

## **9. Transportation Element**

### **9.1 VISION STATEMENT**

---

Route 25 and Route 58 should remain Riverhead's primary east-west traffic corridors, while other east-west roads are discouraged from being used as bypass routes. Road improvements throughout Riverhead should be undertaken in a manner that is sensitive to the Town's residential neighborhoods and its historic, scenic, and natural resources. Downtown and the hamlet centers should be oriented to transit, pedestrians, and bicycles, and commercial sites through Riverhead should be accessible via bus, by bike, and on foot.

As industry, commerce, housing, and tourism grow in Riverhead, it is inevitable that demands on the transportation system will increase. As is the case on the rest of Long Island and indeed much of the country, auto travel is the mode of choice for an overwhelming majority of travelers, meaning that Riverhead's roadway system will feel the most immediate impacts of growing travel demands. Most auto traffic in Riverhead is currently concentrated along the Route 58 corridor and in the downtown area.

Riverhead experiences a great deal of both local and regional traffic. The Long Island Expressway (LIE or I-495) dead ends into Route 58, meaning the eastbound traffic is forced to use either Route 58, Route 25, or the combination of Route 24 and Route 105 to reach points farther east on the North Fork. The Route 58 commercial corridor has been developing and will continue to grow into a destination shopping hub, and the North Fork is becoming a major regional tourist destination. These factors, combined with additional residential and commercial development Townwide, are expected to increase travel demand on all east-west corridors in Riverhead east of the LIE. Traffic is also likely to increase in the Calverton-Wading River area, due to the anticipated development of Enterprise Park at Calverton.

Transportation is a regional issue, and effective solutions require regional cooperation. Town-level transportation planning efforts must be coordinated with the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), the Suffolk County Department of Public Works (SCDPW) and the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC). Transit agencies, particularly the Long Island Railroad (LIRR) and Suffolk County Transit, also play a key role in regional transportation issues, and the Town must work closely with those entities in the future.

NYMTC recently initiated the Sustainable East End Development Strategies (SEEDS) initiative, which is intended to develop a consensus among East End towns and villages regarding future development patterns and transportation investments, with the aim to preserve the area's high quality of life. NYSDOT intends to provide as input to the SEEDS initiative the preliminary results of the North Fork Recreational Travel Needs Assessment (NFRTNA). The study area for the NFRTNA includes the eastern part of Riverhead, beginning at the terminus of the LIE. SEEDS is utilizing the Long Island Transportation Plan 2000 Travel Demand Model (LITP2000) to test the preliminary recommendations and scenarios, with the goal of projecting future traffic and transit demand alternatives throughout Riverhead and the East End.

## **9.2 SUMMARY OF BACKGROUND RESEARCH**

---

### **ROADWAY SYSTEM**

There are approximately 215 miles of roads in Riverhead, including 23 miles of State highways, 14 miles of County roads, and 178 miles of Town roadways. State highways include Route 25, which extends the entire length of the Town, and Route 25A, in western Riverhead. The three major County roads are: Route 43 (Northville Turnpike); Route 105 (Cross River Road); and Route 58 (Old Country Road). Route 54 (Hulse Landing Road), and Route 73 (Roanoke Avenue)

account for nearly all of the remaining County road miles in the Town. A list of highway facilities is included in the appendices.

Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) flows for major roadways available from NYSDOT and SCDPW are presented on Figure 9-1. Information shown on the map was obtained from the North Fork Recreational Travel Needs Assessment (NFRTNA), the *Long Island Transportation Plan to Manage Congestion* (LITP 2000), and the SCDPW. Due to North Fork tourism, summer traffic volumes are typically higher than AADT flows. The paragraphs in this section describe Riverhead's major roadway facilities and provide information regarding their prevailing conditions and current function within the roadway system.

### **Long Island Expressway**

The LIE is a six-lane east-west interstate highway that traverses most of Long Island and terminates at Route 58 in Riverhead. The LIE is the primary route by which travelers from the west reach Riverhead and Southold. As originally conceived, the LIE was intended to terminate at Route 48 in Southold (Sound Avenue turns into Middle Road in Mattituck, at which point it is designated as County Route 48.) The NYSDOT has no current plan to extend the facility beyond its present terminus.

There are no congestion issues related to the 1.25-mile stretch of the LIE that runs through Riverhead. Present capacity for that length far exceeds demand and is expected to be more than adequate in the foreseeable future. The existing AADT on this part of the LIE is approximately 18,000 vehicles per day (vpd).

During focus groups, Riverhead residents commented at length about the LIE. Comments ranged from "do absolutely nothing" to "extend the facility to its originally conceived endpoint." Other comments specifically referred to the entrance or exit ramps at Exits 71 and 72. Strictly from a traffic engineering standpoint, the extension of the LIE to Route 48, as originally envisioned, would result in a significant benefit to adjacent surface streets. It would draw much of the through-traffic off of Route 25 and Route 58, and the current use of Sound Avenue and Middle Road as bypass routes would be reduced.

However, there are several good reasons for which an LIE extension is not being recommended as part of this Plan. First, while congestion along Route 58 is a serious problem, the through-traffic that uses Route 58 also brings potential customers into the area, who spend money in the stores and restaurants along the corridor. Diversion of through-traffic could actually harm the financial health of Riverhead's largest and most lucrative business district. Second, the LIE extension would cut through the hearth of Riverhead's agricultural belt, creating additional pressure for both commercial and residential development in an area that is already vulnerable to development. This Element offers a number of alternative strategies for coping with anticipated traffic increases along Route 58 and other east-west routes.

## **State Route 25**

Route 25 is a two-lane east-west highway that extends from the Queensboro Bridge in midtown Manhattan to the easternmost tip of the North Fork — Orient Point. Approximately 17.5 miles of Route 25 lie within Riverhead. The easternmost and westernmost portions of the Riverhead portion of Route 25 are relatively undeveloped, with the central portion running through the highly developed area of downtown Riverhead.

### ***West of the LIE***

In the future, traffic along the westernmost portion of Route 25 will increase as Enterprise Park is developed. Route 25 will provide access to the main entrance of Enterprise Park. According to the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) prepared by the U.S. Navy prior to turning the property over to the Town, the redeveloped Enterprise Park has the potential to generate 4,000 vehicle trips per hour during the weekday peak hour, and 3,000 trips per hour during the Saturday peak hour. On a daily basis, over 42,000 weekday and 33,000 Saturday trips could be generated. Clearly, this has the potential to have major impacts on the transportation system in the vicinity of the property, not only on Route 25, but also Route 25A, Manorville-Wading River Road, and Swan Pond Road/River Road.

In order to examine the impact of this future traffic, the FEIS analyzed future traffic volumes at four locations along Route 25, namely at the following intersections: (1) Rocky Point Road; (2) Edwards Avenue; (3) North Country Road; and (4) Manorville Road. The results of this analysis indicate that operating conditions would deteriorate to the extent that unacceptable levels of service would prevail during all weekday peak hours at all four locations. With the exception of the intersection of North Country Road, the same deterioration of levels of service is expected to occur during the Saturday peak. The FEIS goes on to suggest minor intersection widenings at these locations would only marginally improve levels of service. A widening of the entire roadway segment will eventually be needed. According to the NYSDOT, an increase in peak hour traffic volumes of only 1,000 vehicles would trigger the need to widen Route 25. Thus, widening would be required well before Enterprise Park is built out to its full potential.

### ***LIE to Downtown***

Capacity deficiencies in this area are not apparent. That is, traffic flows relatively free of congestion. The Peconic River, which is included on the list of waterways protected by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, is in close proximity to this stretch of Route 25. Since the Act prohibits nearly all types of development within 500 feet of a protected river, development opportunities along this part of Route 25 are extremely limited. Sources of future traffic increases would most likely lie outside the Route 25 corridor. A great deal of through-truck activity would be expected, due to existing industrial uses in the area between Route 25 and Route 58. Trucks also use the Route as an alternative to both Route 24 and Route 58.

Figure 9-1: Existing Traffic Volumes

Back of Figure

### ***Downtown***

In the hamlet center, Route 25 runs along Main Street and serves as a main traffic conduit through the downtown area. Many important cultural and civic institutions are located on or just off Main Street, including Town Hall, the Atlantis Aquarium, the Suffolk Theater, the Riverhead Free Library, the Suffolk County Historical Society, and the East End Arts Council. The County courts are located just north of Main Street on Griffing Street. The downtown commercial core is found on Main Street as well, with ground-floor shops and restaurants lining the sidewalks.

