

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Area-Wide Planning Study encompasses the hamlets of Eastport, Speonk-Remsenburg and Westhampton in the Town of Southampton. The Study Area is bounded by the Town of Brookhaven to the west, the Sunrise Highway to the north, the Village of Westhampton Beach to the east (not including Gabreski Airport), and Moriches Bay to the south. The Study Area comprises approximately 9,070 acres, or approximately 14 square miles, of which approximately 4,900 acres are within the Central Pine Barrens region. The year-round population residing within the Study Area is over 6,600 persons.

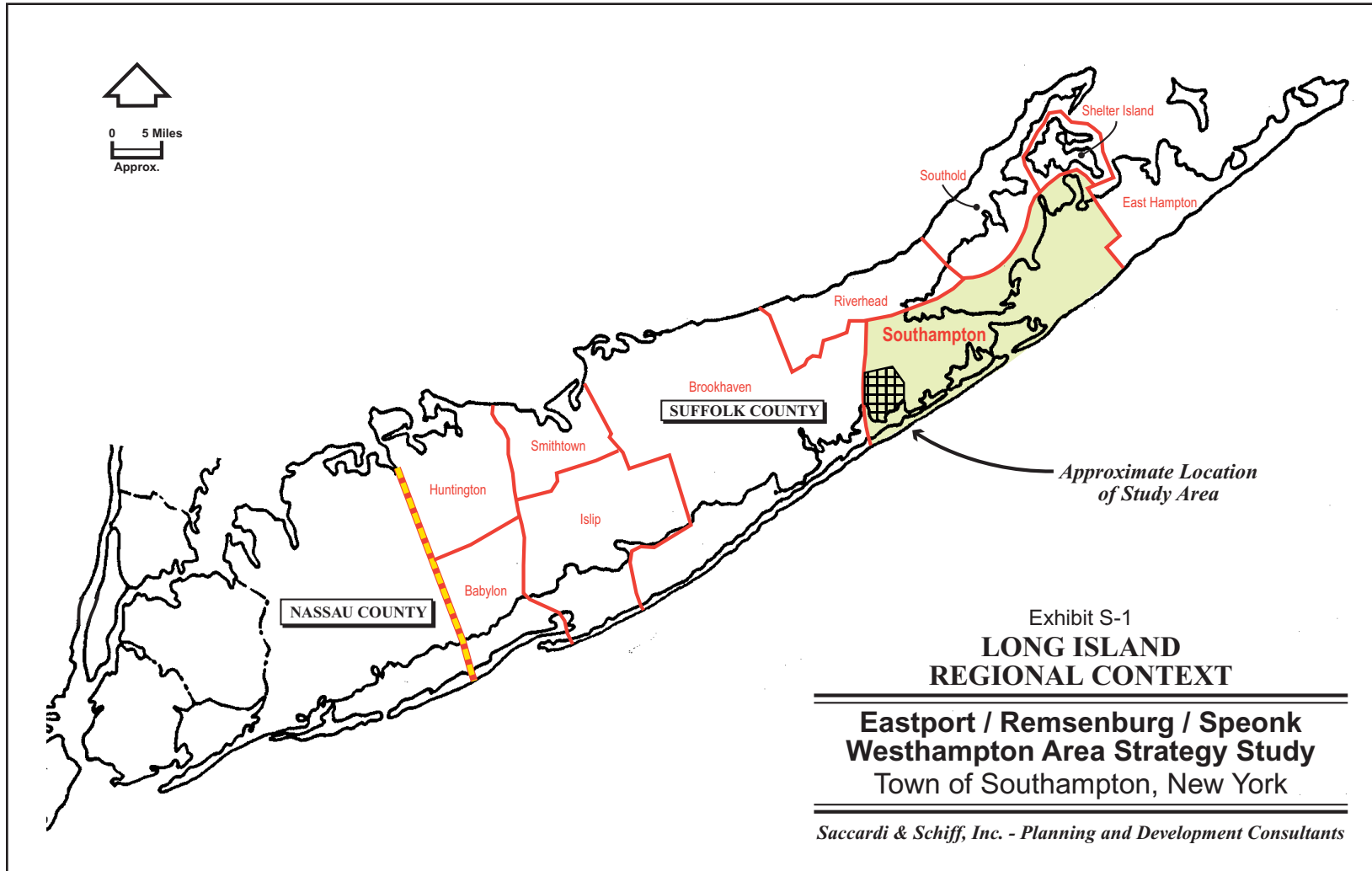
Over the past several years the Town of Southampton has been faced with significant development pressures and has seen an increase in change of zone and variance applications, in particular for high-density, multi-unit housing proposals. As a result, the Town found it necessary to enact a moratorium in an effort to better plan for future development and its related impacts. In January 2003, the Southampton Town Board adopted a local law enacting a nine-month moratorium impacting certain properties in the communities of Eastport, Speonk, Remsenburg and Westhampton. The moratorium affected requested changes to the Town's zoning map and use variances. The purpose and intent of the moratorium was to provide the community with time needed to complete an area-wide study to effectuate sound community planning and implement the objectives of the 1999 Comprehensive Plan Update. In September 2003, the Town Board extended this initial moratorium for an additional three months. In March 2004, a new six-month moratorium was enacted affecting approvals and acceptance of new applications for changes of zones, amendments to the zoning map, use variances, special exception use permits, site plan review, subdivisions yielding greater than four lots, and area variances yielding additional building lots.

