

3. DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR THE HAMLET CENTER

Combining the previously- described transportation options with the potential development opportunities for the hamlet center site area, certain uses emerge as more desirable than others in terms of use, access and approvals. This analysis examines implications for future potential development in the study area that can implement a strategy for the hamlet center as a whole.

3.1 Recommended Framework for Hamlet Center Development

This potential recommended development is planned in terms of a larger strategy—a coordinated approach to circulation, parking, open space and overall land use which can integrate the hamlet center as a whole into an attractive pedestrian environment as well as provide a mutually-beneficial ‘negotiation structure’ for implementation.

1) *Description of Proposed Uses*

Basic Recommended Uses

The basic recommended approach for the site area is to emphasize residentially- scaled development in keeping with the historic character of the hamlet center—

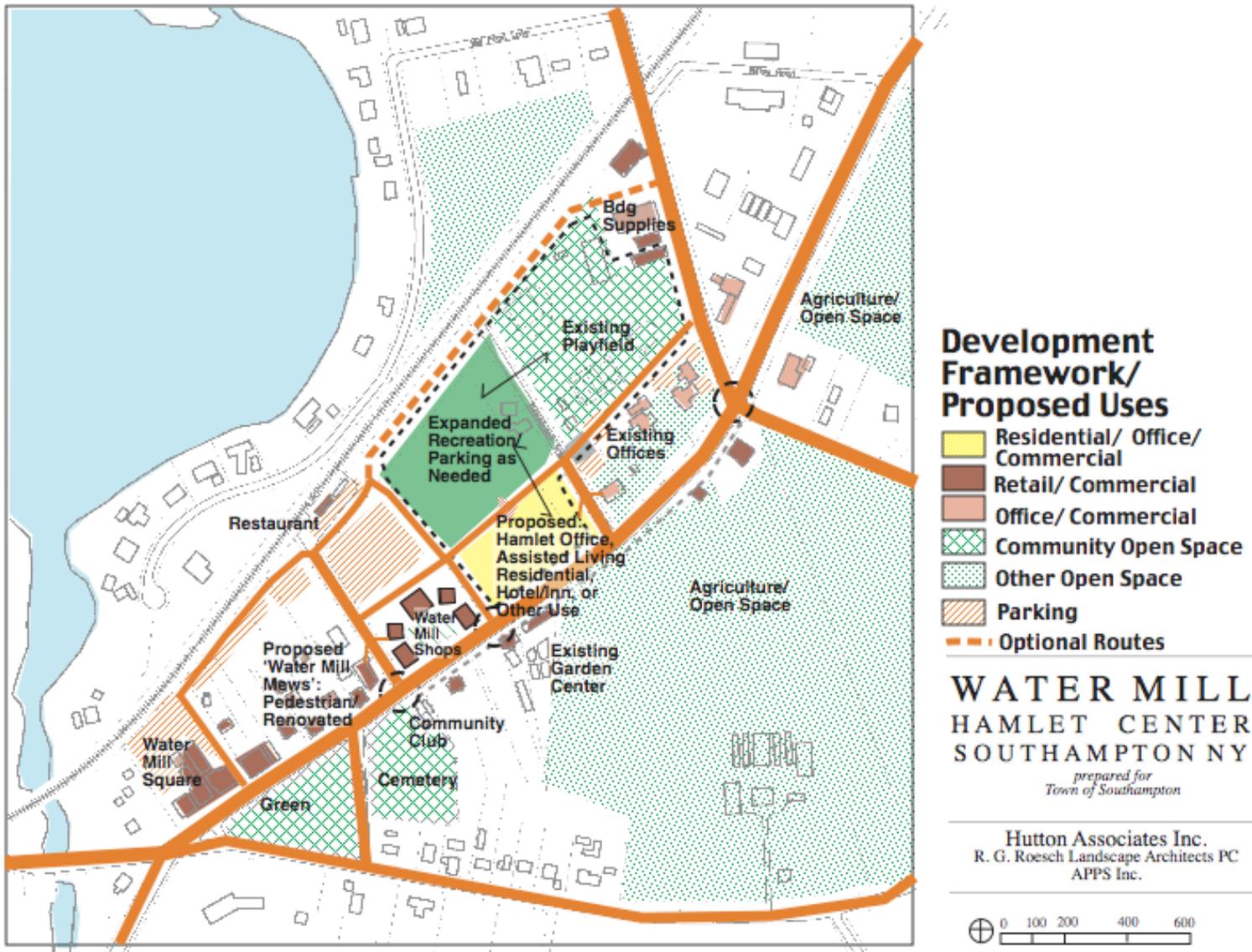
complementary uses such as office development, small-scale retail, or residential uses. This will be accomplished through application of new zoning categories to portions of the hamlet center, replacing older zones that allow larger scale retail and commercial development.