Congestion regularly occurs along Route 25 in the downtown area due to friction from parking maneuvers, turning vehicles at intersections and driveways, and pedestrian and bicycle activity. Although some of these friction factors can be improved, major improvements in downtown traffic flow should not be expected. Road widening, intersection reconfiguration, or other fundamental alignment changes could not be accomplished without significant disruption to downtown businesses, cultural facilities, parking, pedestrian activity, and the historic building fabric. Nevertheless, some friction factors (especially related to parking) can be reduced, helping to relieve some of the problem.

Travel time measurements taken along Route 58 and Route 25 between the LIE and Route 105 indicate that Route 25 has become the faster of the two routes. The original bypass route, Route 58, has become congested to the point that it is now faster to travel on Route 25, the very facility the bypass was constructed to relieve. The solution lies in capacity improvements to Route 58, which would attract through-vehicles back to the appropriate facility.

The intersection having the highest level of congestion and the lowest level of service in downtown Riverhead is the Main Street-Peconic Avenue-Roanoke Avenue intersection. As discussed in Chapter 6, the Business Districts Element, and the Downtown Revitalization of August 2000, the Town is pursuing the concept of extending Court Street to Roanoke Avenue, which would allow many people (Court workers and visitors, weekend visitors, people passing through) to avoid that intersection.

### ***East of Downtown***

The portion of Route 25 between downtown and Route 58 rarely experiences congestion, except when Route 58 is congested and vehicles are spilling over onto alternate routes. Capacity improvements on Route 58 should result in decreased delays and faster travel times on that facility, which will in turn reduce the number of through-vehicles using Route 25. A small segment of Route 25 links Route 58 to Route 105, inheriting all of the traffic leaving Route 58 and headed east to the North Fork. Congestion on this segment typically resembles what can be found on Route 58. At the Route 105 intersection, some of the traffic goes north to Sound Avenue, and some continues east on Route 25.

## **Speed Limits within the Town of Riverhead**

Figure 9-2 depicts the speed limits for a majority of the roadways in the Town of Riverhead. There are four roadways that have 55 MPH speed limits in the Town: 1) Route 25A, between Sound Avenue and Route 25; 2) Route 25, from the Brookhaven Town line to Route 58, and from just east of Jamesport to the Southold Town line; 3) the LIE; and 4) Cross River Drive.

### **State Route 25A**

Route 25A is a two-lane east-west highway that splits from Route 25 in western Long Island and then runs along most of the north shore. Route 25A rejoins Route 25 in Riverhead, near the planned entrance of Enterprise Park. About 2.75 miles of Route 25A lie within Riverhead.

### **County Route 43 (Northville Turnpike)**

Northville Turnpike is a two-lane north-south roadway that runs from Roanoke Avenue in downtown Riverhead to Sound Avenue. All 3.5 miles of Route 43 lie within Riverhead. Some vehicles destined to the North Fork from downtown Riverhead and Route 58 use Route 43 to reach Sound Avenue, which they then follow into Southold. Some northbound vehicles on Route 105 destined for the North Fork use a short segment of Route 43 to reach Sound Avenue.

### **County Route 58**

Route 58 is an east-west roadway that extends from the easternmost terminus of the LIE to Route 25, a distance of about 4 miles. In most places, Route 58 is a two-lane roadway with a center lane dedicated for left-turn movements. In some locations, particularly the westernmost section near the LIE and Tanger Mall, the roadway has been widened to four lanes with dedicated turning pockets.

Route 58 was originally built as a bypass to Route 25, but it experiences a great deal more congestion nowadays than Route 25. Higher levels of congestion are attributable to a variety of factors: commercial development along Route 58, increasing tourism on the North Fork, increasing residential development in Riverhead and Southold, as well as national trends, such as increased vehicle ownership and vehicle miles traveled. That is, even if no development had occurred in Riverhead or Southold, traffic congestion still would have gotten worse, simply because people are using their cars more and more.

As part of the NFRTNA, through-traffic (i.e., unrelated to the commercial businesses) makes up a significant amount of the volumes along Route 58. NYSDOT's long-range transportation plan for Long Island, an extensive origin-destination survey was conducted much of it focused on eastern Riverhead. Motorists were asked to fill out postcards with questionnaires. The survey results indicate that many of the motorists on Route 58 were destined to points in Southold, including the Cross Sound Ferry Terminal.



Figure 9-2: Speed Limits within the Town

Back of Figure

During peak periods, traffic volumes are high and travel speeds are low. Congestion is bad enough that drivers familiar with the area routinely use other roads as bypass routes. Middle Road and Sound Avenue have become the bypass routes of choice for many people, but neither road is very well-suited for bypass traffic. Because these roads and intersections have not been designed to handle heavy traffic volumes, safety has degraded. Both roadways are lined with residential and agricultural uses that are being negatively impacted by high-volume, high-speed traffic.

- Sound Avenue is a two-lane roadway, with significant horizontal and vertical curvature and old growth trees along many segments, resulting in poor sight distance for stopping. Shoulders are narrow or nonexistent; there are few sidewalks; and there are many agriculture-related businesses (such as farm stands), some of which do not have well laid out driveways or parking lots.
- Middle Road is slightly better from an engineering and aesthetic perspective. However, Middle Road has its current eastern terminus at Route 58, so traffic rejoins Route 58 west of Route 105, displacing but not resolving the traffic problem. Also, some of the roads that connect Middle Road with Route 58 (i.e., Mill Road and Osborn Avenue) have a northwest-southeast orientation, making the connection to Route 58 somewhat circuitous.

Rather than diverting more traffic to these bypass routes, this Plan recommends expanding and improving Route 58, so as to better funnel traffic along that corridor. Capacity improvements along Route 58 would start to attract vehicles back off of these bypass routes. Traffic calming on the bypass roads is also recommended in conjunction with improvements to Route 58.

### ***Friction from Commercial Development***

For many years, the western end of Route 58 has been turning into a regional shopping destination, with the ongoing success of Tanger Mall and the recent development of the Riverhead Centre. This activity is beginning to attract synergistic uses such as restaurants. The newly proposed land use designations for the western end of Route 58 (see Chapter 2, Land Use Element) confirm this direction. As a result of new development, driveways are proliferating, most of which allow for both right and left turning movements. Allowing full turning movements creates more traffic friction.

### **County Route 73 (Roanoke Avenue)**

Roanoke Avenue is a two-lane north south roadway that extends from Main Street to Sound Avenue. Roanoke Avenue intersects with Route 58 at a four-leg traffic circle that is extremely well-known and loved by many in Riverhead. During peak times, considerable congestion occurs at the traffic signal. Traffic volumes along Roanoke Avenue are heavier north of Route 58 than south, partially reflecting the use of Roanoke Avenue as a bypass route to reach Middle Road and Sound Avenue.

### **County Route 105 (Cross River Drive)**

A major north-south highway, Route 105 extends from County Route 104 in Southampton to Sound Avenue. It has four lanes from Route 104 to Union Avenue and two lanes from Union Avenue to Sound Avenue. The Riverhead stretch of Route 105 is about 4 miles long. It allows high-speed north-south movement and functions as a bypass to downtown Riverhead and Route 58. People traveling eastward on the LIE can — instead of taking Exit 72 onto Route 58 — take Exit 71, follow State Route 24 eastward through Flanders, and take Route 105 north to either Route 25 or Sound Avenue.

### **Middle Road**

Middle Road is a two-lane east-west Town roadway that extends about 4.75 miles from Service Road A (north of Route 25, located about 0.25 miles west of the LIE terminus) to Doctor's Path (north of Route 25). Existing traffic volumes are relatively low, but as noted, drivers familiar with Riverhead use Middle Road as a bypass route.

### **Sound Avenue**

Sound Avenue is a two-lane east-west Town roadway that runs from Route 25A in Wading River to Route 48 in Southold. Approximately 14.5 miles of Sound Avenue lie within the Town of Riverhead. Currently, Sound Avenue has experienced relatively light traffic volumes (7,200 vpd), although some passing cars experience delays as a result of cars and farm equipment pulling on and off the road.

