

2.0 *STUDY AREA CHARACTER*

2.1 *Historic Resources in the Hamlet Center*

The settlement of Bridgehampton dates to the mid 1650s when the English colonists from Southampton and East Hampton began to settle in the area. The bridge over Sagg Pond connected settlers of Mecox and Southampton with the Sagaponack and East Hampton settlers to the east. This bridge that gave the hamlet its name was built in 1686. Farms were scattered throughout the area, with commercial development concentrated at the important crossroads of the east/west East Hampton Path (now Montauk Highway) and the north/south roads of Ocean Road and Sag Harbor Turnpike. The colonial Bridgehampton Commons (the hamlet's historic village green) was near this crossroads. In the 17th and 18th centuries, militia mustered in this area, and in 1775 and 1776, Minute Men and the New York Militia assembled on alarm. Also near the crossroads were homes, schools, taverns, and businesses beginning in the 18th century. Thus, this crossroads – still an important part of the hamlet – is one of the most important colonial archaeological sites in Bridgehampton.

Much of the original development pattern remains. On the north side of Montauk Highway and between Lumber Lane and Corwith Road, this attractive area has uniform setbacks, attached or semi-attached one- and two-story buildings of wood and brick. There are various degrees of modern storefront alteration of historic buildings in this area. The beauty of Bridgehampton's Main Street lies in the mix on the north and south sides of retail, historic, religious, and civic buildings. Three churches, the old Bridgehampton cemetery, the Bridgehampton Community House, and the Bridgehampton Historical Museum's complex of buildings add to a business center that clearly cherishes its past. Main Street is bounded by period residential areas that are a mixture of building types, ages, and styles. The mix ranges from modest to large 19th century local resident homes to homes built at the end of the 19th century by summer residents.



While there is a wide variety of styles and materials, shingle and clapboard predominate in both the residential and non-residential structures. The buildings are largely simple forms using natural materials and constructed following a local historic building tradition. While not all are landmark quality, the ensemble is important. These structures and the overall character they create are deserving of special recognition. The hamlet is one of the few remaining Long Island South Shore summer resorts with its period architecture and historic past well represented - few of the others remain so intact and displaying the historic linkage among South Shore hamlets.

The Town of Southampton 1999 Comprehensive Plan presents a goal of working "with local historic preservation groups to create 'Hamlet Heritage Areas' that identify and protect locally significant historic districts, buildings, and sites." One of the implementation strategies is the designation of hamlet heritage areas. These would be "areas where concentrations of historic resources may be found within the Town." Bridgehampton's hamlet center is identified as one of six such areas east of Shinnecock Canal on Map10E. This hamlet plan makes specific recommendations in Section 2.5 of this chapter.

2.2 Demographic Profile

This report addresses development pressures in Bridgehampton and how best to shape these. Before moving on to discuss the hamlet's character, commercial market, and transportation, the following section discusses the demographic context underpinning the development pressures.

Town of Southampton

The East End of Long Island is growing at an explosive rate. Between 1990 and 2000, the East End's population increased by 17.6% to 124,938 people. The Town of Southampton alone grew by 30% to 54,712. The town's median household income in 1999 was \$53,887, with the median family income reported at \$65,144; at the same time, eight percent of town residents lived on incomes below the poverty line. The population of the town is increasingly middle-aged, as the median age of the population is now just over 40 years old, mirroring the nation-wide trend as baby boomers age.

As the town population increases and lives on larger incomes than in the past, the work force is also changing. In 2000, somewhat more than half (58% or 25,838 persons) of the town's labor force (the population over 16 years of age) was employed and 2.5% (1,088) were unemployed. One-fifth of the work force was employed in the education, health and social services industries, with another 20% employed in typically white collar professions requiring some secondary education: 13% in professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services and nearly seven percent in the FIRE (finance, insurance, and real estate professions). The retail and arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food occupations provided jobs for over 20% of the work force. These latter are jobs that cluster in the commercial areas, hamlet and village business districts, and shopping centers, and serve the complex year-round and seasonal market found in Southampton. For Bridgehampton and other still rural parts of the town, the

employment change has been obvious as farmland vanishes and the number of farmers dwindle down to 338 persons, or just over one percent of the work force.

