B. An Improved Public Transportation System

Several Southampton Town Transportation Task Force recommendations involved improvement of the existing public transportation system including the Long Island Rail Road and Suffolk County Transit. In order to provide a public transportation system, these two entities must be examined together including support facilities. Task Force recommendations included the following significant recommendations:

- Adopt demand reduction strategies and transportation demand management (e.g., commuter tax credits, the use of intermodal transit such as the rail and bus systems) to reduce the volume of automobile traffic and associated traffic congestion. *Land Committee*

- Examine the feasibility of joint use park and ride facilities at stations for automobiles, bus and rail, including using time-share/flex car sustainable vehicle program and expanded services provided for parked cars. *Land Committee*

- Consider commuter train service (e.g., Inter-Hamlet Train) for South Fork. *Rail and Transit Committee*

- Insure that full signalization is in place on the Montauk line to East Hampton as a minimum. *Rail and Transit Committee*

- Institute a full schedule inter-hamlet train service at least hourly following the demonstration pilot and its evaluation. *Rail and Transit Committee*

- Analyze and recommend more responsive and additional passenger service to/from NYS (e.g., 2 commuter trains A.M. east to west and 2 Commuter Trains P.M. west to east). *Rail and Transit Committee*

- Extend the LIRR service further to the east (Southampton/East Hampton), rather than terminating in Speonk. *Rail and Transit Committee*

- Develop and install a signalization system for physically tracking rail movements through Southampton and East Hampton. *Rail and Transit Committee*

- Develop acceptable exceptions to Federal regulation (e.g., FRA) to demonstrate prototype program (e.g., pilot). *Rail and Transit Committee*

- Develop and install a signalized system for physically tracking rail movements through Southampton, using sensing technology (e.g., differential gps). *Rail and Transit Committee*

- Examine transportation demand management, demand reduction techniques to encourage rail use (quantify benefits). *Rail and Transit Committee*

- Evaluate additional rail station stops (e.g., reopening and new in conjunction with Inter-Hamlet service Hamlet service. *Rail and Transit Committee*

- Examine the feasibility of joint use park and ride facilities at stations for automobiles, bus and rail. *Rail and Transit Committee*

- Continue to expand public bus service and routes for serving passengers on both forks of eastern Long Island. *Rail and Transit Committee*

- Develop a bus feeder connect system, time integrated with the LIRR schedule, on a loop basis to support the commuter population. *Rail and Transit Committee*

- Develop and conduct an operational review of the public transit system (e.g., improve rail/bus) scheduling to establish a more "seamless" connection for users). Look at rider impact rather just cost efficiencies. *Rail and Transit Committee*

- Examine the feasibility of a summer "Pilot" bus shuttle program for selected hamlets to improve business center parking and enhance vehicle beach access, to relieve vehicle congestion (i.e., East Hampton Village operated such a shuttle for several years under a grant but discontinued the shuttle when the grants ran out. *Rail and Transit Committee*

- Develop express bus routes connecting Ronkonkoma station with Riverhead and then the South Fork. *Rail and Transit Committee*

The Land Committee and Rail and Transit Committee of the Southampton Town Task Force both envisioned better public transportation facilities in order to attract people to forego automobile use in order to lessen traffic congestion.

The Long Island Rail Road is the greatest underutilized transportation facility within the Town. As noted previously, the LIRR runs only a handful of trains each weekday and none during the critical A.M. and P.M. peak hours of traffic flow. Federal rules for operating heavy rail systems prohibit the railroad from running more than a single train in track areas which do not have full instrumentation and signalization to identify where trains are and to control signals and switching from a central location. The LIRR has long range plans to add the appropriate signalization but no specific time frames are available. Another obstacle to local service is the type of train that must be run. It has

been suggested that smaller, lighter, one or two car trains would be more suitable to handle local transportation rather than the large diesel locomotives with multiple cars. It must, however, be remembered that in addition to being flexible and dealing with the different types of passengers it carries, the LIRR must also be able to carry the huge loads of passengers it currently handles on summer weekends. The rail system must accommodate both kinds of trips.