In recent years, the road has experienced increases in traffic volume, because tourists increasingly use it to reach the Long Island wine country. As noted, it is also used more and more as a bypass for Route 58. Although the existing right of way is 66 feet wide, the pavement is between 28 and 30 feet wide for most of its length. Few sidewalks and shoulder areas are provided. In some cases, landscape features of the homes such as fences and plantings encroach on the Town right of way. The road has significant horizontal and vertical curvature, which limits stopping sight distances. There have been a number of accidents recently on Sound Avenue, some involving seasonal agriculture workers walking or bicycling along the road.

Sound Avenue is known and beloved by Town residents as a bucolic country road. The road is lined with old trees and historic homes, farms, and farmstands. In 1974, as part of the U.S. bicentennial celebration, the road was designated an historic corridor by the Department of State Parks and Historic Preservation. During focus groups and CAC meetings, residents have repeatedly expressed the wish to maintain the character and beauty of the road.

### **Swan Pond Road & River Road**

Swan Pond Road is a 2.25-mile, two-lane, east-west roadway that runs from Wading River-Manorville Road to River Road. River Road is a 5-mile, two-lane, east-west roadway that

extends from Old River Road to Route 25. Swan Pond Road intersects River Road south of Enterprise Park at Calverton. The two roads function as a single east-west corridor. In the 1997 Final Environmental Impact Study (FEIS) for Enterprise Park, Swan Pond Road combined with River Road is referred to as "Grumman Boulevard". It is envisioned as a major connecting roadway between Enterprise Park and the LIE.

### **Wading River-Manorville Road**

This two-lane, north-south roadway extends from River Road to North Country Road. All 4.0 miles of the road lie within Riverhead. Wading River-Manorville Road provides a connection between the Wading River and Route 25 hamlets and Enterprise Park. It also provides access to local roads in Manorville, which connect to Exits 69 and 70 of the LIE.

### **Edwards Avenue**

Edwards Avenue is a two-lane, north-south roadway that extends from the LIE to Silver Beach Lane. Approximately 4.0 miles of Edwards Avenue lies within Riverhead. Edwards Avenue is approximately 1.25 miles east of Enterprise Park. It is expected that a significant number of travelers will use Edwards Avenue to access new development. Due to increased traffic volume on the roadway, Edwards Avenue will need to be widened and the intersection of Edwards Avenue and Sound Avenue improved.

### **Doctor's Path**

Doctor's Path is a two-lane north-south roadway that extends from Route 25 to Sound Avenue and is about 2.3 miles in length. At the Route 25 intersection, two other roadways converge as well — Route 58 and Middle Road. Four busy roadways, therefore, meet in very close proximity to each other. The odd geometric configuration of this intersection, combined with high traffic volumes, makes some lane changes and turning movements difficult. Improvements to the intersection have recently been completed.

### **LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD**

The Long Island Rail Road (LIRR), a subsidiary of the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA), provides passenger rail service to Suffolk County, Nassau County, Queens, Brooklyn, and Manhattan. At major transit hubs in Nassau County and the New York City area, LIRR passengers can transfer to Long Island buses, New York City buses, or the New York City subway. At Penn Station in midtown Manhattan, LIRR passengers can also transfer to NJ Transit and Amtrak.

Diesel trains operate between Ronkonkoma and either Yaphank, Riverhead, or Greenport. Persons traveling from the North Fork to destinations west of Ronkonkoma must transfer from the diesel trains to electric-powered trains at Ronkonkoma Station. Transfers are timed, such that trains bound for City Terminal Zone stations (i.e., Penn Station in Manhattan; Flatbush Avenue

in Brooklyn; and Long Island City and Hunterspoint Avenue in Queens) are waiting for transferring patrons.

The only LIRR station in Riverhead is located in downtown on Railroad Street between Osborn Avenue and Griffing Avenue. The station building was recently renovated, and there are plans to improve access for buses, cars, bicycles, and pedestrians, making it a fully multi-modal transportation center. On weekdays, four westbound and three eastbound trains serve Riverhead. On weekends, two westbound and two eastbound trains provide service. Although several Suffolk County Transit buses stop at the station, there is minimal coordination of train and bus schedules.

### **Transit Ridership Patterns**

The LIRR is predominantly a commuter railroad. The LIRR's *East End Transportation Study* indicates that 64 percent of the railroad's total ridership consists of commuters who ride the trains daily. However, there are few commuters who take the train from Riverhead Station. Passenger counts indicate that only 18 passengers boarded westbound LIRR trains during the weekday morning peak at all the North Fork stations combined (Riverhead, Mattituck, Southold and Greenport), while more than 6,000 boarded at Ronkonkoma alone.

There are several reasons for the low levels of ridership. Riverhead's distance from New York City means that the Town has relatively fewer resident traveling into the city for work, compared to towns in Nassau County and western Suffolk County. Because of traffic and parking constraints in New York City, the people from Long Island who work there tend to rely on the train for the commute. Most Riverhead residents, in contrast, work in suburban locations in Suffolk County (96 percent in 1990). Most of these locations have relatively less traffic congestion and abundant, free parking, so most employed residents of Riverhead (76 percent in 1990) drive to work.

Another significant factor contributing to the low ridership level is the infrequent train service west of Ronkonkoma. On weekdays, there are only four trains running into New York City over the course of the day, with only three trains returning to Riverhead. By way of comparison, Ronkonkoma station runs about 5 trains every hour during the morning peak. Some residents of Riverhead and other East End towns, therefore, drive to Ronkonkoma Station and take the train from there.

Infrequent service not only dampens commuter use of Riverhead Station, but also tourist use. Most recreational trips to and from the North Fork currently are made by car. Recreational trips take place in both eastbound and westbound directions, that is, both to and from Riverhead. North Fork residents travel into New York City for day trips and long weekends, and the residents of New York City, Nassau County, and western Suffolk County travel out to the North Fork for recreational trips. Weekend service from Riverhead Station is limited to two trains per day in each direction (i.e., New York City and Greenport). No additional summertime service is provided on the Greenport branch. Because train service is inconvenient, it is not extensively

used for recreational trips. During focus groups, participants expressed a desire for more frequent train service and better scheduling, primarily to facilitate weekend trips into New York City.

### **Infrastructure Improvement Needs**

If train service were to be increased to the North Fork, some critical infrastructure improvements would be necessary. According to the LIRR's *East End Transportation Study*, the main line of the LIRR east of Ronkonkoma has only a single track. Passing sidings, where provided, are equipped with hand-thrown switches, instead of remote controlled switches found elsewhere on the system. In addition, there is no signal system, a condition referred to as "dark territory." In dark territory, train control depends on verbal communication and written authorization between train crews and dispatchers. These situations combine to make it extremely difficult to run more than one train at a time on the single-track portion of the railroad, especially in opposite directions.

The LIRR is planning improvements to the system, which include the planned implementation of a Communications Based Train Control (CBTC) signal system, which, if successful, will allow for much more efficient train movements. In addition, the railroad has plans to install power-operated switches, controlled from a central location. Pilot implementation of the CBTC system is included in the railroads 2000-2004 capital program, as is the beginning of the installation of the power switches.

In recent years, the success of Tanger Mall led to discussion of an idea for a new train station adjacent to the mall. Construction of a new train station would be an extremely expensive undertaking. Meanwhile, it is questionable what levels of ridership could be expected. Outlet mall patrons tend to make large purchases, and cars are useful for taking their purchases home, meaning that interest in taking the train to the mall would tend to be low. In light of the needs of the rest of the LIRR system, including the downtown station, building a new station near Tanger Mall would not be cost effective.

### **SUFFOLK COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM**

Suffolk County Transit (SCT) has five bus routes in Riverhead:

- **Bus Route 8A**, serving Calverton, Riverhead, and Suffolk County Community College (SCCC). Runs between Calverton Hills and SCCC East. Stops include Central Suffolk Hospital, downtown Riverhead, and Riverhead County Center. Runs once every hour.
- **Bus Route S-58**, serving East Northport, Smithtown, Selden, Coram, Calverton, and Riverhead. Major stops include Huntington Square Mall, Mayfair Shopping Center, Smithtown Station (LIRR), Smith Haven Mall, Splish Splash, Tanger Mall, Riverhead Station, and the County Courthouse. Runs roughly once every hour.

