



# Three Village Conservation Strategy 2030

**Report of the  
Conservation Strategy Working Group  
Valerie Scopaz, AICP, Planning Consultant**

**To the  
Three Village Community Trust**

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Conservation Catalyst Grant**

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**Stony Brook Environmental Conservancy –Scientific and Technical Services (pledged)**

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# Summary

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*Three Village Conservation Strategies 2030* (CS 2030) is designed to facilitate conservation efforts by the Three Village Community Trust (TVCT) in concert with the larger community and to provide constructive input to the Town's comprehensive plan, *Brookhaven 2030*. It is the authors' hope that the report will show the way to the conservation of significant natural and man-made resources within the Three Village Central School District, a community of approximately 42,000 inhabitants in a 22-square mile area containing Setauket, East Setauket, South Setauket, Stony Brook, and the incorporated Villages of Old Field and Poquott plus portions of Head of the Harbor (in Smithtown), Lake Grove and Centereach.

The general goal of the CS 2030 is *to balance, sustain, and enhance those natural and cultural resources on which rest the overall character and quality of life of the Three Village community*. This general goal is divided into four sub-goals: (1) to protect the natural resources of the area; (2) to manage the built environment; (3) to maintain a prosperous local economy and (4) to enhance cultural and recreational opportunities.

Because of continuing strong demand in the area for land to build or rebuild on, the CS 2030 Working Group convened by the TVCT decided to focus on the first two sub-goals, placing the emphasis on conserving natural resources and protecting historically and architecturally important buildings and sites. In this report, strategies for addressing the other two sub-goals are touched upon but less fully elaborated.

Following an inventory and assessment of community assets (listed in detail in the appendices), the Working Group identified four sets of obstacles to the achievement of conservation goals but found hope in a great variety of opportunities identified in the inventory. The four issues of concern are: (1) a long-standing lack of two-way communication and coordination about planning and future needs between Stony Brook University and the Three Village community and the Town; (2) the inadequacy of consistency between the Town's comprehensive land use plans and its codes as well between its planning division and its regulatory and advisory boards; that, because there are limited alternatives, promotes (3) adverse incremental changes that can be brought on by private landowners, such as subdividing large estates and the potential for building on privately-owned open spaces that today are taken for granted as community assets; and (4) the difficulty of achieving sufficient political unity to mount effective action toward conservation goals. Nonetheless, there are many factors in favor of effective conservation action. Among these are a strong community identity and civic ethos, some well-established organizations devoted to the preservation of community assets, extensive undeveloped land belonging to the University, and many private property owners who may be persuaded to place conservation easements on their land or to sell the development rights.

Conservation strategies -- the actions needed to achieve the goals -- can be summarized as a multi-stage process in which the following seven steps occur, not necessarily in the order listed: (1) gathering and analyzing information; (2) winning citizen support; (3) forming coalitions and partnerships; (4) enlisting property owners; (5) working with government; (6) raising contributions; and (7) employing professional help. In the Conservation Strategies chapter the report outlines in some detail how each of these steps can be applied in working toward each of the four conservation goals.

Only through coordinated and sustained follow-up can the community realize the vision of a Three Village identity that endures from generation to generation. The final chapter outlines an overall strategy for keeping the conservation movement alive and effective over the coming decades. The most important thing is that this not be treated as a final document to put on the shelf, but as a living record of progress to be revised and updated from year to year and

that the ideas outlined will become actions that can be carried forward by local organizations and groups of Three Village citizens in cooperation with one another, the University, the Town of Brookhaven and other key players in community development.

## Introduction

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Much of the scenic beauty of the Three Village area's exceptional natural setting still remains after centuries of extensive modification by human activity. Geological and other natural landmarks along with colonial-era structures and roads still stand interlaced with the suburban developments of the post-World II era. Nevertheless, the amount of available "greenfields"<sup>1</sup> is dwindling, and as the landscape is altered, each "sacred" place within the community, each remnant of forest or old field, scenic vista or historic structure assumes a larger burden of the collective memory of the past.

For each new generation, the Three Village area's landscape in their time becomes the substance of memories to come. And each generation in turn impacts the composite fabric of the community. The challenge is to shape ongoing and future physical development so that it enhances the integrity of the underlying natural environment and compliments historical, architectural, and scenic characteristics as the Three Village community grows in the future.

*Three Village Conservation Strategy 2030 (CS 2030)* is designed to facilitate conservation efforts by the Three Village Community Trust (TVCT) in concert with the larger community and to provide constructive input to the Town's comprehensive plan, *Brookhaven 2030*. It is our hope that the report will show the way to the conservation of significant natural and man-made resources within the Three Village Central School District, a nearly 22-square mile area containing Setauket, East Setauket, South Setauket, Stony Brook, and the incorporated Villages of Old Field and Poquott.

The *CS 2030* is not a government document. It has no legal, regulatory underpinnings to secure its implementation. Rather, it is an expression of our community's vision developed over the course of more than a year of dialogue under the direction of the TVCT, a local, not-for-profit-land trust. The TVCT was founded in 2003 for the purpose of preservation and conservation of natural and man-made resources for the benefit of the community.

The *CS 2030* is the TVCT's response to the Town of Brookhaven's decision to update its comprehensive land use plan. As an alternative to the traditional planning focus on development and redevelopment, the TVCT Board decided to make conservation the focus of the community's input into this planning process. People from many different businesses, civic and education organizations, and government agencies were invited to form a Working Group. The Working Group sought to improve regional development efforts by introducing the idea that conservation can be used to shape development. The Group's consensus strategy is to pursue conservation opportunities directly and immediately, as well as to assist in the Town's long-range development planning.

As part of this effort, the Working Group developed an inventory of land already protected or quasi-protected as a prelude to identifying that which still needs preservation or stronger protection. Realizing that land conservation or preservation by itself was not sufficient to achieve the goals sought, the Working Group explored a variety of allied strategies and actions to conserve and enhance the Three Village environment.

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<sup>1</sup> "Greenfields" is a generic term that is widely used by planners to represent all land that is not "developed" with buildings or man-made infrastructure. It may or may not include wetlands, regulated or otherwise, but is usually considered available for development. It includes woodland, open fields, farmland, etc. This land is not "vacant" and therefore that adjective is avoided.

The *CS 2030* identifies the significant strengths of the Three Village community and acknowledges the community's important political, financial, educational, cultural, and economic resources. We are keenly aware that some cumulative impacts of Three Village development are already exceeding tolerable levels of stress to some natural resources, such as the quality of groundwater and coastal waters. As the Three Village community seeks to ensure a more sustainable, harmonious balance between human activities and the capacity of the natural environment to absorb the impacts of those actions, this report is intended to provide a focal perspective as well as a guide to day-to-day decisions and to plans for the next twenty years. The report is intended for active use, and it is expected that it will need to be updated from time to time to bring it into line with what people have learned while putting its conservation strategies to a practical test.

## Conservation Vision and Goals

**The Guiding Vision of the *CS 2030*** is an image of the community we hope to see in the year 2030 and beyond. It is a community in which the natural and cultural resources we prize today are still found, still cherished, and still protected; where a sense of stewardship prevails throughout the populace, a harmonious balance is maintained between the different components of the community and all resources are used sustainably. More than that, we hope to see that many desirable features of the community have been preserved and even enhanced: historic buildings now endangered will be protected and restored; the Route 25A corridor will be attractive from end to end; there will be strong locally owned businesses serving the community's needs; there will be adequate open spaces and vistas, passive and recreational parks, a wide variety of housing; and -- to paraphrase Abraham Lincoln -- a population "proud of the place in which they live."

**The general goal of the *CS 2030*** is to balance, sustain, and enhance those natural and cultural resources on which rest the overall character and quality of life of the Three Village community. This general goal is too broad and multifaceted, however, to serve as a focus for conservation strategies and planning. For that reason, it is more practical and useful to divide it into a number of *sub-goals* that can be addressed somewhat independently. Here these sub-goals are grouped into four categories:

1. ***Protect the natural resources of the area.*** Maintain ecological integrity of natural systems by conserving (and expanding) existing physical connections (such as greenbelts) between components of the system. Adapt plans as nature and human interactions evolve (e.g. watershed or habitat restoration plans)

2. ***Manage the built environment.*** Maintain existing historic and architectural sites of community interest. Expand an inventory of properties of community interest while allowing for constructive re-use of these structures, if and as necessary. Encourage new construction that is energy efficient, and harmonious in density, scale, and esthetic appearance with the surrounding community. Maintain existing scenic vistas, including streetscapes that define community character and natural features of community interest. Assist in dialog between parties with different aesthetic preferences, particularly where new technologies are or may be perceived to be intrusive or offensive, e.g. wind turbines or cell towers.

3. ***Maintain a prosperous local economy.*** Allow for continued private ownership and management of conserved properties. Enable constructive use of conserved properties to facilitate sustainable use of the property and help maintain the tax base. Promote policies that support a favorable environment for local business and for employment that is compatible with other conservation goals. Find ways to maintain a wide range of housing choices for a population that includes University students, young people at entry level jobs, and senior citizens on fixed incomes. Provide transportation opportunities in addition to the private automobile for access to work, shopping, and other activities.

4. ***Enhance cultural and recreational opportunities.*** Maintain and increase cultural opportunities in the community. Increase the diversity of both active and passive recreational and educational activities for all ages and interests. Expand and connect the hiking and biking trails that have been built in recent years and link them to other trails and recreational facilities.

Like the four legs of a table, these four sub-goals together support the general goal's attainment. Failure to address and achieve any one of them will weaken and destabilize underlying support for the character and quality of life of the Three Village community.