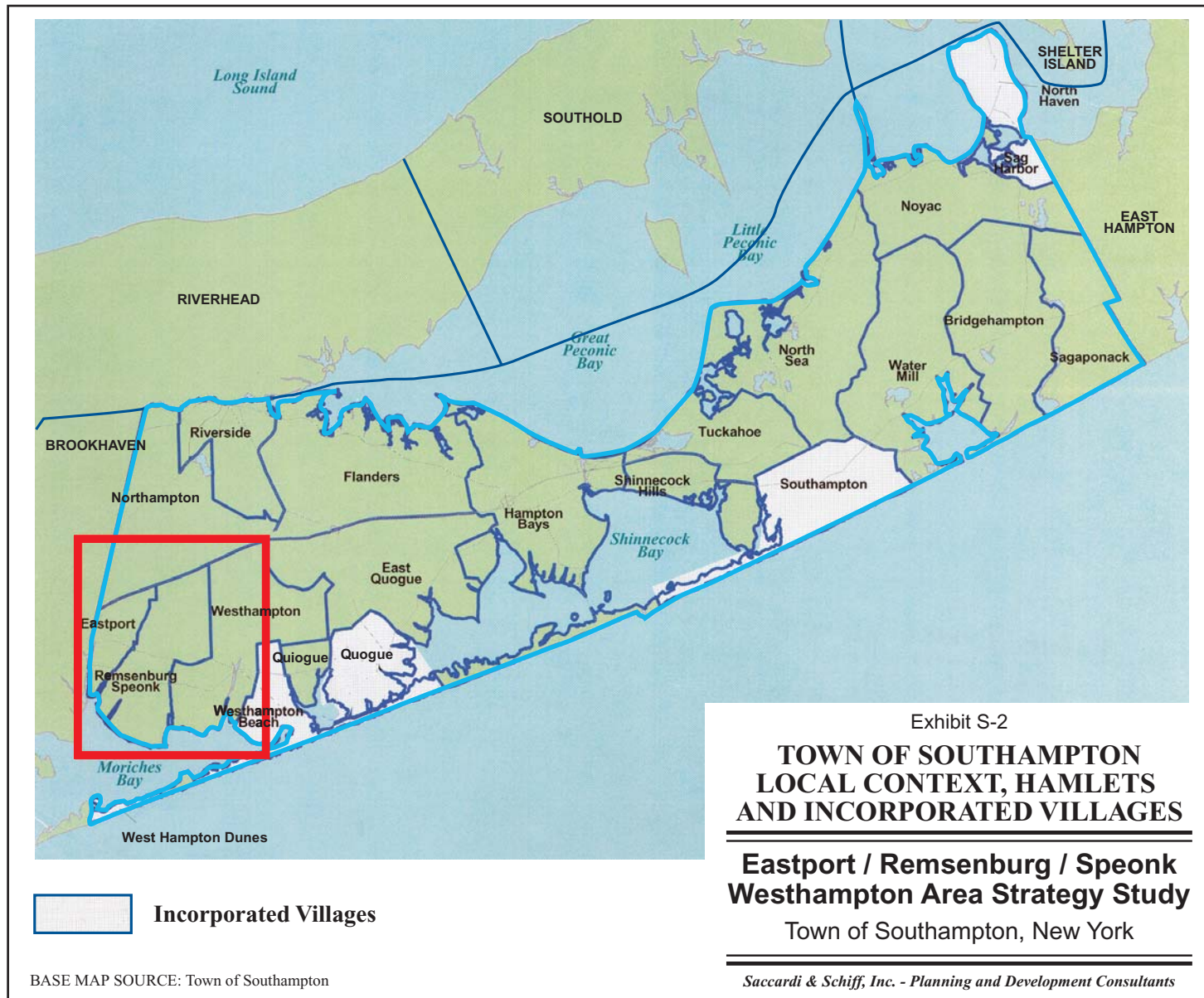
The intent of the Eastport/Speonk/Remsenburg/Westhampton Area Study is to set forth preservation priorities, planned development recommendations, and zoning and land use strategies based on the analysis of previously completed planning studies, existing conditions (e.g., land use and zoning, environmental resources, existing structures, and community facilities), demographic trends and community input. It is the primary goal of the Area Study to identify strategies to preserve the residential character of the community and hamlet centers, while still providing for compatible development opportunities.