Hamlet of Bridgehampton

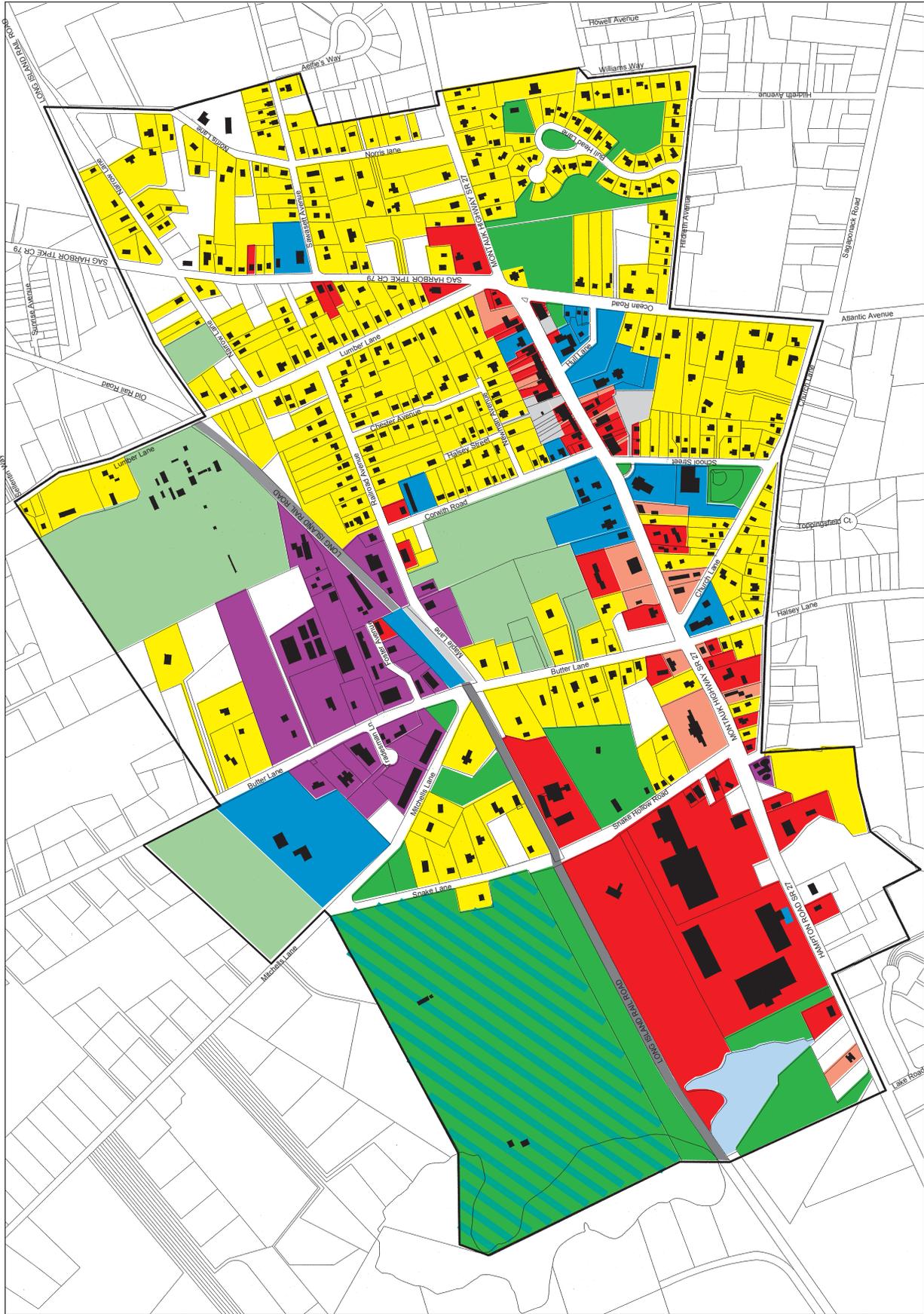
Bridgehampton itself is a geographic area as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. The 2000 Census indicated that Bridgehampton's population was 1,381. Bridgehampton reported a higher median household income than the Town of Southampton as a whole (\$54,896) as well as a notably higher median family income compared to the town (\$74,583). The per capita income in Bridgehampton in 2000 was \$43,781 compared to the Town of Southampton's per capita income over the same period of \$31,320. Bridgehampton's population was also notably older in the town as a whole. The median age in Bridgehampton is 48.7 years. A lower portion of Bridgehampton's labor force is employed, 50.1%, while the hamlet's unemployment of 2.6% is statistically equivalent to the town as a whole. The work force is distributed among the occupations in a similar fashion to the town as a whole with management, professional, and related occupations accounting for the largest percentage of the work force. Compared to the town, a slightly lower percentage of Bridgehampton's work force drove to work alone. Larger percentages used public transportation or walked to work, 4.2% and 6.8% respectively. Over twelve percent of the work force works from home, more than double the percentage identified in the Town of Southampton as a whole.

2.3 Existing Land Use Pattern and Zoning

The hamlet center area includes a diverse range of land uses that encompasses commercial and institutional uses along Montauk Highway, surrounding residential neighborhoods, agricultural land, and an industrial district.

