

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study Purpose and General Municipal Goals

Beginning with the 1970 Town of Southampton Master Plan and continuing through the 1999 Comprehensive Plan Update, the town has planned for the appropriate balance of development and conservation in its hamlets. This report builds upon the recommendations of the Town of Southampton 1999 Comprehensive Plan with a detailed focus on the commercial area of the hamlet of Bridgehampton. (See Figure 1.) The report analyzes land uses, market trends, transportation issues, aesthetic concerns, and development site potential relevant to the part of Montauk Highway from Lake Road to Norris Lane. (See Figure 2.)

The 1970 Master Plan foresaw a future for the Hamlet of Bridgehampton of “low residential development with compatible agricultural and open space uses.” Several areas were identified for a limited amount of multi-family housing, to correct deficiencies in housing quality. All other residential areas were to be developed according to planned residential development requirements : “clustering of residential building types along water courses, at the edge of woodlands near farms, or near recreation beaches.” Development in the business center was to incorporate “a historic theme in keeping with Bridgehampton’s past.” Business intensity was to be “low key... [w]ith small scale businesses of a specialty and service nature.” The three recommended major public improvements were the “recreation of the historic triangle at the eastern end,” a mid-block mall, and more public parking (1970 Master Plan, pp. 109 – 111).

The 1999 Comprehensive Plan addressed the specific objectives for Bridgehampton in its Section 4.9, with text and a map. The overall planning concept for the hamlet was a “Main Street theme, featuring a walkable center with direct and easy connections to Bridgehampton Commons.” The objectives were 1) to maintain a historic, scenic, and walkable center, 2) to emphasize speciality shopping in the historic center, and destination shopping at and adjacent to Bridgehampton Commons, and 3) to strengthen the transportation and land use transition between the historic center and Bridgehampton Commons.

By the time of this 2003 Hamlet Center Strategy Study, and during the planning process, the town has made progress towards achieving the objectives of its past municipal plans. The creation of public open space and a historic triangle at the eastern gateway into the hamlet center is closer to realization with new Triangular Commons park and the recent purchase by the town of the Hopping House. This study provides more recommendations on how this objective can be effected. The town’s current parking study for the hamlet identifies locations, connections, and access. A mid-block public area has been created that responds to the summer visitor and population peak, with more parking, good access to shops, and public restrooms. The town has adopted a square footage cap or gross floor area limit on commercial development in the Highway Business HB zone and has proposed two new

