

AARP LONG ISLAND

**ACTION PLAN
FOR
AGE-FRIENDLY**

VILLAGE OF GREAT NECK PLAZA



**Prepared by:
Village of Great Neck Plaza Age-Friendly
Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)**

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**Village of Great Neck Plaza Age-Friendly
Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)**

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INTRODUCTION

AARP and the Age-Friendly Communities Program

The AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities is affiliated with the World Health Organization's Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Program, an international effort launched in 2006 to help cities prepare for rapid population aging and the parallel trend of urbanization. The program has participating communities in more than 20 nations, as well as 10 affiliates representing more than 1,000 communities.

In the U.S., 70 communities from more than a two dozen states have enrolled in the AARP Network, including four on Long Island. The Village of Great Neck Plaza, the first village enrolled in the program in the U.S., joined the AARP's Livable Communities Program in 2013 and was interested in doing so to encourage and promote public policies for our village that support healthy ageing and thereby improve the health, well-being, satisfaction, and quality of life for our older residents (aged 50 or older).

The Village has incorporated the goals of the AARP program, which are to:

- 1) promote safe, secure and more workable environments for people of all ages and abilities, and
- 2) allow older residents to enjoy physical independence and advance their mobility.

The Village of Great Neck Plaza is looking to become known as an age-friendly community and a healthy, walkable community for persons of all ages and abilities. Leading the program, Mayor Jean Celender formed a volunteer Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to assist in carrying out the goals and objective of the committee in April of 2014. CAC members have met regularly over the last two years for frequent dialogue, discussion and to provide their ideas/suggestions on a future vision. The Action Plan is intended to help the Village in the development of recommendations for projects to improve the "quality of life" in the Plaza and meet the goals and objectives of this AARP program.

Why is this effort important?

The whole world is rapidly growing older, due to increasing life spans along with declining birth rates. In the U.S. the number of persons aged 65+ is projected to grow 79.0% from 2010 to 2030, increasing from 13% to more than 19% of the total population.

In the Town of North Hempstead, 2010 Census data revealed that one-quarter of the town's roughly 230,000 people are now age 60 or over. Furthermore, North Hempstead's older senior population has been growing even faster—residents aged 75-84 increased 40% while those older than 85 increased 60%, according to the last national census.

By comparison, Great Neck Plaza in the 2010 Census had 2,251 persons over the age of 65. This represents 33.56% of its 6,707 population. The increase in seniors was up almost 4% from the 2000 Census when 65+ was 30.25% of the population (1,946 out of 6,433). In 1990 Census, seniors were only 24.86% of the population (1,466 out of 5,897 persons). Thus, in 20 years, the shift in the percentage of seniors, as compared to the total population, was an almost 10% increase.

Population aging will shape local, regional, national and international economies and policymaking unlike any other demographic shift witnessed to date. As people stay healthy and active longer, communities must adapt. A key strategy to facilitate the inclusion of growing numbers of seniors is to make our world more age-friendly: enabling people of all generations to stay engaged in community activities and treating everyone with respect, regardless of age. Age-friendly communities help people stay healthy and active even at the oldest ages, provide appropriate support to those who can no longer look after themselves. It's important for people to live independently and to age in place, and having a walkable, vibrant community is an important part of aging and the well-being of people.

The goal of creating a vision for a small suburban village, such as Great Neck Plaza, can be especially daunting given present challenges in serving changing demographics and diverse local populations. These challenges are compounded by fiscal constraints—the high cost of living on Long Island, coupled with the increasing strain on budgets at every level of government. Nevertheless, well-designed, livable communities are critical to our future economic growth, and they make for healthier, happier, and more vital residents — of all ages.

COMMUNITY PROFILE: VILLAGE OF GREAT NECK PLAZA

The Village of Great Neck Plaza is one of nine incorporated villages on the Great Neck Peninsula, the setting for F. Scott Fitzgerald's classic novel, *The Great Gatsby*.

Incorporated in 1930, the village was transformed from a farming community into a busy commuter community during the growth of region's railroad network during the latter 19th Century. Today, Great Neck Plaza has a total area of only 0.3 square miles, with a high population density—6,707 residents, according the 2010 Census (an estimated 6,918 in 2014). The village has a separate governance structure from the Town of North Hempstead—a five-member board of trustees, composed of four elected trustees and an elected mayor.

The demographic makeup of the village is almost 77% white; 11.6% Asian; 7.3% Hispanic or Latino; and 1.5% African American. There are 3,925 housing units, including almost 90 multiple-family apartment buildings and just 148 single-family homes. Great Neck Plaza has one of the densest downtown senior populations on Long Island, according to Mayor Celender.

The median income for a household in the village was \$54,591, and the median income for a family was \$70,781. About 4.1% of families and 7.1% of the population were below

the poverty line, including 4.7% of those under age 18 and 12.8% of those aged 65 or over.

Great Neck Plaza encompasses a busy commercial district, two parks, as well as a residential section. It offers a compact and vibrant downtown, including the Great Neck Long Island Rail Road station, over 260 retail stores and service establishments, approximately 40 office buildings, 2 four-star hotels, a nursing home and rehabilitation center, a senior independent living facility and one assisted-care living facility.

AARP'S ROLE IN CREATING AGE-FRIENDLY PLANS

The goal of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities program is to provide municipal leaders—whether at the city, county or village level—with guides and tools they can use to create practical age-friendly action plans: assessing current assets and best practices; identifying opportunities for improvement; and formulating short-term and long-term action items.

To enroll in the network a community's leadership must make “the commitment to actively work toward making their town, city, county or neighborhood a great place for people of all ages.” AARP facilitates a community's participation by guiding its representatives through the network's implementation and assessment process. On Long Island four communities have signed up so far:

- **Brookhaven Town** (Enrolled March 14, 2013)
- **Village of Great Neck Plaza** (Enrolled April 19, 2013)
- **Suffolk County** (Enrolled August 23, 2013)
- **North Hempstead Town** (Enrolled November 17, 2014)

The action steps that comprise age-friendly plans are intended to foster not only more sustainable physical environments, but also more effective social services and opportunities for people of all ages. In general, Age-Friendly plans focus on eight “Domains of Livability,” as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO):

1. **Outdoor spaces and buildings**—availability of safe and accessible recreational facilities.
2. **Transportation**—safe and affordable modes of private and public transportation.
3. **Housing**—a wide range of housing options for older residents; the ability to age in place; and other home-modification programs.

4. **Social participation**—access to leisure and cultural activities; opportunities for older residents to participate in social and civic engagement with their peers and younger people.
5. **Respect and social inclusion**—programs to promote ethnic and cultural diversity as well as multigenerational interaction and dialogue.
6. **Civic participation and employment**—the promotion of paid work and volunteer activities for older residents and opportunities to engage in formulation of policies relevant to their lives.
7. **Communication and information**—the promotion of and access to technology to keep older residents connected to their community and friends and family.
8. **Community support and health services**—access to home-care services, clinics, and programs to promote wellness and active aging.

For a detailed description of features that characterize each domain, see the WHO’s “Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities” in the Appendix of Resources.

PLANNING PROCESS AND TIMETABLE

Communities participating in the Age-Friendly Program are expected to commit to a general template—a three-phase plan, over a period of five years and beyond:

Phase 1 - Planning (Years 1-2)

Conduct a comprehensive baseline assessment of the age-friendliness of the community, including the 8 Domains of Livability and other information. Organize stakeholders and establish an advisory committee. Develop and approve a 3-year action plan based on assessment findings; identify indicators to monitor progress.

Phase 2 – Implementation and Evaluation (Years 3-5)

Commit to implementing the approved plan, developing a framework to evaluate priorities as they are accomplished. At the end of five years, a progress report is submitted that outlines the progress against the baseline using the indicators developed in the action plan.

Phase 3- Continuous Improvements (Year 5 and beyond)

Make continuous improvements, identifying new actions to form the basis for a revised action plan. Organize knowledge exchange opportunities, to share ideas, resources and best practices more effectively among participating age-friendly U.S. communities.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORTH HEMPSTEAD AND GREAT NECK PLAZA PLANS

PROJECT INDEPENDENCE (www.tonhprojectindependence.net)

In the spring of 2013—more than a year before the Town of North Hempstead signed on to AARP’s Network of Age-Friendly Communities—the town announced what has become a nationally recognized “aging in place” initiative called Project Independence. A program of the town’s Department of Services for the Aging, Project Independence brings together local health care providers, human service agencies, social, educational and recreational programs and local businesses—all working together to respond to the needs of seniors seeking support and assistance in order to remain at home with optimal health, safety and emotional well-being.

Project Independence programs include transportation to the supermarket and doctor’s appointments, home maintenance, social work services, fitness classes and other social opportunities. Seniors who wish to get involved in North Hempstead’s Project Independence activities can call 311 for more information.

