



CHAPTER 9: QUALITY OF LIFE: HISTORIC, CULTURAL, AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

WORKING DRAFT (9/8/23)

This document is presented in its current form as a preliminary draft for informational purposes only. It is intended to provide an overview of the proposed content and the direction of the Comprehensive Plan. Please note that this draft is subject to further editing, revisions, and updates.

A public meeting is scheduled for September 23rd, during which community feedback will be solicited and considered. Following this meeting, the document will undergo additional refinement based on the input received. This refinement process may include the incorporation of photos, graphics, and other visual elements to enhance clarity and understanding.

As a result, the information contained in this draft may evolve, and new content may be added or modified to accurately reflect the goals, aspirations, and needs of the community. We encourage all stakeholders to provide comments, either in written form or at the Public Workshop, as your input will play a vital role in shaping the final version of the Comprehensive Plan.

We appreciate your understanding of the dynamic nature of this planning process and your active participation in creating a comprehensive plan that best serves the interests of our community.

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QUALITY OF LIFE: HISTORIC, CULTURAL, AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Shelter Island has a rich history, culture, and community that offer many resources for visitors and residents alike. In addition to creating a unique sense of place, these resources are economic engines that attract both full- and part-time residents and support many island businesses, jobs and future economic opportunities.

This chapter focuses on resources which tie the community together such as historic assets as well as community, public health, social, and government services. The community facilities section evaluates the current and future needs of the community for public facilities and services, such as schools, libraries, parks, fire stations, and other essential infrastructure. The governance section addresses the structure and procedures of the government, including capacity needed to assist in the decision-making and implementation of this plan.



SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

There is need to safeguard and communicate Shelter Island's unique identity and history.

There are many structures throughout the Island that reflect the Island's early settlement and colonial past, but there is limited documentation of these historic resources that would tell the story of the Island. Many older homes of all sizes are at risk of demolition to make way for larger new homes, and there is nothing in the Town Code to prevent or discourage this from happening. There is also a need to protect critical visual assets, including scenic views from roads and coastal view corridors.



Cultural organizations are a source of community strength.

Shelter Island has a number of well-known institutions, organizations, and events that are an important part of its cultural environment and contribute to the fabric of the community. The COVID Pandemic underlined the need to help the Island's cultural institutions become more economically self-sufficient.



Various community dynamics have changed, more so recently. The Plan needs to reflect the priorities and values of the current community and support the well-being of its residents.

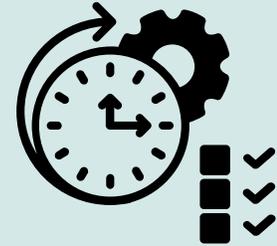
Recent growth in population and summer visitors has led to problems such as traffic, noise, light pollution, impacts on the water supply, overcrowding of beaches, littering, and an erosion of small-town traditions and shared community purpose, as the Island becomes more developed and the seasonal population wealthier and more transient. It has become increasingly challenging for those with low or moderate incomes to afford to live on the Island, as property values and cost of living rise.



SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Government capacity is limited, and there is the need for additional resources to address short- and long-term planning and implementation.

The Town's operations are supported by a system of elected officials, small staff, and many community volunteers. Town government does not include in-house planning, housing, or economic development functions, which presents challenges to both short- and long-term planning and policymaking, inclusive of economic development.



There is a need to improve upon the integrated approach to policymaking and implementation among various departments and committees.

The Town has a robust network of active volunteer committees that support professional staff. The many volunteer committees often combine regulatory, management and advisory functions. The seasonal nature of the population combined with social and demographic changes make it harder to maintain volunteer organizations and a workforce serving the needs of residents and visitors. The reliance on volunteer committees and other issues of continuity in governance has contributed to challenges in policymaking and implementation of goals.



There are opportunities to empower Town government to be more efficient, effective, and transparent.

Various departments struggle with modern records management, capital budgeting, asset management, and up-to-date regulations. There is also a need for improved communication about civic and community resources, such as events and community alerts (i.e., construction and emergencies).



SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Facility planning is needed to evaluate space needs and opportunities for existing municipal properties.

The Town's community services are well-funded and generally perform well, benefiting both from public support and assistance from non-profit groups. Many Town assets need upgrades, according to staff and other sources, but Shelter Island lacks a formal facilities master plan and an asset management system to plan, prioritize, and implement improvements. The solid waste management and recycling programs are well-organized and successful but are facing regional challenges from the scheduled closure of the Brookhaven Landfill, which will increase costs. There are opportunities to incorporate green infrastructure at various public sites, such as solar panels at the recycling center and improvements to the library building and site.



Shelter Island needs to become a more resilient and less dependent island community.

Shelter Island's lack of direct vehicular connections to the East End is part of its attractiveness to residents and visitors alike, but it also presents constraints to residential quality-of-life. The limited availability of goods and services such as emergency or specialized medical care is a significant challenge to daily living. These issues are particularly important given the community's aging population.



SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

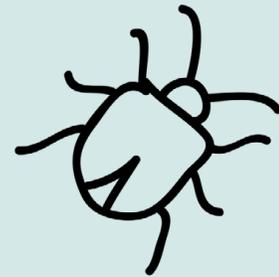
Shelter Island is getting older and needs to ensure all residents have access to the resources and support they need to thrive.

As discussed in the demographic chapter, the median age of Island residents has steadily increased over the past several decades. Some potential issues associated with an aging population include a strain on healthcare resources, increased demand for social services, and a decrease in the number of workers available to support the economy. Additionally, older adults may face challenges related to ageism and social isolation. Both the senior population and teenagers need more social opportunities to interact within and beyond their age groups. Investment may be needed in healthcare infrastructure, social services, and transportation options that help older adults remain independent and engaged in their communities.



Addressing tick-borne diseases will require a sustained and coordinated effort from all stakeholders.

Managing and reducing the incidence of tick-borne diseases is a significant public health challenge. Addressing this issue will require a sustained commitment from all stakeholders, including government agencies, healthcare providers, community organizations, and individual residents. Identified strategies may include improving awareness, sharing data and information about tick activity and disease incidence, as well as developing targeted interventions and treatment protocols. The Town should continue tick-borne disease monitoring and reduction by working with the Deer and Tick Committee to implement identified strategies.



HISTORIC RESOURCES

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

For some 13,000 years, Shelter Island was home to the indigenous Manhansett people, who called it Manhansack Aha Quash A Womak, or “Island Sheltered by Islands.” In 1638, Englishman James Farrett, an agent for the Earl of Sterling, who had been granted the Island by King James I, negotiated with the Manhansetts to “purchase” the 8,000-acre island, and sold it three years later to Connecticut merchant Stephen Goodyear. In 1651, a group of Barbados sugar merchants bought the Island from Goodyear for 1,600 pounds of sugar. The youngest partner, Nathaniel Sylvester, agreed to settle on the Island and establish a provisioning plantation to grow food and supply raw materials for the group’s sugar plantations on Barbados. Enslaved Africans and indentured servants were brought from the West Indies to perform the work needed to establish the plantation.

In 1652, the four native Sachems (leaders) of Eastern Long Island: Pogatticut, the Sachem of Manhansett (Shelter Island); Wyandanch, the Sachem of Meuntacut (Montauk); Momoweta, Sachem of Corchake (Cutchogue); and Nowedonah, Sachem of Shinnecock, brought a suit to the court of Colonial commissioners in Hartford against Sylvester and the partners, as they did not share the same concept of land ownership as the European colonizers. The court decided in the Sachems favor, a deed was signed, and another payment of sugar was provided. The Manhansett people reluctantly gave up their claim to the Island and left to join clans within the Shinnecock, Montauket, and Corchaug tribes. Those that remained were forced to work for Nathaniel Sylvester alongside enslaved Africans and indentured servants. These three groups made up the historical inhabitants of Shelter Island. The Island remained a diverse community after slavery was abolished, with people of color becoming landowners and church members.

The descendants of Nathaniel Sylvester remained on Shelter Island for the next 350 years, though with diminishing land ownership, as the Island grew and evolved into a diversified community, with the economic drivers being agricultural activities, fishing, religious retreats, and summer resorts.

After the Civil War, the Methodist’s Shelter Island Grove and Camp Meeting Association, established in 1871, sparked the growth over subsequent decades of a vibrant resort community that continues to transform the Island every summer. After World War II, change continued in the form of residential subdivisions and individual homes lining the waterfront. Since then, the Island has seen relatively steady increases in population, except for the years following 9/11 and the COVID pandemic, which were both periods of expedited influx and development.

Each of these eras left its mark on the Island, and many historic homes and other features have been preserved and maintained by generations of Islanders. The value of these resources is most obvious in recognized historic sites like Shelter Island Heights and Sylvester Manor, but may be found throughout the Island, where each neighborhood forms a unique composition of landscape, water, and buildings. The result is an exceptional level of scenic beauty and a rich sense of place. Preserving these resources in the face of ongoing social, economic, and environmental change is one of the key challenges in perpetuating the unique character of the Island for future generations.

DESIGNATED HISTORIC SITES

Shelter Island has 10 sites that have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Eight of these are considered to have local significance, while the Sylvester Manor Windmill is of Statewide Significance and Sylvester Manor is of National Significance.

The Presbyterian Colonial Cemetery land was donated by Jonathan Havens in 1732. There are eight stones of American revolutionary patriots, three of whom served in George Washington’s first Continental Congress. The Shelter Island Cemetery Association cemetery, behind the Presbyterian Church, was incorporated in 1903 and includes the grave sites of many veterans from past wars.

