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## **Chapter 4**

### **COMMUNITY HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

(Penultimate Draft)

#### **Keeping Shelter Island healthy and safe**

Town staff and volunteers report that Shelter Island is a safe and secure community in many respects, comparable to others with its age and other demographic characteristics and subject to broader social stresses, such as pandemic conditions in 2020.

- There are a few public health or public safety risks specific to the Island. Although many northeastern and upper Midwestern counties are considered high risk for tick-borne diseases, including Suffolk County, these diseases are a major issue on Shelter Island, where 60% of year-round and part-time residents have been treated for a tick-borne disease according to a 2017 survey.
- As a small island community, residents also experience some risk because of relative isolation and limited resources, such as the lack of an on-island hospital.
- Conditions during the pandemic years have reportedly resulted in an increase in domestic violence and in mental health issues requiring intervention.

Some residents have voiced concerns about substance abuse, and available data and reports from police and EMS suggest that Shelter Island mirrors national and regional trends. Except for a spike in 2016, drug arrests have been declining. DUIs (including drug-related) have no consistent trend, EMS data for 2020 show only one opioid-related call, and the New York State Opioid Dashboard lists only 8 cases as of December 2019, among the lowest in Suffolk County. EMS and Police carry naloxone (Narcan) medication to counter opioid overdose.

In addition to varying levels of Town government financial support for health and

safety services and programs, the Fire Department, EMS, and Senior Center are fortunate to receive support from separate nonprofit foundations, similar to nonprofits that support the school and the library.

Severe storms of various types are the greatest natural risks to Shelter Island people and property, according to the 2020 Hazard Mitigation Plan. Climate change estimates for 2050 project more days over 90 degrees and heat waves; fewer days below freezing; more extreme storm events; and rising sea levels. The plan lists 11 natural hazards with a “frequent” probability of occurrence in the following order:

1. Nor’easter
2. Severe Winter Storm
3. Severe Storm
4. Infestation (including tick borne diseases)
5. Flood (including erosion)
6. Hurricane
7. Shallow Groundwater Flooding
8. Drought
9. Wildfire
10. Earthquake and Expansive Soils

### **Availability of public health data**

As a small and relatively well-off community in a very diverse county, Shelter Island does not appear directly in the numerous public health studies and data sources for Suffolk County, Long Island, and New York State. The Suffolk County Community Health Assessment, 2014-2017, identified health challenges and behavioral/risk factors that may be especially relevant to Shelter Island including obesity, the relative remoteness of the island, volunteer medical staff related to emergency medical transportation, and potential contaminants in water. According to census data, almost all of the Town of Shelter Island residents have health insurance.

### **What medical services are available on the island?**

#### **Town Medical Center and General Medical Services**

The Town owns the Medical Center located at 44 South Ferry Road and rents space to physician groups which then staff the center with doctors. The Center is closed on weekends. As of December 2020, there are two general medicine/family practice doctors providing services. Dr Peter Kelt, MD has practiced on Shelter Island for over 37 years and who, in addition to his general medicine practice, specializes in diagnosing and treating patients with Lyme disease. Dr Joshua F. Potter, DO, recently completed his residency in Southampton and began serving Shelter Island, in the summer of 2020, where he lives with his young family. He is a part of the Meeting House Lane Medical Practice affiliated with Stony Brook Southampton Hospital. He is Board Certified in Family Practice and Board Eligible in Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine. The Island's high percentage of residents over 50 years old means that diseases of older age groups are more prevalent than in communities with a different age composition. During the COVID-19 pandemic, testing was and is available at the Medical Center. Testing is also available off-island at several locations.

### **Other Medical Services**

Currently, there is no dental practice on Shelter Island. There is service on both forks, however, including an office within walking distance of North Ferry. There are two chiropractors practicing on Shelter Island: Dennis Steigerwald, D.C. and the Family Chiropractic Office on North Ferry Road. Home nursing care is available from SI Homecare Agency and other homecare groups in the East End. Hospice service is also available through East End Hospice.

### **What hospital services are available?**

There are no hospitals on Shelter Island. Residents are served by three regional hospitals:

1. Stony Brook Eastern Long Island Hospital (70 beds) in Greenport, which includes programs focusing on geriatric care and behavioral outpatient and inpatient services, and a nationally recognized Center for Musculoskeletal Health for orthopedic care.
2. Stony Brook Southampton Hospital (124 beds), which is a provisional Level III adult Trauma Center and includes a new cancer center.

3. Northwell Health operates Peconic Bay Medical Center (200 beds) in Riverhead, the largest hospital in eastern Suffolk County, which serves the North Fork and east central Long Island. It has an Interventional Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory Suite, a Level III Trauma Center, and state-designated Stroke Center. Peconic Bay Medical Center also operates a 60-bed and 5-star rated skilled nursing and rehabilitation facility.

The nearest Tertiary Care/Trauma Center Level I (the highest designation) is the Stony Brook University Hospital located at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Patients are transported by ambulance primarily to Eastern Long Island Hospital and, less frequently, to Southampton Hospital by the Shelter Island Emergency Medical Service. Medivac transport is provided by the Suffolk County Police Department to the Level One Trauma Center at Stony Brook University Hospital. Island residents also rely on urgent care centers located on both the North and South Forks.

### **Do island residents have access to social and mental health services?**

A Town-funded Licensed Clinical Social Worker is available at no cost to Shelter Island residents for assessment and referral services. The Town Office for Senior Services also provides referrals and assistance for adults 60 years and older as well as their family members and caretakers. The Senior Center Director has assembled a team of mental health professionals who live on-island to assist with mental health issues among seniors.

The East End Mental Health Awareness initiative is supported by the towns of Southampton and East Hampton. The initiative publishes a provider directory (available online) for the East End which includes mental health hotlines, clinics, case management, ACT Team (Assertive Community Treatment), rehab programs, mental illness and chemical abuse clinics and services, substance abuse and addiction services, child and adolescent care, hospitals, employment services, housing, counselors, therapists, psychiatrists, psychologists, licensed social workers, support groups, and other services.

The Suffolk County Department of Health Services supports a community-based outpatient mental health clinic in Riverhead which specializes in integrating behavioral health issues and psychosocial issues. It includes special programs for older adults with mental health and/or substance use disorders.

Although based in Hauppauge, DASH (Diagnostic, Assessment, and Stabilization Hub) is a “24/7 voluntary program for individuals in a crisis situation who are feeling overwhelmed due to substance use, mental illness and/or other life stressors.” This program provides a mobile crisis hotline that anyone in Suffolk County may call. SIPD employs this resource when responding to calls that require such intervention. Stony Brook Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program (CPEP) is also a frequently used resource in the community.

### **County public health program**

The two general practice physicians in town provide some general public health services, for example, counseling on best practice behaviors and COVID-19 testing. The Senior Center provides some immunizations. The Suffolk County Department of Health Services focuses on the following areas in their Bureau of Public Health:

1. Adult Immunizations
2. Arthropod-borne Disease Program
3. Bureau of Epidemiology and Disease Control
4. Central Pharmacy
5. Bureau of Public Health Preparedness
6. Bureau of Preventive Services
7. Bureau of Public Health Protection

### **Tick borne disease**

Diseases caused by tick-borne pathogens are widespread on Shelter Island and nearby communities and they pose a major health concern. Three types of ticks have been found on Shelter Island: deer ticks, dog ticks, and lone star ticks, long endemic in the South, but which have become established here since the 1990s, possibly aided by climate change. While Lyme Disease is the most common and

well known, similar diseases include babesiosis, ehrlichiosis, tularemia, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, Southern tick-associated rash illness, and Powassan virus are also transmitted by ticks. The serious secondary complications of Lyme disease such as arthritis and neurological problems can be avoided by early treatment. Eighty percent of respondents to the 2017 Shelter Island Deer and Tick Survey (including both full time and part time residents) said they had found ticks on family and guests, and 60% had been treated for a tick-borne disease. Deer and small rodents like the white-footed mouse are the most important hosts of ticks. Managing conditions for rodent populations to survive and grow and deer management are critical to managing the tick population. Like many locations in the US, Shelter Island has an overabundant deer population that causes ecological damage from over browsing, public health and safety impacts, and other negative impacts. The Shelter Island Deer and Tick Committee, created in 2005, has pursued a three-pronged strategy to control tick borne disease: deer management, reduction of ticks through application of chemical acaricide at “4-poster” deer feeding stations, and public education. In 2016 the deer population was estimated to be more than 100 per square mile, a level too high to avoid continued negative impacts on native vegetation and human health and safety. The Committee’s goal, as stated in their 2019 Deer Management Plan, was to reduce the density of the deer population to less than 50 per square mile by the summer of 2022. However, the flyover conducted in February of 2022 indicates that the population has rebounded somewhat, and the Committee’s efforts will be continued.

