	13,672	16,348	+19.57
Renter	4,357	5,156	+18.34
Vacant	15,593	14,332	-8.09
For Rent	788	282	-64.21
For Sale	882	335	-62.02
Seasonal	12,960	12,604	+2.75
Other	7,639	8,407	+10.05
Flanders			
Total Housing Units	1,459	1,521	+4.25
Occupied	1,123	1,260	+12.20
Owner	833	871	+4.56
Renter	290	381	+31.38
Vacant	66	261	-295.45
For Rent	17	16	-5.88
For Sale	2	9	+28.57
Seasonal	22	181	+722.72
Other	25	55	+120.00
Riverside			
Total Housing Units	700	926	+32.29
Occupied	634	846	+33.44
Owner	507	652	+28.60
Renter	127	194	+52.76
Vacant	66	80	+21.21
For Rent	17	16	-5.88
For Sale	2	8	+300.00
Seasonal	22	22	0
Other	25	34	+36.00
Northampton			
Total Housing Units	N/A	205	N/A
Occupied	N/A	158	N/A
Owner	N/A	108	N/A
Renter	N/A	50	N/A
Vacant	N/A	47	N/A
For Rent	N/A	0	N/A
For Sale	N/A	1	N/A
Seasonal	N/A	20	N/A
Other	N/A	0	N/A

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Parks and Recreation

Parks

The Study Area is predominantly (70-80 percent) occupied by State, County and private parks/recreational areas, which are also primarily located within the Pine Barrens. Additional park areas are being developed by the Town in each of the Hamlet areas (refer to subsection 1.8 of this report). This inventory includes:

State

- The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation area that is south of Riverside and near Wildwood Lake
- The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation area that is at the western end of Flanders east of Route 104 and south of the Route 105/Route 104 Intersection/Merge.

County

There are also a number of County parks in the Study Area including the following:

- Peconic Hills
- Cranberry Bog
- Maple Swamp
- Peconic Bog
- Birch Creek – Owl Pond
- Hubbard Creek
- Sears – Bellows Pond (Campgrounds and current site of “Big Duck” historic landmark)
- Black Duck (Old Hunting Lodge)

Town

- 144 acres at Iron Point (Flanders – refer to Section 1.8)
- Ludlam Park (Riverside)
- Old Big Duck Site (Flanders – refer to Section 1.8)
- Wildwood Lake (Northampton)
- Flanders Memorial Park (Flanders)

Private

Besides public park areas, there are several private recreational areas. These include:

- Hampton Hills Golf and Country Club
- Flanders Men’s Club
- Wildwood Lanes Bowling Alley (Northampton)
- Peconic Health & Raquet (Flanders) – formerly “7Z’s” (has indoor swimming pool)
- Suffolk County Community College (Speonk Riverhead Road)

Recreation is a broad topic, meaning different things to different people. Different types of recreational activities have their own parameters, standards and issues for planning. Given that the Town is currently undertaking a *Parks and Recreation Master Plan*, it was considered outside the scope of this study to conduct a detailed inventory of public and private recreation space in the hamlets. Despite the above available parkland, it was expressed through the public outreach process that there are limited active recreational opportunities available within the three hamlets and any revitalization effort should take recreational facilities into account. Certainly, the area should not be considered devoid of parks and recreational facilities, but rather the key issues seem to be access, the types of available uses and the quality of existing space. Moreover, plans are currently underway by the Town to improve a park at the southern portion of Wildwood Lake in Northampton, to relocate the “Big Duck” to its original “nesting grounds” (which the community expressed strong support for) and develop a tourist ‘visitors’ center around it, to enhance Ludlum Park in Riverside and to develop another recreational area at Iron Point in Flanders.

Historic Resources

According to the *1999 Comprehensive Plan*, the Town’s historic sites and structures are “only partially recognized, sporadically documented and minimally protected.” The Plan goes on to recognize that “the State of New York has estimated that only 1 percent of all the historic sites and structures in Southampton have been inventoried.” . Further, the 1999 Comprehensive Plan recommends that the Town Board designate Hamlet Heritage Areas after receiving a nomination from the Town Landmarks and Districts Board, a hamlet based historic group, or another Town body or individual. The 1999 Comprehensive Plan presents a goal of working “with local historic preservation groups to create ‘Hamlet Heritage Areas’ that identify and protect locally significant historic districts, buildings, and sites.” One of the implementation strategies is the designation of hamlet heritage areas. These would be “areas where concentrations of historic resources may be found within the Town.” Such an area would become the subject of additional signage and potentially a limited regulatory capacity. Designated as an overlay zone, the Hamlet Heritage Areas may have different dimensional requirements and standards for signage and landscaping that reflect the existing character of the hamlet. Accordingly, a cultural resource survey was undertaken by the Town⁹ and a draft report was subsequently prepared by the Town’s Landmark and Historic District Board documenting the historic resources in the F/N/R Study Area.

