

Plan for Wainscott

Wainscott is the smallest of the school districts and planning areas in East Hampton, both in terms of area, 6.8 square miles and population, 628¹. Wainscott also has the lowest year-round population density and lowest number of housing units per square mile. The potential residential build-out is the lowest in Wainscott compared with all the other East Hampton Planning Areas². However, since more than 25% of the planning area is vacant, the largest percentage of vacant land compared to all the other planning areas, there is great potential for change through future development in Wainscott. With only 29% of the existing farmland protected and a large amount of vacant land zoned for Commercial Industrial Use, future development according to zoning has a large potential to alter the small scale, rural setting and critical natural resources. The area generally north of the airport within Wainscott overlies the largest volume, highest quality and most important area for drinking water protection in the entire Town. Most of the hamlet's existing open space, comprising 25% of the land area, lies within this special groundwater area.

Applying the Eleven Goals and the Specific Criteria for Acquisition and Rezoning, the following general recommendations are offered for Wainscott:

- **Ground and Drinking Water Resources-** Take forceful measures to protect and reduce human impacts to the largest volume of high quality ground and drinking water resources within the entire Town, which exists beneath the land generally north of the Town Airport.
- **Pine Barrens-** Protect the Pine Barrens Site Type and biodiversity corresponding both to the high quality drinking water resources recharge area and properties recommended for protection with respect to the estuarine environment by the Critical Lands Protection Strategy of the Peconic Estuary Program.
- **Agriculture-** Protect the traditional agricultural industry, part of Suffolk County's Agricultural Industry ranked first in New York State and the agricultural land base south of Montauk Highway, identified as the best farmland in New York State. This agricultural land in Wainscott has been identified as eligible for inclusion in the East Hampton Scenic Area of Statewide Significance designation.
- **Georgica Pond-** Protect the surface waters, local fishing industry and biodiversity within Georgica Pond, also identified as eligible for inclusion in the East Hampton Scenic Area of Statewide Significance.
- **Montauk Highway -** Limit the number of new accesses, commercial sprawl and development along Montauk Highway to maintain the functionality of the Town's main roadway and the scenic approaches between hamlets.
- **Commercial Hamlet Center-** Improve the visual quality and viability of the commercial hamlet center along the north side of Montauk Highway.

¹ US Census 2000

² According to Table 2-2 in the Comprehensive Plan Recommendations of Dr. Lee Koppelman there were 553 potential residential building lots available in Wainscott as of 1999. The Town of East Hampton Land Available for Development "Build Out" Analysis prepared by the Planning Department in 2004 indicated a potential for 390 new residential building lots in Wainscott. Although both of these estimates contained limitations as described in the Build-out section of this Plan, it is safe to project that the residential build-out in Wainscott will remain the lowest of all the planning areas in East Hampton.

- **Affordable Housing-** Provide affordable housing opportunities to help meet the needs of year-round residents and their families.
- **Corrections to Zoning-** Make corrections to the existing zoning map.
- **Reductions to overall Build-Out-** Reduce the residential build-out in order to protect the natural and cultural features of Wainscott.

The specific zoning recommendations for Wainscott are depicted on Map 8 and are listed in Table 25. A general description of the zoning, major acquisition and land use specific recommendations is provided below in narrative form.

Ground and Drinking Water Resources-

Recommendation

1. Establish as the Priority Drinking Water Protection Area for East Hampton Town the area between the East Hampton/Southampton Town Boundary, the East Hampton Town/Sag Harbor Village boundary, Route 114 and the area north of the existing East Hampton airport. (Refer to Map 6). Recommend all vacant parcels within this area be included on the Community Preservation Fund List for priority acquisition.

Explanation- This land meets all five criteria for protecting groundwater resources described in the previous section. This land is within the NYS designated Special Groundwater Protection Area; it is within the EH Town designated Water Recharge Overlay District; it is within the five foot groundwater contour boundary; it contains and supplies recharge to several existing Suffolk County Water Authority Well fields; and it is covering high quality groundwater within an area containing a large block of protected open space.

In addition, this area, according to the East Hampton Town Water Resources Management Plan, corresponds to the largest volume of drinking water reserves in the entire town.

