



BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR BREAKOUT GROUP TOPICS

1. Housing Affordability
2. Natural Resources Conservation
3. Community Character
4. Farms
5. Economic Development
6. Maps

Each table will work as a group to discuss and answer the question about each of the six topics listed above.

Choose a note-taker – use the provided notepads to record the group's answers, comments and ideas.

Choose a reporter – someone will need to report out to everyone a summary of the group's discussion

Inside this packet:

- The question to answer for each of the six topics
- Background information about the topic & proposed zoning

Note:

Everyone can also choose to submit their own comments via the Feedback Form on the zoning website at southoldzoningupdate.com.

Housing Affordability

Does the new code advance the Comprehensive Plan goal and community priority of creating more affordable housing options, helping people be able to stay in Southold?

What additional suggestions or changes to the proposed code do you have that will help advance this goal?

Housing Affordability Background Info

Housing affordability – very important

Comprehensive Plan Chapter 8 & Community Housing Plan

This is also mentioned in several other chapters in the Plan including the Economic Chapter. Businesses have trouble keeping employees because they cannot afford to live here.

The proposed code has a number of sections intended to increase the creation of more housing that people can afford.

This dovetails with two other efforts by the Town:

- Community Housing Fund, which can provide financial incentives and assistance with housing,
- Controlling short-term rentals (aka AirBnB)

Those are being done separate from this zoning project

Residential Zones

Accessory apartment in a home:

Our code allows these now, and the new rules are proposed to be similar.

- Size Limit: 750 sf
- Rental Permit
- 2 bedrooms, 1 bathroom max
- $\leq 25\%$ of living space of entire house
- 3 parking spaces total for house & apt
- House & Apartment:
- One must be for the sole, exclusive use of owner or member of owner's household & the other must be leased for year-round occupancy

Housing Affordability (Continued)

Accessory apartment on your property in an accessory building.

It can be an existing building like a garage, or it can be built for this purpose. This is allowed now in the code and the rules are similar except in the proposed code, there are less steps to get approval because the need for Special Exception Approval has been removed.

✓ In accessory building, or build a new small cottage

- 750 sf max
- Rental Permit
- Rent-controlled
- House & Apartment:

One for the owner or owner's household member & the other leased for year-round occupancy

- Tenant certified as eligible for community housing

Non-residential Zones (aka Commercial Zones)

Accessory apartments in the commercial zones.

- Commercial buildings that are primarily for commercial uses
- Already allowed in our existing code.
- Some zones they all have to be rented to people eligible for the community housing registry
- Restricted in size to less than 850 sf.
- The proposed code allows for half the units to be market rate and half affordable
- No site plan needed if no change to the building footprint.
- Size up to 1,000 sf
- No more than 50% of the building for the apartments
- Half rent-controlled and tenants must be eligible for community housing

Housing Affordability (Continued)

Creation of residential buildings as the primary use.

- Require site plan review by the Planning Board.
- The standards for these are found in section 280-44 N.
 - Incentives:
 - ✓ Number limit based on form & function & Health Department, not yield map as in existing code
 - ✓ ½ can be market rate (½ must be affordable – rent control & tenant eligible for community housing)
 - Size limit: 1,500 s.f.
 - Flexible Formats possible:
 - ✓ Apartment House
 - ✓ Rental Cottages
 - Zones: CB, RBII, HMU I & II, T

Now possible to have a commercial building and a residential building on the same parcel without having to meet minimum lot size for each building or each apartment or cottage. Other rules still apply including lot coverage, building height, parking requirements, setbacks and Health Department rules.

So this cannot create unlimited new density because there are still a lot protections in place. This just makes it easier with some incentive being the market rate portion.

Housing Affordability (Continued)

Employee Housing (aka Caretaker Dwelling)

Another area this code intends to address is the difficulty employers are having with employees being able to afford to live here.

The proposed code includes a new use:

Caretaker Dwelling

It is listed as an accessory use

And the standards for it are listed in 280-44 I

Allowed in all non-residential zones

- Rules:
 - ✓ One per property for an employee & household members
 - ✓ Rental permit
 - ✓ Proof of employment by owner or operator of business
 - ✓ Limit 1,500 s.f.
 - ✓ One parking space

Farm Worker Housing

Related to Caretaker Dwelling is a special new accessory use for farms to house their year-round employees.

Farms have traditionally housed seasonal workers and that is allowed in our current code.

