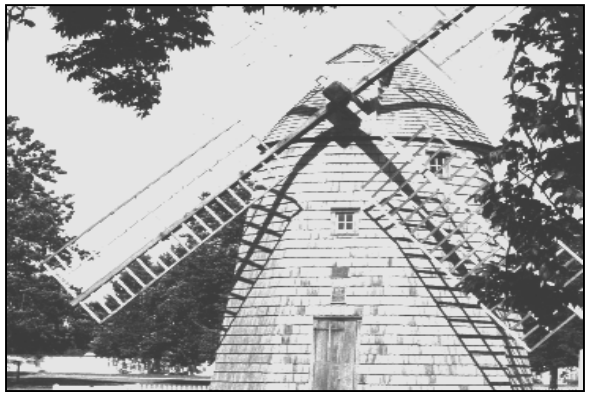
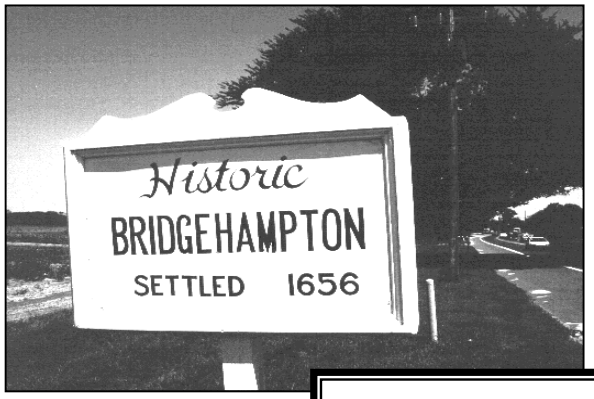
Southampton Tomorrow

Comprehensive Plan Update
Implementation Strategies

Town of Southampton, New York

March, 1999





Historic Resources

The Vision for Historic Resources

The historic and cultural pasts of Southampton are integral to its sense of place, sense of community, economy and attraction as a visitor and second home destination. In order for these resources to be adequately protected, this historic identity must be recognized and interwoven into the overall fabric of the Town.

Vision Goals

In order to achieve this Vision for its historic resources, the Town will:

1. Devise strategies to maintain the historic character of the Town's hamlets and rural areas, with an increased emphasis on protecting historic landscapes and settings as well as individual structures;

2. Develop a historic resource preservation structure which relies on and supports hamlet-based historic preservation groups and integrates them into a Town-wide strategy for protecting historic resources;

3. Work with local historic preservation groups to create "Hamlet Heritage Areas" that identify and protect locally significant historic districts, buildings and sites;

4. Identify, document and evaluate the existing historic resources Town-wide;

5. Establish subdivision and site planning guidelines and standards to protect historic resources when development is planned on or near historic properties;

6. Link historic preservation goals and programs with other community enhancement programs including farmland preservation, open space acquisition, recreation and park development, scenic landscape and scenic roads protection, and hamlet center conservation efforts;

7. Develop a public signage program intended to identify the historic resources and historic areas of the Town;

8. Develop an education program that raises residents' and visitors' awareness of the rich diversity of historic resources that exist in the Town;

9. Integrate local historic preservation initiatives with State and federal programs and the work of non-profit groups in the community;

10. Provide incentives to encourage the designation and protection of historic resources; and

11. Establish a clear focus for the regulatory process and coordinate the roles of committees and boards working to conserve the historic resources of the Town.

Technical Findings and Community Support

Southampton is a town of tremendous historic resources, ranging from the pre-Colonial period to modern times. These historic resources, whether buildings, bridges, archaeological sites or landscapes are integral to Southampton's scenic quality and sense of place. As such, they make an extremely important contribution to the continued economic vitality of the Town, both in terms of local business development, and the tourism and second home economy that many of the Town's residents and businesses rely upon.

The preservation of historic resources can have an effect on the sense of place, quality of life and economy of Southampton in four main areas: local employment/business development opportunities; housing diversity and commercial rent diversity; visitor attraction; and hamlet/village identity. With respect to local employment and business development, the rehabilitation of historic buildings is generally completed by smaller, local companies, employing local labor. This is due to the fact that rehabilitation jobs are generally smaller and cost less than new construction. In addition, a larger percentage of rehabilitation costs go towards labor in a rehabilitation project, rather than materials in new construction. Thus, more of the rehabilitation dollars will stay in the community, rather than going outside of the Town to pay for materials.

There are other reasons for viewing historic buildings as economic resources for the community, particularly in historic hamlet and village centers. Saving historic buildings in commercial and retail areas helps to assure a diverse supply of office and retail space within a wide range of rents.

Historic sites and districts are also important visitor attractions. National trends indicate that weekend trips are on the increase and that one of the prime reasons that people choose to visit an area is the existence of historical locations or attractions. These trends strengthen Southampton's traditional resort and second home markets regional visitation opportunities in the shoulder seasons, making conservation of historic village and hamlet areas worthwhile. Thus historic district designation can also stabilize hamlet and village business centers by improving retail trade and tourism, and encouraging property rehabilitation.

Existing Resources

Even though Southampton's historic sites and structures are an extremely valuable resource for the town, these resources are only partially recognized, sporadically documented, and minimally protected. The State of New York has estimated that only one percent of all of the historic sites and structures in Southampton have been inventoried. There are a total of six sites currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places, one district each in the incorporated villages of Southampton and Sag Harbor, and a total of 78 sites listed in the State Inventory of Historic Places.