Quaker Cemetery When Anti Quaker laws were passed in 1656, Nathaniel and Grizzell Sylvester made Shelter Island a refuge for persecuted Quakers. Quaker meetings are still held there today.

Camp Quinipet, a Methodist camp and retreat center founded in 1922, was added to the Register in 2005. The camp includes 19 buildings constructed between 1830 and 1965, of which 13 are considered contributing buildings. The gazebo on the grounds and “Kissing Rock,” adjacent to the Camp, are both island landmarks.

The James Haven Homestead, built in 1743 and expanded in the mid-19th century, is the second oldest house on the Island. Added to the Register in 1986 and expanded in 2019, it is home to the Shelter Island Historical Society.

Manhasset Chapel, also known as Mechanics’ Hall, was originally built on the grounds of the Manhasset House Hotel in 1890 and moved to its current site in 1924. It was added to the Register in 1997 and is now privately owned.

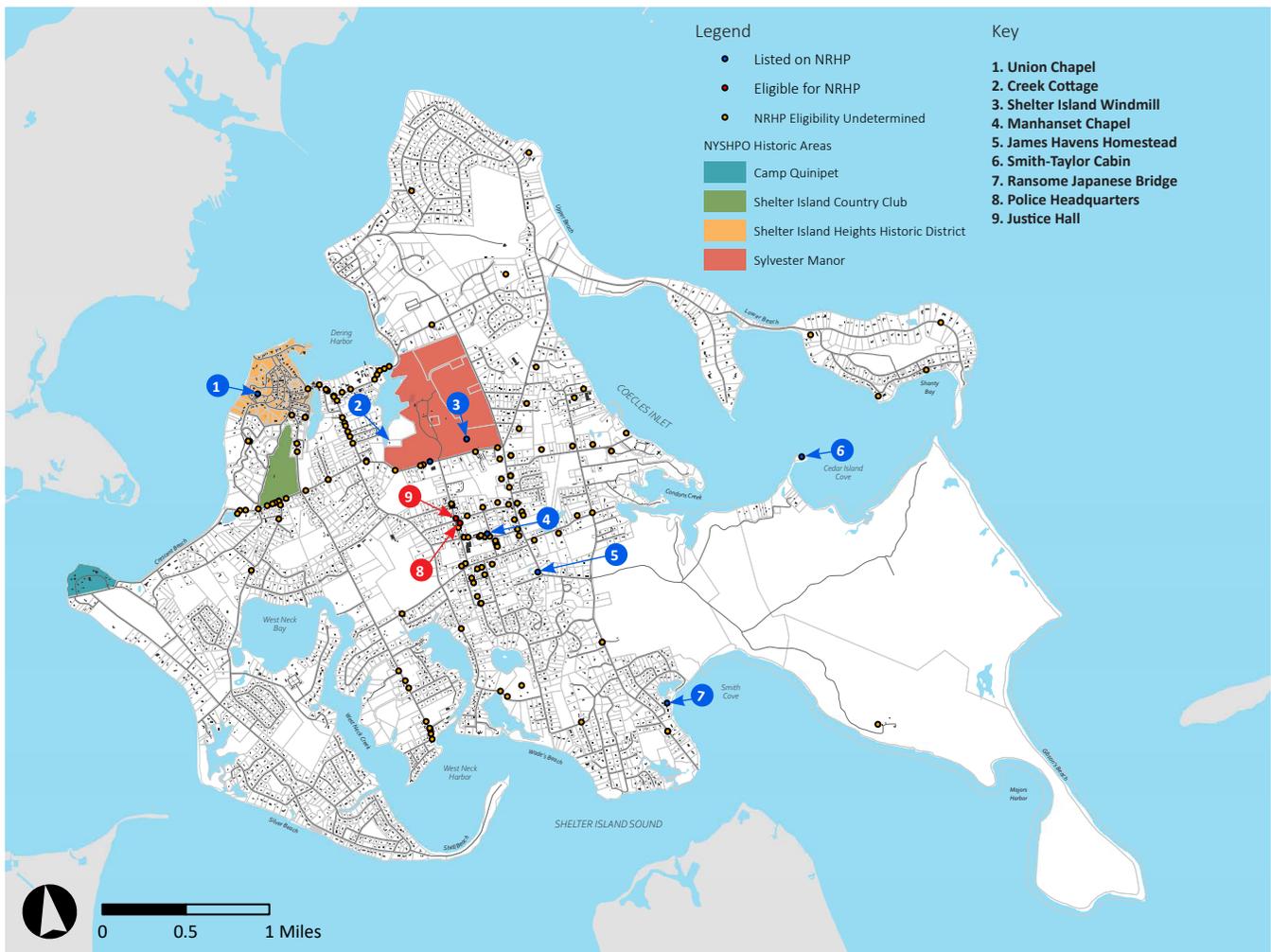


FIGURE 14: HISTORIC PLACES

Source: Data source: NYS Department of Transportation, Main Street GIS, and Microsoft
 Map prepared by Dodson and Flinker, Inc. and Larissa Brown + Associates, LLC

Shelter Island Country Club, listed in 2009, is a golf course and club house established in 1909 to serve summer visitors to the Island. Now owned by the Town, the course is managed by a non-profit. The porch provides a lovely view of Dering Harbor and, in the far distance, the Atlantic Ocean.

Shelter Island Heights Historic District, listed in 1993, includes 141 contributing buildings and one contributing structure. The Heights was laid out in 1872 by Robert Morris Copeland for the Shelter Island Grove and Camp Meeting Association of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The Smith-Ransome Japanese Bridge, listed in 2018, was designed by Ernest Ransome in 1905 for the "Borax King" Francis Marion Smith's estate. It represents an unusual use of reinforced concrete to implement a Japanese-inspired design. While the bridge is still used, a non-profit conservancy has been collecting donations and planning for its restoration, which will begin with repair of concrete abutments and balustrades.

Smith-Taylor Cabin, listed in 2007, is an Adirondack-style log cabin built on Cedar Island in Coecles Harbor around the turn of the 20th century by Francis Marion Smith. The cabin was donated to the Town for public use and enjoyment. The non-profit Taylor's Island Foundation is dedicated to assisting the Town in restoring, maintaining, and providing public access to this unique treasure.

Sylvester Manor, established in 1651 as a provisioning plantation for the Barbadian sugar trade, has remained in the same family ever since. It includes the 1735 Manor House, the 1810 windmill (separately listed), and 235 acres of fields, forests, gardens, and wetlands. Over the past decade, the family donated the Manor to the Sylvester Manor Educational Farm, which is dedicated to interpreting its history while bringing sustainable agricultural practices back to Shelter Island. The Manor was added to the National Register in 2015.

The Shelter Island Windmill, listed in 1978, is located on the on the Manor property. It was constructed in 1810, moved to the Island in 1840, and moved to Sylvester Manor in 1926. The Sylvester Manor Educational Farm is in the process of restoring the mill with the aim of once again grinding grain grown on the Island.

Union Chapel, listed in 1984, is a historic Methodist chapel within the Shelter Island Heights historic district. Built in 1875, it is considered the most important extant

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structure associated with the original Camp Meeting Association, established in 1872. An important feature is the extraordinary windows by Walter Brigham Cole.

OTHER LOCALLY SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC RESOURCES

Data from the New York Cultural Resource Information System (NYCRIS) show additional structures, including the Police Station and Justice Hall, that are potentially eligible for listing on the State and Federal Registers of Historic Places but have not been fully documented and nominated. In addition, NYCRIS shows over 100 properties as “undetermined,” which are potentially important due to age of construction, architectural value, or historic interest, but have not yet been documented. Many other properties remain to be evaluated, ranging from the gracious homes surrounding Dering Harbor to more modest homes and summer cottages found throughout the Island - many of which are threatened by demolition to make way for larger new houses.

ARCHAEOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

The entire island is considered an Archaeologically Sensitive Area by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and Phase I Archaeological Investigations have been carried out on 11 properties according to NYCRIS. From 1999-2005, the University of Massachusetts Boston held an archaeological field school on Sylvester Manor property exploring the three cultures on the plantation in the 1600s. Over 1 million specimens from this dig are housed at the Fiske Center at UMass Boston. After the formation of the Sylvester Manor Educational Farm, UMass has continued to be involved in digs on the site. Archaeological studies have also been carried out on the Mashomack Preserve by scientists from the University of California.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

While homes, churches and other structures are often the focus of historic preservation efforts, the land surrounding and connecting those buildings - the cultural landscape - is often equally significant. The National Park Service defines cultural landscapes as including both historic sites and historic designed landscapes (such as parks, gardens, and estates), as well as the common

vernacular landscapes that emerge from human activities such as agriculture, fishing, commerce, and industry. Even though these vernacular landscapes – harbors, farm valleys, lighthouses, fishing villages, etc. – were not designed, per se, they often are among the most beautiful.

On Shelter Island, several of the National Register properties incorporate a larger district that combines historic buildings with an important cultural landscape, including Shelter Island Heights and Sylvester Manor. Others, including the Shelter Island Country Club and the Smith-Ransome Japanese Bridge, represent historic landscapes designed for a particular purpose. There is a wealth of other landscapes around the Island that fall into the category of vernacular cultural landscapes. These include farms, historic roads and trails, hunting grounds, harbors, docks, and other sites associated with the natural resource-based economy of farming, hunting, fishing, and the processing, storage, and shipping of the resulting products.