In addition to being underutilized, the LIRR track system is not subject to congestion compared to the surrounding highway system. The trains can operate at higher speeds than vehicles on the highway system. Trains may, therefore, operate with considerable time-savings over personal autos or the bus system point-to-point. In order to attract additional use of a public transportation system, it is essential that it offer faster rides and be competitive from a time perspective with the private auto.

Figure IV-13, Proposed Public Transportation System Alternative, provides a conceptual outline of public transportation systems incorporating rail and bus operations into one cohesive system. Such a system has the best chance of attracting motorists out of the personal automobile and reducing congestion on the highway system.

As noted previously, the Town of Southampton's A.M. and P.M. weekday peak hours of traffic include large portions of people from outside the Town commuting to jobs within the Town or in East Hampton. **To have an impact in reducing vehicle traffic flow within the Town inter-hamlet or local service should be provided to stations further to the west, at least to the Mastic-Shirley station.** Therefore, the local system would need to extend westward into Brookhaven Town to the Mastic/Shirley train station and eastward to Montauk. Figure IV-13 only shows that portion of the system within Southampton Town but all elements, such as park and ride, auxiliary bus and express bus facilities, would need to be provided outside of the Town of Southampton to support the rail facility.

In order to reduce the size of the area that local shuttle buses must serve in support of each train station, the opening of closed stations should also be investigated, (e.g., Quogue, Southampton College, Water Mill) although adding additional stops will stretch out time schedules and may make train service less competitive with auto use. It is the unfortunate trade off necessary to place the transit service in close proximity to the ridership.

The proposed rail service would provide east or westbound service every ½ hour from 6:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. Hourly service would be provided after 7:00 P.M. As it takes over one hour to transit the distance between Shirley and Montauk, it would take a minimum of three trains in each direction plus spares to operate the proposed schedule or a total of 8 new trains.