Preferred Uses

In addition to this base of recommended uses and zoning criteria that protect the hamlet center from inappropriate development, there are a series of additional uses that represent *preferred development*.

These are uses emphasized in the 1999 Comprehensive Plan Update as especially appropriate for hamlet center areas: senior housing (various levels of continuing care, sited adjacent to needed services and central access); a modestly scaled inn (to reinforce the Town’s resort character and related economic development); other higher density residential development (to reinforce hamlet center services with 24-hour presence, taking advantage of accessibility, parking, and shared services).

As described in subsequent sections, the use of a ‘Mixed-Use Planned Development District’ as an overlay over basic zoning will allow these uses as special exceptions (rather than by-right), following due diligence and approval by the Town.



Illustrative Plan: One Preferred Option

The plan on the next page illustrates one such preferred option. It features the following elements (discussed in more detail in sections following):

- Implementation of the ‘Water Mill Village’ site as a mixed-use development (the ideal total available site assumes purchase and incorporation of development and utility rights from two adjacent residential parcels along Nowedonah Avenue and the eastern portion of the restaurant site along the rail line):

- Priority for residential development:

Possible as special exceptions would be a 40-50-unit market residential development (for active seniors or similar niche market, possibly built as attached two family units), an approximately 40-50-unit inn, (possibly featuring internal spa facilities and a small restaurant—but not night club), or (as illustrated) an 80-85 unit ‘Assisted Living’ facility, featuring highway frontage and visibility, built on the front portion of the site, with access from Nowedonah Avenue. (As shown, this assisted living facility, would be similar in site plan and scale to other nearby assisted living projects, but should be designed with special consideration for the character of the

hamlet center. As such facilities require elevators, they are typically three stories in height but would be required to have pitched roof, porch and other design features to ensure compatibility with the hamlet center ambiance. Site plans for the inn would be similar but with increased additional land required for parking)

These potential unit counts for each use are based on septic capacity of the expanded site as described above. The numbers of units could be further increased (for instance, possibly up to 100 units of market residential housing) with special ruling of Town and County officials based on additional transfer of development rights or other public benefit gestures.

- Recreation/ open space:

This more intense development on the southern part of the site would allow the north part of the site to be devoted to additional recreation/ open space as an expansion of the existing Community Club playfields to the east. This can include a full-size soccer field and potentially a health club/ recreation pavilion. Total Community Club open space: 9 to 11 acres, up to a 60% increase.

- Closing and removing the paved portion of Nowedonah Avenue once past the entries to the

Water Mill Village site and the office complex to the east, allowing linkage of open space resources and minimization of traffic adjacent to recreation space.

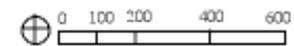


**Illustrative
Plan:
Residential
Option/
Assisted Living**

**WATER MILL
HAMLET CENTER
SOUTHAMPTON NY**

*prepared for
Town of Southampton*

Hutton Associates Inc.
R. G. Roesch Landscape Architects PC
APPS Inc.



