

DRAFT
Statement of Findings
for
Executive Order 11988 (“Floodplain Management”)

Ferry Terminal
Fire Island National Seashore
Patchogue, Long Island, New York

RECOMMENDED:

Superintendent, Fire Island National Seashore

Date

CERTIFICATION OF TECHNICAL ADEQUACY AND SERVICEWIDE CONSISTENCY:

Chief, Water Resources Division

Date

CONCURRED:

Northeast Region Regional Safety Officer

Date

APPROVED:

Director, Northeast Region

Date

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INTRODUCTION

This Statement of Findings (SOF) has been prepared in accordance with Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management), Director’s Order #77- 2, and the National Park Service (NPS) guideline for implementing these orders, including Procedural Manual #77- 2. The SOF summarizes the floodplain development associated with actions to replace the ferry terminal and associated bulkheading along the Patchogue River that were included in the NPS Preferred Alternative as described and evaluated in the 2002 *Environmental Assessment for Proposed Passenger Center, Ferry Terminal, and Park Headquarters Building, Renovation of the PMF Maintenance Building and Replacement of NPS Patchogue River Bulkheading*. The SOF also describes the reasons why encroachment into the floodplain is required to implement the project, the site- specific flood risks involved, and the measures that will be taken to mitigate floodplain impacts.

Proposed Action

The ferry terminal would be removed and replaced in its existing location at the Patchogue ferry dock with a new facility. The new facility would be approximately 4,000 square feet and would include an indoor passenger waiting area, ticketing area, and restrooms. Visitor information and orientation would be provided. The building would be accessible, as would a route between the parking lot and the building, between the building and the dock. The exterior deck used for ferry boarding and disembarking would be replaced and the deteriorated timber bulkhead would be repaired or replaced.

The proposed improvements would address a number of problems. The existing ferry terminal building is inadequate for the current ferry operation and for the NPS plans to expand ferry services from Patchogue to other points on Fire Island. The terminal was initially constructed as a temporary solution to the problem and has remained in place for almost 25 years. The building has no inside waiting area, is not handicapped accessible, is not heated, has no information or orientation capabilities, and is unsafe.

Brief Site Description

The ferry terminal site is located in the Village of Patchogue on the south shore of Long Island, between the Patchogue River and West Avenue (refer to figure 1), and is located approximately 1 mile inland along the Patchogue River from Great South Bay (refer to figure 2). The Patchogue River is heavily developed with boat yards, marinas and other related uses. The National Park Service currently holds several parcels of land in the immediate vicinity of the ferry terminal site.