- **Bus Route S-62**, serving Hauppauge, Smith Haven Mall, and Riverhead. Runs between the Hauppauge Industrial Complex and Riverhead County Center. Stops include the government offices in Hauppauge, Smith Haven Mall, and Tanger Mall. Runs once every hour.
- **Bus Route S-66**, serving Patchogue, Center Moriches, and Riverhead. Runs between the Patchogue railroad station and Riverhead County Center. Stops include Bellport, Shirley, Mastic, and Center Moriches. Runs once every hour.
- **Bus Route S-90**, serving Center Moriches and Riverhead. Runs between the Center Moriches railroad station and Riverhead County Center. Stops include Eastport, Speonk, Westhampton, and Quogue. Runs roughly once every two hours.
- **Bus Route S-92**, serving Orient Point and East Hampton. Runs between Orient Point ferry dock and the East Hampton railroad station. Stops include Greenport, Mattituck, downtown Riverhead, Riverhead County Center, and Sag Harbor. Runs once every hour.

Suffolk County Accessible Transportation (SCAT) provides permanently or temporarily disabled passengers curbside public bus service to any location within 0.75 miles of a Suffolk County public bus route. SCAT also provides rides to the companions and personal care attendants of disabled passengers. Reservations must be made one to seven days in advance of the trip by calling the Reservation Office at 631-491-6500.

## **BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES**

Pedestrian and bicycle circulation in the Riverhead is limited by a lack of continuous and safe routes. Sidewalks are not provided in all residential neighborhoods or business districts. The location in Town with the most significant pedestrian traffic is the downtown area, where the sidewalks can be made more pedestrian-friendly. Chapter 6, the Business Districts Element, includes extensive recommendations for improving the pedestrian environment not only in downtown but in all business districts.

Bicycle routes in Riverhead are few. The only official bicycle route is a two-mile, unpaved path in Wildwood State Park. A map of unofficial bicycle route designations is provided in *Your Guide to Long Island Bikeways*. Although this is a NYSDOT publication, designations shown are the unapproved recommendations of local bicyclists. NYMTC provides a map of existing and proposed bike routes in their Regional Transportation Plan. Chapter 11, the Parks and Recreation Element, lays out strategies for expanding the bicycle network in Riverhead.

Importantly, NYMTC has recently issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the *Long Island Non-Motorized Transportation Study*, the purpose of which is to develop a comprehensive master plan for existing and proposed non-motorized transportation facilities on Long Island. This plan is to identify and prioritize programs that should be completed in the region that would support pedestrian travel, bicycling, and other non-motorized modes as alternatives and complements to vehicular modes.



## AIR TRAVEL

Riverhead Airpark, which exclusively serves private planes, is located at the intersection of Sound Avenue and Route 105. A publicly-owned private use 10,000 foot runway serves industrial land uses within the Enterprise Park at Calverton. Long Island MacArthur Airport (Islip) is the closest airport to Riverhead that provides passenger service.

### 9.3 GOALS & POLICIES

---

#### **Goal 9.1: Reduce traffic congestion and improve traffic flows along Route 58, while improving the aesthetic quality of the roadway.**

The intent is to have Route 58 continue to serve as the main east-west corridor for regional commercial and east bound through-traffic. Focusing roadway improvements along Route 58 will help improve traffic flow and reduce the tendency of through-traffic to use local streets and rural corridors as bypass routes. In addition, the roadway improvements will help maintain good vehicular access to the commercial establishments along the road. Figure 9-3 illustrates various roadway improvements that are being considered along Route 58 and Middle Road.

***Policy 9.1A: Work with Suffolk County to develop a plan to convert the entire length of Route 58 (including the portion of Route 25 that links Route 58 to Route 105) into a four-lane roadway, with a raised, landscaped median, and turn pockets at major intersections and entrances to major shopping centers.***

Expansion of Route 58 to two lanes in each direction will essentially double its carrying capacity. The center turning lane will be eliminated and replaced with a center median. The primary purpose of the median is to reduce traffic “friction” resulting from left-turn movements across the flow of traffic. With a median, friction would be reduced in the following ways:

- Left-turn movements would only be permitted at signalized intersections at cross streets or major entrances to shopping centers. Minor driveways and side streets would be restricted to right turns in and out only.
- Access to properties on the opposite side of the street would be accomplished by making u-turns at signalized intersections, which would be provided with appropriate turning lanes and signal phasing to facilitate the movement. Designated intersections would provide shoulders wide enough to allow trucks to make u-turns, while trucks would be prohibited from making u-turns at other intersections.

To accommodate the widening project, the existing right-of-way (ROW) would have to be expanded only about 8 feet. The roadway is currently narrower than the public ROW. To obtain this additional 8 feet, the County would have to condemn those areas alongside the existing ROW. Also, through site plan review, the Town can require newly developed properties to dedicate land along the road frontage to accommodate the widening project.

The widening of Route 58 would be a County project and would be funded through the County. Funding for the project may not be immediately available due to current economic conditions, but the Town should be ready with a plan when funding does become available.

It is not necessary to expand the short segment of Route 25 between Route 58 and Route 105 to three lanes in each direction, as some have suggested. According to traffic volume information presented in Figure 9-1, there is no notable increase in traffic volumes at this point, despite the fact that Route 25 and Route 58 converge.

***Policy 9.1B: Attractively plant the raised median along Route 58 with native species, and install artwork, decorative signage, and lighting that reflects the Town's character.***

In many parts of the country, medians are nothing more than reinforced concrete barriers. For Route 58, the recommendation is for a median wide enough to be planted with trees, shrubbery, and flowers, adding a splash of greenery to the Route 58 landscape. The median would also provide room for artwork, street lamps, street signs, and identifying signs, all attractively designed. The median should be irrigated to maintain the landscaping, and business, volunteer, or community groups could be organized to participate in maintenance efforts. The County and Town could approach local businesses to contribute funding toward the construction and maintenance of the median. The proposed median would be approximately 14 feet wide.

The widening of Route 58 and the establishment of the planted median create an ideal opportunity to bury utility lines. Utility companies have been resistant to undergrounding in the past due to installation and maintenance costs. Undergrounding at the time of the widening project would be relatively cost-effective, because the utility poles would have to be moved anyway, and the County would already be ripping up and replacing the pavement. The County and the Town should work with utility companies to explore ways to better facilitate access to underground utility lines for maintenance purposes.

***Policy 9.1C: Widen the rotary at the intersection of Route 58 and Roanoke Avenue simultaneously with the Route 58 widening.***

The inventory and analysis phase of this Transportation Element indicated that a low level of service exists at the intersection of the rotary and Roanoke Avenue, both of which are County highways. It was further noted that the Rotary is a place of historic and civic pride. The use of rotaries at the intersections of arterial roadways has recently been demonstrated as an effective traffic control device to both minimize motor vehicle traffic congestion and bring about "traffic calming." The recent construction of a rotary within the Village of Huntington, NY has been proven effective in the aforementioned.

At such time that the County of Suffolk improves Route 58 to a four-lane roadway, the County should prepare a taking map and roadway design, in order to appropriately widen the circle. Further, the circle should be landscaped and improved to be the focal point of County Route 58.

Figure 9-3: Roadway Improvements

Back of Figure

***Policy 9.1D: Improve signal synchronization along Route 58, and provide signal preemption for emergency vehicles.***

Improved signal synchronization can continue to enhance traffic flows along the corridor. Signal preemption for emergency vehicles protects public safety, both by increasing response times for ambulances and reducing the potential for accidents between ambulances and traffic.

***Policy 9.1E: Work with the Town of Southampton, the State, and the County to encourage the use of LIE Exit 71, Route 24, and Route 105 as an alternate bypass route to Route 58.***

These roads experience relatively little congestion compared to Route 58. Congestion at the intersection of Peconic Avenue and Flanders Road, where a traffic circle is located, opposite downtown Riverhead, should be addressed.

**Goal 9.2: Discourage use of east-west Town roads as bypasses to Route 58.**

***Policy 9.2A: Do not widen Sound Avenue, Middle Road, Northville Turnpike, or Church Lane to more than two travel lanes (one lane in each direction).***

These roads are used as bypass routes for Route 58. By focusing roadway improvements on Route 58, the intent is to have Route 58 serve as the Town's major east-west traffic corridor and to discourage use of the alternate routes. The addition or expansion of emergency shoulders and the widening of intersections for turn pockets should be permitted, as those improvements help increase safety and reduce traffic friction.