While recognizing that the quality of life of the community rests on *all* of these components, the *CS 2030* Working Group chose to focus first on conservation of natural resources and second on preservation of historically and architecturally important buildings. Natural resources conservation received the *highest priority* because there is continuing demand for land to build on, and once land has been developed it is essentially lost as a natural asset. Likewise, historic preservation cannot wait because the forces of natural decay of buildings and the anticipated profitability of tearing them down and redeveloping such properties place them in imminent danger.

Nonetheless, the other sub-goals, the local economy and cultural and recreational opportunities, were frequently mentioned in the group's discussions and some strategies for addressing problems in these areas are suggested in the strategies section of . Another recurring topic was the need for a diversity of housing beyond the single-family house to serve *all* generations and to anticipate the growth of the University. These discussions and suggestions are in no way conclusive and only point the way for needed follow-up studies.

The TVCT, with input from the Working Group and the community, expects to integrate new information throughout the implementation of the , and to revise its goals and strategies as necessary. It is hoped that other community organizations will consider these goals and strategies in planning projects and activities.

## Boundaries and Population of the Study Area

The study area for this report is defined as the entire geographic area of the Three Village School District includes the neighborhoods and communities of Setauket, East Setauket, South Setauket, Stony Brook and the incorporated villages of Old Field and Poquott. Small portions of the Village of Head of the Harbor (in the Town of Smithtown), Port Jefferson Station and Centereach, as well as the incorporated Village of Lake Grove also lie within the Three Village Central School District. This is a total of 22.59 square miles according to the School District (see the Community Boundary Map at the end of this section.)

As shown below, information assembled by the Town of Brookhaven Planning Department shows that the population of the School District has increased at about the same rate as the Town as a whole, growing by 15.7 percent in the eleven years between 1997-2008. This increase was primarily the result of the filling in of residentially zone land in Setauket and the increase of number of residents in dormitory and apartment housing on the University campus.

**Table 1. Three Village Central School District Area  
Population Change 1997-2008<sup>1</sup>**

Place	1997 est.	2000 Census	2008 est.	Change 1997-2008	
				Number	Percent
<b>Setauket-E. Setauket</b>	13,580	15,931	16,595	3,015	22.2
<b>Stony Brook</b>	14,334	14,077	14,133	-201	-1.4
<b>Stony Brook University<sup>2</sup></b>	6,323	6,343	8,796	2,473	39.1
<b>Old Field</b>	765	947	992	227	29.7
<b>Poquott</b>	874	975	1,005	131	15.0
<b>Three Village Total</b>	35,876	38,273	41,521	5,645	15.7
<b>Town of Brookhaven</b>	425,023	448,020	491,035	66,012	15.5
<b>Suffolk County</b>	1,350,747	1,419,369	1,508,602	157,885	11.7

1. Source: LIPA Population Survey, population estimates based on U.S. Census data and utility records of active residential electric meters Compiled by Town of Brookhaven Planning Department.

2. Residential student population only

## Regional and Local Factors

The impetus for preparing the *CS 2030* grew out of two separate but related series of events; one regional, the other local in scope. A brief review of these events is essential to understanding the timing, substance, and thrust of this report.

The Three Villages contain the oldest settlements within Brookhaven Town. They consist of mature, developed communities with a strong sense of identity and distinctive character shaped by history, geography, water, culture, and unique scenic attributes. The area has experienced tremendous growth spurts, particularly since the establishment of the University here beginning in the early 1960s. Today, less than ten percent of the land within the study area is estimated to be undeveloped; and the University, the region's largest single-site employer, continues to expand its enrollment and physical infrastructure. Because it is part of the State University of New York system, the Town and County have at best limited, and in several areas no jurisdiction over the University's land use planning, decisions on ultimate size, and construction practices. The community is, however, expected *by law* to provide all fire protection, some emergency services, and, of necessity, a significant amount of off-campus housing for graduate students and others.

Subsequent to the preparation of Brookhaven's 1997 Comprehensive Plan, the *Three Village Hamlet Study: A Citizen's Blueprint for our Future* (1997 Hamlet Study) was published.

This seminal report, representing a year of hard work on the part of more than 30 community leaders, contained what remains today the most current compilation of information about the area. The 1997 Hamlet Study made salient observations about the area's environmental resources, land use, and population trends, as well as the role of the University and the unsettled nature of its relationship with the surrounding community that are still relevant.

In 2003, some community leaders seeking to find a constructive way to build on the findings and recommendations of the *1997 Hamlet Study*, formed the Three Village Community Trust. TVCT is a charitable, tax-exempt organization pursuant to section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC). In its founding documents, the TVCT set as its mission "*to preserve, conserve and otherwise protect natural and man-made resources for the benefit of the community*" and identified five goals:

- *Acquire and restore sites and structures that contribute to our community identity,*
- *Protect our natural resources by preserving wetlands, green spaces and farmland,*
- *Facilitate broad-based community participation in the redesign of the Route 25A corridor, reduce traffic congestion, and establish a real village center,*
- *Plan for sustainable, appropriate development – not haphazard "sprawl"*
- *Create a legacy for future generations.*

The TVCT later refined its mission as follows, "*...to protecting the unique character of this community through the acquisition of diverse properties, either through gift or purchase. Our mission is to preserve and protect our natural resources and our heritage, which may include the restoration and adaptive reuse of historical sites and structures. Our aims are: to encourage community participation in achieving the goals of the Trust; to be responsive to community needs and aspirations; and to facilitate and encourage community planning for both preservation and growth*" (April, 2004).

In 2007, when the Town of Brookhaven announced its intention to create the *Brookhaven 2030* comprehensive plan, the TVCT Board approached the Town's Planning Commissioner, David Woods, for assistance in incorporating a conservation-based planning vision for future development within the Three Village area. Town Councilman Steve Fiore-Rosenfeld and State Assemblyman Steve Englebright provided TVCT with additional political and financial support necessary to underwrite the creation of a Conservation Strategy, as did several local organizations.

Because of the collaborative design of the TVCT's project proposal along with the evidence of broad governmental and local community support through pledges of funds and technical services, TVCT was awarded a *Conservation Catalyst Grant* from the New York Conservation Partnership Program, which is administered by the Land Trust Alliance (LTA).

On receipt of this grant, TVCT invited a diverse group of people from many different organizations to form a Working Group. The Working Group brought together a variety of stakeholders, each with their respective missions and interests. The Working Group agreed to collaborate to create a document that captures a mix of perspectives. These perspectives relate to, but are not necessarily the same as, the goals of TVCT. A consultant was hired to facilitate the dialogue and put consensus points on paper. The *CS 2030* is a written synopsis of the efforts of this Working Group during the course of 2009.

*The CS 2030* reflects many viewpoints of community leaders about the conservation of essential resources within the Three Villages. Effective conservation will not flow from land and resource acquisition and stewardship actions alone. Rather, it will require the active and ongoing engagement of a broad spectrum of the Three Village community in all aspects of planning land use and development. By implication, the process of creating the *CS 2030* and the report itself *reflects the following trends*:

- The recognition that conservation of ecological and cultural resources is as important as traditional land use planning for the future.
- The growing understanding of the dominant role being played by the University within the local area.
- The degree to which the economic and political situation may preclude sufficient government-driven protection of essential community resources.
- The growing desire of private citizens and businesses to coordinate their actions to achieve broader community goals.
- The expanded mission of the TVCT to facilitate conservation with and by the broader Three Village community.

The *CS 2030* is an expression of community vision. It contains a preliminary working plan for action by citizens who met over the course of more than a year to listen to each other, to learn together, and to seek new solutions to old problems.

## Definitions

The following definitions of the word, “conservation” and several related terms have been agreed on by the Working Group for the purposes of *CS 2030* :

***Conservation*** is a noun meaning the act of conserving, from the verb, *conserve*, to keep from loss, decay, waste or injury. In the present context, it includes any and all actions intended to preserve, manage and enhance natural and man-made resources of value to the community.

***Natural resources*** include, but are not limited to, fresh and salt water wetlands, coastal habitat, woodlands, meadows, old fields, beaches, and other natural habitat used by migratory and resident species.

***Cultural resources*** include, but are not limited to, streetscapes, scenic vistas, historical and archeological sites, farmland, architecturally significant structures or styles, recreational facilities and opportunities, and the many other less tangible contributors to the quality of life.

***Stewardship***. A steward is one who manages property or affairs on behalf of another or others. Any act of conservation for the benefit of the community as a whole and of future generations is a form of stewardship.

Acts of conservation have as their aim the realization of one or more of three outcomes: balance, sustainability and enhancement.

***Balance*** is to be found in a middle ground between extremes each of which represent tipping points beyond which a system becomes unstable. A balancing policy or action is one that is intended to ensure that desired changes in one sector of the community will not cause other sectors to become unstable.

***Sustainability*** is the likelihood that practices followed today can continue indefinitely into the future. Closely related to sustainability is the concept of “carrying capacity” which is a measure of the ability of the ecosystem to recover, or renew itself, from the impacts of human activity.

***Enhancement*** includes man-made improvements to the built environment and also applies to the rehabilitation and restoration of damaged or diminished resources including habitat and historic restorations.

***Insert “Community Boundary Map” here on a separate page 11a.***

# COMMUNITY ASSETS: AN INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT

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This section is intended to provide the reader with a brief overview of essential information relevant to the CS 2030 without repeating what is contained in other documents, including the draft *Brookhaven 2030* comprehensive plan document and its supporting materials and maps, or in the *Three Village Hamlet Study* of 1997 that covers the same geographic area.

*Three Village Hamlet Study 1997: A Citizens ' Blueprint for Our Future*, by the Three Village Hamlet Study Task Force contains a compendium of historic and environmental resources within the Three Village area. It includes an inventory of land uses and transportation issues. It examines the nature of the University's relationship with the community. It also includes the findings of a 1996 survey of community residents about issues of concern. The report offers a series of highly specific recommendations which are still relevant today. This report is included by reference into *CS 2030*.

