

ACCESS AND TRANSPORTATION

Fire Island National Seashore has no continuous hard-surfaced road, and vehicular circulation is confined to the state and county park areas at either end of the seashore. A limited number of vehicles are granted permits to travel along the beach and through dune crossings into communities and certain recreational developments.

Traditionally access to Fire Island has been by small boat or ferry. The communities are served by commercial ferry, and the federal activity areas are reached by means of a ferry system controlled by the National Park Service. Most seashore visitors and community residents reach the mainland ferry terminals by automobile, although an increasing number travel from New York City to the vicinity of the ferry terminal on the Long Island Railroad.

Another means of access to Fire Island from Manhattan is by seaplane from the East River. However, the National Park Service prohibits use of seaplanes and other aircraft for access to federal activity areas.

Access to Fire Island National Seashore will continue to be primarily by traditional transportation modes. Private vehicle access will be limited to the Robert Moses State Parkway and the William Floyd Parkway. Visitors utilizing facilities at the Fire Island Lighthouse will park in existing lots at Robert Moses State Park while those visitors entering the national seashore at Smith Point West will park at Smith Point County Park.

Visitor access to recreational areas at Sunken Forest, Talisman, and Watch Hill will be by means of ferry, or small boat or on foot. Old Inlet access will be limited to small-boat and pedestrian travel, although recreational vehicle enthusiasts with valid permits will be permitted to use the beach between Smith Point West and Long Cove.

Ferry service between the communities and the mainland and between the communities and federal developed areas will remain the responsibility of the communities themselves. Similarly, ferry service to town beaches will be provided by the mainland municipalities. Water taxi service between island communities will continue to be provided by private commercial interests.

FERRY SYSTEM

The proposed ferry system will provide future service to federal activity areas within the national seashore and will include substantial service to Watch Hill and Sunken Forest (Sailor's Haven), with limited service to Talisman (see tables 5 and 6 for maximum numbers of daily visitors).

The March 1975 draft master plan included a combined future daily peak visitation of 9,800 people to Watch Hill, Sunken Forest, and Talisman, with 5,600 arriving by ferry and 4,200 by other means, mostly by private boats. This 1977 general management plan proposes a revised 1987 combined peak visitation of 5,200, with 3,292 arriving by ferry and 1,908 by small boat.

The major ferry routes to the federal areas will originate from a proposed terminal site on the Patchogue River in the village of Patchogue and from the existing private ferry operation located in Sayville (see figure 11). Discussions are underway with the Long Island State Parks Commission concerning a secondary ferry terminal, which would be located either immediately north of Heckscher State Park on a site known as Timber Point or on the eastern edge of the state park. If a Heckscher terminal becomes operational, the Sayville ferry service will be discontinued and all ferry access to Sunken Forest will originate from the Heckscher site. Construction of a ferry terminal at either of the Heckscher locations is contingent upon approval of the proposal by the Long Island State Parks Commission and Suffolk County and upon obtaining the right to dredge and maintain a ferry access channel.

Ferry service from the Patchogue terminal will be to Watch Hill and Talisman. The private ferry operation in Sayville will be improved and will provide service to Sunken Forest. However, the 1987 maximum projected number of daily visitors arriving at Sunken Forest by ferry (1,864) cannot be accommodated by expanding the Sayville terminal site. Until the planning problems associated with a Heckscher site are resolved, the Sayville operation will continue. Limited winter ferry service will be available from the Patchogue terminal, but service will not be on a scheduled basis.

HEADQUARTERS COMPLEX/MAINLAND TERMINAL

The 1964 legislation establishing the national seashore did not include provisions for acquiring land on the Long Island mainland. Consequently, private ferry operators under contract to the National Park Service provide ferry service to the island from docks in Patchogue and Sayville. The Park Service must also lease space for its various administrative and maintenance functions. The existing

