

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents traffic accident data for roadways within the vicinity of the Direct Route Alternative and analyzes the Direct Route Alternative's potential impact on roadway safety. The analysis responds to concerns raised during the project's ongoing public outreach and participation process regarding potential accidents that could be caused by proposed poles. The impact analysis also addresses the potential for changes in traffic circulation and traffic volumes associated with the Direct Route Alternative, as well as the Direct Route Alternative's potential impact on public policies related to transportation.

With regard to air quality, the Direct Route Alternative would not involve the addition of any stationary sources of emissions. With regard to mobile source emissions, the Direct Route Alternative would not generate a significant number of new vehicle trips, as noted above, and therefore would not result in any significant adverse impacts on air quality. Further, the new transmission line would maintain air quality, as it would help reduce use of combustion turbines on the East End. Consequently, the Direct Route Alternative would not have any effect on air quality, and therefore no detailed air quality impact assessment is provided.

With regard to noise, the Direct Route Alternative would not involve the addition of new transformers at substations, nor would it involve the addition of any other new stationary sources of noise. The Direct Route Alternative would generate only a small number of vehicle trips and therefore would not result in a significant increase in noise levels due to traffic. Consequently, the Direct Route Alternative would not have any effect on noise, and therefore no detailed noise impact assessment is provided.

Chapter 15, "Construction," evaluates potential short-term impacts on traffic, air quality, and noise during installation of the new transmission line and expansion of the Bridgehampton Substation.

B. EXISTING CONDITIONS**TRAFFIC ACCIDENT DATA**

The Town of Southampton adopted an updated *Transportation Element* for the *Comprehensive Plan* in 2004 (2004 Transportation Element). The 2004 Transportation Element includes a ranking of the 15 highest accident locations in the Town of Southampton, based on data collected between January 2002 and October 2003. One of these locations, the intersection of NYS Route 27 and David Whites Lane, is along the route of the Direct Alternative. Twenty-seven accidents occurred at this intersection during the data collection period, involving 53 vehicles and resulting in 7 injuries.

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KeySpan maintains records of traffic accidents involving utility poles. From 2002 to October 2007, 37 occurred in Bridgehampton hamlet, 110 occurred in the Village of Southampton, and 23 occurred in Water Mill hamlet.

Appendix G presents accident data by type for major intersections and links (i.e., road segments between intersections) in the vicinity of the Direct Route Alternative for the most recent 3-year period for which data is available from NYSDOT (July 1, 2004 – June 30, 2007). Tables G-1 and G-2 in Appendix G indicate a total of 116 accidents during the analysis period, of which 78 occurred at intersections and 38 occurred on road segments between intersections. The majority of accidents (over 80 percent) involved a collision with another motor vehicle. Approximately 16 percent of the accidents were recorded as “other,” a category as defined by NYSDOT that includes collisions with animals, trees, buildings/walls, barriers, fences, curbing, ditches, and bicyclists; and fire/explosions, submersions, and rollovers. Fewer than 3 percent involved a collision with a light support/utility pole and fewer than 2 percent were identified as non-reportable. An accident is considered to be non-reportable by NYSDOT if there was no personal injury and either (a) no motorist report was filed; (b) no dollar value of damage was entered on the accident report; or (c) the amount of vehicular damage did not exceed a specified amount (\$1,000). There were no collisions involving pedestrians during the analysis period. The intersection of NYS Route 27 and David Whites Lane was reported to have the greatest number of accidents during the analysis period (11 accidents over the 3-year period). As noted above, this intersection is along the route of the Direct Alternative.

C. POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The following conclusions regarding potential traffic impacts would apply to all configurations of the Direct Route Alternative transmission line, whether above ground, below ground, or a combination of overhead and underground.

The Direct Route Alternative would not affect traffic circulation. After the transmission line is constructed, the only new vehicle trips would be for periodic maintenance along the route. This small number of vehicle trips would not result in any significant adverse impacts.

In segments of the route that would be overhead, the Direct Route Alternative would replace existing poles, generally spaced at the same intervals as the existing poles, and would, on average, only be about 6 inches thicker in diameter at the base than the existing poles. Two riser poles would be installed at Scuttlehole Road (see Figure 1-4). Where taller (56-foot above grade) poles are required (i.e., at road crossings, at turns along the route, and for riser poles), the increased diameter would still only be about 6 inches over the existing condition. The Direct Route Alternative would replace preexisting distribution lines and therefore would not be expected to result in a substantial change in the proportion of traffic accidents involving utility poles. Further, between 2004 and 2007, only a minor proportion (fewer than 3 percent) of accidents at major intersections and links in the vicinity of the Direct Route Alternative involved light supports/utility poles. Since the Direct Route Alternative would largely replace existing poles, it is anticipated that the Direct Route Alternative would not materially alter the proportion of accidents where lighting and/or utility poles are involved.

The Direct Route Alternative would not have a significant adverse impact on public policies related to transportation, nor would it interfere with future development of new transportation projects. As noted in Chapter 4, “Zoning and Public Policy,” in the event of widening projects (e.g., the CR 39 improvement project), it is expected that the appropriate agency would

coordinate with LIPA on construction and installation of the project. In fact, LIPA and the Suffolk County Department of Public Works (DPW) have already met with regard to the Direct Route Alternative. Concerning the proposed joint-use corridor, which is also described in Chapter 4, “Zoning and Public Policy,” although there are no current proposals for development of the recommended joint-use corridor or new highway along the LIRR right-of-way, there is a possibility that the Town of Southamptton may proceed with the construction of either of these recommendations in the future. The Direct Route Alternative would not, however, prevent construction of the proposed joint-use corridor because most roadways within the Town maintain utility lines along the adjacent road right-of-way. Further, the Direct Route Alternative would not be located along the LIRR right-of-way where the joint-use corridor is proposed. *