

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes existing land uses and community character along the Direct Route Alternative and within ½ mile of the proposed line, where the new line and expanded substation could be expected to have the greatest direct impact on land use and community character. This chapter further addresses the relationship between the Direct Route Alternative and existing as well as future land uses and community character.

Information relative to existing land use and community character was obtained through several sources, including Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and field surveys conducted by AKRF, and municipal reports and documents.

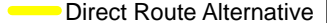



The Direct Route Alternative also examines the Village underground option. This option is not the reasonable worst case when considering potential land use and community character impacts.

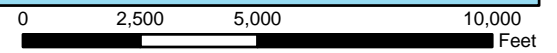
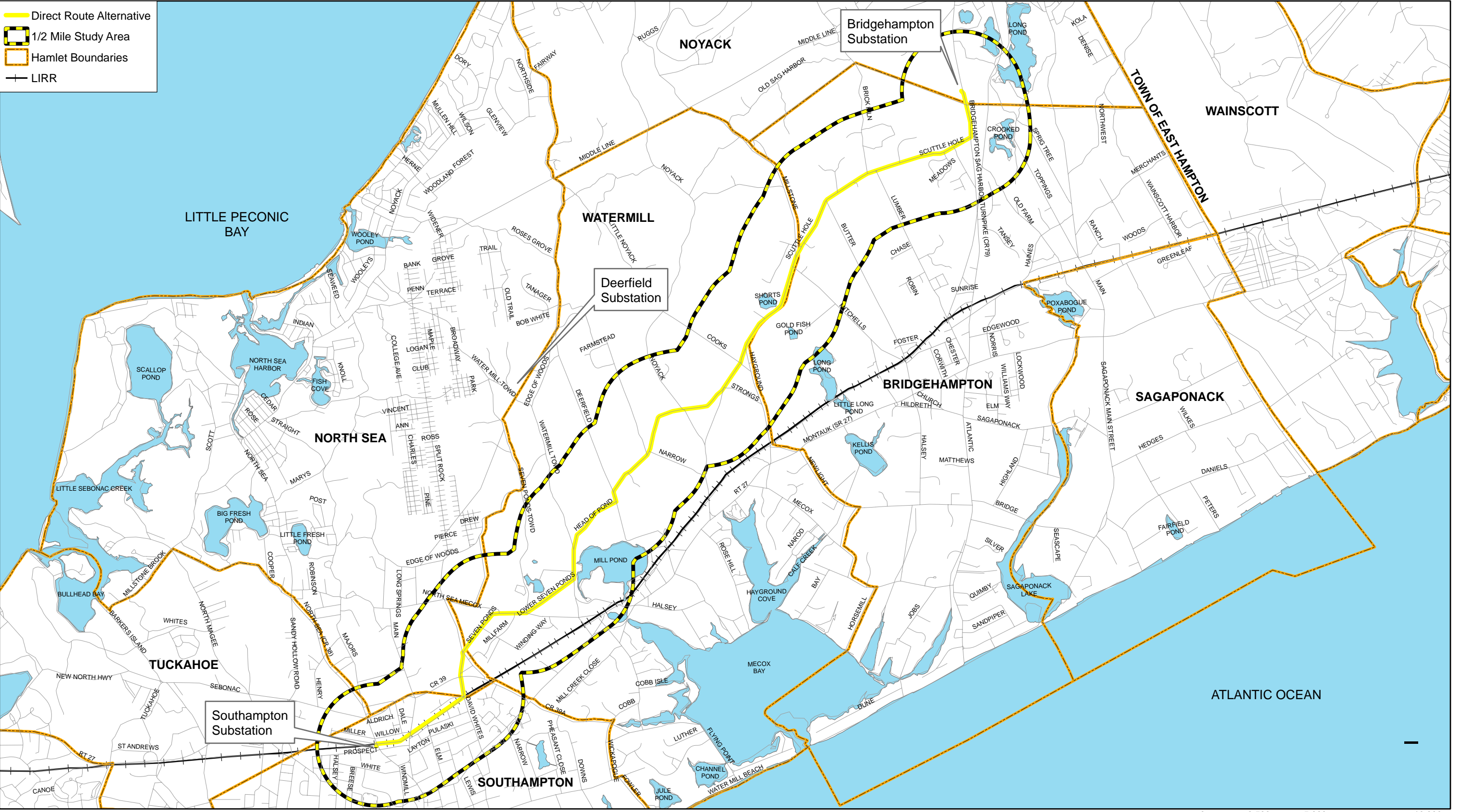
B. EXISTING CONDITIONS**LAND USES ALONG THE ROUTE**

