2025 Village of Greenport Zoning Update – Policy & Implementation Framework

September 22, 2025

Purpose

The Village of Greenport is a compact, one-square-mile community with a historic, maritime identity and a unique balance of year-round residents, second-home owners, seasonal visitors, and a business community that includes both traditional small, family-run establishments and larger operations that are investor-backed. Over the past decade, the Village has experienced significant economic and development pressures, including:

- A wave of **pre- and mid-COVID commercial investment** that has since collided with **macroeconomic trends**, where investor return expectations often exceed the rents that small, local businesses can realistically support
- Vacancy challenges in both residential and commercial properties, influenced by rising short-term rental activity, seasonal ownership patterns, and investor-driven real estate strategies
- The ongoing need to plan for **climate resiliency** and maintain the Village's **working waterfront**

In accordance with the Planning Board's jurisdiction as set forth in New York State Village Law Section 7-718 and Village of Greenport Code Section 150-32, the Planning Board has spent the last several months conducting public outreach at numerous public hearings, encouraging Village residents to send written comments and conducting a public survey in connection with reviewing current Chapter 150 of Village Code and some of the challenges facing the Village from a planning and development perspective. In undertaking this review, the Planning Board has also considered its experience in considering applications requiring Planning Board approval over the last few years and some of the issues that have arisen in connection therewith. As a result of this, the Planning Board has discussed a series of framework ideas, policies and Code amendments intended to address issues and concerns that have been raised or identified as part of the Planning Board's outreach process. The proposed framework amendments are attached to this

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document as Annexes. They are advisory in nature only and are intended to be a starting point for discussion and input from the Village Board of Trustees. It is hoped that the Village Board of Trustees will consider these framework amendments and the policies outlined herein and therein and identify areas and priorities to address some of the issues confronting the Village. The Planning Board is happy to help in this regard as requested and/or directed by the Board of Trustees.

The proposed zoning updates are **not intended to be a wholesale rewrite of the Village's Code**, instead, they are intended to make **practical, incremental refinements** to the Code in order to:

- Clarify and address interpretation issues and other concerns that have been identified in the Zoning Chapter in connection with the 2023 revision to the Zoning Chapter
- Continue to ease barriers for small businesses and adaptive reuse projects.
- Promote year-round housing opportunities for Village residents

By clarifying provisions, addressing administrative bottlenecks, and encouraging incremental improvements, these updates aim to **improve utilization of existing buildings** and **lay the groundwork for future initiatives** once staffing and resources allow. At this time, pending adoption of an updated Local Waterfront Revitalization Program and input from the Village's Waterfront Advisory Committee and subcommittees, the proposed framework amendments do not purport to directly address any potential environmental or coastal resiliency concerns.

Challenges Under the Current Code

The Village undertook a major zoning code revision two years ago under **extreme time constraints**, during a development moratorium. The 2023 revision sought to:

- Encourage small-scale, local businesses rather than large investor/seasonally based restaurants, clubs, and hotels
- Protect the working waterfront
- Lift the moratorium quickly to avoid economic disruption

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While those changes were necessary, several challenges remain:

- 1. **Ambiguity in Definitions and Provisions** Key terms and cross-references create confusion for applicants and complicate administration and enforcement
- 2. **Limited Enforcement Capacity** With minimal staff and procedures, the Village struggles to monitor and address violations consistently
- 3. **Administrative Complexity and Resource Constraints** The Building Department lacks the capacity to process applications efficiently or guide property owners proactively
- 4. **Rigid Parking Requirements** Certain business types are burdened with parking mandates that discourage adaptive reuse or small business openings in the CR Retail Commercial District
- 5. **Density and Bulk Standards Misaligned with Existing Village Fabric** Current standards often conflict with the Village's historic lot configurations, resulting in unnecessary variances or underutilized parcels

These gaps limit the Village's ability to reduce vacancies, expand year-round housing, and support a resilient local economy.