One of the reasons that cultural landscapes are important is that they represent the lion’s share of what residents and visitors actually experience on the Island. When people talk about “a sense of place,” it rarely is embodied in a single structure or feature. Rather, it emerges from the larger experience of moving through and experiencing the landscape. Walking from one’s home down a quiet, tree-shaded walkway to the edge of the harbor; exploring the winding streets of an older neighborhood; hearing the thwack of a tennis racket down the lane; smelling the water and hearing boat shrouds rattling in the harbor – each of these is a cultural landscape experience that couldn’t happen the same way in another place.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Shelter Island has a number of well-known institutions, organizations, and events that are an important part of its cultural environment and contribute to the fabric of the community.

Shelter Island Historical Society

Founded in 1922, the Shelter Island Historical Society was reinvigorated in 1966 and recognized as a non-profit in 1969. Chartered as an educational institution by the NY State Board of Regents, the Society functions as the Town’s historical repository, with an archive of more than 100,000 documents dating back to the 1600s, and

maintains the Shelter Island House Registry, which has historical information on Island homes. The Society hosts many cultural and community events throughout the year, as well as ongoing efforts such as the Living History Project, which documents the lives of Shelter Islanders. The Society provides programming for school children through the Shelter Island History Project; runs the popular weekly farmers’ market from July through early September; sponsors community musicals based on historical events; has sponsored research projects; and mounted a major exhibition of the work of local

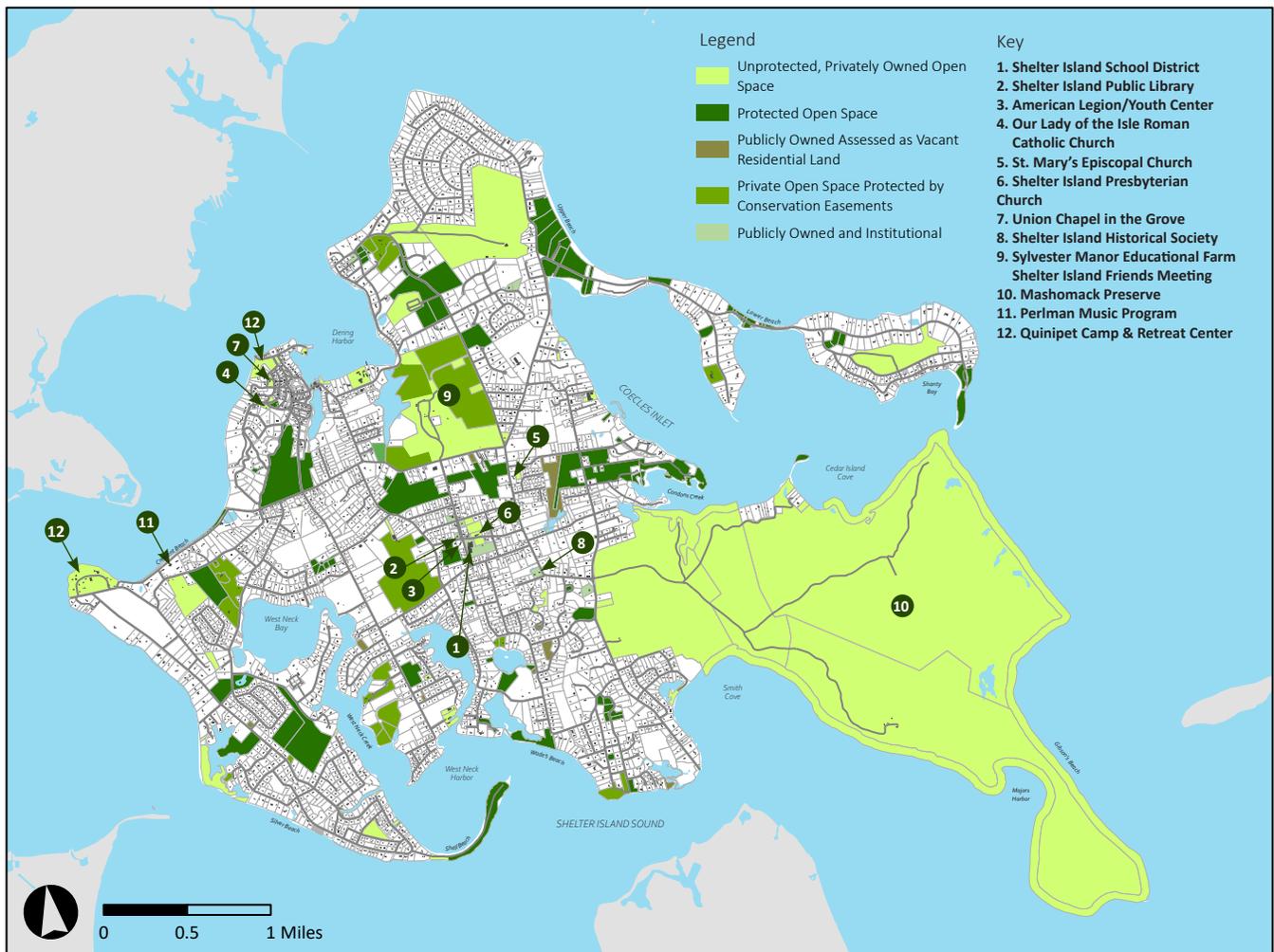


FIGURE 15: COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS & QUALITY OF LIFE

Source: Data source: NYS Department of Transportation, Main Street GIS, and Microsoft
 Map prepared by Dodson and Flinker, Inc. and Larissa Brown + Associates, LLC

artists. The Havens Store offers books on Island history and history-themed products and has become a popular source of hand-crafted items by Island artisans.

The Society's headquarters is the Havens House, a State and National Historic Registry property that was acquired in 1971. The house was renovated and expanded in 2018 to create the Shelter Island History Center, which now boasts state-of-the-art exhibition spaces, offices, and rooms for meetings and educational programs.

Shelter Island Public Library

The Shelter Island Library was established in 1885 and has a mission "to provide state-of-the-art resources, services, programs and technologies that meet current and evolving needs of the community, and to foster lifelong learning on Shelter Island." The Library plays a critical role in the community providing space for different organizations to meet, providing after school programs for students, organizing clubs and events such as cooking club and battle of the brains. The Library is a highly utilized community resource. More on the Library can be found in the next chapter.

Sylvester Manor Educational Farm

The Sylvester Manor Educational Farm was established by descendants of the original Sylvesters, who founded the manor in 1651, and is dedicated to bringing sustainable agricultural practices back to Shelter Island. Its mission is "to preserve, cultivate and share historic Sylvester Manor to ensure that food and art remain connected to community and the land." The farm offers diverse programs aligned with this mission, including field trips for school children, archaeological digs, a 150-member Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm and farm stand, summer youth and family programs, music and interpretive history programs, and public hiking trails. Sylvester Manor is comprised of 236 acres. Between 2009 and 2020, more than 121 of the Manor's 236 farmland and open space acres were preserved in perpetuity through partnerships with the Peconic Land Trust, the Suffolk County Farmland Preservation Program, the federal Farm and Ranchland Protection Program and the Town of Shelter Island Community Preservation Program.

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Recent Initiatives and Long-term Planning

The Farm recently completed a detailed cultural landscape report to guide preservation and interpretation of the property. In 2023 Sylvester Manor launched a \$13-million Phase I capital campaign to support implementation of a sitewide long-range Comprehensive Landscape Plan, which identified areas of the Manor lands appropriate for additional preservation and/or development. Phase I incorporates the renovation of various buildings including a complete exterior rehab of the 1737 Sylvester Manor House. It also includes improvements to site infrastructure and circulation including entranceways, roadways, and visitor parking and arrivals areas. Ongoing partnership initiatives seek to preserve acreage of high conservation and community value along the shore and public roadways and in the woodlands. Sylvester's Phase II goals (2025-2040) include the adaptive reuse of existing barns for cultural and educational programs, new facilities for archival storage, symposia, events and community use, and onsite housing for staff and farm crew.

Sylvester's Phase II goals (2025-2040) include the adaptive reuse of existing barns for cultural and educational programs, new facilities for archival storage, symposia, events and community use, and onsite housing for staff and farm crew.

Concurrently, Sylvester Manor continues to expand its food production capacity with:

- increased row crop cultivation of fruits and vegetables,
- long-season/year-round cultivation in additional greenhouses,
- increased livestock and crop diversification,
- restoring the 1810 wind-powered gristmill to full operation,
- food waste diversion initiatives for on-Island nutrient cycling into soils, and
- renewable energy installations to increase resilience for critical wells and refrigeration.

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Mashomack Preserve

In addition to maintaining 2,039 acres of open space, the Nature Conservancy supports the community with recreational opportunities, education, and outreach, including 11 miles of hiking trails, supported by parking, restrooms, and benches; designated areas for kayaking and cross-country skiing; a visitor center; volunteer opportunities; and nature programs and guided hikes.

The Preserve welcomes 40,000 visitors every year, providing education on the history of the site and the changing landscape of the Island. It has prepared a three-volume Natural and Cultural Resource Assessment of the entire property. Mashomack was entered into the Shelter Island Town Nature Preserve System on April 9th, 1999.

Taylor's Island Foundation

This non-profit foundation was formed in 2006 to assist the Town in fundraising for restoration and preservation of the Smith-Taylor Cabin. It led to restoration of the building from 2011-2014, including assistance with replacement of bulkheads on the Island. The foundation shares the history of Taylor's Island through docent-led tours of the cabin.