The CS2030 report is an extension of the *1997 Hamlet Study* and not an update. The Working Group did not review the *1997 Hamlet Study* recommendations in depth to determine which ones had been implemented and decide their current relevancy. We recommend that such a review of *1997 Hamlet Study* be undertaken in the near future.

*North Country Road Restoration Study for the Hamlet of Setauket: A Report to the Town of Brookhaven, Summer 2006*, by the Three Village Community Trust, presents the results of a community workshop designed to identify and focus Town efforts on rehabilitating the historic streetscape of North Country Road where it runs through the Old Setauket Historic District (between Ridgeway Avenue and State Route 25A). It contains a series of specific recommendations to improve the safety, scenic attributes, and functionality of this road, a significant segment of what is arguably the oldest residential street in Brookhaven. This report is included by reference into *CS 2030*.

Presentations to the Working Group by members and guests during the course of the year were helpful in informing the discussions of conservation issues and eventually in the framing of *CS 2030*

Steven Colabufo, Hydrogeologist, *Suffolk County Water Authority*, "Drinking Water Wells and Watershed Protection."

Andrew Collver, *New Directions Community-Based Research Institute*, "Achieving Community Goals through a Town-Civic Partnership."

Ray Corwin, *LI Pine Barrens Commission*, "The Pine Barrens Credit Program: Transferable Development Rights in Central Suffolk County, NY."

Larissa Graham, *LIS Outreach Coordinator New York Sea Grant*, "Long Island Sound Study: Protecting the coastal habitats of Long Island Sound."

Robert Kent, *Tritec*, "Opportunities and Obstacles: Tritec's Village of Patchogue Project."

Diane M. Mazarakis, A.I.C.P., Principal Planner, *Planning Division, Town of Brookhaven*, "Brookhaven2030: Preliminary Findings and Recommendations."

Luci Betti Nash, *Four Harbors Audubon Society*, "Backyard Habitats."

**Protected and Quasi-Protected Places Maps**, generated by the Working Group, is contained in the present report, at the end of this section. The maps show all protected and quasi-protected parcels within the Three Village area (*divided into four quadrants for clarity*) as of September 2009. Members of the Working Group used their local knowledge, on-site verifications, and a series of Town of Brookhaven maps (Aerial, Land Use, Historic Resources, Public Lands, circa July 2008) as well as "Bing" aerial maps to indicate land use entries. In the

context of this report, the term “Protected” indicates land that is considered protected from further development, such as Town of Brookhaven-dedicated parkland, land with conservation easements, or land from which development rights have been transferred. The term “Quasi-protected” indicates land “safe for the moment” *but without statutory protection*, such as properties belonging to the School District, religious groups, or private foundations not bound by permanent preservation covenants and conservation easements.

Listings of **Protected and Quasi-Protected Places, Ownership and Nature of Protection**, generated by the Working Group, are presented in Appendix A. The properties in these lists correspond to those shown graphically in the *Protected and Quasi-Protected Places Maps*. The properties are grouped into categories and within each category by tax map number. The size of each property is noted along with a brief description of the site and/or the type of protection it enjoys. Note that since properties fall under more than one category, they may be listed more than once. Collectively, the lists contain more than 1,900 acres and 300 parcels of land. The lists include traditional village, town, county, and state park properties, wellhead sites owned by the Suffolk County Water Authority, National Grid and LIPA rights-of-way, recharge basins, cemeteries, bathing and homeowners association properties, state-owned or regulated wetlands, golf courses, and more. The lists are placed in an Appendix because of their length.

## Observations

The following is a summary of observations concerning distribution of open space as shown on the four *Protected and Quasi-Protected Places Maps* and in the series of tables in Appendix A.

The pre-World War II incorporation of both Old Field and Poquott as villages effectively removed them from the Town of Brookhaven’s subsequent acquisition of land in various forms, ranging from recharge basins to parks or preserves. Although the villages were eligible for State or County funds to assist in the purchase of open space, they chose not to pursue these options.

Early in the history of the Village, Old Field residents legislated 2-acre zoning as a means of maintaining its “rural” character despite the pressures from development in this desirable area with significant waterfront and large properties. In the 1960s, the Village and its residents were active in helping to save Flax Pond from being developed into a marina with condominiums. As a result the 146-acre Flax Pond estuary with its rare maritime forest was preserved. This preserve and the Childs Mansion on Flax Pond, the Sunwood Estate and its two adjoining residences are held by the University and/or State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Except for Sunwood (which is the University President’s residence) these are accessible to varying degrees for some public use. At Flax Pond there is a marine laboratory facility that is used by the University and, with funds secured by State Assemblyman Steve Englebright, the Childs Mansion was restored in the late 1990’s for use by the University and, with permission, by the community. The Friends of Flax Pond was formed recently and has been very active in protecting Flax Pond through advocacy, education, and research projects that engage the public, especially youth.

Old Field’s other publicly preserved and accessible lands include the Light House and Old Field Point, Whitehall Beach and right-of-way, two miles of barrier beach, the Kaltenborn Common, a few slivers of property along Old Field Road and Conscience Bay and approximately 20 acres of woods along Crane Neck Road. There are currently four large tracts of privately owned, undeveloped land in Old Field without any known conservation protection.

The Village of Poquott has three parks (California, Mayors, and Trustees), and three beaches (California, Walnut, and Van Brunt Manor), all of which are for the use of residents and their guests. The three parks include playgrounds, a ball field, tennis courts, community garden, and a greenhouse. The beaches in Poquott provide access to its waterfront on both Setauket Harbor and Port Jefferson Harbor.

Poquott also is the site of the recently created Stephen D. Matthews Nature Preserve, which is in fact not public land, but owned by National Grid as part of the Port Jefferson generating plant property. The Preserve is covered with a conservation easement held by the Three Village Community Trust bestowing perpetual preservation and allowing limited public access with permission.

In addition, there are several bathing associations in both Poquott and Old Field, as well as in nearly every shoreline subdivision within the unincorporated hamlets but primarily on Strong's Neck and along West Meadow Creek. These confer rights to the use of private beaches limited to nearby property owners and their guests. Taken together, the Villages, particularly Poquott, and some shoreline neighborhoods in the unincorporated areas provide passive and active recreational access to the natural environment within their borders. While these properties are not accessible to the larger Three Village community, they do provide important recreational, scenic and open space values, and serve to reduce pressure on the openly accessible Town beaches within the Three Villages. They also provide important constituencies and locations to mitigate problems caused by storm water runoff where it interfaces with sensitive coastal habitats.

Non-incorporated portions of the Three Village area acquired significant and well-distributed public holdings through actions of the Town, County and State, as well as private philanthropy and local initiatives. Some of these holdings are in the form of several community parks created by large-scale developers as part of the subdivision process. Other holdings include two areas designated by the Town of Brookhaven as regional recreational parks, several public school grounds open for at least limited public after-hours recreational use, soccer fields on land made available by Stony Brook University, West Meadow Beach and Preserve, the new Greenway Trail, a new 28.3 acre State parkland along Rt. 25A purchased with special "Northville Oil Spill" funding, the Frank Melville Memorial Park, the Avalon Park and Preserve and The Nature Conservancy woods, the large Laurel Ridge Setauket Woods preserve, the large South Setauket Woods County preserve, and lands controlled by the Ward Melville Heritage Organization on West Meadow Creek, just to give a partial listing. From a conservation viewpoint, the unincorporated portions of the Three Village Central School District also benefit from the presence of nearly 200 acres of Town-owned, fenced, and frequently well-vegetated recharge basins. These are distributed across the landscape and make good refuges for birds and small mammals. Most of these recharge basins are under the jurisdiction of the Town of Brookhaven Highway Department. There is at present no management plan embodying conservation principles and the basins are vulnerable clearing of any or all re-vegetation acquired since they were created,

## **Problems and Opportunities**

Over the course of several meetings, the Working Group identified specific problems or issues of concern to the community. The Group also identified unrealized opportunities to improve conservation and conservation-minded development efforts. A synopsis of these collective insights is included here to provide a practical as well as conceptual framework for the actions and strategies proposed later in this report

### **Problems**

**A long-standing communications gap between the University and the Three Village community** is the first of four major sets of problems. It was described as a serious issue in the *1997 Hamlet Study*, and, regrettably, continues to this day. A 1996 survey of residents found 34% of respondents dissatisfied with the University's community relations. (Source: *1997 Three Village Hamlet Study*, p 54). The Working Group echoed these sentiments over a decade later. The lack of dialogue between the University and the Three Village community about the

direction, nature, and intensity of future University development is felt to be a major obstacle to effective community land-use planning and conservation efforts.

The Three Village population of 41,521 (2008 estimate) is about 8.5 percent of the town's estimated population of 491,035; a percentage slightly higher than that of a decade ago (8.4 percent). As a percentage of the local population, resident students enrolled in Stony Brook University now make up a larger share of the Three Village population; up from 17.6 percent in 1997 to 21.1 percent in 2008. This statistic does not take into account the approximately 2,200 University faculty<sup>2</sup> members and other University employees who may or may not live in the area. A significant number of students rely on rental housing within the community. In 2009, the enrollment of the combined East and West campuses at Stony Brook was 24,215.<sup>3</sup>

In the coming years, the continued growth of the University and the Medical Center is likely to force a final build-out of the remaining available land within the Three Village area. Continued growth is likely to manifest itself through intensified use of existing commercially zoned properties, added pressure to subdivide residential lots into smaller parcels and to construct multifamily houses. All these factors can easily lead to densities beyond the carrying capacity of present green and man-made infrastructure.

