

4.0 TRANSPORTATION

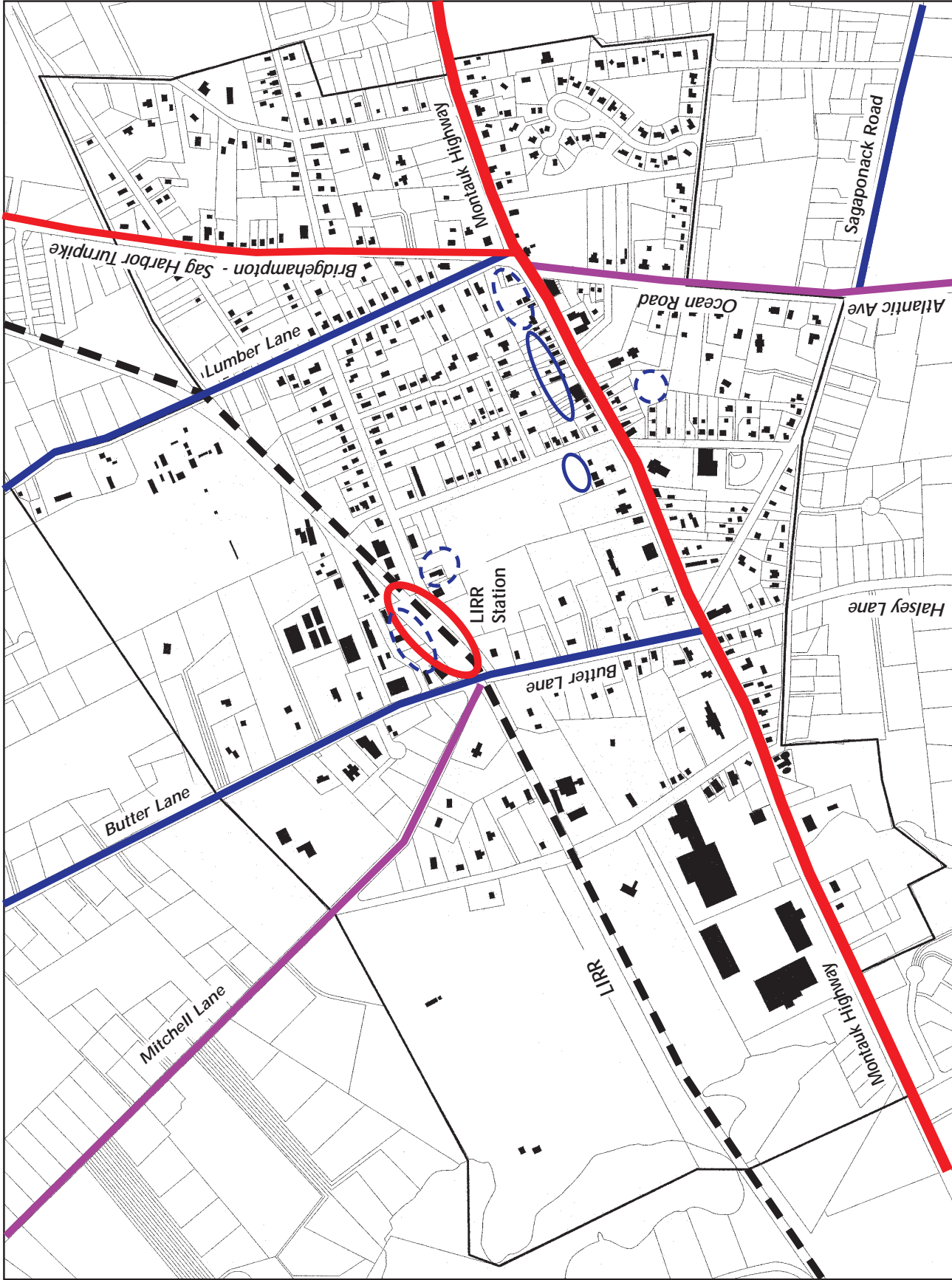
4.1 Existing Conditions and Concerns

Traffic conditions in the hamlet of Bridgehampton are dominated by Montauk Highway, the major east-west arterial. With over 21,000 vehicles per average day, Montauk Highway represents the prime activity artery as well as the source of major congestion. The Comprehensive Plan Update of 1996 classifies Montauk Highway as a major arterial. The Bridgehampton-Sag Harbor Turnpike is also classified as a major arterial even though it carries only about 5,000 to 6,000 vehicles per day.

