

## **Transportation**

### **Roads:**

Shelter Island has one New York State Road, Route 114, which is also designated as New York State Bicycle Route 114. It runs from the North Ferry to the South Ferry and includes the ferry routes themselves. A portion of Route 114 is owned by the Shelter Island Heights Property Owners Corporation with an easement for the state. The island has five designated Suffolk County Roads plus one former county road (CR 37) and one designated county road that is unbuilt (CR 44).

Route 114 and the county roads, except for CR116 and former CR 37 are “federal-aid eligible roads.” Federal-aid highway funding is planned and distributed based on a multi-year plan, the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), which is created by the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC). Local planning for the TIP is facilitated by the Nassau/Suffolk Transportation Coordinating Committee (TCC).

Road Miles by Ownership	New York State	Suffolk County	Town or Private
	4.8	5.0	49.5

Designation	Local Road Name	Notes	Federal-Aid Eligible
NY 114	South Ferry Road, North Ferry Road, Summerfield Place, Grand Avenue, Bridge Street, Cedar Ave (northbound), Clinton Ave (northbound),	Includes ferry routes	Yes
CR 37	Manwaring Rd	No longer a County Road	No
CR 42	Shore Road in Shelter Island Heights	From Rocky Point Ave to CR 115	Yes
CR 44	None	Unbuilt; was designated for South Shelter Island Bridge	Yes
CR 69	South Cartwright Road and North Cartwright Road	From NY 114 intersection to Ram Island Road	Yes
CR 115	West Neck Road	From NY 114 to the intersection of Brander Parkway/Nostrand Parkway/Bootlegger's Alley	Yes
CR 116	Smith Street and North Menantic Road	From NY 114 intersection to CR 115	No
CR 117	Burns Road	From CR 69 to end	Yes

**Road Maintenance:**

The Shelter Island Highway Department is responsible for day-to-day road maintenance, including resurfacing roadways and patching potholes; street sweeping and clearing of catch basins and sumps; repairing curbs and sidewalks; and winter snow plowing, sanding and de-icing.

The town Engineer began a program to assess Town roads with help from summer engineering interns and the Cornell Local Roads Program. The resulting 2019 town-wide study evaluated the condition of all town-owned roads on a scale of 0 to 100. Overall, the Island's roads were rated at 74, an improvement over a rating of 63 made in 2015. This improvement was credited to a steady pace of repair over the last five years, including a 2020 repair budget of \$307,000. However, the study found that 23 town-owned roads, amounting to 7.2 miles, have deteriorated to the point that they will need to be completely reconstructed.

The Shelter Island Heights Property Owners Corporation also relies on the Cornell Local Roads Program to help prioritize annual repaving work on its network of private roads. Private contractors are hired to do paving and repairs.

### **Roads & Flooding:**

According to the Draft *2020 Suffolk County Hazard Mitigation Plan*, numerous roads on Shelter Island are vulnerable to flooding (see list below.)

Climate change is likely to increase the frequency and severity of flooding both from sea level rise and increased intensity of precipitation events. The impact of extreme tides and long-term sea level rise was identified in the town's Emergency Management Plan and is an ongoing project of the town and the ferry companies. Bulkheads were raised 12 inches at South Ferry, and plans have been made to increase the length of platforms from 24 feet to 30 feet to improve vehicular access from the ferries. Improvements are underway at the North Ferry and include extending and raising ramps, starting at the Greenport side.

Roads vulnerable to coastal flooding:

- North Ferry Terminal
- South Ferry Terminal
- Bridge Street
- West Neck Road (Terry Drive-Westmoreland)
- Ram Island Rd (Sheep Pasture-Gardiners Bay Dr)
- 1st Causeway
- 2nd Causeway
- 3rd Causeway
- End of Congdon's Road
- Westmoreland Drive
- Midway Road (South End near Dickerson Creek)
- Menantic Road (South end at Montclair Ave.)
- All of Silver Beach (high water table)