The Direct Route Alternative would follow existing roadways between the two substations for about 8.4 miles within the hamlets of Tuckahoe, North Sea, Water Mill, and Bridgehampton, as well as the Incorporated Village of Southampton, see Figure 2-1. Starting at the Southampton Substation, this route would follow the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) right-of-way to David Whites Lane to Seven Ponds Road to Lower Seven Ponds Road to Head of Pond Road to Scuttle Hole Road (Huntington Path) to Bridgehampton Sag Harbor Turnpike to the Bridgehampton Substation. There are preexisting distribution lines located on the public right-of-way along the proposed Direct Route Alternative. Generally, the predominant land uses featured along the route are agricultural and single-family residential. Other land uses found along the Direct Route Alternative include commercial, open space, a golf course (Atlantic Golf Course), and utility uses and vacant land. See Figure 2-2 for existing land uses along the Direct Route Alternative.

Along the LIRR and into Seven Ponds Road, the Direct Route Alternative is immediately surrounded by commercial uses which culminate just past Bower Avenue. North of Bower Avenue, the Direct Route Alternative traverses along Seven Ponds Road and into Upper Seven Ponds Road. Residential use and agricultural lands become prevalent as the Direct Route Alternative moves towards Seven Ponds Road. Mill Pond is also located immediately east of the Direct Route Alternative in this area. The remainder of the Direct Route Alternative is surrounded by single-family and agricultural uses with Atlantic Golf Course located north of Hayground on the north side of the Direct Route Alternative. The Direct Route Alternative ends at the 10-acre site proposed for the Bridgehampton Substation expansion. The Suffolk County Tax Map number for this parcel (owned by LIPA) is District 900, Section 39, Block 27, Lot 1.