This multi-service initiative involves coordination community partners such as North Shore/LIJ Health System, JASA (Jewish Association for Services to the Aged), Family and Children’s Association, North Shore Child and Family Guidance, Sid Jacobson JCC, EAC, Rebuilding Together/LI, The United Way of LI, RSVP/Community Computer Connections Program, Hofstra University, Adelphi University, Delux Transportation, Taxi Hispano Express, Long Island Checker Cab, and All Island Transportation.

REVIEWING BASELINE DATA

While participating in Project Independence, the Village of Great Neck Plaza also enrolled in the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities. Largely through the leadership of the Mayor Jean Celender, the village has been actively involved in many “smart growth” efforts in partnership with Vision Long Island, a well-established organization that advocates for many of the same features that comprise age-friendly communities. The Village of Great Neck Plaza also offers its older residents programs to assist them, including the Senior Span program (with specially designed seminars on various topics and a senior taxi discount for the Plaza’s regulated Taxi service), and participation in the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (S.C.R.I.E.) program. SCRIE is a rent abatement program for seniors 62 and older who live in rent-regulated apartments which are subject to the Emergency Tenant Protection Act of 1974 and meet income eligibility requirements of a household income at or below \$24,000.

Since North Hempstead Supervisor Judi Bosworth officially announced the town’s participation in the Age-Friendly Communities Program on February 10, 2015, the town’s Office for the Aging has been collaborating with AARP in developing Phase I of the Action Plan, which is the planning process. In addition to holding preliminary meetings

with various stakeholders, including local volunteers, AARP conducted several surveys to identify and assess the needs of seniors across Long Island, as well as the Town of North Hempstead and the Village of Great Neck Plaza.

In the fall of 2014, AARP released its “State of the 50+ in Long Island, New York” report. Subsequently, AARP completed two “livable community” surveys in 2015: “Making the Town of North Hempstead a Great Place to Live: The 2014 Livable Communities Survey of AARP Members Age 50+ in the Town of North Hempstead, New York”; and “State of the 50+ in Long Island, New York.”

Following is a summary of the findings:

➤ **The “State of the 50+ in Long Island, New York”**
(AARP New York, October 2014)

In the spring of 2014, AARP commissioned a telephone survey with almost 3,000 registered 50+ voters across New York State, generating 460 useable surveys on Long Island.

The major findings:

A majority of those surveyed said they would be likely to remain in the state as they age if improvements were made in four areas:

- Housing that is affordable and suitable for older residents (74%)
- Health services and community support (71%)
- Public transportation and alternative services for older or ill residents that is affordable and accessible (65%)
- Employment opportunities for older residents (59%)

Many respondents reported serious concerns about their financial security:

- Over one-quarter (28%) of 50+ Long Island residents are not confident they will ever be able to retire, and over one-third (37%) is just somewhat confident they will ever retire.
- More than three-quarters (78%) support establishing a plan to help New Yorkers who do not have access to a retirement savings option at work.
- More than six in ten (62%) say their retirement will be delayed for financial reasons.
- Almost half (46%) of 50+ participants are extremely or very concerned about being able to afford utility costs in the coming years and 60% are as concerned about affording property taxes.

(See more detailed survey findings about housing, transportation, employment and caregiving issues in the following section the 8 Domains of Livability.)

- **“Making The Town of North Hempstead a Great Place to Live: The 2014 Livable Communities Survey of AARP Members Age 50+ in Town of North Hempstead, New York”**
(AARP, February 27, 2015)

A mail survey was sent to 1,000 age 50+ AARP members in the fall of 2014, generating a response rate of slightly more than 23% response. Survey participants were asked to identify various factors contributing to “livable communities”—using the eight domains developed by the World Health Organization’s Age-Friendly Communities program—and to identify needs gaps and priorities for seniors who want to successfully age in place. (See more detailed findings from this survey in the following section the 8 Domains of Livability.)

Key findings:

The top needs gaps between what is important to seniors and what is present in North Hempstead communities fall into four key areas: outdoor spaces and buildings; job opportunities; housing; and community information.

- The top gaps in outdoor spaces and buildings are separate pathways for bicyclists and pedestrians; neighborhood watch programs; and well-maintained public restrooms that are accessible to people of different physical abilities.
- The top gaps identified in job opportunities: a range of flexible job opportunities for older adults; job training opportunities; and jobs that are adapted to meet the needs of people with disabilities.
- The top gap in housing is affordable home prices for adults of varying income levels; and a home-repair service for low-income and older adults.
- The top gaps in community information are clearly displayed and printed community information with large lettering; information that is delivered in person; and an automated information source that is easy to understand.

➤ **“Making The Village of Great Neck Plaza a Great Place to Live: The 2014 Livable Communities Survey of AARP Members Age 50+ in Village of Great Neck Plaza, New York”**
(AARP, August 17, 2015)

A mail survey was sent to 1,000 age 50+ AARP members in the fall of 2014, generating a response rate of slightly less than 23% response. Like the North Hempstead survey, participants were asked to assess various factors contributing to “livable communities” and to identify needs gaps and priorities for seniors who want to successfully age in place.

Key findings:

The top needs gaps between what is important to seniors and what is present in the Village of Great Neck Plaza were the same as North Hempstead communities overall: outdoor spaces and buildings; job opportunities; housing; and community information.

- The top gaps in outdoor spaces and buildings are separate pathways for bicyclists and pedestrians; neighborhood watch programs; and well-maintained public restrooms that are accessible to people of different physical abilities.
- The top gaps identified in job opportunities: a range of flexible job opportunities for older adults; job training opportunities; and jobs that are adapted to meet the needs of people with disabilities.
- The top gap in housing is affordable home prices for adults of varying income levels; and a home-repair service for low-income and older adults.
- The top gaps in community information are clearly displayed and printed community information with large lettering; and information that is delivered in person.

ORGANIZING AN INITIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

In late October 2015, AARP staff and local volunteers met with North Hempstead and Great Neck Plaza officials to discuss initial steps in creating Action Plans for the respective communities, including successful age-friendly strategies, planning tools, and other resources. Kimberly Corcoran-Galante, Commissioner of North Hempstead’s Department of Services for the Aging (which administers Project Independence), and Great Neck Plaza Mayor Jean Celender recommended that a realistic timeline for delivery of preliminary Action Plans would be the end of the first quarter of 2016. While ultimately preparing somewhat distinctive plans, Great Neck Plaza and North Hempstead officials agreed that it was important to regularly collaborate in the planning process.

Some challenges and opportunities are unique to the Plaza, but many of its residents utilize the services of the town, such as Project Independence, so Mayor Celender affirmed that the village's plans needed to be consistent with the overall town-wide goals, objectives and projects.

8 DOMAINS OF LIVABILITY: A PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT FOR VILLAGE OF GREAT NECK PLAZA

As Great Neck Plaza stakeholders began pulling together relevant information and assembling members on their local Age-Friendly Councils, AARP conducted preliminary assessments of the eight domains of livability for the two areas, based on their Livable Community surveys.

For the analysis of each domain, AARP identified:

- Current assets and best practices
- Challenges/barriers and needs gaps
- Opportunities for improvement/new initiatives, including at least one short-term and one long-term action item

As with the Action Plan for Suffolk County, it was decided that the eight World Health Organization domains should be slightly reconfigured, combining Social Participation and Respect/Social Inclusion (which seemed to fit together), while separating Employment from Civic Participation (employment seemed to merit its own domain, given the high cost of living on Long Island and the need for many seniors to work longer and postpone retirement). Great Neck Plaza's CAC members felt that two domains were not applicable for the village because services are not offered at the local level; employment and community support and health services. Thus, the CAC's revised six domains for Great Neck Plaza are:

1. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
2. Transportation
3. Housing
4. Social Participation/Respect and Social Inclusion
5. Civic Participation
6. Communication and Information

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

This domain covers shared physical environments and natural spaces that represent amenities unique to our area. Features include: clean and pleasant public areas; safe and well-maintained green spaces; well-maintained pavements and crossings for pedestrians; separate cycle paths; well-signed buildings; and sufficient public toilets.

In AARP's 2014 Livable Communities survey for Great Neck Plaza:

- ✓ 86% said it is important to have sidewalks that are in good condition and accessible for assistive mobility devices.
- ✓ 84% said it is extremely or very important to have well-maintained public buildings and facilities that are accessible to people of different physical abilities.

Assets and best practices

Overall, there are many outdoor spaces and public gathering places throughout Village of Great Neck Plaza. In addition, the region offers more than 30 senior centers and clubs and 17 public libraries. Among the town's attractions is the Americana Manhasset, a high-end, open air mall along a stretch of Northern Boulevard known as the "Miracle Mile." Many community members also use restaurants, diners, and church-related facilities; and common areas in housing enclaves for gathering places.