A complete inventory of the historic resources in the Town is essential in understanding the existing resources and their merits in relation to each other. Preliminary analysis and documentation show that the resources are of high quality, and affect both the character and unique identity of each of the hamlets. Assessor's records and field checking indicate a number of areas in the Town that contain concentrations of

historic resources which merit further research and documentation. These areas are indicated in the accompanying Historic Structures Concentration map, which may be used in implementing the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

In the Hamlet CAC surveys, the majority of CAC's identified the loss of historic resources as a concern for their hamlets. Many of the hamlets including Speonk/Remsenburg, East Quogue, Hampton Bays, North Sea/Noyack, Water Mill, Bridgehampton and Sagaponack, completed a photo inventory and/or written documentation of the historic resources of their hamlet. The CAC's also identified a need for architectural and/or developmental guidelines to protect their historic resources.

This concern was also supported in both the written survey and the telephone survey. Nearly 86 percent of the written survey respondents and 88 percent of the telephone survey respondents strongly supported protection of historic resources as a way of maintaining the Town's status as a premier resort and second home destination. During the "visioning" workshop, many suggestions called for increased public awareness of the cultural resources within the Town. There was also a desire to provide economic incentives for their preservation. With respect to the protection of historic resources, 80 percent of the telephone survey respondents indicated that standards for historic buildings should be developed and enforced by Town officials.

Existing Regulations

There are three tiers of recognition and regulatory protection for historic resources. These include at the federal level the National Register of Historic Places, at the state level the State Inventory held by the State Historic Preservation Office, and local regulations. Each level has a different impact on the local resources as detailed below

1. Federal: The National Register of Historic Places

There are presently only a total of six properties in the Town of Southampton that are listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. These are all individual property listings; the only registered districts are located in the incorporated villages of Southampton and Sag Harbor. The individual National Register listings are as follows:

- Beebe Windmill, Hildreth Road, corner of Ocean Road, Bridgehampton;
- Wind Mill at Water Mill, Montauk Highway, Water Mill;
- Water Mill, on Old Mill Road just off Montauk Highway, Water Mill;
- William Merritt Chase Homestead, on the north side of Montauk Highway, west of Sugerloaf Road, Shinnecock Hills;
- Stephen Jagger House(which burned in 1979), on the north side of Old Montauk Highway, west of Tanners Neck Road, Westhampton; and
- James Benjamin Homestead, on Flanders Road in Flanders.

Designation within the National Register of Historic Places requires that the historic resource - either structure or site - meet minimum national criteria.

Federal legislation concerning the protection of historic structures obtains its authority from the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The Act provides a framework for the designation and registration of national, statewide and locally significant historic resources. However, the designation of both levels of resources, whether National Historic Landmarks or National Register sites, is largely honorary. They do not regulate the development actions on sites which are completed by private interests with private funds. The Act does provide some regulation however, for federally funded projects. Under both the 106 Review process and SEQRA of New York State, any project funded by federal dollars which may impact a historic site either listed or eligible for listing to the National Register is subject to review by the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation or their designee.

2. State: The State Historic Preservation Office

Section 1409, New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law, 1980.

Along with the properties and districts listed in the National Register, which are also listed on the State Register of Historic Places, the State also lists a total of 78 properties from Southampton Town in the Statewide Historic Resources Inventory. More than half of these sites are archaeological sites, many of which were identified as a result of cultural resource surveys. Specific archaeological site information is restricted and is available only to qualified professionals. The general locations of sensitive archaeological areas are indicated on Maps 1W and 1E along with National and State Register sites and Town of Southampton Historic Landmarks.

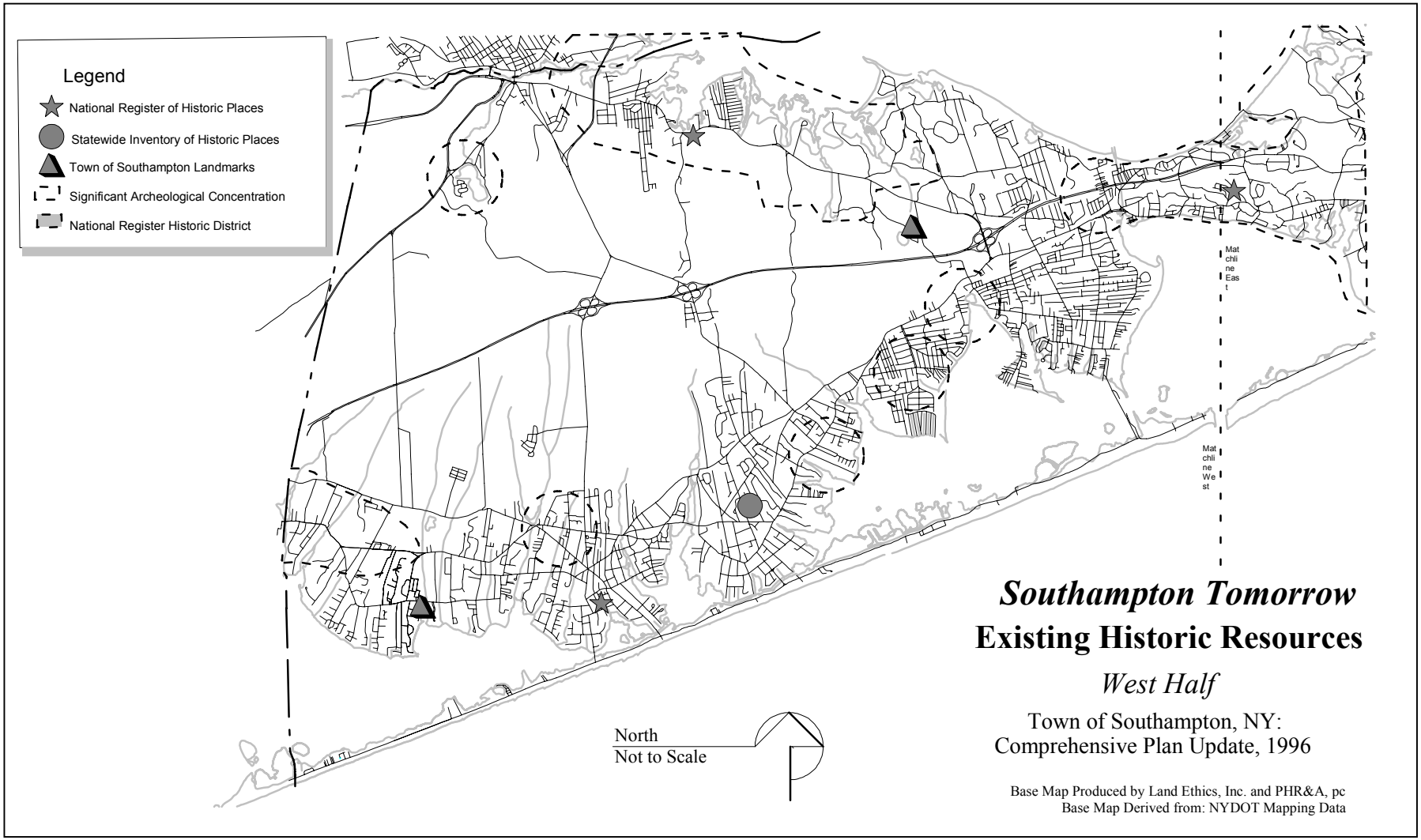
Although the archaeological sites are actively identified by the State Museum, the State Historic Preservation Office relies on local jurisdictions to submit inventories of structures and sites.

