

Town of Smithtown

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE



DRAFT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES STATEMENT



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Comprehensive Plan
Update**

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THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

A Comprehensive Plan is the sum total of the community's ideas for the future. There are three elements which define this Plan:

1. It should have a long term view of the Community (i.e., generally five years or longer).
2. It should recognize the interdependence of its component , that is, that an action on one element, such as land use, will have consequences for other components, such as transportation, economic development and so forth.
3. It should outline the community's choices for the future.

All three elements *must* be present in the Comprehensive Plan and any update to that Plan. While it is obvious that a Plan must look at the future, it must also be a document in which all of the components of a community are examined, under the assumption that there is an interrelationship among them, and conclude with a set of recommendations that attempts to improve the community while balancing these components. The third element, which outlines "the community's choices for the future, is the critical part which ties the Plan together. It is here where we decide how the community should be improved and how we will balance all of those components. In adopting the Comprehensive Plan, the community is defining and choosing their future as opposed to responding to events that surround them. This is the reason we prepare and adopt Comprehensive Plans and this process begins with considering the goals and objectives of the community which will help define the Update to the Comprehensive Plan.



THE GOAL OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The goal of the Update to the Town's Comprehensive Plan is to improve the quality of life for its residents by proposing an environment that is reflective of the community's wishes, including:

- Developing and enhancing the community's "sense of place" in order to provide a strong community identity
- Managing and modernizing the infrastructure so that it becomes more efficient while it serves the needs of the community
- Enhancing the environment and cultural resources through protection, preservation, and management.
- Improving the local economy in terms of business activities, taxes, employment, and property values so as to provide an attractive, affordable, and livable community
- Providing for needs of all segments of the population
- Providing for existing and future trends in land use, communication technology, transportation, and related fields to remain competitive and economically viable in the 21st century

COMPONENTS

The objective of preparing a Comprehensive Plan is to seek to improve each of the major components of the community, which we define as:

- I. Population
- II. Land Use
- III. Transportation
- IV. Natural and Cultural Resources
- V. Economic Development
- VI. Public Facilities

As noted previously, these components are interrelated. What happens in one category could negatively or positively impact another component. We use the Comprehensive Plan to outline



how we can improve the community. That outline is essentially the result of a balance of improving each of these components. We begin this process by defining objectives for each segment.



I. **POPULATION:**

The Population analysis is the fundamental component of a Comprehensive Plan. Not only does it describe who we are and what will be our needs for the future, it grounds the purpose of the Plan itself. We undertake the development of a Comprehensive Plan to improve the community for the people who live there. By its very nature, population is interrelated with all of the other components of the Plan. It is here where we begin to determine our view of the future.

Objective:

Identify past, current, and future aspects of the Town's census in order to discern the needs and requirements of the community.

Approach:

1. Identify trends in population growth, composition, and migration, including:
 - age distribution
 - income
 - household composition
 - mobility
2. Identify the impacts, needs, and requirements of that population, including, but not limited to:
 - housing
 - recreation
 - transportation
 - income distribution
 - school population
 - community facilities
3. Identify how this population will impact the other goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.



Issues:

An examination of the Census will determine who we are and highlight issues such as:

1. What is the composition of the population and how has it changed over the time?
2. What is the saturation population for the Town?
3. How will the school population change and how will this effect taxes?
4. Because of population changes, will the demand for government services, e.g. parks, or the providing of services, e.g. volunteer fire and emergency services, change?
5. What are the effects on on other components of the Plan, e.g. housing, transportation, environment, and so forth. ?
6. How will changes in the County's or Region's population impact the Town?

**II. LAND USE**

Land Use is the traditional focus of most community planning. The issues related to land use are numerous, including such topics as density, design, zoning, appearance, and related attributes of the community. It defines the physical world desired by the residents, whether it is urban, rural, or any combination thereof. Like the Population component, Land Use issues impact all of the other segments of the Plan.

Objective:

Provide for a proper mix of residential, commercial, industrial, and public land use policies that would serve the needs of the residents and foster economic development while preserving the character of the community.



Approach:

1. Identify land use trends for residential, business, institutional, government, and industrial uses, including:
 - a. Inventory and classify the existing land use, including developed and undeveloped properties, economic centers, neighborhoods, public facilities, environmentally sensitive lands, and any other appropriate land use category
 - b. Assess the changes and trends in each of these areas
2. Identify land use issues for the Town, including those issues related to development, redevelopment, and environmental concerns as they relate to the future of the community. This would include:
 - a. Economic trends, including land valuation
 - b. Infrastructure issues (e.g. parking, utilities, sewage)
 - c. Technological Impacts (e.g. cellular communication, internet, etc.)
 - d. The physical appearance of buildings and places (e.g. architecture, scenic vistas)
3. Examine the trends in housing to determine the current demands and issues that would include:
 - a. An analysis of “affordability” as it relates to the long term impacts on the community, including a specific identification of this term as it relates to the community.
 - b. An analysis of the new trends in housing types, e.g. “gated communities”, Continuing Care Retirement Communities, “McMansions”, and so forth, in order to determine need and applicability.
 - c. An analysis of the various housing impacts within the community, such as on the environment, school tax, transportation, and so forth.
4. Identify sites that encompass major long term land use issue, including:
 - a. Vacant or underutilized lands (e.g. Gyrodyne)
 - b. Outdated or obsolete land uses (e.g. Kings Park Psychiatric Center)
 - c. Old Northport Road Area
 - d. Hauppauge Industrial Park
 - e. Kings Park, Smithtown, and St. James Central Business Districts
 - f. Environmental areas, such as the Nissequogue River, the Local Waterfront Revitalization Area, Lake Ronkonkoma, and State and County parklands.
 - g. New York State and Suffolk County Road Corridors