- North Hempstead has some 40 parks and recreational facilities, including the Harbor Links Golf Course; Manorhaven Beach Park and North Hempstead Beach Park; 15 playgrounds; 5 pools; 9 walking trails; and a multi-purpose stadium for soccer, lacrosse, football and concerts. The Town Department of Parks and Recreation also offers a wide array of outdoor recreational activities such as tennis, sailing, kayaking, tennis and paddle tennis, lacrosse, baseball, inline hockey and horseshoes.
- Great Neck Plaza has three parks of the Great Neck Park District, a special district within the Town of North Hempstead, which are as follows: Ielpi Firefighters' Memorial Park, Wyngate Park and Cutter Mill Park. It also has several Village-owned parks, Perlman Park on Brompton Road, a pocket park, and a 9/11 memorial on Grace Avenue, and several seating and garden areas on Bond Street. Great Neck Plaza residents are part of the Park District's service area. All Park District residents are entitled to use their parks and other facilities, as well as partake in courses, cultural and sports programs provided by the Park District.

- Great Neck Plaza has a strong traditional downtown area with 260 retail stores, boutiques, restaurants, service establishments, commercial offices and transit-oriented residential apartment buildings. Great Neck Plaza also has the Station Branch location, in the Gardens of Great Neck Shopping Center, of the Great Neck Public Library, which has served as a main library resource during the reconstruction of the Main Library on Bayview Avenue during its multi-year closure. It is expected that the Main Library will reopen sometime later in 2016.

Challenges/Gaps

Although Great Neck Plaza has good parks and downtown areas; it's not clear whether it has an adequate network of safe pathways, bike trails, or walking paths connecting public spaces. While the downtown is walkable for many people, through implementation of five major traffic calming projects that have been implemented in the past sixteen years to make it more walkable, safer and pedestrian-friendly, there's still the focus on the automobile. Cars still seem to be needed in most areas.

In AARP's "State of the 50+ in Long Island, 2014 report, respondents noted several concerns in their communities that are "major or minor problems":

- Streets that need repair: 86%
- Cars not yielding to pedestrians: 73%
- Public transportation too far away, too limited, or too hard to navigate: 61%
- Traffic lights timed too fast for safe pedestrian crossing: 61%
- Sidewalks too narrow, poorly lit, need repair or don't exist: 60%

According to the AARP's 2014 Livable Communities survey for North Hempstead, the largest unmet need in the domain of outdoor spaces was for audio-visual pedestrian crossings. While more than 88% of respondents said these features are important, only 58.7% said they are present in their community.

Opportunities

- Great Neck Plaza adopted a Complete Streets Ordinance in 2012, and since 2000 has implemented a comprehensive program of traffic calming initiatives using state grants that it has secured. Many LI communities can follow the lead of this model municipality that has successfully used "smart growth" principles to create a vibrant, walkable downtown where people of all ages can live, work and enjoy social and leisure activities. Organizations such as Vision Long Island and Sustainable Long Island have worked with Great Neck Plaza, given its initiatives two Smart Growth awards, and helped to develop community-wide visioning processes. Some groups, like Generations United, specifically support the development of intergenerational communities nationwide through annual competitions and awards. Mayor Celender is often

called upon to be a presenter at sessions on “Smart Growth” walkability and transportation improvements/enhancements given her background as a transportation and urban planner and the many projects completed by the Village under her tenure. The Village is presently working to complete its six major traffic calming and enhancement program under a Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP) grant awarded by the NYS Dept. of Transportation for the Shoreward Drive/Welwyn Road area.

- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program offers funds for programs in low- and moderate-income communities, including infrastructure projects such as senior centers, youth and neighborhood centers, parks and recreational facilities, street improvements, sidewalks and tree planting. The Village of Great Neck Plaza has been an active participant in the Nassau County Consortium and is presently rehabilitating the Maple Drive parking lot, repaving Maple Drive and upgrading the adjacent street park utilizing \$200,000 awarded in CDBG monies for the 41st Year.

Short-term Action Item:

- Coordinate with town agencies to find more effective ways to reach seniors with guides to outdoor activities and programs, as well as resources for creating neighborhood watch programs, which many survey participants said were important.

Long-term Action Item:

- Pick Great Neck Plaza as a “pilot community” for the Town of North Hempstead, working with Vision Long Island and other organizations, to develop a model program for creating age-friendly outdoor spaces, including well-maintained sidewalks, good public access to buildings and safe parks within walking distance from residential and commercial areas.

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Transportation

This domain includes choices of transportation that provide mobility, quality of life and independence to all populations. It covers features such as well-maintained roads; reliable, affordable and frequent public transportation; specialized transportation for disabled populations; well-regulated traffic flow; and safe, conveniently located parking.

- ✓ **In AARP’s “State of the 50+ in Long Island, 2014**, 65% of those surveyed said they would be likely to remain in the region if public transportation and alternative services for older or ill residents were affordable and accessible.

In AARP's 2014 Livable Communities survey for Great Neck Plaza, 50+ respondents also reported that they mostly drive themselves to get around:

- ✓ 92% drive; 64% walk; 38% use public transportation; and 35% take a taxi to get around their community.
- ✓ Most believe that it is extremely or very important to have well-maintained streets (97%); well-lit and safe streets for all users (91%). and affordable public parking (91%).

Assets and best practices

Car, bicycle and pedestrian traffic

- Established road network, especially major arteries, such as Cutter Mill Road, Great Neck Road, Grace Avenue, Middle Neck Road, South Middle Neck Road, which are under the jurisdiction of Nassau County. These are the major roadways that provide access into and out of Great Neck Plaza, with many local intersecting village streets.
- Great Neck Plaza has adopted a “Complete Streets” law in 2012, requiring that roads consider safe accommodation for bicyclists, pedestrians, transit users and motorists alike. As previously mentioned, Great Neck Plaza has developed five major “traffic calming” initiatives to improve local roads and walkways and make them safer for both pedestrians and motorists.
- The Nassau-Suffolk Bicycle Coalition has created a Bicycling Master Plan, with 10 proposed West to East corridors and 10 proposed North to South routes. Also, the New York State Department of Transportation has created an online Region 10 (Long Island) Bike Route Map, with more than 80 trails—many of them in the Town of North Hempstead.
- AARP offers several programs for older drivers, including Driver Safety Courses, “Carfit,” and “We Need to Talk.”

Project Independence & Senior Span Senior Transportation Program

- Project Independence provides free taxi transportation twice a week to 60+ residents for food shopping at designated centers within North Hempstead. The town also provides discounted taxi rides for non-emergency medical, dental and treatment appointments within the town, as well as some frequently visited destinations outside the town, seven days a week.

- North Hempstead also offers various “Mobility Management Services,” such as large-print train schedules, driving courses and mobility options.
- Senior Span is a Village of Great Neck Plaza program for seniors that started in 2009 initiated with the assistance of the Town Supervisor Jon Kaiman of the Town of North Hempstead and modeled after the town’s Project Independence Program. Great Neck Plaza has 35 taxi medallions, operated at the Great Neck Train Station, and through telephone dispatch service, under the name “Great Neck Taxi,” which are licensed by the Village and their rates established by the Board of Trustees. Great Neck Taxis offers \$0.50 discount to the posted taxi rate to seniors. In addition, any person 65 years of age or older who has a “Senior Span” card issued by the Village is entitled to an additional discount of \$0.50 off the published rates.

Public Transportation

Long Island Rail Road: The nation’s busiest commuter rail road serves the Plaza through the Port Washington branch with a station on North Station Plaza in the heart of the village. Seniors aged 65 and over may receive half fare on the rail road except during morning peak times.

Bus Systems: North Hempstead is served primarily by Nassau Inter-County Express (NICE) bus routes, in addition to at least two MTA bus routes enter Nassau County from Queens. The Town of North Hempstead Senior Citizen I.D. Card, or the Nassau County Senior Citizen Leisure Pass, are transit cards that entitle seniors age 60 and over to ride at half fare on NICE buses.

- Some bus transportation is also available to senior centers and Town-sponsored recreational events.
- The Medical and Special Transportation/Able-Ride/Paratransit Program is a curb-to-curb transportation service provided by the NICE bus system for those individuals who are unable to utilize the County's Mass Transit System due to physical, visual or cognitive disabilities. To become enrolled a person must be certified and meet eligibility criteria determined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Other Private Transportation Options

- There are several assisted living facilities and senior subsidized housing complexes, some of which may provide transportation for residents to outside activities and medical appointments.
- Rides Unlimited of Nassau and Suffolk, a nonprofit organization, provides transportation for persons with mental or developmental disabilities.

Challenges/Gaps

Region is still too dependent on private vehicles

It's difficult to get seniors to give up their cars in suburbia—more than 90% of survey participants for both Great Neck Plaza and North Hempstead say they mostly drive to get around. Still, in AARP's "State of the 50+ in Long Island, 2014, 65% of those surveyed acknowledged that one of the criteria for remaining in the region was public transportation and alternative services for older or ill residents that were affordable and accessible.

- Traffic congestion remains a problem in many parts of the town, and AARP survey participants acknowledged that one important need was for more affordable parking in high-density commercial and residential areas, particularly for seniors.
- The fixed-route public bus system, NICE, does not cover the entire region; it has gaps and lacks of point-to-point service. Furthermore, recent budget pressures have led Nassau County to cut 10 NICE bus routes along less-traveled areas.
- LIRR train costs may be prohibitive for many lower-income elderly (senior discounts only apply off-peak). In addition, it is often difficult for senior to get to and from train stations.

