

4. Ferry Service

Existing Ferry Service

There is currently only one commercial ferry service operating within the Town of Southampton. That service is operated by the South Ferry Company and connects the Village of North Haven in the Town of Southampton with Shelter Island. The service allows for the continuation of New York State Route 114 from Montauk Highway (Route 27) in the Village of East Hampton through Sag Harbor and North Haven and then across Shelter Island to Route 25 in the Village of Greenport. To reach Greenport from Shelter Island, a second ferry operated by the North Ferry Company is necessary.

The South Ferry terminal, located at the northerly terminus of Route 114, provides daily year-round ferry service between North Haven (on the South Fork of Long Island) and Shelter Island. As with the North Ferry Company, the South Ferry Company operates four vessels and allows for the transport of passenger vehicles. Travel time between the two terminals is five minutes each way.

The Hampton Jitney, which stops in Sag Harbor, is located three miles from the North Haven Ferry terminal. The closest train station is located in Bridgehampton, approximately seven miles south of the ferry terminal. The South Ferry is, however, directly served by Suffolk County Transit Route 10A. It should be noted that this bus only stops twice at the South Ferry (10:25 A.M. and 4:05 P.M., Monday through Saturday). Suffolk County Transit does not provide Sunday Service (Suffolk County Transit Bus schedule, 10A-10B, effective August 1999).

Current passenger rates for the South Ferry Company are comparable to the North Ferry Company rates.

As noted above, the North Ferry connects Shelter Island with Greenport and the North Fork at Long Island. This connection to Southampton Town serves as an alternate route into the eastern portion of Southampton Town, Village of Sag Harbor, and the Town of East Hampton. The North Ferry Company provides daily year-round ferry service between the Village of Greenport (on the North Fork of Long Island) and Shelter Island Heights, in Shelter Island. This ferry service, which allows for the transport of passenger vehicles, operates four vessels between Greenport and Shelter Island. Travel time between the two terminals is seven minutes each way.

Convenient access to other modes of transportation is provided at the North Ferry Company Ferry terminal, in Greenport. These include the LIRR Greenport Station (located immediately adjacent to the Ferry terminal), which provides daily service to New York City. The Ferry terminal is also served, although not directly, by Suffolk County Transit bus route S-92. This bus stops one block north of the Terminal, along NYS Route 25.

Data is not readily available from the South Ferry operation but an October 1998 Study of North Ferry ridership does shed some light on the use of NYS Route 114 and the South Ferry. The Study summarized the results of an extensive Origin and Destination Study of vehicles using the Shelter Island North Ferry in the summer of 1997. Tables B-11 through B-12 presents the Origins and Destinations of weekend trips on the ferry while Tables B-13 through B-14 present the Origins and Destinations of weekday trips on the ferry. A review of these tables indicate that 30% of the southbound traffic was destined for the South Fork and 25% of the northbound traffic originated on the South Fork. During the weekday approximately 25% of the traffic originated or was destined to the South Fork. Between 15% and 18% of the trips to and from the South Fork on the weekend originated or was destined from New York City, Nassau County or Central and Western Suffolk County. The primary destination for trips originating on the South Fork were Southold and New England via the Cross Sound Ferry out of Orient.

Deficiencies

Congested conditions on westbound roadways leaving the South Fork, typical of summer Sunday afternoons and evenings, make it an undesirable option for motorists leaving Shelter Island bound for points west of the Southampton Town line to travel to the South Fork from Shelter Island via the South Ferry. Therefore, most use the North Ferry connection to Greenport to leave Shelter Island. On summer Sunday afternoons, long queues develop waiting for ferry service to Greenport, with waits of an hour or more not uncommon. Similarly, on typical summer Friday evenings, when eastbound traffic on the South Fork is heaviest, Shelter Island bound demand on the North Ferry is also highest.

These conditions limit the use of NYS Route 114 via the North and South Ferry connections across Shelter Island as a land bridge to travel to and from the Southampton area, since motorists attempting to utilize this route encounter long delays at the North Ferry terminal. Improvements to the North Ferry Service may result in additional use of Shelter Island to access the South Fork. This in turn would induce additional demand on South Ferry Service.