While this Revitalization Study did not focus on historic resources in the F/N/R area, those historic resources identified by the Town’s Landmark and Historic District Board in the Study Area have been documented in **Map 5** (and the complete list is provided in **Appendix A** to this report). Moreover, the community did express support for the recommendations on historic resources outlined in the Comprehensive Plan, in particular as related to the J. Benjamin House located on the north side of Route 24 and those farm houses that reflect the farming and fishing tradition of the community.

⁹ *Draft Cultural Resources Survey of the Town of Southampton, New York.* GAI consultants, July 2000.

Retail/Commercial/Industrial (Existing Land Uses)

Along the Route 24 corridor there are several examples of small retail/commercial and light industrial uses (such as storage, warehousing and gas stations). These uses however, are distributed along this arterial with little architectural or functional continuity (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. Adjacent retail properties on Route 24

The northwestern edge of the Study Area (Traffic Circle in Riverside) represents the greatest concentration of such uses. However, given the significance of this area as a potential key gateway to both the Town of Southampton and the hamlet of Riverside, it is questionable whether this is an appropriate area for such automobile dependent uses.¹⁰

Public/Institutional/Community Facilities

The Study Area contains the County Government Center, the Phillips Avenue School, the Head Start Facility, the Flanders Fire Station and several community-based churches. Such institutions represent a strong base for developing social capital and accordingly are a significant asset to the area. Also, as described in Section 1.8 of this report plans have been put forward to develop a State Police Barracks in the vicinity of Riverleigh Avenue and Route 24, and similar consideration is being given by the Town Supervisor to develop a police substation in the Northampton hamlet. There may also be a need for fire substation facilities in the F/N/R/ area as growth patterns and transportation issues evolve.

¹⁰ The 1999 *Comprehensive Plan* refers to this area as a Hamlet Center but, given the traffic congestions currently existing at this site and the types of uses typical for a Hamlet Center, a different vision for the Traffic Circle is considered later in this report.

1.4 Existing Zoning

Zoning refers to the delineation of districts and the establishment of regulations governing the use, placement, spacing and size of land and buildings. One possible outcome of this study is that some of the zoning districts in this area will be changed to facilitate more desirable physical improvements, tax ratable development and appropriate land uses. In general, the existing zoning in the Study Area permits a mix of uses ranging from residential to motels to light industrial to highway business, resort waterfront business and village business.

The Riverside area, including the Traffic Circle, is defined by seven zoning districts, HB (Highway Business), MTL (Motel Business), VB (Village Business), RWB (Resort Waterfront Business), LI40 (Light Industry), R15 and R80 (both Residential districts, on 15,000 square feet and 80,000 square feet respectively).

The Northampton area is defined by three zoning districts, HB, R15 and R10 (the latter allows for residential development on a minimum 10,000 square foot lot).

Finally, the Flanders area is defined by seven zones, R40, R15, R10, RWB, OD (Office Business District), VB and CR60 (the latter is a country residential district allowing for residential development on a minimum of 60,000 square foot lots).¹¹

1.5 Existing Infrastructure

There are a number of State, County and Town roads in the Study Area, totaling approximately 60 miles in length, incorporating different pavement types (i.e. asphalt, concrete and sand/dirt). There are also natural features as described below (**see Maps 7 and 8** to locate these roads and natural areas).

State Roads

There are approximately 25 miles of State roads as follows:

- Route 27, known as Sunrise Highway, is approximately 11 miles in length
- Route 24, known as Nugent Drive, Centre Drive, Flanders Road, Riverhead-Hampton Bays Road, is approximately 10 miles in length
- Route 51, known as Moriches-Riverhead Road, is approximately 4 miles in length.

County Roads

There are approximately 10 miles of County roads as follows:

- Route 94/34A, known as Center Drive/Bridge, is approximately 0.5 mile in length
- Route 63, known as Riverhead-Moriches Road, is approximately 3 miles in length
- Route 104, known as Riverhead-Quogue Road, is approximately 4 miles in length
- Route 105, known as Cross River Road, is approximately 1.5 miles in length
- Route 31, known as Old Riverhead Road, is approximately 1 mile in length

¹¹ The zoning districts are delineated on **Map 6** and the specific definitions are outlined in **Appendix B** to this report.

