I. INTRODUCTION

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In 1972, the last segment of Sunrise Highway, (NYS Route 27) constructed in the Town of Southampton was completed between Eastport and Hampton Bays, connecting a small segment of the limited access expressway facility to the east with the remainder of the expressway which ran the length of Suffolk County. At that time, the State was already contemplating an extension of Sunrise Highway from its current terminus in Shinnecock Hills out to Amagansett and issued a "Location Report" for the project in December of 1972.

The 1972 Location Report generated substantial public opposition to any new Sunrise Highway extension and the project was dropped by the New York Department of Transportation. In 1984, the State began the "South Fork Transportation Study", which was to examine transportation alternatives which would alleviate the growing congestion on County Road 39 (C.R. 39) and Montauk Highway east of the Shinnecock Canal in the Towns of Southampton and East Hampton. The report projected future traffic volumes to the year 2005. Actual traffic volumes taken in 2002 all exceeded the projected traffic volumes from that report.

The Final Report issued from the South Fork Transportation Study in 1986 (known as the Vollmer Report) concluded that the expansion of public transit on its own could not solve the transportation problems of the South Fork of Long Island. The Study analyzed several road construction alternatives including:

1. Construction of Village by-passes (alternative routing).
2. Construction of a new roadway as a replacement of the LIRR on the LIRR rights-of-way.
3. Construction of a new roadway on several alternative new rights-of-way north of the LIRR rights-of-way.
4. A combination of roadway improvements, alternate routing (by-passes) and public transit improvements.

All of these alternatives engendered substantial public opposition and "none of the alternatives analyzed was clearly superior in its ability to solve the transportation problems without significant adverse impacts on the community".[1]

The Study Report further concluded that "the solution to the transportation problems on the South Fork cannot be confined or limited to only the east-west roads or just the State system. The situation must be viewed from an areawide and systemwide perspective and solutions proposed must also include improvements to the non-State system in both the east-west and north-south directions. The non-State highway system in the study area must be more fully integrated with the State system and be redirected to better serve needs of the South Fork traveler."[2]

[1] South Fork Transportation Study, February 1986, p. XI-4.
[2] South Fork Transportation Study, February 1986, p. XI-6.

"Provision of transportation improvements on the South Fork must be viewed as a joint responsibility shared among the various local municipalities, the County, and the State so that the utilization of the entire highway system in the study area can be maximized."[3]

The Study concluded that it was not possible at the time to build a consensus in the South Fork community which would lead to a constructible transportation solution.

Through the late 1980's and 1990's traffic continued to grow at varying rates reflective of national trends and local economies. By the late 1990's various communities within the Town east of the Shinnecock Canal, began complaining of increasing congestion on major roadways and the spillover of traffic from those roadways onto local streets and back roads. Piecemeal improvements were made by the County on C.R. 39 and access to Sebonac Road was restricted physically on its easterly end at the intersection with Sandy Hollow Road (County Road 52) by local law in a split vote. The Southampton Town Board adopted a time restriction on Shrubland Road's intersection with C.R. 39 to prevent present spillover traffic from C.R. 39 from using the roadway and Sebonac Road as a morning "rush hour" "by-pass".

In 1999, the Town Board adopted the Southampton Town Comprehensive Plan (*Southampton Tomorrow: Comprehensive Plan Update and Implementation Strategies*, March, 1999) as an update to the Town's 1970 Master Plan. One of the Comprehensive Plans recommendations included establishing a "Transportation Advisory Task Force" for the Town comprised of representatives from the community, municipal government and relevant Town Agencies. This Task Force was established by resolution adapted in June 2000 "to initiate a work plan to assist in resolving severe traffic congestion, including certain traffic choke points."[4]

In early 2001 Southampton Town sought to retain the services of a consulting firm to address transportation congestion and to act as the Coordinator of the Southampton Transportation Advisory Task Force and to undertake an Intermodal Study of the Town.[5]

The scope of work for the Southampton Intermodal Transportation Study (SITS) given to the Consultant included, "development of a coordinated intermodal transportation strategy and concept plan to facilitate the safe, sustainable and efficient movement of people, goods and information by air, land, and sea. This scope involved performance of analysis, development of findings, preparation of recommendations and development of an implementation strategy for the Town Supervisor and Board, using a twenty-year (20 year) time horizon."[6]

Ten specific tasks were outlined, that included reviewing all transportation initiatives occurring in the region; developing and utilizing state-of-the-art computer-based simulation applications and visualization technology, including preparing a "pilot"; establish Task Force committees and prepare a one-day transportation innovation workshop; utilize a consensus-based planning process; develop recommendations including potential funding sources for implementation. The