**Tick ID Card**  
631-726-TICK  
Stony Brook Southampton Hospital  
Regional Tick-Borne Disease Resource Center

**TICK DISEASE INFORMATION**  
The East End's danger season for tick-related diseases is April-October although ticks can bite at any time during the year. Learn to recognize the ticks on this card. Ticks can transmit Lyme Disease, Babesiosis, Ehrlichiosis, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Anaplasmosis and other serious diseases. Check for ticks daily, especially on children and pets. Create a "tick-safe" yard by mowing frequently and keeping brush and leaves raked. Pull socks over pant legs and tuck in shirts when outdoors to prevent ticks from climbing under clothing. Insect repellent can be helpful in keeping ticks off the body. Shower as soon as possible after spending time outdoors in a tick danger area. If you, your family, or your pets are outdoors, check for ticks daily, especially on your children and **be aware** of the dangerous ticks illustrated on the chart at left.

**HOW TO REMOVE AN ATTACHED TICK**  
If you find a tick embedded on your body, using fine-tipped tweezers, grab the tick's head and **gently** pull it straight up with a slow and steady motion. If the tick's mouthparts remain in the skin, don't be alarmed. The diseases are in the body of the tick. Disinfect the bite area with rubbing alcohol or soap and water. If you experience a rash, aches, fever or flu-like symptoms, see a physician right away. If at all possible, save the tick in a pill bottle to show to your doctor for identification. For more info visit [www.eastentickresource.org](http://www.eastentickresource.org) or call **631-726-TICK**. Every year, thousands of Tick ID Cards are distributed throughout the South and North Forks. All produced with generous support from:

**IDENTIFICATION**

**Deer or Blacklegged Tick**  
*Ixodes scapularis*  
With no white markings, they are brown to black in color and are very, very small. Both nymph and adult stages can transmit diseases such as Lyme and Babesiosis.

**Lone Star Tick**  
*Amblyomma americanum*  
Tawnyish red. Females are aggressive with a light-colored spot at center on their back. Males have light-colored marks. Their bite can cause Ehrlichiosis, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and an allergy to red meat.

**American Dog Tick**  
*Dermacentor variabilis*  
Larger than the others in size, brown to reddish brown with gray-silver markings on their backs, behind the mouth. Its bite can transmit Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and Tularemia.

**EAST END Tick & Mosquito CONTROL**  
[tickcontrol.com](http://tickcontrol.com)

Deer Management controls hunting on public and some private properties and is managed by the Police Department. The Nature Conservancy and Sylvester Manor have deer management plans and coordinate with the town programs.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation licenses use of 4-Poster feeders. As of March 15, 2020, the Town of Shelter Island suspended its 4-Poster Program because of NYSDEC regulatory changes. The scientific literature, as well as the Committee's observation, may indicate that 4-posters decrease the number of ticks if adequately deployed. The Committee is monitoring and will reevaluate 4-Poster use as the regulatory environment allows.

The Town's deer hunting program is managed by the Police Department and extends from October 1 through March 31. Any person with a valid New York State hunting license can hunt on Shelter Island, regardless of residency or property ownership. To hunt town-controlled properties, hunters must meet eligibility requirements and be vetted by the Shelter Island Police Department. Each deer harvested is logged by the Police Department and can be donated to the Town's Venison Donation Program which then processes it locally and makes the meat available for free at the Town Recycling Center and coordinates with the food pantries.

The Committee is increasing its public outreach through the formation of a public education subcommittee to improve communication on tick reduction techniques via social media and other platforms.

### **Senior services and programs**

The Shelter Island Office for Senior Services (the Senior Center) is located on the lower level of the Medical Center at 114 South Ferry Road, open 9 am to 3 pm, Monday through Friday. It offers a wide array of social, recreational, public health, and educational programs for people aged 60 years or older. Some 200-300 people typically participate in senior programs over the course of a year. Seasonal residents also participate. Program participant numbers listed below are for 2020.

Social and nutritional programs are the foundation of senior programs everywhere. Shelter Island Senior Services provide meals to a steadily growing portion of our Island’s population.

| <i>April-April</i>                                   | <i>2016-2017</i> | <i>2017-2018</i> | <i>2018-2019</i> | <i>2019-2020</i> | <i>2020-2021</i> | <i>2021-2022</i> | <i>4/1/2022-7/5/2022</i> |
|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Home Delivered Meals (Meals on Wheels)</b>        |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                          |
| Clients Served                                       | 26               | 37               | 42               | 42               | 56               | 57               | 39                       |
| Meals Delivered                                      | 1470             | 2786             | 3347             | 3704             | 5281             | 5064             | 1231                     |
| <b>Congregate Meals (in-house)</b>                   |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                          |
| Clients Served                                       | 76               | 63               | 67               | 71               | 42               | 68               | 44                       |
| Meals Served   | 1691             | 2569             | 2687             | 2223             | 2427             | 1393             | 364                      |
| <b>Total Nutrition Program Clients for year</b>      | 102              | 100              | 109              | 113              | 98               | 125              | 83                       |
| <b>Total Nutrition Program Meals Served for year</b> | 3161             | 5355             | 6034             | 5927             | 7708             | 6457             | 1595                     |

\*These #s will grow between now and 4/1/2023

In the last four years, with a new director, the Shelter Island senior services and programs have expanded. A team of volunteer medical and mental health workers work with the Center to provide services and case management. New programs include “Caring for the Caregiver” and assistance with hoarding have been implemented. The pandemic brought Zoom programming and more volunteers to the Center. There are plans to develop more programs to attract younger, active seniors and more programs for men. Two new buses are available for post-pandemic excursions. Assistance includes planning for long term care or retirement concerns; hospice referral and co-ordination; counseling on Medicare, Medicaid, and Supplementary Health Insurance; AARP 55 Alive Driver Safety Classes; and a medical equipment borrowing program. Programs are funded by the Town of Shelter Island, the NY State Office for the Aging, Suffolk County Office for the Aging, federal Community Development Block Grant funds, program fees and voluntary contributions. A nonprofit organization, the Senior Citizen’s Foundation of Shelter Island, provides funding to improve life on the Island for senior citizens,

from new buses to contributions toward making the town's beaches more accessible. Some programs were temporarily suspended because of the pandemic.

**Here is a list of what is available at or through the Senior Center:**

1. The Silver Circle social group meets every Wednesday at the Senior Center. Each meeting costs \$10 and transportation is available. The program includes games, speakers, crafts, parties, a freshly prepared nutritious hot lunch, excursions, and other activities such as senior yoga, Mah Jong, and poker.
2. Bus service is provided if needed. As of January 2021, there were 20 participants.
3. An immunization program provided vaccines for flu, shingles, pneumonia, and Tdap to 275 participants in 2020. COVID vaccines and booster shots have been and will continue to be offered through the Senior Center at the Shelter Island Library.
4. The Telephone Reassurance Program provides daily phone calls Monday through Saturday for older adults who might live alone, be sick or homebound, or who might just benefit from a friendly conversation each day. There are 11 participants and 8 volunteer callers.
5. The Senior Nutrition Program/Dinner Bell Program provides hot nutritious meals Monday and Friday at the Fellowship Hall in the SI Presbyterian Church with voluntary contributions of \$4.00 per meal. During the pandemic, meals are delivered to participants' homes. On average, twenty people participate.
6. The Home Delivered Meals Program is available to frail, disabled and homebound seniors who cannot participate in the Dinner Bell Program. The "Meals on Wheels" program serves 53 recipients.
7. The Residential Repair Program assists seniors with non-emergency, minor household repairs that do not require a licensed contractor. There is no fee for the labor, but the client is responsible for materials and supplies. No tipping is allowed.
8. Case Management sponsored by the Suffolk County Office for the Aging includes benefit and entitlement counseling, application assistance (Medicare, Medicaid, EPIC prescription program, HEAP-Home Energy Assistance Program), and other services. A senior advocate from the Suffolk County Office for the Aging is available by appointment.