Policy Objectives of the Proposed Framework Amendments

- 1. **Strengthen community vitality** by increasing opportunities for full-time, resident-occupied housing for individuals and families
- 2. **Promote adaptive reuse of existing structures** and encourage a balanced housing market that supports long-term stability and affordability
- 3. **Foster mixed-use development** in the CR Retail Commercial District to create a vibrant, walkable downtown that integrates living, working, and community life
- 4. **Further simplify approvals for new businesses** seeking to open in existing commercial spaces in the CR Retail Commercial District
- 5. **Provide greater flexibility in parking standards** in the CR Retail Commercial District to support business and mixed-use growth

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- 6. **Improve clarity and usability of the Zoning Code** by removing ambiguities, correcting cross-references, and streamlining complicated provisions
- 7. **Advance incremental, practical changes** that the Village can realistically enforce today, while laying the groundwork for future initiatives—such as density and affordability requirements—once staffing and resources permit

Implementation Requirements

To ensure the zoning updates have **real-world impact**, the Village should work to pair any Village Code changes with **basic administrative**, **enforcement**, **and public-facing support functions**:

1. Strengthen Enforcement and Administrative Capacity

- Assign or hire additional code enforcement support
- Establish clear enforcement procedures and a violation-tracking system
- Explore **shared services or intermunicipal agreements** with the Town of Southold to supplement staffing without heavy new hires

2. Adopt a Comprehensive Rental Code

- Clearly distinguish short-term rentals (STRs) from long-term residential rentals
- To the extent that STRs are permitted, require STR registration with occupancy and safety standards
- Require registration for all long-term rentals to monitor occupancy and housing availability
- Coordinate enforcement with online rental platforms where feasible

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3. Provide Public-Facing Economic and Planning Support

- Designate a single point of contact for property owners and businesses to receive upfront guidance
- Offer **pre-application consultations** to simplify the approval process and reduce errors
- Create an updated **web-based zoning and permitting hub** with FAQs, flowcharts, and checklists reflecting current Code requirements and processes to minimize in-person demand

4. Monitor Housing and Vacancy Trends

- Maintain a vacancy and occupancy database for commercial and residential properties
- Track year-round vs. seasonal housing to measure the impact of zoning changes

5. Incentivize Compliance and Adaptive Reuse

- Offer modest fee reductions or recognition programs for projects that add year-round housing or reuse underutilized spaces
- Leverage county, state, and regional grant or tax incentive programs for small-scale rehabilitation and housing projects

6. Engage and Educate the Community

- Communicate zoning changes and available resources via the Village website, mailings, and public meetings
- Share **progress dashboards** to demonstrate outcomes such as vacancy reduction and new year-round housing

7. Review and Align Related Village Code Sections

- Conduct a targeted review of other Village Code chapters, including Chapter 65 (Fire Prevention and Building Construction), to identify and address inconsistencies or procedural conflicts with the updated Zoning Code
- Ensure that permitting, inspections, and construction standards are **coordinated with zoning objectives** to reduce administrative friction and improve compliance

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- Establish a **regular review cycle** to update related provisions as the Village's planning, building, and economic development needs evolve
- Review and update **Chapter 132 (Vehicles and Parking)**. Residents and other stakeholders polled in the Planning Board survey were either indifferent or supportive of metered parking on the business corridor streets but support was most often subject to the following conditions relating to **paid/metered parking zones** (and these views are even stronger if the Village were to expand the paid parking program):
 - ⇒ Need for consistent and visible **enforcement**
 - ⇒ **Exemption for local residents**, ideally through a sticker program available to Greenport Hamlet residents for a nominal fee
 - ⇒ Limited to the **peak tourism season** (Memorial Day through Labor Day)
 - ⇒ Limited to high-demand hours—roughly Thursday through Monday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. (not applicable to overnight parking)

Why This Matters

Without complementary enforcement, administrative support, and basic economic development outreach, zoning changes alone will not create year-round housing or reduce vacancies. This framework amendments prioritizes **small**, **realistic steps** the Village can implement now, while positioning Greenport for **long-term success** as resources grow.

