

I. NEW SUFFOLK HAMLET OVERVIEW:

New Suffolk has Southold's only waterfront Hamlet Center. Located on the western shore of Cutchogue Harbor, and extending into Peconic Bay's North Race, facing Robins Island, New Suffolk is isolated from mainland Southold by a band of wetlands extending north and east from West Creek, and west from Marsh Point, and by a series of active agricultural lands. Characterized by its "grid" roadway layout, New Suffolk is today a mature, generally "built-out" hamlet of small residential lots, generally ¼ acre in area, supported by a modest Hamlet Center (Figure NS-1).

The Hamlet Center has a unique and historic association with Peconic Bay. One of the first landowners in the area in the 17th century was Ensign John Booth. The area was originally known as Booth's Neck. The date in the chimney of the oldest house in New Suffolk reads 1760, which highlights the area's historic heritage.

By the 18th century the area was called Robin's Island Neck and was a busy port. As far back as 1820, New Suffolk was the terminus for boats making regular runs to New York City. Rails for the Long Island Railroad, which was extended to Greenport in 1844, were landed at Main Street dock and were carted to the right-of-way by farmers who received a free passage to New York for their labor.

In 1899, the Holland Torpedo Boat Co. opened a plant for testing submarines. The basin and Peconic Bay were used as testing grounds. The first submarine accepted by the U.S. Navy, the USS Holland VI, was launched here, making New Suffolk the first submarine base in this country.

Oyster and scallop industries flourished on Peconic Bay in New Suffolk's heyday. Late spring brought in the weakfish season and with it, the hordes of sports fishermen who filled the white painted boarding houses that lined New Suffolk's streets.

II. NEW SUFFOLK HAMLET VISION:

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

- Preserve the character and integrity of the “grid.”
- New large-scale, high density residential development is inappropriate in the Hamlet.
- Limited opportunities for infill development may exist in New Suffolk. To that end, the HALO zone should be designed to reflect the existing character of the Hamlet and to accommodate second dwelling units.
- New Suffolk seeks to reestablish its historic maritime heritage by revitalizing the underutilized waterfront with water-dependent and water-related uses but on a small scale appropriate to the present character of the hamlet, which is predominantly residential.
- New Suffolk's historic character is also a vital aspect of the area’s “sense of place” and should be reinforced.

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

New Suffolk’s strengths were generally identified as its quality of life, community character and location. The hamlet was found to have a high degree of positive identity, community spirit and pride. The small village atmosphere was noted as a positive attribute and the waterfront was a highly regarded strength, specifically the hamlet’s waterfront heritage, its direct and convenient waterfront access and the beach. The relative compactness of the hamlet, and importantly, views, particularly of the water, and the streetscape were identified as important strengths of the hamlet. The hamlet’s unique roadway grid was also identified as a strength, because it fosters a distinct sense of place while also providing for an efficient circulation pattern. All of these attributes were identified to be preserved or expanded.

The primary weaknesses identified in New Suffolk are the lack of affordable housing and the lack of small shops supporting the neighborhood. Other weaknesses include the poor stormwater drainage and flooding conditions, and parking problems.

TABLE NS-1 NEW SUFFOLK STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES				
STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES	PRESERVE	ADD	REMOVE	PROHIBIT
Quality of Life				
High degree of positive hamlet identity	✓	✓		
High proportion of influential residents	✓			
Most beautiful hamlet on North Fork	✓			
Community spirit	✓			
Cohesive community with strong pride hamlet	✓	✓		
Active civic association	✓			
Small village atmosphere	✓			
Housing				
No rental housing		✓		
Lack of affordable housing		✓		
Business				
Lack of shops		✓		
Lack of convenience shopping		✓		
Reconstruct Post Office and adjacent general store.		✓		
Rehabilitate the vacant restaurant		✓		
Services				
Available public water	✓			
Poor drainage			✓	
Unkempt conditions and dust			✓	
Sewage and waste		✓		

Location				
Waterfront heritage	✓	✓		
Room to implement plans		✓		
Beach	✓			
Submarine heritage	✓			
Maintain public access to the Bay Beach on the South side of Main Street	✓			
Community Character				
Compactness	✓			
Variation in properties	✓			
Good views	✓			
Off beaten path	✓			
Many trees	✓	✓		
School property	✓			
Lack of a community meeting place		✓		
Public access to the waterfront	✓			
Appropriate utilization of the waterfront	✓			
Commercial use infringing on public lands				✓
Attractiveness to special commercial interest	✓			
Formal center (general store)		✓		
No building, structure or object erected on Main Street			✓	
Preserve the viewscape down Main Street	✓			
Traffic/Transportation:				
Well laid out street grid	✓			
Sidewalks		✓		
Fast traffic in and out				✓
Parking enforcement		✓		
Narrow roadways	✓			
Bike path connection		✓		

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.

1. Human Scale:

- ✓ The development of a community meeting house within the Hamlet Center is recommended to preserve the human scale of the hamlet, thereby avoiding the need to utilize the school, which is located a distance outside the Hamlet Center.