Local Roads

There are approximately 25 miles of various paved/unpaved roads and side streets in the Study Area.

While Route 24 has undergone extensive improvements, a general observation of all of the 60 miles of roads in the Study Area and the 20 to 25 miles of roads in the Focus Areas is that they are generally in acceptable condition. While some routine improvements such as resurfacing may be required in selected segments of some roads, the existing road conditions do not contribute to blight conditions, with the exception of some unimproved private roads outside of the Town's Highway System that essentially act as common driveways. The Town allows homeowners on unimproved private roads to form a Special Assessment District for Local Improvement and dedication of the road into the Town Highway System (Town Law 200).

Trustee Roads

Trustee roads are legal but unimproved public roads. There are three trustee roads within the Study Area, specifically Birch Creek Road, Old Squires Road and Hildreth Road.

Sidewalks and Curbs

In general, the Study Area is suburban in nature with local streets and roads receiving discharge from primarily one-story single-family homes. Typically, such a suburban setting would not involve curbs and sidewalks and this is the case for this area. However, in the one-half mile vicinity of the Traffic Circle, there are a few streets and roads that have limited curbs and sidewalks. Their condition is generally acceptable, except for a few locations which require some routine repairs or improvements to either or both the curb and/or sidewalk. In no case, however, do these conditions contribute to blight.

With respect to future revitalization plans, new projects or redevelopment projects within the one-half mile radius of the Traffic Circle should consider, as appropriate, providing new or improved curbs and sidewalks to facilitate pedestrian movement within this area.

Water Supply

Public water supply to the Northampton area is provided by the Suffolk County Water Authority. Public water supply to the Riverside and Flanders area is provided by the Riverside and Flanders Water Supply Districts, respectively, and via Operations and Management Agreements with the Suffolk County Water Authority. While groundwater in the Focus Areas is technically part of a sole source water supply, in the area along Route 24 water supply wells would not be necessary or appropriate.

Wastewater

Wastewater generated within the Study Area is disposed to on-site septic/cesspool systems. An exception to this is the County Center jail-court house and office complex, which has its wastewater pumped to the Riverhead Water Pollution Control Plant. The pump station for the County Center complex is located off Route 24 (north side) by the Nugent Drive/Center Drive bridge (River Street). In general, subsurface discharges in

certain shoreline areas between Route 24 and the Peconic River or Reeves Bay require special consideration with respect to groundwater depths and recharge capabilities and any large development, such as the proposed Rivercatwalk development will most likely need to consider the development of independent sewage treatment plants (refer to section 4.2 of this report).

1.6 Natural Environment

Water Bodies and Wetlands

The Study Area is rich in water-related resources that include marine water bodies, freshwater water bodies and wetlands. This includes the following:

Marine

- Peconic River
- Flanders Bay
- Great Peconic Bay
- Reeves Bay
- Hubbard Creek
- Goose Creek
- Mill Creek
- Birch Creek

Freshwater

- Wildwood Lake
- Cheney Pond
- Sears Pond
- Division Pond
- House Pond
- Grass Pond
- Penny Pond
- Bellows Pond

Wetland Areas

- Cedar Swamp
- Cedar Pond
- Sweezy Pond
- Birch Creek Wetlands
- Cow Yard
- Goose Neck Point
- Hubbard Wetlands
- Mill Creek Wetlands
- Cross River Wetlands
- Maple Swamp

Topography

The Study Area's topography is generally flat with a few areas containing hills and relief. The Route 24 corridor along the Peconic River and Flanders Bay is generally flat with elevations ranging between 2 and 10 feet above sea level. Moving south from Route 24, the elevations increase to between 100 and 200 feet above sea level along Route 27 – Sunrise Highway. The highest point in the Study Area is approximately 295 feet above sea level near Route 51 and Suffolk County Community College.

Within the Northampton area, elevations range between 20 and 50 feet above sea level. Within the Riverside area, the elevations range between 5 and 20 feet above sea level and within the Flanders area, the elevations range between 10 and 50 feet above sea level.

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In general, the topography in the Focus Areas does not create erosion or other problems that would be linked to blight conditions, nor does it present difficulties with respect to redevelopment or revitalization efforts.

Groundwater

Most of the Study Area is in the Central Pine Barrens Special Groundwater Protection Area. An area excluded is the part of the Study Area between Route 24 and the Peconic River from the Traffic Circle to Goose Creek. Within the Special Groundwater Protection Area, the least restrictive requirements are in Riverside and Flanders south along Route 24 from the Traffic Circle to Pleasure Drive.