10.22.07

-  Direct Route Alternative
-  1/2 Mile Study Area
-  Hamlet Boundaries
-  LIRR



10.23.07

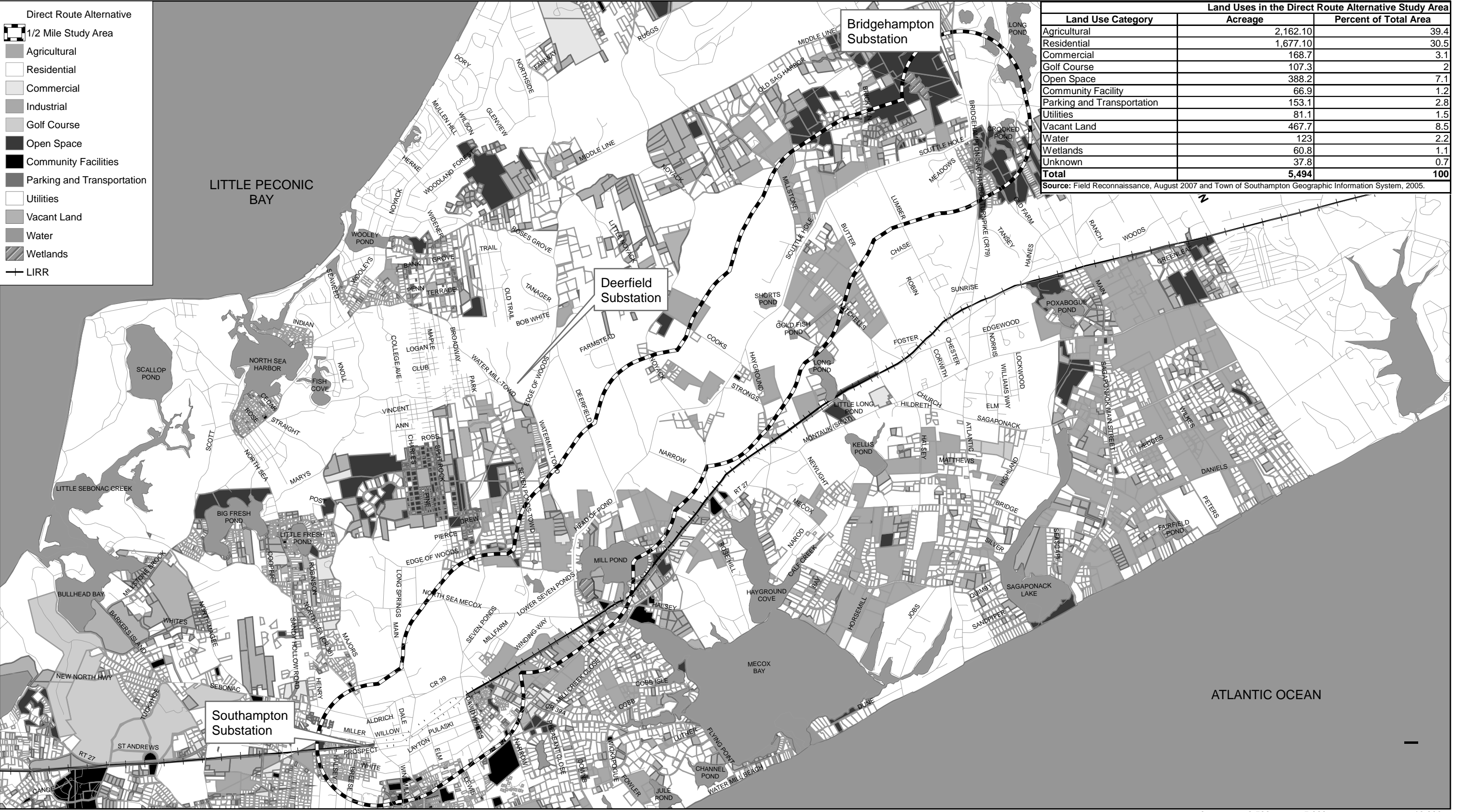
Direct Route Alternative

1/2 Mile Study Area

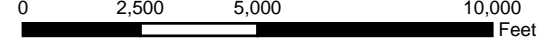
- Agricultural
- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Golf Course
- Open Space
- Community Facilities
- Parking and Transportation
- Utilities
- Vacant Land
- Water
- Wetlands
- LIRR

Land Uses in the Direct Route Alternative Study Area		
Land Use Category	Acreage	Percent of Total Area
Agricultural	2,162.10	39.4
Residential	1,677.10	30.5
Commercial	168.7	3.1
Golf Course	107.3	2
Open Space	388.2	7.1
Community Facility	66.9	1.2
Parking and Transportation	153.1	2.8
Utilities	81.1	1.5
Vacant Land	467.7	8.5
Water	123	2.2
Wetlands	60.8	1.1
Unknown	37.8	0.7
Total	5,494	100

Source: Field Reconnaissance, August 2007 and Town of Southampton Geographic Information System, 2005.



Source: 2003 Suffolk County Real Property



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Open space uses primarily surround the site. Additional uses include existing utilities, agriculture, and single-family residential, as well as vacant land.

LAND USES IN THE STUDY AREA

The study area includes all uses within ½ mile of the Direct Route Alternative. As stated above, the Direct Route Alternative is located in the hamlets of Tuckahoe, North Sea, Water Mill, and Bridgehampton, as well as the Incorporated Village of Southampton. As shown on Figure 2-1, the predominant land use within the ½-mile study area is agricultural (approximately 40 percent of the study area), with single-family residential representing about 31 percent of the study area.

About 2,162 acres of the total land in the study area is used for agricultural purposes. Some of the agricultural uses along the Direct Route Alternative also have accessory farm stands open to the public. As stated, agricultural lands are the predominant land use in the study area and define the character of the Town east of Shinnecock Canal. Community character is discussed in greater detail below. In addition, the central and northern portions of the study area are located in the Town's Agricultural Overlay District (see Chapter 4, "Zoning and Public Policy" for additional information on this district). According to *Southampton Tomorrow - Comprehensive Plan Update Implementation Strategies* (1999 Comprehensive Plan Update), agricultural land is only 8 percent of the total acreage in the Town and represents less than 2 percent of individually owned properties within the Town. It goes on to say that the ramifications of any major shifts in overall land use are extreme. Even a slight change in land use—or land ownership—on an individual parcel from agricultural to residential or commercial can have a tremendous impact on the overall balance between developed land and the rural character of the Town of Southampton. There are limited agricultural uses in the Village of Southampton portion of the study area. However, the Village portion of the study area has proportionately more diverse uses than the Town portion of the study area.