Shelter Island Friends of Trees

Shelter Island Friends of Trees (FoT) is a non-profit organization founded in 1996 with the mission of planting trees on Shelter Island's public spaces as well as educating residents about Island trees. Since its inception, FoT has planted 106 trees, funded through donations of its members. It collaborates with the Shelter Island Town Highway Department to decide where to plant trees and, when possible, share planting costs. In addition to its collaboration with the Town, FoT has partnerships with the Shelter Island School, Sylvester Manor Farm, and the Shelter Island Historical Society.

Churches

Religious communities on the Island provide religious services as well as a broad range of community services and events consistent with their individual missions and capabilities. As in any small town, they are among the few regular gathering places for community members other than school events and Town meetings and provide critical support to senior citizens and families.

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Arts and Cultural Organizations and Community Events

Shelter Island Friends of Music

The Shelter Island Friends of Music (SIFM) was founded in 1977 and incorporated as a non-profit in 1979, with a mission of presenting both world-renowned artists and rising stars of concert music to music lovers on the East End. SIFM presents five free, public concerts annually at the Shelter Island Presbyterian Church, generally three in spring and two in autumn.

Perlman Music Program

Founded by acclaimed violinist Itzhak Perlman and his wife Toby in 1994 and arriving on Shelter Island in 2000 at the sight of the historic Peconic Lodge, the Perlman Music Program (PMP) runs a summer program for young string players at its campus on Shore Road. Each summer, 40 12–18-year-old musicians come from around the world for a seven-week residency. In 2012, the PMP opened the new Kristy and James H. Clark Arts Center, which includes a recital hall, soundproof practice rooms, music library, and girls' dormitory. The PMP offers a year-round alumni recital series at the Clark Arts Center that is open to the public, as well as an annual family concert and special concerts in collaboration with the Shelter Island Public Library.

studios and galleries

Shelter Island boasts numerous resident artists and artisans, some of whom open their studios to the public, and as well as a few galleries, some seasonal, others year-round. An annual open studio is organized every August by Artists of Shelter Island (ARTSI).

Annual Community Events

A series of annual events - many of them organized by the institutions described above - bring the community together and add to the quality of life on the Island, some are shown in the photos to the right:

Show these in photos:

- Fireworks Celebration at Crescent Beach in July
- Shelter Island 10-K in June, which attracts globally elite runners
- Shelter Island 5-K Run/Walk in October for breast cancer charities
- Havens House Farmers Market: local food, music and crafts (May-September)
- Shelter Island Historical Society Antique Car Show (Summer)
- Shelter Island Fire Department Annual Chicken Barbecue (August)
- Shelter Island Chamber of Commerce Arts & Crafts Fair and Green Expo (August)
- ARTSI Open Studio Tour (August)
- Cricket Match to benefit Ambulance Corp. (August)
- Lions Club Scallop Dinner (October) & Corn Hole Tournament (August)
- BBQ Contest at the Legion to benefit the Legion (August)
- Lions Club Snapper Derby (August) and Chamber of Commerce Rubber Duck Race (August)

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

TOWN GOVERNANCE

Towns within New York State are considered municipal corporations with geographical jurisdictions, home rule powers and fiscal capacities to provide a wide range of services to their residents. Shelter Island is classified as a Town of the second class under the New York State Town Law, as are all towns in Suffolk County. The Town Board exercises both executive and legislative functions. Judicial functions are held by Town Justices.

Town Government Officers, Staff, and Volunteer Committees

The Shelter Island Town Board is the governing board of the town. It approves additions, deletions, and modifications of provisions of the Town Code, and also acts as the Police Commission. Among other functions, the Town Board approves certain permit applications; fills vacancies in town offices, elective or appointive; selects the town attorney and town engineer; appoints harbor masters and police officers; and provides for the hiring of other employees as necessary for the conduct of the town's business. Finally, the Town Board adopts a budget, fixes the salaries of officers and employees, establishes rules of board procedure, and designates the official newspaper of the town.

The Town Supervisor fulfills a "first among equals" managerial and supervisory role but is technically not a Town executive. The Supervisor presides over Town Board meetings, legislates as a member of the Town Board, implements Town Board decisions, and serves as the chief financial officer and budget officer in charge of preparing the draft annual budget. The Deputy Supervisor, who may be any Town officer, official, or employee, is appointed by the Town Supervisor. In Shelter Island, the Deputy Supervisor has traditionally been a Town Board member and takes on an important role in oversight of the budget process.

The Town employs staff with technical knowledge and experience to implement decisions and to oversee consultant work, for example, the Town Attorney, the Town Engineer, and building inspectors. Additional expertise is available from County government, nonprofit organizations, and consultants. Records management

appears to be a concern, as some staff continue to depend on paper records and others report growing resident and legal demands for records and data. The Town is implementing a digital conversion strategy through file sharing and management software.

The Town of Shelter Island relies on many volunteer committees and boards to perform municipal functions or advise town government. Town Board members oversee their activities by serving as liaisons to these groups. The Town also appoints temporary task forces and committees to address specific projects and issues. Committees can have regulatory, management, and advisory functions. Some committees are regulatory, such as the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals, others have a strong policy implementation role, and yet others are primarily advisory. In many cases, there is a mix of functions. All boards and committees have a presence on the Town website, though the amount of information and documentation of committee activities that is available to the public through the website is highly variable.

Small towns depend on volunteers to assist with administration of Town functions and provide services. In a seasonal community like Shelter Island, many property owners are part time or seasonal only, which limits their ability to participate in Town government. Most committees meet monthly year-round and in person. For this reason, committee members are typically year-round residents. In many towns, changing lifestyles, such as the time demands on two-earner families, have made it more difficult to find volunteers for town committees. Retirees often become the main source of volunteers. Shelter Island's combination of a high percentage of older year-round residents, a small economy, and a large part-time, seasonal population, is reflected in its volunteer participation.

[Need a flow chart to explain government roles]

Special Purpose Districts

Special purpose districts are unique public entities that are not Town departments but play an important role in community life. In Shelter Island, local special purpose districts are the Fire District, the School District, the Library, and the West Neck Water District, each governed by a board of commissioners or trustees. The water district is owned by the Town but leased to and operated by Suffolk County Water Authority.

Budgeting

Taxes collected by the tax levy go into four major separate budgets: Town of Shelter Island, Shelter Island Union Free School District, Shelter Island Library, and the Shelter Island Fire District. (The Town Assessor also

assesses property in the Village of Dering Harbor, which has a separate budget.) Government and special district activities are primarily funded by the property tax, though there are some other income sources.

Town-Owned Facilities

The Town of Shelter Island owns 25 buildings and nine other facilities. The Town’s assets are maintained by the Department of Public Works (DPW). Funding for Town facility improvements and initiatives comes from the general fund or grants from the state, county, and/or federal governments. The Town applies for \$50,000 per year in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) federal funds which must be spent to benefit seniors, disabled persons, or people in low- and moderate-

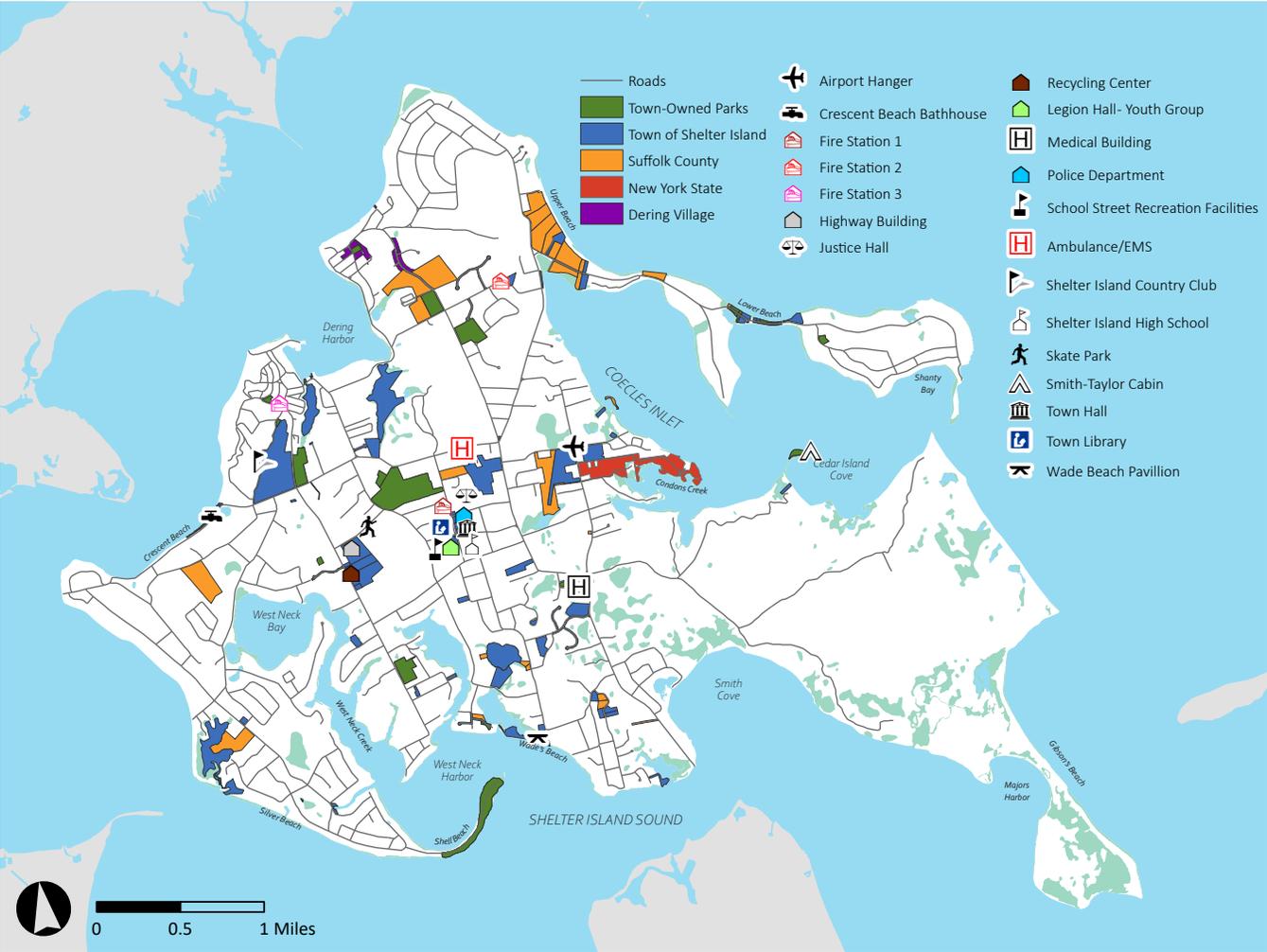


FIGURE 16: PUBLIC FACILITIES AND PUBLIC LAND
 Source: MainStreetGIS, LLC., Suffolk County GIS, and Microsoft
 Map prepared by Dodson and Flinker, Inc. and Larissa Brown + Associates, LLC

