

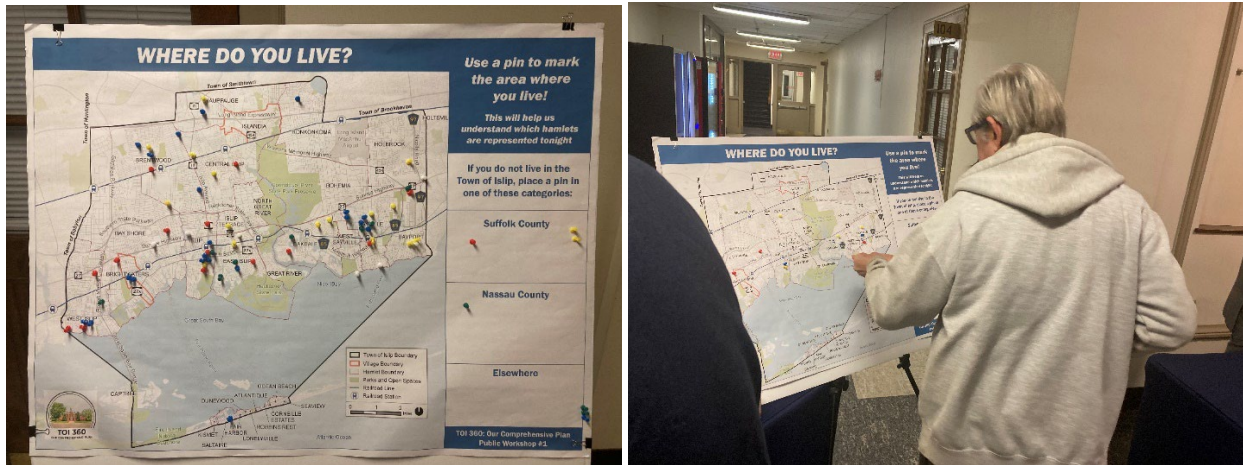


# TOI 360: Town of Islip's Comprehensive Plan Update

## Public Workshop #1 Summary Report

### I. Welcome

Upon arrival, residents placed pins on the map to show where they live, offering a visual snapshot of community representation at the workshop.

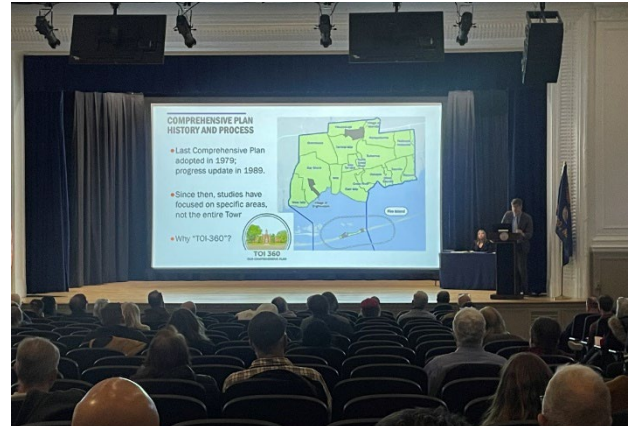


*Residents signing in and placing pins to highlight where they live in the Town of Islip and surrounding areas.*

Town of Islip Supervisor Angie Carpenter provided opening remarks, underscoring the importance of the process and value of community input. Supervisor Carpenter then handed the presentation over to Noah Levine, Associate Principal of BFJ Planning who gave an overview of the project team, including the Town's Department of Planning and Development, the Town Board, and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Mr. Levine also introduced the consultant team, led by BFJ Planning, responsible for preparing the plan.

## II. Comprehensive Planning Process Overview

The consultant team opened with an overview of the comprehensive planning process, which will be developed in collaboration with the Town's Department of Planning and Development. The process will also involve the Town Board and a Technical Advisory Committee, which will provide technical guidance and ensure the plan reflects the community's broader needs. Input will be gathered from a wide range of stakeholders, including experts, business owners, Town Boards and Committees, and residents.