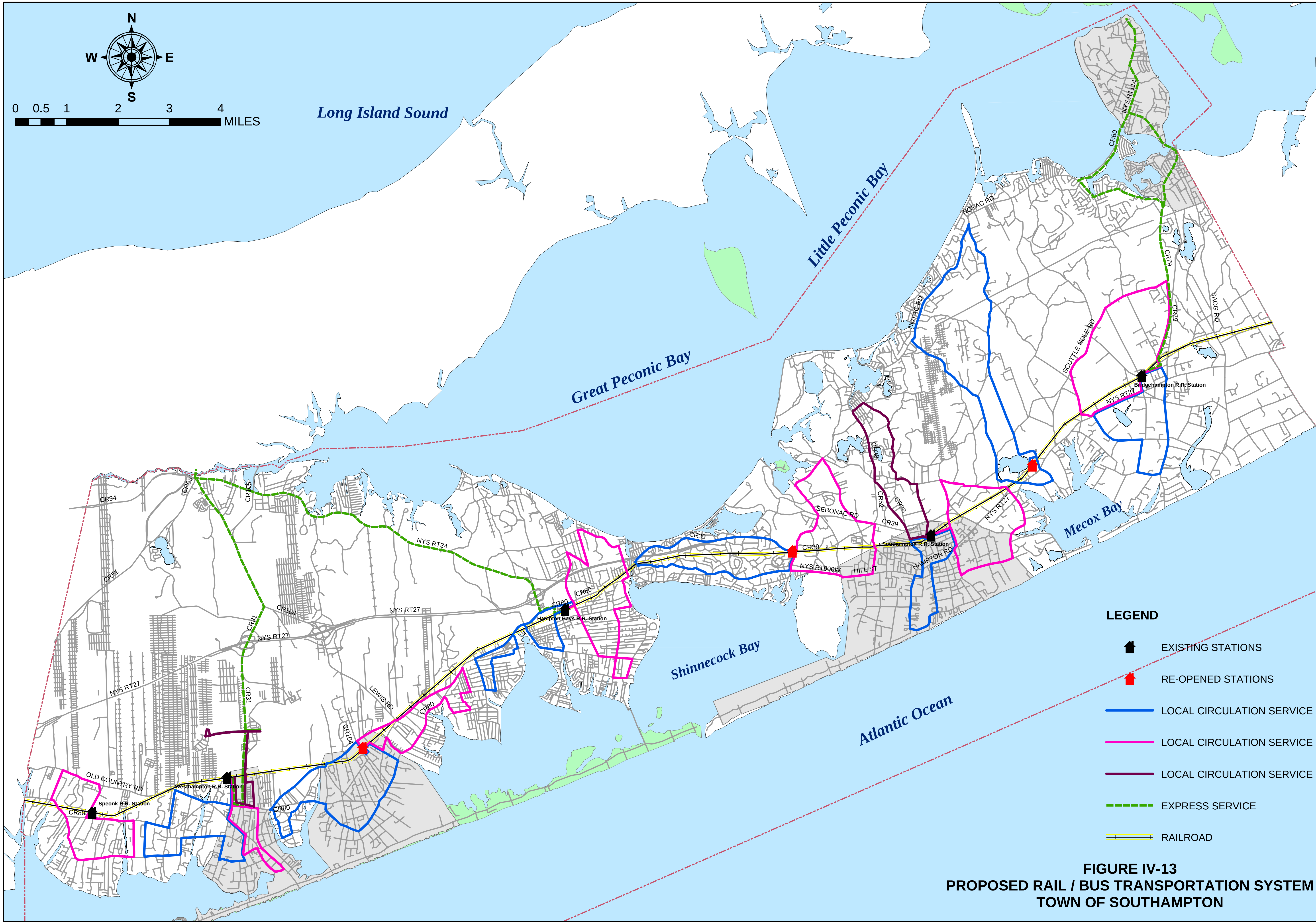
N
W
E
S
0
0.5
1
2
3
4
MILES
Long Island Sound
Great Peconic Bay
Little Peconic Bay
Shinnecock Bay
Mecox Bay
Atlantic Ocean
NOYAC RD
NYS RT114
CR60
CR79
SAGG RD
SCUTTLE HOLE RD
Bridgehampton R.R. Station
NYS RT27
CR38
CR52
CR39
SEBONAC RD
Southampton R.R. Station
HAMPTON RD
HILL ST
NYS RT900W
Hampton Bays R.R. Station
CR80
NYS RT24
CR94
CR63
CR105
CR51
CR104
CR31
LEWIS RD
OLD COUNTRY RD
Westhampton R.R. Station
Speonk R.R. Station
LEGEND
EXISTING STATIONS
RE-OPENED STATIONS
LOCAL CIRCULATION SERVICE
LOCAL CIRCULATION SERVICE
LOCAL CIRCULATION SERVICE
EXPRESS SERVICE
RAILROAD

FIGURE IV-13
PROPOSED RAIL / BUS TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM
TOWN OF SOUTHAMPTON

The trains need not be the large trains currently running on the LIRR and also need not be "multi-mode trains"[15] as it is only intended to use these trains operate locally and not into New York City. Transfers from the local service to City bound trains would be incorporated into the regular schedule at the Mastic Shirley Train Station except for weekends and holidays when the local service would be adjusted to allow the larger existing trains to utilize the local facility.

To facilitate the expanded rail service the following improvements would be necessary.

- The signal and monitoring system between Mastic Shirley and Montauk would need to be upgraded so that the location of all trains would be known and that switching could be accommodated from a central control facility, either operated from Jamaica, as is the existing system, or from a local East End facility. Track improvements would be necessary also.

