

Riverhead — Bustling, But Still Bucolic

Liza Burby | August 9, 2021

THE SCOOP

Riverhead, named for its location at the mouth of the Peconic River, is often the pass-through to the Hamptons, but it has plenty of its own noteworthy features to attract homebuyers — and vacationers.

"It's the gateway to the North Fork and the Hamptons but with none of the traffic," said Nicole LaBella, an agent with Town and Country Real Estate. "It's slowly catching fire because it has undeveloped land, bucolic landscapes and it's not overpopulated. You're five minutes from shopping, local beaches, and fine dining, so you're actually living in a most desirable location."



Crates of asparagus packed and ready for pickup at Wells Farm in Riverhead in May. Credit: Randee Daddona

Riverhead Town Supervisor Yvette Aguiar said Riverhead is an exciting place to live, play and work with a diverse population and the distinction of being the Suffolk County seat.

"We have a rich Long Island history and are well known for our beautiful agricultural farmland, our vineyards, beaches, parks and our many family-friendly attractions," she said. "Riverhead is unique to Long Island because it has maintained its small-town appeal, while welcoming newcomers and visitors.



Nila the sea lion gives a kiss to Lucy Gallehugh, 7, of Rockville Centre at the Long Island Aquarium in Riverhead in June. Credit: Randee Daddona

Riverhead's entertainment venues include the Long Island Aquarium, which has a 20,000-gallon all-living coral reef display tank, and Splish Splash Water Park in nearby Calverton. Cultural highlights are the Art Deco Suffolk Theater, which reopens Aug. 27, the Vail Leavitt Music Hall and the East End Arts Council. Places for outdoor adventures include Indian Island County Park, with fishing and camping. Riverhead's Tanger Outlets attracts more than 10 million shoppers a year. The town also has farmstands — including Briermere Farms, popular for its fruit pies — wineries, and breweries, including Peconic County Brewing.

Many homes on the market in Riverhead are older houses, such as farmhouses, Victorians and Colonials that are getting makeovers, LaBella said. "These are classic homes with charm to them that are keeping their integrity while getting modernized to give you a contemporary feel when you walk in," she said.

An ongoing revitalization of a once blighted downtown includes the development of Town Square between Main Street and the Peconic River, which is expected to break ground within the next six months. It will have a new amphitheater, outdoor dining, small retail spaces and the entrance to the expanded Long Island Science Center, which will feature a planetarium.

"Unlike any other downtown on Long Island, visitors can traverse our beautiful riverfront boardwalk and enjoy kayaking, paddleboarding and fishing as well as our annual cardboard boat races and crew racing," Aguiar said.



Visitors to Peconic County Brewing in Riverhead in April. Credit: Yvonne Albinowski

The downtown recently added Riverview Lofts, a 116-unit affordable housing complex with commercial space designed to be resilient to flooding and severe weather. Island Water Park, a recreational attraction, is expected to open this fall. Aguiar said all the new growth seeks to address the need to provide more opportunities for the younger generation, "specifically, the goal to create quality jobs and affordable, desirable places to live." The town also has an aggressive preservation program of open spaces and farmland.



Riverhead's Suffolk Theater reopens on Aug. 27. Credit: Morgan Campbell

CONDOS AND COOPS

There are 4 condos on the market priced between \$425,000 and \$529,000.

SALE PRICES

Between May 31, 2020 and June 30, 2021, there were 257 home sales with a median sale price of \$347,400, according to OneKey MLS. The low price for that period was \$11,000 (for a mobile home) and the high was \$935,000. During that period a year earlier there were 197 home sales with a median sale price of \$310,000. The price range was \$18,500 to \$1.075 million.

OTHER STATS

Town Riverhead

- ZIP code 11901
- Area 15.1 square miles
- Population 14,196
- Median Age 42.2
- Median household income \$52,126

- Median home value \$355,000*
- Monthly LIRR ticket from Riverhead \$500
- School district Riverhead
- Graduation rate 76.1%
- Parks Peconic Riverfront Park, Veterans Memorial Park, Stotzky Park, Sound Avenue Nature Preserve
- Library Riverhead Free Library
- Hospitals Peconic Bay Medical Center, Stony Brook Southampton Hospital
- Transit Suffolk County Transit bus routes 8A, S58, S62, S66, S92

SOURCES: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; OneKey MLS; LIRR, data.nysed.gov

*Based on 111 sales in the past six months, according to OneKey MLS

NOW ON THE MARKET

\$1.45 million

This new 3,500-square-foot farmhouse on 0.93 acres has views of The Woods at Cherry Creek Golf course. It features a first-floor primary suite, two additional bedrooms and 2½ bathrooms over two levels with a 500-square-foot space over the garage that can accommodate a fourth bedroom and bathroom. There's a great room with 20-foot-high ceilings and a fireplace. A buyer can choose custom details. Taxes assessed at \$13,000-\$16,000. Nicole LaBella, Town and Country Real Estate, 516-652-8888.



This newly built three-bedroom, 2½-bathroom farmhouse on Reeves Avenue in Riverhead is listed for \$1.45 million. It is across the street from a country club. Credit: Bill Camp