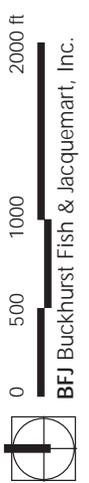
The existing land use pattern is illustrated in Figure 3. To the west, the area is dominated by Bridgehampton Commons, a shopping center with major retail tenants such as Big K, King Kullen and Rite Aid. Further east, the Central Business District between Snake Hollow Road and Corwith Road primarily supports professional service and institutional uses. East of Corwith Road, a more traditional small town main street pattern occurs. Buildings along this stretch of the highway include upscale and specialty stores as well as the Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches and the Bridgehampton Library. Existing housing is concentrated to the east of Corwith Road, immediately north and south of the commercial district. Although most of the housing consists of single-family dwellings, the compact layout of much of the residential district means that a large percentage of residents are within a quarter mile walk of the historic retail center.

The industrial zone is located on the north side of the LIRR on both sides of Butter Lane, with Mitchells Lane forming the west boundary. The zone contains a mix of older converted agricultural buildings and newer, well-maintained industrial structures. The zone suffers from restricted truck access and generally presents an untidy image due to the poor quality of much of the existing streetscape.



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Figure 3. Existing Land Uses



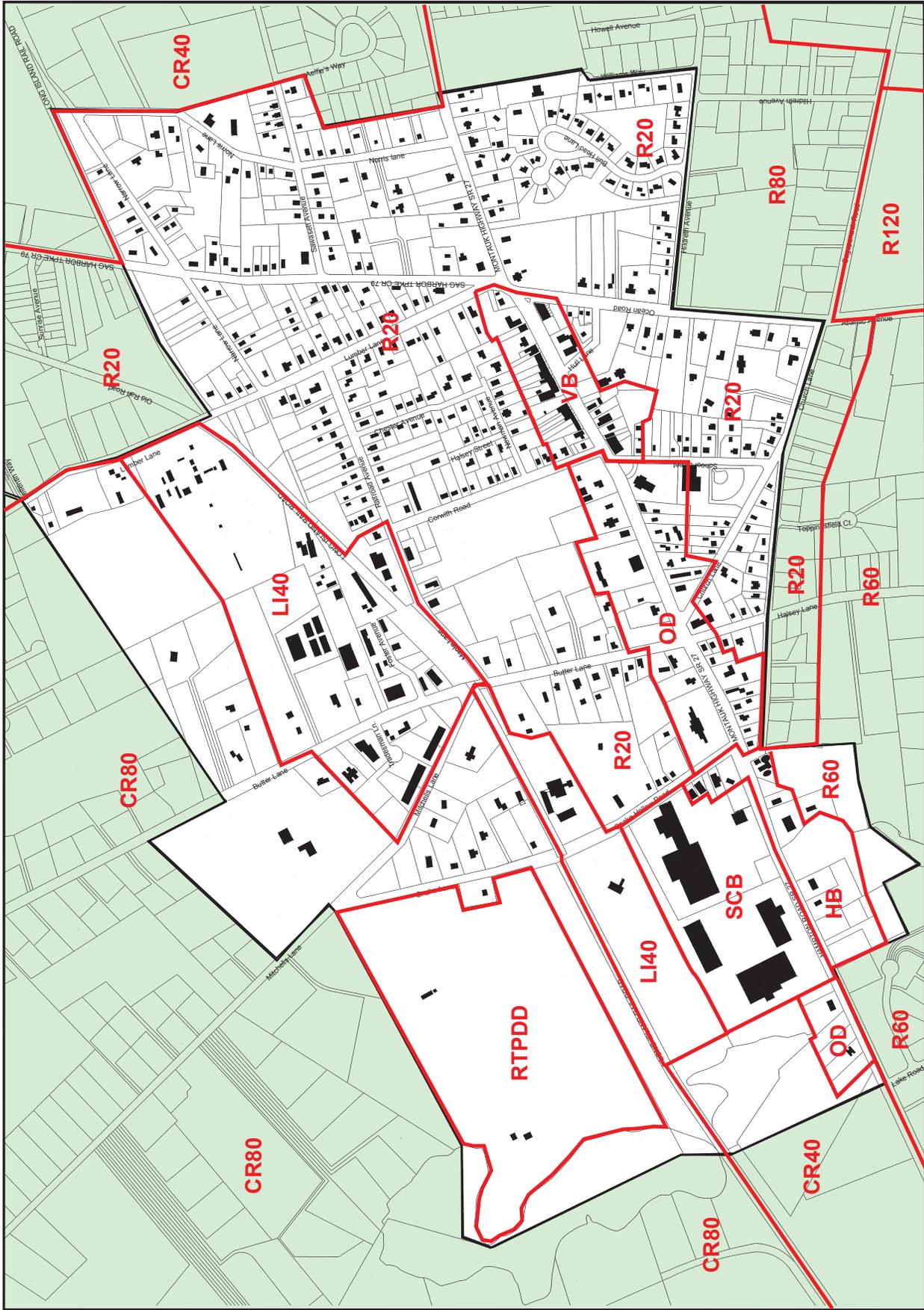
- Residential
- Retail / Commercial
- Offices
- Institutional
- Parks / Open Space
- Light Industrial
- Parking
- Vacant (V)
- Agricultural
- Water Areas
- Private Recreation