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HIGH-LEVEL SUMMARY OF PROPOSED FRAMEWORK AMENDMENTS

I. HOUSING RELATED AMENDMENTS (SEE ANNEX A)

A. Apartments in Commercial (CR/CG) Districts

- Apartments would be allowed on upper floors of commercial buildings or in accessory structures (e.g., carriage houses, barns, rear buildings) including in the form of multi-residential buildings (i.e. 3 or more apartments)
- Ground-floor apartments in principal buildings are not permitted in order to preserve active street-level commercial uses.
- Apartments must either be owner occupied or leased to full-time, year-round residents under leases of at least 12 months. Short-term rentals, hotel-style uses, or pooled rental units are prohibited.
- Property owners are required to file annual certifications with the Village and record a binding 25-year covenant ensuring compliance.
- Bulk standards would be revised to allow up to three stories for residential use above commercial, with height limits of 35 feet plus limited additional allowance for rooftop mechanicals. Third floors must be stepped back from the façade, and rooflines should be pitched or otherwise articulated to reduce bulk.
- Parking would not be required for CR apartments, recognizing the walkable village center.

B. Residential Districts (R-1 and R-2)

- The two existing residential districts would be merged into one, allowing up to two dwelling units in a principal building as of right.
- Conversions of single-family homes into two-family dwellings would be entitled to automatic relief from certain bulk requirements (lot size, width, depth, setbacks, coverage) to make such conversions more feasible.
- Occupancy of buildings benefiting from looser bulk requirements would be required to be subject to owner occupancy/long term tenant residency requirements and owners would record a 25-year covenant prohibiting short-term rental use.

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C. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

- One ADU would be permitted per residential lot, subject to occupancy rules requiring owner occupancy and/or long-term tenant residency (12 months).
- ADUs required to be located in the rear yard, connected to public utilities, and accessed via the same driveway as the principal home. They could not be sold separately.
- Size would be limited (approximately 750–1,250 square feet; max two bedrooms and one bath).
- Existing accessory structures could be converted into ADUs with minimal approvals if no external expansion is involved. New ADUs or expanded/modified accessory structures would require site plan approval (and Historic Preservation review if located in the Historic District).
- Bulk standards would limit height to 20–25 feet depending on configuration, and lot coverage could increase modestly (up to 45%).
- Design guidelines emphasize compatibility with the main house, privacy for neighbors (through window placement and landscaping), and sustainability features such as energy-efficient construction.
- A 25-year covenant would be required to ensure compliance with occupancy and use requirements and prohibiting use of any dwelling unit on the property for short-term rental.

D. Multi-Residential Buildings (3+ Units)

- In addition to permitting multi-residential buildings in the CR District (as above), multi-residential buildings, cluster housing, or cottage courts would be permitted in the residential district(s) and CG District, subject to site plan review.
- Cluster/cottage court housing would require a minimum 12,000 square-foot lot, with density capped at one unit per 1,000 square feet of land and no more than eight units total.
- Design guidelines would encourage "house-scale" buildings with pitched roofs, shared courtyards, landscaping, and stormwater management.
- Occupancy would be limited to full-time residents or employees of Village businesses residing in the Village not less than six (6) months of the year.

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• A 25-year covenant ensuring compliance with occupancy and use restrictions and prohibiting short-term rentals would be required.

E. Parking

- No parking would be required for CR apartments.
- In residential and CG districts, one off-street space per dwelling unit would be required, except where Planning Board waivers are granted. This is a reduction in certain instances from current requirements
- The Planning Board could fully waive parking for ADUs.
- For multi-residential projects, the Board could reduce parking requirements by up to 50% where site constraints make full compliance infeasible.
- Properties with short-term rental permits (where still allowed under other provisions of the Code) would have to meet stricter parking standards under the Rental Property law, without waiver.

