

# Revitalizing Downtown Kings Park

## Action Plan

October 2016



Sponsored by



## Acknowledgements

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Thanks are also due to the Town of Smithtown for its assistance with data collection, mapping, and coordination.

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## Introduction

While other nearby downtowns like Northport and Smithtown have become centers for dining and entertainment, Kings Park has remained quiet with numerous vacancies along Main Street. The Kings Park Chamber of Commerce and Kings Park Civic Association have come together in an effort to bring vitality back to downtown Kings Park.

Both the Chamber and the Civic are hoping to increase foot traffic within the downtown to support a variety of businesses that can both add to the economic strength of the community and provide a center of activity for residents to enjoy.



### Study Area

The commercial area, the ‘downtown,’ is the focus of this revitalization visioning. It includes parts of Main Street, Pulaski Road, Indian Head Road and Meadow West. It focusses on the portions of the commercial district that are walkable to the train station and historic Main Street buildings (see Figure 1).

Connections from the downtown to area attractions and recreations facilities, employment centers, and transportation nodes are also part of the study area.

### Demographics

Kings Park is a hamlet in the township of Smithtown with a population as of the 2010 census of 17,282 residing in 6,212 households, an increase of 7% since 2000. Kings Park residents represent 15% of the population of the Town of Smithtown. As of the 2010 census, residents were somewhat older than those of Suffolk County as a whole. Residents 65 years of age and older represent 17.2% of Kings Park residents and only 13.0% of Suffolk County residents. From 2000 to 2010 the median age increased by 5.5 years.

The community is predominantly white (90.2%) compared to the County’s 70.6% (not Hispanic or Latino).

There is a slightly higher percentage of owner-occupied housing than in the

Table 1. Kings Park, Smithtown, and Suffolk County Demographics

	<u>Kings Park 2000</u>	<u>Kings Park 2010</u>	<u>Town of Smithtown 2010</u>	<u>Suffolk 2010</u>
<b>Population</b>	16,146	17,282	117,801	1,493,350
<b>Median Age</b>	37.8	43.3	42.7	39.8
<b>65 &amp; Over</b>	13.9%	17.20%	16.10%	13.50%



County (82.8% vs. 79.3%). Housing values (2010-2014) are considerably higher than in the County as a whole (\$420,500 vs. \$376,800).

The median household income for Kings Park residents is higher than that of Suffolk County residents as a whole (\$101,308 vs. \$88,323).

On average, Kings Park residents are more educated than the average Suffolk County resident. Residents with a high school diploma or higher account for 94.0% vs. 89.8% in Suffolk County.

Those with a bachelor's degree of higher accounted for 40.2% of Kings Park residents vs. 33.5% of Suffolk County residents.

### Recent History

Kings Park is closely tied to the Kings Park Psychiatric Center (KPPC), from which the hamlet was named (actually, from the original 'Kings Park Farm').



The Psychiatric Center was the primary area employer and was responsible for much of the area's development. The KPPC closed in 1996 and the waterfront portion of the property reopened in 2000 as Nissequoque River State Park.

The fate of the remainder of the former KPPC has yet to be determined. Its

wastewater treatment plant, however, is slated for an upgrade and expansion to serve the Smithtown and Kings Park downtowns in the near future.

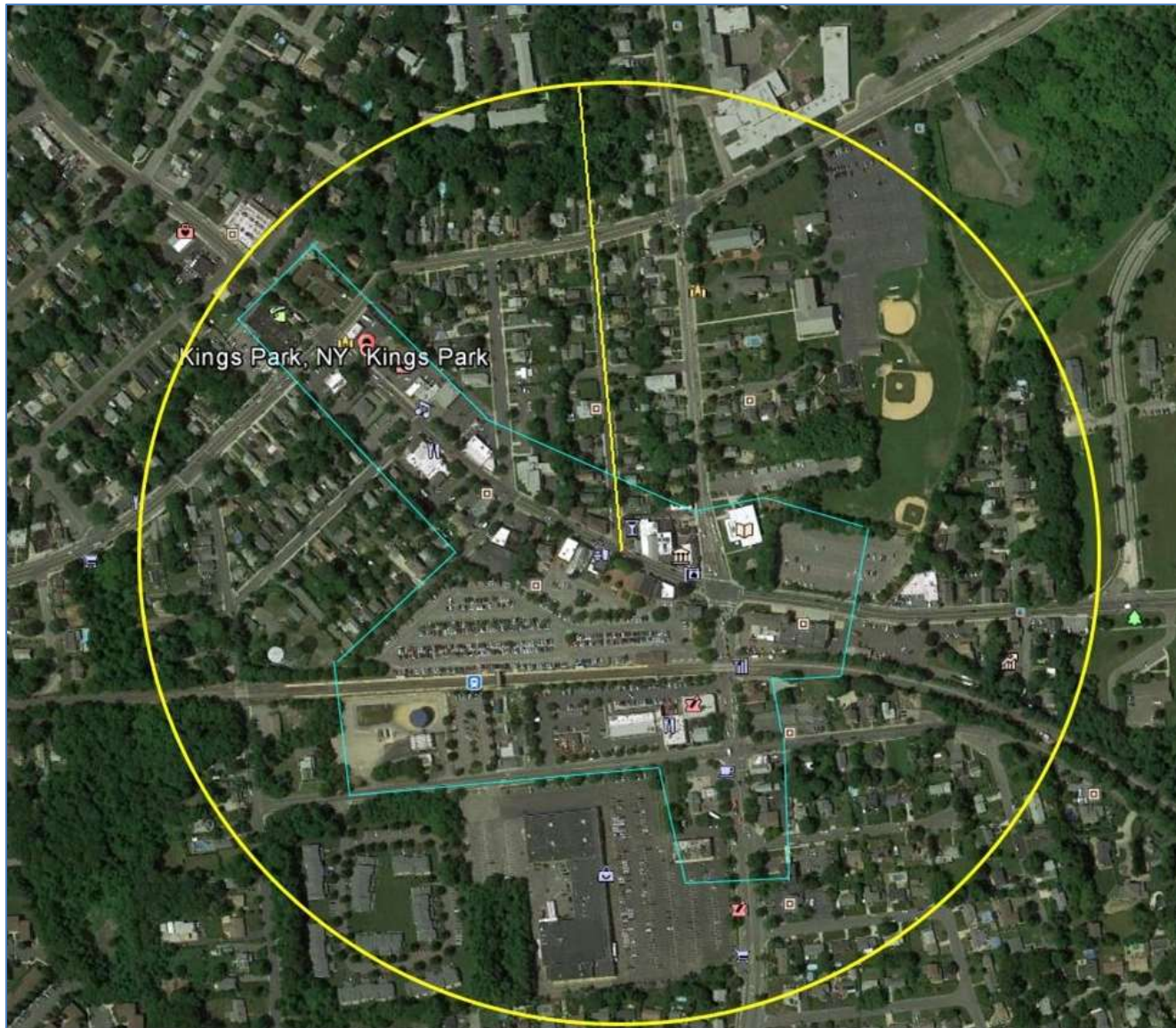


Figure 1. Initial Study Area



# Visioning Summary

## The Visioning Process

The Kings Park Civic Association (Civic) and Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) engaged Vision Long Island to facilitate a community discussion and draft a conceptual plan that would reflect the residents' vision for the King's Park downtown. The Civic and Chamber generated public support for a visioning process to identify key issues that should be addressed in the development of a downtown revitalization plan.

Vision Long Island is a nonprofit organization that has been advocating for downtown revitalization and community redevelopment according to the principles of smart growth. Vision Long Island (Vision) has been working with communities across Long Island for over 17 years.

On Tuesday, October 6 at 7:30 PM, the Kings Park Civic Association held a meeting at the High School where [Vision Long Island](#) representatives explained what would occur at the community visioning scheduled for October 24th.



At the October 6 meeting, Vision presented examples of other Long Island communities that have successfully revitalized their downtowns.

On Saturday October 17th at 11:00 AM, Vision staff led a walking tour of downtown Farmingdale village for Kings Park residents. The goal of the tour was to show how other communities like Farmingdale have successfully revitalized their downtowns.





The real work of the visioning began on Saturday, October 24th at the William T Rogers School. Almost 300 residents came and shared how and where downtown Kings Park could be revitalized. Vision had planners and architects on hand to guide the process and encourage the free flow of ideas.



The event schedule began with a walking tour and was followed by the visioning session itself:

- Opening Remarks – Chamber & Civic
- Opening Presentation – Vision Staff
- Introduction of Design Team
- Hopes & Horrors Exercise
- Visual Preference Survey
- Questions & Answers
- Break
- Design Tables
- Presentation of Design Tables
- Wrap up and Next Steps

### Group Recommendations

Following are summaries of the work completed by the eight groups of visioning participants. Each group worked from an oversize aerial map of Kings Park, which they marked up. Each group chose a spokesperson that presented a summary of the group's work. The following is taken from the verbal presentations and the marked up maps.

#### Group 1

Group 1 identified future land uses by color. They located red areas on Main Street and Indian Head Road that they thought were appropriate for a mix of commercial (stores) and residential (apartments) uses. They marked out green spaces for parks, bike and walking trails.

**Land Uses** - These participants suggested that commercial uses should line both sides of what they referred to as 'South Main Street' – that portion of Indian Head Road from Main Street to Stattle Drive. The group suggested expansion of the commercial center south of the train station along Meadow Road West with stores along both sides of the roadway. They also thought that additional commercial opportunities were possible along both sides of Pulaski Road from Main Street west to First Avenue and as far west as Hoffman Drive.

The group suggested that apartments with first floor commercial would be appropriate in the future for the Petro oil storage site.

**Transportation** - They indicated that improvements were needed to the bus stations and that the area around the train station should be revitalized. A pedestrian bridge was proposed over the train station to a new public plaza just east of the Petro site.

Bike paths were indicated along Indian Head Road linking to a cultural corner at Main Street and bicycle connections to the State Park.

**Identity** - The group thought that a 'Welcome to Kings Park' marking on the water tower could help visitors and Long Island Railroad passengers identify the community. They liked the idea of a 'grand entrance' that would welcome visitors to the State Park at Kings Park Road and East Main Street.

Group 1 thought it important to recognize the historic residential properties that surround the commercial center along with the historic buildings on Main Street.