The Area Study planning initiative is the first step in the process of preserving the unique character of the hamlets of Eastport, Speonk-Remsenburg, and Westhampton. Citizen participation played an important role in the formation of the Study's recommendations, which seek to promote appropriate zoning and land use patterns for future development.

SECTION I provides an introduction and an overview of the citizen involvement process associated with this Area Study planning initiative, and provides statements of goals and objectives.

Focus groups were established to represent each of the hamlet areas, the business community, and recreational interests - including trails and the community center. These focus groups were comprised of community representatives, local businesspersons, civic leaders and members of local government boards and agencies. A community-wide "kick-off" meeting was held in May 2003, followed by individual focus group meetings in June, August, September, October, November and December.





As part of the community involvement process, the topic of “hamlet boundaries” was raised with regard to demographical information provided by the U.S. Census. (See Exhibit S-3.)

The hamlet boundaries assigned by the U.S. Census are not an accurate reflection of what the community residents view as the “traditional” community boundaries for Eastport, Speonk-Remsenburg, and Westhampton. (See Exhibit S-4).

For example, the “census-designated place boundary” for the Hamlet of Speonk-Remsenburg includes the Westhampton Care Center, Westhampton Transfer Station/Recycling Center, Suffolk County BOMARC Site, Westhampton Dragstrip and the Bide-a-Wee animal shelter facility. These properties, located on the north side of Old Country Road, are viewed by community members as belonging within the Hamlet of Westhampton. This sentiment is furthered by the jurisdictional boundary lines of the Westhampton Beach School District and Westhampton Beach Fire District.

Therefore, Exhibit S-4 represents “Community Boundaries” for the Eastport, Speonk-Remsenburg, and Westhampton areas based upon the more traditional views of community members and commonplace names of the aforementioned properties.

Speonk-Remsenburg is further distinguished by community residents along zip codes or postal district lines, with a postal service boundary line running parallel and south of Montauk Highway. The Hamlet of Speonk-Remsenburg has been served by two separate post offices for over 100 years.