income areas. Town officials and staff have identified a number of projects that need attention. Several themes emerge from project planning and implementation lists:

- Sea level rise: Various projects to address sea level rise on coastal Town properties and low-lying roadways.
- Water issues: Ground and Surface Water Management Plan, sewage plant discharge/fertigation at the Shelter Island Heights Treatment Plant, municipal buildings wastewater treatment.
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance: Scheduled for upgrade in 2023-2024 are the Community Center, Police Building, and Justice Hall
- Repairs and improvements to facilities: Legion Hall, Senior Center kitchen and bathroom project, Medical Center roof, Town Hall and Medical Center emergency generators, solar arrays on the Recycling Center roof and at the Town Hall Campus. Some of these projects have been completed, while others are in process or listed for future implementation.
- Municipal Facilities Master Plan: Town Building and Infrastructure Asset Evaluations need updating.
- Town Center planning and improvements: Facility Needs Assessment.
- Building a capital reserve fund.

Capital Planning and Grants

The Capital Planning and Grants Committee (CPGC) advises the Town Board on priorities, costs, and funding resources for capital projects. The Committee is developing a Multi-Year Capital Plan to guide maintenance, repair, and replacement of infrastructure and assets so that these expenditures can be scheduled.

The timeline for this project targets completion year end 2023. The CPGC will be requesting each Town department to examine, and report anticipated expenditures on capital projects that would fall outside of normal operating budgets. Once the CPGC has the requests of each department, they will work to prioritize the projects, seek grant funding, and/or budget for the project in future fiscal years.

Highway & Public Works Department

The Shelter Island DPW is responsible for buildings operations and maintenance; grounds maintenance; solid waste management including recycling, composting, and household solid waste management; and maintenance of Town-owned parks, beaches, docks and other recreational assets within the Town.

The Highway Department is responsible for fleet services; road and right-of-way maintenance, including repairs, repaving, snow removal, and mowing. The Village of Dering Harbor and the Shelter Island Heights Property Owners Corporation (SIHPOC) manage their own roadways and other assets, sometimes contracting for services with the Town.

Solid Waste Management

The Town of Shelter Island does not provide curbside collection of trash and recyclables but is responsible for solid waste management on the Island. A more detailed discussion of this topic can be found in Chapter X: Utilities, Sustainability, and Resilience.

Senior Services and Programs

The Shelter Island Office for Senior Services (the Senior Center) is located on the lower level of the Town-owned Medical Center at 114 South Ferry Road, open 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday. It offers a wide array of social, recreational, public health, and educational programs for people aged 60 years or older. Some 200-300 people typically participate in senior programs over the course of a year, including seasonal residents. In the last four years, with a new director, the Town's senior services and programs have expanded, including a greater focus on mental health. Although some programs were suspended because of the pandemic, there are plans to develop more programs to attract younger, active seniors and more programs for men. Broader planning issues also affect seniors and their quality of life. For example, the limited extent of sidewalks on the Island affects people who want to walk for exercise, especially those who use walkers, and people who use wheelchairs.

Senior Center programs are funded by the Town, the NY State Office for the Aging, Suffolk County Office for the Aging, federal CDBG funds, program fees, and voluntary contributions. A non-profit organization, the

Senior Citizen's Foundation of Shelter Island, provides funding to improve life on the Island for senior citizens, from purchasing two new buses to contributions toward making the Town's beaches more accessible.

Public Safety

The Shelter Island Police Department (SIPD) has a full-time staff of 10 police officers and one police clerk. Part-time positions include four bay constables, a police clerk, a crossing guard, seven jail attendants, an animal control officer, two traffic control officers, and a court officer. Seasonal officers serve from the third week in May until the second week in September. Dispatch is handled by the Southold Police Department. Marine programs include two grant-funded police vessels, boater education, shellfish monitoring, boat storage on Town property, and rescue diving. Community policing includes speed enforcement education, home assistance to seniors, and assistance at special events. The Police Headquarters in the Town Center also operates as Shelter Island's Emergency Operations Center. A more detailed discussion of emergency services can be found in Chapter X: Utilities, Sustainability, and Resilience.

The SIPD is a New York State Accredited Agency. Less than a third of all police agencies in the state have achieved this status, which requires meeting a series of professional standards and regular reviews and inspections. Training of the Town's police and law enforcement personnel is provided and coordinated in part by the Suffolk County Police Department (SCPD) and the NYS Department of Criminal Justice. SIPD's 2022 operating budget represented about 17% of the Town budget, lower than any other East End town or village. Expenses are controlled, in part, by a variety of shared services among Shelter Island, the County, and other East End communities.

Police call data for the past five years (2017-2021) indicates annual calls of between 3,500 and 4,000 calls a year, with a high degree of seasonality. Violent crime is extremely rare, but Shelter Island is subject to broader societal trends such as financial crimes. Deer collisions account for about a quarter to a third of motor vehicle accidents.

In general, demands on the Police Department have been increasing in the last 10 years, reflecting changes to the law and requirements for documentation as well

as a greater demand for residential services. Improved records management is an important issue as the public requires more documents for various purposes. A new records management system for Suffolk County town police departments will be instituted in Shelter Island.

Fire protection in the Town is provided by the volunteer Shelter Island Fire Department (SIFD), operating under and governed by an area fire district. The Fire District is run by five publicly elected, unpaid commissioners who have the power to provide fire protection services within their boundaries, levy taxes, and incur debt. The Fire Department typically responds to 125–150 calls per year. There are about 64 volunteer firefighters on Shelter Island that operate a combined 14 pieces of firefighting equipment. The marine unit also participates in joint training exercises with the Coast Guard and the Shelter Island Police Department.

The SIFD maintains three department locations in the Town to house equipment and enhance fire protection and response. Fire alarm calls are handled by SIFD, and mutual aid agreements are in place at the state, county, and local levels to provide additional resources should SIFD need assistance.

Basic and advanced firefighting training is offered through the Suffolk County Fire Academy. Fire protection also includes a Town Fire Inspector and Fire Marshals from the County, who have broad responsibilities across their jurisdictions. The SIFD also relies on the Suffolk County Police Department Arson Squad for suspicious fire and arson investigations.

Emergency medical services are provided by the EMS Ambulance Company, a Town department, which took over responsibility for ambulance services from the Red Cross in 2012. There are 36 volunteers and three ambulance vehicles available within the Town to respond to emergency situations as needed. In addition to 15 drivers, there are 16 volunteers with Basic Life Support certification, three with Advanced Life Support certification (including one paramedic), and two critical care technicians.

Suffolk County Division of Emergency Medical Services assists in the training and certification of EMS personnel. The Division also has the responsibility for county-wide coordination of the emergency system and the development of support services to aid in improving all phases of emergency medical care. The EMS Director

reports that the types and number of calls have not changed significantly over 20 years, with totals typically in the 200-300 range and a spike in the summer.

The Shelter Island EMS Advisory Board supports the EMS program, and the non-profit Shelter Island Ambulance Foundation raises money to purchase ambulances and equipment and to fund continuing education programs for EMTs.

Public Library

The Shelter Island Library, established in 1885, is located in a 1965 single-story, 6000-square-foot, ADA-compliant brick building at 37 North Ferry Road on 1.27 acres of land. Open six days a week, the library provides traditional library services along with a wide variety of electronic, educational, cultural, and entertainment programs. In the most recent year for which data are available (July 2021-June 2022), the library had over 76,000 visits and over 9,000 people attended programs.

The facility has a community meeting space on the lower level that can be expanded to accommodate up to 125 people. It also contains a children's library, a staff lunchroom/kitchen and a patio off the lower level with table seating and a retractable awning. The main level holds adult materials and computer stations.

The Shelter Island Library is an "Association Library," that is, a public library created by a membership association. It is not a Town department, but the library does depend on tax revenue (the rate for 2023 was 0.1987 per \$1,000 in assessed value) to cover the lion's share of its budget. The library's portion of the tax bill is usually around 3%. This amount is voted on annually by registered voters via an election run by the School's District Clerk. The 2022-23 budget called for \$755,796 in taxes, an amount that covers 81% of operating costs. Total expenditures were budgeted at \$926,715. The balance of expenses not covered by property taxes comes from gifts, grants, fundraising, fees, fines, and investments.