### Group 2

**Land Use** – The group's main land use focus was the Kings Park Fire Department site. They suggested that the Fire Department might be moved further east on Main Street, perhaps to the town's Parks Department property. The existing fire department site could

then be sold to a developer for construction of apartments with first floor stores. They also proposed additional development on the other side of Main Street.

**Identity** – The group thought it important to address aesthetic issues in the commercial core. They suggested that burying utilities would improve the appearance of Main Street as would an enhanced streetscape with wider sidewalks and narrower streets.

**Group 3**

**Land Use** – Group three had a number of land use suggestions. They proposed a number of locations for new apartments. They thought that apartments above stores would be appropriate on both sides of Main Street between Indian Head Road and Renwick Avenue. They recognized that apartments create foot traffic which is good for local businesses and a way keep ‘eyes on the street’ to reduce crime. They suggested that some new apartments should be designed to be affordable and should have parking located close to Main Street to encourage local shopping. Specific sites were identified for future multifamily residential use – the Petro Oil storage site, the Ahern building, and the property that currently houses ‘Subway,’ the fast food eatery.

The group thought that a portion of the resident parking lot (the south side) would be appropriate for mixed use

transit-oriented development (TOD). They thought that two-story mixed use would be a good land use for the northwest corner of Pulaski Road and West Main Street.

The group liked the idea of a café outside the public library with outdoor seating.

**Cultural and Recreational Facilities** – Group three thought that an arts and community center should be located where Renwick Avenue meets the resident parking lot by the train station.



They suggested that the town-owned land on East Main Street currently occupied by the Parks Department should be converted into a park. They proposed additional public space in the form of a plaza on the north side of

West Main Street by acquiring the privately-owned parking lots that extend from Main Street to Thompson Street.

**Transportation** – Group three wanted larger railroad station platforms with overhangs. They suggested additional parking locations near Pulaski Road in the vacant lot next to the package store. Shared parking was proposed at the Key Foods lot. Additional new parking was proposed on the north side of Pulaski Road to the west of the existing lot.

The group proposed eliminating parking on one side of Main Street to widen the sidewalks on both sides of the street. They also thought the sidewalk by the library should be wider. A large sidewalk connection was proposed from Renwick Avenue to the resident parking lot at the railroad station.



The group liked the idea of a downtown trolley that would connect to the sports complex further south on Indian Head Road.



Better traffic management was suggested at Main Street and Indian Head Road when the train is in the station.

The group wanted additional bicycle paths and amenities. They thought the bike path entrance off Main Street should be enlarged. They added a new bike lane along Old Dock Road to meet the existing bicycle path that starts on

Main Street and one along Church Street from Main Street to Pulaski Road.

**Cultural and Recreational Facilities** – Group three wanted new soccer fields at the state park at the northeast corner of Kings Park Boulevard.

They suggested that the town-owned land on East Main Street might be converted to park land with swings and other playground equipment. They thought that the Petro Oil storage site might be appropriate for a skate park or community park.

#### Group 4

**Land Use** – Group four recognized the need for sanitary sewers from Main Street south along Indian Head Road and along Main Street west to Pulaski Road.

They supported the installation of multi-use public facilities south of the Long Island Railroad station. The group suggested that the area by the

municipal parking could be expanded to make room for a library playground, gazebo, and/or bandstand.

**Transportation** – The group thought it necessary to add a bicycle path and sidewalks for the High School students that jog and bicycle along Meadow Road into town. They recognized the need for greater access to downtown from the west.

The group thought that sidewalks could be made more user-friendly and road crossings safer particularly for people with strollers or in wheelchairs. They said that sidewalks should be added in many of the places where there currently are none. They added that the Long Island Railroad (LIRR) should add more sidewalks to their property.

**Group 5**

**Land Use** - Group 5 focused on land uses and how they might be modified and creating or enhancing links to surrounding areas.

The group wanted more spaces for public plazas, promenades, and active and passive parks. They suggested that the municipal parking lot across from the firehouse could be better used by converting a portion of it into a public park or plaza linked to the library.



These participants supported transit-oriented development (TOD) with housing above retail space at various locations including the Petro Oil storage

site and the property at the corner of Renwick Avenue and Main Street.

The group thought that the site that houses the 'Subway' restaurant might be utilized in the future for mixed commercial and residential uses.

They suggested that the Ahern building might be a good location for a museum that could serve as an anchor for the downtown. The group thought that a cultural space might be included as part of a mixed-use TOD at the corner of Renwick Avenue and Main Street.

**Transportation** – Group 5 supported better access across the Long Island Railroad tracks. They wanted more parking and suggested that parking might be provided off Pulaski Road.

**Aesthetics** - The group thought that a storefront façade and aesthetic improvements would encourage property owners to boost their community investments.

**Group 6**

**Land Use** – Group 6 recognized the need for 'empty-nester' housing. They felt that the housing would be appropriate above the stores along Main Street and along a portion of the municipal parking lot. Outdoor dining was proposed as a new use along the walkway behind the Main Street shops in the resident parking lot.

**Transportation** – The group thought that improvements to the bridge over the LIRR tracks could encourage future downtown apartment dwellers to walk to Main Street or perhaps to a theater that might be located near the library.

A second level of parking was proposed over the existing LIRR lot. Improvements to and public use of the parking lot next to the dance center were proposed.

A sidewalk was suggested along Commack Road to improve safety for be the students walking to and from school.

**Group 7**

**Land Use** – This group thought that new housing, particularly apartments, should be located where there would be the least amount of public resistance. They thought that the Fire Department site would be appropriate for new townhouses if the firehouse could be relocated to the State Park property.

Participants suggested locating new public space around the intersections of Main Street, Indian Head Road, and Church Street.



The group acknowledged that additional commercial development along Pulaski Road was possible only if the properties were sewered.

They felt that the revitalization of Kings Park might be accelerated if meetings were conducted with local bank community development officers.

**Transportation** – This group, like others, recognized the need for additional parking. They identified the stone yard on the south side of the LIRR tracks east of the Petro Oil storage site as a good location for additional commuter parking. Additional downtown parking could be provided they suggested behind the bakery and along the north side of Pulaski Road. They felt that the parking provided on the Subway restaurant site is unusable.





**Group 8**

**Land Use** – Group 8 wanted to see empty stores filled with new retail and apartments located above them. They liked the look and land uses of the Village of Port Jefferson.

The group thought that Kings Park needs a theater. They indicated that appropriate locations might be either in the municipal parking lot or on the northeastern corner of Kings Park Boulevard and East Main Street.

They proposed locating new stores across from the firehouse along East Main Street adjacent to the municipal parking lot. New stores were also suggested along the northern perimeter of the residents' parking lot adjacent to the LIRR lot.

**Transportation** – The group suggested that the Subway restaurant site be converted into public parking.



## Hopes and Horrors

Participants in the Kings Park visioning were asked what their wishes were for Kings Park's future and what would constitute a 'horror.' They were then given a limited number of sticker "dots" to vote for which Hopes or Horrors were most important to them. Their 'hopes and horrors,' are listed below.

**Table 2. Participant Hopes - from Visioning**

Things for teens to do	31
Underground the utilities	25
New theater location	24
Resolution on future of psych center	21
'Bike-ability'	21
'Stroll-ability' and place to meet friends	20
Tax-positive development	20
Places to visit-food co-op, tea shop, etc.	18
Transportation connection between sports complex, town, bluffs (trolley)	18
Variety of businesses	18
Dog friendly	17
Look at Parks Dept. property for park uses	17
Community gets support from elected	14
Entry level apartments for young people	13
Museum in town, promote Kings Park	13
People living in downtown	13
Vintage theme-historic feel	12
Extend Main Street east towards PO	12
Fix traffic patterns, trucks etc	11
Connect KPPC to downtown and shore	10
Connect to neighboring areas/sites	10
More green	9
Opportunities south of Main Street	9

Landlords participate	8
Allow apartments in KP	8
Design apartments to encourage walking to downtown	7
Sidewalks to town/transportation	6
Skate park	6
Get park visitors in downtown	6
'Low key' town – maintain character	6
Promote and expand our resources	4
Safe community	4
Stormwater, rain garden	3
Variety of ethnicities/ethnic foods	3
Parking for railroad	2
Uniform look	2
Pedestrian only streets	0
Underground parking	0
No turn on red at all hours at Indian Head and Pulaski Roads	0

**Table 3. Participant Horrors - from Visioning**

Don't get rid of all the green space	27
Kings Park -sewer capital of Smithtown	20
Affordable housing consequences	19
Too big - too populated	12
Repetition of shops & stores	9
Keeping it as it is today	5
Town doesn't support us	5
Fear of people living here, not walking in KP	1
Business disguised as something else	1
Not unique	1
Underestimate peoples willingness to walk	1
Movie theater	0
Outside development impacting Kings Park	0

Participant wishes and fears have informed the development of the conceptual plan for King Park.

The visioning made it clear that the Kings Park participating residents want a more active and vibrant downtown with new apartments, additional cultural opportunities, better pedestrian and bicycle mobility, and improved connections to surrounding recreational attractions.



## Image Preference Survey

A survey was conducted by Vision Long Island of residents' preferences for their downtown utilizing a tool known as an Image Preference Survey.' Contrasting images are shown and participants asked to rate the one they prefer on a scale of minus 5 for least preferred to plus 5 for most preferred. The highest and lowest scoring preferences for each of the categories are shown below and discussed briefly. The complete results of the survey are found in Appendix A.

### Sidewalks



**Plus 4.0**



**Plus 4.0**



**Minus 1.0**

Participants preferred wider sidewalks, sidewalks with some color and texture, and those that incorporated streetscaping and pedestrian amenities.



## Streets and Crossings



**Plus 3.0**



**Minus 2.0**



**Minus 2.0**

Narrower streets and crossings were preferred along with highlighted crossings with colored stamped concrete or brick.

## Community Spaces



**Plus 4.0**



**Plus 4.0**

Survey participants preferred attractive and functional public spaces with shade, seating, and space for events.

## Parking

**Plus 2.0****Minus 1.0**

On street public parking was preferred over off street private spaces, particularly those that front on main streets.

## Commercial Storefronts

**Plus 4.0****Food Carts in Portland, Oregon****Minus 1.0**

(c) dgles, Flickr

Survey participants expressed support for attractive commercial storefronts especially those with large windows and awnings.