It is not anticipated at the present time that road widening would be necessary on these roadways to accommodate future development. As a result of the proposed change in zoning from one-acre to two-acre lots (see Chapter 3, the Agriculture Element), traffic flows Townwide are expected to be less than would have been anticipated under the current zoning. Moreover, under the proposed Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program, this Comprehensive Plan could reduce the anticipated future traffic flows on Middle Road, Northville Turnpike, and Church Lane. On Sound Avenue, certain areas north of the roadway will have increased development as a result of the TDR program, but the area south of Sound Avenue will have less. There will, therefore, be no net gain in housing along the corridor. That is, much of the development that would have been found south of Sound Avenue will be shifted to the north on appropriate parcels or to other parts of Town. If evolving development patterns result in unacceptable congestion levels on these roads, however, the Town should revisit the issue.

***Policy 9.2B: Explore the potential for using traffic-calming techniques on Route 58's bypass and side roads in order to encourage traffic to be diverted back down to Route 58.***

Additional policies to this affect are discussed under Goal 9.12. On side roads, traffic calming techniques should, if possible, only impact traffic leaving Route 58. Traffic going toward Route 58 should not be reduced in speed or flow.

**Goal 9.3: On an ongoing basis, work to reduce traffic congestion on roads throughout Riverhead.**

***Policy 9.3A: Encourage NYSDOT to conduct a study of the Route 25 corridor between the Brookhaven border and the LIE.***

NYSDOT has been willing to fund a Calverton Corridor and Local Roads System Assessment for the Town. The assessment would: (1) Characterize the impacts of development at and ancillary to the Enterprise Park; (2) Evaluate and identify improvements to State and local roads that would mitigate these impacts; (3) Evaluate and identify alternative land uses and development patterns that might mitigate or alleviate these impacts; and (4) Discuss potential funding strategies for the local system improvements. If undertaken, the Town should also make sure that the State contemplates the timing of roadway improvements, such that they are provided at the time when they will be needed (i.e. when development of a threshold amount occurs in Enterprise Park).

The NYSDOT continues to feel this type of study is needed, but the funding that was originally made available was re-allocated elsewhere. The Town should urge NYSDOT to locate alternative sources of funding for this study. The Town can consider offering to participate financially in the study, perhaps through a local matching program, or by undertaking some of the study requirements on its own, such as traffic data collection.

The section of Route 25 east of the LIE would be expected to experience a reduction in traffic volumes as a result of improvements along the Route 58 corridor. If such improvements do not materialize, the section of Route 25 between the LIE and downtown should be included in the study as well.

***Policy 9.3B: Ensure that Enterprise Park at Calverton is given consideration in the Sustainable East End Development Strategies (SEEDS) initiative.***

SEEDS is being conducted under the auspices of the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC), the quasi-public clearinghouse for federal transportation funds for the New York Metropolitan region, which includes all of Long Island. In particular, the SEEDS initiative is recommending and modeling several transit-focused and roadway focused investment scenarios. Enterprise Park at Calverton is proposed to be a regional intermodal hub in Transportation Scenario 3 of the SEEDS initiative. This would involve upgrading the non-operational rail spur at Calverton to accommodate transit rail service. An intermodal hub would provide several different services, such as rail service, bus service, and roadway connections, and combine all possible transit options at one location, with the goal of increasing frequency, convenience, connectivity and coordinated scheduling. The Calverton intermodal hub would be part of a regional system that creates a hierarchy of intermodal hubs throughout the SEEDS study area.

Transportation Scenario 5, which proposes large-scale investments, tests the idea of providing new rail infrastructure that would connect the proposed regional hub at Calverton to a proposed regional hub at Gabreski Airport. This would increase frequency of service on the LIRR, while

creating two major western terminuses for the SEEDS study area with direct connection to all other transit systems west of the study area.

In addition, the SEEDS initiative is proposing a new interchange connecting the Calverton regional hub to the LIE. The interchange would include signage and roadway improvements providing direct access to Enterprise Park.<sup>1</sup>

***Policy 9.3C: Continue to assess the traffic impacts of new development, and require developers to provide roadway improvements and/or other transportation amenities to mitigate those impacts.***

Provision of transit services and facilities, pedestrian-oriented development patterns, and pedestrian and bicycle amenities can help mitigate future traffic impacts. Although such improvements would not completely eliminate the need for roadway improvements in many cases, they can contribute to the mitigation effort.

***Policy 9.3D: Continue to consider road improvement projects Townwide on a case-by-case basis, in order to address issues of traffic congestion, but avoid road widening along scenic corridors.***

This policy is intended to balance the need for traffic relief with the need for scenic preservation throughout the Town. In conjunction with new development proposals, the Town should continue to evaluate potential traffic impacts and the need for potential roadway improvements.

***Policy 9.3E: Through the site plan review process, require cross access agreements and linked parking lots between new commercial development and adjacent commercial sites.***

If adjacent sites are vacant but zoned for commercial development, parking areas shall be designed such that a connecting driveway can be installed when the vacant site is developed. Further, the site plan approval for new commercial development should require a covenant that provides for unrestricted entry into such development by public transportation.

***Policy 9.3F: Either require or condemn cross-access easements for existing adjacent commercial uses along Route 58 and in the hamlet centers.***

Some CAC members expressed concern about the feasibility of cross-access easements because there have been some unfruitful attempts at establishing such easements in the past. Today, cross-access easements are much more common, and developers are more accustomed to accommodating them. Also, people are willing to pay more for access nowadays, because of higher property values, stronger development pressures, and heavier traffic volumes.

---

<sup>1</sup> SEEDS "Transportation Technical Session" Presentation, 12 May 2003, AKRF, Inc.  
<http://www.seedsproject.com/downloads.html>

**Goal 9.4: Provide a Townwide roadway system that ensures the safety of cars, trucks, buses, pedestrians, and bicycles.**

According to NYSDOT and SCDPW, traffic volumes on Riverhead's roadways are expected to grow at an annual rate of about 2 percent in coming years. In some areas of Riverhead, where significant development is expected to take place, the rate of increase may be higher. The Town has the opportunity to avoid the pitfalls that have beguiled much of the rest of Long Island, by promoting the use of alternate modes of travel through transportation investments and land use and development policies (see Goal 9.13). At the same time, roadway improvements will continue to be needed, and safety is the primary concern.

***Policy 9.4A: Work with State and County agencies to improve roads and intersections with safety deficiencies, while being respectful of adjacent neighborhoods and businesses and helping preserve Town's natural, scenic, and historic resources.***

In places where pedestrians have been at risk from high-speed traffic, appropriate improvements (e.g., lighting, sidewalks, crosswalks, etc.) should be made to promote safety. For example, in some parts of Riverhead, farm workers walking alongside rural roads have faced precarious conditions. At the same time, the Town should ensure that roadway improvements are compatible with the character of the area. Lighting along a scenic rural corridor, for example, could be tailored to the environment by setting the street lamps at a lower luminous intensity; installing antique or otherwise well-designed lampposts; or opting for gravel rather than paved sidewalks.

***Policy 9.4B: Undertake a full topographic survey (roadway profile) of Sound Avenue and Middle Road to identify locations with safety problems and recommend improvements.***

Many parts of Sound Avenue are excessively steep or have sharp corners that create safety hazards. Improvements to such sections of the roadway may be necessary. To the greatest extent possible, any improvements should be done within the existing right of way. Great care should be taken in preserving the trees and other landscape features along the road. During the course of regular maintenance of the roadway, minor widening and pavement markings should be employed to provide as wide a shoulder as possible.

***Policy 9.4C: Provide for a uniform design of street signs on public highways.***

***Policy 9.4D: Explore the need for signal preemption for emergency vehicles at high-volume intersections throughout Riverhead.***

**Goal 9.5: Continue to support and encourage passenger use of the Long Island Railroad and Riverhead Station.**



***Policy 9.5A: Work with the LIRR to improve and increase rail service east of Ronkonkoma to the North Fork.***

Enhanced service east of Ronkonkoma could increase utilization of North Fork stations, including Riverhead Station, by both commuters and tourists. Tourism use would include both North Fork residents who want to travel into New York City, and residents of the city and western Long Island who wish to visit the North Fork. Improved transit service to the North Fork is justifiable since all of Suffolk County is located within the MTA service area and contributes to MTA revenue via sales taxes and mortgage recording taxes.<sup>2</sup>

***Policy 9.5B: Work with the LIRR to increase passenger use of the North Fork line for tourism and recreational purposes.***

The Town should seek to provide tourism-oriented rail services, based on the model currently employed on the South Fork. The LIRR currently provides train service to the South Fork that is oriented toward recreational users. This service, known as the "cannonball" provides non-stop service between Jamaica Station and Westhampton on Friday evenings to accommodate weekenders heading to the Hamptons. Additional policies related to the concept of tourism-oriented rail service are included in Chapter 6, the Business Districts Element, and Chapter 7, the Economic Development Element. The construction of a Jamesport Station is a notable improvement.