TABLE 5

FEDERAL ACTIVITY AREAS WITH PRIMARY ACCESS BY AUTO:
1987 MAXIMUM NUMBERS OF DAILY VISITORS

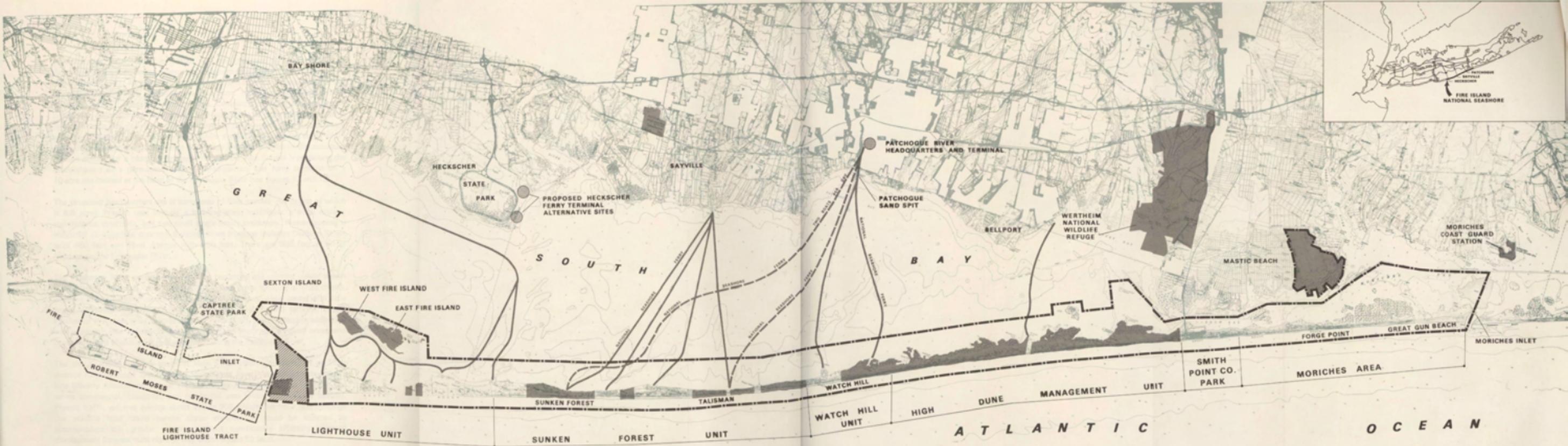
<u>Facility</u>	<u>People</u>
Lighthouse	1,000
Smith Point West	2,500
William Floyd Estate	150

TABLE 6

FEDERAL ACTIVITY AREAS WITH PRIMARY ACCESS BY WATER:
1987 MAXIMUM NUMBERS OF DAILY VISITORS

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Private Boats</u>	<u>People*</u>
Watch Hill		
Boats Beached and Anchored	100	400
Marina Boat Slips	158	632
Ferries	—	968
Total Watch Hill		2,000
Sunken Forest		
Boats Beached and Anchored	125	500
Marina Boat Slips	34	136
Ferries	—	1,864
Total Sunken Forest		2,500
Talisman		
Boats Beached and Anchored	60	240
Ferries	—	460
Total Talisman		700
Old Inlet		
Boats Beached and Anchored	40	160
Boats at Small Docks	20	80
Total Old Inlet		240

* 4 people per boat



- LEGEND**
- SEASHORE BOUNDARY
 - - - STATE PARK BOUNDARY
 - - - EXISTING FERRY (NATIONAL PARK SERVICE AND EXEMPTED COMMUNITIES)
 - - - PROPOSED FERRY TO NATIONAL PARK SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS
 - - - PROPOSED BOUNDARY
 - FEDERAL LAND



Figure 11
Existing and Proposed Ferry Routes
 Fire Island National Seashore
 NEW YORK

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administrative headquarters is located near the proposed ferry terminal area. According to existing lease agreements, administrative operations will remain at this site until 1981. At that time consideration will be given to acquiring the site in order to maintain administrative operation functions here rather than relocating them to the ferry terminal area. Centralization of operations at one permanent mainland area is desirable. The possibility of expanding the existing ferry terminals was examined and determined to be impractical because of a lack of open land and problems with automobile access. Following the study of 24 potential mainland sites along Great South Bay and reevaluation of the minimum acreage needed for a headquarters/terminal site, the Park Service is proposing the establishment of a permanent seashore headquarters and ferry terminal on a 10-acre site located at the head of the Patchogue River (see figures 12 and 13).

The proposed headquarters site is composed of four parcels, the largest of which is 6.8 acres. Present uses include a bowling alley, boathouse, a small marina, maintenance structures, and two small single-family residences. Present zoning is industrial (E-industrial district). Existing street frontage includes Division Street with 450 feet and West Avenue with 650 feet. There are 900 feet of water frontage on the Patchogue River.