[3] South Fork Transportation Study, February 1986, p. XI-6.
[4] Resolution #0662 dated June 13, 2000, Southampton Town Board.
[5] Dr. Clifford Bragdon and Associates Resolution #36, dated March 21, 2002.
[6] Scope of Work, Contract between the Southampton Town Board, Dr. Clifford Bragdon, March 21, 2002, page i..

primary vehicle for this activity was engaging the Task Force, working through a participatory conflict-resolution based process. The ultimate end product, the Southampton Intermodal Transportation Study (SITS)[7] was to reflect all the stakeholders' involvement, combined with the consultant's expertise. Engagement was the operative word, since the Supervisor and Town Board wanted to have a collaborative approach used, rather than a consultant developing findings and independent recommendations.

Early in the study process, the Town's Planning Department also began participating in the East End Transportation Council (EETC), which is an entity formed under the direction of the East End Supervisors and Mayor's Association. The Sustainable East End Development Study (SEEDS) was initiated for all five towns of eastern Suffolk County (Southampton, East Hampton, Riverhead, Southold and Shelter Island). The work of the Southampton Transportation Task Force was to be coordinated with EETC and SEEDS. Members of the Task Force were essentially asked to participate as "Stakeholders" in SEEDS. Several members of the Task Force agreed to participate, in addition to the official Town Planning Departments representation on the EETC.

Due in part to the earlier start and scope of the Southampton Intermodal Transportation Study (SITS), it was envisioned that SITS would address a more local Town scale, while SEEDS would be more regional. In contrast to SITS, the SEEDS would also address both land use and transportation issues together and in a more comprehensive manner. Some of the recommendations contained in the SITS are being actively reviewed in the ongoing SEEDS effort.

A key element was to define and characterize what was meant by an "integrated intermodal transportation system." In the Consultant's initial presentation, intermodal transportation was defined as, "the integrated safe, secure, sustainable and efficient movement of people, goods, resources and information by air, land and sea." This operational definition was then illustrated (Figure I-1), as it would apply to Southampton Town.

[7] Southampton Intermodal Transportation Study (SITS) 2003, Dr. Clifford Bragdon.

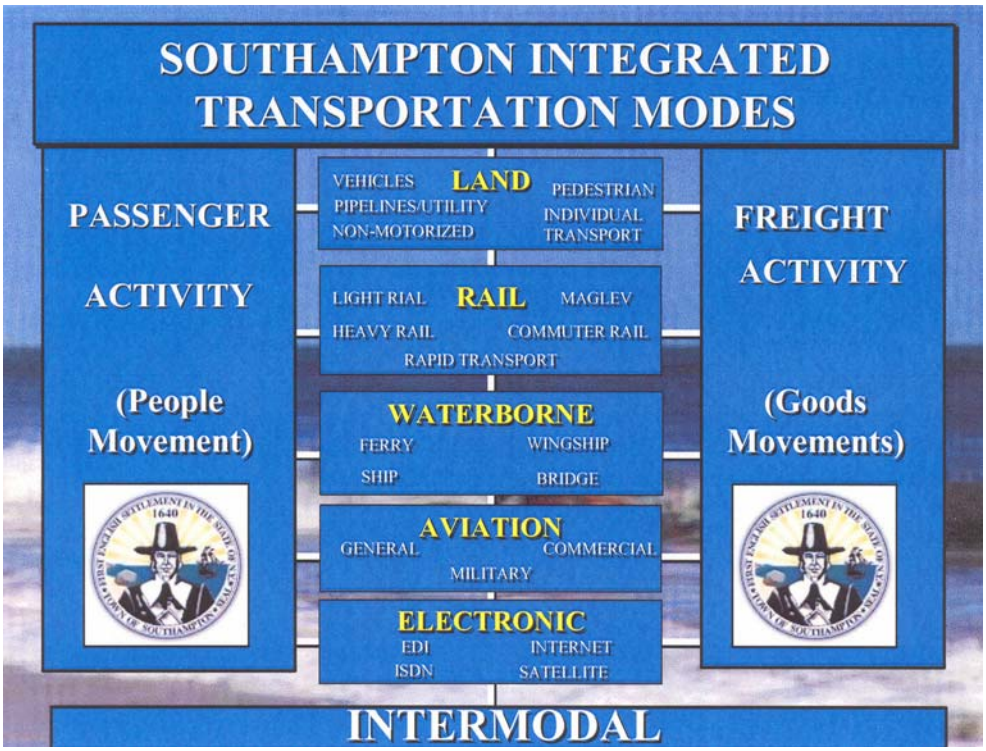

Figure I-1: Integrated Intermodal Transportation System for Southampton Town-SITS

The intent was to establish a comprehensive or holistic definition of transportation so all elements involved both physical and electronic movement by air, land and sea be addressed. This meant the movement of both people and goods be carefully examined.