- Additional secondary access and parking for the hamlet center as a whole: through the mid portion of the site area from Nowedonah Avenue west to Station Road, and adjacent to the rail line between Deerfield Road and the Water Mill Square development. The access plan is to serve the hamlet center only, and would be legally constrained from any extension further west. Circulation and speed within the hamlet center would be controlled through stop signs, paving, and road design, using accepted traffic calming techniques.
- Individual owners between Station Road and Water Mill Square would be encouraged to coordinate or jointly develop their parcels. A suggested

development image, for instance, is ‘Water Mill Mews,’ an informal grouping of individual parcels linked by common infrastructure: the through access road to the north of the site, associated parking, and shared central walkways, plantings and seating areas. The site plan suggests the sort of informal building grouping discussed previously, inspired by Amagansett Square in East Hampton.

A common marketing theme, such as the ‘Water Mill Antiques Center’, could also help give this area a unique identity and economic potential. Joint promotion and common area management are possible ways that cooperative actions can make the sum more than the individual parts.

2) *Transportation*

The proposed concept presents the opportunity to improve the overall traffic circulation within the hamlet center area, building on preliminary agreements with the community achieved as part of the 1999 L. K. McLean traffic study.

- These improvements include creation of secondary cross-access routes through the hamlet center, connecting the various sites (as has been recommended in past studies but never implemented). These access ways would be easements granted through private property, developed according to commonly-agreed guidelines, and maintained by landowners as part of associated on-site parking and circulation.

For the eastern portion of the site, two different options are suggested, dependent on events and negotiations; for the western portion, a single recommended solution is proposed.

- In the eastern portion of the site, the objective is to allow Water Mill-bound Deerfield Road traffic to or from the north to access the hamlet center without entering and leaving Montauk Highway, connecting to Water Mill Square to the west.

The first option is to create an access way

adjacent to the rail tracks between Deerfield Road and Nowedonah Avenue, passing to the south of the restaurant property to Station Road. The second option would go through the center of the site, linking directly to an existing easement through the Water Mill Shops. Public sector funding and participation would assist rights-of-way through land owned by institutions or not-for-profit organizations.

- In the western portion of the hamlet center, a second series of joint access easements would connect Station Road with Water Mill Square access, parallel and adjacent to the rail line. This would be a completely voluntary participation, but it represents a potentially beneficial investment for existing landowners.
- The somewhat circuitous nature of this cross-access route, coupled with associated highway signalization improvements described below, would prevent the new route being used as a bypass to Montauk Highway.) As previously described, this secondary access will serve the hamlet center only, and would be legally constrained from extension further west. Traffic within the center would be controlled through road design, using accepted traffic calming techniques.

- On the south side of Montauk Highway, the intent of the strategy is to maintain existing uses but not to expand the potential for new development. Water Mill is traditionally a one-sided hamlet center, oriented to the north side of Montauk Highway, with independent auto-oriented uses and agricultural open space to the south. Zoning proposals presented later in the report will reinforce this existing pattern. For this reason it is not necessary to add additional cross-access roadways parallel to Montauk Highway as proposed for the north side of the Highway. (Should at some future date the Town allow more extensive development than is now recommended, such access could be considered).
- In conjunction with this secondary circulation improvement, additional signalization and/ or entry/ egress enhancements of the primary Montauk Highway access route can also be made. As shown in the adjacent transportation strategy plan, these would consist of the following:
 - A proposed signal at the intersection of Deerfield Road and Montauk Highway. Long recommended by traffic consultants, this would facilitate turning movements at this important intersection.
 - Complementing the existing Station Road light with an additional light to the east of Water Mill Shops, with adjacent roadways forming a coordinated one-way pair serving the center. These two sets of synchronized lights would act as a unit, simultaneously stopping east-west Montauk Highway traffic and allowing coordinated left turns in and out of the project area.
 - Finally, institutionalizing entry/ exit movements at the Water Mill Square entry, allowing left and right turns in (inbound left turns facilitated by the new traffic light further east), and right turn only outbound to the west (outbound east traffic would use the accessway to the north and exit at Station Road or Deerfield Road).
 - In the longer term, a light could also be considered for the Montauk Highway/ Halsey Lane intersection, although this is a lower priority (triggered by future traffic congestion). Alternatives to the four traffic signalizations could also be explored.
- Parking and curb cut recommendations will also improve the functionality of the hamlet center:
 - Adjacent to the Station Road convenience stores, no parking is currently allowed—creating an access problem for customers that impacts the economic feasibility of the shops. A one-way