Figure 4 shows the existing zoning in the study area. The hamlet's commercial area is zoned for a variety of commercial uses and densities, and is surrounded by residential zoning at 1.5 acre and 0.5 acre densities. Montauk Highway is zoned at the eastern gateway for OD Office District, SCB Shopping Center Business (solely encompassing Bridgehampton Commons), and HB Highway Business. The major undeveloped property currently zoned HB is the Carvel and surrounding parcels Property. Chapter 5 presents recommendations on the potential new zoning and site plan for this property. Moving further west, the zoning changes back to OD Office District and then to the densest of the commercial districts, VB Village Business. The district boundaries in OD and VB are generally one lot deep, conform to the uses actually found there, and support a mix of uses. The 1999 Comprehensive Plan update recommends two new zoning districts to better guide commercial development in Southampton's hamlets (eg., HO Hamlet Office/Residential and HC Hamlet-Commercial). This is discussed in Chapter 5, Recommendations.

2.4 Farmland, Open Space, Parks, and Green Areas

Existing open spaces within the study area include active farmland, a number of vacant properties that remain undeveloped, smaller scale park areas, the newly acquired Hopping House property, and the Hampton Classic PDD site to the west and north of the Hamlet Center. Figure 5 illustrates the distribution of these existing open space areas, grouped under the following categories:

- ***Agriculture Uses.*** The study area includes a number of parcels that remain in agricultural use. The most significant is the Hendrickson Farm property on Lumber Lane where the town has purchased approximately 40 acres of development rights, guaranteeing that the land will remain as open space. A key agricultural area also exists on the west side of Corwith Road, involving three parcels of land totaling approximately 19 acres. The largest of these parcels is the 10.9-acre Catholic Church property located behind the Historical Society site and partially visible from Montauk Highway; the other parcels are privately owned. Additional smaller agricultural lands include a parcel on the north side of Narrow Lane, property on the north edge of the study area located off Mitchell Lane, and an area that extends beyond the western study area boundary, north of Montauk Highway.
- ***Vacant Properties.*** The hamlet has several vacant (non-farmed) properties with development potential. The most visible of these is the group of parcels known as the Carvel and surrounding parcels. These are located on the south side of Montauk Highway at the western end of the study area opposite Bridgehampton Commons. A second potential development site is located on the east side of Snake Hollow Road, also facing Bridgehampton Commons. This is a good site for community housing, using a PDD (Planned Development District) zoning overlay. This site, and possibly others in the study area, are potential receiving sites for increased density, using transfers of development rights from other or environmentally sensitive areas important to protect (eg., farmlands and wooded properties in critical watershed areas).