The high volume of traffic along Montauk Highway creates a summertime situation where traffic flows operate close to capacity. Left-turn movements onto Montauk Highway, and sometimes off Montauk Highway, are subject to long delays unless the intersection is signalized. Pedestrian crossings are very difficult and perceived as unsafe. This difficulty of crossing Montauk Highway limits the retail potential of the Bridgehampton hamlet and makes parking more difficult, since it limits the “park-and-walk” behavior.

Figure 11 shows the existing major transportation elements of the Bridgehampton Hamlet. In addition to the major arterials mentioned above, the figure shows Atlantic Ocean Road as a major collector and Lumber Lane and Sagaponack Road as minor collectors. The Comprehensive Plan Update does not classify Lumber Lane or Butter Lanes as minor collectors. However, this report identifies the actual function of these two roadways as minor collectors for the local roads that come off them, and thus their role is more important than a typical local street.












BRIDGEHAMPTON HAMLET CENTER STUDY 2003

Figure 11. Major Transportation Elements

Sources: Town Comprehensive Plan; BFJ

-  Major Arterial/State Highway
-  Major Collector
-  Minor Collector
-  LIRR
-  LIRR Station
-  Public Parking
-  Future Public Parking



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The Comprehensive Plan Update also lists the intersection of Montauk Highway with the Bridgehampton-Sag Harbor Turnpike and the adjacent intersection of the Sag Harbor Turnpike with Lumber Lane as high accident locations. Over a 15-month period, the highway's intersection with Sag Harbor Turnpike had 16 crashes and the intersection with Lumber Lane had nine crashes.

Like many of the hamlets and villages along the South Fork, parking is at a premium during the peak summer months. Much of the off-street parking is private or looks like it is private and is not as inviting as it could be. The municipal lot behind the buildings on the north side of Montauk Highway east of Corwith should have better signs and should be expanded.

Public transportation in Bridgehampton is limited. The Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) provides rail service (relatively slow and infrequent) via the Bridgehampton station. This station is located at the southern perimeter of the industrial district and has been upgraded recently with new streetscape elements and landscaping. In addition to the LIRR, Suffolk County operates two bus lines serving Bridgehampton: the S-92 operating between East Hampton, Riverhead and Orient Point, with a 1-hour headway, and the 10-B operating between the Bridgehampton Plaza East and the East Hampton Springs. The 10-B service is less frequent with headways of 1.5 hours to more than 2 hours. None of these bus lines stops at the LIRR station.

4.2 Transportation Recommendations

Transportation management in the Town of Southampton is a critical issue, not only for moving vehicular traffic town-wide, but also for maintaining the quality of life in the downtown hamlet centers. There are several transportation initiatives currently underway, including Sustainable East End Development Strategies (SEEDS) which is examining regional transportation issues on the east end of Long Island, and the Southampton Intermodal Transportation Study (SITS), which more closely examines traffic problems within the town.

There are numerous recommendations contained in the SITS that specifically address Bridgehampton. Most of the recommendations contained in the SITS and the June 19, 2002 Report of the Land Committee regarding Bridgehampton have already been incorporated into this hamlet study. There is no single solution to alleviating traffic in the town or in the downtown Bridgehampton hamlet center. It is not the goal of this or any hamlet study to address regional traffic issues. A comprehensive town-wide transportation effort is needed to address traffic congestion. The recommendations provided in this study provide alternatives, in addition to those provided in SITS by the Land Committee, which should be considered to help alleviate traffic conditions in the Bridgehampton hamlet business center. Any traffic improvements made to this area must consider the impacts for fire and emergency vehicle accessibility.