5. Proposed a balanced land use policy that provides for the future and would include:

- a. Zoning amendments
- b. Other regulatory amendment
- c. Proposed development/redevelopment plans
- d. Proposed other land use strategies such as civic improvements, site redevelopment ideas, community and neighborhood enhancements, and so forth.

Issues:

An examination of the community's Land use issues will attempt to highlight issues which impact the physical development of the Town and will include such questions as:

1. Do our current land use policies adequately manage our community and recognize the transitions from a "growth phase" to a "redevelopment phase"?
2. How should the Town consider the redevelopment of its older areas, i.e. more urban (e.g., smart growth, higher densities) or less urban (e.g. sprawl, lower densities) ?
3. Are we overbuilding or missing opportunities ?
4. What is the proper balance of housing for the Town?
5. Is the land use mix sufficient for our tax base?
6. How do you provide for future needs when the supply of vacant land is limited ?
7. How should the community deal with rapidly increasing land values ?
8. Should the Town take a more direct role in providing more residential and business opportunities ?
9. Is our infrastructure capable of meeting the demands for the future?



III. TRANSPORTATION

Transportation has always played a critical role in defining a community. The ability to move easily, safely, and quickly is highly desired. On the other hand, large traffic volumes, insufficient infrastructure, and a lack of choice in modes of travel will have negative impacts. Because Transportation also includes movement through and beyond the community, there are issues that cannot be solely addressed by local efforts. The Transportation component of the



Comprehensive Plan attempts to address all of these issues and suggest a long term approach that will result in the maximum benefit for the community for this and all of the other components of the Plan.

Objective:

Develop a realistic transportation system that provides for safe and convenient movement within the Town , that does not undermine the integrity of neighborhoods or business districts, and that is consistent with the other goals of the comprehensive plan.

Approach:

1. Inventory and assess all transportation systems (e.g. roads, mass transit, pedestrian, etc).
2. Identify primary transportation issues including:
 - a. The relationship of land use and mobility
 - b. The deficiencies within the current systems (e.g. roads, mass transit, etc.)
 - c. Congestion and high accident locations
 - d. Traffic volumes within residential neighborhood
 - e. Conflicts within business and industrial areas
 - f. Pedestrian and bicycle movement
 - g. Mass transit and paratransit alternatives
 - h. The sustainability of current infrastructure (i.e. can we afford it?)
3. Examine existing and future proposals for transportation improvements including:
 - a. Existing Town, County, and State Capital Programs
 - b. Traffic calming strategies
 - c. Impacts from land use decisions (small and large sites).
 - d. Alternative automotive transportation systems (e.g. mass transit, para-transit, etc.).
4. Prepare a list of long and short term proposals, including both physical and management techniques, which will improve transportation movement and minimize problems within the community which will include an assessment of the impacts on other components of the Plan

Issues:

A transportation plan should recognize that “transportation” in and by itself is not the primary objective for a community; rather it is an important aspect that affects all of the other components of the Plan. In the past, transportation has been viewed in terms of “capital planning” which does not answer all of a community’s concerns. Ideally, an analysis of transportation should also consider some of the following issues:



1. What kind of transportation system can we expect with the limited resources and land use plans of the Town and the Region?
2. Is this infrastructure sustainable ? (i.e. can we afford it?)
3. What can we do to reduce traffic impacts, e.g. volume, speed, etc., within residential neighborhoods?
4. How can the goals of good land use, environmental protection, population, and economic development, be balanced with the goals of transportation ?
5. How should we deal with alternative transportation systems, e.g. mass transit, bicycle and pedestrian movement, paratransit systems and so forth.



IV. NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Natural and cultural resources are often features of the community that require special attention because of their importance to the residents. This would include, for example, historic properties, scenic vistas, landmarks, significant environmental features, specially regulated areas (e.g. Nissequogue River, coastal areas, and so forth), and related elements. Because these features define the community, how we manage these resources will also define the quality of life in the community. When a community is characterized as having a “high quality of life”, it usually includes paying close attention to properly managing its natural and cultural resources.

Objective:

Protect, preserve and improve the natural, cultural, and other important features of the Town so as to attain the highest quality in environmental standards and the preservation of historic and other cultural resources of the community that define the character and “sense of place” of the community.