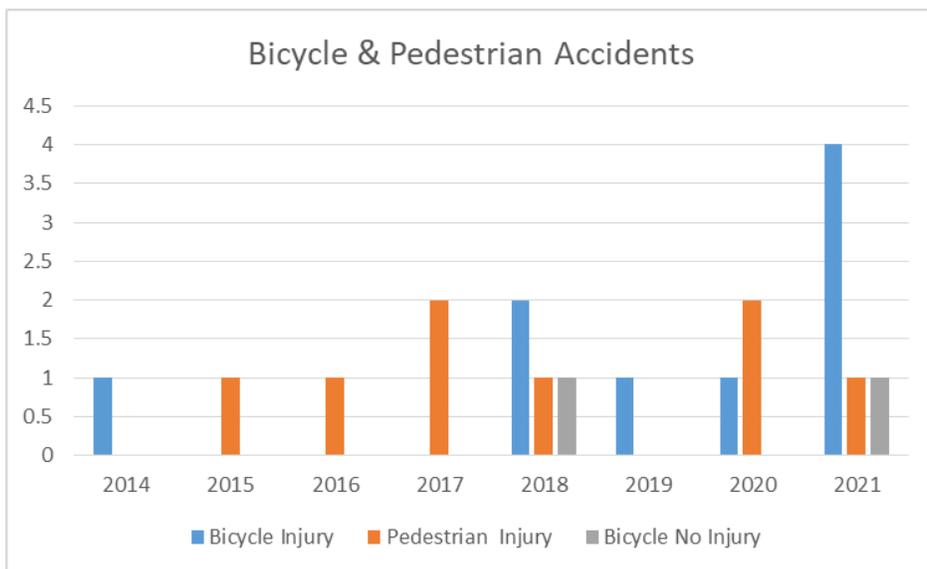
- Crescent Beach (by bath houses) (County Rd)
- Winthrop Road From Cobbetts to Third Bridge

Roads vulnerable to rainfall/urban flooding:

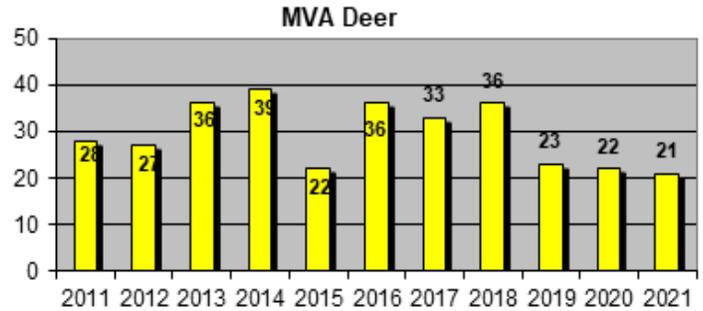
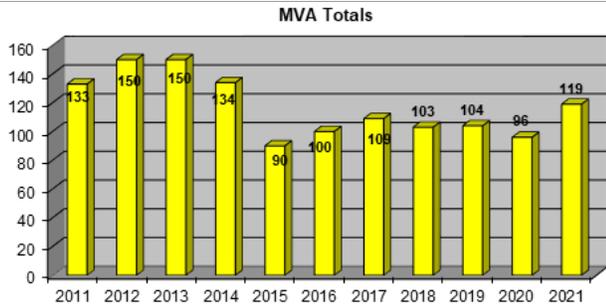
- Clark Place (area)
- Valley Road
- Linda Road
- Osprey Road
- Smith Street (Midway-114)
- Midway Road (W. Jaspa)
- West Neck Road (Nostrand Parkway)
- Emerson Lane (dead end)
- Hay Beach (area)
- Big Ram (area)
- North 114 meets South 114 (medical center)
- Menantic Road from Smith Street to Bowditch Road (County Road)

**Motor Vehicle Crashes:**

Although low, the data for bicycle and pedestrian accidents involving injury show a steady rate, if not a slow creep upwards.



Crash data compiled by the Shelter Island Police Department shows an average of 117 crashes per year between 2011 and 2021. In addition, there have been an average of 29.4 deer-related crashes over the same time period. This demonstrates that 25% of total crashes are deer related.