The following recommendations are based on an initial evaluation of existing traffic and street conditions in the downtown hamlet center. These recommendations should be the basis of a more thorough and detailed traffic analysis and study.

Raised Landscaped Median

Montauk Highway needs to become more integrated into the hamlet so that it is obviously the Main Street of a hamlet. During the off-season, traffic needs to be slowed down. During the high season, Main Street should be safer for pedestrians to cross. In all seasons, Main Street should be attractive.

Currently, the median lane is striped to keep cars from traveling in the middle of the highway. This area should be transformed into raised landscaped median for a significant downtown section of Montauk Highway. (See Figure 12.) An example is shown on page 50, illustrating the planted median constructed along Main Street in Danbury, CT.

A landscaped median will improve the aesthetics of Montauk Highway, reduce speeds, improve safety, and facilitate pedestrian crossings. The raised median should be designed to accommodate emergency vehicles, i.e. allowing emergency vehicles to pass a line of traffic. It should be punctuated with pedestrian crossings and openings to allow left turns into and out of the major driveways such as the main municipal parking lot and any new shared parking areas. Pedestrian crossings would be added at the most desirable crossing locations (for instance, near the parking lot entrances.) A safe pedestrian wait area (called "refuges") would exist in the median allowing pedestrians to cross in two phases. The town should study this measure, identify several design solutions, and consider testing median boundaries and configurations this summer.

In combination with the raised landscaped median, the town should install neckdowns (sidewalk widenings) at those locations where parking is prohibited, in particular at the intersection corners. Appropriate locations for neckdowns are the pedestrian crossing locations at the intersections with School Street and Corwith Road. Neckdowns at these locations shorten the pedestrian crossing distance and slow down turning vehicles.

Modern Roundabout

The intersection of Montauk Highway intersection with the Bridgehampton/Sag Harbor Turnpike and Ocean Road operates inefficiently and unsafely. Vehicles traveling east and west and turning left turns are in conflict. The current ability to access the Starbucks parking lot at the Lumber Lane is unsafe. The intersection is not safe for pedestrians either. As



Before Streetscape Improvements



After Streetscape Improvements Showing Raised Landscaped Median.

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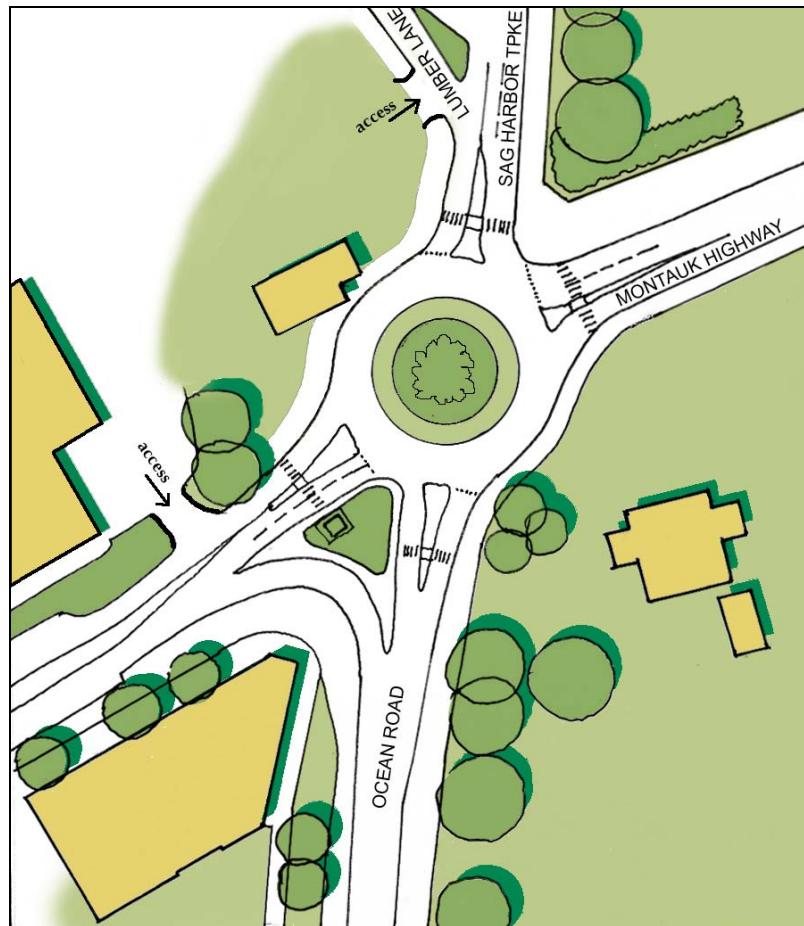
Figure 12. Montauk Highway Streetscape