3. Local Ordinances

The Town Board of the Town of Southampton in October, 1998, adopted a local law establishing *Chapter 330-248 (Article 27*) of the Town Landmarks and Historic Districts ordinance. The three sites in the Town that have been designated under this ordinance are The Big Duck in Flanders, the Mill in Speonk, and the Water Mill in Water Mill (indicated on Map 9W).

The ordinance provides for the general structure of a Landmarks Committee which can recommend historic district designation to the Town Board, and which has the power to review "certificates of approval" for "construction, reconstruction, moving, alteration, or demolition which will affect the exterior or appearance of any structure."

This ordinance can serve as the basis for future regulatory protection efforts by the Town, although further revision of the ordinance is necessary, particularly in terms of the criteria for approval or denial. However, a necessary first step in the designation of historic districts is a comprehensive inventory of the resources.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National Register of Historic Places
Statewide Inventory of Historic Places
Town of Southampton Landmarks
Significant Archeological Concentration
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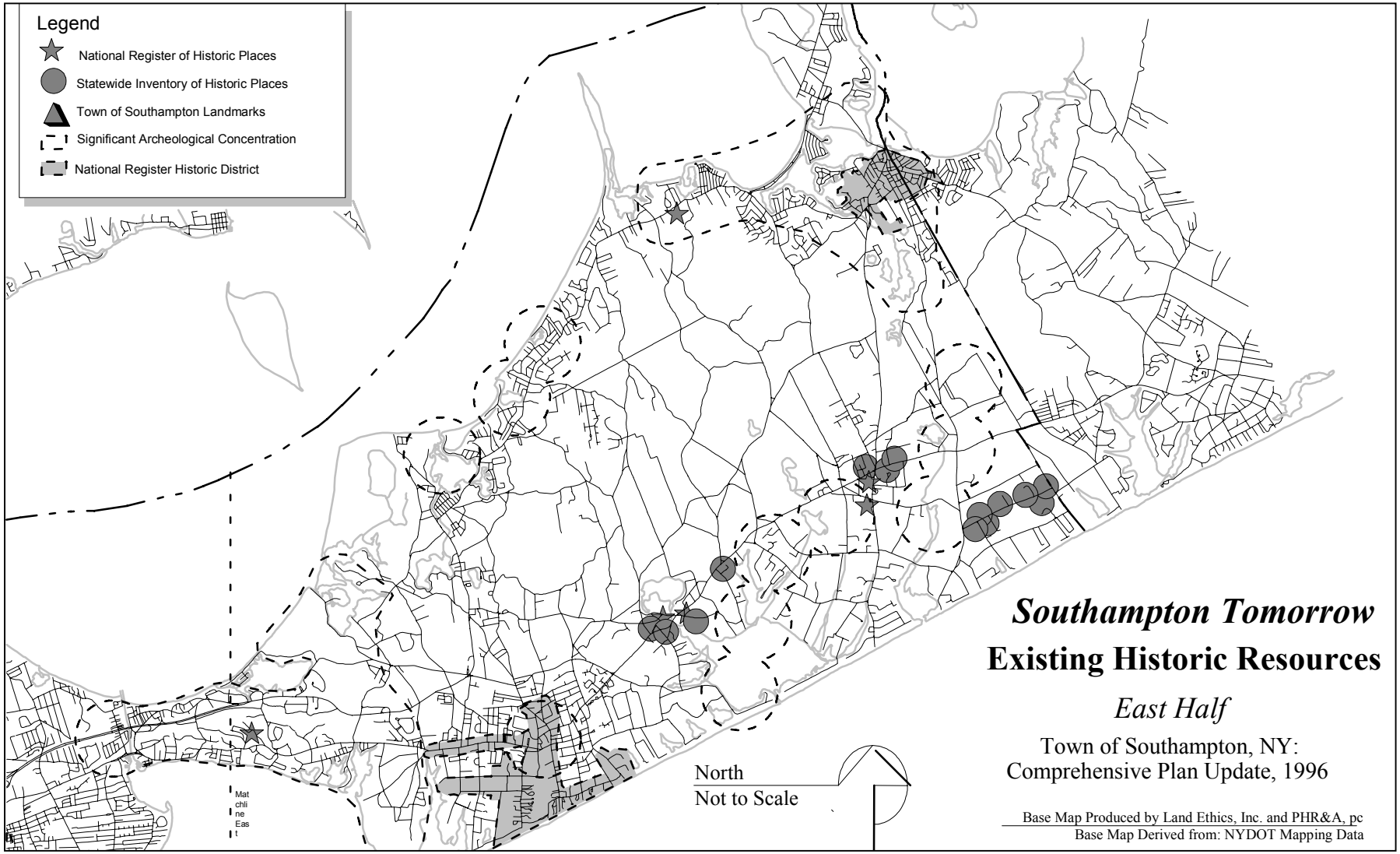
Southampton Tomorrow
Existing Historic Resources
West Half
Town of Southampton, NY:
Comprehensive Plan Update, 1996
Base Map Produced by Land Ethics, Inc. and PHR&A, pc
Base Map Derived from: NYDOT Mapping Data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IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. IDENTIFY IMPORTANT HISTORIC RESOURCES

