



Coastal study 5/2000

Shoreham Hamlet Study Update

Shoreham, New York

March, 2004

Shoreham Hamlet Study Update

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Nearly two years after the completion of the Shoreham Hamlet Study, the Town of Brookhaven has offered the opportunity to update the report. We would like to thank Supervisor John Jay LaValle for this opportunity, and for taking actions in the interim that have led to progress on some of our initial recommendations. Thanks, too, to Daniel J. Gulizio, Town of Brookhaven Planning Commissioner, both for his efforts to improve the Town zoning code and for his insights and professional perspective on the ideas put forward in this Hamlet Study. Finally, we thank Kevin T. McCarrick, our Council member for the Second District, for his support and hard work on our behalf.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE

Twenty months have passed since the release of the Shoreham Hamlet Study (SHS, 2002). As with any planning study, the essence of the work must remain current, reflecting changing conditions in the Hamlet, modifications to the Town planning and zoning codes, experiences of other hamlets, plans for expansion of the school physical plant and refinement of original concepts. The purpose of this update is to incorporate changes that have occurred since the Hamlet Study was originally written, to clarify some of the original recommendations, and to reiterate the key issues that will affect our future for years to come.

1.2 A VISION FOR SHOREHAM'S FUTURE

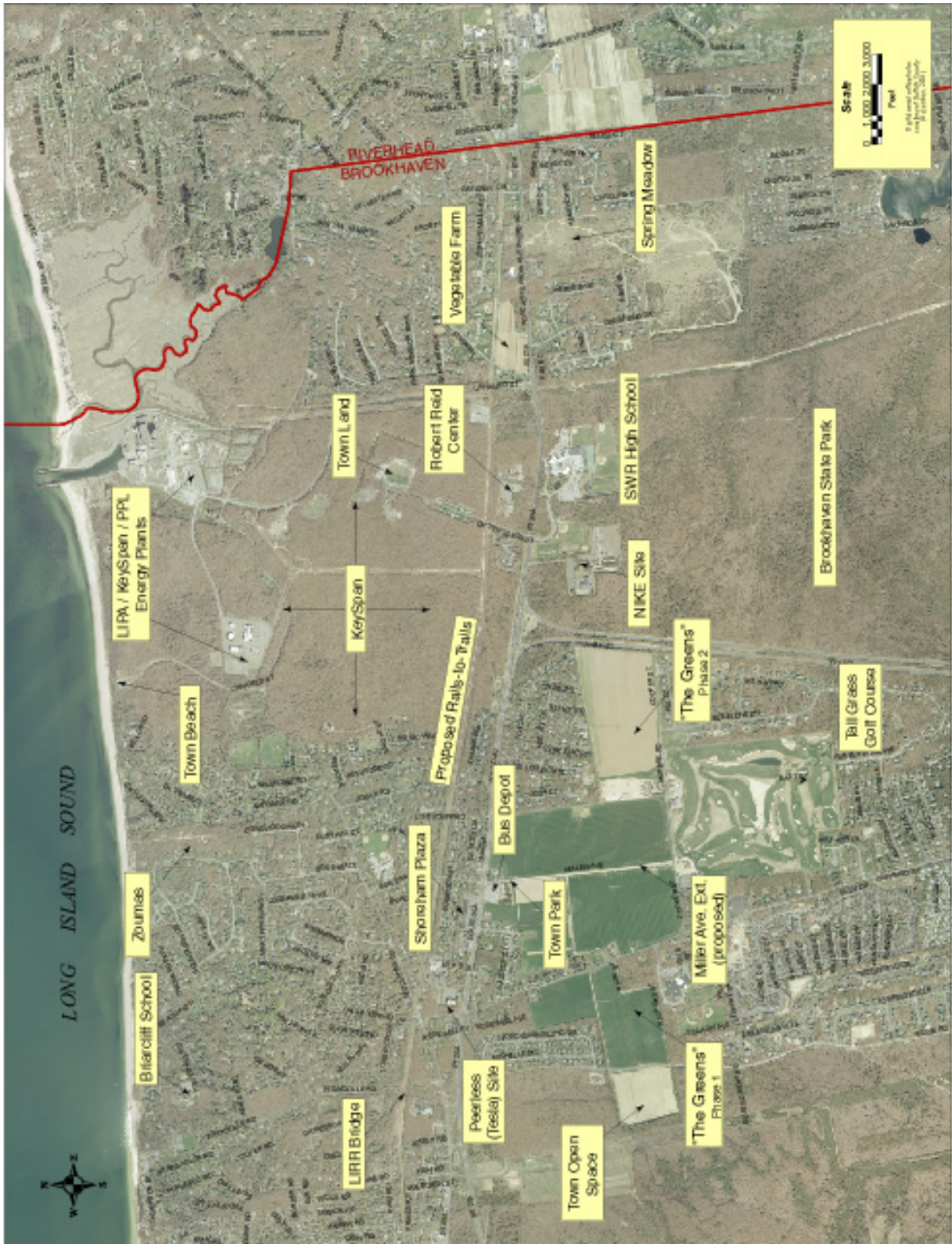
Our vision as detailed in the original Hamlet Study remains unchanged. We reaffirm the original four goals of the vision:

- To create a physical and social **center for our community**;
- To create **housing opportunities** for all stages of home ownership from entry level through retirement;
- To **develop and unify properties** for Brookhaven's and the hamlet's recreation needs;
- To make Shoreham a prime example of **Brookhaven Town's commitment to Smart Growth development** incorporating planning tools such as Planned Development Districts and traffic calming measures.

Figure 1 shows the Hamlet Study area and the key properties discussed in the original Hamlet Study and in this Update. This figure is an update to Map 2 (p. 91) in Appendix C of the Hamlet Study.

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Figure 1. Overview of the Hamlet Study Area



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2 CHANGES SINCE THE 2002 HAMLET STUDY

2.1 ZONING CHANGES

Key goals of the Town Code Amendments that were implemented in 2003 included eliminating multiple zoning of single parcels (*e.g.*, Business zoning along a road frontage, Residence zoning at the rear of the same parcel), ensuring “stand-alone” zoning districts that do not reference permitted uses in other districts, and aligning zoning with existing uses, where appropriate. Figure 2 reflects the current zoning in the Hamlet Study area. (*Note: this map is currently undergoing final review by the Planning Department. Zoning of specific parcels is subject to change.*) Compared to Figure 10 in the Hamlet Study (SHS, p. 31), several changes are apparent.