The Patchogue River site has easy access to bus stops and existing public transit (Long Island Railroad), good automobile access from existing arterial streets, adjacent offsite parking (existing and proposed), and good water access with little or no additional dredging. Location of the headquarters and terminal at the Patchogue River site will facilitate use of public transit, will not require additional encroachment into residential neighborhoods or important wetland areas, and could serve as a stimulus for redevelopment along the Patchogue River.

The site is about 1/3 mile south of Main Street (Montauk Highway) on West Avenue (County Road 19). North of Main Street, West Avenue connects directly into Waverly Avenue and Sunrise Highway. West Avenue is 32 feet in width and serves commercial, industrial, and residential uses (older single-family homes). Present traffic volumes average about 150 to 200 vehicles per hour, and although the existing road could handle higher volumes, it could be widened to accommodate still greater volumes without significantly affecting adjacent development (approximate right-of-way width equals 50 feet).

Ferry service from the new headquarters and terminal site in Patchogue will result in 1,668 people per day at the site bound for Watch Hill (968 people), Talisman (460 people), and Sunken Forest (240 people in two ferries). These daily arrivals will reach the terminal site by car (1,405 people in 401 cars), by the Long Island Railroad (180 people), and by bus and other means (83 people). Table 7 gives the traffic distribution for this proposal.

TABLE 7
1987 HOURLY TRAFFIC DISTRIBUTION

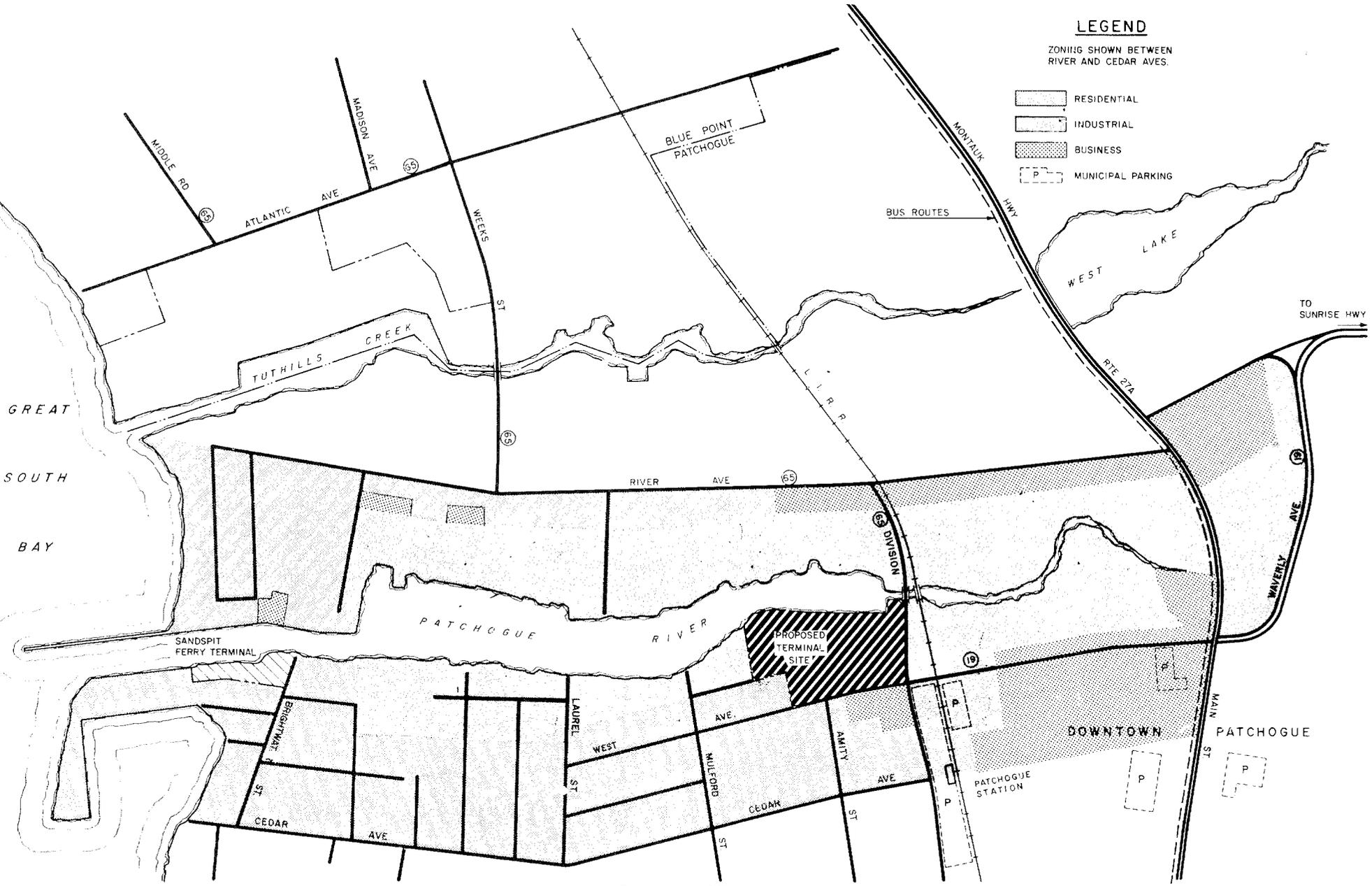
Arrival at Mainland Terminal			Departure from Mainland Terminal		
Time	Percent ^a	Avg. Peak No. of Cars ^b	Time	Percent	Avg. Peak No. of Cars
8 to 9 a.m.	10	40	1 to 2 p.m.	2	8
9 to 10	15	60	2 to 3	5	20
10 to 11	25	101	3 to 4	10	40
11 to 12	30	120	4 to 5	25	101
12 to 1 p.m.	10	40	5 to 6	30	120
1 to 2	5	20	6 to 7	20	80
after 2	5	20	7 to 8	8	32
	100	401		100	401