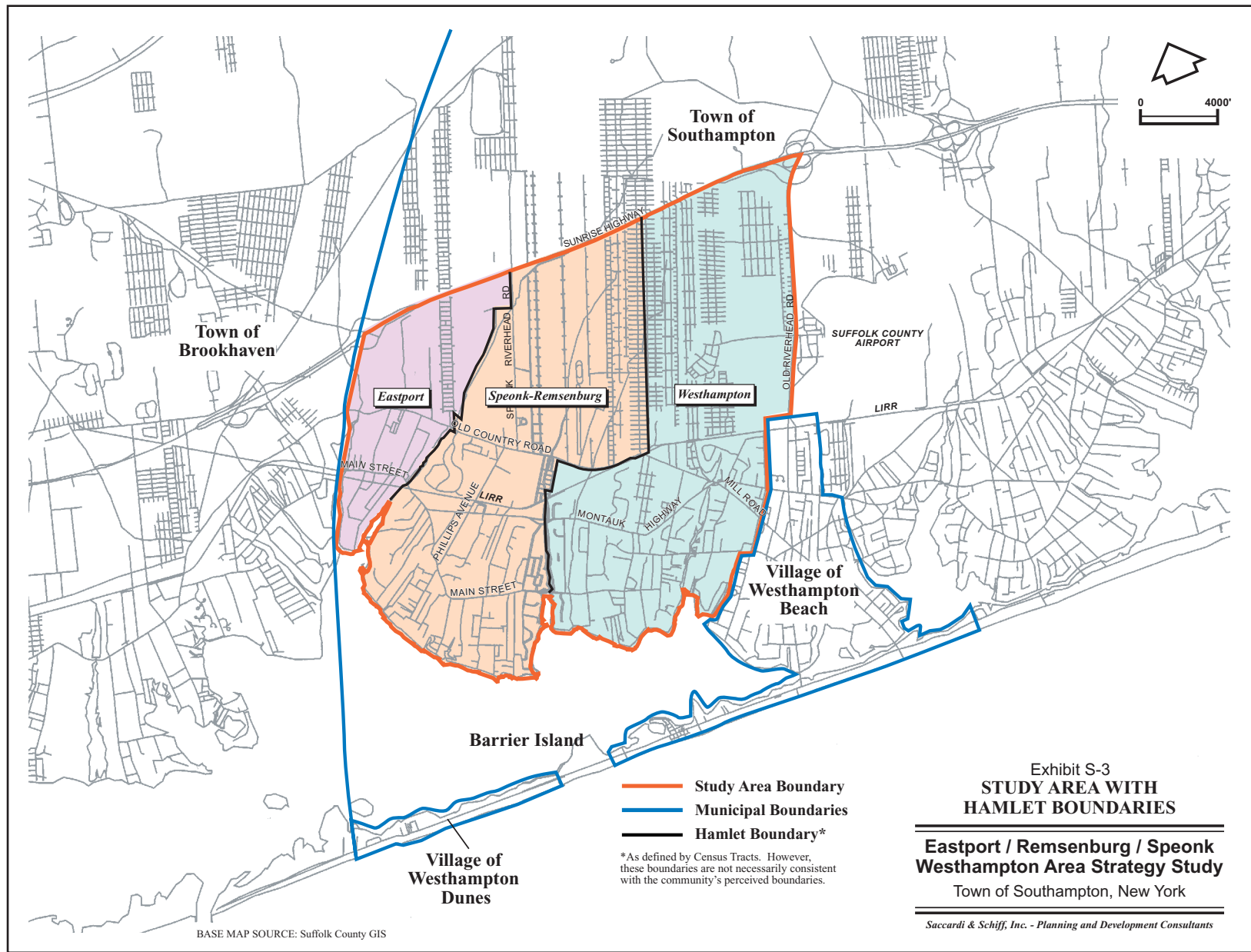
Each of the hamlets located within the Study Area have specific community identified assets, such as (See also Community Character Photo Exhibits):