The Consultant's primary role as Southampton Transportation Advisory Task Force Coordinator was to involve and engage the Task Force and collectively prepare a report, for the Town Board, under the Consultant's supervision and guidance.

Through consensus building, there were five agreed upon positions by the Task Force members:

1. Goal of Southampton Intermodal Transportation Study (SITS) – Minimize gridlock and preserve the quality of life

2. Collectively agree upon and address the number one transportation gridlock problem – the merge of NY 27 with western end of County Road 39

3. Establish transportation solution priorities – Safety, efficiency, esthetics/design and sustainability (in that specific order)

4. Comprehensively address and integrate all transportation modes – Air, land and sea

5. Develop computer-based technology to envision solutions – Virtual transportation simulation

There were six stakeholder groups identified (Supervisor and Town Board, Department of Land Management, Transportation Task Force, Transportation Task Force Coordinator, Media and the Public) to be involved in some aspects of SITS (Figure I-2). Stakeholders meant they all had some role to play, rather than to be passive or non-participants. Active participation rather passive participation was the philosophy espoused from the outset and it became evident that many of the stakeholders were absolutely dedicated, putting in long hours exercising their civic commitment to making the Town a better place to live and work.

Figure I-2: Town Stakeholders in the Southampton Intermodal Transportation Study (SITS)

Composed of 47 voting members appointed by Town Board resolution, the Transportation Task Force was extremely active. Although the Task Force membership did change over the time, the majority participated in both monthly meetings and as representatives on the study committees and were established and charged with preparing draft committee recommendations. The membership composition included elected officials, hamlet-based "CAC"[8] representatives, Hamptons Visitors Council, Chambers of Commerce, Business Alliance, environmental, human services and other community organization representation.

[8] "CAC" is an acronym that stands for Citizen Advisory Committee.

All together there were over 90 meetings held, representing over 400 hours of effort expended by these very dedicated Task Force members. The average attendance at the Task Force meetings was 20-25, with a core group of approximately 20 individuals participating during the entire SITS consensus building process.

Using the Task Force membership roster, three committees were established to deal on a more in depth basis with the primary modes of transportation process:

1. **Land Transportation** – Involving roadways and non-motorized transport (e.g. bicycle) systems.

2. **Rail and Bus** – Involving both public and private passenger and freight systems.

3. **Aviation and Maritime** – Involving aviation and marine based transport systems.

Each of the three committees developed a series of recommendations for improvement of the transportation system within the committee's scope of review. These recommendations were summarized in a report issued and approved by the committee. In addition, the Land Committee issued an interim report focused on County Road 39, which was intended to provide guidance to the County in the conduct of a Corridor Study of County Road 39 which began in 2000 and was completed in 2003. The interim report of the Land Committee was approved by a wide margin and forwarded to the Task Force. The Task Force approved the report and forwarded it on to the Town and County for consideration. A minority portion of the Task Force disagreed with the Land Committee's Interim Report focus on C.R. 39 and authored a minority report that was also forwarded to the Town and County.

The work efforts of the Task Force and the three committees were made part of the report authored by the Town's Consultant and coordination of the Task Force along with recommendations and opinions of the Consultant. The draft report entitled the "Southampton Intermodal Transportation Study: SITS", was presented by the Consultant at a Town Board Work Session in June 2003.

Upon review of the report by the Town Board, it was determined that the report needed to be framed with a description of Southampton's existing transportation system and the identified deficiencies and to more clearly define the overall strategies the Town should pursue. Specific recommendations the Town could adopt to further the transportation policy's goals also need to be more clearly developed. In November, 2003, the Town Board sought professional assistance for the Town's Department of Land Management to complete the report hiring Ron Hill, P.E. of Dunn Engineering Associates, who had participated throughout the SITS consensus building process with the Task Force. The completed report was to be an "Update to the Town of Southampton Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element" and is intended to further the efforts of the Task Force and its Committees, and to refine the Committee Reports and the SITS report into a Transportation Plan that the Town Board could adopt.