- a) Percentage of arrivals and time of arrivals were determined by surveys conducted with the assistance of the Nassau-Suffolk Planning Board and Vollmer Associates.
- b) 3.5 people per car.

Morning peaks will result in about 100 to 120 vehicles per hour from 10 a.m. to 12 noon arriving at the terminal, and afternoon peaks will result in about 100 vehicles per hour from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. departing from the site. Demand, at 140 percent of average peak volumes, may cause peaks from 140 to 170 vehicles per hour. The site, including the bowling alley property, could accommodate approximately 450 spaces, which would accommodate average peaks. Some minor use of adjacent railroad parking lot spaces may be necessary on extraordinary weekends.

National Park Service consultants have analyzed the feasibility of several vessel types for use as ferries. Large capacity, standard hull ferries, with steel or aluminum construction, and conventional screw propellers appear to be most feasible. Channel constraints on the upper Patchogue River favor a vessel with general dimensions that do not exceed 65 feet in length, 26 feet in width, and a 4½-foot draft.

The mainland terminal and seashore headquarters will contain facilities for administration, visitor orientation, a small concession, ferry terminal, maintenance and storage, wet and dry docks, visitor parking, and bicycle storage. The site plan in figure 13 is a general illustration of where certain facilities would be located on the 10-acre site. Table 8 lists minimum area requirements for planned facilities at the Patchogue terminal.



LEGEND

ZONING SHOWN BETWEEN RIVER AND CEDAR AVES.

- RESIDENTIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- BUSINESS
- P MUNICIPAL PARKING

Figure 12
Existing Land Use Surrounding
Patchogue River Site
 Fire Island National Seashore
 NEW YORK