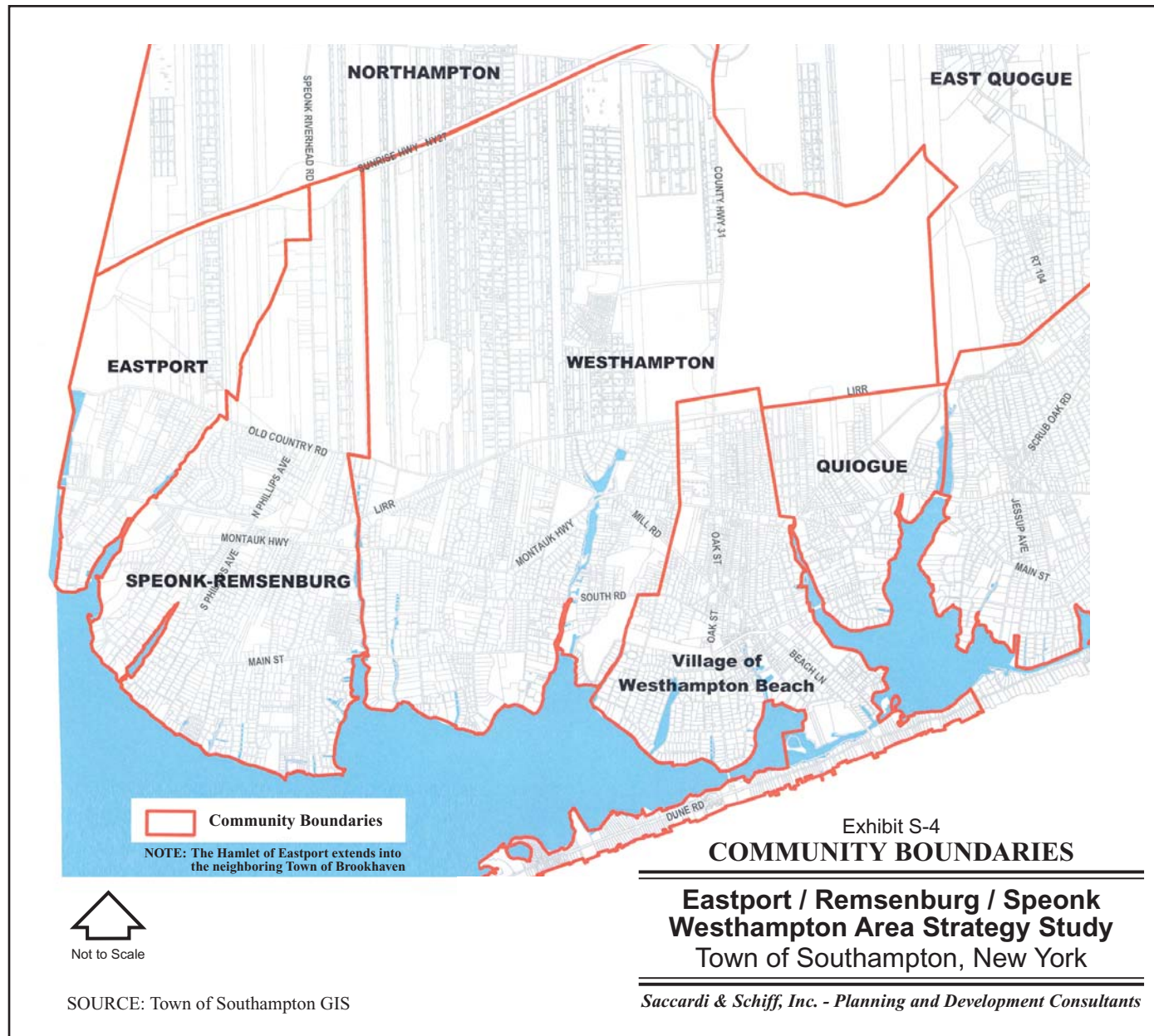
- In Eastport - agricultural lands, historic buildings, bed and breakfast establishments near the waterfront;
- In Speonk - significant historic structures (the Brick Mill, the train station) mixed uses in the hamlet center, and open spaces at community crossroads;
- In Remsenburg - scenic corridor along South Country Road, several historic structures (including several homes, churches and burial grounds), and significant environmental features (Stokes Poges Marsh); and
- In Westhampton - small farms, historic residential neighborhoods, scenic corridor along Old Country Road, and Cook’s Pond.

A significant portion of the Study Area (virtually all lands north of Old Country Road) is part of the Central Pine Barrens, environmentally sensitive lands where limitations on future development exists. Within the Central Pine Barrens portion of the Study Area, approximately 1,600 acres are designated Compatible Growth Area, and the balance of the Study Area is approximately 3,300± acres of designated Core Preservation Area, where future development is prohibited.

SECTION II of this Area Study summarizes several previous planning studies relevant to the Study Area, such as:

- Town of Southampton Master Plan (1970)
- Town of Southampton Master Plan Updates (1980s)
- Speonk-Remsenburg Hamlet Study (1992)
- Central Pine Barrens Comprehensive Land Use Plan (1995)
- Town of Southampton Comprehensive Plan Update (1999)
- Town of Southampton Draft Recreation Plan (2002)







Eastport community identified assets: East Pond, West Pond, small town charm, historic buildings, historic church/cemetery at center of community, antique stores, bed and breakfasts, Town Trustee dock/waterfront area, pine barrens woodland and nurseries (agricultural lands) on Old Country Road - rural ambiance, farmland views from Montauk Highway behind historic homesteads.