- Except from a capital cost perspective, the installation of a second track would best facilitate east/west train movements. An alternative might be the placement of sections of dual track in order to allow east/west trains to pass at strategic points. The location and length of dual track facility that would be needed would be determined by the scheduling of trains to provide half hour service. In addition, control over trains within the system by a central control facility would be a necessity.

- Re-opened or new train stations would require new-elevated platforms. Similar to those constructed at Speonk, Westhampton, Hampton Bays, Southampton and Bridgehampton.

- New or expanded parking facilities need to be provided at new, re-opened and many existing train stations.

- Local circulation facilities at all stations must be modified to allow for convenient drop-off by buses, taxis and personal automobiles.

- Auxiliary bus or shuttle service must tie into each station to support the train service and allow for quick connection to downtown hamlets and employment facilities. Southampton Town Hall and the Southampton Hospital in Southampton, Town Police, Highway and Park facilities in Hampton Bays and Gabreski Airport in Westhampton, are specific examples.

Revitalizing the Long Island Rail Road to provide enhanced local service as described would require a large commitment of capital funds and operating funds. The allocation of capital funds for LIRR improvements is controlled largely by the MTA-LIRR. Federal

[15] Multi-mode trains are the diesel/electric trains that currently service the Town of Southampton.

funds received by the LIRR are administered through the Transportation Coordinating Committee as explained in Section VII of this report.

Capital expenditures would include:

- Improved instrumentation, signalization and operating controls,
- New rolling stock,
- Possible construction of new stations,
- Increased parking at many stations,
- New buses to support operations at each train station;
- Creation of dual track sections to allow for trains to pass.
- Creation of a new central control facility.

Operating expenditures would include:

- Fuel, maintenance and drivers for new buses,
- Fuel, maintenance and operators and conductors for new trains.
- Maintenance and operation of new control facilities.

As both large capital and operating expenses would be required to provide a competitive system, a detailed feasibility study should be conducted to assure that such a program is economically feasible, would attract sufficient ridership to be viable, and would reduce traffic demand on the surrounding highway system. The proposed improved public transit system would also need to be evaluated from the environmental perspectives. Noise quality may become an issue should the number of trains using the LIRR tracks goes from ten trains a day to 60. While smaller and presumably quieter trains could be used, the trains would still be metal wheels on metal tracks. Signaling at at-grade crossings could also be an issue. Expansion of the existing bus systems using the existing highway system is not anticipated to raise environmental issues, although other issues may be triggered by re-opening some train stations (i.e., Village of Quogue) and by the need to a acquire more space for parking in the vicinity of existing and proposed train stations.

Another concern with respect to increased use of the LIRR system would be safety at existing at-grade crossings of the railroad with the highway system. Some grade crossings could become capacity problems for the adjoining roadways with more frequent closures of at-grade crossings to allow passage of trains. Such crossings would include:

- North Phillips Avenue, Speonk
- Old Riverhead Road (C.R. 31), Westhampton
- Springville Road, Hampton Bays
- Ponquogue Avenue, Hampton Bays
- County Road 39, Southampton

- Bridgehampton-Sag Harbor Turnpike (C.R. 79), Bridgehampton

The proposed inter-hamlet train system and accessory bus transit feeder service must be fully evaluated.

Enhanced Intercity Coach Operations

It may not be possible to significantly increase LIRR service between the Hamptons and New York City due to the capacity limitations of the railroads' operations to the west and increasing this service may not be economically viable. Intercity motor coach transport as provided by the Hampton Jitney and Hampton Luxury Liner currently fill this need and can continue to do this in the future to augment the proposed inner-hamlet train service and enhanced operations. Both motor coach services have the ability to add or subtract buses as demand increases over time or decreases due to seasonal fluctuations, making them efficient, profitable, and able to provide frequent service that best serve their customers.

The Town should support these motor coach operations to the maximum extent possible. Stops in each hamlet should be established with safe secure off-street parking. Bus shelters should be provided with adequate lighting, pay phones, signing and motor coach service information. Connectivity to the local transit system is also necessary.