Opportunities

Age-friendly stakeholders acknowledge that improving affordable transportation options and infrastructure in decentralized suburban regions is a complex and wide-ranging problem—and it usually costs millions to fix. Still, North Hempstead and Great Neck Plaza have made substantial progress in addressing transportation needs for senior through its Project Independence and Senior Span/Taxi programs. Some additional steps can be taken to make incremental progress:

- Consult with a consortium of New York lawmakers and transportation experts (Tri-State Transportation Campaign, Regional Plan Association, Vision Long Island, Metropolitan Transportation Authority, state and federal transportation departments) to coordinate various initiatives and ensure that Long Island gets its fair share of federal and state funding for both public transportation and road services.

Short-term Action Item:

- Work with local and state transportation officials to assess street features most residents believe are extremely or very important: well-maintained roads, easy-to-read traffic signs, and well-lit and safe streets for all users (90%).

Long-term Action Item:

- Review long-range, sustainable options to create separate pathways for bicyclists and pedestrians, which AARP survey residents believe is the largest transportation gap and could be addressed through comprehensive implementation of the Complete Streets law passed by Great Neck Plaza.

Housing

This domain includes the availability of sufficient, affordable housing, with a range of accessible housing choices for people of all ages, as well as home modification options and providers.

In AARP’s 2014 Livable Communities survey for North Hempstead, 50+ AARP members reported:

- ✓ 85% own their home and 65% live in a single-family home.
- ✓ 63% have lived in their community for at least 25 years, 13% have lived there between 15 and 24 years, and another 15% have lived there between 5 and 14 years.
- ✓ 50% say it is extremely or very important to stay in their community, and 90% say it is extremely or very important for them to stay in their home as they age.
- ✓ 59% say they are not very or not at all likely to move outside of their community when they retire and stop working completely.

In AARP’s 2014 Livable Communities survey for Great Neck Plaza, 50+ AARP members reported:

- ✓ 79% own their home and 42% live in a single-family home.
- ✓ 57% have lived in their community for at least 25 years, 21% have lived there between 15 and 24 years, and another 16% have lived there between 5 and 14 years.
- ✓ 50% say it is extremely or very important to stay in their community, and 89% say it is extremely or very important for them to stay in their home as they age.
- ✓ 62% say they are not very or not at all likely to move outside of their community when they retire and stop working completely.

Assets and best practices

The majority of residents in the Village of Great Neck Plaza live in multiple-family apartment buildings, approximately 90% or more. Most of the 91 apartment buildings are co-operatives or condominiums, with approximately a dozen rentals. The apartment buildings are small enough (generally around 50 units) so residents are known to one another. This does not mean that people “cannot fall through the cracks,” but it is rare. The demographics of the occupants is diverse – housing young singles, newlyweds, young families, middle aged and seniors. This is an asset which encourages inter-generational awareness.

Buildings with a live-in superintendent have an additional layer of security and those with a doorman, even more so. Management companies hired by the boards of the co-ops and condos also provide a sense of well-being to shareholders and tenants.

Strong residential real estate market

- Rising home values, with highly regarded school systems. The median home value for North Hempstead was \$633,555 in 2015 (compared to the median home sale of \$430,000 for Nassau County overall in November 2015, according to the Multiple Listing Service of Long Island).
- Large stock of single-family homes; almost 82,000 total housing units in North Hempstead, 73.2% owner-occupied, 21.7% renter-occupied in 2015. Participants in AARP’s 2014 Livability Survey for North Hempstead reported a 85% home ownership rate (79% for Great Neck Plaza), compared to a 63.7% national rate. There is significant equity in existing homes; many seniors are savers and may have a substantial “nest egg” for retirement.
- Varied types of local communities and neighborhoods, many with historic downtowns that are benefitting from “smart growth” initiatives to create walkable communities and revitalize downtown transit-oriented development for both seniors and young couples.
- Great Neck Plaza passed an affordable (workforce) housing law in 2005, recently amended in 2015, to provide density bonuses to developers who

set aside affordable units for workforce and next-generation housing. The Village continues to review and update its Zoning Code to provide incentives for developers to provide inclusionary affordable (workforce) housing in new residential apartment buildings and mixed-use projects.

Senior housing options

The Village of Great Neck Plaza does not operate any senior housing facilities. However, the Village does participate in the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) Program, which is offered to income-eligible persons, age 62 and over, who live in rent controlled or rent stabilized apartments making \$24,000 or less in income (including the combined income of all members of the household). The SCRIE program provides a tax abatement of future rent increases. Initial application must be made with the municipality. Members of the household shall be eligible for tax abatement only if they have resided continually in the Village for at least the two-year period immediately preceding the commencement of the fiscal year for which the tax abatement will be granted. There are presently approximately 25 seniors enrolled in the Village's SCRIE Program.

In addition, there are in Great Neck Plaza two senior rental facilities; both high-end facilities operated by the Atria Senior Living Group. One is Atria Great Neck at 51 Great Neck Road, an assisted living facility and the other, Atria Cutter Mill located at 96 Cutter Mill Road, an independent senior living facility. There is also Grace Plaza Nursing and Rehabilitation Center at 15 St. Paul's Place for seniors and persons with disabilities that need skilled nursing care and other supportive medical services.

Project Independence Programs

The Town of North Hempstead's Project Independence works with several organizations that may be able to assist seniors living in Great Neck Plaza. Rebuilding Together/LI provides volunteers to do minor household repairs. There are also government grant programs available for those who need accessibility improvements in order to remain at home. Both programs have income eligibility requirements. Call Project Independence at "311" or 869-6311.

Growing awareness of universal design

In AARP's 2014 "State of the 50+ in Long Island" report, three-quarters of those surveyed support area-wide legislation that would require new homes built for low-income residents with county or state funds to use universal design standards—features that allow living and work spaces to be accessible and usable by everyone, including people of all ages and people with disabilities. Examples in

private homes include no-step entrances, 36-inch doorways, a bedroom or room to convert into a bedroom on the main floor and a full bath on the main floor.

Towns such as Brookhaven, Southampton and Suffolk County have passed legislation provide incentives to developers and (some requirements for new homes with public funding) to use “visitability” construction standards. Visitability refers to a design criterion that affords all persons basic access to residential buildings. Access features to visitable homes include a zero-step entrance, accessible hallways, and bathrooms with doors wide enough for a wheelchair user to enter. Such features can help a resident adapt in his/her home should the resident's needs change due to disability, age, or reduced mobility.

- In 2012, AARP teamed with Vision Long Island to create the Inclusive Design Long Island initiative, designed to increase the amount and quality of barrier-free multigenerational housing in Nassau and Suffolk counties. AARP also offers consumers several free publications with practical information about universal design and visitability, including: “The AARP Home Fit Guide,” “Increasing Home Access: Designing for Visitability.”

Challenges/Gaps

Barriers to aging in place

All three AARP surveys cited in this report pointed out that there are significant concerns that make it difficult for seniors to successfully age in place challenging on Long Island. Among the issues cited were the lack of affordable housing, including the high cost of property taxes, utilities and services; and the challenges and expense of making modifications to enable them to age in place. In addition, as driving becomes more difficult, many seniors lack transportation from their single-family suburban homes to needed services.

AARP 2014 “State of the 50+ in Long Island survey:

- ✓ 60% are as concerned about affording property taxes.
- ✓ 46% of participants are extremely or very concerned about being able to afford utility costs in the coming years
- ✓ 76% say the lack of affordable housing in their community is a major or minor problem

AARP's 2014 Livable Communities survey for Great Neck Plaza:

The most important housing issues are having well-maintained homes and properties (78%); affordable home repair contractors (77%); seasonal maintenance services (74%), and affordable home prices for adults of varying income levels (60%).

The top home modifications AARP members say they would need to make in order to age in place are:

- ✓ 35% say installing a medical emergency response system that notifies others in case of emergency.
- ✓ 32% note bathroom modifications such as installing grab bars, handrails, high toilet seats or non-slip tile.

Lack of affordable downsizing alternatives

- While Great Neck Plaza has taken steps in recent years to increase the supply of affordable housing for seniors, residents in the AARP livability survey said that affordable home prices for adults of varying income levels is still the largest unmet housing need. Many seniors also need higher level of services & amenities than first-time home buyers and the walkability offered by downtown living.

Addressing community/civic concerns

Mayor Jean Celender has noted that there have been challenges with affordable housing and redevelopment, with the length of time needed to study and analyze proposed zoning changes, to adopt updates to the Village Code and to encourage developers to come in and develop under the new regulations. It is often, at best, a five year period to see projects come to fruition. The Village adopted Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) zoning in 2011 for the “B Business” District to encourage mixed-use, mixed income projects to assist young professionals in the ages of 25-34 who have grown up on Long Island and cannot afford to live here after college and form new households because of the high price of housing and other unaffordable costs. The lack of affordability has gotten worse because in the last decade; home prices, transportation costs, etc. have increased more dramatically (80%) while incomes have risen only slightly (15%) in comparison.