A large amount of this land area, over 1,000 acres, has already been permanently preserved. These protected acres, together with an additional 600 acres of vacant land in this area, are in their natural vegetated condition, and provide the highest quality groundwater recharge and the lowest potential for future contamination of groundwater resources.

This core area also supplies recharge to several of the largest capacity public well fields in East Hampton. The Sag Harbor Turnpike public well field along the east side of Rte. 114 opposite Goodfriend Drive, pumps the largest volume of water of any well field in East Hampton and derives its recharge from this core area¹. The Division Street public well field and water tower straddles the boundary with the town and Sag Harbor, and pumps the third largest volume of water. A third public well field was recently installed, within this core area and is expected to have a large capacity when fully operating, and a storage tank.

¹ LI SWAP report

Due to the highest volume of drinking water reserves, the high quality of the water, the large amount of existing protected open space and the importance to the existing public water supply system, the area between the East Hampton/Southampton Town Boundary, the East Hampton Town/Sag Harbor Village boundary, Route 114, and the land north of the Town Airport is of critical importance to all of East Hampton's drinking water supplies. The highest level of land use protection, acquisition, is recommended for the vacant land in this area.

Recommendation

2. Rezone to Parks and Conservation, the most restrictive of the Town's zoning classifications, numerous blocks of publicly owned land within the Priority Drinking Water Protection Area, not already zoned accordingly.

Explanation- Although government agencies are generally exempt from municipal zoning, this rezoning will help to convey the Town's preservation intent for this land. Commercialization or privatization of any of these parkland holdings should be forcefully opposed.

The 107.3 acre undisturbed Town-owned parcel adjacent to Daniel's Hole Road, currently zoned Commercial Industrial (CI), is not currently nor should it be used in the future for airport or commercial purposes, but should remain as part of the core groundwater protection area. It is part of the contributing area to the largest capacity SCWA well field in East Hampton¹ and is part of the largest contiguous block of the Pine Barrens Site Type in the entire Town. Rezoning this parcel from CI to Parks and Conservation should be considered after completion of the updated Airport Master Plan and consultation with the Federal Aviation Authority (FAA).

Recommendation

3. Rezone from A2 to A5 Residence the land between the LIRR tracks, Daniels Hole Road, the EH Village Boundary and Stephen Hands Path.

Explanation- This area is immediately adjacent to and contains three of the five characteristics defining the Priority Drinking Water Protection Area. The land is within the SGPA, WROD and the five foot groundwater contour boundary, all identified as criteria for groundwater protection and rezoning. In addition, the proximity of this land to existing and proposed SCWA well fields is only marginally larger than the Priority Drinking Water Protection Area.

Ground and Drinking Water Resources and Pine Barrens

Recommendation

4. Rezone to A5 Residence the privately owned land in the Priority Drinking Water Protection Area for East Hampton (the area between the East Hampton Town/Southampton Town boundary, the East Hampton Town/Sag Harbor Village boundary, Route 114 and the area generally north and east of the airport), except for the largely developed lots fronting only on Goodfriend Drive and Plank Rd. and the block of land zoned for A2 Residence located between Rte. 114 and Six Pole Highway adjacent to the Sag Harbor Village boundary.

¹ LI SWAP report

Explanation- As explained above, this area overlies the highest volume, highest quality drinking water reserves in the entire Town and meets all five criteria for groundwater protection. It also corresponds with the Town's largest, most contiguous block of Pine Barrens Site Type, containing a great variety of NYS protected and uncommon plant and animal species. The vacant land north of Plank Drive also meets one or two of the criteria for priority protection identified by the Critical Lands Protection Strategy Program of the Peconic Estuary Program. Preservation of the CLPS parcels provides the greatest benefit to the water quality and ecology of the Town's tidal waters and resources.

Approximately 191 acres of this land, currently zoned Commercial Industrial (CI) is recommended to be rezoned to A5 Residence as well. The uses allowed in the CI zoning classification, such as workshops, filling stations, repair garages, together with the more lenient clearing and coverage restrictions, compared to A5 Residence zoning, represents potential threats to the Town's Priority Drinking Water Protection Area, the largest block of Pine Barrens Site Type in East Hampton and the water quality and ecology of the Town's marine environment. Rezoning the CI and Residence A2 zoned land in this area to A5 Residence will reduce and eliminate potential contamination of ground and surface waters and the fragmentation and alterations to this unique Pine Barrens Site Type. The existing private school and institute within this area will remain a special permit use under this rezoning proposal.