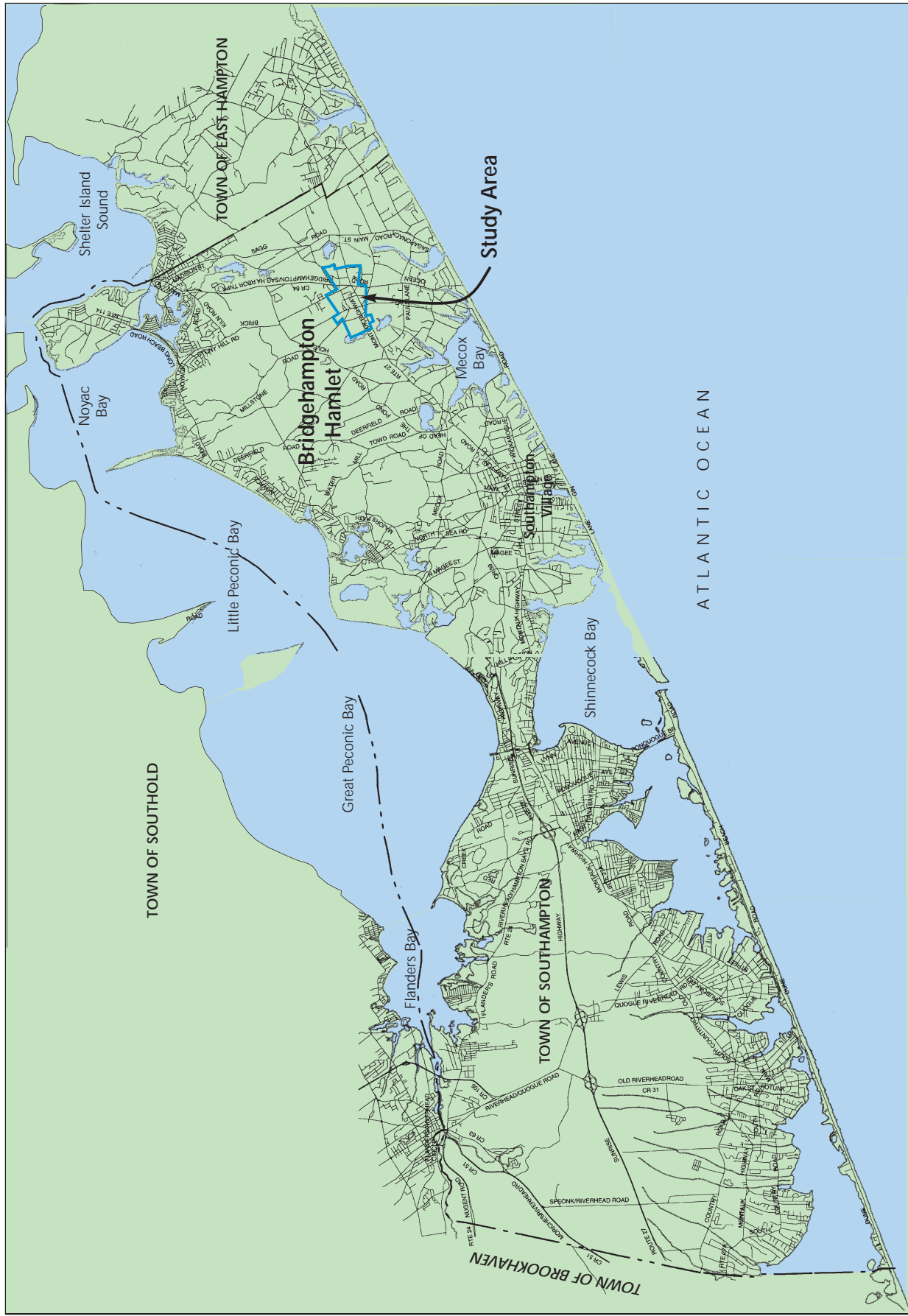


Figure 1. Location Map

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Figure 2. Study Area Boundaries



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zoning districts (HO Hamlet Office/Residential and HC Hamlet-Commercial) – both of which fulfill the objective of creating a better transition between the Bridgehampton Commons shopping center and the historic commercial core.

1.2 *The Planning Process*

The planning process was a collaborative one among the consultants, town planning staff, town officials, and the advisory committee. The ten committee members who were not town staff or officials were the direct liaison with their various organizations, and by extension with Bridgehampton's residents. A July 2002 public workshop was held at the Nutrition Center and attended by about 40 people. Throughout the spring and summer, the consultants conducted 18 interviews with each advisory committee member and others in the community. The interview summaries were provided to town planning staff and were referred to during the planning process, as issues, goals, priorities, and recommendations were discussed. The consultants met four times with the advisory committee to present their findings, analysis, and preliminary recommendations.

1.3 *Summary of Planning Issues*

This report addresses the following major planning issues affecting Bridgehampton:

- Future development and/or preservation of key development sites to maintain and enhance hamlet character and create a clear sense of place by preserving historic buildings, open spaces, and agricultural lands that frame the center.
- Housing development to increase the range in types of housing stock and to create housing affordable to a range of household incomes.
- Improvements to hamlet center design, streetscape, circulation, and parking along Montauk Highway to help businesses and pedestrians and to create gateways at the western and eastern ends of the commercial street.
- Improvements to the industrial district around the railroad station and to the LIRR transit hub.
- Changes to the town's zoning code that would benefit Bridgehampton, specifically focused on the balance among retail, office, commercial, and residential uses.

1.4 *Study Goals*

The planning process led to the evolution of the following general goals. These goals create the framework for the recommendations presented in Chapter 5. Each individual issue, listed above in Section 1.3 Summary of Planning Issues, had its own discussion and led to the formation of more detailed objectives. These are presented in the relevant sections in Chapters 2, 3, and 4.