The University poses a major challenge to conservation efforts in the Three Villages. The University campus and related holdings in the Three Villages extends over 1,300 acres and encompasses eleven colleges and schools, a Medical Center, a State Veterans Home, and business development centers<sup>4</sup>. The campus comprises a little more than 10 percent of the total land in the Three Village area and all of it is off the tax rolls. Moreover, campus construction and land use is not subject to Town or County zoning laws, site plan reviews, and the like. Nevertheless, the University's role in shaping the economic, cultural and social character of the Three Village area is highly significant. In fact, the University's economic reach is regional. It is the largest single-site employer in Suffolk County and its academic reputation extends beyond the State and the Nation into the international realm.

In the absence of information to the contrary, the Working Group has assumed continued expansion of enrollment and facilities on the University campus. This is a source of both concern and frustration because of an absence of cooperation between the University and the community in planning for our common future. Many decisions about campus infrastructure, particularly construction projects that will have a significant impact on the transportation network and surrounding residential neighborhoods, have been made in the absence of a real dialogue with the larger community. A few examples of the projects of concern include: plans for a hotel/convention center, clearing of sensitive woodland habitat, placing new dormitories very close to established community residences with inadequate or no buffering boundaries provided, and continuing uncertainties about the use and maintenance of the Flax Pond marine research facilities. Continued growth has caused and will continue to cause major additions or alterations to traffic flow to and from the campus. Moreover, the University does not seem to have a master land use plan to guide either its future building or its management of environmental impacts both within and outside of the campus.

Concerns about the University's expansion plans also extend beyond campus-based construction and infrastructure into the broader social issues of housing, the supporting transportation infrastructure, and fire/EMS protection to name just three. There is a general perception that University and community housing needs are not being met legitimately with the evidence being that unsafe and illegal apartments continue to proliferate within the surrounding community. Additionally, the expansion of the University seems to have taken

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<sup>2</sup> Stony Brook University Fast Facts at <http://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/fastfacts/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://stonybrook.edu/offires/enrollment/TotalEnrollment.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> common knowledge and Stony Brook University Fast Facts at <http://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/fastfacts/>

place without an adequate review of the economic and environmental viability of assuming that the car will be the primary means of transport to, from, and on campus. Portions of the road network within the area experience heavy congestion, speeding and a high rate of serious accidents: problems that will only worsen with vehicles added by continued University expansion without designing for other transportation modalities.

**The inadequacy of governmental regulatory controls over development** is the second area of concern. Not surprisingly, there are gaps between the application of regulations and their intended effects. There are indications that the overall *Brookhaven 2030* master plan will begin to address some of these issues, but past performance has often fallen short of the stated goals of Town master plans. The Working Group has identified several instances where regulations are either non-existent or insufficient in scope or detail to address issues of concern. These include the following, in no particular order of priority:

- A scatter-shot approach to environmental protection; the insufficiency of existing drainage facilities to retain and filter storm water; the continued pollution of the area's many bays, inlets, and coastal salt marshes from upland land uses; the ongoing threats to ground and surface water quality; and the ineffective stewardship of essential food and shelter habitat for native species of animals and plants;
- The lack of guidelines for commercial site planning, architectural design and signage that are more in keeping with the predominant character of the community, particularly for new construction and major projects;
- The lack of strong incentives for developers to concentrate new residential and commercial development in and around existing commercial centers;
- The need for improved streetscape design, including night-sky lighting, tasteful signage, reduced visual clutter, enhanced landscaping and safe, attractive pedestrian walkways and bicycle paths.
- Inadequate incentives (and planning tools) for developers to engage in energy-efficient and cost-effective re-use and re-vitalization of existing strip commercial centers into more attractive components of the landscape.
- Insufficient attention and tools to insure preservation of oversized lots through tax incentives or the transfer of development rights (TDR) to prevent their sub-division into smaller building lots.
- Inadequate restrictions against building on steep hillsides, resulting in erosion, destructive and dangerous driveways and parking areas, etc.
- Destruction of the unique glacial topography of the community.
- The low priority given to preserving trees during and after construction which can result in clear-cutting by developers or individual property owners.

These and similar issues are symptomatic of the sometimes serious disconnect between the overall goals of Town Planning, Environment, and Land Management (PELM) Department as expressed in most iterations of the Town's comprehensive land use plan, and the individual development plan approvals issued by the Town's Planning Board, and the variances awarded by the Board of Zoning Appeals. The fault may be with either the interpretation of the codes by these Boards or with the codes themselves that are not consistent with the master plans.

**General trends and common perceptions (or misperceptions)** make up the third problem area. As the population grows, and property taxes increase, pressure to subdivide large estates or above-standard-sized lots within the area will continue. These incremental actions are seen as a potential threat to the overall character of the Three Village community, particularly near the water. As noted earlier, there are few economic or tax incentives (other than conservation

easements) to encourage or support property owners interested in keeping intact land holdings in excess of the minimum zoned lot size. For example, there are no provisions for allowing large homes on estates to be converted into condominiums as a way of preserving the integrity of the property. Nor are there easy mechanisms for transferring either septic credits or development rights off these properties, many of which are located at a distance from commercial and transportation hubs, and re-using these rights on sites more suited to higher density to meet current and future housing needs. Addressing these issues will require stronger legislation and more political will at the Town and Village levels of government. (Note: much of the waterfront in the Study Area is within the incorporated Villages of Old Field, Poquott, and Head of the Harbor.) In addition, if the Villages wish to transfer development rights or credits from their jurisdictions into the Town, they will need to engage the Town in a dialogue.

Other problems have to do with an incomplete public understanding of how individual decisions about land use can impact the larger ecosystem. For example:

- The landscaping trend toward extensive lawns and in-ground irrigation, which removes indigenous native habitat and stresses the public water supply delivery system.
- Money with which to finance conservation and planning projects. The current economic downturn that began in 2008 has sharpened competition for government funds even as those sources of money have declined.
- Coupled with this is an increasing awareness of the inadequacy of inter-municipal coordination, particularly where jurisdictions and problem boundaries overlap.
- The Town's comprehensive planning process has thrown light on the difficulty of meeting competing needs such as affordable housing, economic development and tax revenues, while avoiding increased environmental degradation.
- Finally, there are concerns that conservation of small parcels integral to a specific area might be overlooked in the pursuit of large sites with regional impacts.

**How to translate a clear and deep community identity into effective political action and leverage** is the fourth major problem. The Three Village area struggles with a unique governance problem: The diverse history and mosaic of the Three Villages is at once both our greatest strength and our greatest weakness as we seek to promote conservation-minded development plans. We lack a single *local* governing body to take the lead in evaluating potential actions or serve as catalyst for particular agreements. Without a single legislative body to integrate the many perspectives that must be aligned for effective action, any individual or corporate proponent for conservation or development must engage a myriad of disparate stakeholders. Where the average city, town, or village might require five to ten years to achieve a complex conservation programs, the unconnected leadership groups in the Three Village area make such plans inherently more daunting to achieve. It doesn't matter how desirable a proposed project or idea may be, the procedural obstacles to implementation can be a strong disincentive to actual action.

We must also not forget that the Three Villages are competing with other areas for the attention of the best developers and the most effective conservation investment organizations or agencies, public or private. There are many other attractive population centers where development pressures have created favorable market opportunities; and, thus, there are many other important ecosystems on Long Island with sensitive resources and mounting stresses.

In spite of the numerous governmental and quasi-governmental entities with differing jurisdictions in the area, the community has benefited from strong political and civic leadership and support by its representatives at the town, county, and state levels. But it is understood that resolution of some of the problems identified here will require coordinated cooperation within the larger community, including business property owners and developers.

The inherent challenge facing the Three Village area (and the TVCT) is how to advance from a conceptual dialogue about the importance and relevance of conservation and move on to a series of action-oriented decisions and then to implementation of the decisions. There is a

clear recognition within the Working Group that government will not be the source of all future funds and programs geared toward conservation, protecting the environment, historic preservation, and other issues of concern, especially housing. There is also a strong belief that unless the University works more cooperatively with the surrounding community, it has the potential to undermine the combined efforts of private and public sector conservation and planning actions, *to the detriment of all*.

## **Opportunities**

It is important to put the “problems” noted above in proper perspective. The Three Village area contains some of the oldest settlements and structures within the Town of Brookhaven. At one point in its history, Setauket was the seat of colonial town government as well as a thriving economic center in its own right. These historical elements are considered integral to the charm and quality of life in this largely mature suburban community where about ten percent of the land area is now considered available for new development. The Three Village area possesses a strong community identity and civic ethos. The composition and size of the Working Group is evidence of the degree and extent of community commitment, as well as the strength and clarity of community vision. Collectively there is a strong awareness of the problems and potential solutions.

There is also a great deal of receptivity to seeking innovative solutions. There are business people, organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, willing to work with the community to facilitate more efficient and compatible development projects. The Town’s update of the *1996 Comprehensive Plan* offers opportunities to push for new or modified regulations to allow the community and its partners to encourage better decisions. For several decades the Three Village community has sought to accommodate well-planned growth and preserve viable economic activity in its business areas, so these are not new attitudes.

New strategies, partnerships, and solutions will be needed if the Three Village community is to retain its character and quality of life. The Working Group represented engaged citizens with strong and effective connections in their respective spheres of influence. Some already enjoy working relationships with various departments within the Town. There seems to be agreement that these relationships can be improved on. Finally, there is a growing sense that, with some modifications, there may be untapped potential for improved presentation of community interests vis-à-vis the Town and other governmental levels, through the unified efforts of the Working Group and the TVCT.

Feedback received from elected officials who contributed to this collaborative planning effort often consisted of requests for specific recommendations. The role of legislators in implementing the *CS 2030* will be important. But, there may be limits to which the recommended actions of the *CS 2030* will be translatable into legislation. Private land conservation (as practiced by land trusts throughout the United States) essentially is a strong, private sector sphere of action. The Three Village community wishes to foster a broad range of private conservation actions on a parallel track to government acquisition and maintenance of public land. Further, the community believes that a consistent and cooperative working relationship with the University is an essential component of an effective conservation and planning process to achieve better land use, transportation and economic development plans – and the community is willing to put the time and effort into such a dialogue.