mentioned above, the two intersections in this location are classified as high accident locations with more than one crash per month.

A well-designed roundabout at this location would improve safety significantly: 1) the current conflicts between turning movements would be eliminated, 2) the roundabout would slow traffic without leading to congestion, and 3) pedestrians could cross more safely. A roundabout here, with a landscaped center, would mark the eastern gateway into Bridgehampton in an elegant way. With the roundabout, left turns out of Lumber Lane would be prohibited as they could be made via the roundabout. Left turns into Lumber Lane could probably be maintained, but this needs to be studied. Left turns into the Starbucks parking lot should be prohibited since they can be made via the roundabout.

The high summertime traffic volumes would likely require that the east and west entrances into the modern roundabout be two lanes wide. Due to the roundabout's size (maybe an outside diameter of 130' plus space for pedestrians), the northwest corner property (the beverage center) would have to be acquired. As per modern roundabout design guidelines, the pedestrian crossings would be built at least a car length away from the outer circle of the roundabout and would be controlled with yield-to-pedestrian signs. Crossing pedestrians are visible as cars are turning. Pedestrians could cross using the splitter island, in two phases. The existing crossing near the library and Starbucks could be preserved.



A more detailed roundabout feasibility and performance study is recommended. This would identify solutions to questions on design, width, number of lanes, property acquisition, pedestrian and vehicle safety, gateway designs (landscaping, flagpole, and war memorial), and capacity. This plan recognizes that the hamlet is less interested in increasing capacity along its stretch of Montauk Highway than in solving safety and efficiency problems.

Left-Turn Lanes and Signals

The intersection of Montauk Highway with Snake Hollow Road should be improved by at least adding a short left turn lane for vehicles to turn left into Snake Hollow Road. A signal warrant study should be undertaken for this location. In addition, the town should determine if a full signal is needed at Butter Lane.

Park-and-Walk System

Retail vitality can be increased and traffic congestion on Montauk Highway can be decreased by encouraging park-and-walk behavior by visitors and shoppers within the hamlet.