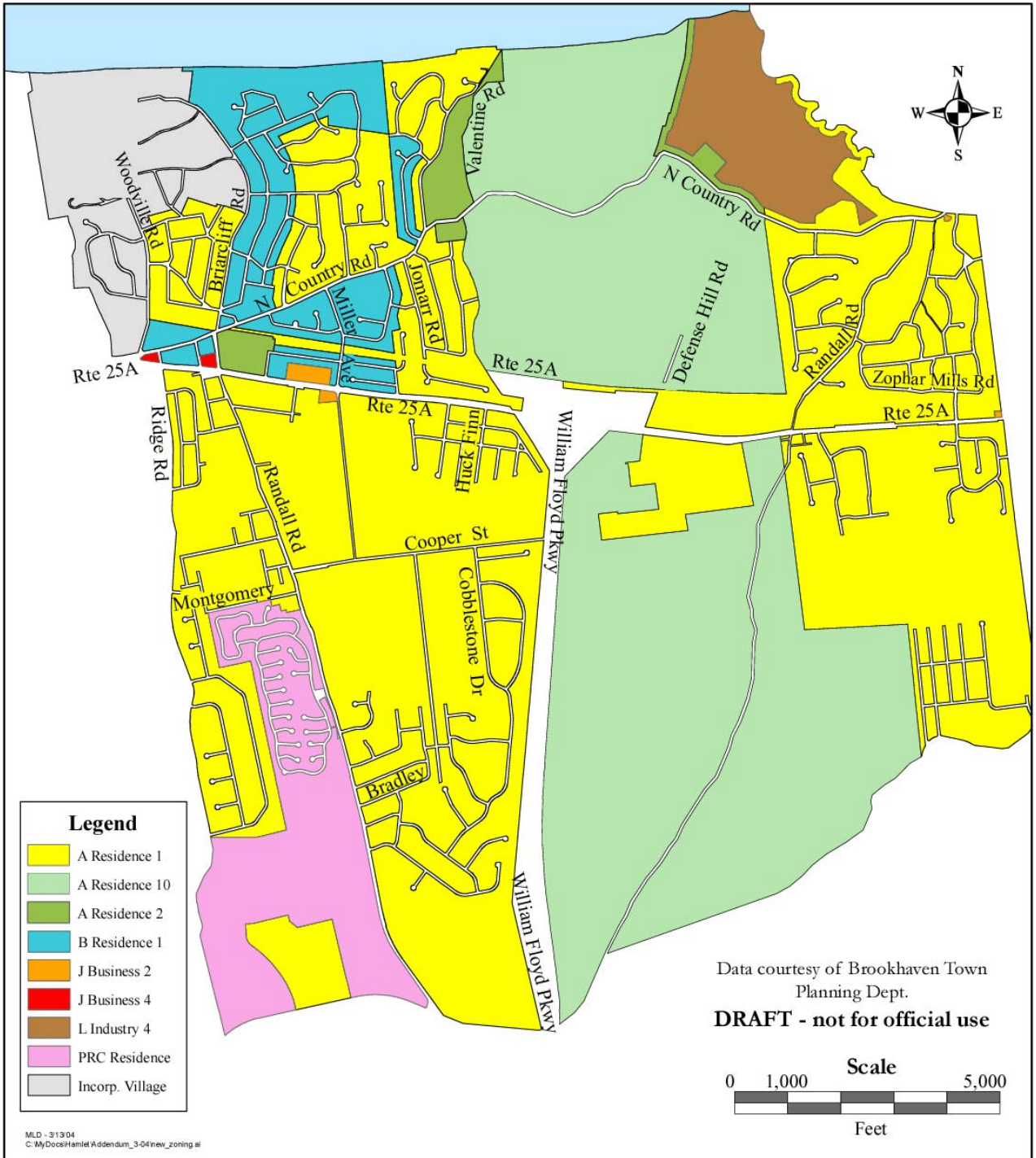
- A small parcel of land on the northwest corner of Rte. 25A and Randall Rd. (Shoreham) has been rezoned from A Residence 1 to J Business 4.
- A small parcel on the northwest corner of Dogwood Dr. and Rte. 25A in Wading River has been changed from A Residence 1 to J Business 2.
- The Tesla (Peerless Photo) property, zoned L Industry 3 in 2002, has been upzoned to A Residence 2. The Hamlet Study recommended A Residence 5 (five-acre residential) zoning as a protective mechanism until the completion of environmental cleanup at the site.
- The Shoreham Plaza shopping center has been changed from J Business 3 to J Business 2. J Business 2 (Neighborhood Business) districts allow activities such as offices, health clubs, barber shops, banks (without drive-through windows), delis and dry cleaners, and pharmacies. Some larger establishments, such as bowling alleys, are also permitted (see the Shoreham Hamlet Study, Table 7 (SHS, p. 30), for a description of Zoning Districts and Permitted Uses).
- The property owned by the Association for Help for Retarded Children on the northwest corner of NYS Rte. 25A and Defense Hill Road no longer appears as D Residence.
- The land at the Shoreham - Wading River High School that belongs to the Shoreham - Wading River School District (SWRCSD) has been changed from A Residence 10 to A Residence 1.
- A narrow strip of land along the west and south boundaries between the LIPA industrial area and the KeySpan property has been changed from 10-acre to 2-acre residential zoning (A Residence 10 to A Residence 2).

2.2 JOSIAH WOODHULL HOUSE

The Shoreham Hamlet Study recommended that the Town partner with KeySpan to acquire the historic Josiah Woodhull Estate (SHS, p. 10). This property transfer took place in late 2002. Many details remain to be resolved before the house can be refurbished and other improvements can be made. Meanwhile, despite efforts by the Wading River Historical Society to protect it, the house continues to deteriorate.

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Figure 2. Existing Zoning



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KeySpan and the Town of Brookhaven are to be commended for their recognition of this important historic site and their cooperation to transfer the estate to the public. However, additional work is needed if this property is to be preserved and protected (see also Section 4.1.2 in this Update).