9. Senior Transportation /AAA Transportation Programs provide free transportation for medical appointments, food shopping, pharmacy needs, and other errands. Rides are available for on-island and off-island needs and must be arranged in advance. Volunteers in 2020 provided 477 rides to 51 participants.
10. The Handicapped Ramp Loan Program lends a portable handicapped ramp to people in need of temporary handicapped access to their home for up to 90 days, installed and removed free of charge by the Residential Repair Program mechanic. In addition to this apparatus, the Senior Center keeps a storeroom for wheelchairs, walkers, etc. that can be borrowed by folks in the community.

The Senior Center has assembled a team of on-island volunteer mental health professionals including 3 social workers (including the Town’s half-time LCSW), 1 psychologist, 1 psychiatrist, and 2 nurse practitioners (including the Senior Center Director). This team assists with mental health issues affecting seniors, such as hoarding. Broader planning issues also affect seniors and their quality of life. For example, the limited extent of side-walks on the Island affects people who want to walk for exercise, especially those who use walkers, and people who use wheelchairs.



## Public Safety Services: Police, Fire, EMS, and Emergency Management

## Shelter Island Police Department



The SIPD is a New York State Accredited Agency. Only 31% of all police agencies in the state have achieved this status. The NYS Law Enforcement Accreditation Program establishes professional standards, the agency adopts policies and procedures that meet the standards, and an independent team of professionals then conducts an on-site assessment to verify successful implementation of the standards. There is an annual review and site inspection every five years. The training of all police and law enforcement personnel in the town is provided and coordinated in part by the Suffolk County Police Department (SCPD) and the NYS Department of Criminal Justice Services. Full-time staff is composed of 10 police officers and one police clerk. Part-time positions include bay constables (4), police clerk, crossing guard, jail attendants (7), animal control officer, traffic control officers (2), and court officer. Seasonal officers serve from the third week in May until the second week in September. Dispatch is handled by the Southold Police Department. The 2022 operating budget of the Police Department represented 16.9% of the town budget, lower than any other East End town or village. These expenditures are kept reasonable, in part, by a variety of shared services between Shelter Island, the County and other East End Towns. The Police Headquarters in the Town Center also operates as the town's Emergency Operations Center. Key operations at SIPD, Town Hall, Justice Court, the American Legion, and the school have emergency power generators for use during power outages to keep government functioning and provide shelters as needed. Marine programs include two grant-funded police vessels, boater education, shellfish monitoring, boat storage on town property, and rescue diving. The SIPD operates cameras and plate readers at the ferry terminals. Cameras have been added to police cars and body cameras are on the horizon. The SIPD is participating in the New York State Police Reform initiative which involves changes to discovery, bail, and Freedom of Information documentation and availability as well as changes in procedures in order to better serve the entirety of the public. Improved records management is an important issue as the public requires more documents for various purposes. A new records management system for Suffolk County town police departments will be instituted in Shelter Island. Community policing includes speed enforcement education, home assistance to seniors, assisting at special events such as races and July fireworks.

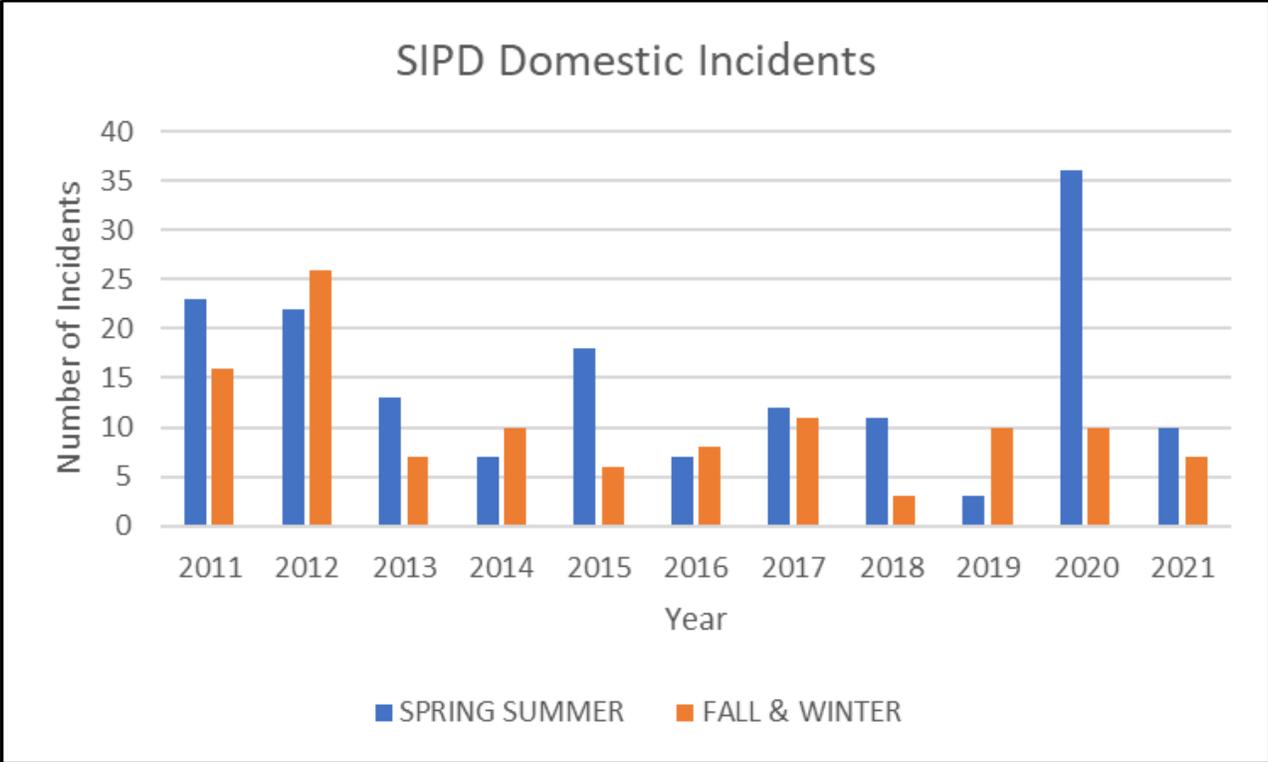
### **Data for 2017 – 2021 indicate the following:**