As farms have evolved, the need for year-round housing for farm workers has become necessary.

The new term is Farm Worker Housing

- New accessory use (see 280-45 K)
- Allowed in All zones where farm operations are permitted
- Rules:
 - ✓ Bona fide farm operation
 - ✓ Rental permit
 - ✓ Proof of full-time employment by farm operation
 - ✓ Limit 1,000 s.f.
 - ✓ No basement
 - ✓ Clustered
 - ✓ Site plan needed for 3 or more

Housing Affordability (Continued)

Community Housing Overlay District

- What used to be the Affordable Housing Zoning district is now an overlay district called the Community Housing Overlay.
- ‘Overlay zone’ means that if it is applied to a parcel, the parcel still has the underlying zoning in addition to the uses of the new overlay zone.
- The Community Housing Overlay District is very similar to what is in the code now in the Affordable Housing District.
- To meet our Comprehensive Plan goals and smart growth principles, this overlay zone is proposed to only be allowed in the Hamlet Centers and HALO zones, or on parcels that are already developed.
- The HALO zones were created during the hamlet stakeholder work and adopted by the Town Board. You can see them on the online maps. The idea behind them was to identify areas that were suitable to have higher density close to the hamlet centers to meet smart growth principles.
- The houses or apartment have to be affordable forever.
- There can be up to 12 dwellings per acre. They can be in the form of apartments or cottages or could be subdivided into small lots with small houses. Note that reaching 12 units per acre density is difficult due to other limitations.
- The actual size and number would be regulated by the Health Dept, height restrictions, and the physical constraints of the parcel.
- In fact to reach the highest density anywhere aside from locations that can connect to Greenport sewer, the Health Department would require sanitary flow credits, and those are and always will be limited in supply.

Natural Resources

Does the proposed code advance the Comprehensive Plan Goal to conserve our natural resources including water quality in the bays & sound, drinking water, and preservation of trees, open space & wildlife habitat?

What additional suggestions or changes to the proposed code do you have that will help advance this goal?

Natural Resources Background Info

Chapter 6 of the Comprehensive Plan, Natural Resources & Environment: goals to protect our natural resources, including water quality and quantity and trees and natural lands.

Protecting water quality both for drinking water and our creeks and bays ranked very highly as community priorities both in the forums we held last spring and the North Fork Civics survey of 2022.

Water quality of our bays and our drinking water – we know these are interconnected. Our water comes from the ground, the water in the ground flows into the creeks bay and sound. Septic systems pollute the groundwater. Lawn chemicals pollute the groundwater. It's what we drink and what we swim in the creeks, bays and Sound. Anything we can do in zoning to lessen the pollution into the ground will help both.

Our existing code already has some features that protect our natural resources.

To what extent can we improve that in this zoning update?

We are still trying to answer that , but we did add some new regulations to meet this goal in this proposed zoning.

- There is a cap on the amount of hotel rooms that can be located at marinas – being very close to the groundwater there.
- There is also a higher amount of land required per hotel room for any other proposed hotels.

Natural Resources (continued)

To address water quantity the Town Board is currently considering adding regulations around irrigation of lawns.

And we know more needs to be done to protect this precious resource. The Town has a Water Advisory Committee that is looking at this more closely to see what else we can do

Other Natural Resource protections in proposed code:

- Clearing of trees and other vegetation and grading would not be allowed without a building permit and/or approved site plan. There are exceptions for agriculture, and removing dead or dying trees that are a safety hazard. (Section 280-3)
- The Lot coverage restriction now includes compacted surfaces as well as buildings. The concept and intended effect is to find Balance between open space and constructed surfaces and buildings.
Note that this probably needs some adjustments to get it right, especially for very small lots, we've heard that comment many times now and will work on it.

There are already a lot of other protections in place for our natural resources that will continue with this proposed code.

The Town will be continuing the land preservation program and preserving land for open space.

The subdivision code, in a separate chapter, remains in place and does a lot towards preserving natural resources and land by requiring clustering of lots and mandatory land preservation.

Community Character

Does the proposed code advance the Comprehensive Plan goal and community priority of retaining the character of Southhold Town and your hamlet?

What additional suggestions or changes to the proposed code do you have that will help advance this goal?

Community Character Background Info

Town Comprehensive Plan – Chapter 5

Community character includes things like quality of life, and visual and scenic character.