A key service provided by the library is technology support and access via the 12 computers which are available in-house and Wi-Fi for patrons' personal devices. The use of these resources, and digital services, has grown exponentially, across all segments of the population, in the years of the pandemic. The library also provides passport processing, notary public services, and

periodic health clinics. On June 17, 2023, Shelter Island voters approved a proposed \$9.5 million expansion of the library. This project will renovate the existing structure of approximately 4500 square feet while adding 6000+ square feet of new space.

The goals outlined in the 2018-2023 Strategic Plan include more support for non-traditional education and coordination with the school district; more specialty spaces, such as a maker space; and sustainability and resiliency improvements to the library's property. In 2020, the library was awarded certification by the Green Business Partnership in recognition of efforts to reduce waste, conserve water and energy, implement green purchasing, and make an organizational commitment to sustainability.

Governed by a Board of Trustees, the library has a staff of 13 (four of whom are full-time). The Friends of the Shelter Island Public Library, a non-profit organization, supports the library through fund-raising events for cultural and educational programs and for resources and materials not within the annual operating budget.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Shelter Island School District (SIUFSD) provides education for grades pre-K through 12th, in addition to supporting community life through concerts, sports, and other activities.

The district is led by a seven-member elected Board of Education and is not a Town department. It is funded primarily by a property tax levy (\$2.89 per \$1,000 of taxable assessed value for the 2022-23 budget of \$12,445,523). Approximately 46% of the total Town tax levy goes to the School District.

Historically, cost per pupil has been higher than similar districts and significantly above the New York State average. According to data from the State Education Department, the cost per pupil in 2020-2021 was \$47,871, compared with a countywide average of \$25,638, and up 41% from \$33,944 in 2010-2011 some of which can be attributed to the decline in enrollment

The SIUFSD exists in a single building at 33 North Ferry Road. Enrollment has declined during the last two decades, from a high of 285 students in 2003-2004 to a low of 186 in 2022-2023. Student population numbers are anticipated to stabilize, as the graduating classes are

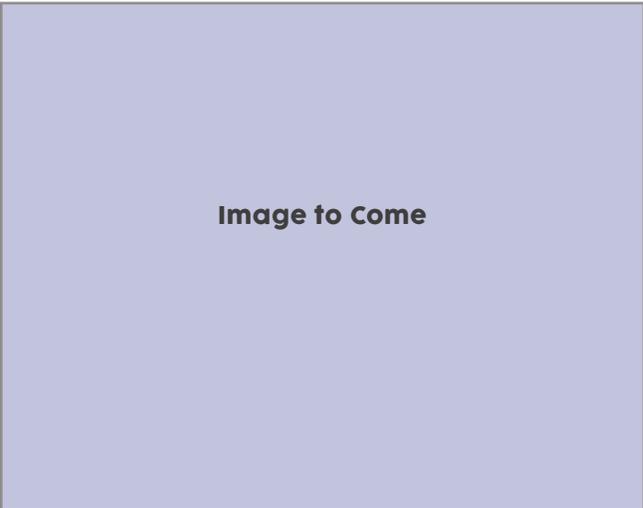
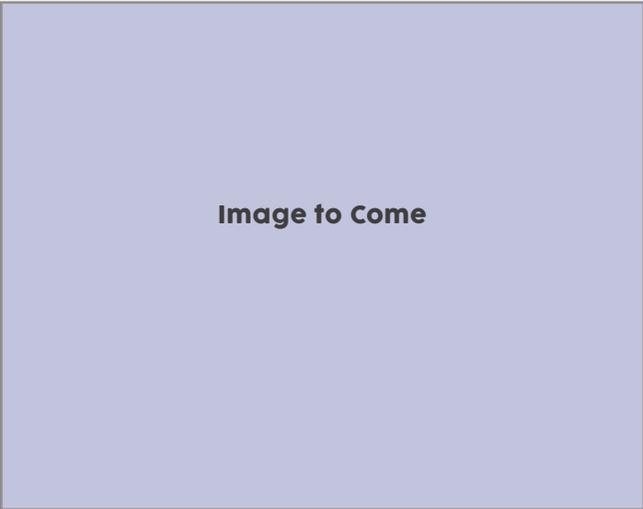
being replaced with like numbers in the lower grades. In recent years, there have been approximately 30 students who attend private schools off-Island. During the pandemic, the district experienced a temporary increase in student population, which showed that the school can absorb more students without an overall increase in costs. The superintendent has initiated a program designed to attract tuition-paying students from surrounding towns.

Certified by the New York State Board of Regents, Shelter Island School employs 34 professional staff in addition to five teaching assistants and aides, a guidance counselor, a school nurse, a school psychologist, and a school social worker. Some 84% of all professional staff have graduate degrees. The number of teachers has been stable in a range of 31-36 since 1998.

The school is rated at the highest level (4) for College, Career and Civic Readiness. The graduation rate for the 2021-2022 school year was 98% according to US News & World Report. The average class size is 16, with a student-teacher ratio of 8:1.

The school population has become more ethnically and economically diverse. As of the 2021-22 school year, 20% of students identified as Hispanic, while 35% of students were eligible for free or reduced lunch.

The high school athletic department runs sports programs under the umbrella of the NY State Public High School Athletic Association. While some sports (cross country and track, volleyball, men's basketball, golf, baseball, and softball) remain active, others that were historically combined with neighboring schools (such as football, lacrosse, tennis, and wrestling) are no longer offered.



PUBLIC HEALTH

Shelter Island is generally a safe and secure community, comparable to others with similar demographic characteristics and subject to broader social stresses, such as pandemic conditions in 2020. In addition to varying levels of Town government financial support for health and safety services and programs, the Fire Department, EMS, and Senior Center receive support from separate non-profit foundations, similar to non-profits that support the school and the library.

As a small and relatively well-off community in a very diverse county, Shelter Island does not appear directly in the numerous public health studies and data sources for Suffolk County, Long Island, or New York State. The 2014-2017 Suffolk County Community Health Assessment identified health challenges and behavioral/risk factors that may be especially relevant to the Town, including obesity, the relative remoteness of the Island, volunteer medical staff related to emergency medical transportation, and potential contaminants in water. According to Census data, almost all of the Town of Shelter Island residents have health insurance.

Severe storms of various types are the greatest natural risks to Shelter Island's people and property, according to the 2020 Hazard Mitigation Plan. Climate change estimates for 2050 project more days over 90 degrees and heat waves; fewer days below freezing; more extreme storm events; and rising sea levels.

Available Medical Services

Shelter Island faces challenges in accessing medical services due to its limited infrastructure, remote location, and scarcity of healthcare professionals. For example, there are only two local primary physicians, no dental practice, and most specialty medicine, including home nursing care, is off-Island on the East End.

There are no hospitals on Shelter Island. Residents are served by three regional hospitals: Stony Brook Eastern Long Island Hospital (70 beds) in Greenport, Stony Brook Southampton Hospital (124 beds in Southampton, and Northwell Health's Peconic Bay Medical Center (200 beds) in Riverhead. Peconic Bay also operates a 60-bed skilled nursing and rehabilitation facility. Patients are transported by ambulance primarily to Eastern Long Island Hospital and, less frequently, to Southampton

Hospital by the Shelter Island Emergency Medical Service (EMS). Medivac transport is provided by the Suffolk County Police Department to the level one trauma center at Stony Brook University Hospital. Island residents also rely on urgent care centers located on both the North and South Forks.

Mental Health and other Social Services

The East End Mental Health Awareness initiative is supported by the towns of Southampton and East Hampton and publishes an online provider directory for the East End. In addition, the Suffolk County Department of Health Services supports a community-based outpatient mental health clinic in Riverhead. Lastly, although based in Hauppauge, DASH (Diagnostic, Assessment, and Stabilization Hub) is a mobile crisis hotline for anyone in Suffolk County. SIPD employs this resource when responding to calls that require such intervention. Stony Brook Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program (CPEP) is also a frequently used resource in the community.

In addition to the Town Social worker, we also have a group of volunteers that formed in response to the COVID pandemic and the toll that it could take on the mental health and wellness of the community called the Health and Wellness Alliance. In recent years there have been increasing numbers of people struggling with mental health which can be exacerbated by any number of factors. World wide stressors such as the recent COVID pandemic combined with more local and personal challenges such as food and housing insecurity could be contributing to the observed increase.

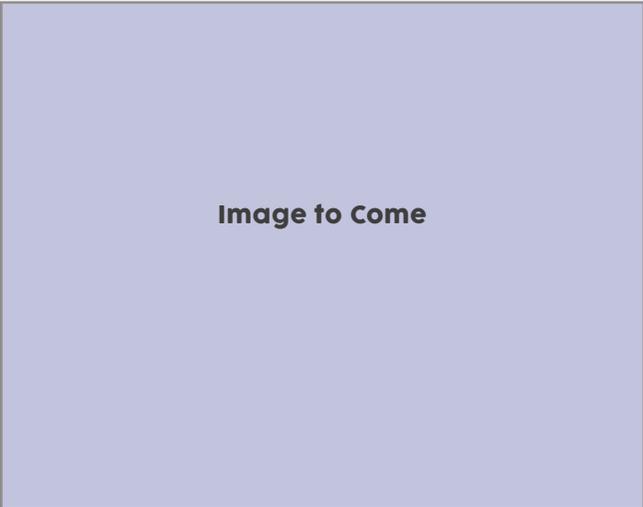
There are some organizations that are helping combat food insecurity on the Island and they are the Food Pantry at the Presbyterian Church, CAST (Communist Action Southold Town), the Towns free venison program, and Sylvester Manor who provides locally grown fresh produce to the food pantry.