Great Neck Plaza is rather unique in Long Island's more than 130 incorporated villages because we are one of a few communities (Hempstead, Mineola, Long Beach) that is predominantly comprised of multiple-family dwelling units with 91 apartment buildings. So historically our village has offered a wide variety of housing stock and prices, from pre-war walk-up rentals and rent-stabilized units since the 1970's ETPA laws, to later on, co-operatives and luxury

condominiums that have dominated our housing market development since the 1980's.

Great Neck Plaza's downtown needs stores and offices that can thrive and replace obsolete structures, upgraded development that allows for space needs and to meet a changing economy and population—the millennial generation, our young professionals now coming up through the ranks. The Village's vision is to build on the “good” development we currently have here, not to change the character of our charming village that we love, but permit some new development that is appropriate, brings in tax rateables, new vitality and excitement into the downtown.

Similar to the zoning revisions in the C-2 District to encourage inclusionary zoning projects with set asides of affordable units, the “B” Business District zoning also includes density bonuses for including affordable units that are part of the development project.

Opportunities

Re-imagining new housing development

- With “smart growth” redevelopment of downtowns across Long Island gaining popularity, senior housing should be part of the mix, as well as young professionals and families. Boomers and Millennials often want the same thing in housing, gravitating toward community settings and active downtowns. A related intergenerational issue: Because housing for recent college graduates is rarely affordable, so many move away and thus, are not the resources for their parents when their parents would need them the most.
- Create better connections from existing housing to social services.

Short-term Action Item:

- Expand and promote the Town's Residential Repair programs that provide elderly residents with low-cost services for small repairs and maintenance tasks in their current homes, as well as needed “universal design” fixes, particularly bathroom modifications and the installation of emergency response systems.

- Promote the publication of a “frail senior” and/or “at risk” census in each building to be kept by the superintendent and/or management company for quick reference in an emergency. During Superstorm Sandy, this was a crisis situation as Mayor Celender and Deputy Mayor Rosen went to superintendents of various apartment buildings with senior residents who attempted to stay throughout the hurricane. After a week these residents were trying to remain, but the weather got much colder (it snowed) and it was decided to relocate these seniors to more appropriate facilities (heated hotels or shelters) or to family members living nearby since these apartment buildings were largely unoccupied due to no heat, no electricity and no ability for the seniors to navigate the stairs since emergency lighting was also out. Volunteer emergency response personnel were summoned to assist in this operation, which was done on an apartment building by apartment building basis. Approximately a dozen seniors were relocated in this manner.
- Designate a building captain (board member of co-ops and condos) to be responsible for making sure that all residents are accounted for weekly/bi-weekly.
- Have building-wide occasions for all residents to gather. Brunch, pizza party, speakers, in addition to the annual shareholders meeting.
- Inform residents of community or county-wide programs from which they can benefit; Project Independence, meals-on-wheels, taxi services, access to Great Neck Social Center programs, and Great Neck Park District programs.
- Keep in step with Great Neck Co-op and Condo Council quarterly meetings and speaker seminars.
- Read publications such as Habitat magazine – a valuable source of ideas, technologies, advice, referral services and stories related to apartment living.
- Be a good neighbor – caring not curious, interested not intrusive – respectful not rude.

Long-term Action Item:

- Promote more mixed-use, mixed income next generation housing that can offer affordable rentals, which enables young professionals, seniors who are downsizing and income-eligible persons an affordable housing units in a downtown setting in Great Neck Plaza.

Social Participation/ Respect & Social Inclusion

This domain includes opportunities for engagement and inclusion in a variety of affordable, conveniently located and accessible activities outside the home. In addition, older people should be specifically included in community-wide interests and be regularly consulted by public and commercial services on how to serve them better.

In AARP's 2014 Livable Communities survey for Great Neck Plaza:

- ✓ 83% say they interact with friends and neighbors in their community several times a week or more.
- ✓ 78% say it is extremely or very important to have activities that are affordable for all residents, while 74% say having activities that are accurately and widely publicized is important.
- ✓ 72% say having activities that offer senior discounts is important, while 71% say it is important to have a variety of cultural activities available in their community.

Assets and best practices

Great Neck Plaza offers numerous organizations and outlets that help stimulate social interaction among seniors:

- The Great Neck Social Center, located at 80 Grace Avenue (just outside the Plaza's borders in the Village of Thomaston), has many senior programs that are available to Plaza's residents, including a hot lunch served daily on week days.
- The Great Neck Public Library with a Main Branch soon to be reopened on Bayview Avenue and annex facilities, including the Station Branch at the Gardens of Great Neck
- 3 religious institutions (Temple Isaiah, North Shore Sephardic Synagogue, and Community Church)
- The Gold Coast Arts Center hosts film screenings and special events all year round, including a renowned seven-day international film festival hosted by the Gold Coast International Film Festival.
- Great Neck House, a facility of the Great Neck Park District, has classes and educational programs for seniors.
- Cumberland Adult Education, offered through the Great Neck Public Schools, is a continuing education program that offers a multitude of courses for adults and senior, such as: English language arts; fine arts and crafts; foreign languages;

games and hobbies; home, life and family; humanities; music and performing arts; physical fitness, dance and sports; technology; special events and field trips.

- Womanspace is a not-for-profit discussion group devoted to issues concerning women. Weekly meetings are held from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Great Neck Social Center on 80 Grace Avenue in Great Neck Plaza. New members are welcome.
- Many organizations, senior clubs and centers, continuing education and self-improvement classes offered nearby throughout the Town of North Hempstead.
- Project Independence helps direct seniors to programs provided by the Town of North Hempstead, the senior centers and the great many service agencies that work in local communities.
- Village of Great Neck Plaza offers many programs year round: Poetry readings and an annual poetry contest, Summer Concerts on Tuesday nights for 12 weeks in Firefighters Park on Grace Avenue, in addition to seasonal and holiday festivities operated in association with the Business Improvement District the rest of the year, including Promenade Nights, Summer Sidewalk Sales, Restaurant Weeks, Annual Fall Street Fair & AutoFest, and many other special downtown promotions.
- Many assisted living and social model adult day care facilities provide social activities for seniors who participate in these programs.

Challenges/Gaps

- Point-to-point transportation is often a challenge for seniors, especially those with mobility issues. Project Independence offers free or discounted taxi transportation through Great Neck Taxi (and the Senior Span discount fare program) for medical appointments and shopping, but generally not for social interaction purposes. Some bus transportation is available to senior centers and Town-sponsored recreational events.
- Due to budgetary constraints, some local staffs of agencies and organizations may be often stretched to capacity to meet demand for community-based social activities and events.
- People want social programs, but are often living on fixed incomes and want them for free.

Opportunities

- Help senior centers, community centers and libraries reinvent themselves and broaden activities and programs to address the needs of a broader swath of older adults.
- Continue to improve transportation options to enable more seniors to attend social events.
- Collaborate with senior communities to inform residents about available social programs.
- Improve transportation to programs and social activities outside the Plaza (i.e. Cumberland Adult Ed, Great Neck House, etc.)

Short-term Action Item:

- Promote activities that offer senior discounts, since more than 80% of respondents in the AARP surveys in both Great Neck Plaza and Town of North Hempstead noted that it is extremely or very important to have activities that are affordable for all residents.
- Advertise in local publications or in electronic newsletters and printed newsletters if people are interested in joining groups.
- Improve communications through creation of a monthly calendar on the Village's website (preferable in a day by day format) so seniors can more easily see the month's planned activities and mark their own calendars.
- Request volunteers to be a guided docent for the Historic Walking Tour and offer tours twice a year, once in the spring and one in the fall.
- Promote free events and program available at the two Atria Senior Living Facilities; Atria Great Neck (51 Great Neck Road) and Atria Cutter Mill (96 Cutter Mill Road)
- Create a new resident committee to foster interest in socialization as a shared activity (Meet Your Neighbors – Getting to Know & Share our Experiences Together). For example, a container garden club, Tai Chi or Yoga Sessions in Firefighters Park.
- A Newcomers Club or Welcome Wagon to provide orientation to new residents on getting involved and informed on activities, clubs and services offered.

Long-term Action Item:

- Explore multiple ways to expand publicity of social activities through government agencies and nonprofit organizations, such as: senior centers/YMCAs; town and village agency websites; faith-based institutions; Long Island Council of Churches; organizational newsletters; and the AARP Long Island website.

Civic Participation

This domain addresses involvement in a broad range of volunteer and civic activities that foster a high quality of life, as well as participation in decision-making bodies that facilitate membership of older people in volunteer organizations. Among most local observers, civic participation is considered one of our core strengths across Long Island, with many opportunities for volunteerism.