II. <u>USES IN CR DISTRICT (SEE ANNEX B)</u>

- A. Permitted Uses Expanded and Clarified: Adds certain types of uses to ensure they are adequately captured as permitted uses and not ambiguous including artisanal manufacturing, small food production, cultural/fitness uses, personal services, professional offices, small catering facilities, and shared commercial spaces. Certain businesses moved to conditional use category as determined to be seasonal or have a higher intensity impact and require specific review on a case-by-case basis.
- **B.** Conditional Uses: Revised to include certain types of uses currently present in CR district but not specifically allowed (i.e. places of worship). Category is intended to be limited to businesses identified as seasonal or higher intensity impacts requiring case by case review to ensure balance between business district, tourism and residential needs.
- C. Accessory Uses: Clarifies what are permitted accessory uses (i.e incidental to a primary use) and when approval (if any) is required. Some accessory uses are by-right (storage, minor assembly, instructional workshops, background music, tasting/sampling). Others need approval (outdoor dining, food trucks, entertainment, solar, signage, curb-cuts).
- **D. Prohibited Uses:** Clarifies what specific types of uses are expressly prohibited in CR District.

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E. Use Determinations: Adds specific guidance on process for use determination and grandfathers all existing uses. Building Department (with referral if ambiguous) decides if a proposed use is permitted, conditional, accessory, or prohibited. Existing lawful uses can continue without need for additional approvals or compliance with bulk standards even if reclassified.

III. ENTERTAINMENT PERMIT (SEE ANNEX B)

- **A. Scope:** Same as in current Code (i.e. covers entertainment and catered events); renamed as "event" permit to avoid misunderstandings as to what is covered under permit requirements.
- **B.** Exemptions from Permit Requirement: Similar to under existing Code but clarifies which exemptions apply to entertainment versus catered events.
- C. Permit Issuance & Renewal: Streamlines renewals and issuances. Building Department can issue permits without referral to Planning Board or a public hearing so long as certain criteria are met: (≤3 complaints in 24 months, ≤2 code violations, events indoors or prior permit still valid). Planning Board approval is only required if criteria is not satisfied.
- **D. Application Requirements:** Similar to under existing Code; certain requirements to be eliminated but applicants required to include event management plan and evidence of insurance in connection with hosting of catered events.
- **E. Ambient Impact Business**: Adds a category of "ambient impact businesses" (generally businesses located close to water or residential district that host amplified music after 9 pm) to clarify what types of businesses may be subject to additional requirements such as a sound impact study or specific sound mitigation requirements.
- F. Catered Events: Clarifies specific rules applicable to businesses hosting catered events including that (i) food service limited to on-site kitchens or licensed caterers; no outside cooking (food trucks, grills) unless approved in site plan, (ii) restrictions on party buses/limos (drop-off only in designated zones, no idling >5 minutes), (iii) explicit prohibition on exceeding occupancy, (iv) prohibitions on obstruction of sidewalks/streets unless mass assembly permit obtained and (v) requirements relating to liability insurance.

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IV. PARKING, CURB CUTS AND LOADING ZONES (SEE ANNEX B)

- A. CR District: Most parking requirements eliminated to help small businesses and housing. (See Exhibit 1 attached). Traffic impact of proposed use remains a criteria to be considered in connection with reviewing and approving applications for impact on public health, safety, welfare and surrounding residential neighborhoods and any conditions to the approval of such applications.
- **B.** Flexibility: Planning Board may waive or reduce parking requirements where applicable.
- C. No More "Parking Impact Fee": Payment-in-lieu system eliminated.
- **D. Protecting What Exists**: Reducing/eliminating existing parking, driveways, curb-cuts, or loading zones requires Planning Board approval. (This is not new but criteria for review is made clearer).
- **E. Drive-ways**. Planning Board approval of repairs or construction of driveways is eliminated.
- **F. Standards for New Curb-Cuts**: Applicable criteria for Planning Board approval of new curb-cuts is made clearer and more streamlined including requirement to consider safety, alignment, pedestrian impacts, stormwater, and neighborhood character
- **G. Review Factors**: Applications judged on, among other criteria, safety, access, neighborhood context, available parking alternatives, and mitigation measures (bike racks, landscaping, shared lots)

V. <u>SITE PLAN/CONDITIONAL USE APPROVAL PROCESS (SEE ANNEX B)</u>

A. Clearer Rules on When Approval is Needed: In residential districts, Planning Board review is limited to things like new ADUs, subdivisions, curb-cuts, and multi-unit housing. In commercial/waterfront districts, approvals are required for bigger changes (conditional uses, expansions, demolitions, new construction, utility upgrades). Clarification is provided for development activities which are exempt from Planning Board review.