Figure 1 – Regional Map

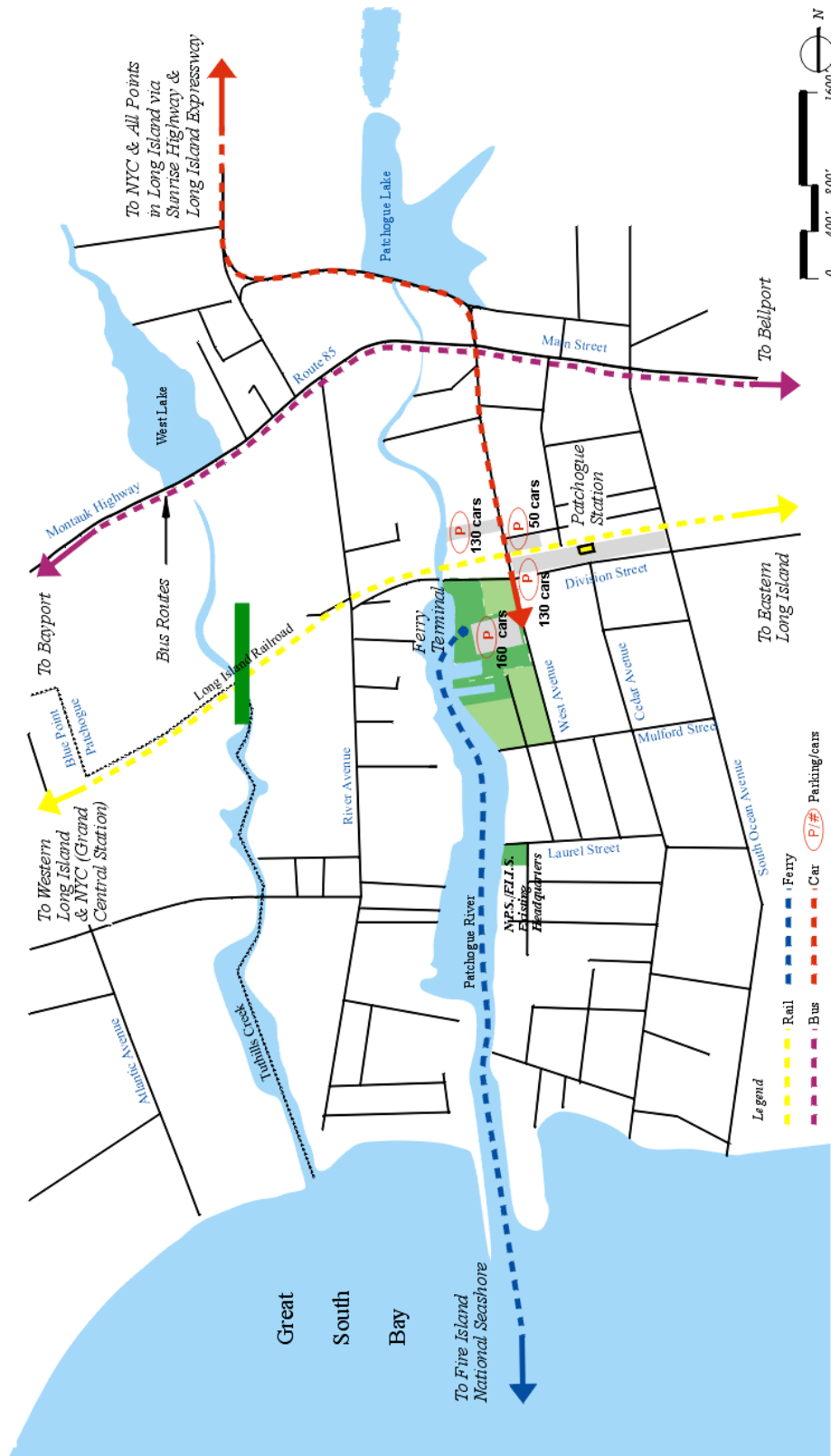


Figure 2 – Local Map

The predominant NPS holding is a 6.66- acre parcel, which contains the existing ferry terminal, its associated parking lot and retention pond. The site is the primary operational and transportation center on Long Island for Fire Island National Seashore, and provides direct ferry access to the park.

JUSTIFICATION FOR USE OF THE FLOODPLAIN

Proposed improvements within the floodplain of the Patchogue River are necessary for NPS to comply with the purpose and legislative mandate for the Fire Island National Recreation Area. According to federal law (16 USC 459e), “The boundaries of the national seashore shall extend from ... and, in addition, mainland terminal and headquarters sites, not to exceed a total of twelve acres, on the Patchogue River within Suffolk County, New York, all as delineated on a map identified as ‘Fire Island National Seashore’, numbered OGP- 0004, dated May 1978.” According to the 1978 Fire Island National Seashore General Management Plan (GMP), “Following the study of 24 potential mainland sites along the Great South Bay and reevaluation of the minimum acreage needed for a headquarters/terminal site, the Park Service is proposing the establishment of permanent seashore headquarters and ferry terminal on a 10- acre site located at the head of the Patchogue River. The site was chosen due to its excellent location adjacent to major arteries, close proximity to the Patchogue Station of the Long Island Railroad, accessibility of the Patchogue River for park boat operations, and availability of land.”

During the preparation of the 2002 Environmental Assessment (EA), other alternatives for locating the ferry terminal were considered but rejected based on cost or impracticality. Moving the ferry terminal function to distant locations closer to the western or eastern ends of Fire Island were ruled out because of the high cost of acquiring new NPS lands, the inefficiencies of further fragmenting park functions and facilities, and (if on Fire Island) the risk of putting key permanent structures on an inherently unstable barrier island subject to hurricanes, storms, flooding, and erosion.

The proposed development is functionally dependent upon a location in proximity to water and for which non- floodplain sites would not exist because of the need to provide passenger accommodations immediate to the ferry dock. Consequently, there are no practicable alternatives for proposed development actions within the floodplain. Overnight occupation of the site would not be permitted.

FLOOD RISK

The Patchogue River is a perennial stream located adjacent to the ferry terminal location. The stream bank is stabilized by a timber bulkhead at this location. The Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) for Suffolk County, NY indicates that the ferry terminal is within the area inundated by the 100- year flood of the Patchogue River. The base flood elevation has been determined to be at elevation 6 feet. The site is not within an area of coastal flooding with velocity hazards. The existing ferry terminal building has been subject to flooding in the past, rendering the restrooms inoperable.

MITIGATION OF RISK TO PEOPLE AND STRUCTURES

Based on the risk of flooding, the finished floor elevation for the building to be constructed would be at elevation of 6.5 feet. The bulkhead would be repaired or replaced and would provide protection from erosion hazards or scouring. The park has a hurricane and flooding plan that would direct emergency actions and evacuations in the event of flooding. At the appropriate times visitors would be removed from the site and the site would be closed until potentially hazardous conditions have abated. Therefore, hazard to life and property from flooding would be reduced.

SUMMARY

The NPS proposes to replace the ferry terminal and repair or place the associated bulkhead in the Village of Patchogue. Proposed improvements within the floodplain of the Patchogue River would comply with the purpose and objectives of the enabling legislation and management documents for Fire Island National Seashore. The risk of flood loss would decrease, and human safety, health and welfare, would not be jeopardized as a result of the proposed development.