In AARP's survey of age 50+ members in Great Neck Plaza:

- ✓ 61% said having a range of volunteer opportunities to choose from is important and another 61% said it is important to have an easy-to-navigate website that shows available local volunteer activities.

Assets and best practices

- Great Neck Plaza doesn't have an active civic associations, but does offer many ways in which older adults can participate in decision-making that affects local quality-of-life issues. All Board of Trustees meeting agendas are posted on the Village's website and are available the day of the meeting from the Village Clerk. Residents can also "Request to Be Heard" if there's an important issue to bring to the attention of the Board of Trustees. Persons have to call the Clerk and identify themselves and the issue to be discussed. Typically, these items are taken at the end of the Board meeting's agenda.
- Great Neck Plaza offers volunteer opportunities for seniors to work in the community, including checking in on homebound seniors by phone, assistance on resident committees ranging from climate change, transportation, parking, wellness and fitness, helping to staff events and other activities. Many local organizations also are in need of volunteers. The Village can identify local organizations upon request.

- The Long Island Volunteer Center is a regional center designated to promote volunteer services; there are also a multitude of non-paying options offered at local hospitals, schools, nursing homes, arts organizations, museums, religious institutions, senior and community centers, veterans' homes, and New York State parks.

Besides the AARP Volunteer program, additional opportunities for Great Neck Plaza seniors to volunteer their services in the region include:

- **R.E.A.P. (Retired Energetic Active People)** – A local organization that provides for senior social interaction, networking, education through meetings every Tuesday morning at the Great Neck Adult Education Center at 20 Cumberland Avenue. Programs generally start at 9 a.m. and include a speaker. The group has a bagged lunch together at 11:30 a.m. and concludes around 12:30 to 1:00 p.m.
- **R.S.V.P. (Retired Senior And Volunteer Programs)**—Opportunities for retired persons aged 55 years and over to serve on a regular basis as volunteers through the Nassau County Department of Senior Citizen Affairs in such areas as non-profit hospitals and nursing homes, institutions for the handicapped, schools, libraries, county offices, Head Start Programs, day care centers, and visits to homebound.
- **Social Service Volunteers of Nassau County**—Volunteers work in partnership with the Nassau County Department of Social Services to provide assistance for families and children, the elderly, and people with disabilities.
- **The Family and Children's Association**—Offers opportunities for volunteers in a variety of social work programs.
- **Foster Grandparents**—Enables low-income senior citizens age 60 and over to assist children with special needs in hospitals and day care centers.
- **SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives)**—Retired business executives provide free consultation on financial, marketing and managerial problems for new or existing businesses.

Challenges/Gaps

- For people with disabilities and the aging, it's more difficult to participate in civic activities because of transportation accessibility. In AARP's survey of age 50+ members in Great Neck Plaza 70% said it is extremely or very important to have transportation to and from volunteer activities for those residents who need it, and 61% said having an easy-to-navigate website that shows local volunteer activities is important.

- Many traditional volunteer and service organizations, such as Rotary Clubs, Lions Club, We Care Committee, Knights of Columbus are losing members and need to think of different ways to engage their communities and make use of new technologies. Many local organizations report a shortage of volunteers that are essential for them to deliver services to the community (American Red Cross is one large organization trying to outreach for more volunteers).
- Need a centralized calendar, or easy to navigate website that shows available local volunteer opportunities that is current and updated frequently

Opportunities

Short-term Action Item:

- Partner with the Project Independence and Long Island Volunteer Center in aggregating and disseminating a comprehensive guide of volunteer needs and opportunities throughout North Hempstead.
- Organize volunteer car service with a central telephone number to set up transportation of seniors, perhaps through Great Neck Taxi.
- Make arrangements with a private car service, such as Manny’s Limousine, or Uber.
- Work with volunteer organizations to have visible drop off points and signage at volunteer locations (it’s hard for seniors to navigate where to go).
- Educate bicycle clubs and bicycle riders as to the need to respect pedestrians, and not to bike on sidewalks, against the traffic, etc.
- Work to provide opportunities for older adults to participate in decision-making processes, such as in volunteer advisory roles on permanent and ad-hoc resident committees, CACs by organizing new groups or programs to educate constituents on emerging issues such as LGBT, ageism, anti-bullying, advocacy regarding Getting Out to Vote, and educating young people in an Intergenerational Program to respect the elderly and that labeling seniors as “cute” is pejorative and can hurt their feelings.

Long-term Action Item:

- Work with the Project Independence Senior Transportation Program, as well as transportation experts and officials from multiple organizations to devise effective strategies to expand affordable means of transportation for volunteers.
- Work with Mayor Celender and the Board of Trustees on ways to educate Plaza constituents, especially senior adults, on new technologies, proper methods to recycle and dispose of materials no longer needed, especially prescription drugs. The Precinct Building at 100 Community Drive is a drop-off location for residents to discard prescription drugs no longer needed. The Nassau County Police will take these outdated prescription drugs and will ensure they are disposed of properly.

- Continue to encourage and make constituents aware that there is a “Suggestion Box” at Village Hall where residents can write and leave ideas
- Work with Great Neck Public Library and Other organizations to offer free access to computers, Wi-Fi and encourage senior adults to learn how to communicate on the various social media outlets. Possibly there needs to be established computer basics classes at a site to be determined, centrally-located in the downtown, where seniors can learn to use an iPad, laptop and smartphone.
- The computer programs need to offer directions in different languages, such as Hebrew, Farsi, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Russian, etc.
- Develop methods for seniors to seek employment should they want to contribute to the workforce such as:
 - Have members establish a resume, and how it should be set up to indicate history and experience
 - Interact with HR departments at local businesses
 - Emphasize the importance of the seniors’ experiences and the skill sets they can share with younger members of the workforce
 - Mentoring programs such as SCORE
 - Possibly set up program to work with LinkedIn
- Develop ways for social interaction of seniors with younger persons through the Great Neck Public Schools and private religious institutions. School leaders need to know about the value of seniors and their ability to speak to and mentor younger persons about their experiences
- Work on developing and updating a list of Homebound Seniors that have little contact with the outside and may need help in their lives. These “Elder Orphas” are persons at risk because of their age, loneliness and the lack of connections with other persons. The Senior Span Outreach program to telephone homebound seniors and check in with them, send cards on holidays and their birthdays, etc. needs to be expanded and keep up-to-date. David Brooks wrote in the New York Times on May 17, 2016 that “social isolation is a rising problem in communities. It contributes to higher suicide rates, drug addiction, widening inequality, depression and alienation.” This is a challenge in America and to be connected more, engaged in the local community helps give people context in which people can do neighborly things—take care of each other, share time together, help raise little ones and care for the sick and dying.

Communication and Information

This domain covers access to and distribution of information to community residents of all ages, including diverse media platforms such as printed information, TV, radio, websites and social media. Public services also should be provided through selective in-person venues, as well as print and electronic media.

In AARP's 2014 Livable Communities survey of 50+ Great Neck Plaza residents:

- ✓ 89% said they would turn to family, friends, or neighbors for community information on older adult services, while 72% would contact local community centers.
- ✓ 70% said it is extremely or very important to have free access to computers and the Internet in places like the library, senior centers or government buildings in their community.
- ✓ 68% said it is important to have community information available in one central source.

Assets and best practices

- Project Independence offers an Information and Referral Service that reaches out to its partners in the Town of North Hempstead and across Long Island to meet the needs or solve the problems of older residents. Among the areas of assistance: information about and access to benefits such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicare Supplemental Insurance, Medicaid, Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC), Home Energy Assistance Programs (HEAP), food stamps and senior citizen real property tax exemptions (STAR).

Traditional print publications (and their websites) and local television news stations, Public Access Television channels, remain useful vehicles for informing the public, particularly seniors:

- Newsday, regional daily paper, including the Act 2 Sunday section and weekly calendars
- 2 local community weekly newspapers; Great Neck Record and Great Neck News
- Village of Great Neck Plaza quarterly printed newsletter and monthly electronic newsletters provide important topical information to its residents on parking, village services, local events, on-going activities, Board of Trustees meetings, grant projects, etc.
- High-end local magazines, including Gold Coast, Manhasset, Port Washington and Great Neck Magazines
- Long Island Patch and Long Island Press (online magazine and community news websites)
- 50+ Lifestyles monthly newspaper
- Well Beyond 50 magazine/website
- Cable News 12, Verizon Fios1 news programs
- North Hempstead Town TV (Cablevision Channels 18 and 63; Verizon Channel 46)
- Public Access Television (Cablevision Channel 20; Verizon Channel 37)
- Telecare: Catholic educational television on Cablevision and Verizon Fios TV

Increasingly, online resources are becoming the mainstream vehicle for communication with the public, including websites, online publications and newsletters and social media. Examples:

- Websites of the Village of Great Neck Plaza (www.greatneckplaza.net), Town of North Hempstead (www.northhempsteadny.gov) and Great Neck Park District (www.greatneckparks.org) government websites
- Websites of the Atria assisted care and senior independent living facilities in Great Neck Plaza (<http://www.atriaseniorliving.com/retirement-communities/atria-great-neck-great-neck-ny/>) and (<http://www.atriaseniorliving.com/retirement-communities/atria-cutter-mill-great-neck-ny/>)
- Websites of the Great Neck Plaza BID (www.shopgreatneck.com), and Great Neck Chamber of Commerce (www.greatneckchamber.org) for local activities
- New York State and Nassau County government website, including the Labor and Health Departments, Nassau County Department of Senior Citizens
- Websites for local social service agencies and nonprofits such as Family and Children's Association, RSVP, 211 Long Island
- www.AARP.org, Google.com websites
- Online newsletters from local elder law firms, nonprofit organizations, professional and trade associations
- Websites of the major local hospitals (i.e. North Shore University Hospital, LI Jewish Medical Center, St. Francis Hospital, Winthrop University Hospital and Parker Jewish Geriatric Institute), universities (such as Hofstra University, Adelphi, L.I.U. C.W. Post, Molloy College, St. Joseph's College, NY Institute of Technology, St. John's, Queensborough Community College) and disease related websites for health information. The USDA website, see "ChooseMyPlate," has resources for a healthy diet and can analyze dietary intake. The American Dietetic and Nutrition Association, the American Diabetic Association, all have good nutrition recommendations as well.