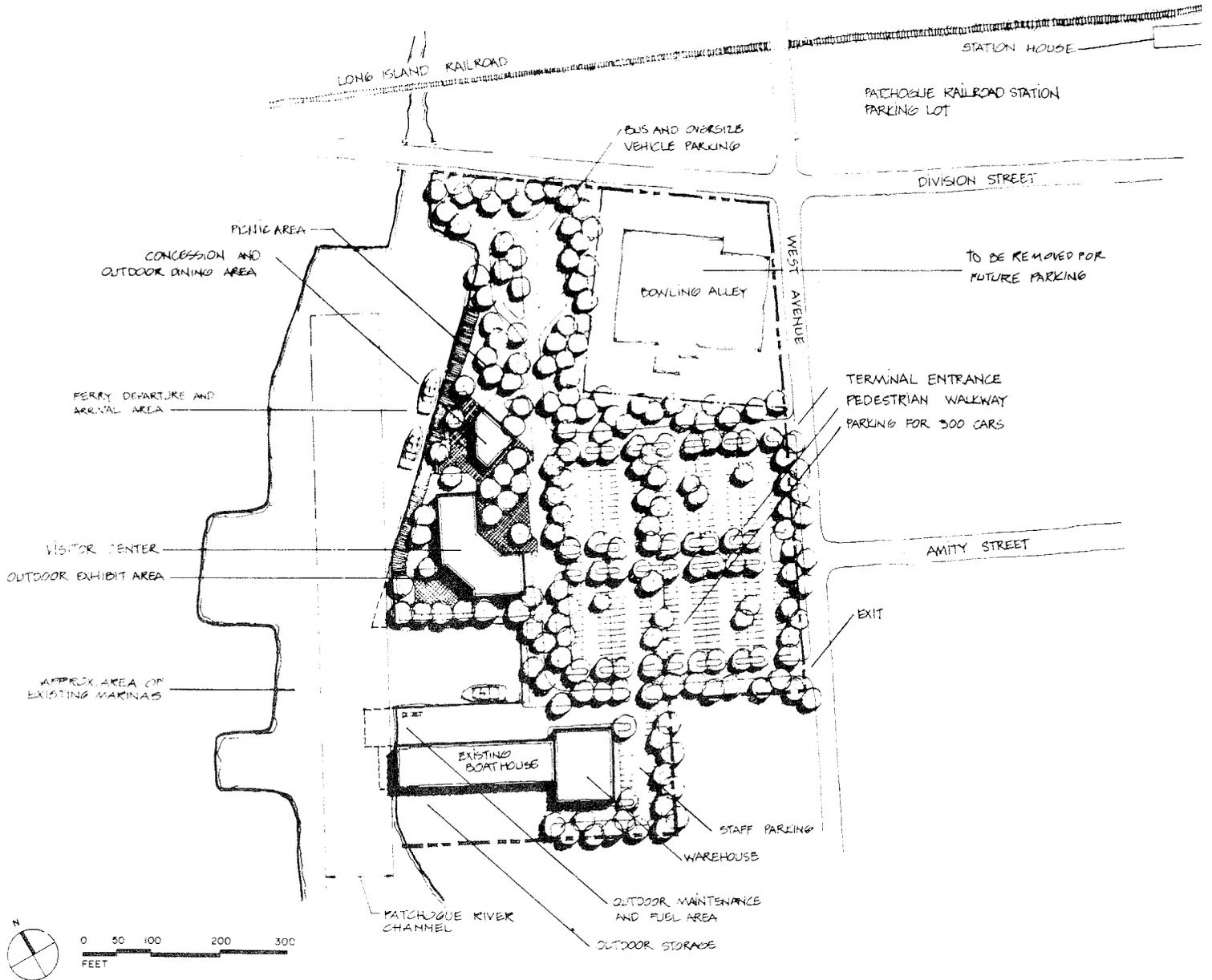


Figure 13

Headquarters/Terminal Area Site Plan

Fire Island National Seashore

NEW YORK

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TABLE 8

PATCHOGUE TERMINAL – MINIMUM AREA REQUIREMENTS

Facility	Floor Area (in sq. ft.)	Building Area (in sq. ft.)
Visitor Center and Administration Building* (two stories)	20,500	13,850
Comfort Station		500
Concession Area		10,000
Maintenance Area and Warehouse (two stories)	25,500	18,000
Visitor Parking (450 vehicles)		180,000
Ferry Terminal		6,500
Space Totals		228,850
Facilities Acreage		5.3 Acres
Open Space Allocation		4.0 Acres
Minimum Required Acreage		9.3 Acres

*Space requirements will be reduced if the present headquarters site is retained.

The Patchogue River site is located in an industrial/commercial area, and the river itself is lined with marina and industrial structures and uses. Design of the terminal complex will be somewhat compact with an urban character. The new terminal site will require some redevelopment for a suitable National Park Service area. The village of Patchogue and the Suffolk County Planning Commission will be encouraged to undertake a replanning and rezoning program for the surrounding terminal site area to complement the development of the site as a national seashore facility.

SEAPLANES AND HELICOPTERS

Public use of seaplanes and helicopters will not be allowed for access to national seashore lands. The communities will be encouraged either to prohibit the use of helicopters or to restrict their use to well-marked landing areas. The National Park Service has cooperated with the Federal Aviation Administration to develop a regulation to govern the use of seaplanes in waters adjoining the communities, to restrict this use to specific areas, and to minimize safety hazards.

Use of helicopters within federal areas will be for emergency and essential management purposes only (for instance, to conduct special studies). Helicopter landing areas will be designated near the Sunken Forest and Watch Hill areas.