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- B. Criteria applicable to review of Seasonal Businesses (generally open less than 9 months of the year): Any seasonal use seeking approval needs to demonstrate that it will not have a direct material adverse impact on traffic/parking, provides local benefits, and won't crowd out year-round activity.
- C. **Pre-Submission Process**: Reduces the numbers and types of "significant" applications (hotels, event spaces, multi-residential, formula businesses, etc.) that are required to go through a structured early review.
- **D. Simplified Workflow**: Clarifies steps and roles of Building Department and Planning Board from application \rightarrow SEQR review \rightarrow referrals \rightarrow public hearing \rightarrow decision.

VI. VACANCY REGISTRY REQUIREMENTS (SEE ANNEX C)

A. Vacancy Registry

- Owners of vacant commercial and residential properties must register with the Building Department.
- Registration includes property details (owner contact, address, size, zoning, prior use, status).
- Publicly accessible registry promotes transparency and accountability.

B. Definitions of Vacancy

- Commercial: Considered vacant if unused for 12+ months or only sporadically open (<10 days per quarter).
- **Residential**: Considered vacant if no permanent resident for 12+ months (seasonal or short-term rentals in compliance are not "vacant").

C. Registration Fees

- Annual fee starting at \$1,000, increasing by \$500 per year, capped at \$5,000.
- Fees support Village monitoring and maintenance oversight.

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D. Maintenance & Security Standards

- Properties must be secured and kept clean, safe, and presentable.
- Ground-floor commercial vacancies in the CR District must maintain attractive windows (e.g., signage, art displays, nonprofit partnerships).

E. Inspections & Enforcement

- Periodic municipal inspections verify compliance.
- Building Department may issue violations and fines; coordination with police, fire, and code enforcement.

F. Exemptions - Certain properties are not required to register, including:

- Properties under active construction or with pending approvals.
- Properties actively marketed for sale or lease (with proof).
- Seasonal use properties and government-owned parcels.
- Owner-occupied residences with occasional use.

G. Community Reporting

- Residents and businesses may request review of suspected vacant properties.
- Building Department must inspect within 30 days.
- Safeguards protect against false or frivolous complaints.

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EXHIBIT 1 PARKING REQUIREMENTS (SECTION 150-16(A)(1))¹

USE	REQUIREMENT ²	RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT(S)	CR DISTRICT	CG DISTRICT	WC DISTRICT
Dwelling Unit	1 space per dwelling unit on property or, in the case of any dwelling unit that is a short-term rental, one (1) space per bedroom that permitted to be used as a short-term rental under and as required under Chapter 103 (Rental Properties)	Required	None	Required	Required
Home occupations in a dwelling unit or on a residentially zoned property	2 spaces per home occupation	Required	Permitted Accessory Uses: None Otherwise required	Required	Required

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¹ NTD: Subject in all respects to grandfathering provisions and other provisions of Code relating to on-site parking requirements (including waivers and reductions in respect thereof).

NTD: Requirements in many instances have been reduced from current Code requirements.