- Seasonality of calls: the average number of calls ranged from 202 in

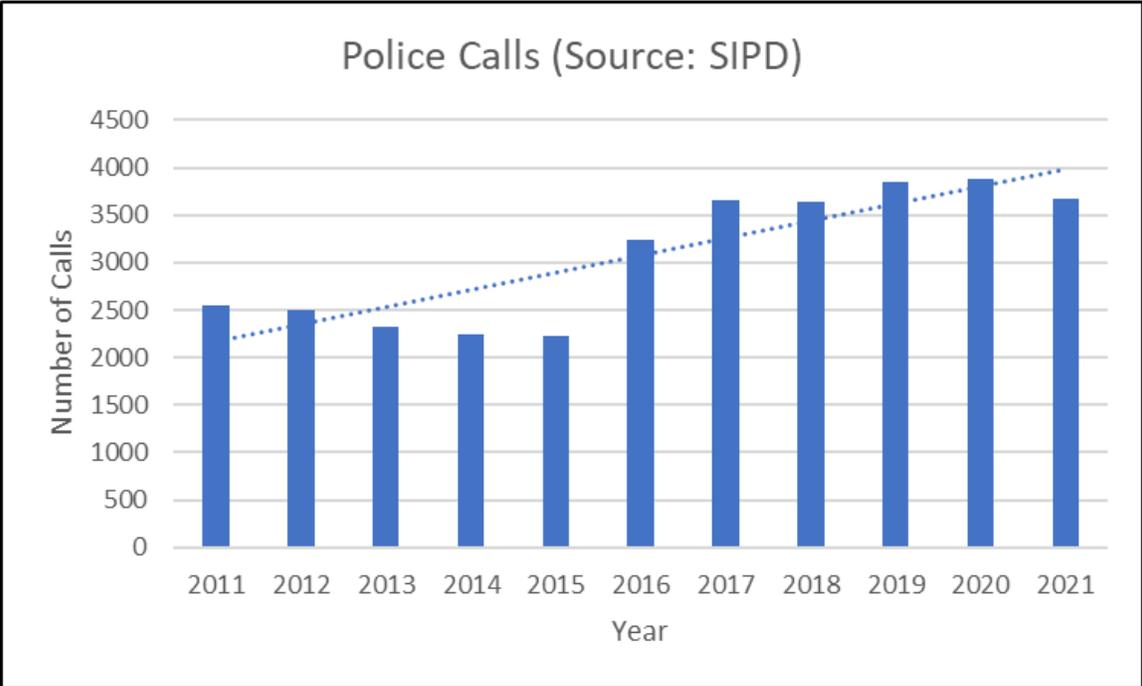
February to 566 in July and 552 in August.

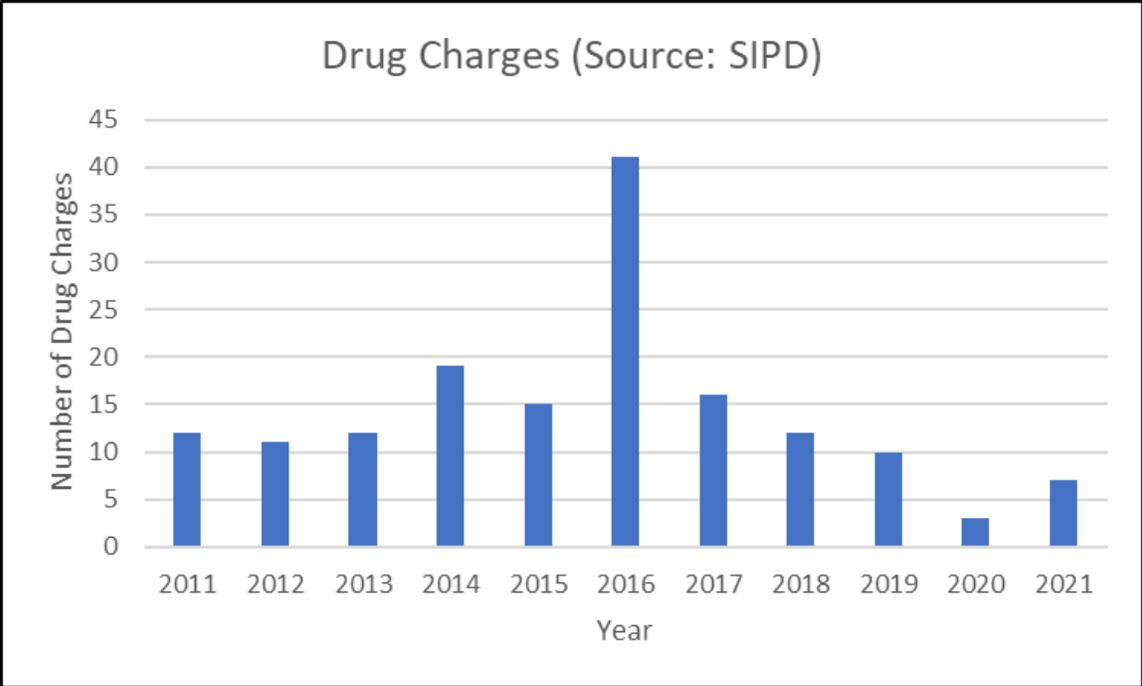
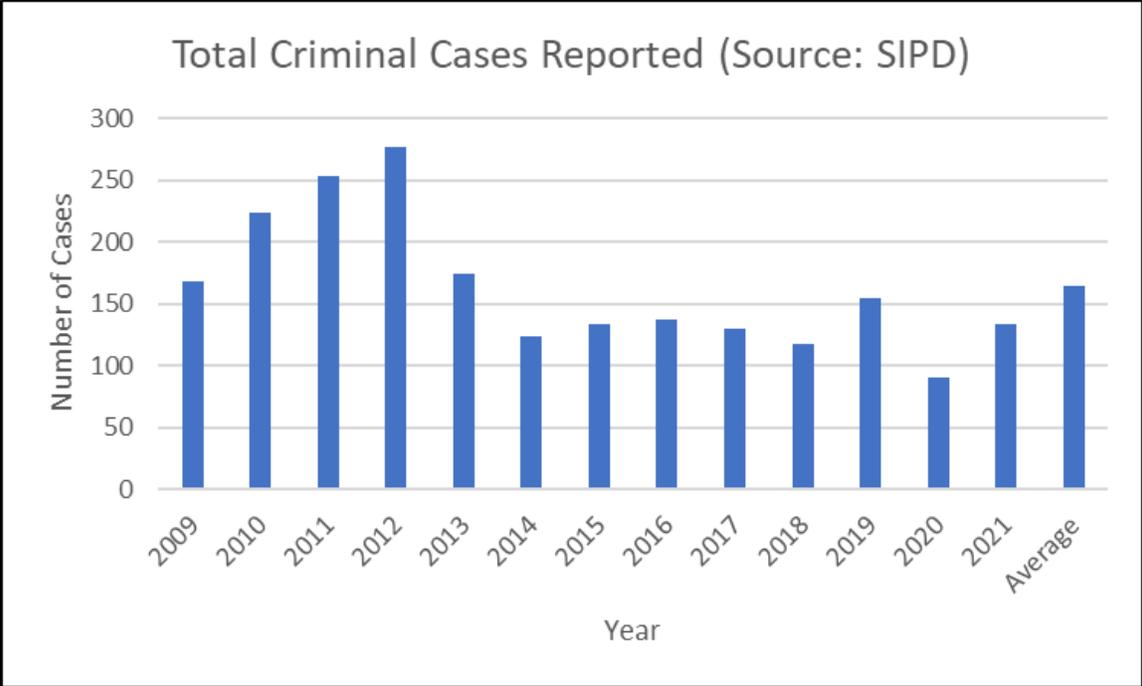
- Overall, the number of police calls has gone up (partially due to a change in record keeping in 2016 to include stops even if no ticket or other action was taken). There was one 2016 spike in drug cases and another spike in 2020 in domestic incidents but otherwise there is no obvious trend.
- Deer collisions account for approximately a quarter to a third of motor vehicle accidents (MVA).
- Shelter Island very rarely has an extreme crime, like the home invasion/murder that occurred in 2018. On the whole, residents and visitors are safe from criminal activity.
- Changes that affect the broader society also affect Shelter Island—for example, the police are seeing internet crimes and scams affecting all age groups.