## **Stony Brook University Properties**

The Stony Brook University Campus, Medical Center, State Veterans Home, and former Flowerfield Properties together total approximately 1,300 acres, of which nearly one-third is

undeveloped forested land. As of 2009, only the Ashley Schiff Preserve (approx 26 acres) has been given the designation of a “nature preserve” by President Shirley Strom Kenney, but it does not yet have official State Parks protected status. The University Administration under Dr. Kenney (now retired) had recently indicated a willingness to accept a legally protected status, but this is again uncertain after the 2009 change of presidents. Some peripheral sections (e.g. some 10+ acres of buffering land along the south side of South Drive, running west of Nicholls Rd.) will probably never be developed, nor will a smaller segment between the LIRR and Rte. 25A at the northwest corner of the main campus, but large and environmentally significant sections are currently vulnerable to development. We are unaware of any overall master plan for the University that gives proper consideration to preservation of land contours, natural stormwater drainage and dissipation, avoidance of large hard, impermeable surface parking lots, and the like.

For many years, members of both the University and the surrounding community have discussed preserving a “greenbelt” of protected natural areas and trails to connect to the Setauket-Port Jefferson Greenway Trail to the east, continue through the main campus and the “Flowerfield” (a.k.a. Gyrodyne) holdings to the west, and, then connect to Stony Brook Harbor through County, Town, and privately preserved land in Head of the Harbor. A designated, but to-date legally unprotected, buffer of 150-200 ft depth has been established on the Flowerfield Campus along more than 3000 ft of the west side of Stony Brook Road (more than 10 acres total). An additional incentive to preserve forested land may come from the University’s commitment to sequester or reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in coming years by preserving woodlands, but to date this option does not seem to have gained traction at the senior administrative level. (Note: there is one DEC-listed protected fresh-water wetland on the West campus, west of Nicholls Road and one on the East campus, just east of Nicholls Road.)

Although not in the study area, but immediately adjacent to it, is property that still belongs to the Gyrodyne Corporation. This covers about 76 acres that include a significant (70% plus) park-like undeveloped area along the southerly side of NYS Rte 25A and a complex of small industrial/commercial buildings mostly along the LIRR tracks and Moriches Road. Currently posted “For Sale or Land Lease”, the land has attracted several development proposals, usually for a luxury retirement community. Protective covenants may require significant buffers along NYS Rte 25A, but the development plans have usually included buffers of only about 100 feet (a standard distance that cannot be considered “significant”). This property is the gateway to the Three Village area. The farmland property to the north of NYS Rte 25A is protected by the Suffolk County Farmland protection program.

## **Conservation Opportunities**

Within the Three Village area, there are relatively few remaining large tracts that are undeveloped. One of the last of these, the 28-acre “Diocese” property stretching along the north side of Rt. 25A in Setauket, has been unexpectedly saved during the course of this study (see below). A few large estates (well in excess of the prevailing 2-acre zoning) exist in the incorporated villages of Old Field and that portion of Head of the Harbor included in the TVCSD study area, and these are always vulnerable to subdivision, unless creative ways to work with current owners are found by the Village governments.

The hard facts are that outside of Old Field and Head of the Harbor, there may never be another large tract that can be successfully preserved. What, then, can be the target for any further conservation of remaining open space? Within most of the Three Village area settled prior to the developments by Levitt and other large scale builders, many houses exist on larger plots than called for by current zoning. These give much of the prevailing feeling of openness to the community, but are vulnerable to subdivision. Brookhaven Town’s Board of Zoning Appeals

(BZA) has had a long-standing record of allowing relaxations down to 50% of required lot size in granting divisions of oversized lots into two or more parcels. Continuance of this practice will destroy much of the present character of the older parts of the community. The BZA's practices must come closer to the intent of the law (small allowed adjustments in required lot size to prevent true hardships). The Town can provide needed relief for owners of larger lots by instituting a flexible program for transfer of both development rights and sewage discharge rights. This must be done *soon*, as the final build-out on open space in the Three Villages, coupled with ever-higher school taxes, begins to place inexorable pressures on large-lot owners to subdivide their property.

The Working Group agreed that listing specific private properties as desired conservation targets could be perceived by property owners as a threat. However, defining the eligibility criteria to qualify would allow property owners to explore conservation as an option. Then, before desirable properties come to market, the Trust or other organizations could work with the owners to effect full or partial preservation or conservation through either public or private means, as an alternative to full build-out of the property. Also, an on-going effort should be undertaken to inform property owners of potential tax reductions and other benefits available to them from conservation easements, bargain sales and other measures leading to full or partial protection.

Many successful conservation projects allow for some development to occur on-site while also preserving those aspects of the property that have conservation value. Partial development through clustering of development in combination with conservation easements may be a particularly attractive option for potentially sub-dividable private properties. The Villages of Old Field and Poquott, in particular, have opportunities for creative applications of private conservation programs. While these projects typically involve a mix of private and public funds, they can also be achieved strictly through private means in coordination with a land trust.

Although there was an underlying agreement not to name specific properties as targets for conservation, it soon became obvious that several properties within the Three Village area have often been publically discussed and documented as worthy of greater protection than they now have:

- The land bordering Rt. 25A from roughly Bennett's Road to Ridgeway Avenue at present has limited development, and forms a highly desirable break in the outmoded strip zoning and succession of shopping centers bordering Rt. 25A from Nicholls Road through East Setauket to Shore Road. Further protection is needed for:
  - The residentially zoned (but commercially used) parcel at the head of the Greenway Trail, on the south side of NYS Rte 25A immediately west of the East Setauket Post Office;
  - The buffer along the south side of Rt. 25A currently maintained by Renaissance Technology and by Stafford Associates
- A desirable addition to Percy Raynor Park (11 acres, between Rt.347 and the Park, commercially zoned and for sale)
- The Damianos Realty property at the northeast corner of Pond Path and NYS Rte 347 (about 10 acres) and listed on a Suffolk County acquisitions list.

The 28-acre parcel on NYS Rte 25A, owned for several decades by the Rockville Center Diocese of the Catholic Church, has been the subject of public interest as a potential site for public enjoyment and open space. It would have been on this list as it has been on several earlier lists, including both the New York State's 2006 and 2009 Open Space Plans. At a December 2009 press conference, however, the NYS DEC announced that an agreement had been reached with the Diocese for the State to acquire this important property in the Conscience Bay watershed. Now named Patriots Hollow, it is NYS DEC first and only State Forest

on Long Island Protection will help preserve the woodland and protect water quality as well as forming a connective link between the preserved Thompson-Detmer Farm to the west and a series of public and quasi-public properties to the east that include the Main Street School grounds, the Emma S. Clark Library, the Setauket Village Green, the Setauket Neighborhood House, and Patriots' Rock properties, and the Frank Melville Memorial Park including the upper and lower Mill Pond, and the Three Village Garden Club Sanctuary. This is an example of how community residents and government worked together consistently and over several years to achieve a shared goal. This would not have happened without the personal commitment of both private individuals and dedicated public officials.

Additionally, some commercial properties, such as the three major shopping centers on NYS Route 25A, are widely regarded as having the potential to be re-developed in the future. Because of their visual prominence and economic roles in the community, these properties offer unique opportunities to re-shape the streetscape in ways that could further enhance the area's scenic, cultural, and historical character. For example, the relocation of parking spaces and the introduction of sidewalks, bike racks, and outdoor seating areas might take advantage of scenic vistas of adjoining preserved properties. The addition of housing through the transfer of development rights (e.g., apartments over stores) would make a vibrant downtown at this location.

There are unique places within the Three Village area that merit a more intense or focused approach to conservation. The following are iconic village centers:

- The Setauket Green, with its two bordering historic churches, the Emma Clark Library, the nearby Patriot's Rock in a two-acre woodland, and the Setauket Post Office adjacent to the Setauket Pond and Frank Melville Memorial Park and the Setauket Neighborhood House, a community meeting and gathering center, form the center to the Old Setauket Historic District.
- The Stony Brook Village Center for Old Stony Brook designed by Richard Haviland Smythe and constructed by Ward Melville in the early 1940s.
- The community's shoreline and harbor vistas, and its tree-lined streets and woodlands, none of which are currently offered more than cursory protection.

The Town of Brookhaven, while maintaining our local road system, has no regular program for maintenance or replanting of damaged street trees, and wholly inadequate limits on clear-cutting of forested areas. To cite two streets that may soon be affected by this lack:

- The Strong's Neck Civic Association identified Maple Road as a scenic streetscape because of the mature maple trees that line it.
- View Road (running from Main Street toward Setauket Harbor) was originally the long linden-tree lined driveway to an estate. This was preserved by the developer in the 1960s and it still is a beautiful tree-lined street that is not the standard wide subdivision road called for in Town standards.

Both these streets face an uncertain future, as the trees that line them are reaching their age limit. Within another decade, street trees planted in the construction boom of the 1960s and 1970s in the Strathmore communities and other large-scale developments will begin to suffer losses and a means of replacement will have to be found.

In the Village of Old Field, many of the trees planted along Old Field Road in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have reached the end of their lifespan.

Finally, on a University campus currently covering more than twelve hundred acres within the Three Village community, there is no master *land use* plan that includes sites the University sees as having any conservation value. If anything, there has been recent indifference, if not

hostility, to suggestions of preserving a greenbelt trail through portions of the campus, and to an earlier intent to give lasting protection to the one area, the “Ashley Schiff Preserve” (a bit over 2 percent of the total campus area), specifically set aside for conservation by administrative action taken over three decades ago. The NYS DEC has unilaterally given protected wetland designation to two small freshwater ponds on the campus, but even this action was apparently accepted by the administration with some reluctance. There are significant benefits which the University could realize from a better dialogue about conservation issues on its own property.