Residential uses are featured throughout the study area both north and south of the Direct Route Alternative with the concentration of this use located in the western portion of the study area. The dominant zoning district in the study area—Country Residence 80 (CR80)—has a minimum residential lot requirement of approximately 2 acres. Minimum lot size requirements decrease towards the western edge of the study area (within the Village of Southampton).

Approximately 169 acres or about 3 percent of the total land in the study area is used for commercial purposes. These uses include retail stores, restaurants, offices, warehouses, and private recreation. Most commercial uses are located within the western portion of the study area in close proximity to the LIRR within the hamlet of North Sea and Village of Southampton.

Open space is found on approximately 388 acres or just over 7 percent within the study area. Open space lands include publicly owned parcels that have been preserved for passive recreational uses such as hiking and birding. The concentration of open space is located in the easternmost portion of the study area associated with the Long Pond Greenbelt. As stated, Atlantic Golf Course is located in the study area. The entire golf course is about 201 acres, with about half (107 acres) within the study area.

About 468 acres or about 9 percent of the study area is vacant. Vacant land is an indicator of potential land use patterns that may occur in the future. Most of the vacant land in the ½-mile study area is zoned for single-family residential uses. On the Direct Route Alternative itself there are few vacant lots.

Community facility uses comprise 1 percent of the study area. Examples of community facilities include places of worship, social organizations, cultural and institutional uses, municipal uses, and landmarks. There are 23 community facilities in the study area, with the dominant use associated with places of worship (see Chapter 3, “Community Facilities and Open Space,” for specific information on community facilities within the study area). Community facilities are primarily found within the Village portion of the study area.

About 3 percent of the study area is commercial parking lots and transportation uses, including roadways. The commercial lots are dedicated to public parking (e.g., LIRR parking) and do not include parking associated with private uses. Utility uses encompass almost 1 percent or 51 acres of total land in the study area. These uses include telephone, electric, and flood control as well as water supply. Some of the uses identified as utilities may be vacant, however, they are owned and maintained by a public utility.

The remainder of the study area comprises water and wetlands, including Mill Pond and Crooked Pond.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

The community character of the study area is defined by land use trends, historical development, and overall density. The study area for the Direct Route Alternative is defined more by large tracts of agricultural land and residential homes than the residential subdivisions that may characterize other communities to the west.

The study area is located within the Town of Southampton and Village of Southampton and is considered part of the larger East End region of Long Island, which is characterized as a seasonal tourist destination with comparatively high median home values, large tracts of agricultural lands, and preserved open areas. In fact, almost half of the population in the Town and Village are seasonal residents.

Historically, Southampton Town and Village were agricultural and maritime communities with large areas of undisturbed land. The shift from a rural farming landscape with scenic vistas to that of a community made up of residential home sites interspersed among agricultural lands is a trend that continues today east of Shinnecock Canal in the project study area.

However, the most dramatic change in the Southampton landscape to occur in the last 40 years has been the steady decrease in undeveloped land. According to the 1999 Comprehensive Plan Update, undeveloped land accounted for 73 percent of the Town in 1960. By 1994, the land use inventory indicated that this figure had shrunk to approximately 34 percent. Similarly, in 1960, land utilized for residential purposes comprised less than 4 percent of the total area, and the 1994 land use inventory indicated that nearly 24 percent of the land was developed and assessed as residential. According to the U.S. Census, the Town’s population has grown approximately 20 percent from 1990 to 2000, whereas the Village population actually decreased by 0.4 percent over the same period. Based on LIPA’s 2006 *Long Island Population Survey*, the population within the Town increased another 6 percent from 2000 to 2005. Today’s pattern of residential development has become fairly uniform throughout the Town. However, more land is available for development east of Shinnecock Canal than in the Town’s western communities.

Due to the Town’s commitment to open space and agricultural preservation, the land use pattern east of Shinnecock Canal is largely residential with a large swath of agricultural land, which is included in the Direct Route Alternative’s ½-mile study area as well as in the hamlet of Sagaponack. Open Space is also a notable land use within this portion of the Town, specifically

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in association with the Long Pond Greenbelt. There are limited agricultural lands within the Village in the ½-mile study area. Similar to the Town, the dominant land use in the Village portion of the study area is residential, but commercial uses are prevalent, at least within the study area. The entire study area is unique in that it encompasses a higher percentage of undeveloped land than the entire Town itself.