Approach:

1. Identify all important environmental, cultural, historic elements and issues within the Town, including:
 - a. Updating our inventory of all public and private lands with environmental, historic, cultural, and related significance.
 - b. Identify all important environmental lands and issues (e.g. environmentally sensitive lands, water quality issues, and so forth).
 - c. Identify important open space and scenic areas
2. Assess the effectiveness of current strategies to manage and protect the environment, cultural resources, and historic preservation, including:
 - a. An assessment of the laws and strategies (e.g., Local Waterfront Revitalization Program , the Nissequogue “Wild and Scenic Rivers’ Program”, local laws, and so forth).
 - b. An assessment of the current historic preservation ordinances and other efforts to protect these resources
 - c. An assessment of the open space Town and County acquisition programs.
 - d. An assessment of the effectiveness of other State, County, and Town environmental programs (e.g. N.Y.S. Dept of Conservation cleanup of contaminated sites, SC Health Department sewer regulations, etc.).
3. Prepare a list of policies that will address future requirements including:
 - a. The use of new strategies, such as “transfer of development rights”
 - b. The updating of current laws and ordinances.

Issues:

In evaluating the Natural and Cultural Resources of the community, the following topics should be considered:

1. How do we protect the environment or historic properties while permitting development ? How do we balance the competing objectives?
2. What other strategies should be undertaken, (e.g. ordinances, building codes, acquisition, etc.) to improve these areas?
3. How do we coordinate the fragmented plans for each of these areas?
4. What are the quantifiable long term goals of each of these efforts? e.g. how much do we improve the water quality of the Nissequogue River).





V. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

One of the key components of a good community is a healthy economy. Of specific concern to the local economy is employment, taxes, revenue, and required expenditures. Good schools, roads, parks, and related government services all require that the community have the proper balance in economic development that supports these needs while maintaining the quality of life within the community.

Objective:

Promote business and industrial development that provides a healthy economic environment, employment, an enhanced tax base, and that contribute positively to the quality of life within the community.

Approach:

1. Identify and assess all major business and industrial centers within the Town, including:
 - a. The three downtown centers of Smithtown, Kings Park, and St. James
 - b. Other major retail centers
 - c. The John V.N. Klein/Hauppauge Industrial Park
 - d. The NY State Route 25, Terry Road/Smithtown Blvd. Corridors
2. Identify all potential business or industrial centers within the Town
3. Examine the trends in each of these categories and assess future impacts
4. Examine deficiencies within the current centers that may impede growth or redevelopment (e.g. transportation issues, sewage, etc..)
5. Examine the positive and negative impact of technology on these center.
6. Develop a list of strategies that will enhance these centers, including:
 - a. Zoning ordinance amendments
 - b. Infrastructure improvement (e.g. wireless communication, sewage systems, etc.)
 - c. Transportation improvements(e.g. road improvements, parking, etc.)



Issues:

In evaluating the economy, the following topics should be addressed in the Plan:

1. Should the Town develop strategies for business retention or related economic strategies?
2. Should the Town, County, or State support infrastructure improvements (e.g. sewage, telecommunications, etc.) that promote economic development?
3. Should we encourage the use of “Business Improvement Districts” to enhance selected business areas ?
4. What zoning policies, incentives, or related mechanisms should be implemented to support this plan?

**VI. PUBLIC FACILITIES**

Besides Transportation, the community requires other public facilities that provide a variety of services. The most visible aspects are the schools and the park systems. Fire protection, utilities, drainage systems, solid waste disposal are just some of the other elements of the public facility infrastructure which are important to the well being of the community. The examination of this area attempts to determine the needs for the future. It is obvious that a lack of proper have a negative on the community’s “quality of life”.

Objective:

Provide an array of public facilities, infrastructure, and utilities that will meet the needs of the current and future residents of the Town.

Approach:

1. Identify all major facilities in the Town, including:
 - a. All Town, County and State parklands
 - b. All public water, sewer, fire and ambulance districts and facilities
 - c. All school districts, buildings, and facilities
 - d. All major utilities and communication systems
2. Identify all current trends as they relate to use, capacity, needs, aging infrastructure, and impact for each of the above categories with emphasis on :



- a. The changing requirements based upon changes in demographics
 - b. Changes in land use
 - c. Requirements for the future with regard to economic development recreation, environmental or historic protection, or other related component of the community.
3. Prepare a long term capital program which will address these needs including,
 - a. Proposed park expansion plan
 - b. Proposed sewer expansion plan.

Issues:

The examination of Public Facilities should be concerned with the following issues:

1. Does our park system meet the needs of our population?
2. Are the lack of sewers or modern communication systems hurting our economic development or other interests ?
3. How do we balance the requirements of these facilities with the requirements of the other components (e.g. housing versus schools)?
4. How do we fund existing or proposed public facilities? What new strategies could be implemented (e.g. privatization) ?