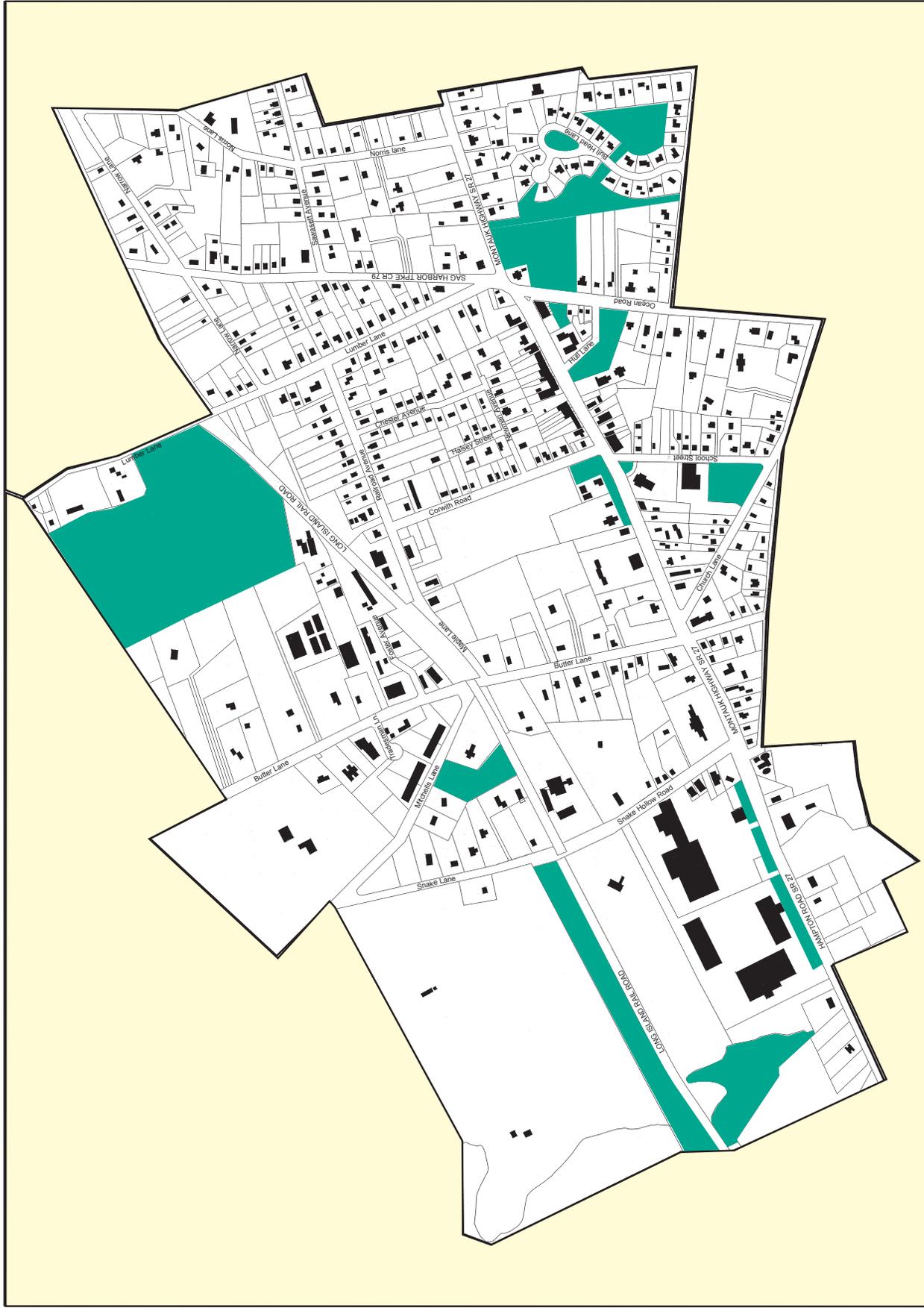


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Figure 4. Existing Zoning



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Figure 5. Existing Open Space Areas

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 BFJ Buckhurst Fish & Jacquemart, Inc.



- ***Town-Owned Open Space and Parks.*** Bridgehampton has a very limited amount of town-owned open space and parks. These are the recently developed Triangular Commons (also known as Militia Green) near the Montauk Highway/Ocean Road intersection, the small triangular park area at Community House, the Lions Club recreation field on School Lane, and Sayre Park, a long and narrow park located along the south edge of the Hampton Classic site. (See Figure 5.) Outside the hamlet study area, there is an undeveloped parcel on Mitchells Lane with potential as a community park.
- ***Contributing Open Space and Green Areas.*** An important contributor to the hamlet's landscape involves the small scale areas that include front lawns, setbacks, islands at intersections, the Bridge Gardens Trust public garden on Butter Lane, and the generous

tree planting that line many of Bridgehampton's roads. (See Figure 6.) The maintenance and enhancement of these features play a critical role in helping to maintain the center's rural character, particularly at the east and west gateways along Montauk Highway.

Hopping Property

The site forms a key component of the eastern gateway into the hamlet center, with the absolute demarcation between commercial development and farmland. The main house was built in 1842 and was initially used as an inn. It has been described as "one of the best Greek Revival structures in the State of New York." (Long Island Landmarks, 1971). The 5.6 acre property includes the Greek Revival historic home, now in serious disrepair, and on the east side of the property a large modern barn that formerly housed Marder's Nursery. Beyond these buildings, the site is unused, with woodland areas concentrated in the south and west portions of the property.

In 2003, the Town of Southampton achieved a long-held goal. The town purchased the Hopping Property. A conceptual site plan for the property is shown in Figure 6. The concept creates substantial open space along the Ocean Road and Montauk Highway frontages, and extends at least 100 feet back from Ocean Road and 50 feet back from Montauk Highway. Most of the site will be a village green, community park, or open space, creating a landscaped gateway at an important entrance into the hamlet core. If funding can be found, the historic house will be renovated to accommodate community uses. The defunct gas station has been removed. The former Marder's Nursery barn will be offered for sale and will be removed. The property is large enough to also accommodate modest municipal parking. This could be paired with prohibitions against parking along this section of Ocean Road and overnight parking in the new parking field. The Town Board will work closely with the community to prepare a revised concept plan for this site.