Crosswalk with rapid flash beacon at Shelter Island Town Hall

**Sidewalks:**

Most areas of Shelter Island are rural in character, with no sidewalks in residential areas. Roads often have small shoulders, with approximately ten feet of Town-owned right of way extending on either side of the roadway. This shoulder is typically grassy and maintained by the Town Highway

Department. In some cases, vegetation extends almost to the roadway edge obstructing passage by pedestrians. Sidewalks are present in the following locations.

### **Town Center**

- North Ferry Road from just north of East/West Thomas Street to about 500 feet east of the roundabout
- The west side of School Street adjacent to the school

### **Shelter Island Heights**

- Summerfield Place
- Grand Avenue from Bay Ave. to Prospect Ave.
- Chase Avenue
- Bridge Street
- Prospect Avenue from about Spring Garden Avenue to Wesley Avenue
- Auburn Avenue adjacent to Shelter Island Hardware. Auburn Ave/Sylvan Place adjacent to the Post Office

### **Walking Paths**

There are a number of walking paths and trails in the Mashomack Preserve, ranging from 1.5 miles to 11 miles, that are very popular with Islanders, visitors and guests. There is also a one-mile wheelchair accessible trail at Mashomack. Sylvester Manor is open from April through October for walking on three trails: the Woodland Walk, the Creekside Loop and the Farm Walk. Five of the Town preserves have walking trails: Bunker Hill County Park, Mildred Flower Hird Nature Preserve, Old Lima Bean Fields, Sachem's Woods, and Turkem's Rest Preserve. In addition, people walk on sidewalks in Shelter Island Heights and the Center, or along road shoulders.

Trails are built and maintained with the leadership of the Shelter Island Trail Club, which holds regular trail clean ups and was involved in the preparation of the 2020-2021 Open Space & Preserved Lands Map. In 2019 they held trail cleanups on seven dates from April to June.



Bicycle at the beach (Source: Girl in the Yellow Taxi)

### **Bike Facilities**

The Island is a popular destination for recreational cycling. New York Route 114 is also designated as New York State Bicycle Route 114. It runs north to south on and off the island connecting Greenport to East Hampton for a total distance of 15.35 miles. There are no dedicated bicycle lanes or shared-use trails on the Island, which results in the need for bicyclists and motor vehicles to “share the road.” Bicycles are not permitted on the trails in Town preserves or on the Mashomack trails. There is a bicycle rental business in the Bridge Street area. Improvements to bike and pedestrian accommodations between the North Ferry and First Bridge have been discussed by the Shelter Island Heights Corporation and they are working with the town’s grant writer to identify a source of funding for safety improvements.

### **Truck Access/Delivery Services**

All materials must be transported by way of the North or South ferries. Both ferry companies operate multiple boats capable of accommodating the size and payload of the largest over-the-road trucks. As trucks exit the North Ferry boats onto Route 114, they encounter narrow residential streets and a difficult left turn from Grand Avenue as 114 makes a 90-degree bend onto Chase Avenue. New York Avenue has also been identified as problematic for truck access. The access from South Ferry is more direct. Route 114 is less congested in the southern part of the Island.

### **Taxi and Ride Sharing Services**

There is one company providing taxi service on Shelter Island as of June 2022. Off-island limousine services also provide options for Islanders for off-Island transportation needs.

### **Public Transportation**

While there is no public or private sector bus or rail transportation on the Island, the Town's Senior Services Department operates a handicapped accessible bus to transport seniors to various locations on the Island.

Volunteer drivers also transport seniors to and from medical facilities and doctor's offices on and off-Island. Off island, the North Ferry connects to a multi-modal station in Greenport with access to the Long Island Rail station, Hampton Jitney motorcoach, and Suffolk County S92 Bus Line. On the Southside, Suffolk County Bus 10A stops at the South Ferry Dock on North Haven.

### **Air and Seaplane Access**

Though not heavily used, the island accommodates small aircraft at the town-owned Klenawicus Airfield, a 1700-foot grass landing strip. The field was acquired by the town in 2010 and is maintained by the Shelter Island Pilot's Association.