***Policy 9.5C: Proceed with plans to establish a multi-modal transportation center adjacent to and including the refurbished Riverhead Station building.***

The Town has been awarded funding to develop a transportation center in and around the existing train station in downtown Riverhead. Conceptual plans for the center provide increased parking for the railroad station and the expanded County Court facilities, a place for bus stops and shelters, enhanced pedestrian facilities, secure bicycle storage, and a source of real time transit information, perhaps through an electronic link to the NYSDOT's INFORM system. Design of this project is scheduled for 2002.

***Policy 9.5D: Place trailblazer signs around the downtown area directing people to Riverhead Station.***

Signage will help patrons find the station and call attention to the presence of rail service. Locations for trailblazer signs include Main Street in downtown, Route 25 east and west of downtown, Route 58, the Exits 71 and 72 off the LIE, and Route 24 in Southampton.

---

<sup>2</sup> MTA/New York City Transit, Manhattan, East Side Alternatives Major Investment Study/Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Chapter 17: Cost and Financial Analysis, 1997.

***Policy 9.5E: Make train information more readily available to residents and visitors.***

Route and schedule information should be made available in Town Hall, the Riverhead Free Library, the Atlantis Aquarium, downtown restaurants, Tanger Mall, Splish Splash, and other attractions Townwide.

***Policy 9.5F: Work with the LIRR and Suffolk County Transit to coordinate bus and train schedules.***

Better coordination would encourage increased use of both trains and buses by reducing wait time for transferring patrons.

***Policy 9.5G: As a temporary measure, work with the LIRR and Suffolk County Transit to explore the feasibility of running express bus service to Ronkonkoma Station.***

Until such time that train service east of Ronkonkoma Station can be improved and increased, express bus service could increase the utilization of train service for the commute to work. Prior to initiating the new service, the Town should work with the LIRR and Suffolk County Transit assess the potential use of an express bus line.

Running express bus service from Riverhead would require a park-and-ride lot somewhere in Town, ideally located in close proximity to one of the LIE entrance ramps. If express bus service is provided, the Town should work with Suffolk County Transit to identify a suitable site for a park-and-ride lot. As an alternative to building a new parking lot, a shared parking agreement with one or more commercial sites along Route 58 could be considered. Any park-and-ride facility should provide secure bicycle storage, in addition to vehicular parking.

***Policy 9.5H: Employ the necessary Town resources to implement the conclusions and recommendations of the Sustainable East End Development Strategies (SEEDS) initiative.***

**Goal 9.6: Support and encourage freight use of the Long Island Rail Road.**

***Policy 9.6A: Work with the LIRR to reestablish rail freight operations to Enterprise Park.***

The freight operations of the LIRR have been privatized and are currently operated by New York and Atlantic Railways, a subsidiary of Anacostia and Pacific Railroads. A rail spur and switches already exist, but will likely need refurbishing. Freight operations could reduce some of the need for trucking activity, with beneficial impacts on Town roadways.

**Goal 9.7: Continue to support and encourage use of Suffolk County Transit buses.**

***Policy 9.7A: Strongly encourage Suffolk County Transit to increase service along existing bus routes in Riverhead.***

The Town should work with the County to reduce bus headways (i.e., wait time) on the existing bus routes presently operating in Riverhead. The minimum headway on any route currently is one hour. During the public outreach effort for this plan, the long wait times between buses was second only to insufficient routes as the reason given for not using bus service. Similar sentiment was expressed in the survey performed for the NYSDOT's North Fork Study. At present, no bus service is offered on any of the routes on Sundays. Consideration should be given to providing Sunday service on some of the existing routes. A number of tourist destinations, such as the Aquarium, Tanger Mall, and Splish Splash attract significant weekend markets for public transportation, yet the existing service does little to accommodate them.

***Policy 9.7B: Strongly encourage Suffolk County Transit to focus service enhancements in downtown Riverhead, along Route 58, and along Route 25 west of the LIE.***

At present, three of the County's current bus routes provide service to Tanger Mall (S-62, S-8A, and S-58), and headways are hourly with no Sunday service. The S-8A stops on Route 25 near the southerly end of Tanger Mall and then takes a circuitous route through Town before reaching downtown locations. Travel time between downtown and Tanger Mall is nearly 50 minutes. The S-62 and the S-58 link Tanger Mall, Splish Splash, the County Courthouse, and Riverhead Station, but none of the downtown cultural attractions. S-92 runs from Riverhead Station east along Main Street and serves the Aquarium. No single route links all these sites.

Increased bus service should be provided between Enterprise Park, Route 58, and downtown Riverhead. Bus service should operate on as frequent a schedule as possible, with a half-hour being the longest recommended headway. The ideal solution would be loop service between Enterprise Park and the Aquarium, along Route 58 and Route 25, with stops at Splish-Splash, Tanger Mall, Riverhead Station, and the County Courthouse. The Town should encourage the County to publicize the existence of this route, if established, and the beneficiaries of the service (Tanger, Splish-Splash, etc.) should be encouraged to advertise it as well. If Suffolk County Transit does not provide a bus loop, the Town should explore the feasibility of providing a Town-sponsored shuttle.

***Policy 9.7C: Encourage Suffolk County Transit to outfit its buses with bicycle racks.***

At present, Suffolk County Transit's policy is not to allow bikes on buses, and no bike racks are provided at the front of the bus. The County has expressed reluctance to allow bikes or install racks, due to liability issues. However, many bus systems nationwide now successfully offer this accommodation, which encourages use of both bicycles and the bus system. The Town should

investigate further the experiences of other transit operators and provide the information to Suffolk County Transit.

***Policy 9.7D: Work with Suffolk County Transit and local businesses to install and improve bus shelters throughout Riverhead.***

Bus shelters provide waiting patrons with protection from inclement weather, as well as the hot sun during summer months. Patrons may be more willing to wait if the wait time (already frustrating in itself) is not further complicated by having to endure the snow, the rain, or the heat. Bus shelters should be designed with seating and places to lean, and their design should be compatible with Riverhead's unique character as a rural and residential community. Ideally, different designs should be used in different parts of town, each reflecting the local theme (e.g., Victorian "Main Street" character in downtown; countryside character in Jamesport, etc.).

At the same time, shelter design should be such that the resulting maintenance costs are not unmanageable. The Town should work with Suffolk County to develop a maintenance plan for shelters, ensuring the bus shelters are always free of graffiti and litter, are kept clean, and are repaired expeditiously in case of damage. If appropriate, the Town should consider contributing funds toward the installation and maintenance costs. In Riverhead's business districts, the Town could endeavor to organize local merchants (in downtown, through the Business Improvement District) to pay for shelters.

***Policy 9.7E: Encourage Suffolk County Transit to improve and increase paratransit service, particularly for senior citizens.***

Currently, Suffolk County Accessible Transit (SCAT) serves disabled persons, upon reservation, for any trip between two points in the County. No trip type take precedence over any other, meaning that it may be difficult to pinpoint one's arrival time. This makes SCAT somewhat inconvenient for work trips, doctor appointments, and other time-sensitive travel. The County should consider starting specialized paratransit services for disabled persons for the commute to work and medical appointments. Also, services specifically tailored to seniors (whether disabled or not) may be appropriate. Seniors may lose the ability to drive before they are considered disabled.

***Policy 9.7F: Work with NYSDOT and Suffolk County Transit to explore the need for and feasibility of extending Clipper Express Service to Riverhead.***

Currently, this service runs from park-and-ride lots off LIE Exits 58 and 63 west to the Route 110 corridor and the Hauppauge Industrial Park. The existing park-and-ride lots are well-located at two of the most congested spots on the LIE. The Clipper takes advantage of the LIE's high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, which are found west of Exit 64. Rather than enduring more traffic, commuters have a strong incentive to pull off the highway and use the service.

Extension of Clipper service to Riverhead may be needed in the future, as development continues to occur and LIE congestion worsens. The Town should continue to monitor the need for such services and work with NYSDOT to expand service, if necessary.

**Goal 9.8: Encourage use of private vanpool services.**

*Policy 9.8A: Encourage Riverhead employers to provide vanpool services.*

State funding and tax benefits are available for vanpool programs. The Town should assist employers and nonprofits interested in setting up vanpool programs by providing technical assistance and information referrals. If appropriate, the Town may also consider making monetary contributions toward the operation of such programs.