## Housing



**Plus 4.0**



**Plus 3.0**

Survey participants found multifamily housing to be acceptable and even attractive in a variety of forms.



**Plus 3.0**



**Plus 3.0**

Variety in housing facades was important to participants as was architectural detailing.



## Architecture



**Plus 3.0**



**Plus 3.0**



**Neutral 0.0**

Survey participants preferred more traditional styles over contemporary structures.

# Land Uses and Zoning

## Land Uses

Today's land use is a reflection in part of history, of past and existing zoning, of community desires, of the local and overall economy, and primarily of the real or perceived real estate market. All of these factors act to change land uses over the course of a community's history. Kings Park is no different in these respects, though it can be argued that the Kings Park Psychiatric Center (KPPC) played an overarching role in the development of the community. The business district developed to service the KPPC and its employees and the residential community developed to house those employees. There may be a different factors determining land uses today, since the KPPC has closed. A brief examination of existing land uses is valuable before considering future land uses.



## Zoning

Zoning is the mechanism utilized by municipalities, in this case the Town of Smithtown, to control how and where communities grow. Zoning sets limits on the types of uses allowed as well as the mass and location of structures. Zoning can be changed when the community decides that it no longer reflects their desires for future development. The community may determine that the current zoning is either too restrictive or not restrictive enough. It may be that the using

permitted by the zoning no longer reflects those desired by residents and business owners. Fortunately, zoning can be changed. The requirements of a particular zone can be changed, although that then changes what is permitted in all of the parcels so zoned in the township. More commonly, an 'overlay district' is drawn over a number of parcels to impose different rules than the underlying zoning. This type of zoning mechanism is frequently utilized for downtown revitalizations. It can be a more expeditious measure that can be applied to a specific collection of parcels. This may be the best approach to revitalizing downtown Kings Park, but the town can best determine what works best with their internal procedures. Before considering new zoning, it is important to understand the existing zoning and its limitations.

Downtown Kings Park is a mix of residential and commercial zones. Main Street and Indian Head Road are zoned CB - Central Business. The surrounding residential areas are RM 7 or R10. The tables in Appendix B summarize the uses allowed in these zones as well as the dimensional limitations imposed by the zoning.



### Market Reconnaissance

An overview of residential and commercial market conditions was conducted by the Regional Plan Association (RPA) with BJH Advisors, Inc. and James Lima Planning &

Development (Appendix B). The report summarized data for Kings Park and Smithtown as of the second quarter of 2014. It is difficult to draw conclusions for Kings Park alone as Kings Park and Smithtown data are merged. For example, the median income listed for the combined areas is reported as \$121,325. The median household income for Kings Park alone, however, is \$101,308. Much of the data is also specific only to Suffolk County, Nassau, and Queens Counties, making it difficult to draw conclusions for Kings Park alone. Nonetheless, some significant data is reported.

The retail market analysis shows asking rents were 18% lower for Smithtown and Kings Park compared to Suffolk County as a whole. It also reported that “retail absorption is flat.” The report also stated that “office market absorption is in decline.” The report had no data for residential absorption, saying only that vacancy rates were

lower in Smithtown-Kings Park than in Suffolk County

### Recommendations

Redevelopment of the Kings Park downtown will depend on a variety of factors, but a change of zoning along with sewerage will likely be a prerequisite for major changes. Although the Town of Smithtown may change their CB - Central Business permitted uses and dimensional requirements, or create a new downtown zoning district, an overlay district might be more expeditious.

The Town does have Overlay District zoning provisions in the code. Zoning regulations imposed by an ‘overlay district’ can override the requirements of the underlying zoning and can therefore accomplish the land use goals of the visioning participants. Such an Overlay District would permit residential uses over first floor commercial. Three stories instead of

the CB District's two and a half, would be similar to many other Long Island downtowns. Other changes such as reduced/modified setbacks, architectural requirements or incentives, and density bonuses should be included in a Downtown Kings Park Overlay District.

The Town of Smithtown has specific requirements for an 'Overlay Zone.' They are as follows:

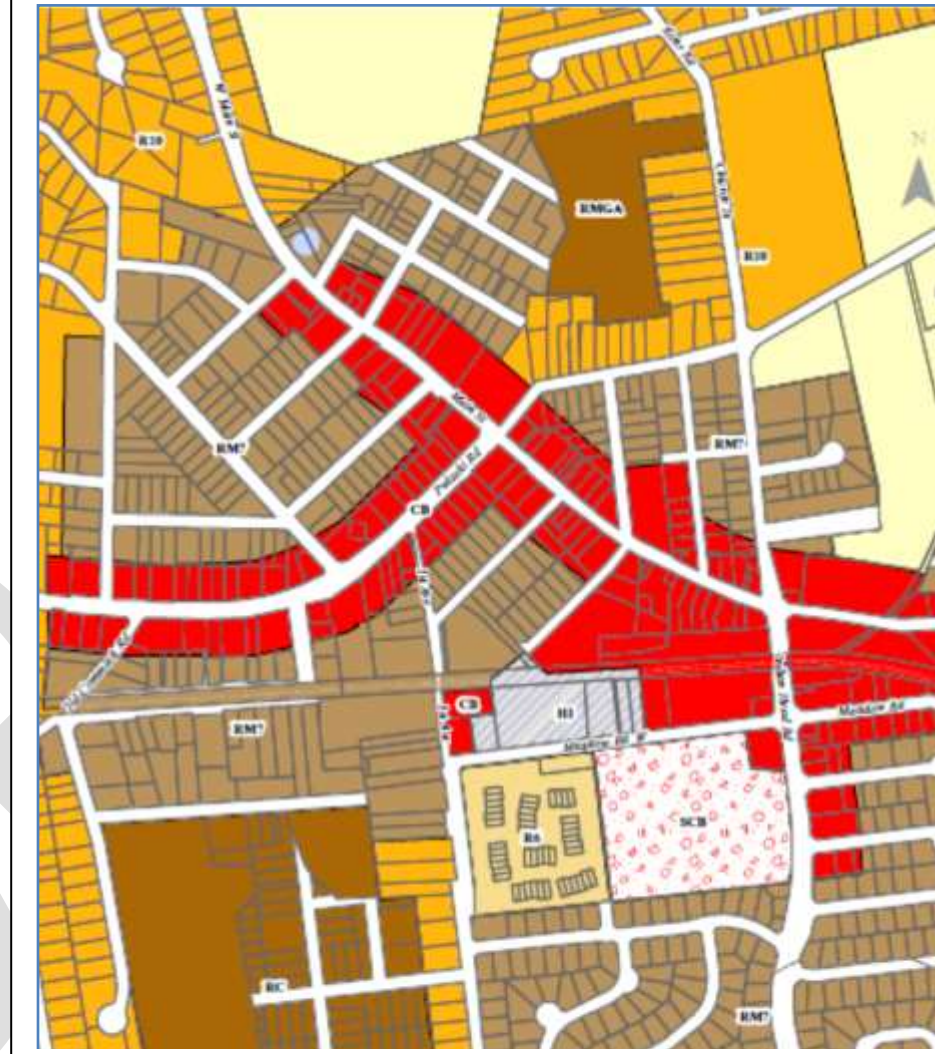
Overlay Zone Requirements

A. There shall be multiple lots and multiple property owners within the district boundaries delineated on the Town's Zoning Map.

B. There shall be specific characteristics that set the area apart from the balance of the zoning district(s) in which it is located, which characteristics shall be enumerated in the designation of the area as an overlay district.

C. There shall be a public purpose(s) served by the designation of an area as an overlay district, and the designation of the district shall specify how the expansion or restriction of the standards of the

Figure 2. Kings Park Zoning



underlying zoning district supports such purpose(s).



# Sewering

## Background

Suffolk County Health Department regulations for wastewater collection and disposal make it impossible for most small properties like those in the downtown to accommodate adequate onsite disposal systems for additional development. Second or third floors or additional restaurant seats are therefore limited or not even possible on most parcels without a connection to a wastewater treatment system.

## The Significance of Sewering

Currently most Kings Park properties rely on cesspools and septic tanks. Property owners in this part of Suffolk County are allowed to generate up to 300 gallons of wastewater per day (gpd) per half acre.

Sewering would make possible additional residential or commercial stories over existing single-story buildings. It would allow existing restaurants to add seats and new restaurants to open. Sewering would also allow businesses that generate large wastewater volumes to locate in Kings Park. Those might include Laundromats and medical clinics.<sup>1</sup>

## Transfer of Density Program

The County's *Transfer of Density Flow Rights* program allows property owners who generate more than the permitted amount of wastewater to purchase additional rights from those generating less. One 'flow right' equals 300gpd. The Kings Park downtown is a receiving district where rights can only be transferred in. Suffolk County only

permits density flow rights transfers up to double the density of the property.<sup>1</sup> For example, a half-acre property could receive at most one additional density flow right or an additional 300gpd, but the property must be a minimum of half an acre.

Wastewater flow data for Kings Park in 2010 (see Appendix D) indicates that 39 of 216 tax lots in the Kings Park downtown could potentially receive additional density flow rights. This includes 10 tax lots currently used for municipal and commuter parking. About 60 density flow rights could be transferred into the downtown.

Also included in the 2010 data were flow estimates for the major types of uses. Below is a breakdown of how much more of a particular use could be permitted if all 60 potential wastewater

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<sup>1</sup> Suffolk County Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Study: Task N1-Inventory of Existing TDR Programs, March 2014. Page 5

flow rights or 18,000 gpd of flow were transferred into the downtown. This also assumes no other intensification of uses occurs in the downtown.

- An apartment between 600 and 1200 square feet generates an estimated 225gpd of wastewater. Therefore the downtown could theoretically permit wastewater flow for another 80 units of apartments at that size. **OR**
- Office space generates an estimated 0.06 (non medical) to 0.1gpd (medical per square foot). The downtown could theoretically permit wastewater flow for another 180,000 to 300,000 square feet of office space. **OR**
- For retail the estimated flow is 0.03 (dry store) to 0.15gpd (wet store) per square foot. The downtown could theoretically permit wastewater flow for another 120,000 to 600,000 square feet of retail.