1.1 Designate Hamlet Heritage Areas

Hamlet Heritage Areas are defined as the areas where concentrations of historic resources may be found within the Town. The goal in establishing the Hamlet Heritage Areas is to protect the historic character of the hamlets and neighborhood areas within the Town.

The Town Board shall designate the Hamlet Heritage Area after receiving a nomination from the Town Landmarks and Districts Board, a Hamlet-based Historic Group, or another Town body or individual. The Town Board will ask for an advisory opinion on the designation from the Town Landmarks and Districts Board (if the Landmarks and Districts Board has not submitted the nomination), and the Planning Board for the nomination's conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.

Hamlet Heritage Areas may be designated based on the preliminary review of historic resources completed by the Comprehensive Plan, and can be updated by a recommendation of any of the above nominators. While the Hamlet Heritage Area has few regulatory controls associated with it, it forms the basis of all of the programs detailed below. The Hamlet Heritage Area becomes the subject of informational signage, and becomes the focus for potential actions of either the Town Landmarks and Districts Board or the Design Review Board (See Map 10W and 10E for potential heritage areas).

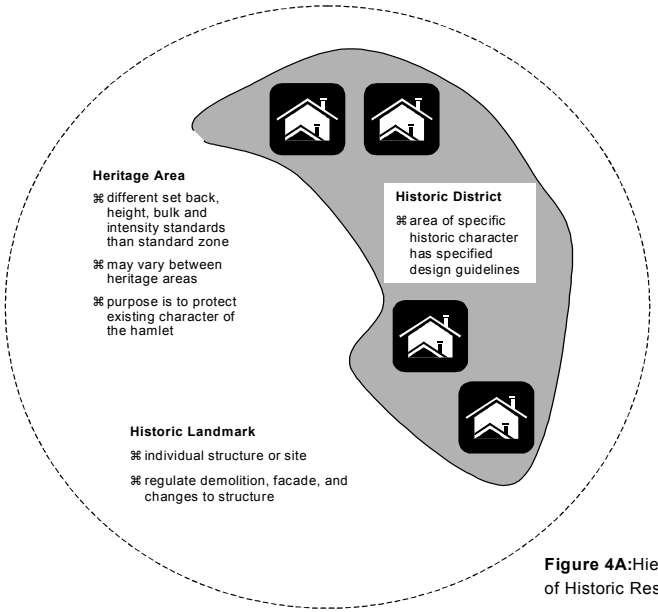
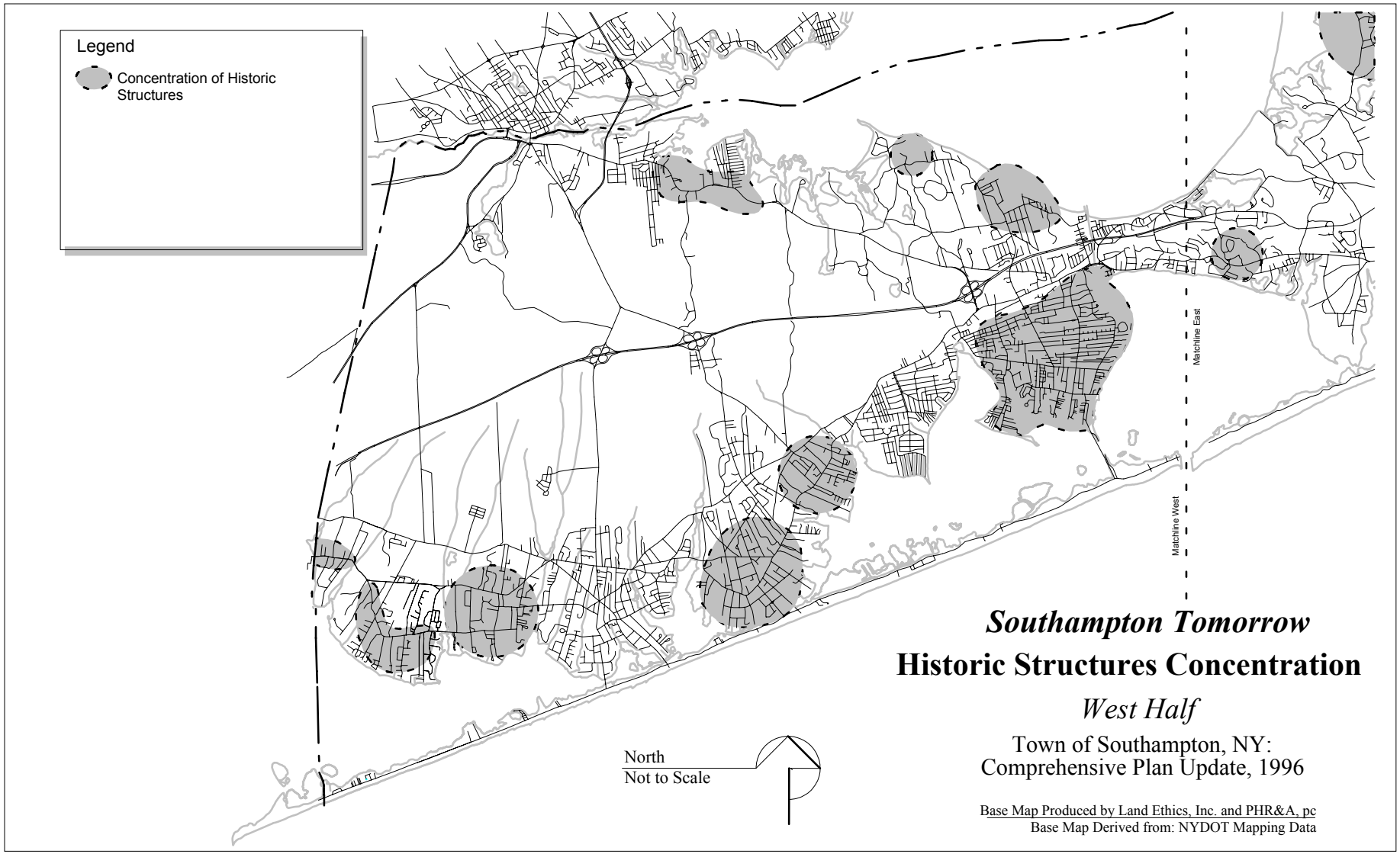


