

## 5. Airport

### **Existing Air Transportation Facilities**

The Francis S. Gabeski Airport serves Westhampton Beach and Suffolk County and is owned by Suffolk County. Currently, the Airport is operated by the County's Department of Economic Development, Division of Aviation. Geographically, it is located north of the Village of Westhampton Beach within the Town of Southampton. Originally, this airport was constructed in 1943 by the Federal Government for use during World War II exclusively as a military base. Following the war it was leased by the Air Force for an Air Defense Command Base and in 1970 Suffolk County acquired it as surplus government property.

The Airport is located between Sunrise Highway (NYS Route 27) and Montauk Highway (County Road 80) and east of Westhampton Beach – Old Riverhead Road (County Road 31). Figure B-9 Eastern Suffolk Airport shows the location of Gabreski Airport and other airports in the proximity. The entrance to the airport is on the east side of C.R. 31 south of NYS Route 27. Immediately to the south and west of the airport is the Long Island Rail Roads Westhampton Station although there is no public transportation connection between the two facilities. The SCT S-90 bus stops at the Airport entrance only twice a day at 9:10 A.M. and 4:35 P.M.

Consisting of approximately 1,480 acres Gabreski Airport has three operating runways. One runway (Runway 6-24) is 9,000 feet in length (third longest runway in the State of New York) and operates as the precision runway. The remaining two runways (Runway 15-33 and Runway 1-19) are both 5,000 feet and operate under visual flight rules. The Airport is situated at an elevation of 67 feet above sea level and is operated as a joint-use facility. It operates primarily as a general aviation airport but also contains a New York Air National Guard Base (106<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Squadron, including an Aerospace Rescue and Recovery unit) occupying 83 acres in the southwest portion of the property.

Civil aviation operations are the largest (excluding air taxi) with 67,219 flights compared to 8,619 military operations annually in 1996, based on Gabreski Airport Air Traffic Control Records). The Airport Master Plan indicates that on average 83% of their total operations are general aviation, 13% military and the remaining 4% air taxi. Because of the Air National Guard mission, both military and itinerant military utilize the airport. Peak operations at Gabreski are during the month of August. More than one-half of these total operations (55%) occur between 12:00 P.M. and 6:00 P.M., while 25% occur between 6:00 A.M. and Noon, with the remaining 20% between 6:00 P.M. and 12:00 A.M.

In addition to the Francis Gabreski Airport, there is the Town of East Hampton Airport which is located in Wainscott along the east side of Townline Road (the border between Southampton Town and East Hampton Town) and west side of Daniels Hole Road, north of Montauk Highway. The Town of East Hampton owns the airport.



**FIGURE B-9  
EASTERN SUFFOLK AIRPORTS**

© 2001 Microsoft Corp. All rights reserved.

There are three existing runways at the East Hampton Airport, one of which can accommodate small business jets and power-driven air charter aircrafts. The Town of East Hampton has recently finished construction of a new terminal.

While the East Hampton Town Airport is not under the jurisdiction of the Town of Southampton, it is close to the Town of Southampton and passengers no doubt come to the airport from Southampton, as the East Hampton Airport is geographically closer to the eastern portion of Southampton Town than Gabreski Airport. Access to the East Hampton Airport is gained via Daniels Hole Road and Montauk Highway.