## **Seven Strategies for Conservation Action**

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The Working Group is aware that to be truly effective this report must be embraced by a growing number of citizens who are willing to work to achieve its goals. In addition to committed volunteers, implementation of the *CS 2030* by the TVCT will require the cooperation of property owners and businesses and the strategic use of partnerships between public and private organizations, spanning a wide range of civic, governmental, business, environmental, social, historical, and educational interests. The services of professional specialists will sometimes also be required, and for that money will be needed. Fund raising and the solicitation of in-kind gifts and *pro bono* services are vital to the success of any conservation program.

The many actions recommended and discussed during the Working Group meetings may be summarized and categorized under seven headings. These seven categories are defined and described in a general way below, and then in the next section they are used as the headings under which to present the specific recommendations for action in pursuit of each of the four conservation goals. The seven strategies are:

1. Gathering and Analyzing Information
2. Winning Citizen Support
3. Forming Coalitions and Partnerships
4. Enlisting Property Owners
5. Working with Government
6. Raising Contributions
7. Employing Professional Help

### **Gathering and Analyzing Information**

For volunteer citizen groups to reach a consensus on goals and strategies and to have credibility with those they seek to influence, it is essential that they have good information to support their positions. The inventory of **undeveloped** land parcels in the Three Village area is an example of the kind of information that is needed; the inventory of historic properties in the *1997 Hamlet Study* is another. Comparable inventories of cultural and recreational assets and of housing, local business and employment opportunities would help to round out citizens' understanding of the forces tending to undermine or to support the community's quality of life. The collection, analysis and updating of community data should be an ongoing activity of the TVCT and allied groups.

Even in the area of natural resources information, much remains to be done. A better understanding of the status and trends of the various ecosystems in our region will be helpful to ongoing conservation and stewardship. For example, wetland acreage can be tracked fairly easily, as can forest lands. Trends of other ecosystem services, such as nutrient runoff assimilation or estuarine nurseries, are less visible because the degradation takes place slowly and incrementally, thus we are not yet able to make equally compelling cases for conservation

actions. For that reason, we should monitor ongoing scientific research and its applicability to policy, planning, and further actions.

### **Winning Citizen Support**

Informed citizens will be better stewards of valued community assets. With good information in hand, we can build a constituency of informed and motivated citizens who understand the present condition of valued community assets, see that they are endangered, and have an idea of what needs to be done to improve their condition and bring them back to sustainability and balance with other components of the community

Having taken the lead through the *CS 2030* project thus far, we would expect the TVCT to continue the Working Group and issue regular status reports on the *CS 2030* implementation process. The Working Group's mission might become serving as a clearinghouse for information that needs to be brought to the wider community.

There are several education and outreach programs run by government and non-profit organizations. These efforts should be supported and coordinated with the aim of promoting citizen understanding and discussion of issues and concerns of the Three Village area.

Many members of the community may still need to understand that land preservation which takes a property "off the tax roles" or may reduce its tax rate, can actually stabilize or reduce future tax increases that would otherwise have been raised to meet the need for more roads and road maintenance, for adding teachers and classrooms to the schools, for providing more fire, emergency, and police protections, and for extending gas, water, and power infrastructure, etc.

### **Forming Coalitions and Partnerships**

Due to the inherent economic limitations of government and the complexity of overlapping jurisdictions within the Three Villages, effective planning and conservation will require the efforts of many individuals and organizations working as partners. The Working Group would like to see the TVCT exert its influence to assemble a forum where ideas and approaches to resolving issues of community concern can be discussed regularly, and from which improved representation of the Three Village area at the Town level can be exercised. The community forum could facilitate pooling of resources among local not-for-profit organizations, non-governmental organizations, and institutions to work toward conservation goals.

For the purposes of the *CS 2030*, there are two categories of partners: private and public. Private partners are defined here as including organizations, for-profit as well as non-profit with interests in civic, business, environmental, social and historical issues. Part of the process of creating the *CS 2030* was identifying the specific roles that non-profit and for-profit organizations could play in facilitating economic and/or political partnerships to accomplish conservation goals. Our dialogue revealed the myriad strengths and resources of various organizations, whether public or private. The challenge will be leveraging those respective strengths to make constructive conservation projects happen quickly and effectively.

### **Enlisting Property Owners**

The active engagement and cooperation of residents and businesses will be necessary to achieve many of the conservation targets. All property owners would benefit from a better understanding of the ways in which the TVCT and other entities can help private property owners conserve key properties. Local governments can play a role in encouraging the use of tax incentives for conservation, particularly when it is proposed to subdivide or develop a piece of property. Property owners must have the freedom to embrace or reject the concept of community-based conservation, but their decision should be grounded in fact, rather than ignorance or misunderstanding of the alternatives

## Working with Government

Public partners are defined as all government and public institutions. These include State, County, Town, and Village levels of government, as well as school, fire, library and other public service districts. The University is included in this category. There is no one public agency with overriding responsibilities throughout the Three Village area. The patchwork of jurisdictions is, in itself, one of the reasons some of the area's problems are difficult to solve.

The following are some of the aims to be sought in working with government and other public institutions:

- Determine what actions can be taken legally, obtaining required authorizations for actions from the appropriate governmental agencies, getting favorable administrative decisions or even legislation to enable the action to go forward.
- Leverage efforts of government and public institutions such as the University, the School District, and the Fire Districts, on issues of common concern.
- Improve understanding of conservation at all levels of government, Village, Town, County, and State.
- Advocate better training of appointed officials on Planning, Zoning and other advisory boards and committees
- Improve enforcement of existing legislation.

Many new and modified policies, laws, and procedures developed in other jurisdictions are worth investigating. The challenge or difficulty faced by the Three Village area is that it represents a small part of the Town. It is unreasonable to expect the Town to devise a separate set of policies, laws, and procedures unique to the Three Villages. As an almost fully developed part of Brookhaven, however, the Three Village area now faces what other parts of the Town will soon face. The Town should be considering new legislative tools for the near future in all of Brookhaven.

For that reason, some of the suggested conservation tools described here could have a broader, town-wide benefit. For instance, improved enforcement at the town level would discourage violations of existing legislation. The same is true for the Villages, which might also benefit from more stringent and enforceable legislation. Continued training of well-qualified officials appointed to Planning, Zoning and other advisory boards or committees will improve decisions at the Town and Village level. However, a well-defined shared community vision with goals and action strategies to guide members of the community could assist the Town improve both enforcement efforts of existing laws and future public policy decisions with the enactment of better land use codes. The nature and consequences of such an ad hoc effort needs to be explored further.

With regard to tailoring or using specific legislation to facilitate conservation within the Three Village area, there is a strong interest in exploring whether the transfer of development rights within the Three Village area might be arranged to facilitate the conservation of some properties while allowing other properties to absorb additional development. For this to work, legal designations of specific sending and receiving areas, as well as transfer ratios, recording and banking methodologies are needed. Additionally, the program might explore the transfer of septic credits separately from other development rights.

Any local program involving transfer of development rights would almost certainly need to affirm the *no-net-loss*, or gain, or reduction principles that underlie density trading programs associated with natural resources. A *no-net-loss* policy or requirement may entail implementation of mitigation programs or trading of assets to offset impacts. The NYS DEC has

done this informally within the State. A Three Village mitigation program would need formal recognition by the Town or State to ensure that trading resulted in, at least, no increase in overall density *within* the school district.

### **Raising Contributions**

Find gifts and donations to enable projects to go forward by identifying stakeholders who are most likely to benefit from the action and asking them to buy in applying for grants, asking government to contribute under one or another program.

Acquisition of interests in property through the purchase and *retirement* of development rights is a technique that has been used successfully by government and not-for-profit organizations to restrict or limit development on vacant and developed properties. The availability of money for this purpose fluctuates with the overall economy as well as public opinion. A transfer of development rights, in which the rights are purchased, is a potential source of revenue for a revolving conservation fund. The 2008-2010 economic downturn, for example, has forced a shift away from public funding at the very time when properties can be obtained at reduced prices. As property values increase during the recovery and competition for public money increases, private sources may need to be cultivated.<sup>5</sup>

Acquisition of property or interest in property is not the only conservation tool that requires funding, though usually the one that requires substantial upfront investment. There are many ways in which private property owners, individuals, and non-governmental agencies can become good stewards and take an active part in conservation efforts. For example, habitat restoration, backyard habitats, rain gardens, to name a few. Funding is needed for such activities, including programs that provide information and technical assistance to people who wish to carry out such projects on their own properties.

### **Employing Professional Help**

For many tasks the willing hands of volunteers are not enough. Scientific studies, engineering, architects, planning consultants, and construction contractors need to be brought in. Research and educational institutions such as SUNY and Cornell Cooperative Extension may be called upon to assist in planning and outreach.

Keeping in mind these seven general strategies, we now turn to look at specific actions that should be taken in order to move the Three Village community in the direction of the four conservation sub-goals.

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<sup>5</sup> In the Three Village area much of the properties that are likely to qualify for public acquisition funds have been acquired. A majority of perceived 'open space' that is of local significance (rather than regional) may require other conservation approaches to protect them from intensification of development. Such alternative methods may include private conservation measures (e.g., private acquisition or conservation easements) with private funding or donation, private landscaping practices, or a variety of purchase of development rights options (e.g., TDRs).