2.3 POPULATION GROWTH AND SCHOOLS

School-age population in the Shoreham – Wading River School District has continued to grow. An updated Long Range Planning Study issued in August 2003 indicated that “the potential exists for 420 additional homes to be built within the District” based on housing developments currently underway and applications on file (SWR, 2003). Based on these projections, the student population is expected to increase from 2,669 students in 2002 to 3,082 students by 2007. The Hamlet Study recommended that the SWRCSD convert Procell Middle School to an elementary school and use its land south of the High School to build a new Middle School. However, subsequent study determined that this parcel insufficient to build a middle school and no other property of the necessary size is available. Any future new building will therefore likely be a new elementary school.

According to District officials, the preferred option for building a new school in the SWRCSD has changed to what was originally listed as Alternative Option A (SHS, p. 27), with a slight change. The former sod farm parcel that is now owned by the Town is the primary site for locating a future elementary school. The SWRCSD has begun negotiations with the Town for the transfer of 17.5 acres of this property, currently designated as Open Space, to the school district. The Town, along with Suffolk County and other stakeholder agencies, should expedite an agreement with the District so that funding can be secured and building can begin as soon as possible.

FOLLOW-UP RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Town should focus more attention on completing all aspects of the transfer of the Josiah Woodhull Estate from KeySpan. Work should be undertaken to protect and improve the house and surrounding property.
- The Town property west of Ridge Road, formerly part of the DeLalio Sod Farm, should be transferred to the Shoreham – Wading River School District for a new elementary school.

2.4 “THE GREENS AT SHOREHAM”

Development of Phase I of “The Greens at Shoreham” (now known as Country Manors) began in mid-2003. As anticipated, the developer donated the 23-acre parcel west of Ridge Road to the Town, with about five acres set aside for a recharge basin. Although this parcel was slated as open space, the Hamlet Study recommended that the Town develop it for athletic fields.

We reiterate the recommendation to create a grade school south of Rte. 25A and we urge state and local governments and agencies to work with the District to permit construction of an elementary school on Town property that was transferred from The Greens (Section 2.3, above).

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2.5 BROOKHAVEN STATE PARK

The Hamlet Study recommended that Brookhaven State Park be transferred from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to the Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) (SHS, p. 46). This was suggested because the park has not been actively maintained. Its use for passive recreation has been constrained by lack of availability for use permits and unauthorized use by ATVs and illegal dumping. The Office of Parks announced in January 2004 that the park would be fully opened and staffed for passive recreation by the end of the year. A management plan will be developed in conjunction with the community, environmental and user groups, and the NYSDEC.

This change appears to meet the intent of Hamlet Study's recommendation. Access to the park should be from established locations where parking is available – the William Floyd Parkway at Whiskey Road and Rte. 25 (Middle County Road) in Ridge. There is a dirt trail leading into the park from its northern edge on Rte. 25A, but this is a result of unauthorized use and should be secured. Access from Rte. 25A should be prohibited to vehicular traffic, with the possible exception of emergency vehicles.

2.6 TESLA (PEERLESS PHOTO) PROPERTY

In addition to its recent up-zoning (Section 2.1), sampling and characterization of contaminated soils and groundwater at the site of the former Tesla Laboratory have been completed. The NYSDEC has prepared a Proposed Remedial Action Plan (PRAP) for cleanup at the site and public comment has been solicited. Cleanup is expected to be completed in about two years (2006). The PRAP meets the Hamlet Study recommendation for cleanup to residential guidelines in all but two locations on the site. While both the zoning change and the proposed cleanup guidelines are in accordance with the intent of the Hamlet Study recommendations, and no acquisition can be accomplished until the cleanup is complete, more can and should be done to preserve this historic site for future public use.

The Town should consider creating a new zoning district for institutional and municipal uses and should apply it to the Tesla site. Such a district would be transitional between Residential and Business districts and would serve as the “holding” category for which A-5 and A-10 Residential districts are now used. Permitted uses would include schools, cultural centers, and other public uses.

Because of its location between Rte. 25A and the planned Rails for Trails along the LIPA right-of-way and its proximity to the Post Office and Shoreham Plaza, the Tesla property should, if

FOLLOW-UP RECOMMENDATIONS

- Public access to Brookhaven State Park should be limited to existing locations on the William Floyd Pkwy and NYS Rte. 25. There should be no public access from NYS Rte. 25A.
- The Town should consider creating a new zoning district for institutional and municipal uses.
- The Tesla property should be dedicated to public use as a historic and cultural center. The Shoreham 9/11 memorial should be relocated to this site.
- Development at the “Vegetable Farm” in Wading River should be limited to single-family homes in accordance with the current zoning. Access should be via Randall Road.