**COMMUNITY CHARACTER
PHOTO EXHIBITS: EASTPORT**



Speonk community identified assets: Historic train station in hamlet center, historic old mill, greenspace at community crossroads at Speonk River (East Gateway) and intersection with Dock Road/South Country Road (West Gateway), mixed uses and “affordable housing” in hamlet center; houses converted to small-scale commercial uses, pine barrens woodland and nurseries, pumpkin farm (agricultural lands) on Old Country Road; rural ambience; greenspace along Speonk-Riverhead Road.

**COMMUNITY CHARACTER
PHOTO EXHIBITS:SPEONK**



Remsenburg community identified assets: Extensive grouping of historic homes, barns, churches; scenic corridor along South Country Road; Stokes Poges wetlands preserve, historic post office at center of community - no commercial businesses; historic yacht squadron and Town Trustee Dock on Speonk Shore Road; equestrian/gentlemen's farms mixed with residential neighborhoods; narrow roadways/country lanes deter traffic and parking.

**COMMUNITY CHARACTER
PHOTO EXHIBITS: REMSENBURG**



Westhampton community identified assets: Small farms/rural ambiance along Old Country Road together with pine barrens woodland and nurseries (agricultural lands); greenspace/scenic views of community crossroads at intersection of Montauk Highway, Old Country Road; Cook's Pond and waterfront vistas along Montauk Highway and South Country Road; Town Trustee Dock on Baycrest Avenue; historic ambiance of residential neighborhoods; potential for Town Park Recreation Area/campgrounds at "The Water Hole"; Hampton West Park; Westhampton Beach Schools; scenic wetland areas and bridges along South Country Road and South Road.



**COMMUNITY CHARACTER
PHOTO EXHIBITS:
WESTHAMPTON**



**COMMUNITY CHARACTER PHOTO
EXHIBITS: WESTHAMPTON**

An overview of the Study Area’s historical formation is discussed in detail in **SECTION III**.

SECTION IV reviews the existing conditions within the Study Area, including:

Natural Features: the distinguishing elements of the environment that help establish the Study Area as a unique place.

- **Pine Barrens** – A significant portion of the Study Area comprises either Core Preservation Area (approximately 3,300 acres, or 36 percent of the Study Area) or Compatible Growth Area (1,600 acres, or 18 percent.)
- **Aquifer** – The Study Area, as most of the Town, relies on groundwater as a critical resource. The protection of this resource is of utmost importance.
- **Waterways** – The waterways in the Study Area are one of the greatest natural assets for both scenic beauty and the ability to provide public access and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike.
- **Soils and Topography** – Specific portions of the Study Area are underlain with prime agricultural soils. The ability to identify and preserve, where appropriate existing agricultural uses is an identified concern.

Land Use Patterns: The existing land use pattern reflects past development patterns. Certain land use trends, as envisioned by the community, seek to alter certain identified aspects of local land use.

- **Agriculture** – Approximately 350 acres, or four percent, of the land use pattern is devoted to active agricultural use. The ability to retain what remains in agriculture use is a priority to the community, as well as encouraging

agri-business and eco-tourism opportunities for community heritage purposes.

- **Residential** – The predominant land use pattern south of Old Country Road is devoted to residential use. The ability to preserve remaining land area through clustering and other design and zoning techniques was identified as a critical community concern. The appropriate location of specific residential land use patterns (e.g., multifamily or senior housing) relative to existing hamlet center core areas was also raised.
- **Recreation/Dedicated Open Space** – Significant resources within the Study Area are its open space/recreation resources, providing access to significant environmental assets, such as the Central Pine Barrens and Moriches Bay. An interconnected system of trails and pathways has been identified to link many of these resources.
- **Commercial** – Commercial uses are primarily focused along the Montauk Highway corridor in each of the Hamlet Areas. The land use pattern for the most part, reflects the small-scale mixed-use pattern serving the local community.
- **Sand Mines and Industrial** – Four separate former or currently operating sand mines sites exist within the Pine Barrens region within the Study Area. Separate light industrial areas exist along North Phillips Avenue, Speonk-Riverhead Road, and Old Riverhead Road. For these pre-existing nonconforming mining sites and some of these industrial uses, their re-development or adaptive re-use must be contemplated with respect to their impact on the environment and the ability to create employment and enhance the existing tax base, or provide recreational opportunities.