Consumers often get information through personal interaction, meetings, events, workshops and conferences provided by government agencies and non-profit organizations, such as:

- Senior centers/YMCAs activities, speakers and events
- Suffolk County Advocate consultations
- Faith-based institution events and interpersonal interactions
- Speaker presentations and informational conferences sponsored by professional firms, agencies, professional associations, universities (Hofstra's Annual Aging in Place conference) and groups such as 50+ Lifestyles
- AARP Long Island seminars, workshops and activities

Challenges/Gaps

Rapidly changing media technologies have created several challenges in communicating with various audiences, particularly the elderly:

- The “digital divide” in technological skills between younger and older populations is lessening, but there is still a gap. Furthermore, given the pace of change, especially in mobile devices, it’s difficult for both providers to figure out the best ways send information—especially when messages need to reach adult children and older parents, who may communicate in different ways.
- Information overload. There is so much available information today, but it’s usually not organized aggregated in easy-to-locate places for consumers. It’s “siloeed” in multiple agencies, websites and locations that makes it difficult for consumers to find—especially because many people only start looking for critical information when they’re in crisis situations.
- Keeping information current. Information (regulations, research, events) changes so often these days that organizations are constantly struggling to find additional staffing and funding to keep their communications outreach up to date.

Opportunities

While there are many challenges to communicating with target audiences in a digital age, there are also opportunities for age-friendly communities to improve effectiveness and test new approaches. Some suggestions:

- Partner with organizations that provide more opportunities for face-to-face interaction, information and counseling with consumers, including religious institutions, hospitals, and social service agencies. Some examples include the following organizations:
 - Long Island Health Collaborative
 - Family and Children’s Association
 - Vision Long Island
 - Tri-State Transportation Campaign
 - Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council
 - Health and Welfare Council of Long Island
 - Long Island Builders Institute
 - Long Island Council of Churches
 - Great Neck and Port Washington Chambers of Commerce
 - PSE&G-Long Island
- Create a joint “Speakers Bureau” through a network of organizations such as AARP, hospitals and health care agencies, non-profit groups, elder law and financial services firms, and the Long Island Volunteer Center.

Short-term Action Item:

- Great Neck Plaza should look to continue partnering with Project Independence, coordinate an annual calendar of educational events, seminars, fairs and conferences sponsored by a network of institutions across the Village and throughout the Town of North Hempstead.
- Posting and continue to update information at all listed websites
- Encourage residents to sign up for the Village’s electronic newsletter that contains a monthly calendar and a wealth of information regarding the Village
- Extending email notifications and encouraging residents to provide email addresses to the Village
- Encouraging seniors to participate in opportunities for email education and on its usage
- Encouraging Library branches to offer email education and assistance to seniors
- Offering computer “geek” help by appointment by Library staff of other local organization
- Modeling program after “Senior Net” in Suffolk County Family League to encourage seniors to be more adapt with the computer

Long-term Action Item:

- Since almost 9 in 10 respondents in the AARP survey Great Neck Plaza say they turn to family, friends or neighbors to learn about key services, consult with media experts to better target communications to both adult children and older seniors—particularly exploring how social media can be used to advance information for age-friendly initiatives.

Community Support & Health Services

This domain covers a range of programs and social services vital to the day-to-day needs of residents, particularly older adults. Included are home care, residential care and community service facilities, as well as clear and accessible information about health and social services

In AARP’s 2014 “State of the 50+ in Long Island report:

- ✓ 71% of those surveyed they would be likely to remain in the state as they age if improvements were made in the areas of health services and community support

- ✓ 54% said they have been family caregivers to an adult spouse or relative in the past five years, and 54% also say that it is extremely or very likely they will need to provide similar care within the next five years.
- ✓ 53% said the impact of caregiving is either “overwhelming” or places a “good deal of strain on their quality of life, including financial hardship, emotional stress at work.

In AARP’s 2014 Livable Communities survey for Great Neck Plaza:

- ✓ 95% of members age 50+ said it is extremely or very important to have well-maintained hospitals and health care facilities in their community.
- ✓ 87% said having affordable home care providers was important.
- ✓ 86% said having conveniently located emergency care centers was important.

Assets and best practices

The Great Neck Plaza and surrounding area is home to 7 renowned hospitals, including North Shore-LIJ Health System, Winthrop-University Hospital and St. Francis Hospital. In addition, the Village has several assisted living/independent living facilities, a skilled nursing and rehabilitative facility, and the region has at least five (5) certified home health agencies (known as CHHAs).

- Project Independence helps the Town's older residents connect to health and mental health services and is available to Great Neck Plaza residents. The program links seniors to providers of physician home visits, geriatric mental health assessments, Alzheimer’s disease support programs and advance directive education. Our partners provide case management, supportive counseling, wellness classes and nutrition education. Project Independence locations have nurses and social workers on site to provide assistance such as screening for chronic conditions like hypertension and diabetes, immunizations for influenza, pneumonia and shingles, and health care advocacy. Social Workers are also available to assess individual needs and ease access to in-home support services. The Vial of Life program is a packet of information about your health status that you keep in an easily accessible spot in your home so that in case of emergencies, responders can access it.
- Caregiver support. Project Independence and its partners can assist Great Neck Plaza residents with information and linkage to services and support programs that bring caregivers together to discuss issues and concerns. Respite services (adult day care programs and in-home support services) provide the opportunity for time off.

- Food and Nutrition. Project Independence staff can be consulted by Great Neck Plaza residents to request evaluation of individuals for homebound meal delivery programs (Meals on Wheels), grocery shopping assistance, food stamp applications, free food package programs, congregate meal sites and mobile food van locations. Community resources also include nutrition counseling and education. In addition, programs are available to provide emergency food for eligible individuals via local food pantries.

Challenges/Gaps

Despite the region's strong network of hospitals, health care facilities and institutions, the cost of care is often high, sometimes unaffordable, for many seniors.

- Readily accessible, point-to-point transportation for patients as well as home health aides is inconsistent, depending on local jurisdictions.
- There is often lack of knowledge about ongoing changes in complex government health care regulations for long-term care, including DSRIP (Design System Reform Incentive Payment Program, the Medicaid redesign program to achieve cost savings and efficiencies); and FIDA (Fully-Integrated Dual Advantage, the Medicare/Medicaid managed long term care plan integration for dual recipients).

Opportunities

The Age-Friendly Council members assigned to this domain should work with staff at Project Independence and partner organizations to:

- Continue exploring innovative tactical approaches to low-cost, effective delivery of health care and medical practices, such as mobile doctor services in areas where patient transportation is difficult.
- Create more venues (working with Project Independence and HIICAP) to promote greater understanding of Medicare services, including the expansion of Medicare/Medicaid reimbursement to include preventive treatments.

Short-term Action Item:

- Promote informal preventive health programs through encouraging Great Neck Plaza residents to seek services of Project Independence, incorporating health education programs and screening for at-risk patients at the provider level.

Long-term Action Item:

Through Village of Great Neck Plaza programs and others available through Project Independence, look for multiple ways to provide health information through government agencies and nonprofit organizations, such as:

- Senior centers/JCC of Roslyn
- Great Neck Plaza and Town of North Hempstead agency websites, including Project Independence
- Faith-based institutions across Great Neck Plaza and throughout North Hempstead
- Great Neck Public Library website and newsletters
- Organizational newsletters
- AARP Long Island website
- Long Island Health Collaborative
- Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council
- Health and Welfare Council of Long Island

NEXT STEPS

During the first several months of the planning process, the initial Age-Friendly Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) for the Village of Great Neck Plaza needed to review the findings of the AARP Livability surveys, identifying assets and best practices for each of the 6 domains; gaps and challenges; and opportunities, including short-term and long-term action items.