Figure 4A: Hierarchy of Historic Resources

The Hamlet Heritage Area designation may be purely honorary, or it can have a limited regulatory capacity. Designated as an overlay zone, the Hamlet Heritage Areas may have different dimensional requirements as well as different standards for signage and landscaping than other adjacent areas. These standards will reflect the existing character of the hamlet. For example, the front setback for the R-20 district is a minimum of 40 feet. In a Hamlet Heritage Area, that setback may be reduced to a minimum of 25 feet to reflect the character of the existing streets. Thus, the reviewing authority (Planning Board, Design Review Board, Town Landmarks and Districts Board) will have increased flexibility within certain parameters to vary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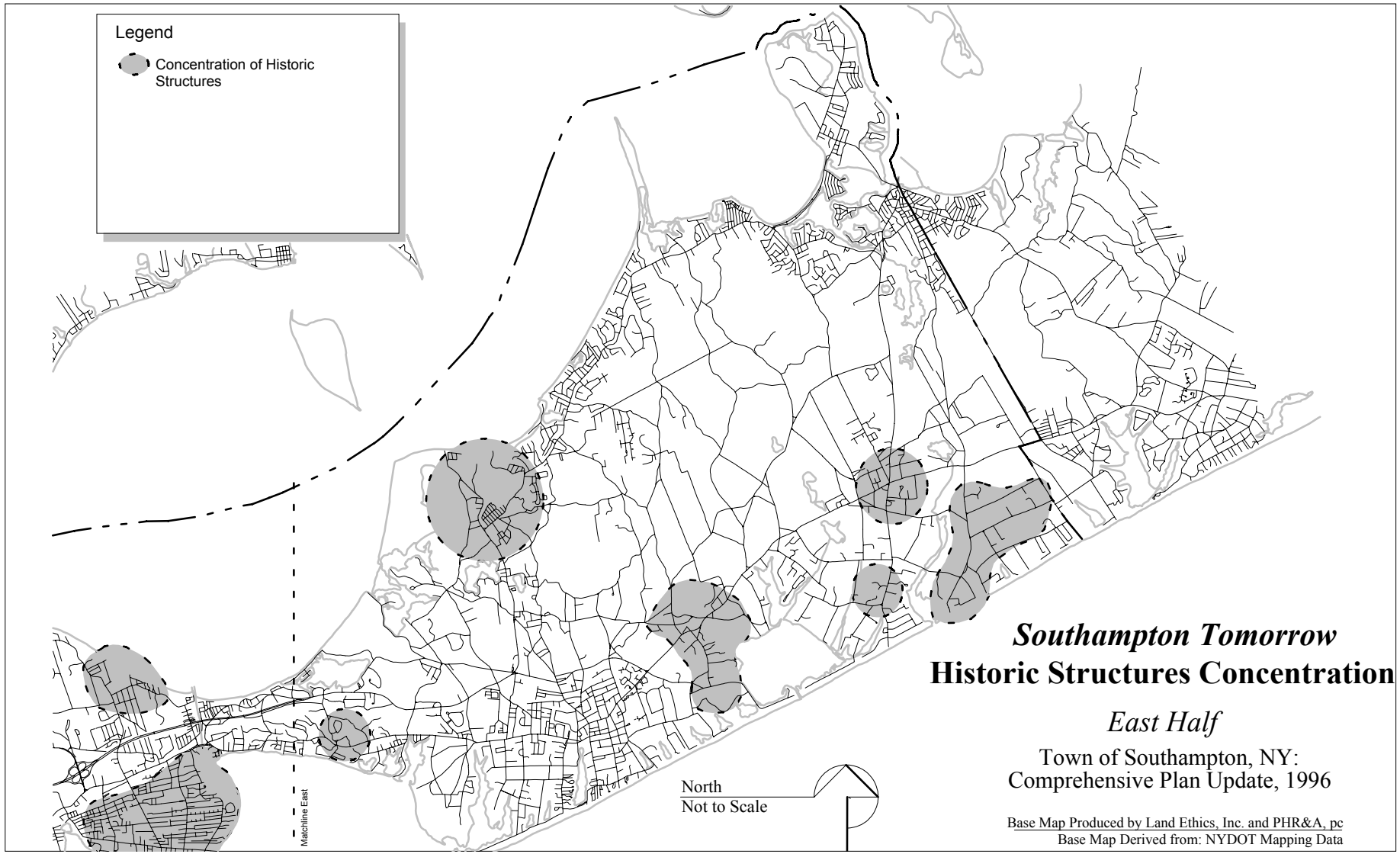
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dimensional requirements so that the new development can be consistent with the character of the neighborhood.