USE	REQUIREMENT ²	RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT(S)	CR DISTRICT	CG DISTRICT	WC DISTRICT
Places of worship, art and cultural facility, postal delivery services and other places of public assembly not otherwise classified	The greater of (a) 1 space for each 300 square feet of net floor area and (b) 1 space for each 5 persons of permitted occupancy	Required	Permitted Uses: None Otherwise required	Required	Required
Educational services	In the case of (a) any preschool, nursery school or elementary school the greater of (x) 2.5 spaces per classroom, plus 1 space for each 5 seats in any auditorium or other place of assembly, (b) secondary school, 4 spaces per classroom plus 1 space for each 5 seats In any auditorium or other place of assembly and (c) in all other cases, as determined by the Planning Board in connection with any site plan or conditional use approval	Required	Permitted Uses: None Otherwise required	Required	Required
Hospitals	1 space for each 3 beds	Required	Required	Required	Required

USE	REQUIREMENT ²	RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT(S)	CR DISTRICT	CG DISTRICT	WC DISTRICT
Mortuary, funeral and burial services	1 space for each 2 employees plus 5 spaces for each chapel	Required	Required	Required	Required
Eating and drinking establishments or any shared commercial facilities in respect of any of the foregoing	1 space for each 5 persons of permitted occupancy <i>plus</i> 1 space for every 3 employees	Required	Except with respect to any formula business, none	Required	Required
			Required for formula business		
Artisanal manufacturing, production, recording and distribution services, small-scale food production, food catering facilities and any shared commercial facilities in respect of any of the foregoing (to be defined by specific cross reference to Use provisions)	1 space per 300 square feet of net floor area plus 1 space for every 3 employees	Required	None	Required	Required
Motels or Hotels	1 space for each guest room plus 1 space for every 3 employees	Required	Required	Required	Required

USE	REQUIREMENT ²	RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT(S)	CR DISTRICT	CG DISTRICT	WC DISTRICT
Medical facility or health care facility	The lesser of (a) 5 spaces for each physician (including any physician assistant) or dentist and (b) 1 space for each 300 square feet of net floor area	Required	Required	Required	Required
Veterinarian hospital or clinic	1 space for each 300 square feet of net floor area	Required	Required	Required	Required
Offices (other than to the extent applicable to any other express category of use that also constitutes an office)	1 space per 300 square feet of net floor area	Required	None	Required	Required
Gas Stations/Electric Charging Stations	4 spaces queuing line area for each pump plus 1 space for every 3 \employees	Required	Required	Required	Required
Repair Garage	3 spaces for each repair bay	Required	Required	Required	Required
Commercial marinas and docking facilities	1 space per boat slip, mooring, dock space or similar unit of capacity plus 1 space for every 3 employees	Required	Required	Required	Required

USE	REQUIREMENT ²	RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT(S)	CR DISTRICT	CG DISTRICT	WC DISTRICT
Private marina and/or docking facilities (i.e. operated solely for benefit of owner and guests without requirement of compensation)	1 space per 2 boat slips or dock spaces or similar unit of capacity	Required	Required	Required	Required
Yacht Clubs	The lesser of (A) to the extent that such yacht club is associated with a commercial marina or docking facility, the total spaces required if such yacht club were a commercial marina or docking facility and (B) the sum of (i) 1 space for every 2 members <i>plus</i> (ii) 1 space for three (3) employees	Required	Required	Required	Required
Passenger Ferry Terminal	1 space per every 3 person ferry passenger capacity <i>plus</i> 1 space for each 3 employees	Required	Required	Required	Required
Marine Industry businesses not otherwise covered in listed uses and requirements	1 space per 750 square feet of net floor space	Required	None	Required	Required

USE	REQUIREMENT ²	RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT(S)	CR DISTRICT	CG DISTRICT	WC DISTRICT
(including shipbuilding, aquaculture etc.).					
Manufacturing, processing, industrial and wholesale uses (excluding any artisanal manufacturing, production, recording and distribution services, small scale-food production and/or food catering facilities or shared commercial facilities in respect thereof)	1 space per 750 square feet of net floor space	Required	Permitted Uses: None Otherwise required.	Required	Required
All other uses	1 space per 300 square feet of net floor area	Required	Permitted Uses and any seasonal business that would otherwise constitute a permitted use but for its seasonal nature: None	Required	Required

USE	REQUIREMENT ²	RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT(S)	CR DISTRICT	CG DISTRICT	WC DISTRICT
			Otherwise required		