

East End Transit Survey

Qualitative & Quantitative Transportation Surveys:

Five Towns on Long Island's East End

Prepared For:

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❖ Introduction

The towns of the East End of Long Island – East Hampton, Riverhead, Southampton, Southold, and Shelter Island -- have experienced strong population growth in the past thirty years, and projections indicate that the escalation will continue at a rapid pace. The growth consists not only of 2nd homeowners, for whom “the Hamptons” is well known, but also of primary residents, as well.

Total population within the five towns is expected to increase by 48% from January 1, 2003, when saturation is reached. Even though this growth has been predictable, little has been done to upgrade the transportation system in the region during the last thirty years. Highway improvements through western Suffolk County have merely increased the numbers of cars that can reach the East End's inadequate road system, which largely dates from the forties. Public transportation exists – railroad, local buses, inter-regional jitneys, ferries, and airports -- but they are geared more for visitors and seasonal residents than for commuters to local jobs and other local activities. And like the highways, sizable increases in usage are being reported by most of these forms of public transportation.

With the higher population comes economic growth, employment, and transportation congestion. While the past transportation pattern for commuters had been almost exclusively east to west, there is now, according to the 2000 US Census, a large contingent of workers from outside the five towns who travel west to east into the East End (24,265, compared to 17,411 who travel from the five towns out to the west). Still, much of the commuting travel is relatively local, with 40,774,39,599 workers both living and working in the five towns, 31,417 in the town in which they reside, and 9,357 commuting to other East End towns.

However, the April 2000 US Census, based on questions asked in April 2002, understates the magnitude of the data, and hence, the potential number of riders of a new transit system. Thousands of travelers were not counted, including those with second homes, as well as undocumented immigrants and seasonal workers. Furthermore, respondents were asked, “Where did you work last week?,” as opposed to where the job site was. Employees often answered with the location of the employer. We also know that many contractors are based in Brookhaven, but send workers to the five East End towns.

As part of the initial preparation, Five Town Rural Transit, Inc. (5TRTC) has engaged Appel Research, LLC, a marketing and public opinion research firm, to collect and evaluate opinion data from various market segments in order to determine the level of support to a public transportation proposal. The 5TRTC's proposal would reduce auto congestion by increasing

the number of employees, second home owners, guests, tourists and other recreational travelers, etc., who will take public transportation to and from their destinations – saving time and money. Based on population trends, workforce data, current public transportation usage, and several transportation surveys, a reasonable working hypothesis indicates that 10 – 20% of automobile travel could be shifted to this new system.

The surveys reported here, therefore, measure attitudes and opinions toward this plan. Using the data and analysis, the committee can fine-tune the details and present options that will find acceptance in the communities and among stakeholders.

❖ Executive Summary

➤ Key Finding

Residents of the East End of Long Island support overwhelmingly the proposed public transportation plan developed by Five Town Rural Transit, Inc., according to the findings of a large 1,200 sample telephone survey and five focus groups. Furthermore, this opinion is shared by each of the population segments studied -- region, age, income, work status, and other demographic groupings – with little variation in findings. The sampling also prefers the proposed system to the current system by a wide margin:

<i>Rate the – current/proposed -- public transportation system, using a 1 to 5 scale – 5 is best:</i>		
	Current System	Proposed System
Worst it could be (1 – 2..)	52%	13%
Average (.. 3 ..)	26%	25%
Best it could be (.. 4 – 5)	22%	62%

More significantly, after the plan was described, many of the respondents reported that they would use the new system frequently. We note that 22% would use the proposed transit system at least twice per week, as compared to only 4% who currently use public transportation that often. Putting it another way, the proposed system would be used more than five times as much as the current one. The usage jumps further, to 30%, when the possibility is explained that the system could be operated with no fares at all:

<i>How often -- do you/would you -- use public transportation on Long Island's East End?</i>			
	Use Current System	Would Use New System	Would Use New System If Free
4/5 times per week	2%	7%	13%
2/3 times per week	2%	15%	17%
Combined Regular Use	4%	22%	30%
A few times per month	9%	29%	24%
A few times per year	34%	26%	21%
Never	53%	19%	18%
Don't Know	1%	4%	7%

The population segment most likely to use the new system was younger residents, while those retired were slightly less likely. There were no significant differences by town.

➤ Current State of Transportation on Long Island's East End

According to the telephone survey, 95% of the resident population relies primarily on automobiles for transportation. In the focus groups, respondents emphasized the steady increase in traffic congestion in recent years resulting in gridlock conditions, especially during the morning drive-to-work period, and throughout the summer. We also learned that businesses and employees are affected, both from convenience and from economic viewpoints.

◆ **With respect to public transportation, there are three major modes:**

- Suffolk County Transit – Intra-regional transportation with a steady increase in ridership, but respondents report the system as having routes and schedules do not make sense, limited hours in the morning and evening, no Sunday service, some rude drivers, and most significantly, no coordination with the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) or other forms of transportation. Only 3% of those participating in the telephone survey use Suffolk County Transit at least two times per week, 7% use it only a few times per year, and 88% never use Suffolk County Transit all. Only low-income residents take the Suffolk County Transit buses with any frequency -- 14% use them at least two times per week.
- Long Island Rail Road – Inter-regional transportation used by almost no one for travel within the region. Its service is infrequent, and not geared to regular users, except possibly weekenders. Residents on the North Fork regard the LIRR even more harshly. Overall, we found that 54% of the respondents never use the LIRR and 35% only a few times per year.
- Long distance buses – Inter-regional transportation provided by three (now four) private services. Sunrise Coach covers the North Fork, while the Hampton Jitney and the Hampton Luxury Liner run on the South Fork. The respondents were generally favorable toward these services, informing us of significant passenger loads on all lines, (especially on the Hampton Jitney). They choose these services for their frequent service, speed, reliability, and flexible routes. The private bus lines make multiple stops, and are comfortable, clean, and safe. Some respondents suggest that the buses are

pricey, but increasing gasoline prices are making them more competitive. Overall, 46% never use long distance buses, and 41% only a few times per year.

By using single buses, instead of long trains, they can schedule far more runs at more times, a clear advantage over the Long Island Rail Road.

◆ **Can public transportation be improved?**

After discussing the current transit system, the focus group respondents had their doubts about whether the system could be significantly improved. They noted that the area is too spread out geographically, many employees don't work at fixed locations (construction/renovation, landscaping, etc.), population may not be large enough to warrant frequent service, and demand is largely limited to the transit-dependent. Also, 2nd homeowners would be resistant.

• What are the components of a perfect transportation system?

The respondents were asked if these local conditions could be overcome via the development of a perfect public transportation system of their own design, through an exercise in which each focus group participant was asked to come up with components of an ideal public transportation system. They were then told to rank these components in order of importance. The components were grouped into two tiers, by level of importance:

- 1st Tier -- Most Important Components
 - Frequency of service -- more runs, at better times
 - Reliability – on time
 - Accessibility of system – proximity to routes
 - Increased speed -- quicker door-to-door trips – goal is to make them faster than going by car
- 2nd Tier -- Most Important Components
 - Low cost – same as Suffolk County Transit
 - Extended morning and evening hours, Sunday service
 - Coordination of bus and train schedules
 - Amenities – clean, comfortable, safe
 - Sufficient parking
 - Energy-efficient, non-polluting equipment
 - No exact change requirement

➤ The Proposal for a New Public Transportation System

◆ Description of the Proposal – Focus Groups

The Five Town Rural Transit proposal was described in 5-7 minutes in the focus groups. As explained, the proposed system would consist of new shuttle train service along the LIRR tracks, replacing the existing Long Island Rail Road on the East End, from Mastic-Shirley to Montauk on the South Fork, and from Ronkonkoma to Greenport on the North Fork. (After the surveys were conducted, Mastic-Shirley was replaced by Speonk as the western terminus on the South fork, owing to its existing railroad sidings). The main concept consists of rail shuttles of one or two cars, running between hamlets at thirty-minute intervals, which are met at the stations by bus shuttles to take passengers to final destinations.

The explanation included the little-known information that residents of the five East End towns now pay more than \$60 million per year in taxes and surcharges to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), largely from sales and mortgage taxes. In return, they receive very little LIRR service. The new system, which would replace and add to that service, is estimated to cost \$20 - \$30 million per year in operating expenses – less than one-half of what the MTA now receives from the people who would be served. *(After the surveys were conducted, the annual operating expense estimate range was adjusted upward, to \$30 - \$40 million.)*

◆ Reactions to the Proposal – Focus Groups

From the focus groups, first reaction comments after the plan was described included, “When does it start? We’re ready,” and “The interesting thing about this focus group ... is that there is no negativity toward the plan. Everybody wishes your group well and encourages them to move forward.” A common thread was the appeal of the proposal to everyone. “Everybody’s going to benefit a lot ... the government, the users, the environment.”

◆ Description of the Proposal – Telephone Survey

For the telephone survey, we offered the components one at a time in consecutive questions, with each component building and having an impact on the next:

<i>Components of a New Public Transportation System</i>		
<i>Rate Each Component on a 1 to 5 scale – 5</i>		
Component	Least Favorable (1-2..)	Most Favorable (..4-5)
First, create new public authority to take over public transit service on East End	26%	49%
New train service, every 30 minutes, new equipment	19%	68%
Buses coordinate with trains, meet them at stations	17%	70%
More parking at train stations and at enhanced bus stops	18%	67%
Fares similar to Suffolk County Transit	5%	86%
Reopen closed LIRR stations	12%	74%
New bus routes and enhanced stops	13%	71%
Extended morning and evening hours and Sunday service	9%	80%
New trains and buses, energy-efficient, non-polluting, paid for by Federal grants	6%	87%
Seasonal, passenger-only water taxis	23%	65%

◆ **Reactions to the Proposal – Telephone Survey**

The first question related to the prospect of creating a new public authority to assume control of existing public transportation, which was met somewhat favorably, although the response was not overwhelming – not surprising given the technical nature of this initial characteristic. Still, this was a necessary precursor to what would follow.

Once the “every 30 minute” train service was mentioned, the support reached a plateau and remained high. Only the seasonal, passenger-only water taxis had support of below two-thirds of those questioned, but even that component reached 65% (slightly less in East Hampton, but still a clear majority).

➤ **Further Discussion of the Proposal**

◆ **Operations**

Focus group respondents were relieved that operations would be contracted out, fearing that local government officials have little experience running such a complex system. They also noted that Suffolk County Transit contracts their

operations to private vendors. Another issue of concern was the likely need for maintenance yards, a potentially controversial issue the LIRR is now facing.

- ◆ **Parking**
Additional parking at railroad stations and enhanced bus stops is a popular part of the plan, but focus group respondents point out that land is so expensive. One suggestion offered was, "Could we use some of the money going to the MTA to buy land for parking?" There is also a desire for Park & Ride lots, especially west of the Shinnecock Canal for commuters coming from the west into the five towns.
- ◆ **Why Employers would want a new public transit system**
One of our focus groups consisted of representatives of large public and private sector entities, who employ nearly 4,000 workers in the East End. They reported on the difficulty in hiring and retaining employees, due to traffic congestion. They are forced to pay premium salaries in return for long commutes and they have to spend considerable sums for employee parking, on top of the customer parking that most provide. On the human resources side, their employees are often tired and harried, and lateness is excessive and unavoidable.