Excluding the two largely developed commercial-industrial subdivisions in this area along Goodfriend Drive and Plank Road Park and Turnpike Commercial will effectively limit the commercial industrial uses to the generally non-polluting existing uses and the few lots, generally less than one acre in size, already committed to them. Future CI uses in these subdivisions will be restricted by limited land area available, the specific conditions already imposed by the EH Planning Board, the EH Planning Board Groundwater Protection Policies, and implementation of the recommendations from the East Hampton Town Water Resources Management Report.

Excluding the largely developed block of land zoned for A2 Residence located between Rte. 114 and Six Pole Highway adjacent to the Sag Harbor Village boundary will have a negligible impact on groundwater resources, Pine Barrens Site Type and water quality and ecology of the town's tidal waters. Retaining the existing zoning for this block of land will provide a transition between the high density development within Sag Harbor Village and the low density development within the Town.

Agriculture

Recommendation

5. Rezone from A2 to A5 Residence the agricultural land south of Montauk Highway.
Explanation- East Hampton Town has a long history of commitment to preserving this prime farmland, rated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) as the best land for raising crops in New York State. It is currently listed as the highest priority for acquisition on the Town of East Hampton Community Preservation Plan. This land has also been identified as eligible for inclusion in the proposed East Hampton Scenic Area of Statewide Significance designation. The

attributes contributing to the statewide scenic significance of this area include the farm buildings and working farmland, some having sweeping views of ponds, dunes or the ocean. Upzoning to A5 Residence will help reduce the elimination, fragmentation and alteration of this valuable farmland resource and industry, while helping to protect scenic views. Furthermore, as described in the Specific Criteria for Acquisition and Rezoning Section of this plan, reducing density from what is currently allowed by A2 Residence zoning is necessary in order to comply with the existing regulations set forth in Section 193 of the East Hampton Town Code - Open Space Preservation together with Suffolk County Sanitary Code Article 6 provisions. Rezoning this farmland area will also reduce nitrogen and other harmful surface water pollutants associated with residential development, to Wainscott Pond, a locally designated Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitat.

Recommendation

5a. Rezone from A2 to A3 Residence the agricultural land located at the northeast corner of Main Street and Town Line Rd.

Explanation- This land contains many of the same characteristics described in Recommendation # 5 above. However, considering the subdivision history of this parcel combined with the preservation efforts proposed, A3 Residence zoning is appropriate to protect the natural and cultural features on this parcel of land.

Georgica Pond

Recommendation

6. Rezone from A3 to A5 Residence the land adjacent to and within the watershed of Georgica Pond.

Explanation- Georgica Pond has been designated a locally Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitat by the East Hampton Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan. The land proposed for rezoning contributes both surficial drainage and groundwater underflow to Georgica Pond. Rezoning to A5 Residence can help to reduce additional nitrogen and other harmful pollutants associated with residential development from entering the Pond.

This area is characterized by generally large, estate type lots interspersed with some vacant and protected land. The southern half of this area is part of the Georgica Association, a summer colony founded in 1892. The Georgica Association and the land bordering the northerly section of Georgica Pond are eligible for inclusion in the proposed East Hampton Scenic Area of Statewide Significance designation. "Most of the estates are set in beautifully designed and maintained grounds that often extend to the ponds or an ocean dune....Subdivision of historic estate grounds also detracts from the scenic character of these areas"¹.

Rezoning this area to A5 Residence will help to protect the Georgica Pond locally designated Significant Habitat, the water quality of Georgica Pond and the attributes within the area which contribute to the scenic qualities of statewide significance.

¹ East Hampton Scenic Resources Protection Plan Proposed Scenic Areas of Statewide Importance, pp. 265 & 267

Montauk Highway

Recommendation

7. Rezone from B to A Residence the land on the north side of Montauk Highway, east of Town Line Road, within Old Filed Map 625, UR Map WA-1.

Explanation- The lands along the Town's main arterial roadways are the scenic entrances to each hamlet. The land identified in this rezoning recommendation is not only along the scenic entrance to the Wainscott Business Center, it is part of the main gateway to the entire Town of East Hampton. Reducing residential density in this area will help reduce the alterations, destruction and impairments to the natural and scenic landscape along the main entrance to the Town. Furthermore, as this area is contained within Groundwater Management Zone V, rezoning from B to A Residence will reduce the potential subdivision density to that which is already imposed by the maximum density standards prescribed by the existing Suffolk County Health Department Article 6 Regulations.