2.5 Assets, Concerns, and Areas of Agreement

Public meetings, discussions with the Advisory Committee and the interviews conducted with Bridgehampton officials and representatives of businesses, community services and churches, civic groups, and resident groups helped to identify the hamlet center's major assets and concerns. This section of the report provides a brief summary of the results of these meetings, and concludes with recommendations.

Major Assets

Small-Town Character. There is general agreement that Bridgehampton has historic importance, a natural beauty that is directly tied to farming, and a defined architectural and community character. The older commercial section of the center is compact and walkable, with many stores that are still locally-owned and aimed at serving the needs of residents, as opposed to weekend visitors. The presence of a variety of institutions, such as the post office, churches, Community House, library, and Historical Society contribute to the special character of the center. Many of Main Street's structures were built from the



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Figure 6. Hopping House
Conceptual Plan



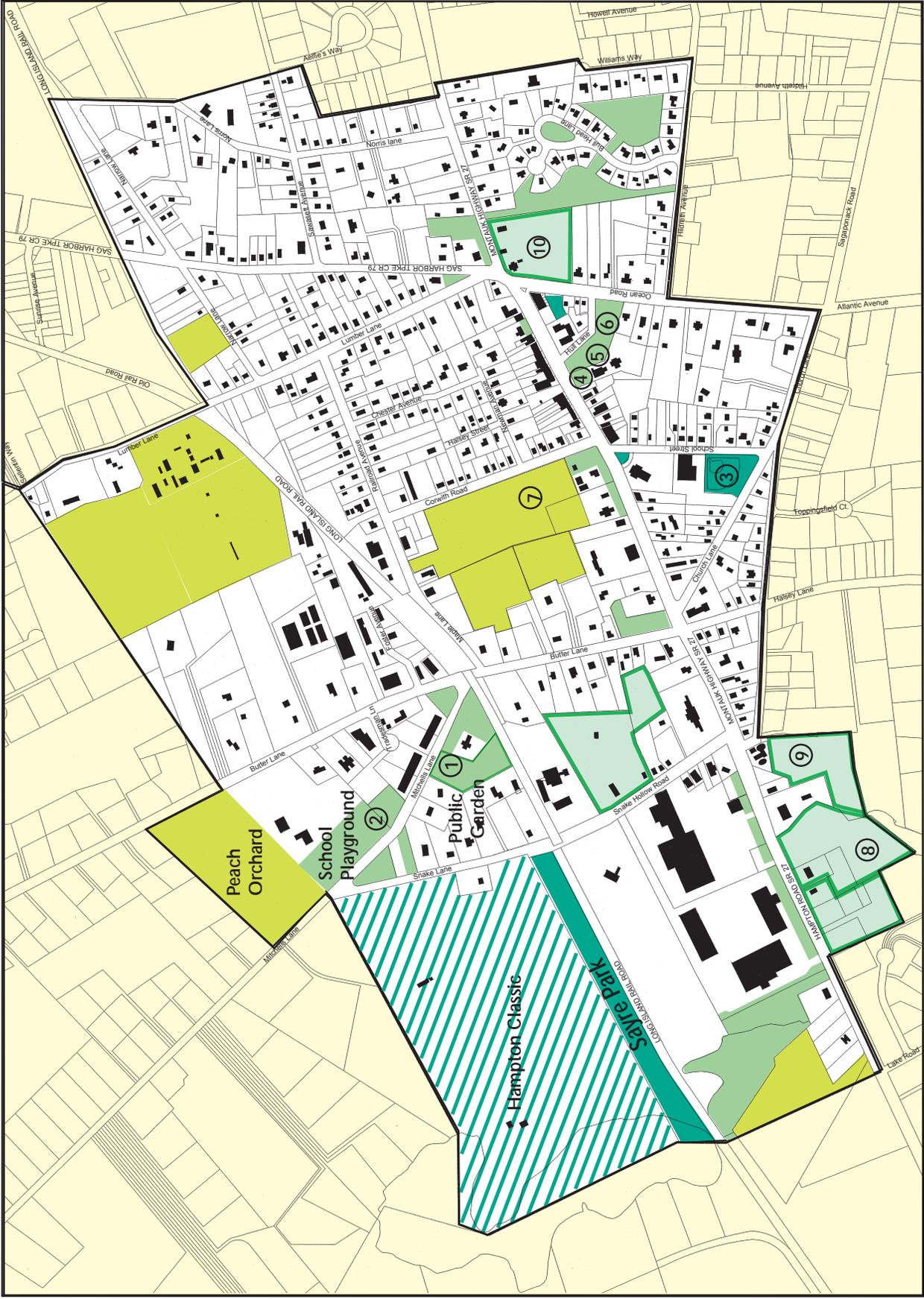
1840s through the early 1900s, with some remaining well-preserved. This historic character is buttressed with a mix of uses in the buildings that remains local, informal, and quaint in character and typical of a small town's main street, such as a barber, hardware store, deli, luncheonette, and post office. The historic character of the hamlet center should be enhanced with antique reproduction sidewalk lamps that are exact reproductions of the lights used during the 1920s and 1930s along the south shore by L.I.L.C.O. The style should be the same as those installed in Southampton Village, Hampton Bays, and East Quogue to reflect the historic linkage among these hamlets.