Attempts to improve the situation have failed, notably incentives to car pool, and fare subsidies.

With the new system as described however, the employers adjust hours to meet new transit schedules, and provide vans to shuttle employees to stops/stations (although they hope the new routes would include their locations). "If I could eliminate employee parking lots, I would pay for it," said one employer.

They offer their support for the plan. -- "You'll need us and all of our employees and their friends and family to advocate for this plan."

➤ **Challenges to Enactment**

- ◆ **Convincing the MTA to give up the Long Island Rail Road**
In the focus groups as well as in the telephone survey, respondents recognize that the main structural issue – eliminating the MTA's role in Eastern Long Island -- is one of the two biggest challenges. Focus group comments included "... not something they're going to relinquish easily, since they are having their own budget crisis." "They would throw everything at us." "Why hasn't the LIRR had the vision to accept that there is a need for this kind of service?" The solution

offered was, "Emphasize that it's a good idea, and develop our own political power." "Let us help."

◆ Getting people out of their cars

The other major challenge, this sentiment was best expressed by a focus group respondent, who said, "People are wedded to their cars. People demand total convenience and control." It is possible that the recent increase in gasoline prices might be incentive not to drive, but there has been little evidence so far. The solution, we learned, was to generate a realistic understanding of the objective – it is not necessary to get everyone off the road. A relatively small shift to trains and buses leads to a major reduction in auto congestion.

❖ **Detailed Findings – Focus Groups**

➤ **Existing Conditions**

The East End towns of Long Island are extremely car-dependent, with almost all point-to-point to trips taken in personal automobiles. As the population has risen, there has been a corresponding increase in traffic congestion -- and not just on the main roads. The secondary roads are now crowded, as well. In fact, where once only the residents knew the back roads, now, thanks to several annual publications detailing these routes, as well as computerized mapping and GPS systems, the less-traveled roads have become common knowledge.

As a result, travel times, including commuting times, have been lengthening. The obvious bottlenecks, especially where the four-lane Sunrise Highway is reduced to two lanes, are causing backups of tens of miles. Many solutions have been proposed, usually in the nature of increased highway lanes, limits on intersections and curb cuts, the more-modern roundabouts, or other traffic calming schemes. Not in the equation until now, however, is another way to reduce traffic congestion – a logical, efficient mass transportation system – that will actually take some cars off the road.

This is not to say there is no public transportation, but it serves limited constituencies, most of whom are dependent upon it. Where all agree – users and non-users -- is its inadequacy, as demonstrated by our respondents on a 10 to 1 scale (where 10 is the best and 1 is the worst), and by the discussion that followed.

<i>Rate the Current Public Transportation System Servicing Long Island's East End on a 1 to 10 Scale – 10 is Best It Could Be (Average [Mean] Rating for Focus Groups)</i>	
Commuters:	2.2
Full-Time Resident Non-Commuters:	3.4
Large Employers:	0.3
2 nd Homeowners:	3.1
<i>(General rating of service – respondents had little personal experience)</i>	
Spanish Speaking Residents:	7.1
<i>(All ratings are for local buses)</i>	

◆ **Inter-Regional**

Transporting people from the New York City area to the East End are two distinct carriers --the Long Island Railroad, owned by the Metropolitan Transportation

Authority (MTA), and private bus companies, notably the Hampton Jitney, Hampton Luxury Liner, and Sunrise Coach. (A fourth service began after the telephone survey and focus groups were completed.)

While the long-distance bus lines generally provide reasonable service, the LIRR does not, according to respondents. Many travelers, especially 2nd homeowners, do not use either mode. "I would hate to be dependent on them." One reason expressed was that there will always be a need to shop or carry cargo along the way, neither of which is conducive to traveling on a railroad or long distance bus.

- Long Island Railroad

With respect to the Long Island Railroad, we had no regular users in our focus groups. Second homeowners reported occasional use, but they see the train as mostly for their guests. Commuters note that the services are too infrequent and poorly scheduled for use by them. Moreover, there is no way to get from the station to work and home at either end.

Separating the Long Island Railroad service into its two lines, North Fork service from Ronkonkoma to Greenport is spotty, with only two trains regularly scheduled per day (three on certain weekend days). The timing of the runs is such that virtually no intra-region commuters can use it. The stops are distant from each other, further adding to the inconvenience. With rumors that the Long Island Railroad is considering an end to North Fork service, few people may be including the train in their future transportation plans.

The South Fork service is more frequent, but similarly not geared to most commuters. While it is possible to travel from Patchogue or even Speonk west to New York City on a daily basis, the number of trains running to the east from those points is limited. Trains are simply scheduled at the wrong times. From the respondents, we learned that only passengers heading from New York City to the Hamptons on Friday and returning on Sunday are moderately well served.

- Long Distance Buses

The Sunrise Coach on the North Fork, and the Hampton Jitney and Hampton Luxury Liner services on the South Fork are more successful, generally running hourly schedules and with significant passenger loads on all lines. All the companies are flexible in their routes, able to travel on Long Island Expressway HOV lanes and service roads to gain speed, when in traffic

congestion. Thus, they are usually on time, in terms of their published schedule. They are also able to add buses to match demand.

They have many stops in Manhattan, compared to the Long Island Railroad, which just has one. The buses run much more frequently than the railroad, and have a customer-oriented staff, according to our respondents. The buses themselves are relatively comfortable, clean, safe, and, of particular importance to some, they place restrictions on cell phone use. On the negative side, some respondents regard these buses as pricey. Up until recently, we note that driving was cheaper, but this calculation may be changing with the increased cost of gasoline. Some respondents, especially on the North Fork, also complained that information on schedules and prices is sometimes hard to locate.

◆ Intra-Regional

Local buses fall under the purview of Suffolk County Transit, and there appears to be little knowledge of the system, except among the Spanish-speaking respondents. The data indicates that ridership is increasing, and most of our Spanish-speaking respondents were frequent passengers. Much of the detailed discussion came from this group. While the Spanish-speaking users give a high numerical rating to Suffolk County Transit (7 of 10, where 10 is the best and 1 is the worst), it should be noted that our experience with Spanish-speaking respondents in other areas indicates that they were more likely to rate services positively than do other populations.

From the discussion, it was clear that the high numerical ratings do not reflect the qualitative findings. In fact, we learned that there is little of Suffolk County Transit to be praised. Users informed us that the routes, as designed, force transfers to other routes (without any special coordination of timing), a process that lengthens most trips. To travel a significant distance requires a half-day commitment, in some instances. The respondents informed us that drivers are frequently rude, and apparently, there is a rule that the bus doors remain closed when the bus sits at the beginning of a run, no matter what the weather, until it is about to leave. This policy, of course, leaves the passengers unnecessarily exposed in the rain, wind, and snow. Even the new bus shelters came in for criticism – they are too shallow to adequately protect passengers from the weather.

We were also told that figuring out the routes and schedule times is difficult, especially if the rider does not speak English. Furthermore, the service begins later in the morning than is desired and ends early in the evening, and there is no

service on Sundays. Given that so many jobs are in service sectors that require early or late commutes (aside from the businesses that are open on Sundays), employment opportunities are limited among those who do not have access to automobiles. Respondents requested overwhelmingly that the period of service should be extended to include earlier and later hours, and Sundays.

The nonusers were also aware of the need to take several different buses to a destination. One reported, for example, that it takes four buses to go from Montauk to Riverhead, where discount shopping is available.

◆ Can Public Transportation on the East End Be Improved?

During the course of the discussion on existing public transportation systems, respondents expressed doubt that service could be improved enough to attract more riders from their cars, and thus, reduce road congestion. For example, a major source of traffic is contractors, who serve the continuing boom in residential construction, renovation, and landscaping. Since the worksites are typically in dispersed residential locations, there will always be a need for trucks and cars. Thus, this population cannot be efficiently served by public transportation. Other employees would not use even an improved system, because it would never run frequently enough, or serve the specific locations to which they travel, they report. This sentiment was offered by commuters who were discussing the Shinnecock Canal bottleneck. Only a train could alleviate traffic congestion, but the train simply does not run often enough to be useful.

Another major source of traffic is generated by 2nd homeowners (who will probably not respond to economic incentives, if there are any). Business representatives question whether the existing system can ever make an impact on this segment.

On the technical side, we were told that public transportation of this kind could never succeed in the East End of Long Island starting with the proposition that there are simply too few people to support it. And since the users would only be particular classes of people – notably the transit dependent – those without access to an automobile due to the lack of a driver's license, disability, age, etc. -- such a system can never generate sufficient revenues.

But the commuters were vehemently in favor of a more-robust public transportation system, even though they expressed doubts as to whether there was enough public support to make the changes.

In addition, there are those who are transit-dependent due to economic or social reasons. We included several respondents from this group in our focus groups, especially the Spanish language session. This group, of course, would be highly supportive of public transit improvements.

► The Perfect Public Transportation System

We asked respondents in all five groups to describe the attributes of a perfect transportation system, one that a sizable portion of the population would regularly use, and that at the same time, would take cars off the road, and relieve traffic congestion.

- Attributes in order of significance (the first four attributes are ranked roughly equal and are grouped together):
 - Frequency of service
The respondents in all five groups agree that unless they can get to their destinations when they need to or want to, the transportation system will never reach an acceptable level. The most frequent users, from the Spanish-speaking session, expressed the hope that service could be scheduled every 15 minutes. The current non-users cite infrequency as a major disadvantage, as compared to “on-demand” auto travel. Frequency of service was especially important among those in the commuting group.
 - Reliability
Goes hand in hand with frequency – the assurance that the buses come on time. The frequent users complained that the current Suffolk County Transit buses were often late, due to traffic congestion, and other reasons that were not explained.
 - Accessibility of the system
Ranked third, we note that respondents would all prefer routes that would take them door-to-door, with no transfers. They are realistic enough to recognize that routes have to serve significant numbers of passengers, which makes the choices made by Suffolk County Transit bewildering to many. While stops are available for most communities and many large population centers (although not all – for example, the Tanger Outlet Mall, the routes from point to point seem to defy logic. There were suggestions that rapid, express bus service along major roads should be instituted, where transfers would be available for more local travel. Instead, the buses wind their way through major roads and back roads, slowing the trips and sometimes adding to the transfers. Respondents also want a sizable number of stops, to

eliminate long walks or transfers to cars. Spanish-speaking respondents, in addition to their needs as employees, also want routes that are convenient to shopping, especially important since most of the respondents did not have automobiles. Second homeowners rate accessibility as the most important attribute, ahead of frequency of service. Lack of routes near their homes are a major barrier to significant use.