The groundwater in the Study Area is generally at or slightly above sea level along the Peconic River and Flanders Bay shoreline and at approximately 25 feet above sea level along Sunrise Highway, Route 27. Along Route 24, the groundwater is generally less than 10 feet above sea level and between 10 to 20 feet for most of the area south of Route 24.

Storm Water

The entire Study Area Focus Area has well-drained soils that allow for generally acceptable groundwater recharge. In addition, many parts of the Focus Area are relatively close to surface water bodies such as rivers, creeks, bays, ponds and lakes. Except for routine localized drainage improvements, in general, roadway runoff in the Focus Area is not contributing to blight. This proximity to such water bodies for the storm water discharges creates the need to incorporate storm water runoff control measures to prevent water quality and erosion control problems. In addition, after March 10, 2003: 1) all construction sites disturbing more than one acre must have a State permit for their runoff and a construction runoff control plan; and 2) all new development and redevelopment projects must have water quality control measures as part of their runoff management plans.

1.7 Other Planning Programs and Reports

1970 Town Master Plan

As stated in New York State's Town Law section 272-a 11(a), once adopted, all Town land use regulations must be in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan. A comprehensive plan is intended to guide the growth and development of a community or region and typically includes recommendations for the community's future economic, housing, recreation, open space, transportation and public facilities development. The Town of Southampton's first Comprehensive Plan (1970) depicts the Flanders-Riverside area as predominantly residential with a business and governmental center located in Riverhead. Specific recommendations include:

- In the case of the Riverside business district (which is delineated in the Plan as stretching along both sides of Riverhead-Hampton Bays Road and along both sides of Peconic Avenue northerly to the Peconic River) - a "major land use redevelopment to improve the traffic circulation, off-street parking, and the general quality of the district"

In general, the topography in the Focus Areas does not create erosion or other problems that would be linked to blight conditions, nor does it present difficulties with respect to redevelopment or revitalization efforts.

Groundwater

Most of the Study Area is in the Central Pine Barrens Special Groundwater Protection Area. An area excluded is the part of the Study Area between Route 24 and the Peconic River from the Traffic Circle to Goose Creek. Within the Special Groundwater Protection Area, the least restrictive requirements are in Riverside and Flanders south along Route 24 from the Traffic Circle to Pleasure Drive.

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- A concerted effort by several levels of government and private owners to combat a “fairly extensive spread” of blight.
- Specific traffic improvements to improve service to abutting businesses and expediate traffic flows at the Riverhead Traffic Circle.
- The expansion of the Sears Bellows County Park Lands
- A major housing rehabilitation program should be implemented including increased code enforcement and spot demolition of buildings in the surrounding areas .

Master Plan Update - Flanders Road Business Study (1983)

This study was “requested” by the Flanders Civic Association to determine if and where a business area could be located in the hamlet to provide it with a focal point. This study put forward a variety of land use and transportation recommendations related to business development in Flanders and the surrounding area. In summary, the report recommends the establishment of a hamlet center in Flanders that is relatively small and serving local needs only. The study further recommends that larger scale business development take place in Riverside.

1999 Comprehensive Plan Update

The 1970 Plan was updated in 1999 and makes specific recommendations for each of the Flanders, Northampton and Riverside hamlets on key topics such as Natural Resources, Historic Resources, Scenic Resources, Greenways and Open Space, Affordable Housing, Community Facilities, Economic Sectors, Agriculture, Fisheries, Hamlet Business Areas and Transportation. Building upon the *1970 Master Plan*, the 1999 update puts forward recommendations for the Riverside-Flanders Hamlet Center. Specific recommendations include (but are not limited to):

- Promote mixed-use residential and low-scale commercial development with a recreation/maritime theme along the Peconic River.
- Promote park and related uses on the northwest side of the circle.
- Promote post-office or satellite post office in Riverside/Flanders.
- Expand or create new open space and recreation areas
- Promote compatible commercial/light industrial development at the former drive-in movie theatre site.
- Target funds for housing reinvestment in the area
- Consider a Town Police substation or a New York State Police Barracks in the Hamlet Center
- Maintain, but redesign the Traffic Circle.
- Maintain two-way traffic on Peconic Avenue, with a direct pedestrian connection to Riverhead.
- Acquire and landscape portions of the Traffic Circle.
- Promote a traditional Hamlet Center on Route 24, just to the east of the Circle.