The abundance of agricultural and undeveloped land, as well as the presence of historic resources and single-family homes, create the Town's valuable scenic images—open vistas, ocean views, country roads, rolling landscapes, and active agriculture. This scenic presence is found along the Direct Route Alternative.

The *Village of Southampton Comprehensive Plan* (Village Comprehensive Plan) identifies its special architecture, small-town character, and historic resources as part of the character of the area. In the Village portion of the study area, most of the area is developed. Uses range from older community facilities such as Our Lady of Poland Roman Catholic Church, to newer uses such as restaurants and retail. Even some of the industrial uses appear to operate within historic structures. Unlike the Town portion of the study area where large agricultural tracts dominate, the Village area is more densely developed.

Protecting the character of the community has been a historically significant goal for the Town and Village. The Town's comprehensive planning history, which includes several documents dating back to 1970, recommends the preservation of open space, rural landscape, and historic character of the community.

However, the rise in population and development pressure on the East End is expected to create new demands on unpreserved open areas and agricultural lands as well as community facilities, infrastructure, and housing stock. According to the 1999 Comprehensive Plan Update, the large second home population has the greatest potential for increasing Southampton's population over the next decades. A significant national and local trend is the movement by many second homeowners to use their "seasonal" homes more frequently, in many cases converting their seasonal or weekend homes to their primary residences.

C. POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The proposed new poles would range in height from 48 to 61 feet. Historically, LIPA has constructed transmission lines and substations similar to the proposed project throughout Long Island to respond to growing energy demand. Land uses in those areas have not suffered an adverse impact as a result of those projects. As stated above, trends indicate that the full-time residential population, and development overall, will increase in the study area and within the entire East End in the future. This growth will undoubtedly create an additional demand on infrastructure, notably energy supply. LIPA has estimated that the current energy network will not be able to accommodate this growth, and therefore is proposing this project to meet the expected future demand.

Specifically, the new transmission line (whether overhead or underground, or a hybrid) and expanded substation would be consistent with current and anticipated future land use conditions and would have no significant adverse land use impacts. Additionally, the Direct Route Alternative would have no significant adverse impact on the health, safety, or welfare of the community or residents, nor would it result in an undesirable change in the character, or the environmental conditions of the surrounding neighborhood or nearby properties. Land use

conditions would not substantially change as a result of the Direct Route Alternative. The Direct Route Alternative would be constructed along a preexisting distribution route along the existing right-of-way, therefore avoiding the need for disturbance or clearance in the region. This right-of-way has historically been used for utility purposes, and therefore would not conflict with the existing and future land use patterns in the area. Moreover, the utilization of the Direct Route Alternative would prevent disturbance of otherwise pristine land. In fact, the existing distribution line has been on this route since the late 1920s. The distribution line has coexisted with the agricultural, residential, and other uses located along the route for more than 80 years. There is currently no evidence that these utility uses have an adverse impact on farming functions or residential uses. The uses along and surrounding the proposed transmission line, whether the line was constructed overhead or underground, would continue to function in the same capacity without an impact from the Direct Route Alternative. The transmission line with the Direct Route Alternative would have no significant adverse impacts in terms of land use and community character.

The proposed expansion of the Bridgehampton Substation would be constructed on a vacant portion of a LIPA-owned parcel where the existing substation is located. The proposed site is located in close proximity to open space. LIPA has proposed to maintain natural buffers around the perimeter of the site to prevent any adverse impact on the surrounding scenic vistas. The proposed substation would also be gated for safety purposes. The proposed substation would generally not be visible from the roadway. Moreover, the lot has historically been used as a substation and would therefore continue to be compatible with surrounding uses. The substation expansion would have no significant adverse impacts in terms of land use and community character.

Furthermore, LIPA may bury all or part of the transmission line. Any underground portions of the transmission line, including the Village underground option, would not result in significant adverse impacts on land use and community character (including scenic vistas)¹ within the study area. *

¹ As described in Chapter 6, “Visual Resources,” the Direct Route Alternative with the entire line constructed above ground, or hybrid overhead and underground would not result in any significant adverse visual impacts or scenic vistas.