- Increased speed
All of these attributes lead to the desire for shorter trips in terms of elapsed time, which ranked high among commuters and large employers. To get commuters out of their cars, the system must allow for a door-to-door commuting time that is, at least, slightly faster than current time via auto.

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- Low cost
Inexpensive fare leads the next grouping of ideal attributes in order of importance – a feature that ranks first among commuters. It has to be at least competitive with driving, a goal getting increasingly easier with the steady rise in the price of gasoline. Barely mentioned was the issue of sources of revenue for such a system beyond the fare box, except among full-time resident non-commuters and 2nd homeowners. There was a relatively minor concern about increased government subsidies, which might be funded from higher taxes.
- Extending the AM/PM service hours and adding Sunday Service
This was a highly popular attribute, especially among Spanish-speaking (for work), full-time resident non-commuters, and 2nd homeowner respondents (who were more interested in late night service).
- Coordination of bus and train schedules
The need for seamless transfers came up in most of the groups without prompting, but it was not top-of-mind, initially. The concept is entirely absent in eastern Long Island, but once the idea was raised, the question as to why transportation modes are not already coordinated was anything but subtle. There were lively discussions about this subject. The respondents noted that bus lines and trains belong to different entities, each having their own routes and schedules, coordinating with no one. The commuting group mused about having a single entity to coordinate – if not control -- the entire system. Full-time resident non-commuters advanced the idea that there should be a single entity in charge, so that responsibility could be easily determined, with the

added advantage of a single gateway for complaints. For the most part, the discussion was about an intra-regional system, but the 2nd homeowners mentioned desired integration between local and long distance systems.

- **Basic information**

Many respondents commented on the difficulty in finding information about schedules, routes, and fares in the existing system. For a new system, it would be presented on the Internet, through circulars, on bulletin boards, at bus and rail stops, and at other easily found locations.

- **Amenities**

Under this general category, we found cleanliness, seating comfort, safety, lighting, staff courtesy (the drivers would be screened, trained, and rated, like any high end retail establishment), and space for luggage and packages to be important attributes. The 2nd homeowners ranked these characteristics even higher than frequent service. Bus shelters, with adequate wind protection and posted schedules, were mentioned by the Spanish-speaking frequent users, who were especially vocal about the need to provide comfort while waiting for buses in inclement weather.

- **Exact change**

This policy of Suffolk County Transit is another inconvenience, which can be especially onerous to new travelers, especially those who do not speak English. Recognizing the security issue that fostered the exact change movement initially, other transportation systems now have Metro cards (or the equivalent) and machines that offer change. Respondents want that feature in a system of their design.

- **Parking**

An ample, well-lit, secure place to leave cars at the train stations, and perhaps at the bus stops, would increase ridership, especially among commuters. Second homeowners discussed the possibility of long term parking at the train stations with skepticism, noting the high cost of land. Shelter Island was particularly problematic in this respect. And even with this added amenity, few in this group would permanently move their cars from their New York City garages to Long Island (and many already keep cars on both ends). Park-and-ride services were popular among commuters and large employers.

- Energy efficiency / clean environment
Only the full-time resident non-commuters brought up these twin goals on their own, which would be accomplished by fewer cars on the road and new mass transit equipment.
- Include auto traffic planning as part of the discussion
Also mentioned in the context of a perfect transportation system was the consideration of how the discussion of improved public transit affects similar discussions on auto traffic – a recognition that one affects the other. If there were no congestion, major public transit plans would not be considered, most respondents believe. There is no support for the notion that traffic congestion can be solved completely. No one thought that more highway lanes, entry tolls at the Shinnecock Canal, express routes along the LIRR right-of-way, etc. would really solve the problem. They only hoped for some general improvement.
- Consider the employer perspective
Recognizing that this group consists of important stakeholders with respect to East End transportation, we invited nine representatives of large employers located in the five East End towns, who collectively employ roughly 4,000 employees residing in central and western Suffolk County, as well as in the East End. They were extremely pleased to participate, citing the importance of transportation to the success of their businesses, hospitals, and government entities.

All agreed that labor force commuting was a serious problem, and getting worse. They note the inadequacy of existing public transportation, and they regret the sheer acreage of land they need to set aside for employee parking. Ultimately, employers recognize the effect congestion has on attracting and retaining qualified staff, pointing out the premiums they are already paying in the form of higher salaries. The situation becomes obvious to prospective employees who are regularly late to initial job interviews, unaware of the delays they will face.

Employers have been willing to take action to encourage public transportation in the past, but so far, have had little success. The strategies that are currently available -- fare and tax subsidies, shift flexibility to meet mass transit schedules, and preferred parking for carpools – have had little success. In some locales, disincentives have served to reduce traffic — congestion, and unavailable or expensive parking lead the way. Employers, employees, and resident East Enders do not want conditions to go that far.

Aside from the parking and congestion, the sheer distance between homes and their jobs adds to commute time. (The nine respondents in the commuter focus group were asked their travel times and distances from home to work. Averaging the responses, the group travels 28.78 miles from home to work, taking 62 minutes, at an average speed of 27.85 mph.) For most employers, affordable housing nearby for moderately-salaried employees is simply not realistic. Housing prices have reached luxury resort levels. Similarly, many employees cannot afford to own and operate cars, which further reduces the labor pool. Speed is also a major consideration, which makes the notion of a train barreling along at a pace faster than road traffic very attractive.

Even if a new public transportation system would not attract employees, commuters noted that customers would use it, which would help reduce traffic congestion.

➤ **A New Public Transportation System for the East End**

➤ Description of plan

After a lengthy discussion in each of the focus groups about the state of existing public transportation, followed by a respondent-generated list of attributes that would constitute an ideal system, we then described the tentative plan, as devised by Five Town Rural Transit, Inc. A new shuttle rail and bus transit entity would be



created with coordinated services that would be combined into an efficient, scheduled public transportation system, with possible connections to water taxis and passenger ferries. On the presumption that the Long Island Rail Road and Suffolk County Transit would not develop such a service (the LIRR specifically informed Southampton officials a few years ago that it would not), an East End Transportation Authority would be established. The new authority would acquire the LIRR

tracks and rights-of-way from Ronkonkoma to Greenport on the North Fork, and from Mastic-Shirley (*changed to Speonk after the surveys, and whose railroad yard is pictured here*) to Montauk on the South Fork from the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. The corridors would become the east-west spine for the system.

Coordinated schedules between trains and buses, with seamless transfers, would be a key feature. Buses would meet the trains as they stop at every hamlet to take people to (or least close to) their final destinations. In addition, bus routes and stops would be established to take advantage of maximum demand. The rolling stock, as an added benefit, would reduce emissions and be energy-efficient.

In some cases, where there are population centers that do not contain rail stations, enhanced bus stops would be built with additional parking and other simple amenities.

Five East End Long Island Towns



The operations would be financed by a portion of the more than \$60 million in taxes and surcharges that East Enders in the five towns currently pay to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority as part of their regional obligation. Capital costs would be covered primarily by federal and other grants earmarked for rural transportation, for which the East End qualifies.

➤ Reaction to Plan

◆ Positive comments, generally

"When does it start? We're ready," was a typical reaction, not always at first, but eventually. Once the system was described and discussed, **all respondents in all groups were extremely enthusiastic toward the plan.**

Current transit users and potential users of the new system were the most eager to proceed. The Spanish speaking respondents were particularly excited about the concept, noting the money savings and convenience, and pointing out that many of the components could be found in public transit in their countries of origin. "I like that (the plan). It would be ideal." Furthermore, "Everybody's going to benefit a lot -- the government, the users, the environment."

Commuters, both English and Spanish-speaking, commented in the context of operating an automobile, discussing the opportunity of saving money, in lieu of high gasoline prices, and other costs of driving. "I drive without a license. I pay for my car \$200 and \$300 per month," said one respondent, who would welcome the opportunity to use public transportation.

A full-time resident non-commuter offered this insight -- "The interesting thing about this focus group -- admittedly community leaders and activists are here -- is that there is no negativity toward the plan. Everybody wishes your group of people well and encourages them to move forward." Another remarked, "It's a positive plan that offers a positive future."

Although 2nd homeowners did not appear initially to be very enthusiastic about the plan, when challenged, the group insisted that we were reading them incorrectly. In fact, they were very positive about the concept, noting that such a system would be especially important to many, including those who are dependent on public transportation, even if they themselves were not users.

➤ Components of Plan

◆ Revenue to operate and acquire the system

Most respondents followed and accepted our logic -- since more than \$60 million in taxes (mostly mortgage and sales taxes) and surcharges is now assessed on East Enders as part of the MTA region, some of this money can be used to fund operations for the new system. (We used a \$25 million annual expense estimate for the new system in describing the plan). One 2nd homeowner, upon hearing these figures, was outraged and suggested we make the information available to local town officials, to encourage protests to the MTA.

We asked if people might demand cuts in taxes and surcharges if operating costs really were significantly less than the amount currently paid in taxes for public transportation to the MTA, but no one thought there would be any pressure in the regard. If the system were created, it would be so highly valued that any movement toward tax savings would be overridden, suggested one business representative. "I don't think people would be arguing for a decrease in taxes." As for what to do with a surplus, should that occur, one respondent suggested that a reserve budget for operations could be created with some of the difference between the \$25 million and the \$60 million.

Concern for the initial capital costs was expressed in most groups. When the statement that funding could be obtained from federal grants on the basis of the region's status as a rural community, the 2nd homeowners suggested that this component was so vital that it should be mentioned toward the top when describing the plan. One full-time resident non-commuter, however, wondered if the region would have trouble getting money from Washington, given the East End's reputation for being the home of rich people.

◆ Expenses

Some respondents commented on the difficulty of making realistic expense projections. Responding to our mention of a similar system in Cape Cod as a source, a 2nd homeowner wondered whether the two really had much in common. Our description noted that Cape Cod bus service spends about \$10 million annually for operations. From there, another \$10-\$20 million was added to cover the annual operating expenses of the light rail service we were proposing. Following the focus group sessions, we have learned that a similar light rail system in Denver spends approximately \$12 million in operating expenses per year.

We were asked by a 2nd homeowner if we were counting the real costs – "It's labor-intensive, so you have to count salaries, benefits, and retirement." "That's a very low projected cost to run a system as complicated as this," said another. Our response was to point out that even if our projections were off by \$100%, increasing them to \$40-\$50 million, we were still well under the more than \$60 million that the East End sends to the MTA.

On the capital side, we were asked if we had considered the cost of purchasing railroad right of way. The respondent believed that the MTA would invoke its fiduciary responsibility, similar to that of the New York Jets / west side railroad yards negotiation. One possible response is that the transaction would simply be

as asset transfer from one New York State-created public authority to another, as opposed to a sale to a private (or even a joint public/private) entity. We note that the MTA was not required to purchase the New York City Transit Authority when it gained control of its subways and buses.