# Conservation Strategies Applied to the Four Sub-goals

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The general goal of the conservation strategies is to protect from harm those natural and cultural resources that are integral to the overall character and quality of life in the Three Village community. This goal can be broken down into different but interrelated sub-goals:

1. Protecting the natural environment
2. Preserving the existing built environment, especially the historical, while guiding new development
3. Maintaining a balanced and prosperous local economy
4. Maintaining and enhancing cultural and recreational opportunities

A strategic plan can only lay out a tentative outline of steps, with the warning to monitor the results at each step and make adjustments as needed. Community organizations and individuals are encouraged to use these to formulate projects of their choosing. With that caveat, we outline how the goals might be accomplished in the following pages. The steps outlined will not necessarily be taken exactly in the order given. Two or more are likely to be going on at the same time, and in many instances it will be appropriate to revisit some steps and go over them again. In short, adapt plans as nature and human interactions evolve.

Working Group participants made suggestions during discussions each of the four subsets of goals. These were noted by the facilitator or recalled later when the Working Group went over this section line by line. Based upon that review, refinements and modifications have been incorporated into this section as much as possible. The suggestions are grouped by which sub-goal is addressed and by which of the seven general strategies is to be applied.

## 1. Protecting Natural Resources

### Objectives

- Add new areas as protected open space, and seek greater protection for quasi-protected areas through public and private means.
- Maintain ecological integrity of natural systems by conserving (and expanding) existing physical connections between components of the system.
- Protect the quantity and quality of the ground and surface waters.
- Protect environmentally sensitive wetland and coastal resources.
- Enhance existing food and shelter habitat for resident and migratory species of birds and fish, and prevent further loss of critical habitat.
- Prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species.
- Ensure that resource-dependent economic and recreational activities are environmentally sustainable and compatible.

### Actions

#### Gathering and Analyzing Information

Continue an annual update of the *Protected and Quasi-Protected Land Inventory* and Maps showing important and/or defining natural and man-made resources of the community.

Secure GIS database management services either through the Town or through private consulting services.

## Winning Citizen Support

Work with existing non-profit organizations and government agencies (such as the University, State Department of Environmental Conservation, the Long Island Sound Study, The Nature Conservancy, Suffolk County Water Authority, Long Island Pine Barrens Commission, etc.) to develop ongoing community outreach programs about how environmental resources can be protected by using the best scientific and technical land management practices. Examples of public information themes are:

- Promote “backyard habitats.” Replacing large lawn areas with meadows, old fields, and woods will increase the amount of food and shelter for migrating and resident birds and small animals
- Demonstrate how in-ground irrigation systems affect water pressure, pricing, and supply of public water.
- Show that certain lawn management and land-use practices can add pollutants to the groundwater.
- Advertise location and benefits of boat pump-out stations.

Enhance existing stewardship efforts by expanding community participation in the effort. For example:

- Hold annual community stewardship “work days” on specific properties, including those in public ownership, such as beaches, playing fields, and parks.
- Promote use of environmentally sound native plants and landscaping techniques (e.g., create backyard habitats, rain gardens, and the like).
- Promote the proper disposal of yard debris (e.g., leaves, grass clippings, branches) rather than dumping these into adjoining woodland, parkland, or other properties.

## Enlisting Property Owners

Develop a working dialogue with the University to protect and conserve ecologically significant habitat in its ownership.

Promote partnerships between entities both public and private to draft and implement stewardship plans for publicly or privately owned properties to preserve the conservation values of the property and benefit the community. For example: Stony Brook Forest (“Forsythe Meadow”) Nature Preserve (owned by Suffolk County), West Meadow Beach (owned by the Town of Brookhaven), and Patriots Hollow State Forest (formerly the Rockville Center Diocese property and now owned by the NYS DEC).

Work with adjacent property owners to achieve consensus on how to conserve key elements of their properties to everyone’s mutual benefit. Neighboring homeowners could create a “community forest” by cooperatively applying contiguous conservation easements on the wooded portions of their backyards.

## Working with Government

Use the land inventory to work with government agencies to identify valuable in-fillings and bridges between existing preserved spaces as well as to identify new acquisitions for their respective land acquisition programs.

Develop liaisons with state, county, town, village agencies to work with, monitor and promote government actions to:

- Improve management strategies for public land, particularly recharge basins and parks,
- Enforce best management practices during construction,

- Construct and improve storm water runoff retention and filtration facilities, and eliminate or reduce intensity of development on steep hillsides.
- Enforce existing codes prohibiting dumping of any (including yard debris) on Town or other public lands. Improve these codes as necessary.

Work with and encourage the Town of Brookhaven to develop a comprehensive natural resource management plan for the entire waterfront and its contributing watershed in coordination with the Town of Smithtown, the Villages of Port Jefferson, Poquott and Old Field, the University and the State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Explore using an expanded Harbor Management Plan (under the auspices of the State's *Local Waterfront Revitalization Program [LWRP]*) as the vehicle for doing this.

**Note:** Port Jefferson Harbor Complex has a Harbor Management Plan that has been adopted by the surrounding four jurisdictions (Town of Brookhaven and the villages of Poquott, Port Jefferson and Belle Terre). It is overseen by a Harbor Commission. However, the scope is limited to the harbor and shoreline. The Village of Port Jefferson is drafting a watershed management plan for Mill Creek which runs through the heart of the Village into the harbor. The Villages of Head of the Harbor and Nissequogue have a joint LWRP, enforced by a Joint Commission, for their portions of Stony Brook Harbor.

Work with the Town Highway Department to develop a management plan for the nearly 200 acres of Town recharge basins so that any necessary maintenance is carried out in a way that least disturbs the vegetation and viability of these as wildlife refuges for birds, turtles, frogs, and small mammals.

Work with all government levels to expand the range of political, legal and financial tools currently used to facilitate and achieve land conservation. For example:

- Explore an environmental mitigation measure using transfer of septic credits or transfer of development rights to allow existing commercial properties to include affordable housing.
- Work with the Town to explore potential TDR trading regions.

### Raising Contributions

Starting with the land inventory, identify the owners, surrounding neighbors and others who have a stake in how each property is used and call on them for private donations and volunteer work to help conserve the property. Seek public and private funds and/or matching grant.

### Employing Professional Help

Employ consultants to assist in design and implementation of environmental protection projects, such as: land and/or structure acquisitions, storm water remediation facilities, design studies, repair and renovation of historic or architecturally significant structures for re-use.

## 2. Managing the Built Environment

### **A Note on Housing:**

The Working Group did not take up the matter of housing in any detail, but it is an important component in the overall makeup, variety and culture of the Three Village community. The current housing mix is an interesting and fairly broad one in terms of size, cost, and age. Until the mid 1900s, the area was largely a mix of slowly declining farms, middle-income housing and a significant number of "country gentleman's estates" whose owners often had New York City residences for at least part of the year. There were also a significant number of cottage communities, used primarily, but not exclusively, as summer escapes for middle class city dwellers. In the 1960s, full scale suburbia arrived with the Levitt Corporation and smaller

developers, who built several large housing developments, mainly in the southern and eastern parts of the district. The arrival of the State University, beginning in 1961, brought many new residents (faculty and staff), and an increasing population of students, not all of whom were accommodated in campus dormitories. Throughout the period of greatest growth (the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) there was very strong local opposition to any form of apartment housing, and very little enthusiasm for cluster development, with the result that the former is nearly absent, and the latter is rare, existing mainly in the form of planned retirement communities with age restrictions on ownership. As a result, nearby communities of Smithtown, Lake Grove, and Port Jefferson-Port Jefferson Station supply far more apartment units, multi-family housing, and other lower cost housing than are available in the Three Villages.

Nevertheless, there is a fairly large remaining stock of smaller housing units, often on small lots, in portions of northern Stony Brook, Setauket, and Poquott. This is a valuable resource, unfortunately steadily decreasing in recent decades as residents build larger and larger houses and tear down or enlarge older cottages with additions.

The Town of Brookhaven currently has little legislation on the books to limit this process, other than relying on County limits on sanitary disposal. If the Three Village community is to retain its mix of incomes, occupations, and viable local businesses, the Town needs to follow the example of other Towns in limiting teardowns and ever-larger houses on small lots.

The University's junior faculty often finds housing prices to be unaffordably high throughout Long Island, but particularly in the northwest corner of Brookhaven. The University must find its own remedy for that, through rental subsidies, on-campus housing for junior faculty, or low cost loans.

A substantial number of graduate students, and some undergraduates, live off campus in legal or illegal rental apartments within houses, or by group rental of entire houses. These off-campus student residents are rarely cited by surrounding home owners as a problem, but there is a hidden overall impact on traffic, waste disposal, police, fire, water and power supply, recreational facilities, and other infrastructure that escapes the Town's control of the population density and carrying limits through its zoning of lot sizes and other means. The uncounted extent of this added student population also allows the University to avoid recognition and acknowledgement of the full impact upon community services on which it depends and from which it benefits.

### **Objectives for the Built Environment**

- Maintain existing scenic vistas, including streetscapes that define community character and natural features of community interest.
- Maintain archeological sites and existing historic buildings and sites of community value.

### **Actions**

#### Gathering and Analyzing Information

Refine existing criteria on which to base decisions on the acquisition, protection, and enhancement of these resources.

Update and expand existing inventories of structures of community interest and historic/cultural value.

#### Forming Coalitions and Partnerships

Support the efforts of the Three Village Historical Society, the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities, the Ward Melville Heritage Organization and others in their efforts to preserve social, archeological, historical, and cultural structures and locations in the Three Village area.

## Enlisting Property Owners

Mediate dialog between parties with different aesthetic preferences, particularly where new technologies may be perceived to be intrusive or offensive; e.g. solar panels, wind turbines, or cell towers, etc.