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possible, be dedicated in its entirety to public uses after cleanup. However, as indicated in the Hamlet Study (SHS, p. 56), if economic or other conditions preclude transfer of the entire Tesla site to the Town (or other public entity), a limited number of residential units on the site would be acceptable. Because the property is in the heart of the “hamlet center” that is part of the community’s vision for its future, such residential development should be seamlessly integrated into the community as a whole.

2.7 THE TRIANGLE

The two-acre triangle at the intersection of Rte. 25A, North Country Road and Woodville Road was identified in the Hamlet Study as a desirable location for the Shoreham Civic Organization’s planned 9/11 memorial (SHS, p. 58). The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) has rejected the Civic’s request for safety reasons. An application has been filed for commercial development on the parcel immediately east of the Triangle (east of Woodville Road). This is likely to add volume to the confusing traffic pattern in this area. The NYSDOT should consider reconfiguring the intersections that created the Triangle.

LIPA has offered the Civic the use of its right of way where it crosses North Country Road north of the Tesla property for the memorial. Plans are under development at this time. We recommend that the 9/11 memorial be relocated to the Tesla property when it becomes available for reuse.

2.8 THE “VEGETABLE FARM”

An application has been filed to develop a Planned Retirement Community (PRC) on the site of the “Vegetable Farm” on the northeast corner of Randall Road and Rte. 25A in Wading River. Preservation of this farm as agricultural land would be ideal, but other, larger farms may be more worthy of scarce preservation funds. The Hamlet Study acknowledged that farming was unlikely to continue on this property for very long, and recommended that any future development be limited to single-family residences. We strongly reiterate this recommendation. Single-family homes are consistent with the residential pattern in Wading River. Restricting access to Randall Road (rather than Rte. 25A) would minimize traffic impacts, especially if the recommendation for a traffic light at that intersection were implemented.

2.9 THE RTE 25A CORRIDOR

We withdraw one of the original recommendations for improving traffic flow and safety. The Hamlet Study recommended installation of a traffic light at the intersection of Ridge Road and Rte. 25A. Upon reconsideration, a light at this intersection would be impractical, given the current configuration of other traffic signals in the immediate area. Without a signal at the Ridge Road intersection, however, it is even more important for the Town to extend Miller Avenue south to Cooper Street (SHS, pp. 36 and 55; Section 4.2, below). As well, the NYSDOT should change the existing configuration (Section 2.7, above).

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3 ADDITIONS

3.1 THE ZOUMAS PROPERTY

In the north-central area of the hamlet is a small (19 acre), undeveloped area of rolling woods ending at the Long Island Sound bluffs. The parcel lies at the north end of Cordwood Path between two older residential developments on Long Island Sound. Though somewhat scarred by limited land clearing, the site provides a habitat for wildlife. The property owner, Zoumas Homes, has submitted an application to the Town for a standard development of residential homes. The property, which is mixed one-acre and half-acre residential zoning (A1 and B1), falls within the Rocky Point Fire District, but the tax maps show access through Fordham Road, in the Wading River Fire District. Cordwood Path itself is a closed cul-de-sac.

The Town attempted unsuccessfully to acquire the land in late 2002 from the previous owner. The Town should continue its efforts to acquire this property, including the bluffs and beach, as open space. In addition, the two adjacent, active homeowners associations have volunteered to act as stewards of the property to ensure its maintenance and protection; the Town should accept their offer.

3.2 SPRING MEADOW

The 59-acre parcel known as Spring Meadow in Wading River is located on the south side of Rte. 25A between Wading River Estates and Wading River Acres. This parcel was mentioned only in passing in the original Hamlet Study (SHS, p. 61) because at the time its fate as a residential development seemed preordained. Since then the possibility of retaining it as open space has again come up. It is the third parcel involved in the proposed Spring Meadow subdivision. Suffolk County has already purchased the first two parcels and is currently in the process of seeking to acquire the remaining parcel.