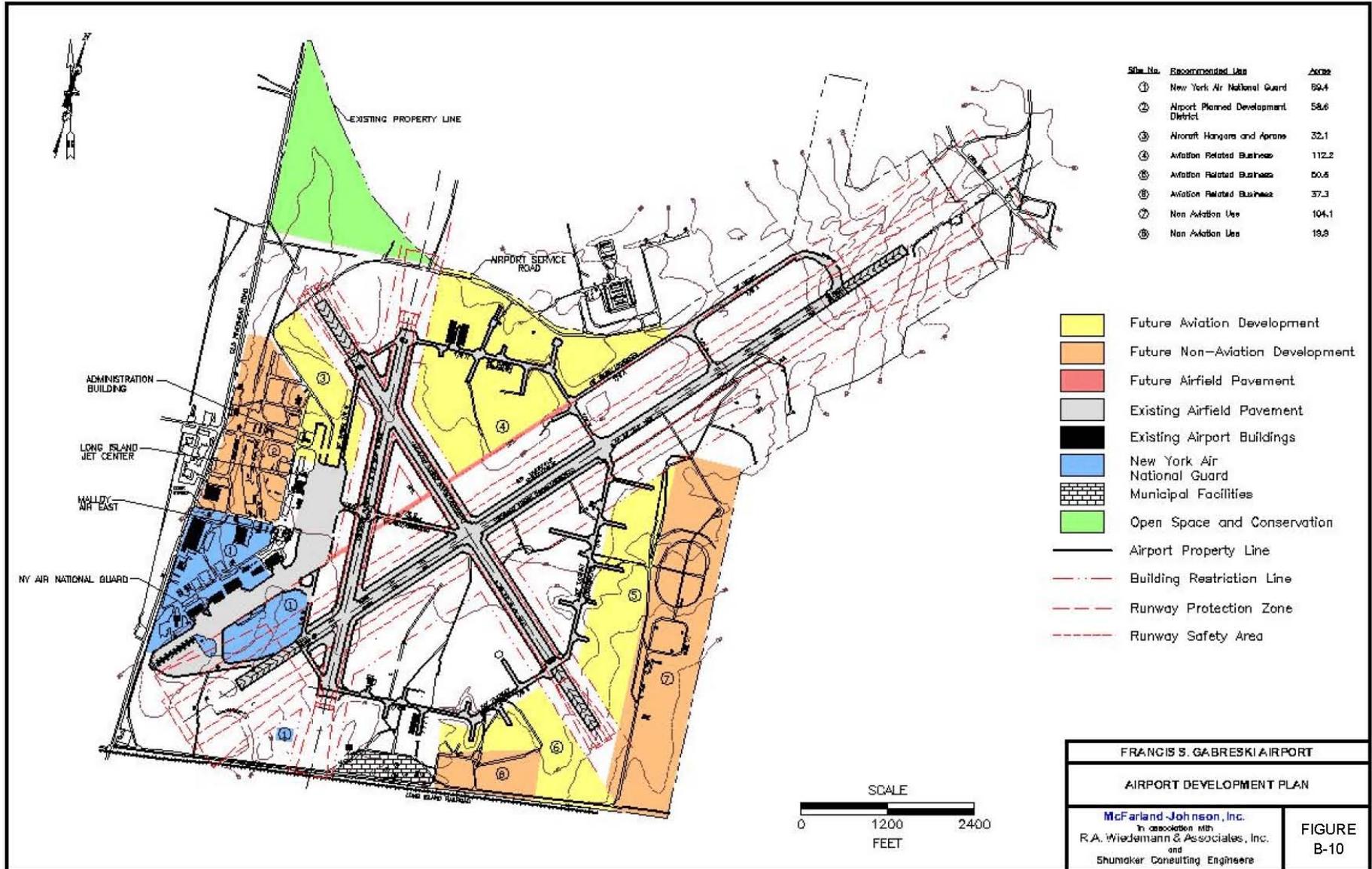
There is also a helipad operated on the north side of Dune Road about ½ mile east of the Shinnecock Inlet within the limits of the Incorporated Village of Southampton.

These three aviation facilities provide for all of the air transportation within the Town. There are no regular scheduled commercial flights available at any of the three facilities. Passengers arrive via private charter, business or private aircrafts. The Gabreski Airport entrance is served by the SCT S-90 bus, which is some distance from the terminal, and the other two facilities have no direct connectivity to public bus or rail facilities.

### **Future Plans**

The Southampton Town Board, by Resolution 1443 of December 23, 1997, adopted an Industrial and Commercial Incentive Plan. The plan was forwarded to Suffolk County for consideration as part of a countywide plan. The Town proposed “Gabreski Airport Planned Development District (APDD) April 17, 1998 Zoning Amendments” that supported the implementation of both Suffolk County’s Airport’s Development Program and the Town’s Draft Comprehensive Plan Update in a manner compatible with the Central Pine Barrens Plan. Figure B-10, Airport Development Plan, provides an overview of the development plan proposed by Suffolk County in the February 2002 Gabreski Airport Business Plan. The proposed Airport Development Program and Planned Development District included the following objectives for Gabreski Airport that support business and industry recommended for real property tax abutments:

- “Create a unique employment and business center that will complement and not compete with existing Village and Hamlet Centers in terms of retail sales, services and visitor attractions.”
- “Attract future development that will create a mixed use activity center consisting of complementary aviation, light industrial, office, service, support retail, transportation, lodging and related uses.”
- “Limit and phase the development of support retail and service uses to a maximum of 5% of the total occupancy permitted by the proposed development program. Support retail and service development will consist of multiple tenants and uses that will be phased to coincide with current and future on-site aviation and non-aviation demands.”



- “Establish the Airport as a true local transportation hub through the improvement of general aviation facilities, access to the Long Island Rail Road station and the introduction of a ground based transportation complex consisting of car rental, taxi, Suffolk County Transit, inter-city bus and other transportation, retail, restaurant and related services.”
- “Target future development identified as strategic businesses by the Suffolk County Strategic Industries Incentive Program and Project Long Island.”<sup>3</sup>

In February 2002, the Suffolk County Department of Economic Development released the Gabreski Airport Business Plan (McFarland-Johnson, Inc., 2002) to identify development and operational options for the future of the airport. One of the leading goals identified in the Business Plan was full development of the airport PDD.

The County is currently designing a new subdivision plan for a large segment of the Airport adjacent to Old Riverhead Road and north of the BOCES and Air National Guard Facilities. This area is comprised of 58 acres zoned as a Airport Planned Development District (APDD). The Town of Southampton has commissioned a separate consultant to complete a site plan design study to provide greater certainty and guidance for identification and soliciting of appropriate business development in the APDD. This study has not yet been released for public review, but will entail a coordinated development scheme to provide specific overall design direction for the Town, County, and prospective developers. Conceptual site plan designs and building depictions, elevations, and architectural elements will be provided to illustrate recommended development standards and guidelines, including lot layout, road infrastructure improvements, drainage design, circulation, streetscape landscaping, lighting, common signage, etc. Site uses will also be explored as part of this Town initiated planning/design study.

---

<sup>3</sup> Town of Southampton Industrial/Commercial Incentive Report, October 1997.