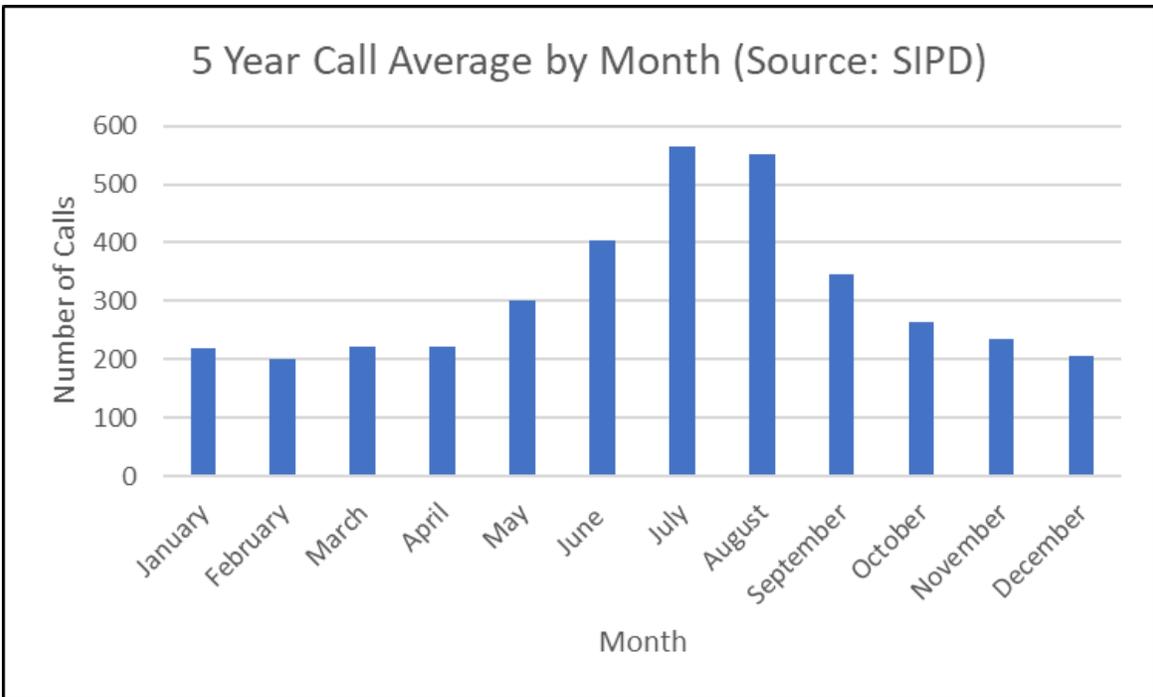
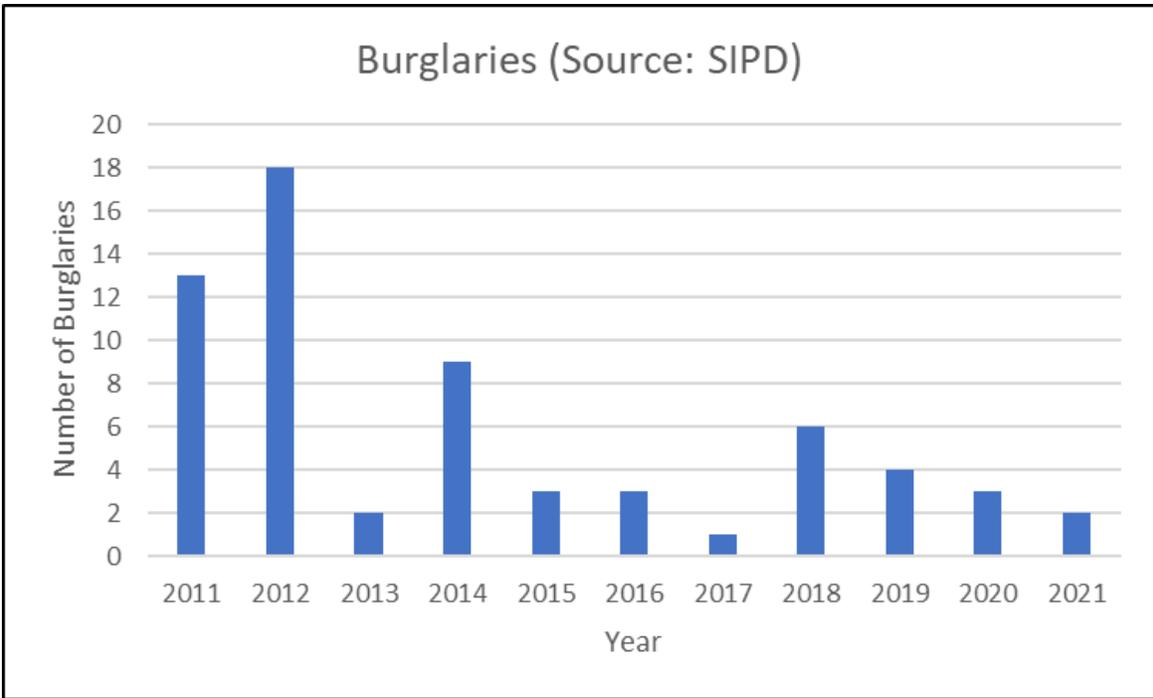
In general, demands on the Police Department have been increasing in the last ten years, ranging from changes to the law and requirements for documentation to a greater demand for services from the population since 2016 including assistance with things such as lift assists for the elderly or unlocking cars. The Police Department is the only full-time 24/7 town service and receives calls for a wide array of reasons. The pandemic year of 2020 showed a marked increase in domestic incidents but, thankfully that volume decreased back to trend in 2021.

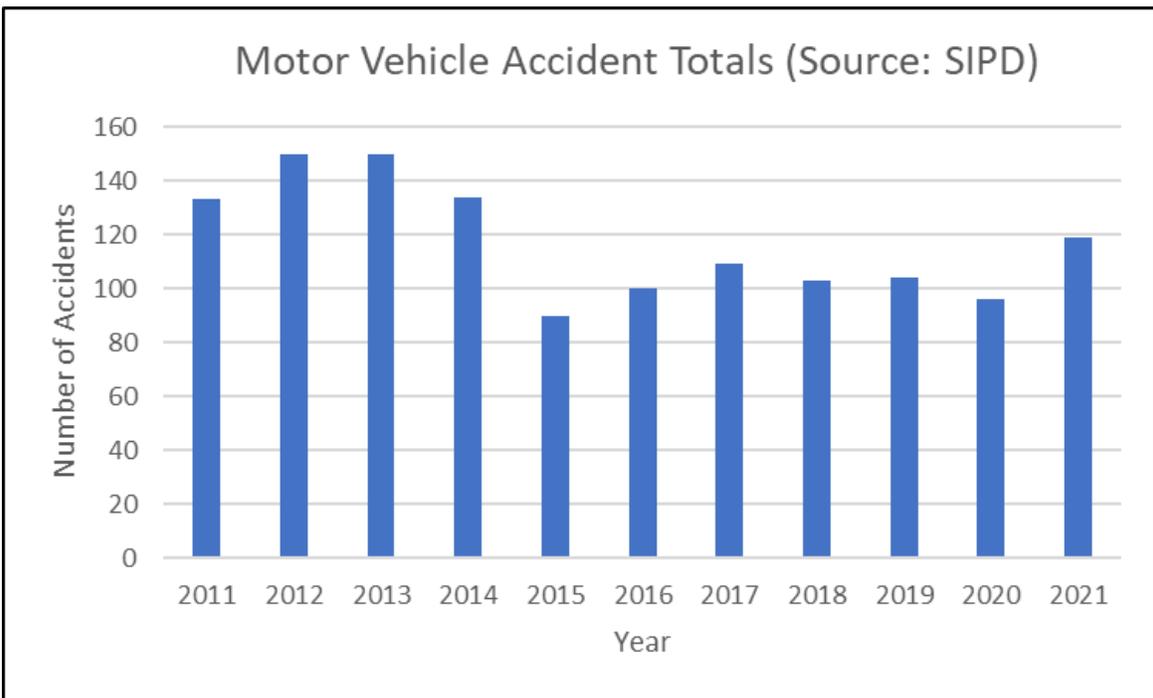
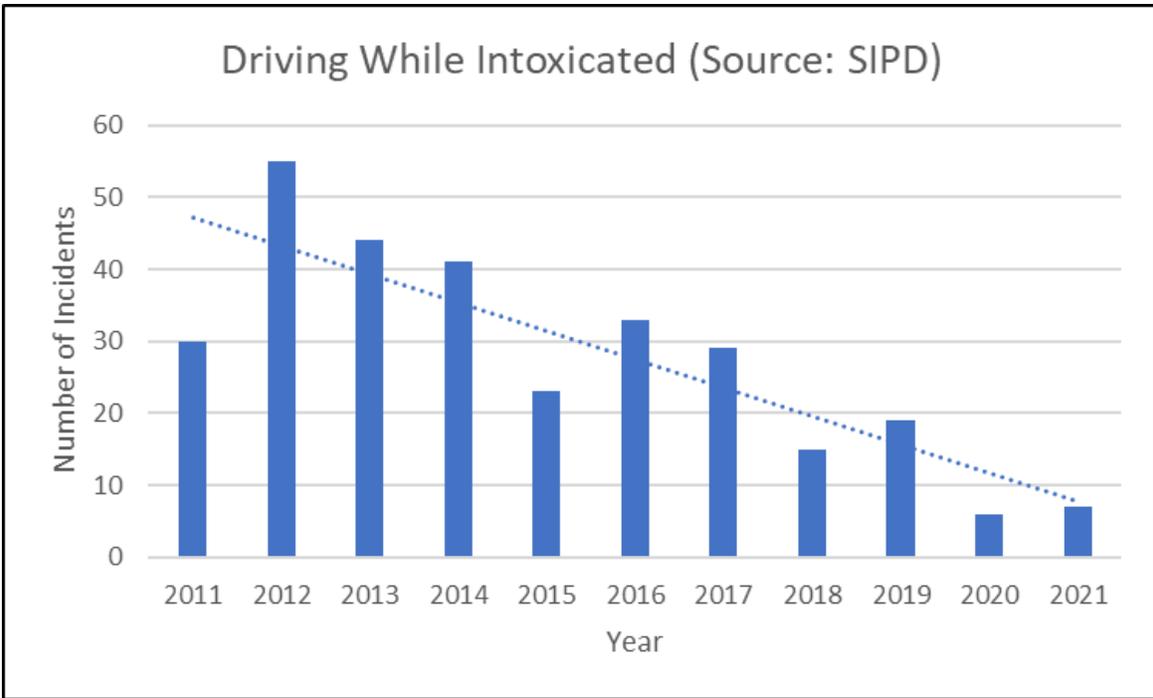