<sup>2</sup> Town of Smithtown Sewer Plan, June 2013. Sheet 1

## Wastewater Infrastructure

Although the Kings Park downtown is not connected to a wastewater treatment plant (WWTP), an existing sewer main does run through the downtown and connects to three residential developments further to the south.<sup>2</sup>

## Design Work

A sewer collection system has been designed for downtown Kings Park with a connection to the existing treatment plant on the Kings Park Psychiatric Center (KPPC) property. Full funding for the collection system is not yet in place.

A preliminary sewer district has been drawn up and is reproduced below in Figure 3. The map includes the areas suggested by some visioning participants – Main Street and Indian Head Road. It does not include other areas proposed for new commercial,

<sup>3</sup> Suffolk County Department of Public Works. Smithtown & Kings Park Sewer Feasibility Study, January 2009.

residential or mixed use development. Those areas include additional parcels along Pulaski Road and the Petro Oil storage property.

A review of wastewater capacity and projected wastewater generation rates for the Smithtown and Kings Park downtowns was completed by Cameron Engineering & Associates in 2009.<sup>3</sup> In 2012, H2M Architects & Engineers prepared engineered plans for the collection system, pump station, and force main to the treatment plant. The Town submitted plans to sewer the Kings Park downtown and expand the capacity of wastewater treatment plant to Suffolk County in 2013 for funding.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Town of Smithtown Sewer Plan, June 2013. Sheet 2

## Tax and Fee Implications

Although a public sewer system would facilitate additional and desirable development, it would also impose new fees on property owners. Annual sewer district fees would be imposed on all property owners inside the district in addition to an initial one-time 'connection fee.' These additional taxes would be offset by an increase in the value and income potential of those properties.

## Funding

The Town of Smithtown received some funding from Suffolk County to install gravity sewer lines and a force main and construct a pumping station to connect the Kings Park downtown and the Kings Wood residence complex to the County's Sewer District #6 treatment plant. The Town has also allocated some funding for the project. Complete funding is not yet available.

## Recommendations

Redevelopment of Kings Park is dependent in large part on the provision of sewer infrastructure. The existing WWTP can be expanded to accommodate flow from both downtown Smithtown and Kings Park, though there will likely be more support from the Kings Park community, if their downtown received sewers before Smithtown.

Capital and operating costs for the WWTP would be lower on a per property basis if the plant were to serve both Kings Park and Smithtown. Constructing two plants would be less cost effective. However the capacity available for both downtowns if they were to share the plant would be limiting to both. Currently it is recommended that Kings Park be sewered before Smithtown.





Figure 3. Proposed Kings Park Sewer District



Source: H2M Architects & Engineers



## Commercial Space

### From the Visioning

Additional office space was not proposed by visioning participants and as of this writing is in abundant supply on Long Island (18% vacancy rate as of late 2015) and numerous store frontages are currently occupied by professional offices. However office use does help to support other businesses within the downtown and provide higher paying jobs to nearby residents.

Visioning participants identified several areas in the downtown that they felt would be appropriate for additional or revitalized commercial (retail) space. Some liked the look and land uses of the Village of Port Jefferson.



#### Main Street

Some visioning participants suggested that the north side of Main Street from Pulaski Road to Thompson Street should be redeveloped primarily for 'mom and pop' stores and townhouses with parking in the rear.

The site where the 'Subway' restaurant is located was proposed for mixed commercial and residential uses.



#### Pulaski Road

Some residents thought that two-story mixed use would be appropriate for the northwest corner of Pulaski Road and West Main Street.

Others proposed additional commercial uses along both sides of Pulaski Road from Main Street west to First Avenue and as far west as Hoffman Drive.

#### Indian Head Road

Others proposed commercial uses along both sides of what they referred to as 'South Main Street' – that portion of Indian Head Road from Main Street to Stattle Drive.

#### Meadow Road West

Another proposal was for the expansion of the commercial center south of the train station along Meadow Road West with stores along both sides of the roadway.



### Petro Oil Storage Site

Some suggested that redevelopment of the Petro oil storage site should include first floor commercial with apartments above.



### East Main Street

Some participants thought that the Kings Park Fire Department might be moved further east on Main Street, perhaps to the town's Parks

Department property. They thought that the existing fire department site could then be sold to a developer for construction of apartments with first floor stores.

They also proposed additional retail development on the other side of East Main Street across from the firehouse adjacent to the municipal parking lot.

One group liked the idea of a café outside the public library with outdoor seating.



### Train Station Resident Parking Lot

A number of visioning participants thought that a portion of the resident parking lot (the south side) would be appropriate for mixed use transit-oriented development (TOD). The property at the corner of Renwick

Avenue and Main Street was proposed for mixed-use TOD that might include a cultural space.

Others suggested outdoor dining as a new use along the walkway behind the Main Street shops in the resident parking lot.

New stores were also suggested along the northern perimeter of the residents' parking lot adjacent to the LIRR lot.

### The Market for Additional Space

As of this writing, Kings Park is experiencing substantial commercial vacancies. Attracting new commercial uses may therefore be difficult unless new stores and offices fill niches not currently satisfied.

The RPA *Market Reconnaissance* reported that retail rental rates were 18% lower in the second quarter of 2014 than elsewhere in Suffolk County. They also concluded that "retail absorption was flat."



## Recommendations

### Redevelopment Opportunities

After considering input from the visioning and examining the existing fabric of downtown Kings Park, several opportunities became apparent for mixed use (commercial and residential) redevelopment (see Conceptual Downtown Redevelopment Plan in Appendix E). The potential areas **(2A & 2B)** are shown in the Plan detail in Figure 4 on the following page.

Since retail, both pedestrian and auto oriented, usually requires visibility and significant traffic to thrive, sites that are located along busier roads such as Main Street, Indian Head and Pulaski are

more suited for mixed use development. Sites that are more 'out of the way' along Meadow Road or Renwick, may be better suited for multifamily residential development.

Much of the western portion of Main Street has sites that have development potential, with the addition of adequate wastewater treatment. Combination of adjacent properties and redevelopment with parking behind, shops fronting the sidewalk and apartments above, can extend the more walkable environment of the eastern portion of Main Street.

Additional areas identified in Figure 4 as '2B' could also be developed. These include two parcels off Pulaski Road which may be appealing to smaller developers. One additional potential development area is the south western portion of the municipal parking lot across from the firehouse. Building out the portion of the parcel along the roadway could add additional retail to the Main Street 'street wall' and strengthen the connection to the

development west of Indian Head Road. Residents suggested that the parking lot is rarely fully utilized, although replacement parking could be provided onsite or elsewhere in the downtown.

Since downtowns thrive on walkability, spreading storefronts along a length further than many are likely to walk, is likely to lead to many storefronts struggling to stay afloat. Main Street in Kings Park is approximately a quarter mile in length from the intersection of Indian Head Road to the end of the row of stores just west of Pulaski. This is similar to other downtowns around the island.

Smaller downtowns such as Northport and Sayville have Main Streets between .17 and .25 miles, downtowns with long Main Streets such as Smithtown and Bay Shore are just over a half mile, and Huntington's Main Street is .36 miles plus an additional .28 miles along New York Avenue.

Kings Park could extend mixed use development perhaps as far as the entrance to the trail which would make it similar in length to Huntington's Main Street and down Indian Head Road a bit, but further than that would likely lead to storefronts that have a hard time staying occupied.

### Market Demand

New mixed use development in Kings Park will need to wait until sewerage comes to the downtown. Sewerage alone is not likely the only factor hampering redevelopment. The demand for additional retail in Kings Park may be limited and the rents or for sale prices that new residential space would demand may be inadequate to spur development. A retail market study is recommended to document available area disposable income, identify existing area commercial uses within specified radii, and determine the unmet need for specific types and amounts of retail and residential space and the potential income/sales prices

that such space would command in Kings Park.

### Incentives

The Town of Smithtown might provide incentives to spur new downtown development and overcome some of the potential market limitations. Development incentives could take the form of reduced onsite parking requirements or permit fees, increased lot coverage, floor area ratios, or height, or reduced sewer connection fees. Such incentives would likely be accepted by the community if they were accompanied by a requirement for certain design criteria, public amenities, or purchase of Transfer of Density (TOD) credits.

### Short-Term 'PopUp' Stores

As an interim measure to fill vacancies and add vitality to Main Street 'Pop Up' stores or galleries can be encouraged. 'Pop Up' stores are those lease vacant space for a very short term on the order of weeks or a few months. They can add interest to vacant storefronts that do

not otherwise contribute to the pedestrian experience and hinder the success of adjacent stores. A pop up store may determine that there is a longer term business opportunity in Kings Park and sign a longer lease.



Storefront enhancements can add interest to vacant stores. Some communities bring art displays or historical photos to their vacant stores. In fact, the local school district is



starting a program to match storefronts with rotating school art exhibits. This, combined with pop up events can temporarily fill vacancies and create a downtown event.



### Downtown Business Types

Some types of businesses tend to thrive in downtown environments and some newer, trendy business types have been doing well and opening in downtowns across Long Island.

*Gastro Pubs-* Gastro Pub type restaurants such as Sapsuckers in Huntington and Heirloom Tavern in Glen Head (below) offer a selection of higher end beers with high quality food.



*Paint Night Venues-* that offer customers the opportunity to paint, eat, and drink with their friends such as Paint the Town in Downtown Patchogue.



*Craft Beer Tasting Rooms-* These businesses offer local beers to drink on site or bring home a six pack. They provide a venue to try new local beers such as Sand City Brewing Co. in Northport or Oyster Bay Brewing Company.



*Shave Ice/Self Serve Froyo businesses-* Fire Island Shave Ice in Babylon



*Gaming Stores/ Youth Food/Drink establishments-* Places that cater to younger people, providing places to hang out such as POP Social Market in Mastic Beach.



### Retail Attraction Strategies

The local business community can play an active role in attracting new retailers to Kings Park. Coordination with local property owners, area realtors, the Chamber, and the Town is needed to produce the right mix for Kings Park.

A local new business committee and/or the Kings Park Chamber of Commerce

can reach out to commercial retail brokers that have contacts with local, regional and national retailers and can help recruit to Kings Park. Those individuals can be given a tour of the downtown to familiarize them with available spaces and existing retail. An inventory can be maintained of those spaces that can then be easily shared with realtors and potential new businesses.

A targeted outreach can be pursued to local retailers interested in downtown locations. Businesses in other downtowns can be contacted to promote downtown Kings Park for a second, larger, or better location.