Shoreline Aviation provides seaplane service to Shelter Island from the 23rd Street Seaplane base in Manhattan, Thursday and Friday afternoon, Sunday afternoon and Monday mornings. Additional service is available for holiday periods and for private charter. Seaplanes arrive at Crescent Beach. Several other companies run similar services. Recent restrictions on seaplane access in the Town of East Hampton have reportedly resulted in increased arrivals of seaplanes on Shelter Island, with passengers calling a taxi to complete their journey across the South Ferry to the Hamptons.

### **Boat Landings and Moorings**

Shelter Island has dozens of boat landings and hundreds of moorings. The town has issued approximately 800 mooring permits and recognizes the possibility of limiting future mooring permits in order to maintain safe navigation and keep open water for recreational use. Mooring permits are limited to town residents and some areas have waiting lists. Non-residents can obtain moorings through the commercial marinas. Waterfront landowners are allowed one riparian mooring.

Town-owned docks at Congdon's Creek and Dering Harbor are regulated according to a new Dock Law adopted in October 2020. Chapter 53, the Dock Law, regulates commercial and private docks as well as Town-owned docks and underwater lands. The

law requires an annual permit from the Town Clerk and describes allowable uses, seasons and other issues regarding the town facilities. For commercial and private docks, the law regulates design and construction and establishes a permitting and review procedure. Design standards control the length, width and depth of docks.

**Recreational/Commercial Waterways Traffic**

Shelter Island waterways are frequented by recreational boaters/sailors, commercial fisherman and shell fisherman, water taxis, launches, charter boats, and paddlers of all stripes. Each of these users are an integral part of Shelter Island’s economy and identity.

The Bay Constables, responsible for keeping our waterways safe, report the following combined calls/stops/marine blotter reports for the past 5 summers:

2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
103	134	138	93	95

The trends noted by the Bay Constables in their annual report to the Waterways Management Advisory Committee are notable for their possible long-term impact on the quality of island life:

- Day charter boats hailing from Sag Harbor are making day trips to Coecles Harbor, West Neck and Crescent Beach in addition to an increase in for-hire watersports in Smith’s Cove and off Crescent Beach adding waterways congestion
- Increased usage of the Coecles Harbor and West Neck anchorages
- Larger vessels with greater horse-power using inside waters which can mean higher speeds and larger wakes
- Increased Jet Ski traffic

**Ferries**

Shelter Island is served by two independent ferry companies. North Ferry Company is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Shelter Island Heights Property Owners’ Corporation. South Ferry is a privately-owned company. A town committee, the Ferry Study Group, assists in reviewing ferry services, and in 2019 was involved in establishing 5AM service on the North Ferry to enable better connections to train and bus service in Greenport.

**North Ferry**

North Ferry operates boats between Shelter Island and Greenport continuously between 5:00 a.m. and midnight, seven days per week, 365 days per year. In addition, the ferry provides an average of twenty-two after-hour emergency trips per year. In 2021, North Ferry carried:

- 1,294,500 passengers (down from 1,451,000 in pre-pandemic 2019)
- 823,869 cars (driver and passengers included above in passengers)
- 53,719 trucks (driver and passengers included above in passengers)