Tick-Borne Disease

Diseases caused by tick-borne pathogens are widespread on Shelter Island and nearby communities and they pose a major health concern. While Lyme Disease is the most common and well known, similar diseases include babesiosis, ehrlichiosis, tularemia, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, Southern tick-associated rash illness, and Powassan virus are also transmitted by ticks.

Managing conditions for rodent populations to survive and grow and deer management are critical to managing the tick population. Like many locations in the US, Shelter Island has an overabundant deer population that causes ecological damage from over browsing, public health and safety impacts, and other negative impacts. The Shelter Island Deer and Tick Committee, created in 2005, has pursued a three-pronged strategy to control tick borne disease: deer management, reduction of ticks through application of chemical acaricide at "4-Poster" deer feeding stations (program currently suspended pending state regulatory changes), and public education.

The Town's deer hunting program is managed by the Police Department and extends from October 1 through March 31. In addition, the Nature Conservancy and Sylvester Manor have deer management plans and coordinate with the town programs.



GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND VISUAL LANDSCAPE

Goal 9-1: Preserve archaeological and cultural resources in order to protect linkages between the Town's history and its present life, to improve community self-understanding, to strengthen the sense of community, and to protect Shelter Island's unique identity.

Activate and staff the Historical Advisory Commission

A historical advisory commission was established in Town code to coordinate and advocate actions for managing historic resources. While this commission was established, it is not active as of this writing. The powers of the Commission as stated in Chapter 77 may include the following:

- Coordinate and advocate actions for managing historic resources as set forth in the towns comprehensive plan
- Undertake a program of serving and documenting of the town's historic landmarks and historic districts within the town
- Provide recommendation for designation of identified historic landmarks
- Increase public awareness of the value of historic preservation by developing and participating in public education programs preparing a manual describing the towns history highlighting the distinctiveness of the Islands historic landmarks and neighborhoods and suggesting guidelines for building in harmony with that inheritance
- Make recommendations to town government concerning the utilization of state federal or private funds to promote the preservation of historic landmarks and districts within the town

- Assist the Historical Society in updating their Shelter Island House Registry. A goal for the Society is to continue this project and include architecturally significant homes built since the 1980's. The Society anticipates that a multi-year endeavor would be necessary to update the Registry. As transactions take place and new homes are built, there is an opportunity to maintain the Registry with more recent information.

The first step to establish this commission would be to advertise for applications from residents who are interested in serving. The next step would be the selection process. When established, the Commission can assist the Historical Society in updating its Shelter Island House Registry, with a focus on including homes built since the 1980s.

Create a Historic District Zone

The purpose of this zoning district would be to preserve and protect important historic assets in the community. One potential location could be the Shelter Island Heights National Historic District. A floating historic district overlay zone could also be created for other properties which meet certain criteria.

The historic district zone regulations may include restrictions on the types of changes or alterations that can be made to buildings or structures within the district, guidelines for the design and construction of new buildings, and other rules and regulations that are designed to preserve the area's historic character.

It could also establish an architectural preservation review committee to review proposed modifications, demolitions, and new construction within the district.

A floating zone for historic properties typically includes a set of development criteria and standards that must be met in order for a property to be eligible for development under the floating zone designation. These criteria and standards may include requirements for preserving or restoring historic buildings, maintaining the historic character of the surrounding area, and limiting new development that would negatively impact the historic properties or area.

One of the advantages of this type of floating zone is that it allows for greater flexibility in the types of land uses that are allowed, while still preserving the historic character of the area. For example, the floating zone may allow for a mix of residential, commercial, and office uses, or for the adaptive reuse of historic buildings for new purposes. By allowing for flexible land use regulations and adaptive reuse of historic buildings and areas, a floating zone for historic properties can help to ensure that these valuable resources are preserved for future generations.

Such a district would be an overlay on existing zones which would, in turn, trigger an additional level of review. The floating "H" designation, if adopted by the town, will not change, supersede, down-zone, or alter the uses permitted in any existing zoning district on Shelter Island.

Continue to maintain and preserve historic records

Preserving historic records is an essential function of the municipality as it plays a critical role in protecting the community's history and cultural heritage. Municipal records can provide valuable insight into the growth and development of a community, including its political, social, economic, and cultural history. They can also help to document significant events, individuals, and organizations that have shaped the community over time.

One example of documents that need to be preserved are the historic records contained in the headstones and monuments located in historic cemeteries.

Promote the Town's history and

cultural resources under the charge of the Historical Advisory Commission (named above)

[Promoting Shelter Island's history and culture on the town website can be a great way to showcase the unique characteristics and heritage of the community. The website should be connected with social media platforms so updates on photos, historical facts, and cultural insights can be shared regularly. This will encourage visitors to follow the town's social media accounts to stay engaged and informed about ongoing heritage and cultural initiatives. Other potential items to include are:

Historical Timeline: Highlights significant historical events, milestones, and developments in the town.

Historic Landmarks and Sites: Information about the town's historic landmarks, buildings, and sites.

Photo Galleries: Curated historical images and photographs of the town, its landmarks, and notable events.

Oral Histories and Personal Stories: These accounts can provide unique insights into the town's past, preserving personal experiences and memories for future generations.

Events and Festivals: Highlight upcoming cultural events, festivals, and celebrations in the town.

Museum and Cultural Institutions: Information about local museums, art galleries, cultural centers, and heritage organizations.

Heritage Trails and Walking Tours: Develop interactive maps or guides for heritage trails and self-guided walking tours.

Historical Documents and Archives: Digitize and make available historical documents, maps, newspapers, and archives related to the town's history.

Cultural Traditions and Artistic Expressions: Highlight the town's cultural traditions, local crafts, artistic expressions, and performing arts.

Community Involvement: Encourage community participation by inviting residents to contribute their own stories, photographs, and memorabilia related to the town's history. This can foster a sense of ownership and pride among community members.

Goal 9-2: Protect the Island's small-town way of life, rural character, and natural resources through coordination of land use with the land's natural and visual qualities and protection of critical visual assets, including scenic views from roads and coastal view corridors.

Develop a program to encourage preservation easements

Preservation easements, also known as conservation easements, are legal agreements between property owners and a qualified organization, such as a land trust or a government agency, to protect and preserve the historic, cultural, or natural features of a property. This tool is a valuable way to protect and preserve land while still allowing the property owner to retain ownership and use of the property. One example of a preservation easement is Cackle Hill on West Neck.

These agreements typically limit the future use and development of the property to ensure that its historic or natural character is maintained. They may prohibit certain types of alterations or demolitions, require that specific features of the property be preserved or restored, or limit the density or scale of future development. The organization that holds the preservation easement is responsible for monitoring the property and enforcing the terms of the agreement. This may involve regular inspections, documentation of any changes to the property, and legal action if the terms of the agreement are violated.

Preservation easements are voluntary agreements. To date, it does not appear that this preservation tool is typically utilized. There are a variety of strategies the Town can take to encourage property owners to declare a preservation easement. For example, the Town, in collaboration with the Shelter Island Historical Society can:

- Develop a potential list of potential sites which might qualify,
- Provide information about the benefits, including tax incentives, reduced property taxes, and reduce maintenance costs.
- Work with property owners and develop partnerships with qualified organizations to help them navigate the process of entering into a preservation easement.
- Offer financial incentives such as tax abatements or exemptions for properties who enter into preservation easements.

Develop an equitable approach to controlling noise disturbances

Excessive noise can significantly impact the quality of life for residents. Typical issues have to do with sound amplification systems, boisterous late-night parties, use of noisy equipment and machinery, or similar activities. Excessive noise, especially during nighttime hours, can disrupt sleep patterns, cause stress, and affect overall well-being. By controlling noise disturbances, the town can create a more peaceful and livable environment for its residents.

Enforcing this issue can be difficult to accomplish. The Town's noise ordinance sets a sound level standard measured at or beyond the property line. According to a Town police report, enforcement of this is problematic and difficult to enforce. There are also no limits as to the time of day when noise can be generated (i.e. using landscaping machinery in the early morning). The Town should conduct a review of the code to determine areas that could be strengthened, and whether there should be times and days (i.e. Sunday) when certain noise-generating activities might be limited.

Control excessive night sky lighting

While Shelter Island currently has little excessive night sky lighting, excessively bright and widespread lighting profiles do occur at businesses and residences. There is the need to review the 'dark skies' code for enforceability, to control excessive unnecessary bright and intrusive night lighting and to reduce Island-wide energy consumption and costs.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES (GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES)

Goal 9-3: Ensure an efficient, effective, and transparent Town government.

Increase Government Capacity for planning and implementation:

Facilities Master Plan: A facilities master plan is needed to provide for additional office and meeting space to provide for anticipated additional hires. Increasing government capacity is essential for a small town like Shelter Island, which is facing increasingly complex challenges in areas such as economic development, infrastructure, and public services. Meeting these challenges will require specialized training and knowledge or expertise, which may not be currently available in-house, or, if it is available, capacity is limited. Some of the important key functions could be addressed with the hiring of additional staff listed below:

Town Manager: Shelter Island's governance includes a supervisor, an elected official who serves as the chief executive officer of the town. The supervisor is responsible for administering the day-to-day operations of the town government, including overseeing the various departments and staff. One issue with this structure is that continuity issues can arise when there is a change in leadership due to an election or other factors. This can impact the ability of the government to maintain consistency in policies, initiatives, and long-term planning efforts. To remedy this, the Town may consider the addition of a new administrative position such as a Deputy Town Supervisor. The person in this role can help ensure continuity in planning by overseeing the implementation of Town plans, monitoring progress, and adjusting as needed. This includes ensuring that zoning and land use regulations are up-to-date, enforcing these regulations, and coordinating with other departments to ensure that projects are aligned with the municipality's overall vision and goals.