◆ Proposed Fares

• Single Fare vs. Charge by Distance

We did not find a clear consensus among respondents with respect to pricing the service. Second homeowners and full-time resident non-commuters were strongly in favor of fares increasing by distance traveled (rather than a single fare), but business representatives and commuters were split. They leaned toward charges by distance, based on the fairness issue, but they were concerned that high charges for long distances would discourage workers from using the system.

There is also an apprehension that charging by distance might be difficult, technically. Assuming it would work on some kind of honor system, one Spanish-speaking respondent favored a single fare, largely to mitigate against cheating.

As for a fixed price, the suggestions ranged from \$1 to \$2.50.

• Volume discounts

All respondents favor frequent user discounts. Numerous comments were made along the lines of encouraging use and getting more people out of their cars.

There were some added benefits, we learned. One is that volume discounts would help to keep a stable level of usage, which makes the system requirements predictable and hence, easier to operate. Another was that taking in money up front via monthly tickets improves cash flow.

• No Fares At All – Free Service

As we described how the operations of this new system would be funded, we offered the possibility that fares might not be necessary at all. The logic is twofold; First, in most American communities, the fare box only covers a small percentage of the operating costs of transit systems (roughly 10%), so it is reasonable to expect the bulk of the expenses would be obtained from other sources, usually taxpayer subsidies. Second, residents of Long Island's East End already subsidize the limited Long Island Rail Road service at an amount that far exceeds the cost of operating this new bus, train, and water taxi

service. Therefore the subsidy system is already in place, large enough to easily fund the operations budget, so it might be possible to avoid fares altogether.

This proposal for no fares was accepted by three of the groups swiftly and unanimously. "Free is good," said a 2nd homeowner. "This plan has the two words in capitalism that work – new and free," replied a full-time resident non-commuter. Commuters were especially enthusiastic. Several compared a free service to the \$200 to \$300 per month they now spend on gasoline, "plus the wear and tear on the car." Even a commuter who had been extremely skeptical through the entire session came around with the offer of free transportation. "Free makes it worthwhile." Of course, the length of commuting time is still a significant factor – "I'd use it if I could save a half-hour," said another commuter. Almost all the business representatives favored the concept. "I absolutely agree. If it's free, if it's safe, you're going to be flooded with people."

Only the Spanish-speaking participants were somewhat negative, largely along the lines of disbelief. None could be convinced that it really could be free, or if it started out free, that it would stay that way. "You're dreaming," was the common attitude. "In United States, nothing is free." Furthermore, "If it's that easy, if it's free, then I won't even be interested in getting on."

Still, the overwhelming response was in favor of free fares. "There is no question that it would significantly increase acceptance and usage," said a full-time resident non-commuter. "As long as it is well maintained, it will encourage people that have never used it before," according to a business representative.

Some of the respondents felt that free fares would make the system into a tourist attraction, a novelty. A business representative offered, "People will get on just to experience the ride." Second homeowners would use it more as an "interesting way to get around."

As an added benefit, there would be a savings in administrative expenses – no cost to collect fares, no tax incentive bookkeeping, we were told.

But there was as slight undercurrent from respondents who suggested that the system should not be entirely free for all – perhaps just for commuters or residents.

There were also several other negative comments, in addition to the skepticism expressed by the Spanish-speaking respondents. For example, increased use resulting from a policy of no fares, might mean increased maintenance, wear and tear, which in turn means more expense to operate. "My concern is that it will be let go [will deteriorate] – whether it's the maintenance or the trains," said one participant.

One business representative argued against free fares. "No. If something is free, there is no perceived value to the system." But several other representatives in that focus group disagreed forcefully, stating that a service specifically designed for the good of the community would be seen as having significant value.

◆ Operations

As we described the plan, we mentioned that the new public authority would probably contract out the system operations to an experienced operator. This statement was met with relief among some respondents, who feared that inexperienced people would take charge of a complex system. "Where are you going to get qualified personnel to run this system", asked one respondent. We mentioned that Suffolk County Transit does not run its own buses, and neither would the East End Transportation Authority.

Still, there was skepticism. Concerning the sheer logistics of mini-buses meeting trains, we were told, "Can you really execute this plan the way you're describing it? I don't think so," said one full-time resident non-commuter, who nevertheless favors the concept in principal.

Another potential problem is the need for maintenance yards, the location of which might face community resistance. The Long Island Railroad is currently facing this issue.

◆ Parking

The plan will need various parking options, including additional parking at train stations, and parking at enhanced bus stops. Some of the respondents pointed out some difficulties, including the complexities of acquiring land. One suggestion was a transaction with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority -- "Could we use some of the money going to the MTA to buy land for parking? Or just not pay it?"

Park and Ride lots were suggested, especially on the west side of the canal for commuters heading from west to east.

- ◆ Water Taxi service
Several respondents were excited at the prospect of integrating water taxes with the system, with the caveat that the service must be limited to passengers and seasonal. For example, the thought was expressed that water taxis would be good for a Greenport to South Fork commute, ideally with a Three Mile Harbor dock location.
- ◆ Negative Comments
To reiterate, almost all of the 43 participants of five focus groups enthusiastically favor this public transportation plan. Still, we would have been remiss not to have actively encouraged discussion as to why the components of the plan were not right for the region, or why it could never succeed. Therefore, a portion of each focus group session was devoted to "Shooting Holes in the Plan." Two reasons offered for why the plan might fail predominated, according to the respondents, followed by lesser barriers.
 - First -- Convincing the MTA to give up the LIRR tracks and rights-of-way
The respondents were quick in all the groups to bring up this issue. "The keystone of the plan is to dislodge the MTA. I'm pessimistic about that and I'm usually an optimist ... it will take a major crisis to change things."

Taking a cue from recent news, we were informed that capturing \$60 million from the MTA right now "is not something they are going to relinquish easily, since they're having their own budget crisis." Comments from all the groups were similar to "They're not going to give up their tracks without a fight." "They would throw everything they had at us to prevent this plan from happening.

Ironically, we were told, the MTA will battle this plan, even while reducing East End service – a money-loser for them, they say. One respondent suggested that the LIRR might actually prefer to get out of providing service to the East End. "They (the LIRR) think this is a big loss. They say they need to get 500 passengers on a train to break even" and they're not getting close to it. However, "they'd rather not lose the tax revenue."

Political power would be important as part of an effort to separate the MTA from the East End. "You'd need a powerful government authority, like the Suffolk County Water Authority, to pull it all together. Then you'd be transferring the power from the MTA to another powerful political agency. It needs a strong coordinating agency." While the MTA has acquired public transportation authorities (the New York City Transit Authority, for example),

they don't often, if ever, relinquish any. Still, the MTA is a creation of the State of New York, much as the proposed East End Transportation Authority would be.

As a further argument in this plan's favor, a full-time resident non-commuter noted that the plan recognizes the East End of Long Island as a rural area, which allows some further separation from the rest of Suffolk County and the MTA region.

Finally, one respondent offered a compromise, suggesting that the LIRR should implement the system as proposed. "Why can't you cooperate with the LIRR, integrating this system with the LIRR? Why hasn't the Long Island Railroad had the vision to accept that there is a need for this kind of a service, rather than continuing with what they do?"

- Second -- Getting people out of their cars
In our respondent's words, "People are wedded to cars. People demand total convenience and control." No one wants to lose independence, we were told. There were numerous comments about the need to be able to run errands and carry cargo.

According to one business representative, for this to work in a significant way, "we would have to 'retrain the animals,' to get people out of their cars." "In Europe, everybody walks. Here, to go around the corner, you take a car," said another.

It might take a disincentive to drive, such as taxes, tolls, or (more likely), an increase in the price of gasoline.

Second homeowners will be especially difficult to garner. "This system will serve people who don't have cars, but I don't think anyone will leave their cars at home and use this system. I use public transportation in New York City all the time – it's easier and faster – but I can't imagine using these trains and buses to get where I'm going when I can just hop into my car and drive."

+++++

- Other Reasons to Oppose the Plan
 - Effect on Other Carriers
Simply put, the plan will be opposed by the people who now operate the trains, the jitneys, and the local buses, according to a Spanish-speaking

respondent. There was also concern that private enterprise – Hampton Jitney and Sunrise buses -- will lose out. They will naturally be in opposition. However, it was suggested that long distance services will not be as significantly affected as Suffolk County Transit's local service will be, and these companies may qualify as a managers and providers of parts of the new service.

- **Opposition from Those Seeking a Highway Solution**

For several decades, community leaders and public officials have been meeting and setting forth plans with respect to mitigating the ever-increasing traffic congestion. Several respondents suggested that there was a need to consider the public transit plan in context of all traffic solutions – highway widening, roundabouts, etc. "Why is this project not integrated into this whole scheme of things?" asked a 2nd homeowner. It was also suggest that some people who are tied to the highway expansion plan will oppose this, figuring it will make it harder to widen roads. And in order to maintain their relevance, "the New York State DOT (Department of Transportation) would jump in after hearing about this plan, to put in their own plan," according to a full-time resident non-commuter.

"It would mitigate against what has been proffered by other planners working for the state – the plan for a four-lane highway. That the Sunrise Highway needs to be extended all the way to Montauk," said a 2nd homeowner. Or, "It's Unnecessary. What about building a toll road along part of the LIRR right-of-way?"

- **Overdevelopment Issues**

On the one hand, "if you solve the transportation problem, it's just going to increase development." Furthermore, it will be a temporary solution. "You'll get some cars off the road, which will simply leave room for more cars." On the other hand, "at some point, homeowners will max out, and then tourism will become important. The plan becomes crucial at that point." Another view expressed was that, without a viable public transportation system, the congestion would be much worse when population saturation was reached in a few decades, but with a system similar to that proposed, the transportation mix might work.

- **Geography**

One possible hole in the plan is that at least some areas are simply too spread out to have efficient routes. "Given the low population density (on the north fork), will we have enough riders?"

- Too seasonal
The system would be economically unfeasible, since capacity would have to be developed to meet peak demand, a condition that would exist for only a few months in the summer. "People won't use it in winter, it's mostly for peak season."
- Multiple Modes – A Negative for Some
Switching modes from trains to buses and back again was a negative, to several respondents. Transfers might be annoying, hard to understand, and risky if the schedule wasn't kept. From the perspective of a 2nd homeowner, "A subway to a train to another train to a bus – it's just not worth it."
- Too Radical
It was suggested that we were attempting to establish a system that is better suited to urban centers. "It's different than the light rail system that services a hub for outlying communities. This is radically different."
- Never Happen
This argument came only from the Spanish-speaking group. "I would be happy just if you would fix where I'm waiting for the bus. And put more scheduled hours of bus service. That would be enough. For all of us in this room, in this place, it would be fabulous. We're not expecting more, or demanding too much. This plan is fabulous and I'm much in agreement and am grateful, but let us speak of a reality. He's (an observer in the room) saying that it's been around for five years and we're still waiting to see something to be implemented."

◆ Can the System Meet its Goals?