☑ Action Items

❶ Designate Hamlet Heritage Areas based on nominations from the Town Landmarks and Districts Board or other individual or Town bodies.

❷ Define specific regulatory design controls for the Heritage Area on a district-by-district, hamlet-by-hamlet basis.

1.2 Designate Historic Districts

Where the goal is to protect specific historic resources and/or the historic character of a discrete neighborhood, the Town can designate an historic district. As defined in *Town Code §330-249*, a historic district "constitutes a distinct section of the Town of Southampton," and meets one or more of the following criteria:

- Possesses special character or historic or aesthetic interest of value as part of the cultural, political, economic or social history of the locality, region, state or nation; or
- Is identified with historic personages; or
- Embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style; or
- Is the work of a designer whose work has significantly influenced an age; or
- Because of a unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar feature of the neighborhood.

Thus a historic district is a discrete area of high quality and an important historic resource. Each historic district will have specific design guidelines associated with it, guidelines which may range from architectural style to facade and landscaping standards. These guidelines may vary from district to district, depending on the specific character of the historic resources to be protected.

☑ Action Items

❶ Designate Historic Districts under §330-248 based on recommendations from the Town Landmarks and Districts Board.

❷ Define specific design guidelines for the district.

1.3 Designate Historic Landmarks

A historic landmark is an individual structure or site that exhibits high quality and is a significant historic resource for the hamlet and/or the Town. Where the goal is to protect an individual structure, the Town can designate it a Historic Landmark which may regulate demolition, facade improvements and other changes to the exterior of the structure.

☑ Action Item

❶ Designate Historic Landmarks under §330-248 of the Town Code based on recommendations from the Town Landmarks and Districts Board.

1.4 Complete a Comprehensive Survey

In order for the Town to effectively protect its historic resources, they must be identified, documented and placed in a context that describes their significance in terms of the development of the Town. Barring those resources listed in the villages of Southampton and Sag Harbor, at present there are only six properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and 78 listed on the State Register of Historic Places within the Town of Southampton. Identified resources must include buildings and other structures, as well as views and landscapes which are important to the historic character of the Town.

Completing a comprehensive survey of historic resources and identifying historic districts may make the Town eligible for Certified Local Government (CLG) status through the State Historic Preservation Office. CLG status carries with it increased access to federal survey and planning funds distributed annually. To provide a strong baseline for the evaluation of all historic sites and structures, a historic theme study should be completed for the Town, detailing the major development themes. An initial draft of this is presented in the accompanying technical report.

In order to implement the Heritage Areas and to designate Historic Districts and Historic Landmarks, the Town should work towards completing a comprehensive survey of all historic resources including archaeological and underwater resources in the Town. This survey will become the Town Register of Historic Places, and by using the State documentation forms, can be coordinated with the State Register of Historic Places.

The theme study and comprehensive survey can be completed in the following manner:

Theme Study: A baseline Theme Study should be prepared by Town staff or a consulting professional. The Theme Study provides the basis for evaluating the significance and importance of all historic structures in the Town. State funds from the State Historic Preservation Office may be available to complete this resource overview.

Volunteer Program: A successful volunteer program for the documentation of individual resources can be established if there is training and guidance provided to the volunteers by the Town, in the person of a staff member or a consulting professional. The Hamlet Historic Groups, along with the members of the Town Landmarks and Districts Board are a valuable source of individuals to complete the documentation of historic sites in their hamlet and throughout the Town. The Town Landmarks and Districts Board can also request annual funding to accomplish the documentation of historic resources and districts within the Town.

☑ Action Items

❶ Complete a baseline Theme Study of the historic resources in the Town through Town staff or a consulting professional.

❷ Establish a volunteer program for the documentation of individual historic resources.

❸ Designate a Town staff member or hire a consulting professional to provide training and guidance to the volunteer group.

2. Develop an Administrative Structure for Historic Preservation Actions

2.1 Encourage and Support Hamlet-based Historic Groups

Many of the hamlets within the Town have already developed historic societies or have a historic function as part of their CAC (e.g. East Quogue, Hampton Bays, and Sagaponack). The Town can support these local hamlet-based initiatives by formally recognizing them and integrating them into the historic resource analysis and protection structure. As volunteer citizen-based groups, these hamlet historic groups will become the base of support for historic preservation in their communities.

☑ Action Item

❶ Formally recognize hamlet historic groups.

2.2 Expand the Role of the Historic Landmarks Committee

The Town Landmarks and Districts Board should be designated to provide an advisory review function to the Design Review Board and Planning Board on the potential impacts of subdivision proposals and site plans to the identified historic resources of a Heritage Area and any new subdivisions in an historic district.

In addition, since many of the historic resources are landscape resources, the preferred disciplines for the Landmarks and Historic Districts Board should be expanded to include a landscape architect.