Engage the business community more fully in development and redevelopment issues as well as Conservation, Preservation and Stewardship opportunities. For example:

- Encourage constructive reuse of appropriate older and historic structures (stores, houses, mixed-use structure), rather than tearing down and replacing them.
- Work with Business Improvement Districts to improve lighting and streetscape features, including signage.
- Conduct seminars on tax advantages of conservation easements.
- Encourage local organizations, businesses, government and quasi-government service districts to adhere to historically appropriate and energy-efficient design using current best practices standards (e.g., Energy Star, LEEDS, etc).
- Advocate reduced dependency on inefficient energy use.

Promote development and redevelopment of commercial properties that is more compatible with the existing character of the Three Village area and to improve currently substandard and outmoded commercial facilities and structures.

Encourage businesses, property owners and all government agencies to use “dark sky” principles as a guide to street lighting. For example,

- Replace street, site, and building lights with energy efficient models;
- Reduce duplication and number of lighting fixtures (e.g. street and pole mounted fixtures within 100 feet of one another),
- Increase uniformity of street light fixture design.

## Working with Government

Provide the Town of Brookhaven with a Three Village Community Design and Landscape Manual for its planning and building departments to use in reviewing site plans.

Advocate more public investment in the reuse and revitalization of existing resources than in new construction on greenfields.

Modify the existing transportation network to make streets more walkable for pedestrians and safer for bicyclists. Employ “complete street” strategies where appropriate and feasible.

Use traffic-calming measures on main roads.

Design sidewalks, bike lanes and off-road paths to enhance use by shoppers as well as for recreational purposes.

Urge conservation-sensitive road improvements or rehabilitation to the following, but not limited to: Christian Ave, Old Town Road, NYS Rte 25A between Bennetts Road and the Museums, LIRR parking lot and Bennett’s Road intersection, Sheep Pasture Road (especially at the intersections of Bennetts Rd. and Pond Path), Main Street, Setauket

Work with government and the University to rethink growth in the context of increasing energy efficiency, alternative energy use, and reducing use of cars, etc.

Work with the Villages and the Town to discuss the possible advantages of developing a Transfer of Development Rights program tailored to the Three Village area.

### Employing Professional Help

Solicit input from professionals (architects, planners, engineers) in creating architectural, site layout and landscape design guidelines for commercial and multi-family projects within the Three Village area. Include builders, developers, and financiers.

Invite professionals familiar with renewable energy technologies (e.g. solar, geothermal, and wind) to explore and discuss a variety of concerns regarding application such as aesthetics, scenic, environmental, and noise, and to draft reasonable mitigation measures and siting guidelines.

## **3. Maintaining a Prosperous Local Economy**

### **Objectives**

Ensure an economically diverse and balanced community capable of providing the services needed to meet residents' daily needs and to support public service functions and governance, whether paid or volunteer, including, but not limited to, utilities, school, fire department, constable, and emergency medical services.

Ensure a constructive balance between the needs of the combined residential and business community with those of the University.

Ensure a sustainable revenue sources (e.g., tax base, use fees, other) of funding for maintaining local governments and quality public services (emergency services, schools, etc.).

### **Actions**

#### Gathering and Analyzing Information

Develop a Three Village website containing information about proposed regulatory and permitting actions within its boundaries.

#### Forming Coalitions and Partnerships

Facilitate proactive and constructive action at all levels of community and local government by continuing the monthly meetings of the Working Group.

Devise ways to leverage the resources and strengths of participating organizations and individuals.

#### Enlisting Property Owners

Allow for continued private ownership and/or management of conserved properties.

Support sustainable use of conserved properties; e.g., adaptive reuse of historic structures, public access to recreational uses, etc.

Work cooperatively with the Three Village Chamber of Commerce and the local business community to revitalize and strengthen existing small businesses and hamlet business centers.

### Employing Professional Help

Work with existing resource centers such as the Stony Brook University's Small Business Development Center to facilitate the efforts of small businesses to re-develop or expand in coordination with the community's conservation efforts.

## **4. Enhancing Cultural and Recreational Opportunities**

### **Objectives**

- Provide sufficient social, educational, cultural, and recreational opportunities to serve the needs of a culturally and economically diverse population.
- Maintain existing cultural values of the community while including new and evolving cultural aspects of the community.
- Expand diversity of educational offerings by age, types, venue, etc.
- Improve and increase passive and active recreational opportunities throughout the community, such as the new Greenway.

### **Actions**

#### Winning Citizen Support

Maximize use of existing resources through careful stewardship.

Seek to create more access to paths and trails (for walking and bicycling), e.g. off Belle Meade Road and other locations.

Explore the placement of off-road pedestrian paths and/or bicycle pathways to access parklands, recreational areas, school grounds, etc;

Promote community-supported agriculture and farm markets.

#### Forming Coalitions and Partnerships

Look into initiatives by other organizations, e.g. the Boys & Girls Club of Suffolk County to license and maintain playing fields.

#### Enlisting Property Owners

Increase access to recreational facilities on Three Village Central School District properties,

Add new playing fields in appropriate locations such as the County-owned "sand pits" area and other designated park properties,

Work with LIPA and National Grid to introduce walking, horseback, and biking trails on their right-of-ways.

#### Working with Government

Work with government agencies and the University to Improve the extent and diversity of recreation opportunities;

Urge government agencies to prohibit certain activities, such as the use of motorized dirt bikes and all-terrain vehicles, in natural open spaces.

Advocate additional cultural amenities in the Three Village area, for example, band shells or cultural pavilions suitable for concerts, outdoor theatrical and other ceremonial events.

# FOLLOW THROUGH

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## Next Steps for 2010 and 2011

The following is the “to-do” list of essential tasks for the immediate future and builds upon the Working Group’s progress to date to advance the report’s goals.

1. **Share the 2009 CS2030 report with the community-at-large.** This is essential to the successful implementation of these Conservation Strategies and is the first step toward engaging the greater community in the process. Specifically, in 2010 and 2011 we will seek comments and input from community members and engage them in mapping the conservation (sending) and growth (receiving) zones (described in #2 below). A subcommittee of the Working Group has been formed to design and implement an outreach program for fall 2010 and beyond.
2. **Identify and map conservation and growth districts or zones.** The Working Group inventoried and mapped the protected and quasi-protected properties. Although it discussed various potential conservation properties, sites, and vistas, it decided against listing specific ones for this report. Mapping potential conservation and development districts or zones, however, is a prerequisite to carrying out many of the report’s conservation strategies. This is not easy. The TVCT and the Working Group are sensitive to the concerns of private property owners and to what being in this or that zone would mean to them. This is, in part, why the Working Group decided not to list or map individual properties as conservation targets—except those that had been previously discussed and listed in various planning documents. Instead, the strategies include criteria by which such properties might be selected. Once zones or districts are defined on a map, it will be quite clear in which district a specific property belongs. This will be true of all parcels on the map, without “targeting” specific ones. And, it is important to emphasize that what action the property owner takes remains the prerogative of the property owner within the limits of the law. A Transfer of Development Rights program requires a map designating the “sending” and “receiving” zones, and a Strategic Conservation Plan is incomplete without a map that designates “greenbelts” or “critical conservation focus areas.”

This map must be drafted with the input from and the buy-in of the community-at-large.

3. **Advocate for compatible governmental policies and regulations,** The TVCT and Working Group also need to distinguish the ideas and strategies that will require governmental action, including public policy and/or legislative modifications, changes, or enforcement. Defining these will make it easier to coordinate the support of and advocacy for appropriate governmental actions. This targeted summary for governmental agencies should also make it easier for government officials. The TVCT and Working Group should request that this document be adopted by the Town to be part of Brookhaven 2030.
4. **Ask local organizations and civic groups to proactively advance these goals by selecting those strategies that best suit their mission and programs.** Each Working Group member is requested to bring this report to the local organization he/she represents. The local organization is asked to review the lists of strategies (pp 17-24) and select one or more that best fit its mission, integrate it (or them) into a current program; the organization can also choose to design a new program or project based upon the strategy or strategies. The TVCT and the Working Group, as the core, should be available to provide support and assistance as needed and requested. In fact, the Working Group may choose to develop criteria, outlines, and even “assignments” as well as recruit an appropriate organization (or

partnership of organizations) to implement such an assignment – remembering always that all of this is voluntarily done by and for a caring community<sup>6</sup>.

### **The Longer-Term Outlook**

The text and tabulated material in the *CS 2030* contains information and an informal analysis of where we are strong and where we are weak in various issues affecting the Three Village quality of life. The earlier *1997 Hamlet Study* also contains much material relevant to the present day that we have not repeated here. The maps and inventories contained in the appendices give an additional measure of where the Three Village community stands at the end of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the specific category of land carrying varying degrees of protection.

Throughout the preparation of this report, the Working Group dealt with a consensus-based method of defining conservation and conservation-minded development, agreeing on possible ways to encourage and achieve those goals. Conservation strategies arising from this report will need to be reassessed regularly in response to changes in economic, social, and political situations as well as changing perceptions of the issues. For this reason, the report is to be considered a work in progress. The means of converting vision, principles, and policy into specific, concrete results will depend on the goals to be achieved, the community's resolve to follow through to a successful conclusion, and the resources at hand to do it. There is no 'one-size-fits-all' method, no single individual, private group, or governmental agency that must be persuaded to act to achieve goals of conservation, preservation, and enhancement of those things that make this a good place to live.

The *CS 2030* recognizes the role of government in the education and public input process, yet also recognizes that there is an equally important role for private conservation and enhancement efforts and actions. Toward that end, community groups that share a common vision can be potent agents of change when acting individually or together.

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<sup>6</sup> The *CS2030* report was to include a section for "Implementation Schedules." However, the Working Group found that it needed to complete this report before it could move on to develop these schedules. In large part, each organization needs time to review this report and develop its own "Implementation Schedule" which it may submit to be added to this document. That would enable the Working Group to update this periodically and monitor the success of this effort.