• Significant Increase in Usage by Multiple Groups

While some analysts may see public transportation in the East End as a service provided for those dependent upon it, either due to disability, income, age, etc., the hallmark of this plan is to greatly increase the usage by many segments of riders.

The Spanish-speaking respondents, already current users, would continue to use the new system, and they believe that this complex structure of intertwined light rail and buses would attract "everybody. The Hispanic, the North Americans, everybody. The African-Americans, tourists, the rich, and the poor."

The plan was suggested as a "solution to low-income housing. You'd be providing inexpensive transportation for low-income workers, so they could afford the live here and ply their trades." And, "It would be a great system for lower and lower-middle class people who don't have cars." Day laborers might also be able to use the system.

And it would not just be for the benefit of the transit-dependent, according to business representatives and their employees, the commuters. It is designed to be popular among people who commute daily to fixed locations. "Daily commuting people find value in this system," although they recognized that "it might work for office workers, but not for construction workers."

A commuter reluctant to leave his car, said, "The population is growing fast, and the transportation is going to increase, too. If this goes into place, I may have to use it."

Second homeowners will probably never be significant public transportation travelers, according to full-time resident non-commuters. "This plan is more for those who live here than for those who are visiting or are 2nd homeowners." Although, "Some 2nd homeowners will use it for the novelty."

Shelter Islanders are in a unique situation, since they must take a form of public transportation to leave the island. There is a belief that some Shelter Islanders would use new train service if the schedule allowed them to get to it.

- Reduce Traffic Congestion

Ever-increasing traffic congestion is a prime impetus for this proposed system. After describing and discussing the plan, we asked each respondent to estimate the percent of cars that would be taken off the road following its full implementation.

<u>Average Percentage of Cars Taken off the Road</u>	
2 nd Homeowners -	8.6%
Full-Time Resident Non-Commuters-	17.1%
Business Representatives -	15.9%
Spanish-speaking Residents -	60.1%
<i>(Question was not asked of Commuters)</i>	-----

Several respondents presumed that Five Town Rural Transit, Inc. expected the majority of drivers to switch to mass transit, and argued that such a result was unlikely. (Actually, Five Town Rural Transit, Inc. estimates a 10%-20% drop.) But all felt there would be some reduction. It was suggested that there would be a gradual increase as the system matured and the traffic increased. "Maybe I wouldn't use it immediately, but in five years, when the traffic is really bad, I might."

Among those who might become riders were various worker categories. "This plan might reduce the traffic caused by the 'trade parade.'"

There was some doubt about one segment: "This system might take a few of the day workers, but most have automobiles or are part of car pools."

There would be a reduction in Spanish-speaking drivers who don't have licenses and fear being stopped. "It would be relief not to have to drive."

- What's Good for Employees is Good for Business

The representatives of large employers were consistent in their belief that the transit plan would be a boon for business. They feel that employees will benefit as well, especially with gasoline at \$2.35 per gallon. They also recognize that as employers, they have certain obligations:

- They might choose to adjust their hours to meet the schedules.
- They need to be sensitive to employees who go out at lunch for errands.
- They might need vans to go back and forth from stops or stations, although they hope the system can have direct links to some of the places of employment. They also suspect that certain tax benefits might be available.
- Simply put, they said that the new system resolves the objections of employees – notably the routes and times.

Ultimately, "If I could eliminate employee parking lots, I would pay for it."
(Business Representatives)

And if the system were free, employees would be even more likely to use it.

The business representatives remarked that everyone benefits, "even if they don't use the system. There's a benefit in reduced traffic, in the environment, in the convenience, to all of us ... and especially to employees."

They also want to participate in the selling of this idea. "You'll need us and all of our employees and their friends and family to advocate for this plan." Already in gear, they asked, "Do you have tallies of the number of employees affected? Do you have projections?"

We also brought up a sensitive issue in the focus group of commuters. We suggested that some workers would not take the train or bus due to class and racial differences among the riders. This notion was rejected as out-of-hand. "They're here to work, not to hit you on the head and steal your money."

◆ Description of Plan by Respondents

Noting the difficulty in describing this plan and imparting its flavor in a few words, respondents were asked to give it a try:

"It's a very good local public transportation system ... coordinated with the MTA ... that will encourage people to travel intra and inter community, and reduce the number of vehicles on the road, which will then encourage more people to come out here."

"There's a plan to create a light rail and shuttle system in East End's five towns which will alleviate congestion, particularly on the roads. You would finance it through tax money that is already collected by the MTA from residents of the five East End towns."

"It's a coordinated plan, ranging from Shirley to Montauk.

And finally, some encouragement -- "It's hard to sell it in two minutes, but they would believe -- in that time -- that there is a serious, sophisticated plan that is gaining support among key groups."

◆ Miscellaneous Comments

- Would the LIRR run enough trains ... to meet the new trains? (*2nd homeowners*)

- “That little change at Hunter’s Point is a dissuasion from taking the Long Island Railroad out here.” Would they fix it? (*2nd homeowners*)
- Maybe SUNY will contribute, as a result of their new affiliation with Southampton College? (*Full-Time Resident non-commuters*)

After the description and discussion of the proposal, the respondents were asked to rate the plan, using the same 10 to 1 scale as used earlier to rate the existing public transportation system. The ratings were much higher than those previously given of the existing public transportation system:

<i>Rate the Current Public Transportation System Servicing Long Island's East End on a 1 to 10 Scale – 10 is Best It Could Be (Average [Mean] Rating for Focus Groups)</i>		
Group	Current System	Proposed System
2 nd Homeowners	3.1 <i>(General rating for the region – respondents had little personal experience)</i>	4.0
Full-Time Resident Non-Commuters	3.4	4.1
Large Employers	0.3	7.5
Commuters	2.2	8.0 <i>(Assumes free fares, or no more than \$3 per day)</i>
Spanish Speaking Residents	7.1 <i>(All ratings are for local buses)</i>	<i>(Not specifically asked, but from the discuss, a near-10.0 rating, qualitatively)</i>

➤ **Focus Group Composition of Groups**

Composition of Groups				
Group	Date / Time	# of Participants	Moderator	Location
2 nd Homeowners	Sunday, April 24 10 AM – 12 AM	8	Steven Appel	Southampton College
Full-time resident Non-Commuters	Sunday, April 24 2 PM - 4 PM	7	Steven Appel	Southampton College
Large Employers Breakfast	Monday, April 25 8 AM – 10 AM	9	Steven Appel	Princess Diner-Southampton
Commuters of Six or More miles	Monday, April 25 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM	9	Steven Appel	Southampton Town Hall
Spanish-Speaking	Tuesday, April 26 6 PM - 8 PM	10	Francesca Moscatelli	Southampton Town Hall

❖ Detailed Findings -- Telephone Survey

➤ Existing Conditions

Not surprisingly, the initial survey finding is that the automobile is the method of choice for transportation on the East End of Long Island. And since many highways in the region have reached their stated capacity decades ago, with congestion increasing ever since, it is similarly appropriate that an effort would be made to find alternatives.

<i>When traveling around in your area, do you mainly use a car, a bus, a train, or something else?</i>					
	Car	Bus	Train	Something else	Don't Know
Total	95%	2%	0%	2%	0%
Southampton-East	91%	4%	1%	4%	0%
Suffolk County Transit Users	63%	33%	0%	2%	2%
Income: <\$25K	84%	13%	0%	4%	0%

By region, a few residents in the eastern part of Southampton Town use buses a bit (probably the Hampton Jitney and Luxury Liner), but overall, the reliance on cars is clear. Interestingly, better than three in five of those who are frequent Suffolk County Transit (the local buses) rely mainly on automobiles.

Virtually no one considers the Long Island Rail Road as his or her primary means of getting around. We also note that low-income residents are more likely than other to regard buses as their major form of public transportation, but greater than 80% of this group use cars primarily to travel within the region.

Next, we queried the respondents about their frequency of use with respect to three public transportation modes:

<i>How often do you use the Long Island Railroad?</i>						
	4/5 Times per Week	2/3 Times per Week	A Few times per Month	A Few Times per Year	Never	Don't Know
Total	1%	2%	8%	35%	54%	1%
East Hampton	0%	0%	8%	28%	63%	1%
Riverhead	0%	1%	8%	45%	45%	1%
Age: 66-74	0%	3%	7%	24%	65%	1%
Age: 75+	1%	2%	1%	24%	71%	1%
Income: <\$25K	1%	1%	6%	21%	69%	1%
Income:\$100K+	1%	0%	10%	42%	45%	1%

By defining “frequent usage” as at least two times per week, we see that only 3% of the respondents can be found often riding on the LIRR. Even adding another 8% who say they ride the railroad a few times per month, we confirm that a relatively small portion of the population uses the Long Island Rail Road with any regularity, and even fewer in East Hampton. Interestingly, the group with the highest usage, though still not a lot, was those in households with incomes greater than \$100,000, better than half of who take a train at least a few times per year. Similar figures appear for Riverhead residents.

Residents 75 years or older use all forms of public transportation less than other groups, and will use the proposed system less, as well.

Frequent use of Suffolk County Transit is not much more than that of the Long Island Railroad, but it is significant that far more people report no use of local buses at all, 88% to 54%.

<i>How often do you use local buses, such as Suffolk County Transit?</i>						
	4/5 Times per Week	2/3 Times per Week	A Few times per Month	A Few Times per Year	Never	Don't Know
Total	2%	1%	2%	7%	88%	0%
Work Full Time	2%	1%	0%	5%	90%	0%
Income: <\$25K	11%	3%	3%	13%	71%	0%
No Auto Access	17%	11%	3%	17%	53%	0%

Clearly, local buses have not had a significant impact on getting commuters out of their cars, with the possible exception of low-income workers and those with no regular access to automobiles (*caution – small sample -- 36 respondents*). More than half of those who use Suffolk County Transit four or five times per week have incomes below \$25,000.

Long distance bus users have a similar profile to that of the LIRR, but there are some differences among certain segments. For example, East Hampton residents are much more likely to use the Hampton Jitney or the Hampton Luxury Liner, while Riverhead residents can be found more often on the train, and rarely on the long distance buses.

How often do you use long distance buses, such as the Hampton Jitney, Hampton Luxury Liner, or Sunrise Coach?

	4/5 Times per Week	2/3 Times per Week	A Few times per Month	A Few Times per Year	Never	Don't Know
Total	1%	1%	10%	41%	46%	0%
East Hampton	3%	2%	16%	52%	26%	1%
Riverhead	0%	1%	3%	25%	70%	1%
Southold-Shelter Island	1%	1%	10%	43%	44%	0%
Southampton	1%	2%	11%	43%	43%	0%
College Grad	2%	2%	13%	46%	37%	0%
Income: <\$25k	3%	3%	3%	31%	60%	1%
Income: \$25K-\$50K	1%	0%	9%	34%	55%	1%

There is little variation from the total by gender, age, and length of residence. Also, as infrequently as low-income residents use this form of inter-regional transportation, they use the other form, the LIRR, even less. The long distance bus usage goes up a bit among college graduates and in East Hampton, but drops among Riverhead residents.