- system inbound on Station Road will allow space adjacent to these shops for parking. Outbound lanes east of Water Mill Shops provide exit.
- Similarly, creating a one-way inbound route on Nowedonah Avenue will allow diagonal parking adjacent to the street that can serve the expanded recreation fields.
- New parking would be created adjacent to the new cross-access way next to the rail tracks between Station Road and Water Mill Square. Diagonal parking off the circulation lanes would serve both the proposed 'antique center' development to the south as well as overflow or shared parking with Water Mill Square and Water Mill Shops.
- Parking in front of the Green Thumb/ garden center opposite the Water Mill Shops is currently pull-in directly off the highway; defined curb cuts and landscaping should be added.
- In addition, pedestrian and bicycle circulation are extremely important components of the transportation plan.
 - Sidewalks should be extended along Montauk Highway to allow circulation from on-street parking among the various sites fronting the highway. Similar details should be used as in present Water Mill streetscape (see later section).
- Equally important to highway-frontage sidewalks, however, is the creation of off-street pedestrian ways, extending current in-place systems east- west connecting Water Mill Shops to new development and Community Club facilities. These should be attractive informal walkways (see later sections for suggested details).
- The plan also makes provision for the proposed bikeway parallel to the rail line. The bikeway can be built adjacent to the new access road between Water Mill Square past Station Road to Deerfield Road, either beside the road or as an exclusive right of way past the new playfield.
- Finally, with respect to traffic capacity, previous impact analyses have detailed the implications of a retail center development. Modifying the allowable amount of retail will reduce this traffic impact. Office use impact will remain the same per square foot but may be mitigated by adjacent uses. However, the potential for residential/ assisted living/ inn development requires additional analysis.
 - *Office uses:* one space per 180 square feet is the current zoning requirement, but this can be modified by sharing assumptions—based on

adjacent retail (often sized for peak weekend usage), a certain number of spaces may be available during weekdays for nearby office use. Such sharing would also lesson the amount of impervious surface required.

- *Assisted Living:* Parking, trips and deliveries related to the assisted living proposal are minimal compared to potential retail or other use. Assisted living developments similar in size and program to what is proposed typically have approximately 0.5 parking spaces per bed (covering staff and visitors as well as residents), or fewer than 50 spaces. Residents seldom drive (the location adjacent to convenience retail and a pedestrian- enhanced center is an advantage).

Another way to describe the impact is an approximation of the relatively minimal trip generation for an 84 unit assisted living facility:

- Daily Trips (Weekday)-110 in, 110 out
- Daily Trips (Saturday or Sunday)-80 to 90% of weekday numbers (90-100 in, 90-100 out)
- Weekday AM Peak Hour-10 in, 7 out
- Weekday PM Peak Hour-9 in, 14 out

Predominant traffic movement is therefore limited to visitor and staff, much of which takes place at off-peak times.¹

¹ L.K.McLean Consulting Engineers PC, October 2000

- *Market Residential:* Different residential types have different parking needs. For instance, according to developers of market housing facilities for seniors, active residents average 1.5 cars per unit, but prefer (because of an age-increasing aversion to stairs and inclement weather) to have a majority of parking beneath the units, served by elevator. Auto circulation will be more extensive than with assisted living, but as most residents are retired, traffic movement does not cluster at peak hours. By comparison, for general population housing, overall car ownership and peak hour car usage are higher.
- *Inn:* One space per room plus employee parking is the operative model. Again, traffic is not rush hour related, and can be controlled to a degree by the amount of internal self-sufficiency of the inn (guest-oriented restaurant, etc).

3) *Utilities and Density*

A major constraint to site development in Water Mill is the fact that there are no sewer lines in the area— all development must be able to have its own wastewater treated through a on-site septic system (package sewer plants were also examined but discounted due to physical constraints and relatively low program served).