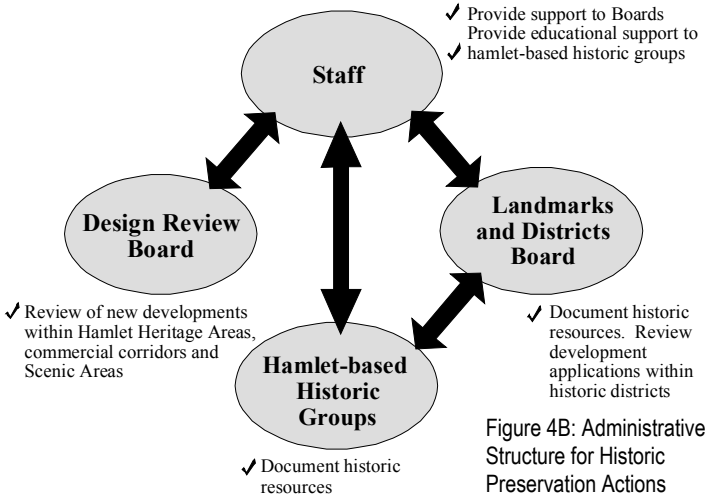

Figure 4B: Administrative Structure for Historic Preservation Actions

☑ Action Items

❶ Revise the membership of the Town Landmarks and Districts Board under §330-248 of the Town Code by adding a registered landscape architect.

❷ Appoint the Town Landmarks and Districts Board to provide advice to the Planning Board and Design Review Board on the impact of potential development on historic resources to the Town that are located outside of locally designated historic districts.

2.3 Provide Staff Support for Historic Preservation Activities.

In order to support the volunteer efforts of the hamlet-based historic groups and the activities of the Town Landmarks and

Districts Board, some level of staff support will be required. Staff will be required to:

- provide training and guidance in the identification and documentation of historic resources by the hamlet-based volunteer groups;
- coordinate local documentation efforts with the State Register of Historic Sites;
- provide staff support for the Design Review Board and the Town Landmarks and Districts Board; and
- prepare and update a theme study for historic resources within the Town of Southampton based on the themes identified within the Historic Resources Technical Report. This theme study will provide the basis for determining the relative importance of individual historic resources identified by the Town Landmarks and Districts Board and/or the hamlet-based historic groups.

☑ Action Items

Designate Town staff to:

❶ Provide support to the Design Review Board and the Town Landmarks and Districts Board.

❷ Coordinate local documentation efforts with the State Historic Preservation Office.

❸ Provide training and guidance to volunteer groups.

❹ Prepare and update a theme study for historic resources within the Town.

3. Develop an Integrated Process for Review of Historic Preservation Actions

(see figure 5)

3.1 Role of the Planning Board

When subdivision plans or site plans which are located in the Hamlet Heritage Areas are submitted to the Planning Board, the Planning Board should direct a copy to the Town Landmarks and Districts Board for their determination on whether any historic resources are involved or will be affected. If the plans are located in either a designated historic district, or on the site of a designated landmark, the Planning Board should also direct a copy of the plan to the Town Landmarks and Districts Board.

☑ Action Item

❶ Revise §292-5 Major Review and §292-6 Minor Review procedures for subdivisions, and §330-184 Site Plan Application procedures to direct the Planning Board to request Town Landmarks and Districts Board advisory opinion regarding impacts on historic resources.