2. Waterfront:

- ✓ Enforce consistency with and recommendations of the LWRP. New Suffolk stakeholders believe that it offers support in preserving the character of the Hamlet.
- ✓ The most important underutilized parcel in the Hamlet Center is a 3.25 acre waterfront parcel owned by the Love Lane Acquisition Corp. This parcel, once owned by the Holland Torpedo Company, which built the first submarines in the United States and used the site to launch and test them, has in recent years been the subject of various redevelopment proposals. It is recommended that this parcel should support a mix of public and private use. Public waterfront access must be preserved while accommodating small marine-related water- dependent uses, such as a small docking facility for transient boats and a small marine motor repair shop, along with small-scale commercial use, such as small shops, or offices, a general store, the post office, perhaps a small museum focusing on local issues, a marine ecology demonstration project, a wind-surfing teaching station, the local yacht club and/or sailing association and other possibilities.
- ✓ Preserve waterfront access and promote water-dependent uses. New Suffolk's legacy as a working multi-use waterfront must be preserved. Maintain public access to the waterfront and maintain the marine viewscape at the end of Main Street.
- ✓ Designate mooring fields in Cutchogue Harbor. These moorings will allow the Hamlet to better serve local boaters. Mooring fields must be designed to comply with all applicable NYSDEC regulations, and must not interfere with navigable waters. Support facilities, such as dinghy storage areas, associated parking and water taxi services must be incorporated into this scheme.
- ✓ Provide for transient moorings in the Hamlet Center. These moorings, which can be regulated by the Town for a reasonable fee, will afford the

opportunity for boaters to visit the Hamlet Center as a destination, thereby supporting the economy and vitality of the area.

- ✓ Provide easily accessible and identifiable boat pump-out facilities.
- ✓ Preserve waterfront habitats, including wetlands. Fostering water enhanced and water compatible uses requires striking a fine balance with natural environments that requires constant vigilance. The long term vitality of waterfront habitats must be the paramount goal.
- ✓ Enhance treatment of stormwater runoff and water quality. Untreated stormwater runoff represents one of the greatest problems facing Peconic Bay today. Yard fertilizers, road salts, animal waste, faulty septic systems, petroleum runoff from roads and parking lots, and a host of others non-point source discharges, are all washed into the Bay via stormwater runoff. These compounds have degraded the Bay's water quality to such an extent that inland water quality treatment is now necessary. Development activity of any kind in the Hamlet must comply with current stormwater treatment and water quality requirements.
- ✓ Add more benches at Town Park.
- ✓ Make public restrooms at the Town Beach available beyond the customary beach season (end of June to Labor Day).
- ✓ Keep trash barrels at the Beach year round, and empty them on a regular basis.
- ✓ In addition to maintaining and enhancing public access to the waterfront physically, an unimpeded visual connection to the waterfront is an essential aspect of the Hamlet Center. Recognizing that marinas and boat yards are a present and historic land use along the waterfront, it is imperative that these facilities prohibit rack boat storage, or large boat storage buildings. Such facilities are generally large, tall and visually obtrusive. They invariably degrade the waterfront viewscape and the aesthetic appearance of the waterfront as a whole.
- ✓ The grade and configuration of the boat ramp off Jackson Street requires improvement. The ramp is too steep to allow for safe and efficient operation.

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.

- ✓ An on-going street tree planting program is recommended in the Hamlet Center. This program is intended to increase the density of street trees in the area, and should also include a maintenance component where damaged or dead trees are routinely replaced. As a waterfront community, New Suffolk absorbs the unabated brunt of many storms. As a result, street tree maintenance is particularly important.
- ✓ Preserve New Suffolk's linear grid street pattern and the unique and dramatic viewsheds it affords along streets and to the water. In order to ensure that the viewsheds remain unobstructed, construction of large structures on the waterfront should be prohibited.
- ✓ First Street is in many ways New Suffolk's "front street." The streetscape should be enhanced with decorative streetlights, street furniture and a distinctive sidewalk (brick pavers etc.).
- ✓ High intensity lighting and neon lighting should be avoided in the Hamlet Center. All lighting should be shielded and directed downward.

4. Vehicular Circulation:

- ✓ Install a stop sign at the east end of Main Street at First Street.
- ✓ Install a stop sign on Orchard Street at First Street.
- ✓ Prohibit on-street parking along the east side of First Street between King and Orchard Streets.
- ✓ All streets that end at the water should maintain accessibility to the waterfront for use by the residents of New Suffolk.
- ✓ Designate a truck route into the Hamlet Center (Main Street/First Street) and impose a weight limit for roadways not designated as a truck route.
- ✓ Modest traffic calming measures are recommended throughout the Hamlet. Signage, pavement striping, raised or textured crosswalks are examples of possible traffic calming measures.
- ✓ Evaluate all sight distance impediments at driveways and intersections and correct as required.

5. Parking:

- ✓ Given the scale of the New Suffolk Hamlet Center, it has been determined that additional public parking lots are not necessary.