

Please Turn on "Reviewing" before making changes

BACKGROUND

This Comprehensive Plan is a statement of visions and intentions for Shelter Island, resulting from a series of efforts by the community beginning in 2020 and continuing through 2023 involving a series of community workshops, forums, committee studies, and final drafting of this document. Formal adoption will be by the Town Board, following review by the Planning Board, SEQRA review procedures, hearings, and broad community consultation.

The document is divided into eleven topics and an appendix containing implementation and action plans. There is some duplication between chapters, done for clarity, but there should not be conflict between them.

Semi-Final Draft of Vision Statement 3/14/22

A Comprehensive Plan sets forth 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 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 and that the results will affect people differently.

At the onset, we note that although the inroads of suburbanization have been felt, the Island still affords a sense of community that is relatively rare on Long Island's East End. Thus, a challenge in planning for Shelter Island, is to assure that the growth which results from being attractive does not destroy that which makes the Island desirable or exceed its sustainable capacity, in particular its fragile aquifer.

This Vision Statement sets forth the kind of community the Town of Shelter Island would like to be in ten to twenty-five years. First and foremost, Shelter Island is defined by its unique character with only water connections to the North and South Forks of Long Island. In addition to its geography, the island's natural and cultural resources are critical as is its population (an interdependent mix of year-round and part-time residents, working persons and retirees, second homeowners, renters and summer visitors) in defining the identity of the island.

While the people of Shelter Island have traditionally valued smallness of place and exhibited a cooperative spirit blended with an element of independence, modern influences are promoting more controversy. Nonetheless, many Islanders value the long history and cultural resources of the Island and show a high level of volunteerism. Islanders support transparent and responsive government, the school, library, fire protection and emergency services. Individualism combined with sensitivity to one's neighbors and regard for the rights of the general public are important characteristics to be maintained and promoted.

As members of the global community as well as Islanders, there is a need to include ‘sustainability’ thinking in our everyday policies and practices. In fact, the natural and community qualities that are attractive to most Islanders are those put at risk not only by climate change, but by uncontrolled development and growth, the increased costs of living reflected in the lack of affordable housing and rentals, and the increasingly litigious nature of society. These pressures threaten to undermine the very qualities that make Shelter Island special. Despite the pressures of development and change, these are the qualities that the people of Shelter Island wish to preserve.

As we move forward, we will utilize the following guiding principles to help us define goals, objectives, actions and implementation plans.

Guiding Principles

These guiding principles are inherent in and overlap across multiple chapters and should guide the specific goals and objectives that follow in those chapters.

1. Exercise responsible stewardship for the natural and cultural resources which give the island its special character and significance. These cultural and natural resources that are enjoyed by all – fresh and salt waters, vistas, parks, and cultural institutions - should be considered when establishing goals and objectives.
2. Increase the resiliency of the island to climate change and sea level rise by implementing appropriate adaptation measures. By acknowledging that we are only accessible by water and at its mercy, we recognize the need to mitigate the negative effects of sea level rise through infrastructure improvements and conscientious changes made by homeowners living in sensitive coastal areas. These changes will require community-wide commitment and support.
3. Maintain a vibrant year-round island community that meets residents’ economic and social needs. We recognize the need to balance the protection of natural and cultural resources with the accommodation of growth and economic opportunities to sustain a year-round island community. This goal is only achievable by giving due consideration to year-round employment and housing opportunities, high quality community services and a strong public school system
4. Motivate and enable upcoming generations to be part of Shelter Island’s future (including its town governance) through education, economic development, housing efforts, and by encouraging early involvement in municipal operations, and the volunteer work of local boards, committees, and services. Shelter island's history and sense of community is strengthened by providing a future on island to the children who have grown up, summered, or who have family roots here.