The Shelter Island Heights Property Owners Association, which operates the North Ferry, has been seeking solutions to address these problems, but the highly seasonal nature of demand limits the cost-effectiveness of many possible strategies. The North Ferry typically places a maximum of four boats in service at the peak times noted above, and there are two ferry slips at both the Shelter Island and Greenport terminals. Short dwell times on the non-peak side, as well as low demand, mean that most return trips are nearly empty. Typically, two boats will be docked at the low demand terminal off-loading vehicles, while a third is reroute or waits off the terminal for a slip to become available. Adding more or larger boats, or additional slips, would help to reduce the long waits during peak times, but during the majority of times when demand is lower, any additional vessels would be idle, as are several of the boats already owned by the ferry company. Additional boat slips would also be idle for most of the year, limiting the cost-effectiveness of constructing them.

ORIGIN	DESTINATION								
	Shelter Island	Southold	New England	Nassau and west	South Shore-West	North Shore-West	South Fork	Other or not stated	Total
Shelter Island	45	330	145	766	66	165	21	4	1542
Southold	3	246	5	3	0	0	9	0	266
New England	0	2	7	1	0	0	2	0	12
Nassau and west	1	4	1	29	0	1	0	0	36
South Shore-West	0	1	0	0	16	0	0	1	18
North Shore-West	0	3	1	0	0	112	0	0	116
South Fork	0	195	282	67	16	37	49	9	655
Other or not stated	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	3
Total	49	781	441	868	98	316	81	14	2648

Table B-11
Shelter Island North Ferry Customer Survey
Results Summary
Summer Season 1997 Southbound Weekend

ORIGIN	DESTINATION								
	Shelter Island	Southold	New England	Nassau and west	South Shore-West	North Shore-West	South Fork	Other or not Stated	Total
Shelter Island	60	276	41	139	43	130	11	0	700
Southold	0	186	1	0	0	2	4	0	193
New England	0	1	6	2	0	0	1	0	10
Nassau and west	2	4	1	34	0	0	0	1	42
South Shore-West	0	1	0	3	12	3	6	0	25
North Shore-West	0	3	0	0	0	71	0	0	74
South Fork	0	152	108	34	13	16	34	3	360
Other or not stated	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	62	623	157	212	68	222	56	4	1404

Table B-13
Shelter Island North Ferry Customer Survey
Results Summary
Summer Season 1997 Southbound Weekday

ORIGIN	DESTINATION								
	Shelter Island	Southold	New England	Nassau and west	South Shore-West	North Shore-West	South Fork	Other or not stated	Total
Shelter Island	52	3	1	14	0	0	4	4	78
Southold	418	169	3	8	1	0	262	19	880
New England	105	1	1	2	0	0	241	3	353
Nassau and west	478	1	1	13	0	0	60	4	557
South Shore-West	47	0	0	25	6	2	14	6	100
North Shore-West	125	0	0	1	0	29	24	3	182
South Fork	10	2	9	4	0	0	45	8	78
Other or not stated	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1235	176	15	67	7	31	650	47	2228

Table B-12
Shelter Island North Ferry Customer Survey
Results Summary
Summer Season 1997 Northbound Weekend

ORIGIN	DESTINATION								
	Shelter Island	Southold	New England	Nassau and west	South Shore-West	North Shore-West	South Fork	Other or not stated	Total
Shelter Island	74	1	0	4	0	0	1	5	85
Southold	413	132	8	2	2	0	178	3	738
New England	38	1	4	3	0	0	110	2	158
Nassau and west	151	2	4	11	0	0	16	10	194
South Shore-West	13	0	1	0	7	0	10	1	32
North Shore-West	139	1	3	1	0	19	15	3	181
South Fork	11	3	3	0	0	0	14	3	34
Other or not stated	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	839	140	23	21	9	19	344	27	1422

Table B-14
Shelter Island North Ferry Customer Survey
Results Summary
Summer Season 1997 Northbound Weekday