

Vision Statement 1

Shelter Island is defined by its unique character and quiet 'sense of place', where water and landscapes are critical resources.

The Island affords a sense of privacy, intimacy, and scale. It also reflects an interdependent balance of locals, year-round and part time residents, working persons and retirees, second homeowners, renters, and summer visitors.

Continued development towards full build out, the entry of large-scale commercial developers, the increased costs of living here, and an increasingly litigious society threatens those local resources and the very qualities that are attractive to most Islanders. These Shelter Island qualities are special; and despite the pressures of development and change, they are the qualities the people of Shelter Island wish to protect and preserve. (From the 2008 Comp Plan Executive Summary, as an example of what it sounds like people are asking for)

Vision Statement 2:

Attractive places attract growth. A challenge in planning for Shelter Island, is to assure that the growth which results from being attractive doesn't destroy what makes the Island desirable or exceed sustainable capacity.

In general, a Comprehensive Plan explicates the vision that a community has of itself and its future. Backed by data and a shared outlook, the Plan promotes the common interests of the community by establishing provisions that protect the public good. A good Plan attempts to remedy the negative effects of market actions to preserve the core attributes of a place. In our pursuit of a fair and effective plan, we should recognize that this process is inherently political - meaning that many differing views, values, and interests must be considered. To this end, it must be noted that the consequences that result will affect people differently because there cannot be equity of impact.

This Vision Statement sets forth the kind of community the Town of Shelter Island would like to be in ten to twenty-five years: Shelter Island is defined by its unique character and quiet 'sense of place' as an island, with only water and air connections to the North and South Forks of Long Island. With a highly varied coastline, including creeks, wetlands, bays and harbors, and a sensitive sole source aquifer, *water* and open land is a critical resource to be protected and intelligently utilized.

The physical aspects and natural resources of this community's character are critical. Shelter Island has a visual quality quite unlike that of other resort islands of the northeast and certainly unlike any mainland communities. The name is apt: Shelter Island's coastline is

sheltered, not only by Long Island's configuration but by the combinations of dense vegetation and shoreline complexity which make the water's appearance from place to place a more intimate and surprising event than is common on other islands. That same vegetation shelters the visibility of much of the Island's development, providing green continuity even in developed areas. Shelter Island is characterized by a varied landscape, ranging from high hills to the outwash flatland areas to mature woodlands, open fields, and scenic vistas, generally affording a sense of privacy, intimacy, and scale. These qualities should be protected and maintained.

A key component of the rural seaside charm that has defined Shelter Island is a population whose interests are centered in this place. This has been a generational home for families, as well as a destination for a dynamic and varied group of people and business. While the people of Shelter Island traditionally have valued smallness of place and exhibited a cooperative spirit blended with an element of independence, modern influences are promoting more aggressive interactions. Nonetheless, many Islanders have valued the long history and cultural resources of the Island and shown a high level of volunteerism. Islanders have supported transparent government, school, library, fire protection and emergency services. Individualism and sensitivity to one's neighbors, the community and rights of the general public are important characteristics to be maintained and promoted.

In addition, as members of the global community, there is a need to include 'sustainability' thinking into our everyday policies and practices. In fact, the natural and community qualities that are attractive to most Islanders are those put most at risk by climate change, uncontrolled development and growth which reflects increasing affluence of many in the greater New York area seeking escape to a tranquil Island. The threats arising from such pressures make it difficult to maintain a balanced community, with inflated housing prices common, lower cost/ starter home housing difficult to find, and labor for homeowners difficult to source. The qualities of Shelter Island are special; they are why people come and stay here. Despite the pressures of development and change, these are the qualities the people of Shelter Island wish to preserve.