**Goal 9.9: Encourage walking, biking, and transit use in downtown and the hamlet centers; and ensure that commercial sites Townwide are pedestrian-, bicycle-, and transit-friendly; and ensure that residential neighborhoods are walkable and bikeable.**

A variety of strategies are included in Chapter 6, the Business Districts Element, to improve the walkability of the Town's business districts. Strategies range from sidewalk and crosswalk improvements, to façade and streetscape improvements, to enhanced landscaping and lighting, to design of pedestrian-friendly parking lots.

*Policy 9.9A: As part of the site plan review process, ensure that all commercial development is accessible via transit, by bicycle, and on foot.*

All site plan applications for commercial development should include sidewalks and walkways for pedestrian access, adequate space in driveways for bike access and circulation, and bicycle parking. Continuous walkways should connect public sidewalks along the roadway with walkways in front of building entrances or storefronts. When application is made for residential subdivision, the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians should be given heed, as much as those of motorists. Subdivisions should include sidewalks, and subdivision roadways should provide shoulders or bike lanes. In addition, public transit connections and transit stops should be identified on all site plans and it should be the responsibility of the developer to make the necessary improvements.

*Policy 9.9B: In the review of commercial site plans, consider both the need and location of bicycle racks on an ad hoc basis.*

Racks should be of a quality that they provide secure parking for bicycles. Also, racks should be located in prime locations, close to main building entrances. They should be located so as to minimize the potential for bicycle-pedestrian or bicycle-automobile conflicts when bicyclists are arriving or leaving.

***Policy 9.9C: Work with the Business Improvement District and the Parking District to both locate and install bicycle rack(s) in a central location.***

Individual sites within the Parking District should not be required to provide their own bicycle racks, because parking is shared. Rather, bicycling parking could be located in the shared lots, along the Main Street sidewalks, and along the waterfront.

***Policy 9.9D: Work with local merchants in the Jamesport, Aquebogue, Wading River, Calverton, and Route 25A business districts to provide adequate bicycle racks in appropriate locations.***

Like downtown, some parts of these business districts may have limited parking and could benefit from a pooled bicycle parking.

***Policy 9.9E: Develop standards for street patterns in residential neighborhoods that are walkable.***

The Planning Board should continue to require the use of curvilinear street arrangements and cul-de-sacs in residential subdivisions, to allow convenient pedestrian movement. Walkway easements over lots should also be considered to connect streets.

**Goal 9.10: Encourage biking throughout Riverhead.**

***Policy 9.10A: Actively participate in NYMTC's initiative to prepare a bicycle master plan for Long Island.***

NYMTC is in the process of developing a plan for a system of off- and on-road bicycle facilities on local and County roadways. As the system is planned for local roadways, NYMTC intends that there be significant input and participation at the local level. The Town should decide on the most appropriate locations for bicycle facilities, using the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan as a starting point.

***Policy 9.10B: When appropriate, include bicycle paths in the Town's proposed greenway network.***

As discussed in Chapter 11, the Parks and Recreation Element, a Townwide greenway network is proposed. Each greenway would include a pedestrian path, at a minimum, but could also include bicycle and bridle trails. Bike paths along the greenways would provide residents with an

alternative to on-street riding. Also, dedicated bicycling paths are popular with visiting bicycle enthusiasts and could help draw more tourism activity and spending.

**Goal 9.11: Promote pedestrian and bicycle safety Townwide.**

***Policy 9.11A: Establish guidelines and standards for the development of sidewalks and bicycles paths or lanes alongside roadways.***

In its current rewrite of the Town of Riverhead Highway Specifications, the Planning Board should include specifications for sidewalks and bicycle paths on certain street types.

***Policy 9.11B: Explore ways to improve bicycle safety on Sound Avenue.***

Sound Avenue is currently dangerous for biking due to high speeds. NYMTC is considering an application by the Town for funding a safety improvement project along Sound Avenue between Route 105 and the Southold Town line. This project will provide for the installation of 5-foot wide shoulders on either side of the road and resurfacing of the existing pavement. The NYSDOT supports the project, and funding is likely. The wider shoulder will help improve emergency vehicle access and provide additional room for cars to pull over during an emergency. They will also allow bicyclists to use the roadway more safely, because they will not be in the direct path of oncoming cars.

Off-road bike paths would be preferable to shoulders from a safety viewpoint, but difficult to implement. Installation of continuous bike paths would mean that utilities would have to be moved and some old growth trees eliminated. Moreover, because the current roadway is not aligned with the actual ROW, installation of bike paths along the roadway as is would require the path to hop back and forth across the street, resulting in dangerous conditions for both bicyclists and motorists. To avoid a hopping bike path, the entire roadway would have to be realigned. These changes would have serious cost and scenic quality implications.

The Town should consider ways that the planned shoulders could be made safer for bicyclists. For example, the Town could consider installing rumble strips along the edges of the travel lanes or 3-foot tall wood barriers between the travel lane and the shoulder at sharp curves. If any significant reconstruction of Sound Avenue is ever undertaken, the feasibility of installing bike paths should be reconsidered.

***Policy 9.11C: Consider installing bike paths or lanes and making other roadway improvements that enhance bicycle safety along major east-west and north-south routes.***

Sound Avenue is not the only major road where improved bicycle safety may be necessary. Other routes that should be considered include, but are not limited to, Route 25, Middle Road, and Reeves Avenue (in the east-west direction) and Doctor's Path, West Lane, Roanoke Avenue and Edwards Avenue (in the north-south direction). Route 58 is not well-suited to bicycle traffic,

due to heavy traffic volumes, high traffic speeds, and frequent curb cuts and driveway activity, so bike lanes would be inappropriate.

Efforts for on-street bike paths or lanes should be coordinated with development of bike paths in off-road greenways. That is, bike facilities should not be duplicated in adjacent locations (e.g., along Route 25 in the downtown area and along the adjacent Peconic River greenway) at the expense of expanding the bicycle network into other parts of Town.

**Goal 9.12: Use traffic-calming techniques to slow down traffic on roads used as bypass routes, in downtown, in hamlet centers, and in residential neighborhoods.**

The concept and practice of traffic calming is known by a number of names across the U.S., including neighborhood traffic management, traffic abatement, and traffic mitigation. Regardless of its name, the objective is the same, namely to reduce the speed and volume of traffic to acceptable levels for the nature and function of the street and adjacent land uses.

The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) defines traffic calming as “the combination of mainly physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behavior and improve conditions for non-motorized street users.” In addition, the ITE states that traffic calming devices are intended to be self-enforcing, that is, as opposed to devices that are regulatory in nature, such as STOP signs and speed limit signs.

Traffic calming in its varied guises has been implemented in a large number of communities throughout the U.S. and around the world. When dealing with through-traffic, traffic-calming strategies have been most successful when two conditions are present. First, there is an alternative route to which traffic can be diverted. Second, the travel time on the traffic-calmed route is increased to the extent that it is no longer worthwhile taking, compared to the alternate route.

***Policy 9.12A: Undertake a study to identify potential locations for traffic-calming techniques, and identify criteria for implementing those techniques.***

As noted, traffic calming can have mixed results if not implemented properly. If one road is traffic-calmed, there must be another facility with the capacity to absorb the traffic overflow. Arterial roads must be improved, as traffic calming is done on side streets. The Town should investigate appropriate locations for traffic-calming. Among the potential candidates are the side streets off of Route 58, local residential streets experiencing through-traffic, pedestrian-intensive areas in downtown Riverhead and the hamlet centers, scenic corridors, and streets in the vicinity of schools and parks.



***Policy 9.12B: Conduct a campaign to educate the public about the anticipated impacts of traffic-calming techniques.***

An important part of traffic-calming is public education with regard to expectations. Appendix H describes the various traffic calming techniques available, and provides a discussion of their benefits and drawbacks. It is recommended that this be used as a starting point for a public discussion regarding traffic-calming in Riverhead. Throughout the outreach campaign, the public should be encouraged to notify the Town of undesirable conditions on local roadways.

**Goal 9.13: Systematically regulate property access patterns, in order to reduce traffic friction.**

***Policy 9.13A: Amend the existing roadway classification system, in order to maintain proper access management and provide for rural routes.***

Roadways perform the dual role of providing access to abutting properties and accommodating through-traffic. It is important that these roles be balanced, because traffic congestion can result when development is poorly planned or driveways are improperly located.