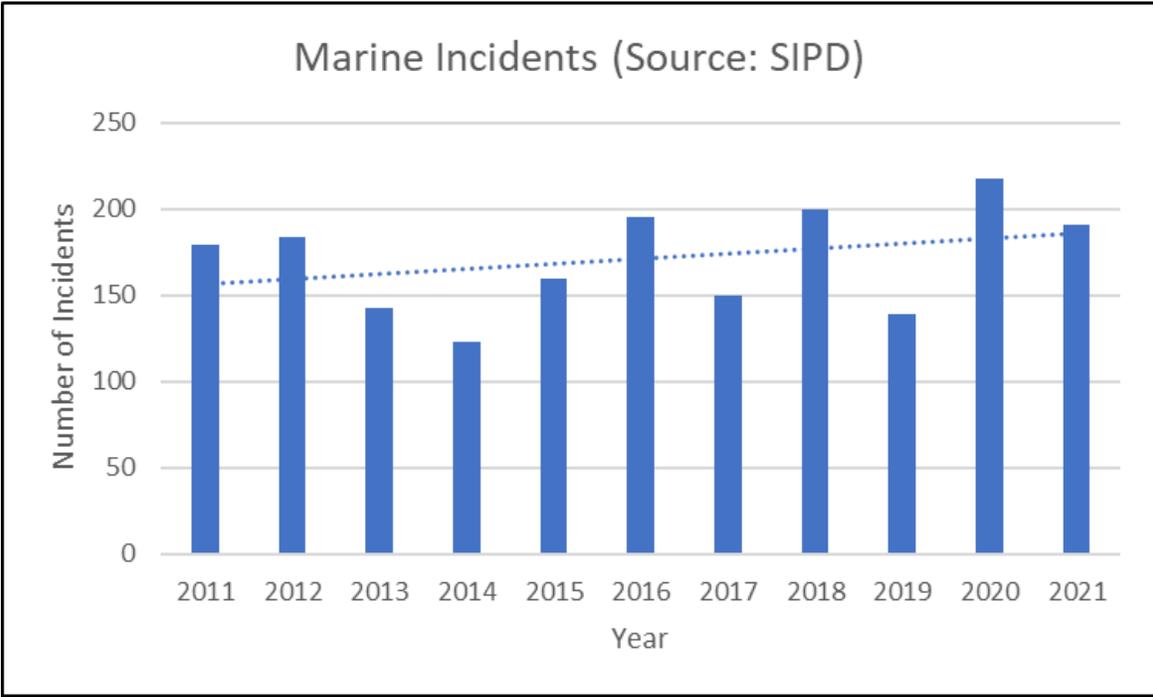
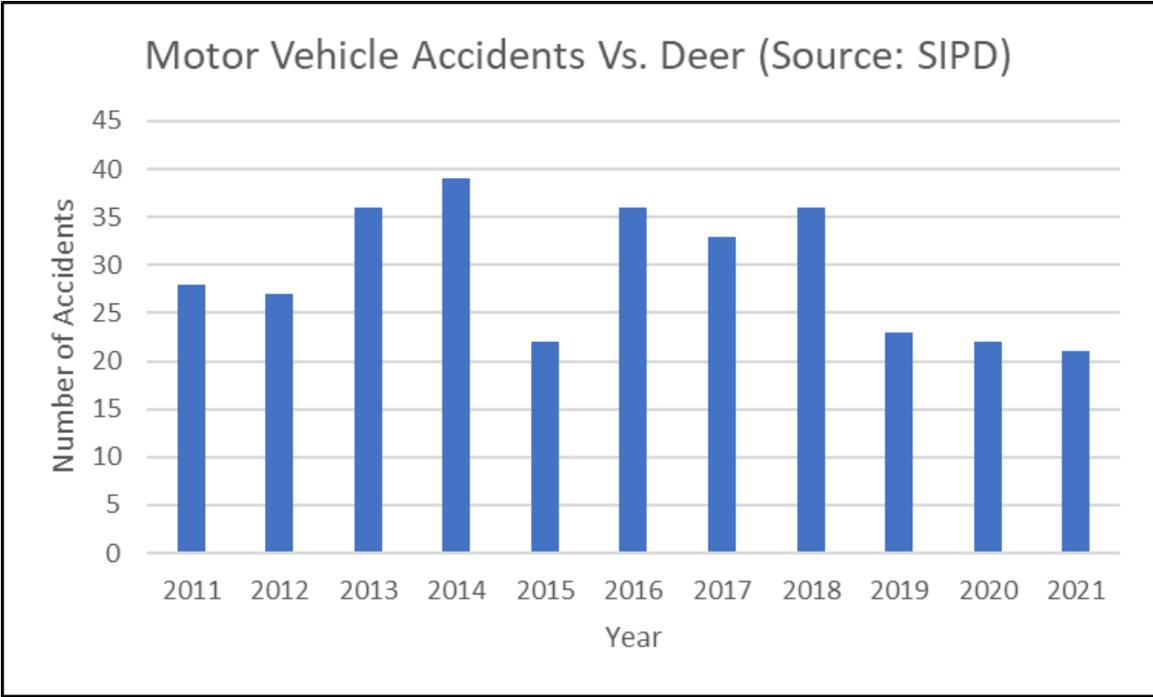
\*Spring/Summer: 3/21-9/20 Fall/Winter: 9/21-3/20