Recommendation

8. Rezone from A to A2 Residence the underdeveloped tracts of land between Montauk Highway and Two Rod Highway.

Explanation- Montauk Highway is East Hampton's main roadway. Due to the location of Wainscott, most of the traffic entering or exiting East Hampton traverses over this portion of Montauk Highway. This portion of Montauk Highway has the highest traffic volume of any road in East Hampton¹. Maintaining unobstructed, clear, easy vehicular movement in this area is critical for safe transportation for all of East Hampton. Rezoning this area from A to A2 Residence will help to limit the number of new curb cuts, turning movements and development potential along this roadway critical for safe vehicular traffic flow.

Commercial Hamlet Center

Recommendation

9. This recommendation has been left blank deliberately.

Recommendation

10. Conduct a Wainscott Hamlet Center Study to help improve the appearance and functionality of the Business District.

Explanation- The commercial center in Wainscott, along the north side of Montauk Highway is comprised of some small free standing shops mixed with some areas characterized as "strip" shopping centers. Every effort must be made to prevent this area, already subject to high through traffic volume, due to its "gateway" to East Hampton location, from converting into a congested strip commercial highway. Some of the design and land use issues to be addressed in the Wainscott Hamlet Center Study include: a plan to bury the power lines; a coordinated landscape, signage and lighting plan; a coordinated parking and highway access plan to limit curb cuts onto Montauk Highway and to incorporate the changed traffic patterns resulting from the new traffic light; a plan to consider options to relocate the Post

¹ Town of East Hampton Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element, August 1997

Office to the north side of the highway; a plan to coordinate the existing business area with the potential new uses at the reclaimed sand pit site; appropriate zoning.

Recommendation

11. Develop a plan for reuse of the former sandpit property.

Explanation- Although not recommended for rezoning at this time, reuse of the former sand pit is a large consideration. The portions of the site which are currently occupied by heavy industrial uses such as brick manufacturing, should be consolidated within an area to limit additional heavy commercial industrial uses, and should be well screened from view. Other portions of this site should be developed as office parks and “clean”, low intensity CI uses. Anticipating the continued build-out of the town and the needs generated by new potential office parks, a limited area could be considered for new business development, to be coordinated with the existing central business center. A limited amount of moderate income housing can be accommodated in this area as well, particularly since the only existing Affordable Housing Overlay Districts in Wainscott are proposed for deletion. Finally, a large portion of the reclaimed pit should be devoted to open space and recreation.

Affordable Housing

Recommendation

12. Delete from the zoning map the two existing Affordable Housing Overlay Districts: near the Sag Harbor boundary; and within Urban Renewal Map WA-1.

Explanation- These two Affordable Housing Overlay Districts correspond to land no longer available for affordable housing. In Urban Renewal Map WA-1, the subdividable tracts have been acquired for park purposes and the land near Sag Harbor is already improved with a cemetery and residential development.

Recommendation

13. Encourage and facilitate the construction of apartments over stores in the Central Business District.

Explanation- Consistent with the Housing Section of this plan, the Town Board should develop a Transfer of Development Rights program to enable apartments over stores, currently allowed by zoning, to meet Suffolk County Health Department standards.

Corrections to the Zoning Map

Recommendation

14. Rezone from A to B Residence the two individual parcels of land zoned for A Residence between Two Rod Highway, Foxcroft Lane, Roxbury Lane and Whitney Lane.

Explanation- This rezoning corrects an apparent error in the current zoning map. These two parcels are improved with residences, are surrounded by B zoning and have lot areas less than 15,000 square feet. No further subdivision could result from this rezoning.

Recommendation

15. This recommendation has been left blank deliberately.

Reduce the Overall Build-Out

Recommendation

16. Adopt the zoning and acquisition recommendations described in this plan.

Explanation- Zoning and acquisition recommendations are offered to reduce degradation of environmental resources and the unique character of Wainscott.

Additional recommendations which could affect Wainscott are contained in the Town-wide Recommendations to Meet the Goals Section of this Report