- ***Shared Parking.*** Southampton should pursue shared parking operations more aggressively. There are numerous private parking lots that are utilized only during limited time periods and some of them are underutilized during peak periods. The town's goal should be to institute a park-and-walk system where private parking lots would be leased and maintained by the town. For zoning purposes, the property owners would be credited for the number of parking spaces leased into the "common lot." These lots would be operated like a municipal parking lot (with access points for loading and unloading at particular businesses). The retail vitality of the hamlet will be enhanced by 1) combining the lots and increasing the number of access points to each lot, and 2) increasing the access between each lot and the retail destinations. Park-and-walk behavior of shoppers will also enhance the retail vitality by encouraging shoppers to walk longer distances and pass by businesses that otherwise they may not notice. Signs like "XXXXX's Customer Parking Only" should be discouraged, since it is not critical that customers be able to park in front of the store that they visit. In fact it may be to the merchant's advantage that other shoppers park in front of the store and may be attracted to go into the store. Loading zones may be designated for those customers and stores where heavy articles are brought in or out.
- ***Drives and Service Lanes.*** To increase shared parking accessibility and to relieve summer parking along residential streets, the town must provide drives or access onto the side streets. In this way, customers can get to the common lots without having to enter Montauk Highway. For instance, the town should continue to proceed with its draft conceptual plan establishing a service lane between Lumber Lane and Corwith Road. Using jogs, a narrow width, and stop signs, the design would prevent this connection from being used as a bypass. Similarly, the parking lots of Newman Village, the Post Office, and the Catholic Church should be connected in the back - these connections are physically easy - and a connection should be made with Corwith Road behind the Historical Society building. Again, the connection needs to be designed to prevent its use as a bypass.
- ***Parking Durations.*** Within these common lots, the town may better manage parking by limiting the most attractive spaces for shoppers to two hours. The town should pursue additional long-term parking and encourage long-term parkers, employees, and storeowners to park more at the fringes away from the retail stores.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation

Given the topography of the hamlet and its surroundings, the relatively short distances for a number of the trips, as well as the summer-time travel peaks, bicycling and walking should

be seen as important complementary travel modes, especially to and from the center, the station and other major generators. The town should further encourage these modes requiring bicycle parking at the major commercial destinations and planning for additional bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

The town is currently pursuing a dedicated bicycle lane along Ocean Road, beginning at the traffic light at Montauk Highway and eventually extending to a shared bike path (signs only) to provide access to the public beaches. The town is also completing an engineering analysis of the South Fork Bikeway, which will begin at town-owned open space located behind the South Fork Natural History Museum and connect to the bike path in East Hampton. Future studies will consider extending the bikeway to the west, connecting with public transit facilities such as the Long Island Railroad and the Suffolk County bus system.

Public Transit

The LIRR station and surrounding area present opportunities for mid-term and long-range improvements to weekend traffic congestion and inadequate parking. In the short-term, there does not seem to be a significant need to bring buses (such as the Hampton Jitney) to the LIRR station in Bridgehampton as these buses do not carry passengers that typically use the LIRR station. However, Suffolk County buses could serve a market that may want to use the LIRR. For instance, the 10-B route that currently serves the Springs and the center of East Hampton and that terminates at the Plaza East in Bridgehampton could pass by the LIRR station. Similarly, the S-92 route serving East Hampton and Sag Harbor could easily pass by the Bridgehampton LIRR station. These connections should be investigated further. The town should pursue long-range actions, including the creation of new municipal parking areas close to the LIRR station and the increased ability to use the station without needing to park a car. For example, the town should work with the LIRR to designate kiss-and-ride spaces or locations that facilitate passenger pick up and drop off. Taxi services should be encouraged to operate at the station by providing for taxi parking spots at the station and by providing a direct telephone connection to the local taxi service. Similarly, a direct telephone connection should be provided to the car rental agencies in the area. Local car rental agencies should be encouraged to pick up or drop off customers at the station.

In the long-term, there are station options that the town should explore with the LIRR. Currently, passengers can only exit the train at Bridgehampton from the side of the train facing the existing parking lot. This forces passengers to use the existing parking facility located along Maple Lane. As previously noted, there is considerable traffic congestion on Maple Lane in the summer when a train arrives. Much of this traffic spills over into the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

This bottleneck would be mitigated if a platform were constructed on the north side of the existing platform. Passengers would be allowed to exit or enter from both sides of the train.



Additional parking could also be constructed on the north side of the tracks within the existing industrial areas.

The current location close to the hamlet center may not be the best location for future expansion. Land immediately north of Bridgehampton Commons might provide a site for a future station that could have sufficient parking, drop-off, and taxi space. While the new station would remain close to residential and commercial areas, station-related traffic in this area would not have the same impact on local streets as the current location. If the LIRR station remains where it is now, additional parking options should be explored.