Suffolk County should make every effort to acquire the remaining parcel. If necessary, Brookhaven Town should offer to partner with the County. This acquisition would preserve the entire 189 acres of Spring Meadow and protect a significant amount of open space. Spring Meadow is in close proximity to Brookhaven State Park and adjoining County and Town open space. It would provide a greenway link between the park and the wooded KeySpan property to the north.

3.3 TALL GRASS GOLF CLUB

Tall Grass Golf Club is a commercial course that was created on a portion of the DeLalio Sod Farm south of Cooper Street. Residential developments are located to the east and south; a church and some homes line Randall Road to the west. The clubhouse lies at the foot of the Miller Avenue extension that was proposed in the Hamlet Study (SHS, pp. 35 and 54; see Figure 3).

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Town should acquire and protect the wooded open space, bluffs, and beachfront known as the “Zoumas property.”
- Suffolk County should acquire the remaining 59-acre parcel at Spring Meadow. The Town should assist, if necessary.
- Tall Grass Golf Club should be re-zoned to ensure the property’s continued use as recreational open space.

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Although some parcels in Shoreham were recently re-zoned in accordance with existing land use, this property remains zoned one-acre residential (A Residence 1). The Town should change the zoning to protect against possible future residential development and to provide recreation, open green space, and some commercial tax base for the school district.

4 PLANNED DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS

Two of the recommendations in the Shoreham Hamlet Study that are critical to achieving our vision involve creation of Planned Development Districts (PDDs). Coordinated planning and development of the remaining large tracts of undeveloped land in the northeast corner of Brookhaven Town are essential to avoid piecemeal development and to implement the concepts of Smart Growth. *It is important to emphasize that the original recommendations for establishment of PDDs remain unchanged.* The purpose of this section is to clarify some aspects of the original Hamlet Study recommendations and to reiterate the importance of these two areas to our vision for Shoreham’s future.

4.1 THE LIPA AND KEYSpan PROPERTIES

The Hamlet Study referred to the “LIPA/KeySpan property.” This term included both the industrial LIPA property (about 40 acres) and over 800 acres of wooded, undeveloped KeySpan property, currently zoned A Residence 10. To capture the vision for future use of this area, these properties should have been addressed separately.

4.1.1 LIPA

Since the original Hamlet Study, a 79.9 MW, two unit, oil-fired turbine generating facility has been constructed and placed in operation as an electrical peaking station on the LIPA property, and land-based facilities for the cross-Sound electrical transmission cable have been built. The LIPA site is also used for placement of temporary “emergency generators” installed by LIPA during the peak-demand summer months. In 2003 a proposal for a waste-to-energy (WTE) garbage incinerator became known. We reject this proposal unconditionally. Waste disposal is a growing problem, in Brookhaven and elsewhere, and the Brookhaven has a low rate of recycling, despite the Town’s relatively simple recycling program. We acknowledge these issues, but believe that an incinerator at the LIPA site or anywhere else in Suffolk County is unacceptable. The Town should work with its civic leaders to revitalize its recycling program. It should seek alternatives to reduce its waste stream

THE LIPA INDUSTRIAL AREA

- A waste incinerator should not be located at the LIPA site or elsewhere in Suffolk County.
- The Town should revitalize its recycling program and seek to reduce its waste stream and waste management costs.
- All electrical generating facilities should be consolidated at the LIPA site and steps should be taken to minimize their environmental impacts.

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The LIPA site is not part of the vision for a PDD. However, several steps should be taken to minimize the environmental impacts of the industrial use in this area. We continue to recommend the use of natural gas, when available, or other clean technologies for the generating facilities. The KeySpan generators that are currently located in a separate area west of the LIPA property should be moved, consolidating all existing generating capacity at the industrial site. The older KeySpan generators should be taken off-line or upgraded to be cleaner and more efficient. Facility noise should be mitigated and a wide wooded buffer should be maintained to visually isolate the industrial property from surrounding areas. LIPA should include a community representative in its planning process for the site, and cumulative impacts of any new facilities should be assessed prior to final siting.