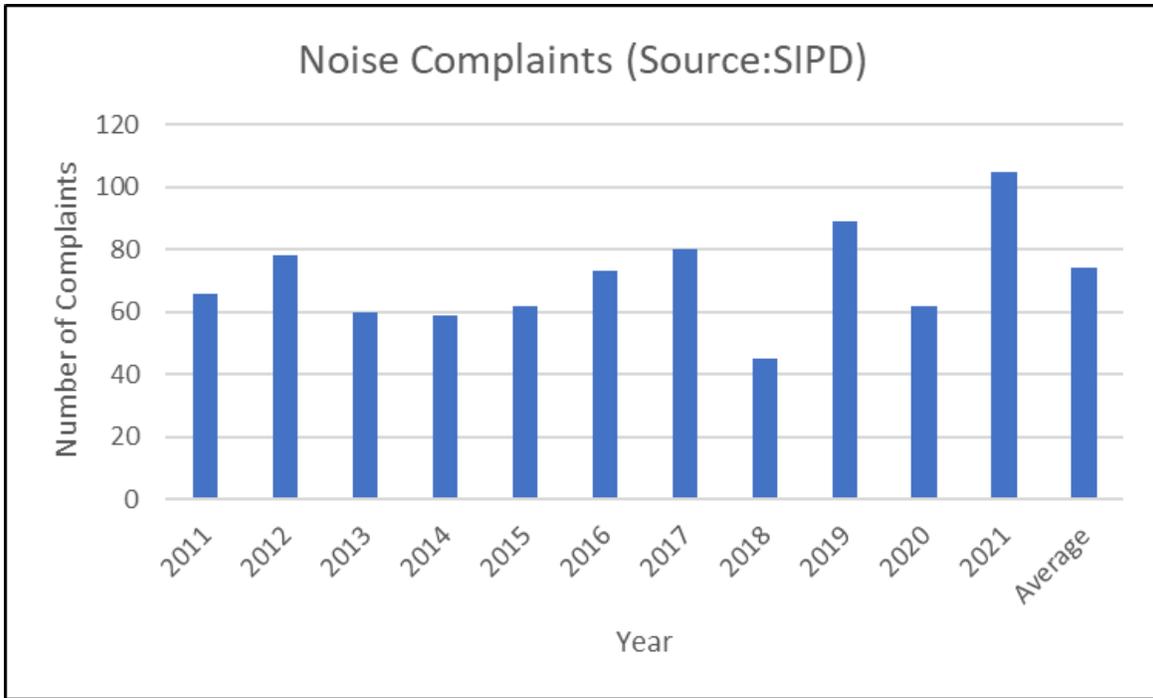












**Shelter Island Fire Department:**

Fire protection on Shelter Island is provided by volunteers in one fire department operating under and governed by an area fire district, a local form of government created pursuant to state statutes. The fire district cannot be superseded in authority by a village, town, county or the state government. The fire district is run by five (5) publicly elected unpaid commissioners who have the power to provide fire protection services within their boundaries, levy taxes, and incur debt. The Fire Department typically responds to 125–150 calls per year. There are approximately

64 volunteer firefighters on Shelter Island that operate a combined 14 pieces of firefighting equipment. This equipment ranges from the typical engine, ladder truck and rescue vehicle to more specialized vehicles used for off-road fighting of brush fires, performing technical rescue services, as well as a boat capable of fighting fires and participating in marine search and rescue operations. The marine unit also participates in joint training exercises with the Coast Guard and the Shelter Island Police Department. The Shelter Island Fire Department (SIFD) maintains three department locations in the Town to house equipment and enhance fire protection and response. Basic and advanced firefighting training is offered through the Suffolk County Fire Academy operated by the Vocational Education and Extension Board under contract with the Suffolk County Department of Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services. The training takes the form of year-round classroom instruction at fire stations and the Fire Academy in Yaphank. Live fire training is conducted at the academy operated training center, also in Yaphank. Fire protection also includes a Fire Inspector from Shelter Island Town and Fire Marshals from the County, who have broad responsibilities across their jurisdictions. The SIFD relies upon the Suffolk County Police Department Arson Squad for suspicious fire and arson investigations. Alarm receipt and dispatch is handled by a call to Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) at Southold PD and self-dispatch capabilities. The SIFD utilizes tone alert pagers and radios in the low and high band radio spectrums. Neighboring fire departments share each other's operating frequencies for interoperability purposes. Additionally, the SIFD has at least one portable radio that can operate on Suffolk County's 800 MHz trunked radio system for use during local and regional events, emergencies, and disasters. Fire alarm calls are handled by SIFD. These initial responses to alarms also include incidents involving hazardous materials. Mutual aid agreements exist on the state, county, and local levels to provide additional resources should SIFD need assistance. In some instances, mutual aid is automatically provided by prior agreements for structure fires during certain time frames or for high-risk facilities.



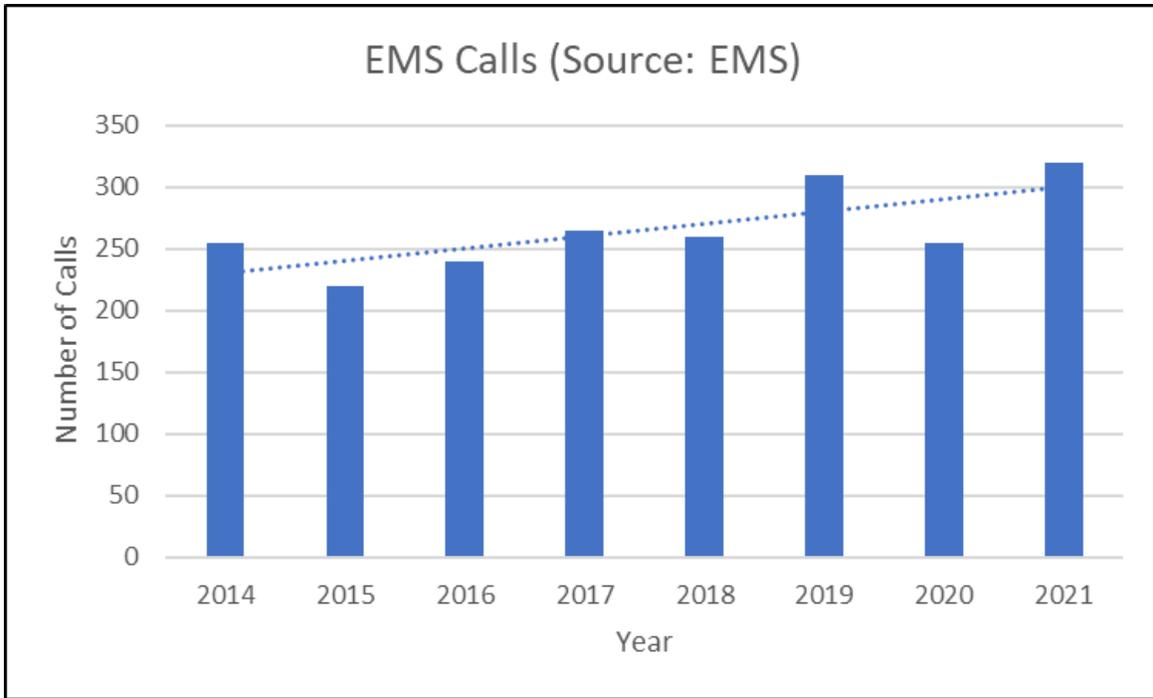
## **Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**

The Police Department provided 2009 – 2019 data on total medical-aided calls, which means calls for ambulances or police calls (such as an accident) that resulted in the need for an ambulance. The EMS Department provided data on 2021 calls and performance:

- Total 2021 calls: 309, up from 276 in 2020. Of these 84% (260) were transported by ambulance and the remainder did not require transport for a number of reasons ranging from cancellation to evaluation on scene and no treatment required.
- Average response time: 10:31 minutes with 32% of calls at 8 minutes or less. A review of 2015 EMS records from around the country found that the average national response time is 7 minutes. However, areas classified as rural (under 2500 population) like Shelter Island, the average response time is more than 14 minutes. (<https://medicalnewsbulletin.com/response-time-emergency-medical-services/>)
- Volume by time of day: The majority of calls occurred between 8 am and 8 pm.
- Seasonality: There were more calls from June through September.
- Transports by Destination:
  - Eastern Long Island Hospital – 231
  - Southampton Hospital – 23
  - Stony Brook University Hospital – 5
  - None – 49