Having established that most residents of the East End use public transportation sporadically, we then asked the respondents to rate public transportation, keeping in mind that many were responding with limited information:

I'd like you to give me an overall rating of the current public transportation system on the East End. Let's use a scale of from five to one, where five is the best it could be and one is the worst?

	Worst It Could Be 1 – 2 ..	Average .. 3 ..	Best It Could Be .. 4 – 5	Average (Mean)
Total	52%	26%	22%	2.49
Riverhead	46%	29%	25%	2.68
Southampton-West	57%	21%	22%	2.39
Would use new system: 4/5 times per week	64%	20%	16%	2.17
Would use new system: 2/3 times per week	67%	14%	19%	2.18
Would use new system: rarely/never	43%	32%	26%	2.71
Age: 18-34	37%	34%	29%	2.91
High School Grad or less	40%	29%	32%	2.83
No Auto Access	39%	18%	43%	3.21

In the above table, the right hand column represents an average, or mean, on the 1 to 5 scale. The midpoint is 3, making scores below that number negative. Only those with

no regular access to an automobile (36 respondents) rated the current system on the positive side. The youngest, and lowest educated respondents were most favorable, probably because current public transportation works at least a little bit for them.

But overall, the respondents gave a fairly negative view. By geography, residents of Southampton-west of the Shinnecock Canal rated the system the poorest, while Riverhead residents rated the existing system higher, although still poorly.

➤ Proposed Public Transportation System

In the focus groups, we could hold the respondents' attention for five to seven minutes while we described the proposed system, but on the telephone, we needed to approach the description in a different way. Instead of attempting to describe the key components all at once, we separated them into individual questions, with the instruction that each question/component would build upon the previous questions/components. In this way, we could establish a general "plateau" ranking of the system, and note the differences between that plateau and each of the components.

A scale of 1 to 5 was used, with 5 as the best. The first three questions establish the basic structure, and the remaining questions build upon that structure:

<i>Rate Each Component on a 1 to 5 Scale – 5 is Most Favorable: Percentage who answered "Most Favorable" (.. 4-5)</i>	
1. Create public authority	49%
2. New trains with service every 30 minutes	68%
3. Mini and larger buses coordinate with trains	70%
4. More parking at train stations and bus stops	67%
5. Fares similar to Suffolk Transit	86%
6. Reopen closed LIRR stations	74%
7. New bus routes and enhanced stops	71%
8. Extended AM/PM hours and Sunday service	80%
9. New trains/buses—energy efficient, clean--from Fed grants	87%
10. Seasonal, passenger-only water taxis	65%

Assigning those who answer "4" or "5" as "most favorable" toward the proposal, the plateau appears to be slightly higher than 70% for most favorable. Note that the rankings for each component are affected by the information already received in previous questions.

We also computed a mean score. Since on a 1 to 5 scale, 3 is "average," anything over 3 would be positive. The mean plateau is just over 4. (The "Don't Know" response is excluded.)

These next tables provide more detail for each component. To begin, we asked the respondents to rate a relatively innocuous one. Few respondents would have been expected to have an expertise as to whether the establishing of a new public authority would have much effect on public transportation. However, since the regard for the current system is so low, it appears that any significant change is presumed to be an improvement.

1. Let's suppose we make some major changes in the public transportation system. To start, we set up a new organization – a public authority -- which takes control of all public transportation – the rail and bus service -- on Long Island's East End. How favorable would you be to a new organization running public transportation?

	Least Favorable 1 –2 ..	Most Favorable .. 4 -5	Average (Mean)
Total	26%	49%	3.36
<10 years living on East End	17%	61%	3.74

The respondents of the East End demonstrate a clear willingness to try another entity.

The next question introduces one of the key features the new system – frequent and regular train service:

2. The new authority sets up a new train system, with trains that run every thirty minutes in each direction, just for the East End, on the existing Long Island Railroad tracks. The new trains would travel from Shirley to Montauk, on the South Fork, and from Ronkonkoma to Greenport, on the North Fork, and it would connect, at Shirley and Ronkonkoma, with the existing LIRR to and from New York City. The trains would be smaller, but with enough seating to handle the expected passenger load. How favorable would you be to a new train system that runs every thirty minutes?

	Least Favorable 1 –2 ..	Most Favorable .. 4 –5	Average (Mean)
Total	19%	68%	3.87
Riverhead	11%	76%	4.19
Current LIRR User	15%	72%	4.30
Current Suffolk County Transit User	16%	77%	4.08
Current Long Distance Bus User	19%	74%	4.02
Age: 18-34	11%	77%	4.21
Age: 66-74	28%	59%	3.55
Commute: 6+ miles daily	14%	74%	4.04

The approval ratings of the components mentioned thus far (new authority, regular and frequent train service) ramp up substantially, to 68%, with a 3.87 mean. There is little variation among segments, but it is worth noting that longer-distance commuters and younger respondents are especially favorable toward the plan, while older respondents tend to give lower ratings, at this point in the sequence of questions.

When the next key component is described, the favorability continues to climb:

3. The next step is to add new mini-buses, and the key feature is that when the trains arrived at stations, there would be a coordinated schedule with the mini-buses, so that they would be there to meet the train passengers and take them on their way. How favorable would you be to a mini-bus and train schedule coordinated together in this way?

	Least Favorable 1 –2 ..	Most Favorable .. 4 –5	Average (Mean)
Total	17%	70%	3.95
Riverhead	11%	77%	4.18
Current Suffolk County Transit User	12%	87%	4.37

Coordination of services is an important feature of the system, and highly popular, based on the results to the survey. And the means to accomplish it is by establishing a single entity to run the trains and buses. Especially favorable are the current Suffolk

County Transit users, who by their responses, might see themselves using the combination of buses meeting trains.

If the system has frequent and inexpensive service to popular destinations, then a portion of the population will park their cars at train stations and bus stops and patronize it:

4. There would be more parking at train stations and at some larger bus stops. How favorable would you be to more parking?

	Least Favorable 1 –2 ..	Most Favorable .. 4 –5	Average (Mean)
Total	18%	67%	3.86
East Hampton	24%	62%	3.67
Riverhead	9%	82%	4.30
Commute: 6+ miles daily	17%	69%	3.94

Respondents from Riverhead were more favorable toward parking at train stations and bus stops than was anyone else – the only region of the five that had a mean of greater than 4.00 (by a wide margin).

Costs to passengers is a major concern among potential users, and the suggestion that fares would remain the same is popular:

5. The fares would be similar to what Suffolk County Transit charges now – about \$1.50 as the standard, with discount fares of 50 cents for elderly and disabled, and \$1 for students. How favorable would you be to maintaining current fares for the new, proposed, rail and bus system?

	Least Favorable 1 –2 ..	Most Favorable .. 4 –5	Average (Mean)
Total	5%	86%	4.48

The results were an indication that current fares are reasonable – or at least that a superior system should not cost more to passengers. The ratings on this question were similar for all segments, including commuters, non-commuters, and all income groups.

The proposal would include reopening railroad stations that had been closed (inexplicably, according to the focus group respondents) by the Long Island Rail Road:

6. Some of the train stations that the Long Island Railroad has closed would be reopened. How favorable would you be to reopening closed stations, such as Quogue, Southampton College, Watermill, Calverton, and Jamesport?

	Least Favorable 1 –2 ..	Most Favorable .. 4 –5	Average (Mean)
Total	12%	74%	4.13
Southold-Shelter Island	16%	66%	3.84
Southampton-East	12%	82%	4.29
Would use new system: 4-5 times per week	6%	87%	4.51

Two of the station re-openings would occur in Southampton Town-east of the Shinnecock Canal (Southampton College and Watermill), which may account for the more-favorable responses from that region. Another point of significance is that potential frequent users want to see the stations re-opened, increasingly the flexibility of the new system and drawing new passengers.

From the focus groups, we learned that many residents do not use buses because their routes simply do not take people to desired destinations, and for those who actually use them, the rides can be long and arduous. The proposed system includes major changes in the routing system:

7. New bus routes would be set up based on where people say they want to go. How favorable would you be to new bus routes, which might also include enhanced bus stops with parking in some of the following areas – Wading River/Baiting Hollow, Cutchogue (KUTCH-OG), Orient, Flanders, Sag Harbor, or Springs?

	Least Favorable 1 –2 ..	Most Favorable .. 4 –5	Average (Mean)
Total	13%	71%	4.01
Riverhead	10%	76%	4.17
Income: \$25K-\$50K	5%	80%	4.33

The notion of bus routes that will take people where they want to go is especially popular on Riverhead.

Respondents in the focus groups noted that public transportation was not used for getting to certain jobs, because the buses do not run early enough in the morning or late enough in the evening. And since so much of the East End economy is based on services that are open on Sunday, the lack of Sunday service further restricts prospective users of public transportation:

8. The mini-buses and trains would have longer hours. They would start earlier in the morning, and run later in the evening, and include Sunday service. How favorable would you be to longer hours?

	Least Favorable 1 –2 ..	Most Favorable .. 4 –5	Average (Mean)
Total	9%	80%	4.26
Age: 18-34	7%	83%	4.43

Younger respondents were even more favorable toward extended hours.

Although the elements in the following question cannot be isolated individually, the cumulative effect is very favorable:

9. Unlike the current trains and buses, there would be sparkling new trains and mini-buses that use less fuel and are non-polluting, paid for by federal grants for this kind of system. How favorable would you be to new, energy-efficient, clean-operating trains and mini-buses?

	Least Favorable 1 –2 ..	Most Favorable .. 4 –5	Average (Mean)
Total	6%	80%	4.53

Energy-efficiency, non-polluting rolling stock, and federal grants to pay for capital costs, all enhance the attractiveness of the proposal.

As a third mode of public transportation, water taxis would be integrated into the proposed system:

10. Water taxis will be added, providing North Fork to South Fork service, and along-the-fork service, coordinated with the mini-bus schedule. They will be small, seasonal, and for passengers only?

	Least Favorable 1 –2 ..	Most Favorable .. 4 –5	Average (Mean)
Total	23%	65%	3.76
East Hampton	29%	57%	3.48

Though less popular than the other components, respondents register significantly on the favorable side for water taxis. East Hampton respondents are somewhat less in favor, but even they are highly positive. Note that the question restricts water taxis to seasonal, non-auto, passenger service only.

It is worth noting that respondents from Riverhead were generally the most favorable toward the individual components of the proposed transportation system.

But while favorability is important, the ultimate factor in the success of this proposal is the likelihood of use, which was specifically measured in the next question:

Let's put all these features together. If there were trains that ran every 30 minutes, met by mini-buses, with added parking and stops, and water taxis, run by a new authority, how often do you think you would use it?