4.1.2 *The KeySpan PDD*

The heavily wooded KeySpan property serves as a buffer between the industrial LIPA site and the residential communities of Shoreham and Wading River. It also physically separates the hamlets, a situation that is unusual in much of Brookhaven, where communities have grown together along the main corridors and only the knowledgeable can tell when they are leaving one hamlet and entering another. Since the release of the original Hamlet Study, KeySpan has donated 530 acres of open space in Jamesport to New York State. About half of this will be used as a State Park, including a one-mile stretch of shoreline on Long Island Sound; the remainder will remain in farmland. Under the circumstances, it appears unlikely that all of the Shoreham KeySpan property can be preserved as open space. Nonetheless, we urge KeySpan, the Town, and the County to preserve as much of this wide expanse of open space as possible and to carefully plan for an appropriate mix of uses in any areas that are to be developed.

We reiterate the original Hamlet Study recommendation that development on the KeySpan property focus on a technology research park (SHS, p. 52).

We suggest clean energy technology research, which would align with the energy uses (generating facilities, cross-Sound cable, and [future] natural gas pipeline) at the LIPA site. Energy research would also be a good fit with the science-oriented institutions at Stony Brook University and Brookhaven National Laboratory. The technology research park would not be a production facility. As recommended in the Hamlet Study (SHS, p. 53), a small area of housing for researchers could be included within the park's boundaries. Another small area zoned for business could also be incorporated within the park to allow for a convenience store for the park's workers and residents. However, a retail center in the KeySpan PDD, on Rte. 25A, or on the LIPA Access Road, would be inappropriate.

THE KEYSpan PLANNED DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

- Preserve as much open space at the KeySpan property as possible.
 - Include generous wooded buffers around any developed areas and along roadways.
 - Create a Shoreham Sound Nature Preserve to protect the beach, bluffs, and continuous land.
- Create a clean energy research technology park as the focus for non-residential development on the property.

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Substantial natural buffers should be established around the technology park, utility infrastructure, residential areas, and roadways. These buffers should be linked to the bluff preservation area, the LIPA buffer, Spring Meadow, and Brookhaven State Park for a greenbelt. Additional open space should be set aside to include the stream swale that passes by the Josiah Woodhull House. It is important to retain a wooded buffer along Rte. 25A, to preserve the visual impact of the current open space. In addition to the buffers, the open space along Long Island Sound, including the beach, bluffs, and contiguous area, should be preserved in the form of a Shoreham Sound Nature Preserve (SHS, p. 53). The County and/or the State could take the lead in this area.

4.2 THE SOD FARM PDD

The changes that have occurred in Shoreham since 2002 have only served to strengthen our original recommendation to create a Planned Development District to encompass the remaining undeveloped land at the DeLalio Sod Farm. Although much smaller than the KeySpan property (150 acres vs. 830 acres), these parcels lie in the heart of Shoreham and are currently zoned A Residence 1. The likelihood is high that the owners will seek to develop their properties in the very near future.

THE SOD FARM PLANNED DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

- The Town should begin immediately to implement a Planned Development District at the Sod Farm.
- The Miller Avenue boulevard is key to Shoreham's vision.

Because the land is open and flat, it is ideal for recreational use and for the greenway boulevard that is recommended in the original Hamlet Study (pp. 54-55). It will be more difficult to achieve a PDD at the sod farm, since there are multiple parcels with multiple owners. For this reason the Town should begin taking steps immediately to identify and implement planning instruments that will allow for coordinated, multiple-use development in the area.

As noted above in Section 2.9, the extension of Miller Avenue south to Cooper Street is a key element of traffic mitigation as well as the aesthetic and practical centerpiece of this PDD. Figure 3 shows how the Miller Avenue boulevard will retain the green vistas that now exist, allow for access to recreation, shopping, and homes, and provide a needed outlet for residents and schools south of Rte. 25A while putting the principles of traffic calming into practice. Playing fields with minimal infrastructure (e.g., soccer fields), a playground, and a picnic area would be located away from the roadway. The figure also shows the Bus Depot replaced with a second shopping area.

5 CONCLUSION

Most of the changes that have occurred since the release of the Shoreham Hamlet Study in July 2002 have been in the direction anticipated by the Hamlet Study. Most of our original recommendations remain valid, and some new ones have been made. We look forward to working with the Town of Brookhaven, Suffolk County, New York State, the Shoreham – Wading River School District, and our neighboring civic groups to achieve our vision for Shoreham's future.