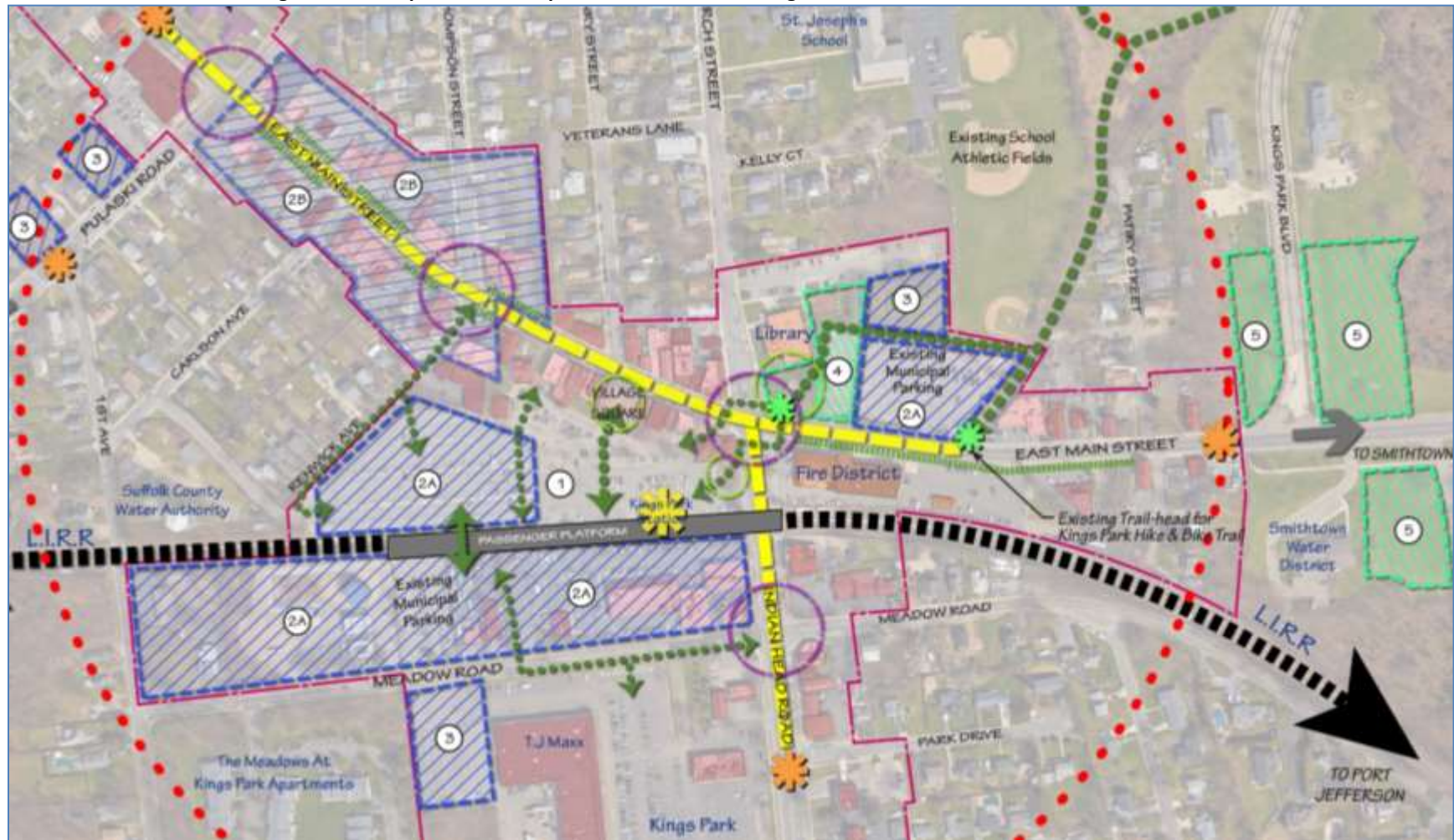
A brochure or flyer summarizing permitting and other requirements along with the benefits for businesses that may want to locate in downtown Kings Park would be useful. A business 'concierge service' with a contact person that can help walk them through the process can demonstrate that the Town is business friendly.

The Chamber of Commerce may be the best promoter of downtown Kings Park. It has relationships with business owners and understands their needs. The Chamber keeps tabs on downtown concerns and can represent the business community in discussions with the Town, County, and State.





Figure 4. Conceptual Redevelopment Plan Detail showing Areas 2A, 2B, and 3 Outlined in Blue Hatch





## Residential Space

### Opportunities from the Visioning

Visioning participants recognized the need for apartment style housing in downtown Kings Park. They pointed to the need for apartments not only for younger residents that are not ready or willing to purchase single-family housing, but also for the so-called 'empty-nesters' and other seniors that will sell their homes and seek the smaller and simpler housing typical of apartments and townhouses.

Visioning participants pointed to other downtowns like Port Jefferson and Huntington that have apartments over stores and asked 'why not Kings Park?'

Specific parcels were identified by residents as appropriate for new residential development. Many pointed to the Petro Oil storage property and suggested that it could be redeveloped entirely for multifamily housing or

perhaps for mixed residential and retail use.

Some participants identified parcels that they thought might be appropriate for townhouses. They included properties on the north side of Main Street from Pulaski Road to Thompson Street and properties on the south side of East Main Street east of the firehouse.

### Existing Residential

There are only two apartment complexes in Kings Park. One is just south of the Petro Oil storage site off Meadow Road south of the LIRR tracks. The other is north of downtown on Old Dock Road. Both of these developments are designed in an auto oriented way which doesn't encourage residents to walk to nearby locations.

Some historic apartments over stores are found on Main Street. The

remaining residential units in Kings Park are single-family homes.

### Recommendations

Adding housing to the Kings Park downtown would provide new 'built in' customers for businesses. New residential development could also add vitality to the downtown and provide 'eyes on the street' to enhance safety.

Some new residents could share the existing commuter parking as its peak use is opposite that of residential use.

New residential for downtown Kings Park could take several forms; apartments over existing stores, townhouses, mixed-use (commercial and residential) developments, and all residential multifamily developments.

The feasibility of and market for new apartment development in King Park is dependent on many factors. Chief among them is sewer availability, zoning, and market demand.

Suffolk County Health Department regulations for wastewater collection and disposal make it impossible for most small properties like those in the downtown to accommodate adequate onsite disposal systems. Development is therefore limited or not even possible on most parcels without a connection to a wastewater treatment system. A sewer collection system has been designed for downtown Kings Park with a connection to the existing treatment plant on the KPPC property. Funding for that system is not yet in place (see discussion of sewerage on page 25). Efforts should be made to support the Town's and County's sewerage Kings Park initiative for the expansion and upgrading of the WWTP at the former Psychiatric Hospital.

Zoning is also critically important in determining what kind of development is possible in downtown Kings Park. Current CB – Central Business District zoning does not permit apartments over stores or townhouses. Only two and a half stories are permitted in the

CB District. See the discussion of zoning on page 22. The Town should be encouraged to create an overlay district for the downtown that makes possible the kind of development envisioned by the community. Alternatively, the Town might create a new zoning district for hamlet centers and downtowns like Kings Park.

The private development market is ultimately what determines what is built and where. There must be sufficient demand for a particular type of development and an adequate profit available for the private development community to move forward with new projects.

For most of Long Island's recent history single-family homes were most in demand and condominiums desired and accepted in most communities. Although rentals have long been needed by several segments of the population, they have been far less accepted in many communities. Today, the demand for rentals and their

acceptance have increased in many communities.

Townhouses are another housing type that is appropriate on the edges of a downtown area, where it transitions to single family residential. Attached single family townhomes can provide a more affordable starter homes for young couples and others looking to buy while also providing a moderate density transition between a higher intensity downtown area and a lower density single family neighborhood. These can be individual lots or a condominium style set up. It should be noted that although these types of units may be desirable and needed as a housing option, at this point it may be difficult to get financing.

For single parcels, the decision to add a second or third story for office or residential use is made based on whether projected net operating income (rent less operating expenses) allows for adequate profit. Outside developers frequently prefer to acquire multiple contiguous parcels to design a

project of sufficient size to interest investors and/or lenders and to cover fixed costs. Parcel assembly is often constrained by reluctant sellers, parcel configurations, and adjacent land uses.



The western portion of the Long Island Railroad parking lot north of the tracks (see '3' in Figure 4) could be redeveloped in the future in such a way that the existing commuter parking is preserved and resident parking provided all below grade or a level of parking added above a portion of the existing lot with residences at the perimeter. The portion that fronts

Renwick could be designed in a way to balance with the detached homes across the street, with taller portions behind Main Street stores. It could also be extended, or divided into two buildings so that one connects to the Plaza, with an active frontage, to bring vibrancy to the Plaza. Such a development would likely be costly due to the provision of above or below grade parking.

The properties south of the LIRR tracks might also be attractive for redevelopment (see '2A' in Figure 4). This area is comprised of several private properties and a small municipal parking lot. The potential size of the combined lots, their location by the train, and proximity to existing retail could be attractive to developers.

Any discussion of new housing should address housing affordability, both the need for and community concerns. The

Table 4. Suffolk County "Uncapped" FY 2014 HUD Income Limits

MEDIAN INCOME	HOUSEHOLD SIZE							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>Extremely Low</b>								
30%	\$22,100	\$25,250	\$28,400	\$31,550	\$34,100	\$36,600	\$39,150	\$41,650
<b>Very Low</b>								
50%	\$36,800	\$42,050	\$47,300	\$52,550	\$56,800	\$61,000	\$65,200	\$69,400
<b>Low</b>								
60%	\$44,150	\$50,450	\$56,750	\$63,050	\$68,100	\$73,150	\$78,200	\$83,250
<b>Moderate</b>								
80%	\$58,850	\$67,250	\$75,650	\$84,100	\$90,800	\$97,550	\$104,250	\$111,000
<b>Area Median</b>								
100%	\$73,550	\$84,100	\$94,600	\$105,100	\$113,500	\$121,900	\$130,300	\$138,750
120%	\$88,300	\$100,900	\$113,500	\$126,100	\$136,200	\$146,300	\$156,400	\$166,500
130%	\$95,650	\$109,300	\$122,950	\$136,650	\$147,550	\$158,500	\$169,400	\$180,350

The chart above is based on FY 2014 Median Income for a Family of Four at \$105,100

\*INCOME LIMITS ARE ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST \$50.00



*Long Island Workforce Housing Act* requires that -ten percent of the units in new developments of five or more units must be affordable to those who earn less than 130 percent of the HUD area median income for Nassau and Suffolk Counties adjusted for family size. For a household with two people, that was \$109,300 in 2014 (see Table 4). Interestingly, the median income for Kings Park residents is in line with that of Suffolk County as a whole. The definition of an affordable unit used by HUD and most housing policy experts is a unit priced at 30 percent or less of a household's annual income per year. Using the HUD guideline (which is not mandated under the Housing Act), the monthly rent for the aforementioned two person household could be as high as \$2732 ( $\$109,300 \times 0.3 / 12$ ) and would still be considered affordable under the Act (and 2014 median incomes).