	4/5 Times per Week	2/3 Times per Week	A Few times per Month	A Few Times per Year	Never	Don't Know
Total	7%	15%	29%	26%	19%	4%
Age: 18-34	15%	20%	34%	22%	9%	1%
Age: 66-74	1%	18%	30%	20%	24%	6%
Commute: <6 miles daily	7%	12%	28%	30%	20%	3%
Commute: 6+ miles daily	12%	16%	30%	22%	16%	4%
Auto Access	7%	14%	29%	27%	19%	4%
No Auto Access (36 respondents)	22%	22%	19%	14%	17%	6%

By combining the "4/5 times per week" response with the "2/3 times per week" response, we note that "frequent users," based on what they say they will do, represent 22% of all respondents. This figure climbs to 28% among longer distance commuters –

a key target group in our study. This data indicates that heaviest users of the new system will be those with longer commutes. The higher figure for 2/3 times per week may be explained by commuters who anticipate they will drive occasionally for shopping and other errands, a few times per week.

There was a strong consistency in the answers to this question in each of the towns, except for a few differences in East Hampton. While the combined "a few times per year" and "never" categories show 45% for the total sample, the figure is 55% in East Hampton. Also, the frequent user totals for East Hampton are slightly reduced, as compared to the entire region.

Lower income, younger respondents and current users of public transportation were slightly more likely to indicate they would use the system frequently, but there was no significant difference in full time vs. part time employees.

As an example of shifts in behavior when a new option becomes available, among those who currently never use the LIRR, 12% would use the new system 4-5 times per week. If it were free, that number jumps to 22%. Along those lines, frequent potential users of the new system are most likely to condemn current system.

This next table compares the use of the current public transportation system to the potential use of the proposed system, which, based on these responses, would have considerably more passengers:

<i>How often [do you / would you] use public transportation on Long Island's East End?</i>		
	Use Current System	Would Use Proposed System
4/5 times per week	2%	7%
2/3 times per week	2%	15%
A few times per month	9%	29%
A few times per year	34%	26%
Never	53%	19%
Don't Know	1%	4%

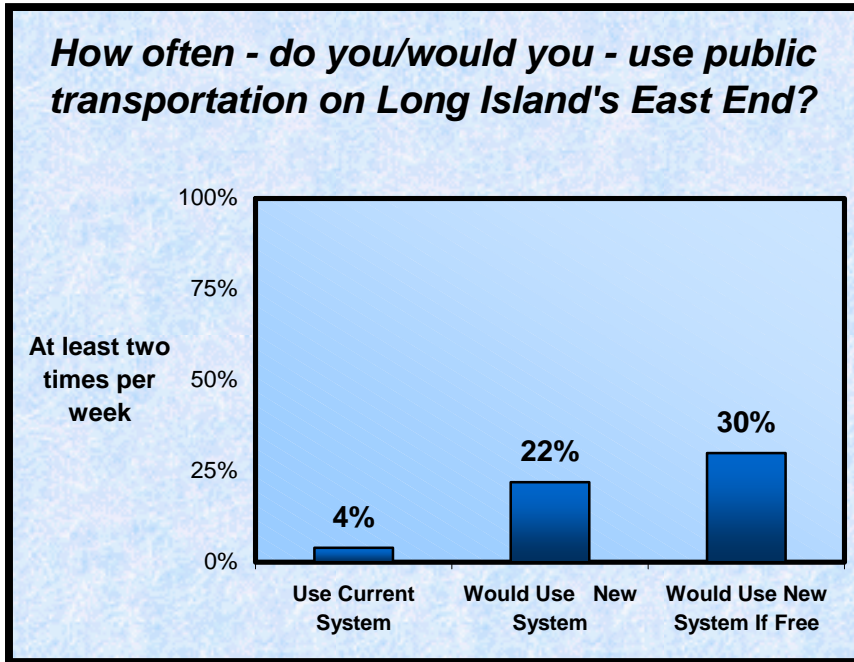
We found that 22% of the respondents would become "frequent users" (combined 4/5 times and 2/3 times per week) of the proposed system, compared to 4% who use the current system frequently.

Next, we added (or rather, subtracted) a component to the proposal – the possibility of a fare-free system. To make the statement credible, we included an explanation of finances that would allow the new public authority to operated the system at no direct cost to the passengers:

Let's add an element – suppose the cost to riders would be free. There would be no fares at all. It could be done, by taking some of the 60 million dollars per year that people in the five East End towns now send, through sales and other taxes, to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which operates the Long Island Railroad. The estimated annual cost to run the new system is 25 million dollars, so the new authority would take some of the 60 million dollars to cover these costs. Asking the question again, how often do you think you would use the new system if it were free?

	4/5 Times per Week	2/3 Times per Week	A Few Times per Month	A Few Times per Year	Never	Don't Know
Total	13%	17%	24%	21%	18%	6%
East Hampton	8%	12%	21%	30%	21%	8%
Age: 18-34	28%	26%	24%	15%	6%	6%
Age: 66-74	10%	16%	26%	17%	23%	8%
Commute: <6 miles daily	13%	14%	22%	27%	19%	4%
Commute: 6+ miles daily	21%	17%	24%	16%	16%	6%
Children in Household	21%	16%	26%	23%	11%	3%
Income: <\$100K	17%	17%	29%	19%	16%	3%

The frequent user category climbs from 22% to 30%, if the system were free:



Combining the three options, we note that just under 20% of the respondents will never use the proposed system. Still, many who use currently never use public transportation report that they will use the proposed system, especially if it were free:

How often [do you / would you] use public transportation on Long Island's East End?

	Use Current System	Would Use Proposed System	Would Use Proposed System If Free
4/5 times per week	2%	7%	13%
2/3 times per week	2%	15%	17%
Frequent Users	4%	22%	30%
A few times per month	9%	29%	24%
A few times per year	34%	26%	21%
Never	53%	19%	18%
Don't Know	1%	4%	7%

Before we suggested a system with no fares was possible, we asked respondents to consider two methods of determining tariff levels:

About fares for this new system, do you think that there should be a single fare, like the New York City subways, where you pay the same amount, no matter how far you go, or should they be based on distance – the further you go, the more you pay?

	Same Amount	Based on Distance	Don't Know
Total	33%	58%	9%
Suffolk County Transit User	69%	21%	10%
Suffolk County Transit Non-User	32%	59%	9%
Age: 18-34	48%	48%	4%
Income: <\$25K	48%	41%	11%

Most respondents favored a system of fares based on distance. The exception was current local bus users.

➤ **Reasons to Support / Oppose Proposal**

Recognizing that this public transportation proposal would spark significant discussion, we asked a series of questions that sought to measure various arguments both for and against the plan. Beginning with the benefits accruing from the proposal, we combined three key attributes into a single question, in order to obtain a ranking:

Which of the following three benefits is the most important, if this new system were to be put in place?

	Energy efficient, non-polluting	People would switch, get cars off the road	Better public transportation for those who need or want it	Don't Know
Total	17%	32%	44%	7%
Age: 18-34	31%	31%	35%	3%
Age: 75+	12%	27%	50%	11%
Income: <\$25K	9%	26%	60%	9%

Overall, “better transportation for those who need it (the transit-dependent) or want it (commuters and others)” is the most important benefit, but there are some significant differences among segments. Energy efficiency/non-polluting is a somewhat stronger argument among younger respondents, while the oldest residents and low-income respondents regard better public transportation for those who need or want it as more important, discounting energy efficiency.

Next, we offered and measured several reasons to support or oppose the new system. Starting with reasons to support, we asked a question specifically derived from the discussion held in the full-time resident non-commuter focus group:

Reason to support plan: it's a well-thought-out, detailed plan, devised by people in the area and by transportation experts, and it's backed by all of the local elected officials and large employers in the five Long Island East End towns.

	Extremely Convincing	Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Not At All Convincing	Don't Know
Total	18%	26%	34%	17%	4%
East Hampton	11%	25%	39%	20%	6%
College Grad	23%	26%	31%	16%	4%

Not unexpectedly, people are more likely to support an idea that has significant backing from those who might garner respect. But specific benefits proved to be even stronger reasons to support the plan:

Reason to support plan: It will reduce traffic congestion by getting some people out of their cars and onto trains and buses.

	Extremely Convincing	Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Not At All Convincing	Don't Know
Total	32%	26%	26%	15%	2%
East Hampton	26%	24%	26%	21%	2%
Would use new system: 4/5 times per week	54%	26%	8%	9%	2%
Age: 18-34	45%	24%	28%	3%	1%

The most frequent potential users, as to be expected, give the highest level of support to the notion of reduced traffic congestion.

Another point raised frequently in the focus groups was that everybody benefits from a viable public transportation system, a position that was confirmed among the telephone survey respondents:

Reason to support plan: Everybody benefits, not just those who must take public transportation.

	Extremely Convincing	Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Not At All Convincing	Don't Know
Total	26%	27%	30%	15%	3%

We then listed four reasons to oppose the plan, and the results were similar for each. The focus group respondents had informed of us that there were two barriers were especially difficult to overcome in establishing the proposed system. To begin, many respondents recognize that convincing the MTA to yield their franchise will be hard, but relatively few think it is not worth the effort:

<i>Reason to oppose plan: The political opposition from the MTA or the Long Island Railroad would be too powerful, so why waste time with something that will never happen.</i>				
	Very Strong	Somewhat Strong	Not At All Strong	Don't Know
Total	18%	28%	46%	7%
Age: 18-34	11%	32%	47%	10%
High School Grad or less	24%	30%	38%	8%
College Grad	16%	25%	53%	6%

Next, the telephone survey respondents believe, by a slight majority, that the limited number of people who will actually get of their cars and onto the buses and trains is a significant reason to oppose the plan, especially in Southampton-east of the Shinnecock Canal. Defining "enough," however, is the key issue in this question:

<i>Reason to oppose plan: Even if we had this system, you still wouldn't get enough people out of their cars to make it worthwhile.</i>				
	Very Strong	Somewhat Strong	Not At All Strong	Don't Know
Total	23%	27%	45%	5%
Southampton East	33%	32%	27%	8%
Age: 18-34	17%	34%	46%	2%
Age: 66-74	33%	35%	27%	5%
Retired	30%	32%	31%	6%
Commute: < 6 miles	28%	29%	38%	5%
Income: <\$25K	34%	33%	30%	4%

The contention that a high quality public transportation system would simply make the area more attractive and bring more people has some traction among all segments:

<i>Reason to oppose plan: If we have this new public transportation system, it would just attract more people to the area.</i>				
	Very Strong	Somewhat Strong	Not At All Strong	Don't Know
Total	23%	27%	45%	5%

The weakest opposition statement was the notion that there are those who wouldn't use the system due to the inconvenience of multiple transfers, a significant point since the proposal places a heavy emphasis on coordinated trains and buses, instead of the current system of long bus rides but infrequent transfers. The respondents, however, did not regard this concern as a "deal-breaker."

Reason to oppose plan: People wouldn't use the system because there would be too many transfers from trains to mini-buses.