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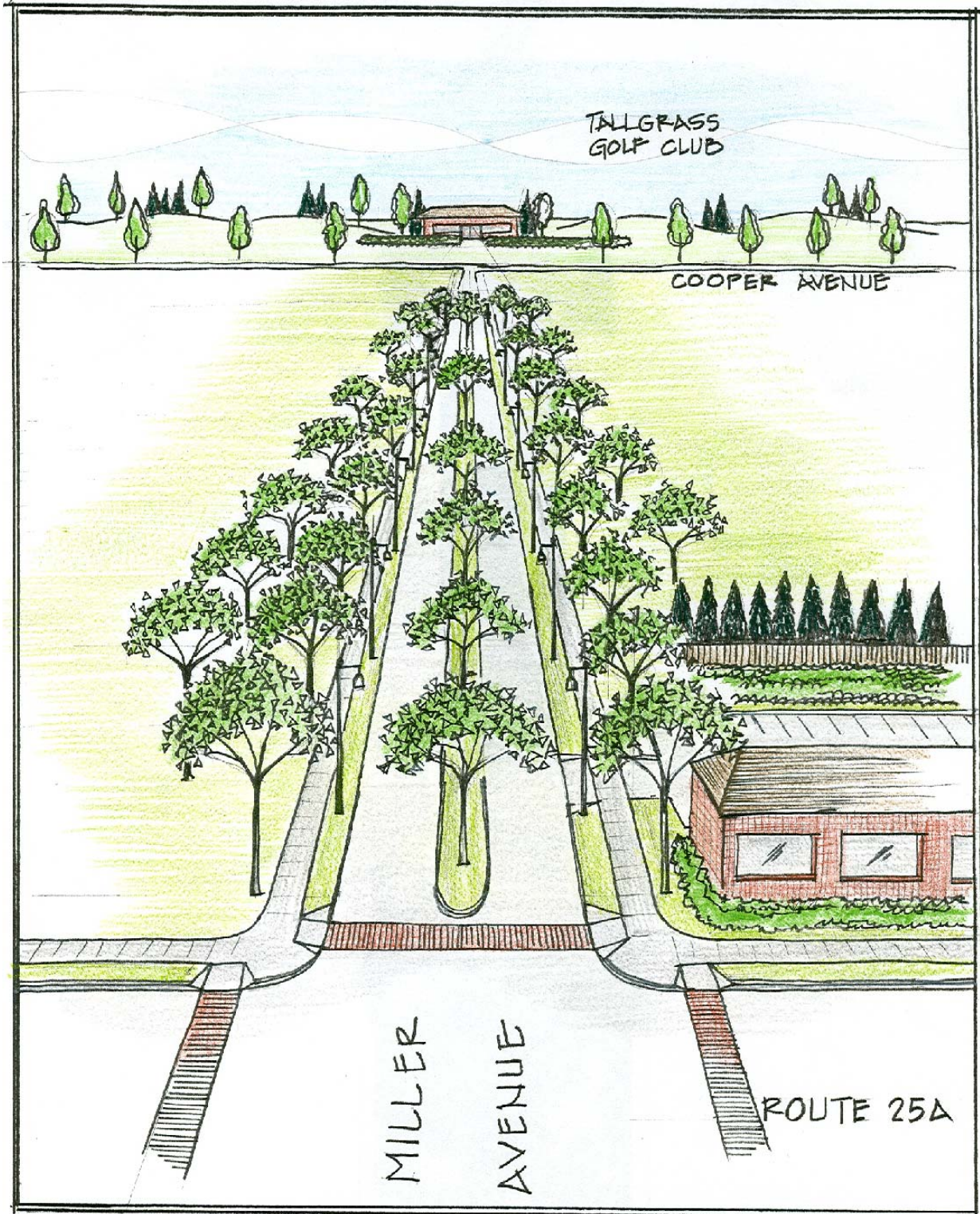


Figure 3. Looking South Along the Miller Avenue Boulevard

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6 REFERENCES

SWR, 2003. Long Range Planning Study Abbreviated Update. Shoreham – Wading River Central School District, August 2003.

SHS, 2002. Shoreham Hamlet Study, July, 2002.