Developers must either provide the affordable units on site or they may instead make a payment-in-lieu to a

housing trust fund for the acquisition, construction or rehabilitation of affordable housing. In exchange for complying with the Act, the developer receives a municipal density bonus of ten percent that does not require a zoning change.

The Workforce Housing Act has housing affordability requirements with limits so high that 'affordable' units could be more expensive than market rate units in Kings Park.

There are a number of parcels in the downtown that are under-developed with only one floor or minimal lot coverage. Infill development on these lots would mean new housing or offices above stores, which could help finance building/façade improvements. The western end of Main Street is appropriate for this sort of development.

The total number of units that a downtown the size of Kings Park might accommodate is likely to be close to

200-300. Building heights of three stories is common in many older downtowns and in newer developments in many Long Island commercial centers.

A market study, as discussed in the previous section on commercial space is recommended to assess the demand for and preferred type of new residential development in Kings Park. Such a study would build on the 2014 *Market Reconnaissance* conducted for Smithtown and Kings Park by RPA, BJH Advisors and James Lima.

## Public and Recreational Space

Downtown Kings Park is fortunate to have several public spaces, though visioning participants acknowledged a need for additional and more functional and focused spaces. Some emphasized that existing open space should be preserved, such as the space along the KPPC entrance.

Kings Park hosts a regular and popular farmers' market. The community is fortunate to have a large and modern library in its downtown. The library is not only a source of reading material and information, but also a host for various community and cultural events. Other events are hosted by various community organizations.

Perhaps Kings Park's most significant natural attraction is the adjoining Nissequogue River State Park. The hamlet has a roadway – Kings Park Boulevard – and bicycle trail that connect downtown to the Park.

Kings Park is also just south of Sunken Meadow State Park with its beach, fields, and picnic spots along the shore of the Long Island Sound. The community is just a few miles from downtown Smithtown that offers additional shopping and cultural attractions.



## From the Visioning

Downtown Kings Park is fortunate to have several public spaces, though visioning participants acknowledged a need for additional and more functional and focused spaces. Some emphasized that existing open space should be preserved, such as the space along the KPPC entrance.

### Connection to Attractions

Visioning participants recognized the significance of the area's State parks and recommended additional bicycle trails to connect the community to



these special attractions.

### Cultural and Recreational Facilities

Some participants thought that Kings Park should have a theater. They indicated that appropriate locations might be either in the municipal parking lot or on the northeastern corner of Kings Park Boulevard and East Main Street. Some Long Island downtowns have seen their theaters undergo a revival. It is important to recognize, however, that nearby downtown Smithtown does have a theater.

Others suggested that the Ahern building may be a good location for a museum that could serve as an anchor for the downtown.

The western corner of the resident parking lot at the end of Renwick Avenue was also proposed as a location for a cultural center.

One of the visioning groups wanted new soccer fields at the State Park at the northeast corner of Kings Park Boulevard. The same group suggested that the town-owned land on East Main Street might be converted to park land

with swings and other playground equipment. They also thought that the Petro Oil storage site might be appropriate for a skate park or community park.



### The Library and Adjacent Corner

One group liked the idea of a café outside the public library with outdoor seating. Another group suggested locating new public space around the intersections of Main Street, Indian Head Road, and Church Street.

### Renwick Avenue and the Station Lot

One group thought that an arts and community center should be located where Renwick Avenue meets the resident parking lot by the train station.



### Parks Department Property

A number of participants suggested that the town-owned land on East Main Street currently occupied by the Parks Department should be converted into a park.

### Main Street

A new public plaza was proposed in on the north side of West Main Street by acquiring the privately-owned parking lots that extend from Main Street to Thompson Street.

### Resident Parking Lot

Outdoor dining was proposed as a new use along the walkway behind the Main Street shops in the resident parking lot.

## Recommendations

### New Parks and Public Places

Visioning participants were clear about their desire for more public spaces for active and passive recreation. It may be possible to convert the parcels at the entrance to Kings Park Boulevard to recreational use. Agreements would

need to be secured from the State (Figure 5). Alternatively, or additionally, the Town may agree to transform the property adjacent to its Parks Department site on East Main Street into recreational use. Perhaps even the Parks Department parcel itself could be

utilized and the current functions moved elsewhere.

Veterans Plaza by the library can be made into a more actively used park by reconfiguring some of the adjacent municipal spaces around it (Figure 5). Connections could be enhanced across

Figure 5. Possible Active Parks/Recreation Opportunities



Main Street which can help to provide a more prominent connection to the hike-bike trail into Nissequogue State Park. Any development at the municipal parking lot should address this park, creating well defined spaces, and present an active façade towards public spaces in order to encourage activity within the park.

### **Street Fairs**

People want to be where they see and can interact with others. Regular downtown events can provide that venue. The Kings Park Chamber of Commerce understands this and has presented Kings Park Day for the past 37 years. It is their annual street fair to celebrate Kings Park. They arrange for music, rides, food, and craft vendors. Local businesses have specials all day and raffle prizes are offered.

### **Farmers and Holiday Markets**

The Chamber or other organizations can host additional events at other times of the year. Farmers markets and

holiday markets are popular in many communities.



A craft market for early holiday shopping can draw people in during the off-season. Portable heaters, tents, Christmas lights and hot chocolate can make outdoor events in chilly weather more appealing and help draw people downtown in less than ideal weather.



### **Music and Dance Events**

Music and dance events could be staged outdoors in plazas, parks, or even parking lots that have emptied in the evenings. This is something that few other Long Island downtowns are doing. Lessons, live or recorded music, and food and drink provided by local restaurants can make such events attractive to all.

## Mobility and Parking

Mobility describes how people and vehicles move about within the downtown and from the downtown to neighboring places. It includes pedestrian access, 'walkability,' and pedestrian 'friendliness.' Mobility includes the ability of vehicles to move through the downtown and connect to other places easily, quickly, and safely. Transit is an important element of any mobility discussion and incorporates bus (Suffolk County Bus) and rail (the Long Island Railroad). Integration of bicycles for transportation and recreation is also important. Parking is a closely related issue as that is where vehicular and pedestrian mobility intersect.

The Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) operates regular train service on the Port Jefferson Branch from the Kings Park station. There are eight westbound peak trains to Penn Station during the morning hours. The first peak train to Penn Station leaves Kings

**Table 5. Kings Park and Smithtown LIRR Information**

Parameter	Kings Park	Smithtown
Distance to Penn Station	45 miles	49 miles
Mean time to Penn Station (minutes)	84 minutes	92 minutes
Weekday ridership (2006)	923	945
Parking spaces	725	676
Trains per day	39	39
AM Peak trains per day	8	8

**From the Town of Smithtown Comprehensive Plan - Draft Transportation Study:**

**Table 6. Transportation to Work (%) 2013 ACS**

Municipality	Drove Alone	Car-pooled	Public Transportation	Walked	Worked at Home
Hamlet of Kings Park	84%	5%	8%	0.7%	2.20%
Hamlet of Smithtown	84%	5%	5%	0.3%	4.60%
Village of Northport	71%	7%	13%	3%	5.50%
Town of Smithtown	83%	6%	6%	0.7%	4.10%
Suffolk County	80%	8%	6%	2%	3.60%
Nassau County	70%	7%	16%	3%	3.50%
Westchester County	60%	7%	21%	5%	4.80%

Park at 4:47am and the last peak train leaves at 8:06am. The fastest peak train to Penn Station takes 1 hour and 7 minutes and the slowest peak train takes 1 hour and 32 minutes. There are seven afternoon and evening eastbound peak trains from Penn Station to Kings Park. The first peak train leaves Penn Station at 4:19 pm. The last peak train to Kings Park leaves

Penn Station at 7:22 pm. The fastest peak train to Kings Park takes 1 hour and 16 minutes. The slowest peak train to Kings Park takes 1 hour and 38 minutes

Downtown Kings Park has several large parking fields and numerous smaller privately-owned lots. It is not clear that downtown Kings Park lacks adequate



parking. Rather, it seems that parking is not as conveniently located or efficiently distributed as many shoppers are accustomed to. Parking conditions vary between the eastern and western ends of Main Street. All thriving downtowns have inadequate on-street parking and rely on off-street lots to supply the majority of the parking needs. Kings Park has a municipal lot by the library that is large, but just east of the majority of the downtown shops and restaurants.

## From the Visioning

### Wayfinding

One group of visioning participants suggested that Kings Park ask that the water tower be labeled 'Kings Park' as a beacon to welcome visitors.

Others suggested that attractive signs should welcome visitors Kings Park on Pulaski Road, Indian Head Road (CR14), East Main Street, and West Main Street.

### Traffic Calming

Pedestrian safety and the safety of drivers were on the mind of many visioning participants. Participants thought that road crossings could be made more user-friendly and safer particularly for people with strollers or in wheelchairs.

There was a desire to slow down traffic entering the commercial district from



the north and west along Main Street. A traffic circle was proposed near the Valero station.

Better traffic management was suggested at Main Street and Indian Head Road when the train is in the station.

### Pedestrian Mobility

Many residents acknowledged that Kings Park sidewalks are too narrow for comfortable passage and do not enhance the pedestrian experience. Some suggested that sidewalks could and should be widened by removing one lane of parking on Main Street. Greenport has done this and Port Jefferson will do so too soon. Most thought that sidewalks could be made more user-friendly.

Some thought the sidewalk by the library should be wider. A large sidewalk connection was also proposed from Renwick Avenue to the resident parking lot at the railroad station. The Main Street sidewalk was cited as poor especially from Indian Head Road west on the south side of the road.



