Booklet #4
August 31, 2009

POTENTIAL ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

EAST HAMPTON

The preparation of this report is supported by a grant from the State of Connecticut – Office of Policy and Management as part of the Incentive Housing Program.

Overview

The Village Center area of East Hampton has been identified as the location most appropriate for establishment of an Incentive Housing Zone program (see Booklet #2 for a description of the Incentive Housing Zone program and Booklet #3 for information on overall location considerations within East Hampton).

This booklet is intended to:

- provide an overview of potential issues and opportunities which may affect the Incentive Housing Zone (IHZ) program, and
- provide a basis for further discussion.

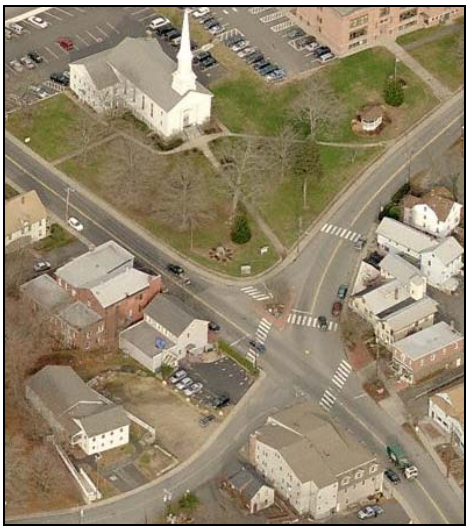
Source Materials

In assembling this summary of potential issues and opportunities, the following were used:

- 2006 Plan of Conservation and Development
- 2006 Village Center Revitalization Assessment
- Discussions with Town Staff / Commissioners
- Assessment database
- Field visits

Street Level View

Aerial View



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Potential Opportunities

Overall Considerations

- The overall character of the Village Center area makes it an attractive place for development of new housing in a village-type setting
- The "Main Street" ambience of the Village Center area makes it attractive for development of new housing opportunities
- The amenities available within East Hampton (overall character, recreation, education, etc.) also make it attractive for development of new housing

Major Opportunities

- Development opportunities allowed under the Incentive Housing Zone program (or a similar program) can help spur redevelopment of the Village Center area
- The residential development which could occur will help provide housing opportunities for current and future residents of East Hampton
- The residents of the new units could help provide a labor force for local businesses
- Additional residential units within the Village Center area will help support the businesses in this area
- Development under the IHZ program will help the Village Center area achieve a critical mass which:
  - will help overall property values and rental rates
  - help support utility investments
  - help promote provision of public transportation
  - should help spur additional private investment

Other Opportunities

- Given the overall development program, it is anticipated that the residential development will have a net positive fiscal impact for the community
- The blending of residential development, a "Main Street" ambience, and a regional rail trail will help attract more people and investment to the Village Center
- The provision of common parking lots and shared parking could help enable the appropriate development and redevelopment of the Village Center area
- The presence of "contributing" properties within the Belltown National Historic District listed on the National Register of Historic Places may provide opportunities for tax incentives for income-producing properties
- By promoting "merging" or "consolidation" of parcels, it may be possible to increase the viability of the IHZ program

Potential Issues

Overall Considerations

- While the community has been supportive of redevelopment of the Village Center area for some time, various impediments have slowed progress
- People may have a difficult time envisioning what the Village Center could be

Major Issues

- The lack of a public water system with adequate capacity will prevent redevelopment of sites until water service is extended or additional water supply sources are connected
- The presence or perception of potential environmental contamination may deter redevelopment of sites and the lack of definition regarding the extent of possible contamination makes it more difficult to determine how to approach redevelopment of the Village Center area
- Current landowners may not be interested in making the investment necessary to obtain a higher economic return from existing properties

Other Issues

- The presence of floodplain areas on certain properties may make establishing residential development more challenging in some areas
- The lack of public transit means that the area will rely primarily on automobiles to support present and future uses and this will require substantial land area be set aside to meet parking needs
- The presence of "contributing" properties within the Belltown National Historic District listed on the National Register of Historic Places may make it more challenging to redevelop some properties which are functionally obsolete and not conducive to residential development
- The minimum densities required to obtain reimbursement as part of the IHZ program may be higher than appropriate for some sites within the Village Center area
- The smaller lot sizes in some areas make it more difficult to achieve the residential densities envisioned by the IHZ program
- The smaller lot sizes in some areas may make it more difficult to provide affordable housing units as envisioned by the IHZ program
- While studies have indicated market support for higher density residential development in general, the market for higher density residential development in the Village Center area has not been tested

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Preliminary Recommendations

Proceeding with the Incentive Housing Zone program is recommended as a strategy to:

- capitalize on the opportunities in the Village Center area, and
- help overcome some of the issues and obstacles which exist in that area.

To help address some of the issues and obstacles, the following strategies are recommended for further consideration:

- continue to implement the Water Supply Master Plan to provide a public water supply in the Village Center area
- consider undertaking a Master Brownfield Study to define and quantify the potential environmental remediation program
- consider preparing a Village Center Master Plan to coordinate development of the public areas (street rights-of-way, rail trails, and public lands) and private lands into a harmonious overall concept
- if necessary, consider allowing for lower densities than required in the IHZ program if that will be more appropriate and compatible for the Village Center area

Notes

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