Quality of life ranks very high among the qualities most important to our community.

Our existing code already does a lot to protect community character.

The proposed code carries those forward. These include

- House size limitations
- Outdoor lighting regulations currently reside in another code section separate from zoning, and are proposed to be moved to zoning with the hope it will be easier to enforce and light pollution problems can be better addressed.
- Walls would not be allowed to be built right on the property line.
- What is now a one-size fits all Hamlet Business zone for our hamlet centers is proposed to be split into two zones.
 - Hamlet Mixed Use I will have less intense uses than Hamlet Mixed Use II, and would be for the smaller hamlets that have less infrastructure to support the more intense uses.
- Rural character is another sub-category of community character. This idea ranked very highly as a priority in the North Fork Civics survey of 2022.

And is closely linked to our agricultural community and their success,

Farms

Does the proposed code advance the Comprehensive Plan goal of helping our farms stay viable and retaining the business of agriculture? This is also tied in to rural character, and preventing overdevelopment.

What additional suggestions or changes to the proposed code do you have that will help advance this goal?

Farms Background Information

Farms = Rural Character

Farms = Protection from Over-development

Farms = Local food

Successful Farms have to be Successful Businesses.

The intent of the proposed code is to create a regulatory environment favorable to the continuation of farming in Southold Town.

Proposed Code:

- Farm operation – encompasses all activities that are part of farming
- Clarifies allowed uses
- Definitions revised to provide clarity and remove inconsistencies
- Farm worker housing for year-round employees
- Removes the requirement for 80,000 sf for each different aspect of a farm

Economic Development

Does the proposed code advance the Comprehensive Plan goal of finding a balance between retaining local businesses and preventing overdevelopment?

What additional suggestions or changes to the proposed code do you have that will help advance this goal?

Economic Development

The vision statement in our Comprehensive Plan:

Calls for a balance in supporting a vibrant economy while also protecting our quality of life and natural resources.

Chapter 7, Economic Development, calls for retaining and supporting existing businesses and vibrant downtowns, but always with the idea of balancing it with what we love about Southold Town.

The proposed zoning provides for both; support for economic growth, with protections against overdevelopment.

Support for Economic Growth:

The proposed code's intent is to provide for more efficient use of the small amount of commercial land in the town (only about four percent of the land in the Town is zoned commercial or industrial.

The ways this code provides support for economic growth include

- Added flexibility in development standards.

One major impediment to commercial development in our existing code has always been this idea of “one use per minimum lot size”. It meant you could only have one building if your lot wasn't twice as big as the minimum lot size required in the code.

This led to overly large buildings in some cases where two buildings, or campus style development would have fit in better with the surroundings.

Economic Development continued

The proposed code provides much more flexibility for future development, relying more on form and function using setbacks, building height, parking requirements, and lot coverage. Multiple buildings would be allowed where beneficial. Multiple uses would be allowed. And mixed uses allowed in many zones, so you could mix residential and commercial in and near the hamlet centers

- Another way this code supports economic growth is by reducing the burden on applicants for development proposals that need both Special Exception approval by the Zoning Board of Appeals, and site plan approval by the Planning Board. This code proposes to have those applications handled by the Planning Board so the applicant only needs to make one application to one Board. This also reduces the administrative burden on the Town, and the public only has to pay attention to one board instead of two.

Protections Against Overdevelopment

The protections in this proposed code to help achieve that balance between economic growth and quality of life include things mentioned under the previous topics

- Creating the new zoning district for the smaller hamlet centers,
- putting limits on new hotels,

Economic Development continued

- making sure farms are viable because a successful farm means that the land won't be converted to a new development.

Many rules being carried forward from our existing code that have and will continue to prevent overdevelopment.

Things like building height, setbacks, site plan review, special exception review criteria.

And the other rules outside of our code such as the State Environmental Quality Review Act, our wetlands code, Town Trustees, Suffolk County Health Department rules which allow only so much development when there are no sewers and most of Southold has no access to sewers.

Map

The zoning maps are available for review at the forum – both existing and proposed zoning.

Everyone will spend some time at the maps to make comments

Use sticky notes to make comments on the map.

Or Mark it up with highlighters and pens (try not to obscure the map notations).

For comments on individual parcels, submit your address and the question or issue regarding the proposed zoning of that parcel to the Planning Department via the feedback form online or on paper (forms available at the sign-in table).