Town Planner part time or a consultant on retainer: This role would help to manage physical development, ensuring that growth is sustainable, coordinated, and

aligned with the community's vision. The Town Planner would work with the building department to review development proposals, ensuring that they meet the town's zoning and planning regulations and are consistent with the town's overall vision for growth and development. This person would also advise the various land use boards, which may include topics related to a project's compliance with the Comprehensive Plan, Town Code, Zoning Code and Environmental regulations. The Town Planner could also help to develop and implement long-term plans, including research and analysis to support those planning efforts.

Water Specialist/Hydrologist part time or a consultant on retainer: The need to protect the water supply in Shelter Island is critical, as it is a small island with limited freshwater resources. Having an in-house water specialist or hydrologist to work with the Town Engineer could help the town to be more resilient, sustainable, and prepared for the challenges of the future by helping to:

- Monitor water quality in various areas on a regular basis and identify potential risks and hazards.
- Plan for future water needs considering population growth, climate change, and changes in land use.
- Develop and implement water management strategies to help the town and residents manage its water resources effectively
- Respond to water related emergencies

Improve record keeping technologies

With the increasing use of digital technologies, it is essential to improve record-keeping technologies to help make town operations more efficient, transparent, and

secure. Newer tools can also help to provide data and insights needed to make informed decisions and plan for the future. Some of the opportunities include:

- Streamlining administrative processes and town services: This can include faster and more accurate data entry, easier data retrieval and analysis, and improved communication and collaboration among town staff.
- Portal for building department applications: Software applications that track development applications can automate many of the processes involved, such as data entry, document management, and communications with applicants. This can save time and resources and enable town staff to process applications more quickly and accurately. It can also improve the experience of residents and staff using the portal.
- Record keeping: Digital record-keeping can also improve the security and privacy of town records. Digital records can be protected through secure backup and storage systems, and access to sensitive information can be restricted to authorized personnel.
- Tracking of planning and implementation items: With improved record-keeping technologies, the Town can better track trends and patterns in town services, helping to inform planning and decision-making.

The Town should also continue to explore the use of cable TV for community education about historic and cultural assets, including broadcasting of local events. The use of Channel 22 has greatly expanded the availability of visual/ oral information to Town residents. Zoom and other virtual meetings have also become a ubiquitous, cost effective, and easy way to allow people to watch and participate from home.

Utilize new tools for communication and transparency

Some in the community have expressed concern that it is difficult to find information about what is going on in the different government departments and committees as well as various events sponsored by the Town, school, or other groups. Shelter Island acknowledges that there is room to improve communication to help advertise these events. This could include hosting of a central calendar of events on the Town's website. There is also an opportunity to improve community outreach through mobile applications such as Notify Me or Nixle. These tools allow the municipal government to communicate directly with Island residents who sign up to receive notification on emergencies, road closures, meeting agendas, events, and Town initiatives and are being implemented by Town government by early 2024 along with an updated and more functional website.

Goal 9-4: Assure that community facilities provide adequate service to the population and businesses over time, in a fiscally efficient way that positively contributes to the Island's character.

Develop a Facilities Master Plan

This would provide an opportunity to comprehensively assess their current and future needs related to public facilities and infrastructure. The Plan would holistically evaluate existing facilities, identify gaps or deficiencies, and prioritize future municipal development and improvement projects. Recommendations would include cost estimates associated with facility development, operation, and maintenance over the short and long term. This would help the Town make informed decisions about the acquisition, construction, expansion, or renovation of public facilities. It would also address public service needs which are not currently being met or may be needed in the future. Some of the priority topics to address are the following:

- Investigate potential new locations for the Senior Center. It may be beneficial to relocate the senior center closer to the center of town and other resources such as the library and the community center so the senior center programs could more conveniently take advantage of those resources. If a new location can be found, explore new uses for the current senior center space.
- Assess long-term potential for future use of the old Highway Department site. Previously discussed alternative uses for the site have been wide ranging including housing, light industrial, and open space. It has been chosen as a site for affordable housing and an RFP for construction of this site is currently being developed by the Community Housing Board.
- Assess relocating the FIT Center from the school grounds, where it creates safety concerns for the school administration, by acquiring a centrally located property to house the FIT Center (including a half-gym space), youth programs, senior activities, and a community park/recreation area. Explore setting up this new community center as an emergency shelter.
- Identify opportunities to incorporate a public, 24-hour restroom facility in the center of town.

- Assess ADA compliance for all Town facilities.
- Identify upgrades at the Tot Lot on School Street to make it more attractive to parents and children.
- Evaluate the safety and use of the skateboard park and either close it or move it into the center of Town where it would be easier to maintain and monitor.
- Define oversight and maintenance needs for all Town recreation facilities.

Develop a framework to monitor and measure the progress of the Comprehensive Plan's implementation

This Comprehensive Plan represents not only a product of much time and effort, but also the beginning of a process which involves changing conditions, regulations, and procedures in the Town. Sustained town effort and public involvement is necessary to bring the items in this plan to fruition.

Chapter X provides an Action Agenda as a policy implementation tool, which identifies the action, responsible parties, and proposed timeframes. This "To Do" list will help the Town to review and report on implementation progress. The Town may consider creating a new implementation committee to help track and monitor action item implementation. This committee may be composed of current town committee members or community members and 1 or 2 town board members.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Goal 9-5: Support cultural organizations and strengthen our sense of community

Promote volunteerism to maintain a strong and self-perpetuating volunteer corps of ambulance and fire department members, while recognizing that there may come a day when a paid force of first responders may be necessary.

Volunteerism strengthens community resilience by ensuring the availability of critical emergency services. Volunteers from the community bring valuable local knowledge and a deep commitment to serving their neighbors. They understand the unique needs, challenges, and dynamics of the small island town, which can contribute to more efficient and effective emergency response. In addition to emergency services, volunteers can contribute to other activities such as community events, fundraising, disaster preparedness, and educational programs. The knowledge and experience gained through volunteerism contributes to the overall growth and development of individuals and the community as a whole.

From a fiscal perspective, recruiting and training volunteers is more cost-effective than maintaining a paid workforce, allowing the Town to allocate resources to other community needs while still providing essential services.

The Town should continue to support the following programs, and pursue others, which cultivate the volunteer and professional Town staff base:

- Create an annual Volunteer Opportunity Day.
- Develop stronger connections with the high school to generate interest in volunteering.
- Establish a Junior Corps for both the Fire Department and EMS Ambulance Corps.
- Create shadowing opportunities in Town departments that could lead to internships.

- Consider offering a stipend to the volunteer 1st responders. The EMS stipend could be tied to the level of certification achieved while the Fire Department could offer a stipend to those who take on the additional duties of the officer corp.

Expand recreation department and library programming.

Expand Recreation Department and Library coordinated activities for seniors, children, and adolescents, including a Head Start-type program for children too young for preschool and after-school programming for pre-K through middle school.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Goal 9-6: Improve access to goods and services to help the Island be a more resilient and less dependent community

Support Expansion of Services for Senior Population

As the senior population increases, in part due to the part-time residents becoming full-time retirees, it is essential to ensure that basic needs are met for this demographic. Addressing the evolving needs of the community will help seniors to age with dignity, maintain their independence, and actively participate in community life. For the Town, expanding services can include provisions for affordable housing, access to healthcare, transportation, and nutritious meals. Isolation and loneliness are common challenges, so it is important to support and expand senior-friendly activities that foster social connection and engagement. The Town can also help to expand public transportation options, such as shuttle services to medical facilities and shopping centers, and volunteer-based transportation programs.

Many seniors prefer to age in their own homes, but they may require assistance to do so safely and comfortably. Expanding services can include home support programs and home healthcare services. By enabling seniors to age

in place, the town can honor their preferences while also reducing healthcare costs associated with institutional care.

Address food insecurity

Supporting and coordinating non-profit efforts to address food insecurity on the Island is essential to ensure that no one goes hungry. By working with groups and volunteers on the ground, we can maximize impact, target assistance to specific populations, mobilize resources, take a comprehensive approach, raise public awareness, and work towards long-term solutions.

Food insecurity is a complex issue with underlying factors such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to affordable and nutritious food options. Coordinating non-profit efforts allows for a more comprehensive approach to addressing these interconnected challenges. By collaborating, organizations can develop holistic programs that not only provide immediate food assistance but also address the root causes through initiatives like job training, education, and advocacy.

Goal 9-7: Support and coordinate efforts to address tick-borne diseases.

Continue tick-borne disease monitoring and reduction

Conducting tick-borne disease monitoring is essential to protect public health, promote early detection and treatment, implement targeted prevention strategies, understand environmental factors, raise community awareness, and support research efforts. These monitoring initiatives are instrumental in mitigating the impact of tick-borne diseases and ensuring the well-being of the local population.

The Town should continue to work with the Deer and Tick Committee to implement identified strategies, which include methods for monitoring, targeted prevention strategies, and improving community awareness and education. The Town should also continue to evaluate environmental and ecological considerations and collaborate with other researchers who are studying disease patterns, effectiveness of interventions, and emerging tick-borne diseases or strains.

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