EMTs initial observations of patients cover a variety of conditions and injuries of various types make up the biggest category (approximately 38%) but the conditions range from “generalized weakness” and non-traumatic pain to respiratory disorders and dizziness. Shelter Island EMS is provided by a volunteer

ambulance company that is a department of Town government. Ambulance services were provided by the Red Cross until 2012, when the Town took over the ambulance company. The EMS Ambulance Company has responsibility for emergency medical services within the Town and works in conjunction with other ambulance companies, fire departments and police as necessary to ensure that the appropriate resources are directed where and when they are needed, including medevac services for those critical patients. The Shelter Island EMS Advisory Board supports the EMS program, and the nonprofit Shelter Island Ambulance Foundation raises money to purchase ambulances and equipment and to fund continuing education programs for EMTs. There are 36 volunteers and three ambulance vehicles available within the Town to respond to emergency situations as needed. In addition to 15 drivers, there are 16 volunteers with Basic Life Support certification, three with Advanced Life Support certification (including one paramedic), and two critical care technicians. Recruiting efforts among young people have been successful, with ten volunteers aged 22 or younger as of early 2021. As of the 2022 Town budget, the Ambulance service is in the process of hiring its first paid Advanced EMT to cover 12 hours/day, every day. The emergency medical service functions on Shelter Island include both Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Life Support (ALS) capabilities. The advanced life support capability entails specialized training in the administration of medications and the performance of life saving measures in the field. The Suffolk County Division of Emergency Medical Services within the Department of Health Services assists in the training and certification of EMS personnel. The Division also has the responsibility for county-wide coordination of the emergency system and the development of support services to aid in improving all phases of emergency medical care. The EMS Director reports that the types and number of calls have not changed significantly over 20 years, with totals typically in the 200-300 range and a spike in the summer.



### Emergency Management

The 2020 Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, prepared in accordance with federal guidance by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), guides emergency response in Shelter Island. The Chief of Police is assigned as the Town’s Emergency Manager and operates the Emergency Management program, with direction from the Town Supervisor. Located in the Police Department, the Shelter Island Town Emergency Operations Center (SI EOC) is maintained by the Police Department and staffed by Town personnel and the Town’s pre-identified partners during emergencies. Activity at the SI EOC includes resource and information coordination. The Shelter Island Town Police (all of whom are either EMTs or Certified First Responders) work hand in hand with the Emergency Response Teams from the Shelter Island EMS and Shelter Island Fire Department. A “tier” level response approach has been developed that involves coordinated efforts between key essential organizations for the purposes of shelter, care for the elderly, care for pets, food and water as well as transportation and ferriage. The American Red Cross works with Shelter Island EOC for the sheltering, feeding, and general mass care of the population during a disaster situation. The primary shelter is the Shelter Island School, with the Shelter Island Senior Center and the American Legion used as secondary shelters. The Senior Center also functions as a special needs shelter. The Town Supervisor is the Public Information Officer (PIO) for the Town, in charge of communications to the people of Shelter Island through

all available communications media before, during, and after an emergency or disaster in any location of the Town in support of Town response/recovery operations. Residents are encouraged to subscribe to the local Code Red system allowing email, text, and telephone information to residents, as well as reverse “all call” messaging through the 911 database. The primary public safety radio communications for Shelter Island are provided through the Southold Police Department and the Suffolk County Fire Rescue Communications Bureau. Shelter Island Emergency Management is also assisted by amateur radio operators who maintain a communications center at the Town’s EOC.

### **Safety committee**

The Safety Committee listed on the Town website is a committee required by the Town’s insurer and deals with general workplace safety issues, protections, and training. Committee members are Town staff, with the Town Attorney as chair and safety officer for the purposes of the insurance carrier. Its functions are purely internal without the need for volunteers.

### **Summary Findings**

- Physicians-are available on-island.
- A town-funded Licensed Social Worker is available at no cost to residents.
- Additional medical services are off-island in three hospitals, walk-in clinics, and many practitioners.
- The Office of Senior Services has multiple programs to assist and serve seniors.
- The Police Department is among the one-third of New York State police departments that has achieved accreditation by the New York Law Enforcement Association. Residents depend on the police as one of the few Town departments that operate 24/7.
- Volunteers staff the Fire District and EMS Ambulance.
- Nonprofit foundations provide support for the Senior Center, the Fire Department, and the EMS Department.

- The Town has an up-to-date Hazard Mitigation Plan and Emergency Management Plan.
- Tick-borne illnesses are very widespread on Shelter Island and the Town has developed and implemented deer and tick management

### **Challenges:**

- Continued management of deer and ticks to reduce populations and infections.
- An aging population, including many seniors living independently, may create more demand for senior services and need for volunteers to assist seniors.
- The Town depends on volunteers for essential safety services, especially new cohorts of young volunteers. The lack of affordable housing and employment on the Island and on the East End in general may reduce the pool of volunteers for both fire and EMS services.

### **Goals & Objectives:**

1. Maintain a strong and self-seeding volunteer corps of ambulance and fire department members while recognizing that there may come a day when a paid force of 1<sup>st</sup> responders may be necessary.
2. Continue tick borne disease monitoring and reduction
3. Senior Services should be sustained and expanded as the increasing numbers of part-time residents become full-time retirees
4. Early childhood services/adolescent services both medical and social should be explored

### **Action Items:**

1. Develop an annual “Volunteer Opportunity Day” - perhaps in conjunction with the Craft Fair and Green Expo Day
  - a. Establish a stronger connection with the high school in order to generate interest in volunteering
  - b. Junior Corps for both the Fire Dept and Ambulance Corp
  - c. Shadowing opportunities in Town Departments that could lead to internships

2. Reduce the numbers of tick-borne illnesses on Shelter Island. Among the strategies recommended by the Deer and Tick Committee:
  - a. Identify tick sampling locations suitable for entomological risk assessment. Identify quantity, species and life stage of ticks needed to develop an entomological risk index (ERI). Identify laboratory to conduct testing. Identify sampling frequency. Collect and submit tick samples. Monitor changes in ERI.
  - b. Establish compliant data sharing with Shelter Island Medical Center. Monitor changes in tick-related medical information
  - c. Promote public education pertaining to tick borne disease prevention. Utilize conventional and digital media platforms to maximize exposure. Promote public education pertaining to responsible chemical control of ticks
  - d. Pursue island-wide deer reduction pursuant to the Deer Management Plan.
  - e. Monitor changes in 4-Poster™ regulations. Reactivate 4-Poster program if possible
  - f. Identify Town-controlled property suitable for habitat modification. Modify habitat. Identify private property suitable for habitat modification. Promote and facilitate habitat modification. Including the re-introduction of natural predators and the removal of invasives that provide habitat
  - g. Promote and facilitate rodent host-based interventions on private property and/or groups of properties
3. Senior Services:
  - a. Sustain the following services
    - i. Meals on Wheels
    - ii. Congregate meals
    - iii. Case management
    - iv. Residential repair
    - v. Transportation to medical appointments and shopping
    - vi. Social programming
    - vii. Telephone reassurance
  - b. Explore and institute as/if needed
    - i. Caregiver support

- ii. Adult daycare services for adults in need of support during the day including both the social model and the medical model.
    - 1. The social model – Provides meals, social activities, recreation and some health-related services.
    - 2. The medical/health model – Provides more intensive health and therapy services.
    - 3. Senior recreation in a dedicated playground
  - c. Expand Recreation Department and Library coordinated activities for seniors, children and adolescents
    - i. Trips
    - ii. Classes
    - iii. Lectures
    - iv. Joint activities with teens, children and seniors
- 4. Early childhood services for children and their families have been shown to improve outcomes later in life
  - a. Afterschool programming through the Rec Dept that would care for PreK 3 through Middle School until the end of the work day
  - b. Establishing a Head Start opportunity for 1- & 2-year old's because day care services are almost non-existent on the island.
- 5. Food insecurity is a consistent concern on Shelter Island. There are some institutions that assist such as the Food Pantry at the Presbyterian church, Meals on Wheels, and lunch programs at the Senior Center, and the CAST (Community Action Southold Town) mobile food pantry that serves approximately 40 families on the island that speak to the reality of food insecurity.

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