*Noah Levine, Associate Principal at BFJ Planning, discussing the comprehensive planning process.*

A comprehensive plan represents the community's shared vision for its future, serving as a long-term guide for public policy, initiatives, and investments. It lays the groundwork for zoning decisions and provides a strategic framework for achieving broad community goals, rather than detailing specific project designs. Actions like zoning changes will require additional analysis and public review before adoption. The plan does not address or approve specific projects or resolve immediate issues unrelated to long-term planning objectives.

The Town's last comprehensive update was in 1979, with a progress report in 1989. Since then, planning has focused on individual hamlets rather than the entire Town. The name "TOI 360" reflects two themes: in two decades, it will mark 360 years since William Nicoll's 1683 land purchase from the Secatogue Nation, and the number 360 symbolizes a full-circle approach—honoring Islip's history, evaluating growth and land use trends, and collaboratively shaping a vision for the Town's future.

The town is made up of diverse hamlets, each shaped by its unique history, demographics, local services, and organizations. Outreach efforts will encompass both town-wide and hamlet-specific discussions to capture a range of perspectives. While the plan will include recommendations tailored to individual hamlets, these will remain broad, supporting a unified framework for the entire Town.

The planning will occur over an 18-month period, where there will be many opportunities for community input, including two Town-wide workshops, neighborhood-oriented public workshops, focus groups with topic experts, questionnaires to civic groups. There will also be ways to participate [online](#) including a public survey, ideas wall, and interactive map.

The presentation covered key population trends, highlighting Islip's status as New York State's fourth-largest municipality, with a population comprising 22% of Suffolk County.

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Growth has slowed significantly, with just a 1% increase over 12 years, while the median age has risen to nearly 39, reflecting an aging population. Housing costs have surged, with rent increasing by nearly 50% since 2010, creating affordability challenges. Islip's diverse population includes over 21% foreign-born residents, with significant communities of color in Bay Shore and Brentwood. Economic trends showed a stable unemployment rate of 4.2%, driven by education and health services, though manufacturing jobs have declined.

The discussion also explored housing and economic development. Most of Islip's housing stock was built between 1940 and 1980, and the Town has focused on adaptive reuse and transit-oriented development to address affordability and land limitations. Efforts to support affordable housing include initiatives for veterans, seniors, and the homeless. Economic development emphasized revitalizing historic downtowns, hamlet centers, and major commercial areas while promoting industrial clusters and the potential of MacArthur Airport and the proposed Midway Crossing project to boost regional growth. Hamlet centers were highlighted as vital hubs for community activity, with strategies focused on improving connectivity, walkability, and infrastructure.

Transportation, sustainability, and public services were key themes. Transportation challenges include high car dependency, limited public transit access, and increased traffic and crashes, with ongoing projects like the Oakdale Merge and Complete Streets Policy. Sustainability efforts focused on protecting Islip's natural resources, mitigating flooding risks, and enhancing resilience through initiatives like tree planting and ecological restoration projects. Public services showcased the Town's extensive park network, including recent upgrades, and strong community resources like libraries, schools, and healthcare facilities, anchored by major hospitals undergoing significant expansions.



*NYU Project Team gathering insights on where flooding impacts the Town most.*

A team of graduate students from NYU-Wagner was also present to gather feedback for their capstone project, which will look at flooding issues in Bay Shore. Findings from this academic report will be incorporated into the Plan as appropriate.

### III. Public Comment

After the presentation, participants were encouraged to share comments, ask questions, and offer feedback. 24 attendees addressed the audience with their questions and 5 comments were written down. The feedback was summarized by topic, providing a broad overview of the key themes discussed.

#### Development and Housing

- Concerns about Overdevelopment:
  - Some residents expressed concern about overdevelopment. One project that received a lot of opposition was the Island Hills proposal in Sayville.
  - One attendee expressed interest in utilizing zoning tools that would help to preserve residential areas such as Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs).
  - Certain developments, such as Island Hills and the Ronkonkoma Hub, were noted as unaffordable. Concerns were also expressed about how much they will contribute fiscally, given their tax breaks, and won't contribute their fair share for local schools and infrastructure.
  