Peconic Estuary Program

The Study Area is adjacent to the Peconic River and Flanders Bay, which are part of the Peconic Estuary. The watershed for this estuary covers more than 110,000 acres of land and 121,000 acres of surface water. Approximately 80 to 90 percent of the F/N/R Study

Area and 100 percent of the Focus Areas is within this watershed. The Peconic Estuary has been designated by the Federal government as one of 28 estuaries of national significance, and as a result, a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan has been completed. The Plan includes numerous strategies and actions to control brown tide in the estuary, manage nutrient bacterial and toxic loads, protect habitat and living resources and critical land and carry out public education and outreach. Therefore, any redevelopment or revitalization activities, plans or projects need to be consistent with the strategies in this Plan.

Long Island Central Pine Barrens

In 1993, the Long Island Pine Barrens Maritime Reserve Act was passed by the State Legislature, which created the third largest forest preserve in New York State—the Long Island Central Pine Barrens. The Act defined two geographical areas. The overall Central Pine Barrens zone totals 100,000 acres. A portion of this is known as the Core Preservation Area (52,500 acres), while the remaining portion is known as the Compatible Growth Area (47,500 acres). The Compatible Growth Areas are those designated to accommodate appropriate patterns of development and regional growth, with recognition of the rights of private landowners and the purpose of preservation of the core area.

Except for land located between Route 24 and the Peconic River/Flanders Bay, all of the land in the Study Area is within the Pine Barrens. Of this, all of the land is in the Core Preservation Area except for land on the north and south sides of Route 24 from the Traffic Circle to Pleasure Drive. This excluded area is designated as a Compatible Growth Area (**see Map 8**).

1.8 Current Initiatives

It is important to note that, paralleling this study, the Town of Southampton has undertaken many initiatives that will contribute to the revitalization of the Flanders/Northampton/Riverside area, in particular the acquisition of various parcels of land for the development of passive and active park areas, the relocation of the “Big Duck” (a historic Town landmark listed on National and State Registers of Historic Places) and the development of a new State Police barracks.

Land Acquisition for Parkland Development

Iron Point Park (Flanders)

The Town has recently purchased approximately 144 acres of land on Reeves Bay (at Iron Point) to be both used for active recreation and preserved as a natural scenic reserve in the Flanders community. The conceptual plan shows opportunities for both passive and active recreation, such as campgrounds, picnic areas, a skate park, baseball diamonds, volleyball and basketball courts and boat launches.

Wildwood Lake Park (Northampton)

The Town is constructing a public restroom facility and sanitary system within an existing parking lot at Town-owned Wildwood Park, situated within the Central Pine Barrens Core Preservation area. This includes repair, renovation and asphalt surfacing of an

existing approximate 24,079 square foot parking lot. Further, the project will include the construction of a 200 square foot wood frame public bathroom facility, with allowance for three future expansion pools, greater than 100 feet landward of wetlands and surface waters associated with Wildwood Lake, as well as playground and lighting improvements.

Tire Craft Property (Riverside)

This property, adjacent to the Riverside Traffic Circle, has been purchased by the Town and plans are being developed to demolish the existing building and expand the adjacent park, to create a small public green space. Such a move is in concert with the community vision of recreating the Traffic Circle area to serve as a “gateway” into the community.

Relocation of the “Big Duck”

In May of 2001, the Town of Southampton purchased the property at 1012 Route 24 in Flanders, via the Community Preservation Fund, as part of an ongoing effort to protect the Town’s valuable wetland resources. This property was historically used for duck farming and was the original site of the “Big Duck.” The duck farm use was abandoned many years ago. Since that time the site has remained basically unchanged, the structures have slowly deteriorated and the site has become overgrown. The Town is currently proposing demolition of some of the existing structures and restoration of the disturbed areas as well as relocating the “Big Duck” from its current location back to this site (this initiative is strongly supported by the local community).

Development of State Police Barracks

Currently a proposal has been put forward to develop a 7,200+ square foot State Police Barracks on 1.6 acres of land abutting County Road 104. Such a facility will support the Town’s effort to add both a police presence and employment in the Riverside area.

Other Initiatives

The Town has acquired five (5) tax-defaulted properties from the County in the area of Old Quogue Road and Riverleigh Avenue, south of the Traffic Circle, which have been placed in an “Affordable Housing Land Bank.” These properties are to be rehabilitated by the Town for use as affordable housing units.

1.9 Summary

The existing land use, socio-economic, natural environment and infrastructure conditions of the Study Area have many attributes but also pose many challenges. Accordingly, this effort seeks to build upon and enhance the area’s assets while providing a blueprint or strategy for dealing with the various challenges. The Town should be applauded for its current proactive initiatives that will support the recommendations for revitalization put forward in this study.