Following these sessions, the current stakeholders and AARP must complete the next phase of the planning process:

1. Establish an official Citizens Advisory Committee by June, 2016—a group that represents the specific interests of Great Neck Plaza, as well as other municipalities in North Hempstead, and members who will serve as coordinators for subcommittees in charge of planning strategies for each of the 6 domains. To ensure long-term success of the initiative, Great Neck Plaza Mayor Jean Celender, along with other elected officials, policy makers, agency heads and community leaders, must create a strategy to announce the Action Plan with a public event that outlines a 3 to 5-year process.
2. The assessment of each domain still requires a good deal of refinement, and the CAC—long with each of the domain subcommittees—must prioritize various goals for the overall plan and determine which needs of an Age-Friendly plan are already being met. Which domains merit the most focus and have the greatest opportunity for success or improvement. And are there specific municipalities, in addition to Great Neck Plaza, that should be targeted as “pilot communities”—more likely candidates for additional age-friendly initiatives?

3. By the end of 2016 (Planning Year 2), the CAC should develop and approve a 3-year Action Plan that includes: specific targets and tasks for each domain; who will be responsible for completion; by what date; the indicators to monitor success; what resources available and needed; and potential barriers of resistance
4. As the Age-Friendly initiative moves into Phase 2 (implementation of the Action Plan) in 2017, the CAC should develop a framework to evaluate priorities as they are accomplished and create a cycle of improvements for additional communities as they are added to the list of pilot communities. A critical part of the implementation process is to develop a core of key partners—organizations, businesses and agencies who can support, enrich and benefit from the overall effort.
5. An integral aspect of implementation is a step-by-step communication plan to carry each phase of the age-friendly initiative toward its conclusion. A well-devised communication strategy is essential to maintain momentum through the inevitable obstacles, resistance and inertia that hinder many plans. Stakeholders must sustain the vision first articulated by Mayor Celender when she announced the Village's Age-Friendly designation in 2013: "The Village Board of Trustees and I care greatly about all members of our community and recognize that our seniors have a wide range of capacities and resources to share and help educate our younger members of the community. Their involvement in the community, and to remain connected, is important. We are honored that the AARP bestowed on Great Neck Plaza the privilege to be the first village in the U.S. to join in their Livable Communities Program. Our goal is to support healthy aging, which will thereby improve the health, well-being, satisfaction and quality of life for older Americans. In Great Neck Plaza's age-friendly community, we are working to develop the policies, services, settings and structures that will support and enable people to remain active as they age and enjoy their golden years in Great Neck Plaza."

APPENDIX:

Checklist of Essential Features of Age-Friendly Cities

This checklist of essential age-friendly city features is based on the results of the World Health Organization Global Age-Friendly Cities project consultation in 33 cities in 22 countries. The checklist is a tool for a community's self-assessment and a map for charting progress. For the checklist to be effective, older people must be involved as full partners, suggesting changes and in implementing and monitoring improvements.

Transportation

- Public transportation costs are consistent, clearly displayed and affordable.
- Public transportation is reliable and frequent, including at night and on weekends and holidays.
- All city areas and services are accessible by public transport, with good connections and well-marked routes and vehicles.
- Vehicles are clean, well-maintained, accessible, not overcrowded and have priority seating that is respected.
- Specialized transportation is available for disabled people.
- Drivers stop at designated stops and beside the curb to facilitate boarding and wait for passengers to be seated before driving off.
- Transport stops and stations are conveniently located, accessible, safe, clean, well-lit and well-marked, with adequate seating and shelter.
- Complete and accessible information is provided to users about routes, schedules and special needs facilities.
- A voluntary transport service is available where public transportation is too limited.
- Taxis are accessible and affordable, and drivers are courteous and helpful.
- Roads are well-maintained, with covered drains and good lighting.
- Traffic flow is well-regulated.
- Roadways are free of obstructions that block drivers' vision.
- Traffic signs and intersections are visible and well-placed.
- Driver education and refresher courses are promoted for all drivers.
- Parking and drop-op areas are safe, sufficient in number and conveniently located.
- Priority parking and drop-off spots for people with special needs are available.

Housing

- Sufficient, affordable housing is available in areas that are safe and close to services and the rest of the community.
- Sufficient and affordable home maintenance and support services are available.
- Housing is well-constructed and provides safe and comfortable shelter from the weather.

- Interior spaces and level surfaces allow freedom of movement in all rooms and passageways.
- Home-modification options and supplies are available and affordable, and providers understand the needs of older people.
- Public and commercial rental housing is clean, well-maintained and safe.
- Sufficient and affordable housing for frail and disabled older people, with appropriate services, is provided locally.

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

- Public areas are clean and pleasant.
- Green spaces and outdoor seating are sufficient in number, well-maintained and safe.
- Pavements are well-maintained, free of obstructions and reserved for pedestrians.
- Pavements are non-slip, are wide enough for wheelchairs and have dropped curbs to road level.
- Pedestrian crossings are sufficient in number and safe for people with different levels and types of disability, with nonslip markings, visual and audio cues and adequate crossing times.
- Drivers give way to pedestrians at intersections and pedestrian crossings.
- Cycle paths are separate from pavements and other pedestrian walkways.
- Outdoor safety is promoted by good street lighting, police patrols and community education.
- Services are situated together and are accessible.
- Special customer service arrangements are provided, such as separate queues or service counters for older people.
- Buildings are well-signed outside and inside, with sufficient seating and toilets, accessible elevators, ramps, railings and stairs, and non-slip floors.
- Public toilets outdoors and indoors are sufficient in number, clean, well-maintained and accessible.

Community Support & Health Services

- An adequate range of health and community support services is offered for promoting, maintaining and restoring health.
- Home care services include health and personal care and housekeeping.
- Health and social services are conveniently located and accessible by all means of transport.
- Residential care facilities and designated older people's housing are located close to services and the rest of the community.
- Health and community service facilities are safely constructed and fully accessible.
- Clear and accessible information is provided about health and social services for older people.
- Delivery of services is coordinated and administratively simple.

- All staff are respectful, helpful and trained to serve older people.
- Economic barriers impeding access to health and community support services are minimized.
- Voluntary services by people of all ages are encouraged and supported.
- There are sufficient and accessible burial sites.
- Community emergency planning takes into account the vulnerabilities and capacities of older people.

Social Participation & Inclusion

- Venues for events and activities are conveniently located, accessible, well-lit and easily reached by public transport.
- Events are held at times convenient for older people.
- Activities and events can be attended alone or with a companion.
- Activities and attractions are affordable, with no hidden or additional participation costs.
- Good information about activities and events is provided, including details about accessibility of facilities and transportation options for older people.
- A wide variety of activities is offered to appeal to a diverse population of older people.
- Gatherings including older people are held in various local community spots, such as recreation centers, schools, libraries, community centers and parks.
- There is consistent outreach to include people at risk of social isolation.
- Older people are regularly consulted by public, voluntary and commercial services on how to serve them better.
- Services and products to suit varying needs and preferences are provided by public and commercial services.
- Service staff are courteous and helpful.
- Older people are visible in the media, and are depicted positively and without stereotyping.
- Community-wide settings, activities and events attract all generations by accommodating age-specific needs and preferences.
- Older people are specifically included in community activities for “families”.
- Schools provide opportunities to learn about ageing and older people, and involve older people in school activities.
- Older people are recognized by the community for their past as well as their present contributions.
- Older people who are less well-off have good access to public, voluntary and private services.

Employment

- The qualities of older employees are well-promoted.
- A range of flexible and appropriately paid opportunities for older people to work is promoted.
- Discrimination on the basis of age alone is forbidden in the hiring, retention, promotion and training of employees.
- Workplaces are adapted to meet the needs of disabled people.
- Self-employment options for older people are promoted and supported.

Civic Participation

- A range of flexible options for older volunteers is available, with training, recognition, guidance and compensation for personal costs.
- Training in post-retirement options is provided for older workers.
- Decision-making bodies in public, private and voluntary sectors encourage and facilitate membership of older people.

Communication and Information

- A basic, effective communication system reaches community residents of all ages.
- Regular and widespread distribution of information is assured and a coordinated, centralized access is provided.
- Regular information and broadcasts of interest to older people are offered.
- Oral communication accessible to older people is promoted.
- People at risk of social isolation get one-to-one information from trusted individuals.
- Public and commercial services provide friendly, person-to-person service on request.
- Printed information – including official forms, television captions and text on visual displays – has large lettering and the main ideas are shown by clear headings and bold-face type.
- Print and spoken communication uses simple, familiar words in short, straightforward sentences.
- Telephone answering services give instructions slowly and clearly and tell callers how to repeat the message at any time.
- Electronic equipment, such as mobile telephones, radios, televisions, and bank and ticket machines, has large buttons and big lettering.
- There is wide public access to computers and the Internet, at no or minimal charge, in public places such as government offices, community centers and libraries.