- **Vacant Land** – The majority of the vacant properties within the Study Area are located north of Old Country Road in the Central Pine Barrens. Significant parcels south of Old Country Road have also been identified and potential opportunities for these sites are discussed further in Sections VI and VII.

Zoning: A summary of the different zoning districts is provided together with a list of permitted uses and selected dimensional requirements for mapped districts within the Study Area.

Community Facilities: Descriptions of the community facilities serving the Study Area include schools, fire districts, ambulance districts, Westhampton Community Center, Town of Southampton Solid Waste Transfer Station and Recycling Center, and the Suffolk County Airport (Gabreski Airport).

Demographics and Housing: An evaluation of demographic trends in population and housing is provided, based on U.S. Census data. The trends and demographic information points to specific shifts in the Study Area’s population relative to overall population growth, change in specific age cohorts, seasonal versus year-round housing, household size and income.

Visual Resources: One of the most compelling resources the Study Area has to offer are its visual attributes. Among those areas evaluated include:

- **Scenic Roadway Corridors** – Old Country Road, Montauk Highway, South Country Road (Main Street), and Sunrise Highway;
- **Viewsheds of Local Importance** including remaining agricultural tracts and historic farmsteads, wetlands and waterbodies; and

- **Historic Resources** - relevant examples of the Study Area’s built environment includes many of the Study Area more historic structures, such as residences, the brick mill, churches, farm buildings and barns.

SECTION V addresses tax equity concerns in the Study Area and provides a build-out analysis based upon school district boundaries within the Study Area. The build-out analysis assists the community in determining a conceptual baseline of potential development that could occur within the designated areas under current zoning conditions. This section also addresses implementation of the state-approved Central Pine Barrens Plan, which is a goal noted in the 1999 Comprehensive Plan Update.

SECTION VI addresses the “Issues and Opportunities” presented in the Study Area, which includes a series of properties or “Areas Subject to Change” where development/redevelopment was potentially identified. For example, there are four sand mines located within the Study Area with mining permits issued by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation that have either expired or are set to expire in the near future. These large parcels potentially provide the opportunity for needed recreational uses on lands that have already been cleared, therefore minimizing the need to clear untouched lands. Another example of an area subject to change is the “old Feather Factory” site on the west side of North Phillips Avenue in Speonk. Redevelopment of this ±15-acre disturbed site provides the opportunity for increased tax base for the Eastport School District. The Issues and Opportunities section of this report also provides information on preservation priorities, (including the “Water Hole”, agricultural lands along Old Country Road, etc.), the utilization of incentive zoning, housing issues and opportunities, recreational resources, community services, transportation issues, and energy use.

SECTION VII sets forth Detailed Hamlet Area Concept Plan Proposals with specific recommendations with respect to: Land Use Controls/”Smart Growth”; Proposed Zoning Map Amendments for Hamlet Office/Hamlet Commercial (HO/HC and others); Eastport Detail Hamlet Area Concept Plan; Speonk-Remsenburg Detail Hamlet Area Concept Plan; Westhampton Detail Hamlet Area Concept Plan; Preliminary Design Guidelines/Streetscape Recommendations; Agricultural Resource Protection Strategies; Scenic Resource Protection Strategies; and Historic Resource Protection Strategies.

SECTION VIII then outlines a summary of the proposed Action Items.

AREA STUDY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following Goals and Objectives were identified through the extensive planning analysis and citizen involvement process associated with this Area Study:

- ***Preservation of Community Character*** – While this Area-Wide Study aims to determine appropriate land use and identify means of increasing the area’s tax base, a key goal is to preserve the existing, primarily residential character of the hamlets, the area’s scenic resources and the general country ambiance. See Executive Summary Community Character Exhibits.
- ***Preservation of Open Space*** – The Central Pine Barrens Act has preserved a large swath of environmentally-sensitive acreage from development. There is, however, a recognition that the overall appearance of the Study Area would be profoundly affected if development were left unchecked on remaining large vacant parcels. One goal of the Area-Wide Study is to preserve significant open space, through the use of Community Preservation Fund

(CPF) monies, design techniques such as clustering and other zoning strategies, such as transfer of development rights and overlay districts. See Exhibit VI-3, Proposed Recreation/Open Space Resource Enhancements.