A roadway classification scheme categorizes roads by their function. It usually has four major categories: Expressways, Arterial Roads, Collector Roads, and Local Roads. Expressways serve only through-traffic, with no intersections, or they provide access alongside the road. Arterial roads primarily serve through-traffic, but have intersections with other major roads and provide property access, particularly to large destinations. Collector roads distribute traffic coming from arterial streets, with more frequent intersections and curb cuts. Finally, local streets are entirely oriented to property access, with little or no through-traffic. Similarly, rural routes are dedicated to local traffic and serve neighborhood residents.

***Policy 9.13B: As part the Town's access management policy, limit the establishment of excessive curb cuts and driveways on arterial roads, with the exception of scenic corridors, rural corridors in downtown, and in hamlet centers.***

This policy is intended to preserve the carrying capacity of arterial roads, thereby reducing future traffic congestion and widening needs as the Town continues to experience development. The subdivision and site plan review processes should make certain that no resulting parcels have access only to an arterial road, which would result in the necessity to establish an additional curb cut on the arterial. Instead, new parcels should be accessed from existing side roads or new roads in the subdivision. If parcels do have sole access to the arterial, access to the roadway should be limited to a single access point. That is, through easements, adjacent lots would connect their driveways into a single curb cut.

In downtown, in historic hamlet centers, and along rural and scenic corridors, consolidated access patterns such as these would be inconsistent with the pattern of small-scale development. In these areas, access patterns should revert to a more traditional pattern, where access is directly from the

arterial roadway. More specifically, this traditional pattern should be preserved in area zoned DC, HC and VC. In these zones, even though parcels would be accessed only from the arterial, not all properties would necessarily have curb cuts, because a pedestrian-oriented pattern of development is being encouraged. Also, in Jamesport and Aquebogue, where traditional neighborhood design is called for in and around the hamlet center, it would be entirely appropriate for residences to front directly onto the arterial roadway. The traditional pattern should also be used along Rural Corridors (RLC zones) and scenic corridors, which would be more compatible with the agricultural uses of those areas.

***Policy 9.13C: Require new subdivisions to provide roadway connections to existing arterial, collector, and local streets and reserve space for potential future connections to adjacent undeveloped lots.***

This encourages subdivisions to be interconnected, allowing some circulation to take place off of the Town's arterial road network, alleviating some of the traffic congestion on those roads.

***Policy 9.13D: Wherever possible, require newly developed or redeveloped commercial sites to locate their driveways several hundred feet away from signalized intersections or to place their driveways on side streets.***

Proper spacing of driveways and intersections has been shown to make it easier for drivers to react and to respond to conflicts. Side-street entrances and exits are well-suited to residents, who are more likely to approach Route 58 from north-south streets. Driveways should be two-way to allow both entering from and exiting to roads off of Route 58.

***Policy 9.13E: Establish driveway design standards for commercial development, and require newly developed or redeveloped commercial sites to provide auxiliary turning lanes.***

Auxiliary lanes help reduce accident risks and increase roadway capacity by reducing the difference in speed between through-traffic and turning vehicles. To the extent possible, left-turn movements at unsignalized driveways should be limited as well. This can be accomplished through the use of channelizing islands in driveways. Along Route 58, left-turn movements will be prevented by the raised center median.

***Policy 9.13F: Develop model roadway sections for each type of roadway classification, and work with the appropriate agencies and private developers to ensure that roadways, when built or improved, meets the model specifications.***

Property dedication to accommodate the ultimate desired section should be made a requirement for approval of building permits for properties adjacent to the roadway. For roadways not under the jurisdiction of the Town, the desired section should be discussed with the appropriate agency so that ample right-of-way can be preserved for alternative improvement strategies. In some cases, actual design and construction of the roadway to the desired section can be made a

condition of approval for subdivisions. Model roadway sections should specify the number and width of travel lanes, including bike lanes, parking lanes, shoulders, sidewalks, and bus stops for roadways.

***Policy 9.13G: Through the site plan review process, require new buildings and parking areas to be sufficiently set back from existing right-of-way lines in order to facilitate future roadway widening.***

Driveway throats should also be required to be long enough so that when the road is widened in the future, operations within the site will not be compromised. In addition, cross-easements to allow internal access arrangements should be encouraged so that access to the signalized intersections can be maximized. Where appropriate, similar standards should be applied to frontage on side streets to accommodate widenings to provide additional left and right turning lanes. In order to provide incentive for cooperation, consideration should be given to allowing increased density or relief from parking requirements on the site to offset the loss of use of the property. Alternatively, these setback and site plan requirements could be made part of the language in the newly created zoning district, which could also include provisions allowing the increased density and/or reduction in parking requirements.

**Goal 9.14: Better coordinate land use and transportation.**

Land use and development patterns influence how and where people travel. Over the last 50 years, Riverhead, like most of Long Island, has followed an auto-oriented pattern of development, making the automobile the mode of choice for most people. In the future, there will be important opportunities to foster more compact settlement patterns that create more opportunities for walking, biking, and transit use. The Sustainable East End Development Strategies study is currently examining how current land use policies and transportation investments have resulted in today's transportation patterns. The study, which is currently being prepared will come forth with recommendations for more sustainable development patterns and improved coordination between towns.

***Policy 9.14A: Adopt land use and zoning policies that take into account roadway classifications, such that high-intensity uses are concentrated in locations where roadway capacity is expected to be available.***

The Proposed Land Use Plan in Chapter 2 is generally intended to reflect this principle. Rezoning proposals in the future should continue to take into account roadway capacities.

***Policy 9.14B: Adopt land use and zoning policies that take into account existing and planned transit services and facilities, as well as the potential for pedestrian and bicycle circulation.***

By orienting development to transit, pedestrian, and bicycles, the Town can provide real alternatives to automobile circulation. Policies throughout this chapter are intended to build off

transit, biking, and walking as alternative modes of travel, particularly in downtown and the hamlet centers.

***Policy 9.14C: Cooperate with other towns on the East End to foster development patterns that result in more sustainable transportation patterns.***

Once the SEEDS recommendations are released, the Town should consider how to best coordinate land use and transportation policies to foster more sustainable development patterns. Sustainable development is critical to maintaining the long-term attractiveness of the East End as a place to live, do business, and visit.

**Goal 15: Preserve the character of the Town's scenic corridors.**

Chapter 5, the Scenic and Historic Resources Element, provides a detailed discussion of strategies for scenic corridor preservation. In addition, the following policies can help preserve those roadways.

***Policy 9.15A: Do not widen Route 25 east of Route 105, but provide for additional widths at appropriate intersections to ensure efficient traffic flow.***

Some participants of the CAC meetings expressed the concern that a widening of the Route 58 corridor would create a bottleneck where the road hits Route 105 and is reduced back down to one lane in each direction. At that point currently, eastbound traffic already breaks into two directions: east on Route 25 and north on Route 105 to Sound Avenue. Because the traffic splits, the traffic volumes on Route 25 east of Route 105 are considerably lower, and the neck down to a 2-lane road is appropriate. Widening Route 25 east of Route 105 is not recommended because it would damage the scenic character of the corridor (appealing to wine country tourists) and disrupt business in the hamlet centers of Jamesport and Aquebogue.

***Policy 9.15B: Allow Route 25 (east of Route 105) and Sound Avenue (east of Route 105) to share the traffic flows traveling to and from the Route 58 corridor, while preserving the unique scenic and historic qualities of both.***

By not widening Route 25, it means that a portion of the traffic bound for Southold will continue to use Sound Avenue as an alternate route. The idea is not to make Sound Avenue absorb all of the traffic flows from Route 58, but for Route 25 and Sound Avenue to share the volumes. Both roads have important characteristics: Route 25 has two historic hamlet centers, and Sound Avenue had a bucolic scenic quality and historic farmhouses. While steps are being taken to protect the visual quality of both roads, traffic will nevertheless continue to make use of both roadways, particularly as North Fork tourism continues to grow.

Some portions of Route 25 will be traffic calmed in the hamlet centers, meaning that traffic will have a tendency to travel north to Sound Avenue. To avert this problem, the side streets between Route 25 and Sound Avenue should be the target of traffic-calming strategies. Also, the Town

should consider traffic calming parts of Sound Avenue, such that Route 25 and Sound Avenue have equivalent traffic calming measures, and neither route is favored over the other for traffic flow.