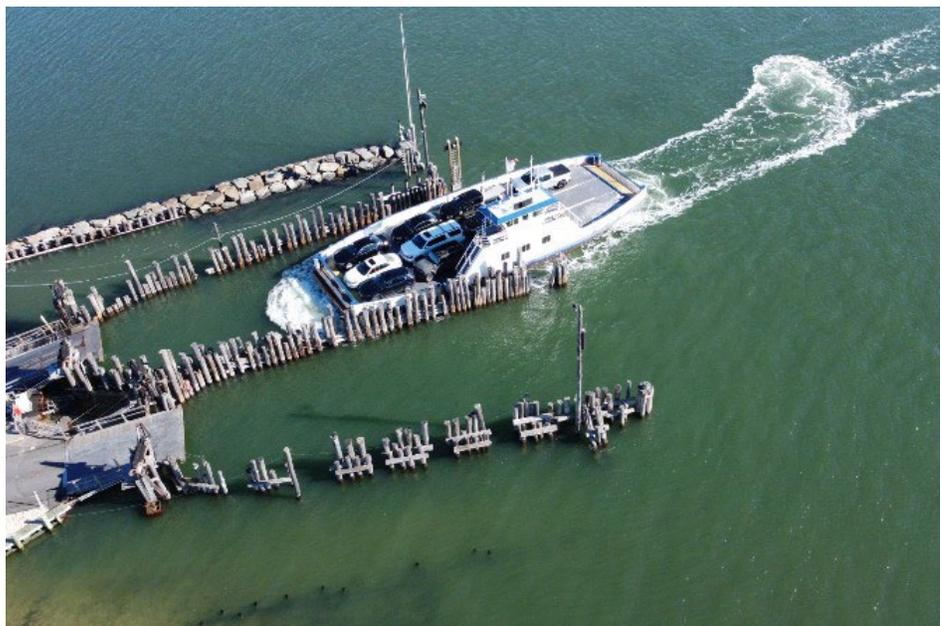
The trip is approximately .9 nautical miles and takes about fifteen minutes. Boats generally arrive for unloading and loading 15-20 minutes apart based on the time of day and

demand, at four active docking areas on the Shelter Island side and two on the Greenport side. The company operates four relatively new ferry boats, with capacity for 25 cars each.

Greenport vehicles and passengers board at the terminal at the Greenport multi-modal transportation hub, where the company leases the land from the Long Island Railroad. Ferry access is by roadways owned by the Village of Greenport and New York State. Ferry access from Shelter Island is by roads owned by the Shelter Island Heights Property Owners Corporation, North Ferry's parent company.

The ferries are capable of operating during high winds, including hurricanes. However, extreme high and low tides may interrupt ferry service when the tide exceeds the vertical range of the ramps. Due to sea level rise, minor flooding has been becoming more frequent, and North Ferry has raised one of the landing areas in Greenport, as well as extend the length of the ramp. This redesign will be replicated on three more slips at both ports.

North Ferry is one of the largest employers on Shelter Island with approximately fifty employees, including thirty-two regular captains that not only operate the vessels but also rotate deckhand duties, five staff in the office and three engineers. North Ferry also has several pursers who do not operate vessels as well as seasonal and casual (fill in) staff.



South Ferry (Source: Chris Tehan)

## **South Ferry:**

South Ferry operates a daily ferryboat shuttle service between the town of Shelter Island and North Haven Village in Southampton Township. A single crossing takes approximately 5 minutes with boats departing every 10 - 12 minutes. The first boat from Shelter Island departs daily at 5:40 a.m. The last boat departs North Haven at midnight, year-round. The last boat shuttle service is extended to 2:00 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays during the Fall and Spring. Extended service to 2:00 a.m. is offered daily from the third Friday in June through the Sunday of Labor Day weekend.

South Ferry, owned and operated by the Clark family, was incorporated in New York State in 1906. But ownership of the family business dates back to the early 1700s when a row boat was used to transport people and cargo to and from Shelter Island. South Ferry is the only ferryboat company in New York State which owns the property on both sides of the channel. In the early 1900s the current road was created through Clark family land on Shelter Island to become what is now State Route 114. The current east slips are in the New York State right-of-way. The west slips at both terminals are on South Ferry land.

Due to rising tides, the Company has begun building replacement bulkheads and docks at least a foot higher than previously and plans to extend the existing ramps six feet in anticipation of continued tide increases.

South Ferry operates as many as four boats during the summer season with a fifth on standby. Since 1997, the Company has built four 101' steel vessels which carry up to 15 cars and can accommodate pretty much any size truck that is legal on the roads. Prior to the 1997 vessel being built, the last boat the Clark's built was a 65 foot-wooden vessel in 1926 capable of just six cars and no large trucks. From 1960 until 2002 the Company survived using old, refurbished, high maintenance steel boats until revenues allowed the construction of the state-of-the-art new vessels.