- ***Agricultural Land Preservation*** - Related to the above referenced issue is the preservation of the community’s remaining agricultural lands. Agricultural uses represent an historic reminder of the land use pattern that once predominated and still contributes to the Study Area’s open space aesthetic and rural quality. See Section VII, Agricultural Resource Protection Strategies.
- ***Community Housing*** – The creation of affordable, community-based housing targeted towards Town residents, municipal employees, school district employees, volunteer fire fighters and ambulance workers and the like has been broadly recognized as a desirable goal for the area. Affordable housing should be provided as a component in residential development projects or created through specific zoning and regulatory techniques. To the extent practicable, and in keeping with Smart Growth principles, there should be a particular focus on locating higher-density prototypes in proximity to hamlet commercial centers. To preserve community character, subject to the constraints of economic feasibility, small-scale housing developments are preferred, as are design techniques such as manor houses and zoning strategies such as accessory apartments. See Section VII, Housing Issues and Opportunities.
- ***Design*** - Future development and redevelopment should focus on historic design precedents, use of quality materials and sensitive design techniques, incorporating aesthetically pleasing materials such as wood, brick and stone. Existing historic residential design can be used as a guideline for future residential development. See Section VII, Preliminary Design Guidelines.

- **Transportation** - Transportation routing should reflect the preservation of the scenic qualities of the Study Area and alternative access ways (e.g., contemplated new interchange at Speonk-Riverhead Road/Sunrise Highway and potential extension of the Sunrise Highway Service Road from the Eastport Manorville Road exit to Speonk-Riverhead Road). Emphasis should be given to pedestrian orientation in the form of traffic calming, transit-oriented facilities, and creation/signage of bicycle routes throughout the Study Area. See Exhibit VI-8, Preliminary Transportation Recommendations.
- **Seasonally Based Economy** - The Study Area depends, in large part, on the seasonal resident. The Area-Wide Study attempts to create additional resort area amenities that would enhance the recreational amenities currently available, and provide new recreational opportunities, which could include eco-tourism as a means of promoting future economic development. These potential new recreation/tourism amenities are intended not only to attract seasonal residents but also to meet the needs of the year-round residents. See Exhibit VI-1, Issues and Opportunities.
- **Groundwater Protection** - Groundwater protection is a vital issue due to the sole source aquifer system serving this portion of Suffolk County. Where appropriate, state of the art stormwater management systems and organic technology (e.g., golf course design) should be employed. Further, at those locations where there is known/suspected groundwater contamination there should be given a priority for redevelopment with the goal of remediating the existing adverse environmental condition. See Exhibit IV-2, Aquifer Protection Overlay District.
- **Scenic Resource Protection** - As illustrated in the photo exhibits included as part of this report, there are significant scenic resources located throughout the Study Area. Preservation of identified area gateways, scenic roadways, and important community vistas should be a priority. The use of scenic roadway designations and Scenic Resource Protection Overlay Zones should be considered, in particular for Old Country Road.
- **Historic Resource Protection** – An inventory of the Study Area’s historic resources was commissioned by the Town during the course of this Planning Study and the report entitled “Historic Profiles of Eastport-Speonk-Remsenburg-Westhampton” is included in Appendix B.¹ Each hamlet area has a concentration of historically significant sites. The Town should consider establishing Historic Heritage Areas for Eastport, Speonk-Remsenburg, Westhampton and other historic resource protection strategies involving “Special Character Overlay Districts.” See Section VII and Exhibit III-1, Potential Hamlet Heritage Areas and Historically Significant Sites.

The Area Study planning initiative is just the beginning. The key is implementation. To achieve the goals and objectives outlined herein, Town Officials, landowners, community organizations and residents need to work together to continue to build consensus and help bring the vision to fruition.

¹The report entitled “Historic Profiles of Eastport, Speonk-Remsenburg and Westhampton” was completed in January 2004 under a separate consulting agreement with local historians Ron A. Michne and Ron A. Michne, Jr.