Equally important is the walkability of the hamlet center. It is geographically tightly focused, providing much activity in a concentrated area. The hamlet's historic gateways are partially defined by the historic houses at the east entry and the 1870 Methodist Church and the Gurden Corwith building at the west entry. Overall, the good architectural quality of the hamlet's civic buildings and churches are important to the hamlet center's ambiance.

Natural Landscape. The hamlet's natural beauty is largely dependent on the remaining farmland and the decades-long practice of planting and replacing street trees. Farms and the open vistas they provide are found in the heart of the hamlet center, as well as extending across open landscape at the perimeter of the hamlet.

Residential Areas. The Main Street retail, office and institutional buildings are bordered by period residential areas largely built in the mid to late 19th Century. Although the housing includes a wide variety of building styles and materials, shingle and clapboard facades predominate. The historic importance of these neighborhoods has been recognized by the Bridgehampton Historical Society, which completed a survey of architecturally important buildings within the hamlet in July 2002. (See Appendix A.)

Mix of Land Uses. The hamlet's land use pattern is unusually broad for a small community. This diversity maintains the hamlet's well-being and keeps it successful economically. The industrial area is a regional asset, proving services that cater to the needs of the South Fork as well as providing employment opportunities for local residents.



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1 Bridge Gardens Trust
 2 Hayground School
 3 Lions Club Park
 4 Presbyterian Church
 5 Episcopal Church
 6 Triangular Commons
 7 Catholic Church
 8 Carvel et al.
 9 ESP Fuel Facility
 10 Hopping Property

Agricultural Lands
 Major Undeveloped Parcels
 Town Open Space
 Contributing Open Areas

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 BFI Buckhurst Fish & Jacquemart, Inc.

Figure 7. Contributing Open Space and Green Areas

Major Concerns

Need for Community Housing. During the course of this study, it was indicated that the Town of Southampton has an increasing separation between its employment centers and its affordably-priced housing stock. There is also a lack of good public transportation between jobs and affordably priced housing and land. The current Bridgehampton real estate market is not providing adequate supplies of housing affordable to moderate and low income families, young ("start-up") families, and senior citizens. The high cost of living is precluding moderate income groups (e.g. service sector workers) from living nearer their jobs in the Bridgehampton area. Service sector and contractor employees should be able to live nearer their jobs; this might reduce some of the commercial vehicle traffic traversing Montauk Highway from west of Shinnecock Canal to east. The children and grandchildren of long-time residents should be able to live in Bridgehampton.

There is some general support for the construction of housing that would be affordable to a greater range of household incomes. The hamlet center area includes vacant parcels that could be developed for a variety of housing including apartments, senior citizen housing and housing for moderate or lower income households. This is explored further in Chapter 5, Recommendations.

Loss of Farmland, Open Space, and Character. Residents worry that Bridgehampton lies in the path of growth and development on Long island's South Fork, and that this threat is worsened by the conflict between being a small town and a summer resort. The possibility of losing rural character is seen in the loss of farmland to development, the construction of atypically large houses, high real estate costs, the blurring of the tourist season into the traditional off-season, and the spread of once discrete hamlets separated by large farm tracts into undifferentiated sprawl. The shoulder season is growing in economic importance. Due to film festivals, theater, vineyard events, and fall foliage tours, there is less and less relief every year from the stresses of the summer high season. Interviewees and committee members felt that there has been a shift in retail away from locally-owned convenience stores aimed at the needs of year-round residents to high-end goods and services aimed more at the resort and tourism market, producing a central business district targeted at an income monoculture.

As noted earlier, the hamlet center contains several parcels that are used for farming or exist as open space. However, only the Hendrickson property is protected by the town's purchase of development rights. As shown in Figure 7, relatively few other areas within the hamlet center study area are guaranteed to remain as farmland or non-dedicated open space. Parcels such as the farmland between Corwith Road and Butter Lane, the Carvel and surrounding parcels, and undeveloped (or underutilized) land on Snake Hollow Road , on Montauk Highway behind the ESP fuel oil facility, and between Butter Lane and Mitchells Lane could be developed for housing. Development on these sites should preserve a portion as public open space. Further, the 1999 Plan calls for maintaining "the open vista providing the backdrop for the Historical Society, and the landscaped setting of the Community House" and generally protecting "historic buildings and views."