Commercial Sites. The primary goal for Bridgehampton should be to maintain and enhance the general commercial character of Montauk Highway from west of Snake Hollow Road to Ocean Road as it is today and keep it viable by allowing more uses and services aimed at the year-round community. The hamlet center can absorb a minimal amount of new commercial development, as long as the new uses within the established commercial core are built at the established scale demonstrated by the building size, massing, and height of structures located between Lumber Lane and Corwith Road, and favor non-retail uses. This will limit the creation of additional traffic impacts. Such development should be designed and landscaped so that it forms an attractive gateway into the hamlet. Retail uses should not be allowed east of the intersection of Sag Harbor Turnpike and Montauk Highway, with the exception of the existing use at Judge Rose House/Bull's Head Inn. No additional retail should be allowed on Sag Harbor Turnpike. Bridgehampton Commons should remain the only large-scale destination shopping in the hamlet. Development on the vacant property across the highway (known as the Carvel and surrounding parcels property) should be a mix of non-retail commercial uses, with lower traffic impacts than retail, and residential uses.

Residential Sites. The town should encourage the construction of a variety of housing types – apartments, small houses, community housing (belowmarket-rate housing stock), and senior housing – in order to keep the community's existing variety of households. The hamlet has historically been home to diverse families and families of varying incomes. This aspect of the community's character is as important as its hamlet character and farmland, and should not be lost. Especially important will be a town commitment to community housing.

Community Character. An important element in Bridgehampton's identity is its rural character of historic buildings, open space, and farmland. Land use decisions must be mindful of the importance of farmland preservation, open vistas, and open space. There should be a sharp edge defining the separation between the developed hamlet and its rural



setting. The importance of view of the farmland between Corwith Road and Butter Lane is recognized in this Comprehensive Plan update. The view brings farming directly into the heart of the hamlet, and thus keeps the hamlet's history alive to residents and visitors. It is a meaningful backdrop to the Corwith House and the church, and the Bridgehampton Community House across the street. If developed, site planning on these parcels should preserve to the extent practical the open vista as seen from Montauk Highway behind the

church and the Historical Society. Other heritage resources should be protected using the Comprehensive Plan' recommended strategy of Designated Hamlet Heritage Areas.

Streetscape, Circulation, and Parking. Traffic congestion, unsafe pedestrian circulation, inadequate parking, and little differentiation between the hamlet's commercial corridor and the stretch of Montauk Highway to either side need to be corrected. Vehicle and pedestrian circulation in Bridgehampton's commercial core needs to function efficiently. Measures may include traffic calming, more stoplights, left-turn arrows or prohibition, a roundabout or intersection redesign, closing curb cuts, and adding additional crosswalks and sidewalks. The core should provide a sense of welcome to residents and visitors, and even to those driving through. The hamlet center should be readily and safely walkable from end to end. Improvements in these critical areas will help local convenience retail, improve the shopping and strolling experience, assist local residents in moving around their hometown, and minimize through and local traffic impacts.



The town needs to focus on Bridgehampton-Sag Harbor Turnpike and its changing character, in order to keep this a small-scale residential neighborhood with a few commercial and institutional land uses. While this road remains an important collector, connecting the two hamlets, it is also a residential street and may require additional sidewalks, crosswalks, and traffic calming measures to reduce traffic speed between Montauk Highway and Scuttlehole Road so that this area does not lose its residential character.

Industrial District and LIRR Transit Hub. The industrial area north and south of the LIRR station is ripe for redevelopment. Such development will sustain the importance of this area as a town employment center. The area should be neat and orderly, occupied by

conforming uses, and redeveloped with more efficient site layouts and uses. The town should consider improving the zoning code's flexibility so that new uses and changes in tenant needs on the north side of the tracks can be accommodated more readily and so that property owners can attract new uses. The area around the rail station functions poorly on Friday evenings when traffic and parking spill into the side streets. The town should provide more off-street parking in the area. The area directly south of the LIRR station on Maple Lane is currently occupied by a non-conforming use that is also unsightly. The town will take action to improve the development quality here, by removing the non-conforming uses and encouraging its redevelopment as a mix of better-quality business and public parking.