- Diverse Housing Needs:
  - Many participants emphasized need for broader housing options, with the following topics mentioned:
    - Affordable, starter homes and housing for working-class families over luxury developments.
    - ADUs (Accessory Dwelling Units), praised for flexibility, especially near hamlet centers.
    - Increased availability of condos, co-ops, and mixed developments, as opposed to high-end properties.
    - Sewer infrastructure to support more dense downtown living.
  - Some residents raised concerns about certain developers prioritizing profit over affordability, creating barriers to building equity.
  - Suggestions included encouraging housing limited to two stories and more affordable two-family homes.
  - In Brentwood, it was suggested that an emphasis be placed on affordable housing for working-class families.
  - It was suggested that the Town consider lower AMI (Area Median Income) requirements for affordable housing and transit-oriented development to reduce gentrification.
  
- Preserving Community Character:
  - Some attendees expressed reservations about multi-family housing developments, noting potential strain on community resources like libraries and recreational programs, such as in Oakdale.

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- At Country Village in East Islip, there are concerns about tree removal for pool installations, leading to diminished area character and environmental issues.

### **Traffic and Transportation**

- Traffic and Road Safety:
  - Concerns were expressed about traffic along Sunrise Highway, speeding, and road-related fatalities, especially in Bay Shore in light of new developments and hospital expansions.
  - Frustration was noted by some participants over congestion caused by a proposed 800-unit development on Lakeland Avenue.
  - Recommendation was made for Town to establish a task force to address speeding and intoxicated driving, which could potentially involve police and youth groups.
- Transportation Improvements:
  - A need for better train connections to MacArthur Airport was highlighted.
  - Suggestion to introduce a free shuttle service to enhance mobility and commercial usage, specifically in areas like Bay Shore.
  - Suggestion made to extend parking lots and improve raised tracks at Central Islip's railroad station.

### **Taxes and Financial Impacts**

- High Taxes:
  - Some residents voiced frustration about rising property taxes, particularly in West Islip, which also hosts tax-exempt hospitals.
  - Concerns were expressed about how municipal projects like the Town Hall renovation could affect taxes.
- Request for Transparency:
  - Some commented on the need for transparency in this planning process, with the request for information on how recommendations will impact fiscal conditions for the Town and the school districts.

### **Parks, Recreation, and Public Programs**

- Parks and Programs:
  - Attendees expressed general appreciation for parks, libraries, and recreational spaces like the repurposed Central Islip hospital property. Boating opportunities and maintenance of pump systems and bulkheads were also valued.

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- **Community Amenities:**
  - Some frustration was noted over the incomplete Central Islip Park Master Plan and strain on recreational facilities due to overdevelopment.
  - Suggestions included introducing weekly forums for residents to discuss local matters.

### **History and Aesthetics**

- **Preservation of History:**
  - Concerns expressed by several attendees about the need to preserve historic homes and historic character and prevent overbuilding on historic streets such as South Bay Avenue.
  - There was some frustration over lack of public hearings for prior development projects, in particular, those that are in historic areas.
- **Aesthetics as a Key Asset:**
  - The Town's aesthetic appeal was frequently highlighted as a strength.

### **Climate and Environmental Concerns**

- **Addressing Climate Change:**
  - Concerns expressed about sea-level rise, flooding, and erosion, with projections of increased flooding risks affecting thousands of residents by 2045.
  - Flooding and erosion persist, particularly in South Sayville (e.g., Browns River Road). Acknowledgement that work has been done, but additional sustainable solutions are needed.
- **Environmental Impact of Development:**
  - Several respondents asked for thorough evaluations of infrastructure and emergency service impacts.
  - Suggestion to follow Patchogue Village's example with erosion mitigation using special vegetation and riprap rock.
- **Code Enforcement:**
  - There was interest in stronger enforcement of Town codes, such as clearing permits, to protect quality of life.

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#### **Comprehensive Planning Process**

- Resident Engagement:
  - Participants asked questions about how their input will influence the plan, with some calling for prioritizing residents' needs over attracting outsiders.
  - Positive feedback on the TOI360 process, with requests to keep surveys open longer and publicize them more widely. NOTE – it was agreed that the public survey would be extended an additional 15 days.
  - Request to publicize TOI 360 meetings on local TV networks.
  
- Long-Term Impacts:
  - Questions about implementation of past plans and alignment of recommendations with community needs.
  - Some expressed wanting to see transparency on housing density and its impact on fire services and parking.