Need to Improve Streetscape and Hamlet Appearance. Character is also defined by the look of the hamlet. Although there is general agreement that Bridgehampton presents an attractive overall image, several aesthetic concerns were expressed during the analysis phase of this planning study. Where preserving farmland may not be possible, open space set asides should be located along the public road to keep the open views once provided by farmland. There should be eastern and western gateways into the hamlet along Montauk Highway, involving integrated design of intersections, new construction, and landscaping.



According to the interviews conducted for this study, other aesthetics fixes are needed. The industrial area around the LIRR station should have more evergreen tree planting to screen the buildings. Unsightly land uses should be removed or cleaned up. Building height, bulk, and design should be more strictly controlled. Streetscape improvements along Montauk Highway should include better quality street furniture and, if feasible, the placement of the overhead utility lines underground. Overhead utilities should be buried not only for storm safety reasons and aesthetic reasons, but also so street trees are not butchered into bizarre shapes to make room for the wires.

Need to Improve Traffic, Circulation, and Pedestrian and Parking Conditions. With the hamlet's Main Street also being a through traffic arterial, there are crowded streets, sidewalks, and stores and a loss of small-town character. In the summer (and beyond), community members say there is too much traffic and too little parking. Travel by main roads during peak hour and on summer weekends is extremely difficult, with the result that the back roads are increasingly used as bypasses. Traffic congestion occurs at the railroad station during peak travel times at weekends. The constant truck traffic is a problem, and pedestrians have a hard time crossing Montauk Highway in the hamlet center. The hamlet center has too few stoplights, and only one has a left-turn arrow. The intersection of Montauk Highway, Ocean Road, Lumber Lane and Sag Harbor Turnpike is very bad, with poor pedestrian visibility and safety, poor vehicular safety, too much congestion due to it being the only left-turn arrow, poor placement of the stop sign, and existence of curb cuts serving the Beverage Center and Starbucks café.

Sag Harbor Turnpike is a major north-south route linking Bridgehampton to Sag Harbor. In recent years, it has emerged as a growing destination in addition to being a through traffic arterial. Until recently, this tree-lined road had been sparsely developed. Now, new houses are being built, some are being renovated, a Natural History Museum will be opening soon, a second museum is proposed, and the child care center will grow. There are existing bars and restaurants located in primarily residential areas, creating noise and parking problems. The turnpike should be balanced between a local street serving the road's residents and an important through traffic route. It should have sidewalks, crosswalks, traffic calming measures, and a safer pedestrian crossing over the railroad tracks.

Need for Expanded Municipal Services. Hamlet residents also spoke about inadequate municipal or community-based services and facilities. The needs include better health care targeted at the African-American population's needs, more active recreation activities for children and youth, and more parks, picnic areas, and benches for families.

Areas of Agreement

The many people interviewed generally agreed on the hamlet's major assets and their concerns for its preservation, development, and enhancement. While there were differences in emphasis, we found the following areas of agreement on recommended actions:

- ***Residential Development.*** Community housing is needed now, to keep the Bridgehampton community at its historic (pre-1980s) mix of incomes, races, and generations. A variety of housing types should be allowed and actions taken: apartments, apartments over stores, accessory apartments and units, subsidized housing for moderate income households, senior citizen assistance with property taxes and home maintenance, and senior citizen housing. Such housing should not be all market-rate but should include a community housing component. Other sites for market-rate and community housing are the Carvel and surrounding properties, the undeveloped farm parcel on the east side of Snake Hollow Road, the property behind the ESP Fuel Facility on Montauk Highway, the Southampton Department of Public Works Highway Yard on Corwith Road, and the former orchard north of Hayground School (located between Butter Lane and Mitchells Lane).
- ***Commercial Development.*** Somewhat more commercial and professional office development can be accommodated in the hamlet, but it must be a low-scale, non-destination type, built close to the sidewalk, and using the local architectural vernacular. Limited new development is conceivable on the Carvel and surrounding properties, if such development is non-retail.
- ***Pedestrian and Vehicle Circulation.*** Traffic and parking are difficult issues but not insoluble. The hamlet center must be kept compact, walkable, and oriented towards year-round residents of Bridgehampton. Pedestrian safety and comfort is key: more

sidewalks, crosswalks, sidewalk benches, and lighting are needed. The town must pursue a variety of approaches: more stoplights, left-turn controls (in some cases making this easier and in other cases prohibiting this), curb cut consolidation, traffic calming, satellite municipal parking, traffic and parking regulations enforcement, and an analysis of parking regulations and the parking escrow fund.