

Town of Southport Zoning Update FAQ

First Public Meeting: Tuesday April 21st, 2015

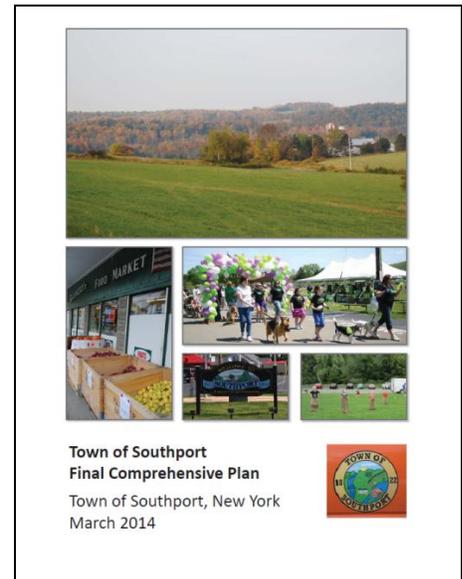
Q: What is zoning? Zoning is the means by which the government regulates real property within its jurisdiction, with a view to protect the health, safety, morals and general welfare of the public. In New York State, Towns, Cities and Villages have the legal authority to enact zoning regulations.

Q: Why is the Town updating its zoning? The Town is embarking on this project to implement the goals of the Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2014. In New York State, zoning ordinances must be consistent with a community's comprehensive plan to ensure the ordinance reflects the community's vision for how it wishes to develop over time, and to ensure that the ordinance will withstand legal challenge.

The goals of Southport's Comprehensive Plan are:

1. Generate economic development opportunities;
2. Accommodate the changing population;
3. Enhance the community character;
4. Protect natural and historic resources.

*The Comprehensive Plan (right) is available on the Town's website:
www.townofsouthport.com*



Q: How is the project funded? The project is funded by a \$60,000 grant from the New York State Energy and Research Development Authority (NYSERDA) with a \$15,000 matching contribution from the Town (consisting of \$12,500 cash and \$2,500 in-kind services). The consultants leading the project are Elan Planning, Design & Landscape Architecture based in Saratoga Springs with Hunt Engineers, Architects and Land Surveyors, PC based in Horseheads.

Q: What has been done so far? The Town has appointed a Steering Committee to assist the consultants with the project, made up of members of the Town Board, Planning Board, Zoning Board, and Southport residents and business owners.

The draft changes to the ordinance made to date are:

- Preparation of a Diagnostic Report to specify the changes required to bring the zoning up to date with the Comprehensive Plan (available to view on the Town website)
- Stakeholder walking tour of Bulkhead, Cedar St and Pine City (November 2014)
- Six Steering Committee Meetings (all meeting minutes are available to view on the Town website)
- Introduction of a form-based code in the CN and CR zones
- Use Table revision and updates
- Map boundary changes that include the removal of the RT zone (replaced with CN), a new CN zone behind Penna Ave and Route 14 above Cedar Street)
- Various parcel zone changes
- Replacement of the Planned Senior Housing Overlay District (PSHOD) and Planned Multiple Residential (PMR) with a more flexible, developer-friendly Planned Development District (PDD)

- Parking table revisions that remove minimum off-street parking requirements and encourage developers to decide the optimum amount of parking for new developments in conversation with the Planning Board. Excessive minimum parking requirements mean more expensive development, excessive stormwater runoff, degraded community character and lower tax revenues for the Town over the long-term.

Q: What are the next steps? Upcoming tasks include the following:

- Finalize the new parking regulations
- Insert regulations to allow Accessory Dwelling Units in residential zones
- Evaluate the zoning with respect to green infrastructure and floodplain management
- Revise various definitions, including roadside stand, family, home occupation, contractors equipment yard
- Re-organize the zoning to make it more user-friendly (for example, by placing definitions at the end)
- Repeal duplicate regulations for signs and site plan review
- Preparation of the draft ordinance and draft zoning guidebook
- Second public meeting (June 2015)
- Preparation of the final ordinance and zoning guidebook
- State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) process
- Public hearings in accordance with Town Law
- Recommendation to Town Board and Adoption of the new zoning ordinance

Q: What is a form-based code? Unlike a traditional zoning ordinance that organizes a community into single-use districts (such as Residential, Industrial or Commercial), a form-based code is more concerned with the bulk, density and location of development in zoning districts, or the *form* of development, rather than the *use* of land and buildings. Form-based codes do not regulate architecture, but they do designate whether development may be one story or two, along with other dimensional aspects of the built environment such as setbacks, the location of parking, the kind of frontage with the street (shop front, porch, yard, etc), and the type and location of public spaces.

In the United States, very few form-based codes apply community-wide. In Southport, the new form-based regulations will only apply in CN and CR districts. The form-based code will be designed to promote more consistent development in Southport and encourage the development of mixed-use buildings that will help to diversify the Town's housing stock and allow for a greater variety of commercial and retail spaces. The Town hopes that the form-based code will also lead to high quality development of its commercial areas that will ultimately bring new businesses and jobs to Southport in support of Goal 1 of the Comprehensive Plan.

Q: Where can I find out more information? Ask us at tonight's meeting! Alternatively, you can contact Nicolette Barber, Project Manager, at HUNT: (607) 358-1000 or barbern@hunt-eas.com. Steering Committee meetings are advertised on the Town website and are open to the public. Meeting minutes are available at www.townofsouthport.com