A sidewalk along Meadow Road was proposed to connect King Park High School to Indian Head Road and thus the downtown. Some said that sidewalks should be added in many of the places where there currently are none.

A pedestrian bridge was proposed over the train station to a new public plaza just east of the Petro site. Some thought that improvements to the existing pedestrian bridge over the LIRR tracks could encourage future downtown apartment dwellers to walk to Main Street or perhaps to a theater that might be located near the library.

It was also suggested that the Long Island Railroad (LIRR) should add more sidewalks to their property.

### **Bicycle Paths and Facilities**

A bicycle trail along Meadow Road was suggested to connect King Park High School to Indian Head Road and thus the downtown. Other bike paths were proposed along Indian Head Road linking to a cultural corner at Main

Street and bicycle connections to the State Park.

Bicycle racks were proposed at the bicycle trail entrance in the municipal parking lot.

Additional bicycle connections were proposed throughout the downtown and connected to the State Park.

Many agreed that the bicycle path entrance off Main Street should be enlarged and beautified. Some suggested adding a new bike lane along Old Dock Road to meet the existing bicycle path that starts on Main Street and another lane along Church Street from Main Street to Pulaski Road.

### Rail, Bus, and Other Transit

Some visioning participants suggested running a trolley from the LIRR parking lot to Nissequogue State Park and to the sports complex south of the downtown. Others indicated that improvements were needed to the bus stations and that the area around the train station should be revitalized. One group wanted larger railroad station platforms with overhangs.



### Connections

Participants recognized a need for better connections between municipal parking lots and downtown stores. Connections could be more frequent, better lighted, wider, and more attractive.

### Parking

Many visioning participants recognized the need for additional parking. One group identified the stone yard on the south side of the LIRR tracks east of the Petro Oil storage site as a good location for additional commuter parking. A second level of parking was proposed over the existing LIRR lot.

Others suggested parking locations on Pulaski Road in the vacant lot next to the package store. Shared parking was proposed at the Key Foods lot. New parking was also proposed on the north side of Pulaski Road to the west of the existing lot. Some suggested that private lots be improved for public use including the lot by the dance center.





## Recommendations

### Walkability/Pedestrian Safety

The downtown can be enhanced to through various design improvements to be more comfortable, attractive, and safer for pedestrians.

Downtowns thrive on pedestrian activity. Ensuring that pedestrians feel safe and comfortable and providing an interesting and attractive environment, will encourage more shoppers to the downtown.

Bulb-outs can help make the main roadways safer and easier to cross by shortening the crossing distances and increasing the limited sidewalk space. Such improvements would be most immediately useful at the intersections of Main Street (Route 25A) with Indian Head Road and Pulaski Road. Bulb-outs could also enhance the intersections of Main Street with the smaller roads by adding sidewalk space at the corners.

Figure 6. Bulb-outs and Island at Main Street and Indian Head Road



The Main Street/Indian Head Road intersection could be redesigned by shifting southbound lanes slightly to accommodate some on-street parking on the west side of Church Street. There is a gratuitous amount of shoulder space on the east side of Church Street that currently encourages fast turns which can be used to accommodate the lane shift.

Reducing the right-turn curb radius by the fire house would shorten pedestrians' crossing distance but may inspire resistance from the fire department (see Figure 6). Alternatively, adding a pedestrian island as could shorten the crossing distance while still facilitating easy right hand turns by fire trucks. Best practices would need to be incorporated to ensure that pedestrians crossing to the island were visible to drivers. Temporary or 'tactical' changes could be made with paint and plastic bollards

to test the new configuration before committing to roadwork.

For the western end of Main Street, where much of the street frontages are occupied by parking lots, different measures can be used to enhance walkability in the short and long term. Attractive landscape screening of parking lots can help continue the street wall along the sidewalk and minimize the view of parked cars. As these lots are redeveloped, parking should be relocated to the rear of the building to allow interesting storefronts to front the sidewalk and keep pedestrians engaged.

To allow for additional sidewalk space, redeveloped buildings should be set back a few feet from the right of way line to allow for the expansion of the sidewalk. Second floor window bays or balconies could encroach into that setback space allowing for more varied and interesting facades.

In addition to bulbouts, which make crossings safer and add sidewalk space,

other visual cues can be used to remind drivers that they are entering an area with pedestrians and should modify their behavior. “Gateway” treatments at the various entry points to the downtown, can alert drivers that they are entering a pedestrian oriented space. Planted medians with a ‘Welcome to Kings Park’ sign can slow drivers down and add attractive landscaping. Other distinctions such as improved sidewalks, decorative street lamps, and street trees can reinforce this transition.



Bicycle lanes may not be possible along Main Street through the downtown, but should be considered along other routes in the area to create an

interconnected network of bike friendly routes. Secure bike racks in several locations in the downtown area can provide places for visitors on bikes to safely lock them up.

### **Signage and Connections**

Better and more permanent signage with clear regulations would help visitors and residents alike to distinguish between shoppers’ and commuters’ parking and make shoppers aware of parking availability.

A stronger connection to area trails and parks would benefit visitors. For example, Kings Park Veterans Plaza on the northeastern corner of Main Street and Indian Head Road (see Figure 7) could be reconfigured into a multi-use park with a more obvious and attractive trail head to Nissequogue River State Park (see public spaces section).

Additional pedestrian connections (new sidewalks) should be considered from the commercial district to the High School to increase safety and bring customers to the downtown.

Figure 7. Connection to Area Trails



Figure 8. Reconfigure Municipal Lot by Library



### Parking - General

The eastern and western ends of Main Street have different parking issues. The eastern end of Main Street has a more typical downtown arrangement with on street parking and municipal parking behind the stores. The western portion of Main Street has small private lots for individual buildings, but no shared parking for those without private lots and no on street parking due to the numerous driveways.

Though the distance from Pulaski Road to Indian Head Road is only about a quarter of a mile, which is about a five minute walk, the lack of walkability, particularly at the western end, discourages shoppers from parking and walking to their destination.

Though the first impulse when there appears to be a lack of parking is to increase the overall supply, there are several measures that should be applied first.

*Demand* – Reduce demand by strategies such as programs to

encourage employees to use alternate modes

*Location* – Spread peak parking demand over a larger area, encourage shared parking

*Time* – Utilize time limits in prime parking locations

*Price* – Establish paid parking on street, then off street

*Supply* – Once all these have been used, then increase supply

Business owners and employees should be encouraged or incentivized to park at locations at the periphery of the commercial district to allow closer parking spaces for shoppers.

Further west, additional downtown parking might be made available by investigating shared parking arrangements on private lots. Some lots that are used during the day by one or more businesses might be utilized during the evening hours when those businesses are closed by nearby restaurants and bars.



In the long term, redevelopment of properties at the western end should encourage the combination of adjacent lots and relocation of parking to the rear of structures, which can be shared among multiple tenants leading to more efficient parking. Vacant parcels can also be developed as municipal parking to supplement the supply if needed.

Existing municipal parking areas can be made more attractive with new streetscaping and landscaping and made more user-friendly by providing stronger connections to Main Street.

The municipal lot by the library might be reconfigured (Figure 8) by utilizing a portion for new development along East Main Street and then expanding the remaining lot north.

#### **Railroad Station and Parking Lot**

The LIRR station parking lot (Figure 9) striping could be restriped to create a stronger connection between the station and Main Street. A direct path to Main Street for those arriving by

train can help encourage commuters and visitors to patronize stores on Main Street. Enhanced connections could also be provided from the lot to the station platform and pedestrian bridge to the south side of the tracks.

The underutilized parking behind TJ Maxx could also be utilized as additional commuter parking in order to make more spaces available for shoppers on the north side of the tracks. The Town could come to an agreement with the owners of the shopping center to use the spaces that aren't being used by the center.

#### **Parking Variances**

As redevelopment happens, the amount of onsite parking provided will likely become an issue. Mixed use downtowns tend to use parking spaces more efficiently and require fewer spaces per square foot than single use areas, due to different uses that "peak" at different times being able to share spaces. Onsite parking requirements

for the downtown area should reflect this efficiency.

Smaller parcels may not be able to accommodate even a reduced parking requirement. In these cases parking variances may be required. In a walkable area like a downtown, it is not expected, nor should it be required that each property provide for all of its own parking needs. On street parking and shared municipal parking lots exist to allow buildings to be situated closer together to encourage walkability.

Variances for onsite parking requirements could be tied to reasonable fees that would be then used to improve or expand parking within the downtown area. Fees shouldn't be so high as to make small projects unfeasible, just to ensure that there is a fund to help pay for offsite parking improvements as they become needed.

#### **On Street Parking**

On street parking along Main Street has been reconfigured several times in past

years. The current configuration includes twenty foot long spaces separated by eight to twelve foot boxes, presumably intended to give extra space to those who are less skilled at parallel parking and allow fewer delays to through traffic. It has however reduced parking capacity along the street.

Some studies have shown that more cars can fit on a length of curb when the spaces are not marked, that the occasional small cars can allow extra vehicles to fit. Not a large amount, usually one car per block. If individual marked spaces are desired, the length of the spaces should be revisited. The current configuration allows 24-26 feet per car. On street parking spaces in downtown Huntington are closer to 22-23 feet of length per car, The USDOT recommends a minimum of 20 for spaces at the end of the row and 22 feet for other spaces. The current arrangement is close to the maximum size recommended. This may not make a large increase to the capacity given

other interruptions to parking such as intersections and fire hydrants, but could help add a few more along Main Street.

At the western end of Main Street, where on street parking is all but eliminated, travel lanes are striped wider, up to eighteen feet wide in places, which encourages faster driving and diminishes walkability even further. Maintaining the lane width that exists further east on Main Street and allowing parking, even if just sporadically in places where sightlines allow for it, will add capacity and improve walkability at the western end of town.

A parking structure might be considered over a portion of the station lot if additional commuter, resident, or visitor parking is needed in the future or if substantial new development comes to Kings Park. Parking structures require a significant capital investment and sustained revenue to cover operating and maintenance expenses

along with debt service. Some or all of the costs associated with parking structures are sometimes borne by developers.

If sufficient long-term revenue is anticipated the garage may be operated by a vendor. In addition to parking fees, revenue can come from leasable space at the perimeter of the

building, either residential units or commercial space.