	Very Strong	Somewhat Strong	Not At All Strong	Don't Know
Total	13%	29%	51%	7%

➤ **Percentage of Cars Taken Off the Road**

It has been suggested that a key benefit of the proposed public transportation system would be reduced traffic congestion, based on drivers and passengers switching from cars to trains and buses. It should be emphasized, however, that a random sample of residents will not comprise the expertise of traffic engineers, but still, it is interesting to note the number of cars taken off the road, as projected by those surveyed:

If this system were to be put into place, what percentage of cars would be taken off the road because drivers would take public transportation ... during a typical non-summer weekday?

	1 - 10%	11 - 20%	21 - 30%	31+%
Total	44%	22%	17%	16%
Mean (Average) 19% / Median 15% <i>(Computations in this table exclude Don't Know's)</i>				
Would use new system: 4/5 times per week	21%	14%	21%	43%
Would use new system: rarely/never	57%	19%	12%	11%
Male	51%	22%	15%	12%
Female	39%	21%	19%	20%
Age: 18-34	27%	28%	16%	29%
Age: 75+	50%	16%	16%	18%
<10 years East End resident	34%	30%	17%	19%
High school Grad or less	40%	20%	17%	24%
College Grad	45%	24%	19%	13%
Income: <\$25K	32%	19%	18%	31%

If this system were to be put into place, what percentage of cars would be taken off the road because drivers would take public transportation ... during a typical summer weekend?

	1 - 10%	11 - 20%	21 - 30%	31+%
Total Average (Mean) 24% / Median 16% <i>(Computations in this table exclude Don't Know's)</i>	36%	16%	15%	33%
Would use new system: rarely/never	76%	13%	14%	24%
Most important benefit: get cars off road	48%	14%	18%	43%
Age: 18-34	25%	19%	13%	51%
Income: >\$100K	17%	19%	21%	24%

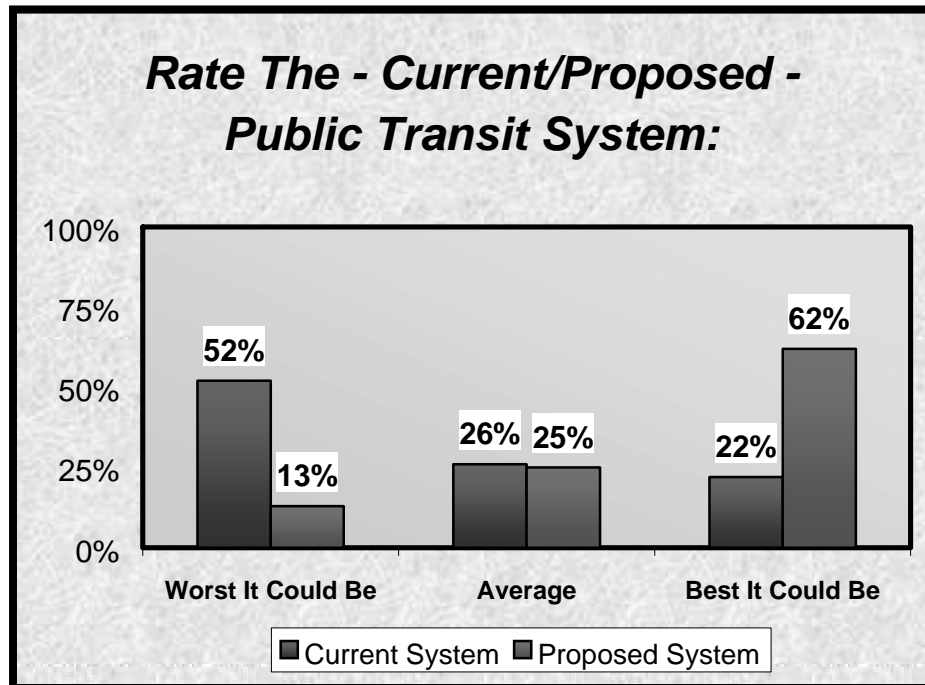
Again, recognizing the lack of expertise of the respondents, the average projections -- 19% for typical non-summer weekdays and 24% for typical summer weekends -- indicate that a significant number of cars would be taken off the roads.

➤ **Final Ratings**

In concluding the survey, we asked the respondents, -- now that they had received considerable information about the proposed system, including arguments for and against the system -- to rate the proposal, using the same scale as the one used earlier to rate the existing system:

I'd like you to give me an overall rating of this new, coordinated, public transportation system, using the same five to one scale we used earlier - from five to one, where five is the best it could be and one is the worst?

	Worst It Could Be 1 – 2 ..	Average .. 3 ..	Best It Could Be .. 4 – 5	Average (Mean)
Total-Current System	52%	26%	22%	2.49
Total-Proposed System	13%	25%	62%	3.72
Riverhead	8%	23%	68%	3.91
Current Transit Users	8%	21%	70%	3.99
Most important benefit: get cars off the road	8%	22%	71%	3.89
Age: 18-34	3%	22%	76%	4.05
Age: 66-74	17%	29%	55%	3.57
Age: 75+	19%	24%	58%	3.51
Commute: 6+ miles daily	10%	23%	68%	3.86



There is a consistency among those who rate the proposed public transportation system poorly -- almost all of them rarely or never use the LIRR.

➤ **Methodology**

This survey of five towns in eastern Long Island was conducted for Five Town Rural Transit, Inc., by Appel Research, LLC. This research assesses the opinions of full-time residents within this geographic area toward transportation in general, existing public transportation, and a proposal for an entirely new transportation system.

➤ **Sample Design**

In order to accomplish a reliable and representative measurement of the full-time resident population of the five towns in eastern Long Island, a scientific random probability sample was designed. The sample was comprised of 1,200 randomly selected adults living within the sample area. The number of interviews designated for each of five geographic areas was fixed at 240 each, and then weighted to match the year-round population relative to the total year-round population of the area. The 2000 United States Bureau of Census Data has been used to calculate sample proportions for this stratified random sample design.

The five regions are:

- 1) East Hampton Town
- 2) Riverhead Town
- 3) Southold and Shelter Island Towns
- 4) Southampton Town -- east of the Shinnecock Canal
- 5) Southampton Town -- west of the Shinnecock Canal

Region	# Actual Interviews	% Actual Interviews	# Weighted Interviews	% Weighted Interviews	% Year-Round Population Five Towns (2000 Census)
East Hampton	240	20%	189	16%	16%
Riverhead	240	20%	258	21%	22%
Southold-Shelter Island	240	20%	222	18%	18%
Southampton-East	240	20%	212	18%	18%
Southampton-West	240	20%	322	27%	26%
Total - Five Towns	1,200	100%	1,203	100%	100%

Southampton Town totals are available for each question, but they are rarely shown because the respondents did not vary in their opinions from those of the sample as a whole.

► Sample Composition

Telephone numbers used in the sampling were generated by random-digit process, a sampling technique that assures an equal, unbiased probability of inclusion in the sample for all households with a telephone. In addition to the universe of published telephone numbers, this procedure includes in the sample unlisted and newly established telephone numbers.

The rigorous methods employed in composing the sample assured that each household with a telephone had an equal probability of being selected for inclusion in the sampling frame. The sample design and methodology maximize the likelihood that the survey will be representative of the total population, and the subsequent reliability of the inferences that are drawn.

In theory, the statistical sampling error associated with the overall findings based on the probability sampling of 1,200 respondents is approximately ± 3 percentage points. Simply put, this means that if we had interviewed every adult with a household telephone residing within the five town area, the findings from this complete census would not deviate from our sampling findings by more than the maximum of ± 3 percentage points, 95 percent of the time (i.e., to a 95% confidence level). We are confident that Appel Research, LLC's rigorous data collection methods and sample design insure that the research findings are highly representative and reliable indices and sentiments among the total population with telephones living within the designated region. For each region, the sample size was 240, yielding a margin of error of slightly greater than ± 6 percentage points.

The following is offered as a guide:

Sample Size	Margin of Error	Sample Size	Margin of Error	Sample Size	Margin of Error	Sample Size	Margin of Error
9,605	1%	267	6%	79	11%	38	16%
2,401	2%	196	7%	66	12%	33	17%
1,067	3%	150	8%	57	13%	30	18%
600	4%	118	9%	49	14%	27	19%
384	5%	96	10%	42	15%	24	20%

➤ Questionnaire Design

The survey questionnaire was custom designed to measure accurately and comprehensively the objective as summarized above. The design, wording, and order of the specific questions were all heavily influenced by the findings from the five focus groups conducted beforehand. Five draft versions of the questionnaire were written, and the final draft was pilot tested to ensure that the questionnaire would be comprehensive, valid, and free from contextual biases. Adjustments were incorporated into the questionnaire that was ultimately used. Pilot tested interviews have not been included in the survey sample.

➤ Data Collection

All of the 1,200 interviews were conducted by professional staff interviewers from central data collection facilities in New York City and in Florida. In addition to regularly scheduled in-service training, the interviewers and supervisors involved in this research project received training specific to this project before data collection and over the course of the project. The completion time to administer questionnaires averaged 16 minutes. Once selected, each telephone number was attempted at least three times before it was discarded, to minimize overrepresentation of easy-to-reach respondents (homebound, disabled, elderly, for example). Each interview was verified by a supervisor. Data collection shifts were limited to weekday afternoons and evenings. All interviews were completed between June 8, 2005 and June 13, 2005.

To maximize co-operation of contacted residents and in order to minimize non-response and self-selection biases, respondents were guaranteed anonymity for their

participation in the research. To promote objectivity of responses to the survey questionnaire, the sponsor of the research was not apparent to respondents and was not disclosed.

➤ Data Processing Analysis

The interviews were conducted using a computer-aided telephone interviewing system, in which questions are read from a computer screen, and responses are entered directly into a database, eliminating data-transfer bias. Following completion, the data was loaded into a specially designed software package for comprehensive statistical analysis of the data, including descriptive frequencies, crosstab relations, and multivariate analysis, to provide the clearest understanding presentation of the research findings.

➤ Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics of Respondents						
Age	18-34 10%	35-50 24%	51-65 33%	66-74 16%	75+ 14%	DK 3%
Length of East End Residence	<10 Years 15%	10-25 Years 32%	25+ Years 51%			DK 2%
Last Year of Education	<H.S. Grad 3%	H.S. Grad 23%	Some College 23%	4 Year College Grad 29%	Post Grad 20%	DK 2%
Work Status	Full Time 43%		Part Time 14%	Retired 36%	Don't Work/ Other 6%	DK 2%
Travel Daily to Fixed Location	< 6 miles 30%		6+ Miles 33%	Don't Travel Daily 33%		DK 5%
Auto Access most times	Yes 95%				No 3%	DK 3%
Children in Household	Yes 23%		No 75%			DK 2%
Household Income	<\$25K 7%	\$25K-\$50K 18%	\$50K-\$75K 18%	\$75K-\$100K 12%	>\$100K 17%	DK/RF 27%
Gender	Male 46%			Female 54%		
Region	East Hampton Town 16%	Riverhead Town 21%	Southold/ Shelter Island Towns 18%	Southampton Town-East of Canal 18%	Southampton Town-West of Canal 27%	