The current fleet not only has excellent carrying capacity, it is capable of operating in extremely high winds as demonstrated during Hurricane Sandy in 2012. At the height of the storm with the winds at a steady 93 miles per hour South Ferry, in coordination with Shelter Island and Sag Harbor Emergency Services, transported a woman with a life-threatening event safely across the channel to a waiting ambulance. There have been interruptions and delays due to storms and ice, but in more than 70 years there has never been a day when South Ferry could not operate at all.



## **Summary Findings**

- Shelter Island has robust land and water-based transportation systems
- The Town is responsible for the vast majority of the road miles on Shelter Island, though there are also state and county roads
- The town has a small, but significant, number of motor vehicle crashes that result in injury and, rarely, fatality.
- There is a perception among some residents that speeding is a problem and speed limits should be lowered.

## **Challenges**

- Numerous roads on Shelter Island are subject to flooding. This is likely to increase with climate change.
- While its small size and relatively flat terrain makes Shelter Island highly suitable for bicycle transportation, roads are often narrow and lack dedicated bicycle infrastructure. This can lead to conflicts between bicyclists and motor vehicles, sometimes resulting in crashes.
- Because roads lack sidewalks and sometimes have narrow shoulders, some residents are not able to safely walk from their homes to destinations or for recreation or exercise.
- The North Ferry and South Ferry are Shelter Island's only connections to the mainland. Rising sea levels can impact ferry service which will be addressed through continued reconfiguring of land areas and ramps. Decreases in ferry utilization due to the COVID-19 pandemic placed a significant financial strain on the Ferries.
- Some roads may not be designed to handle the size or weight of larger trucks.
- Lack of public transportation and on-island affordable housing adds to vehicular traffic and forces workers without transportation to walk from the ferries along the shoulder of

the road.

**Goals and Objectives:**

The goal for transportation is simply to provide for moving people and goods to and around the Island, with reasonable convenience and cost, and to do so safely, and without conflict with other objectives, including concerns for environmental, visual, and aural quality of the Island.

**Action Items:**

- 1) Conduct a sidewalk study to determine where we can enhance walking in Town areas for example: Sidewalks throughout the Center of town and down to the IGA and from North Ferry to the 4 way stop at NY Ave & West Neck then down to Crescent Beach
- 2) Seek funding for a bicycle path study and construction, consider having the Chamber of Commerce map contain recommended bicycle routes
- 3) Explore limiting sea plane activities in all inland waters.
- 4) Explore increasing town control over offshore waters from 1500 feet to a greater distance in order to better control air and water traffic using the waters surrounding Shelter Island
- 5) Continue monitoring the rise in sea level with regard to the ferry terminals and ramp heights
- 6) Restore the right of way/shoulder along our roadways. Access to those areas provide off-street parking as well as utility access for the community and safer pedestrian travel
- 7) Town Board to adopt a code defining and maintaining the right of way. Many intersections have been losing site to oncoming traffic from improper plant locations

as well as requiring the highway department to maintain those areas. Most right of ways around the island are about 10' wide. Proper plant placement would be ½ the width at maturity plus 10' would be the spacing from the edge of the paved road. In theory a mature tree or shrub would only reach the property line.

- 8) Address the Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Plan. Search for funding.
- 9) Adopt a paving schedule that is no less than an 18-year paving cycle for the island's town roads.
- 10) Adopt a Complete Streets approach to town roads addressing all forms of travel.
- 11) Conduct a review of a community wide transportation service.
- 12) Where practical, always consider a smaller more energy efficient vehicle for replacement.
- 13) Look into having the Pilots Association expand their scope to include Westmoreland airfield and the operations of seaplanes.
- 14) Continue to monitor helicopter, airplane, and sea plane traffic in light of the changes to East Hampton Airport.
- 15) Action items pending WMAC input such as placing our own regulatory buoys such as NO WAKE ZONE.