**Figure 9. Potential Station Area Parking and Pedestrian Improvements**





## Character and Aesthetics

### From the Visioning

Visioning participants wanted the downtown business facades beautified. They recognized the need for improved lighting, wider sidewalks, and streetscape improvements to the LIRR and resident parking lots.

Others pointed to the overhead utility lines on Main Street as an eyesore and suggested that they might be buried at least for the two blocks west of Indian Head Road.



### Recommendations

#### Preserving Character

The Kings Park downtown is fortunate to have several early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings that provide traditional downtown character and help define the existing historic fabric (see photos this page). Preservation of these buildings and restoration of their facades would help maintain the historic character of the downtown.



New or expanded buildings can also help maintaining the character of main Street and Indian Head Road. New buildings can be constructed with



elevations similar to the existing taller buildings and their facades can be designed to complement older structures (Figure 10).



Figure 10. Infill Development Can Preserve and Enhance Character



Underutilized lots that can be expanded or redeveloped should be redeveloped to match the character of a traditional walkable downtown. That means providing parking behind the building and placing new buildings back slightly from the sidewalk (5-10 feet to allow expanded sidewalk space. Professional and medical offices are not ideal on the ground floors of prime shopping streets. These types of businesses are best located on upper floors and side streets.

#### **Façade Improvements**

Striking the right balance between variety and uniformity of architecture in a downtown isn't always easy to achieve. A certain amount of consistency is needed to establish the character of a place. However, too much leads to a place that feels artificial and dull.

Based upon results of the image preference survey, which showed a preference for traditional styles, new

buildings that are traditionally proportioned and inspired by the existing historic fabric, would fit well within the downtown. Design guidelines can be incorporated into the overlay or rezoning district that can guide the appearance of future development.

In the short term, stores can add interest to their windows with local art and photography or items/images of historical interest. In addition,

maintenance of buildings and signs/awnings can help keep buildings from appearing run down.

There are a several ways that owners can improve their storefronts and facades without the financial incentive of additional square footage. Grants are sometimes available through County government for commercial façade rehabilitation through the CDBG program. The Town can provide an incentive by waiving permit fees for historically or architecturally sensitive improvements. Towns can also enforce



property maintenance requirements for particularly egregious violators. The Town can also institute design standards for new construction or

substantial reconstruction and additions.

### Lighting

Well placed and designed lighting is important to appearance of a downtown and to its safety. Lighting should be directed downward and should be the right quality (color) and quantity (intensity). Lighting that is too weak is will not make pedestrians feel safe. Lighting that is too bright can be aesthetically objectionable.



### Sidewalk Dining

Everyone enjoys people watching. In fact it has been shown to be one of the



biggest attractions of bringing people to a place. As long as a 48-inch clear path is maintained along the sidewalk, additional space can be used for café tables. Small tables for two could be placed along building frontage where space is available. In areas where there is inadequate sidewalk space, restaurateurs can provide facades that open or counter seating in street-facing windows.



### Parking Lot Screening

A relatively low cost enhancement to the appearance of Main Street would be the improvement of landscape screening of parking lots adjacent to the sidewalks.

Such screening not only minimizes the visual impact of the parked cars, but also makes pedestrians feel more comfortable.



### Visual Clutter

There was a strong desire to bury utilities along Main Street within the downtown. Underground utilities have

not only an aesthetic benefit within the downtown but also a practical one. Reducing the amount of interruptions of the sidewalk can leave more space for pedestrians.



The cost of burying utilities is very high. There is the cost to put the lines underground, and an additional cost to every property owner to bury their connection. It is not likely that this will be feasible due to cost and coordination between entities, but it would be most cost effective to do it at the same time that the sewer lines are being put in the ground. This way road construction and disruption is minimized. At a minimum, redundant poles should be removed to minimize sidewalk disruption.

Redundant signage should also be reviewed and street signage should be at a scale compatible with a pedestrian oriented, slow driving speed environment. Signs should be installed on the minimum number of poles possible to reduce sidewalk interruption.

## Economics

Though a market study specific to Kings Park hasn't been done, revitalizations in other communities can provide examples of the economic benefits. Traditional downtown style of development with mixed use and multifamily residential has many economic advantages.

Mixed use development including multifamily housing has shown to help with revitalization of existing downtowns, which leads to increased property values for the surrounding community. In addition mixed use and multifamily development is typically tax positive, meaning it generates more tax revenue than it uses in services. This is due to less infrastructure being needed when development is compact and few school age children in downtown multifamily developments as compared to single family houses.

Hicksville is a community with similar median household incomes, age and

housing costs. A study performed for the revitalization of downtown Hicksville estimated a maximum population growth of close to 2800. Since the vast majority of that growth was to occur in the downtown area, the percentage of convenience and comparable goods would increase 150% leading to the capture an additional \$4.7 million of unmet retail spending translating to the 107,000 square feet of supportable retail space.

Kings Park is obviously much smaller than downtown Hicksville and any population increase due to new development downtown is likely to be 1/7<sup>th</sup> of that studied for Hicksville. Though a direct comparison cannot be made due to numerous variables, if the resulting retail spending and supportable retail square footage followed the same increases per person, Kings Park would be able to support over 15,000 additional square footage of retail space.

Though it would need to be confirmed by a study specifically for Kings Park, it could be argued that Kings Park could support even more new square footage since it likely has less retail square footage to begin with.

In a 2014 case study of revitalized towns in North Carolina, the average couple renting an apartment between \$800 and \$1200 per month annually spent \$18,773 in their immediate downtown area. This number can be broken down into a number of categories: on average, a couple annually spends \$3,578 on food at home, \$1,560 on food away from home, \$346 on alcoholic beverages, \$630 on clothing, and \$216 on fees and admission to local events. Other expenditure categories included pets, toys, hobbies, reading, education, furniture, and housekeeping supplies.

These North Carolina communities also saw impressive increases in jobs after revitalization. In the two years before receiving a grant used for filling gaps in

economic development projects that benefit small businesses, these communities averaged a total of 26.5 new jobs per year. In the two years after receiving the grant, the same districts added an average of 110.5 new jobs per year. Full-time employees of the expanded businesses are not the only beneficiaries of revitalization; the public sector in each of these communities saw significant returns via property tax, sales tax, and income tax, as well. Therefore, the potential economic benefits of removing vacant storefronts and properties and attracting new residents downtown are both abundant and impressive.

(source:

[http://www.placeeconomics.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/nc-main-street-economic-impact\\_placeeconomics.pdf](http://www.placeeconomics.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/nc-main-street-economic-impact_placeeconomics.pdf))



# Implementing the Plan

Potential projects are divided into short-term (less than five years) and mid- to long-term (more than five years). Short-term projects are important as they build enthusiasm, demonstrate that ‘something is happening,’ and that community wishes were heard. Many other projects require extensive permitting and approvals, most need funding, some require policy or legal changes, and many will happen only when market forces are positive. Recommendations are categorized by timing and summarized below.

## Short Term

### Land Use and Zoning

- Work with the Town to formulate new zoning for Kings Park downtown.
- Clarify or amend outdoor dining requirements.

### Sewering

- Investigate interim measures to increase wastewater disposal capacity of downtown properties
- Support efforts by the Town and County to sewer Kings Park and Smithtown and expand existing WWTP capacity.

### Commercial and Residential Space

- Meet with potential developers to solicit their support for Kings Park sewerage efforts.

### Public and Recreational Space

- Meet with the State to explore new public space options for parcels at entrance to Kings Park Boulevard.
- Meet with the Town to explore new public space options for its property on the south side of East Main Street.
- Meet with the Town and library to explore new public space options for Veterans Plaza and adjoining property.

### Mobility and Parking

- Meet with the LIRR to explore restriping their parking lot and adding pedestrian amenities.
- Explore shared parking options with private parking lot owners.
- Improve parking lot signage and install ‘Welcome to Kings Park’ signage at key intersections.
- Expand bicycle trails, reroute Hike-Bike Trail entrance and improve trail head.

### Character, Architecture, Aesthetics

- Explore opportunities to fill vacant storefronts with pop-up stores and art shows.

- Develop façade treatment guidelines with downtown property owners.
- Preserve the historic fabric and character of the business district through special designations.
- Landscape edges to hide exposed private parking along Main Street.

## **Mid- to Long-Term**

### **Land Use and Zoning**

- Town to rezone Kings Park downtown as an Overlay District or as a new zoning category.

### **Sewering**

- Secure support of property owners in proposed Kings Park sewer district.
- Connect all properties inside the commercial area to the new sewer collection system and expanded WWTP.

### **Commercial and Residential Space**

- Conduct market analysis for new residential and commercial space when sewerage is imminent.
- Update market analysis for new residential and commercial space with sewer capacity availability.
- Encourage redevelopment of larger properties and select Main Street properties (non-historic).

### **Public and Recreational Space**

- Implement public space improvements developed and planned during short-term.
- Expand and reconfigure Kings Park Veteran Plaza.

### **Mobility and Parking**

- Install bumpouts at intersection of Main Street and Indian Head Road
- Expand sidewalks by eliminating on-street parking on one side of Main Street.
- Improve Main Street streetscape, including lights, bolder pedestrian crossings, traffic calming treatments, new furnishings.
- Restripe LIRR station parking to improve parking efficiency lot and better connect Main Street to the train station.
- Upgrade and expand rail station facilities including pedestrian bridge over tracks.
- Improve residents' lot on south side of Main Street with pedestrian amenities, better business access, outdoor dining.

### **Character and Aesthetics**

- Formulate development incentives with design criteria.
- Implement facade improvements and rehabilitations.

## **Appendices**

**Appendix A. Visual Preference Survey**

**Appendix B. Zoning Dimensional and Use Tables**

**Appendix C. Market Reconnaissance**

**Appendix D. Septic Capacity**

**Appendix E. Kings Park Conceptual Downtown Redevelopment Plan**



## **Appendix A – Visual Preference Survey**

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## **Appendix B - Zoning Dimensional and Use Tables**

DRAFT

## **Appendix C - Market Reconnaissance (RPA, BJH Advisors, and James Lima)**

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## **Appendix D - Septic Capacity (RPA)**

DRAFT

## **Appendix E - Kings Park Conceptual Downtown Redevelopment Plan**

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