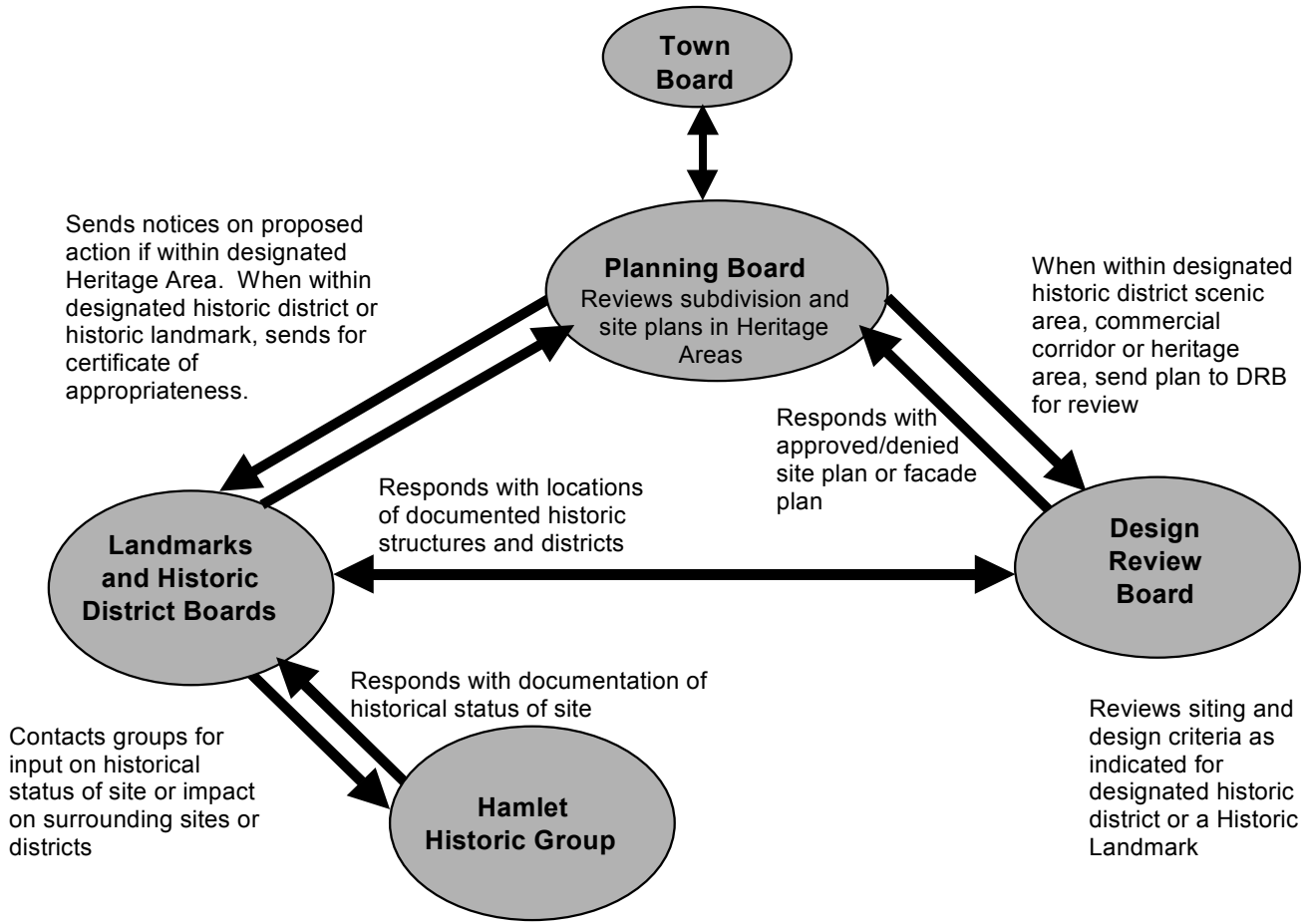

Figure 5:
Subdivision or Site Plan Approval Process

3.2 Town Landmarks and Districts Board Role

The Town Landmarks and Districts Board should provide a determination as to whether any documented historic sites, landscapes or districts are affected or could be affected by the proposed plan.

☑ Action Item

❶ Revise § 330-248 Town Landmarks and Districts Board duties to include advisory opinions on impacts to historic resources.

3.3 Role of the Hamlet-Based Historic Groups

The role of the Hamlet-based Historic Groups will be to voluntarily respond to requests from the Town Landmarks and Districts Board with documentation of the historical status or significance of an area or particular site. They may also be asked for their opinion with respect to the positive or negative effect of a proposed plan on documented resources or designated districts.

☑ Action Item

❶ Revise §330-248 to allow the Town Landmarks and Districts Board to request an advisory opinion on any project from hamlet-based historic groups.

4. Variances for Historic Properties

At the present time *§330-167(H)* of the Town Code includes a variance provision for threatened historic and cultural landmarks. The present code allows for the Zoning Board of Appeals to grant a variance of use, parking and other requirements when:

- A threat to the continuance of the landmark as a historic or cultural town resource exists.
- Such variance is in the best interest of the town and not contrary to the objectives, principles and standards expressed in the Town's Master Plan of 1970.
- Such variance is needed to support the continued integrity of the landmark.
- Such variance is reasonable as it may relate to existing zoning district provisions and nearby neighborhood uses.

This provision of the Town Code should be revised and amended as follows:

- to require that the application for variance be referred to the Planning Board and the Town Landmarks and Districts Board for their comments.
- to allow a variance for any structure or site within a designated historic district or designated an historic landmark.
- to revise part *(H)(1)(b)* to read that the variance is "not contrary to the visions, goals and directives expressed in the Town's Comprehensive Plan."

☑ Action Items

❶ Revise §330-167 to require that the application for variance be referred to the Planning Board and the Town Landmarks and Districts Board for their comments.

❷ Revise §330-167 to allow application for a variance for any structure or site within a designated historic district or designated an historic landmark.

❸ Revise §330-167(H)(1)(b) to read that the variance is "not contrary to the visions, goals and directives expressed in the town's Comprehensive Plan."

5. Education and Public Information Program

The Town should develop a comprehensive brochure for visitors, listing historic attractions in the Town. This may be more effective as a South Fork initiative.

The Town, in cooperation with the local Chambers of Commerce and other South Fork communities, should investigate the possibility of a toll-free number providing historic sites information, such as hours of operation, directions, themes and accessibility.

The Town, in cooperation with the local hamlet historic groups, should develop a signage program to alert residents and visitors to the importance of the hamlet heritage areas.

☑ Action Items

❶ Work with Chambers of Commerce, the business community and other South Fork communities to produce a comprehensive brochure of historic attractions for the Town.

❷ Work with Chambers of Commerce, the business community and other South Fork communities to establish an 800 number for historic attractions.

❸ Develop a signage program to celebrate the Town's history and historic resources.

6. Local Tax Abatements as an Incentive for Historic Preservation

The Town Assessor's office should provide local tax abatements for the continued protection of any property listed on the Town Register of Historic Places. A sliding scale of tax benefits and abatements can be devised for historic structures, depending on whether they merely fall in a heritage area, or are a part of a designated Historic District or are a Historic Landmark site or structure. This is a particularly effective strategy for commercial or mixed-use developments to encourage the protection of their historic assets.

☑ Action Item

❶ Provide a local tax abatement for the protection of any property listed on the Town Register of Historic Places.

7. Heritage Tourism Initiatives

As indicated in the Economic Sectors Technical Report, heritage tourism is a sector of the economy that is growing nationally. Southampton, with its unique character and high quality of historic resources, is well situated to exploit this expanding economic sector. Heritage tourism opportunities would also support and enhance the visitor and second-home economies that are key for the Town's economic vitality.

New initiatives at the federal level through the National Park Service are defining heritage tourism corridors across the country. Either the South Fork alone, or the North and South Forks together, have a common theme and sufficient historic resources to obtain corridor designation.

In addition, there is a proposal by private investors to build a Long Island Maritime Center along the Peconic River shoreline. The proposed museum would exhibit a collection of 18th, 19th and 20th century artifacts and educational exhibits.

The success of this type of museum will depend on the support and cooperation of both the state and local government. The museum would serve the dual purposes of acting as a heritage tourism location, along with aiding in the revitalization of downtown Riverhead.

☑ Action Items

1. Work with other south and/or north fork towns to obtain a Heritage Corridor designation.
2. Support the proposal to create a Long Island maritime museum.