As with transportation issues, while previous environmental impact analyses have examined whether the Water Mill Village site could support a 30,000 square foot or more hamlet retail center development, the potential for residential/ assisted living development required additional analysis.

- With the help of professional engineering consultants, advice from Suffolk County health officials, and suggestions from the landowner, a variety of options were examined for utility services for proposed assisted living or similar uses.
- Sites are evaluated for septic suitability on the basis of a capacity of 600 gallons/ day (gpd) per acre using septic systems. The per unit treatment requirements for an assisted living unit are less than for a typical single family house: 110 gpd per bed as opposed to 300 gpd per unit. For townhouse or duplex oriented housing, 220 gpd per unit is a reasonable measure, similarly for an inn serving an average of two people per room.
- The size of the current ‘Water Mill Village’ property ownership (6.45 acres) will allow for treatment of only 3,870 gpd, which will support 35 assisted living beds or 18 apartment units or inn rooms, not sufficient for feasible development given typical project modules.

However, expanding the site to include additional parcels to the north and east, allowing agreed use of the Community Club site for utility capacity calculations, would increase the total amount of septic treatment area land available, supporting an increase to approximately 84 beds—a feasible development module for an assisted living facility. This would alternatively allow approximately 40-45 inn rooms or townhouse/ duplex units depending on bed count. (Sewage treatment itself would not be a package plant or treatment station, but a below-ground septic system in a defined area adjacent to proposed buildings—not impacting nearby recreation space). The site is not over aquifer land, and is outside drainage impact areas for nearby ponds. Water table is not an issue at this location. Of course, detailed analysis would be required prior to approvals to ensure against unforeseen impacts.

Such a technique is a way to achieve desired development patterns on ‘primary sites’ while simultaneously preserving open space by extinguishing the ability to develop on adjacent sites.

It may also be possible to further expand these allowable numbers, at the discretion of the Town for desired projects, with additional development right transfers, for instance using Pine Barrens credits or additional credits from sending sites within the Water Mill area, such as around the Mill

Pond or other lands targeted for open space protection under the ‘Community Preservation Plan Project’ (CPPP).

Maximum gross densities should be defined on the affected sites within the proposed Planned Development District. Based on the expanded site and potential development as discussed above, these densities should be defined with respect to specific uses: for assisted living, 5.5 units (single bedrooms) per gross acre; for inn or townhouse/ duplex, 3.3 units per acre. (Absolute numbers of units can be increased by adding site area or purchase of development rights).

This is not an increase in actual unit count density from what would be allowed by the underlying HO zoning, rather, it simply allows that density to be built by facilitating compliance with septic regulations by using consolidation of utility rights from adjacent undeveloped land.

- To achieve this consolidation will require agreement and cooperation from all concerned—landowners, developers, community, Town officials and County officials. The project will also require Suffolk County Department of Health Services (SCDHS) Board of Review approval. The septic usage is not an increase over what would be allowed on affected properties by the County Board of Health. Approvals will be contingent on evaluation and mitigation of any impacts on adjacent properties.

- The use of a Planned Development District (PDD) zoning overlay designation for this project will facilitate Town approval, as there is precedent for use of consolidation of development rights in PDD projects elsewhere in the Town.

In Water Mill, the use of a ‘Mixed-Use Planned Development District’ (MUPDD) can also facilitate development of uses that are not currently allowed in the underlying zoning.

3.2 Recommended Hamlet Center Strategy: Office or Mixed Residential/ Open Space

The recommended strategy is therefore to rezone major portions of the hamlet center, as recommended in the 1999 Comprehensive Plan Update, to Hamlet Office (HO). This would include areas to the south of Montauk Highway now zoned for office use (OD), with existing farm stand and commercial uses grandfathered. A Mixed-Use Planned Development District (MUPDD) overlay north of the highway would be configured so as to allow desired residential uses at feasible densities. There is also the potential of other cooperative public-private development options with landowners on the south side of Montauk Highway to facilitate preservation of agricultural open space through development of adjacent property not part of this study area.