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2007**



Growing Greener Communities

**The Long Island Mayors' and Supervisors'
Institute on Community Design**

Regional <sup>CT
NJ
NY</sup>Plan Association

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Regional Plan Association (RPA) is an independent, non-profit regional planning organization that improves the quality of life and the economic competitiveness of the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut region through research, planning and advocacy. For more than 80 years, RPA has been shaping transportation systems, protecting open spaces, and promoting better community design for the region's continued growth. We anticipate the challenges the region will face in the years to come, and we mobilize the region's civic, business and government sectors to take action.

The nation's most influential independent regional planning organization since 1922, RPA has storied history, but it is more relevant than ever in the 21st century. RPA's First Plan in 1929 provided the blueprint for the transportation and open space networks that we take for granted today. The Second Plan, completed in 1968, was instrumental in restoring our deteriorated mass transit system, preserving threatened natural resources and revitalizing our urban centers. Released in 1996, RPA's Third Regional Plan, *A Region at Risk*, warned that new global trends had fundamentally altered New York's national and global position. The plan called for building a seamless 21st century mass transit system, creating a three-million-acre Greensward network of protected natural resource systems, maintaining half the region's employment in urban centers, and assisting minority and immigrant communities to fully participate in the economic mainstream.

RPA's current work is aimed largely at implementing the ideas put forth in the Third Regional Plan, with effort focused in five project areas: community design, open space, transportation, workforce and the economy, and housing.

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The second Long Island Mayors' and Supervisors' Institute on Community Design is a program organized by RPA to promote and implement better design and planning in communities throughout Long Island.

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We also extend special thanks to the Mayors' and Supervisors' Institute Resource Team:

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PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Modeled on the national Mayors' Institute on City Design, the Long Island Mayors' and Supervisors' Institute on Community Design provides a two-day retreat for four to six mayors or supervisors and a resource team of design and planning professionals. The elected officials present planning and design issues that each community is facing, and then participate in a wide-ranging discussion. While addressing the specific concerns raised by the mayors, the resource team members also describe in broader terms how they have approached similar problems. Using case studies from other communities both on Long Island and around the nation, the mayors, supervisors and resource team members learn from each other.

The Mayors' and Supervisors' Institute offers public officials the rare opportunity to discuss a planning issue facing their communities with a group of peers and some of the most respected designers and planners in the country. The Institute is based on the success of the program throughout the tri-state area. RPA has conducted ten Mayors' Institutes in the State of New Jersey with assistance from that state's Office of Smart Growth, and one in Connecticut with assistance from the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities.

The second Long Island Institute focused particular attention on how better design can help implement green-friendly techniques in both Nassau and Suffolk Counties. The Institute examines potential improvements to the public realm, opportunities for redevelopment, connections to open space, and an enhanced quality of life. The towns and villages participating in Long Island's second Institute represent a broad range of communities from both counties.

2007 Long Island Mayors' and Supervisors' Institute Participants

Hon. Steven Bellone, Supervisor, Town of Babylon
Hon. Brian X. Foley, Supervisor, Town of Brookhaven
Hon. Wayne J. Hall Sr., Mayor, Village of Hempstead
Hon. Joseph J. Troiano, Mayor, Village of Stewart Manor

Case Studies

The four case studies presented by the mayors and supervisors touched on a range of conditions facing communities across Nassau and Suffolk Counties. Several interesting design challenges spurred lively discussion and debate:

- Transit-oriented and walkable development
- Linking communities to the Island's environment
- Green economic development

The most basic lesson for the mayors and supervisors is to think beyond the confines of their individual planning concerns, ponder beyond the boundaries of individual development sites, and envisage the larger neighborhood or community planning framework as an essential component of the solution.

Resource Team Presentations

Jeffrey M. Zupan, Senior Transportation Fellow at RPA, highlighted the extensive opportunities for Long Island when East Side Access to Manhattan becomes a reality in 2014 while warning that transit-oriented development must be designed carefully with attention to the pedestrian.

Matthias Altwicker, Principal at AB Architekten and Assistant Professor at NYIT, discussed the key elements of urban design in any development proposal. In a Venn diagram format, he showed that urban design is essentially the intersection between architecture and urban planning. He emphasized the three scales of urban design – municipal, community, and individual – while offering examples of each.

Harry Dodson, Principal at Dodson Associates, a landscape architecture firm, offered some examples of work that he has done on Long Island emphasizing the ecological framework of place (see additional piece on the South Shore Bayway).

Scott Carlin, Associate Professor of Geography at C.W. Post Long Island University, spoke about the importance of sustainability efforts on Long Island to combat climate change. He believes that multiplistic actions – or composites of many individual actions – have a profound positive effect on stemming global warming, almost as much as, or perhaps more than, overall policy changes.



KEYNOTE ADDRESS:

Each year, the Institute's keynote address, the highlight of the program, is open to the public and draws many influential figures, including elected officials, business leaders, civic activists, experts, and the media. Traditionally delivered by some of the planning and design field's most distinguished figures, this year's address featured Rohit T. Aggarwala, Director of New York City's Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability. Aggarwala's presentation outlined PlaNYC 2030, the city's first long-range plan, which identifies strategies to adequately accommodate a growing New York City population while improving the city's quality of life and sustainability by the year 2030.

Aggarwala was commissioned by Deputy Mayor of Economic Development Dan Doctoroff to work with the Department of City Planning to develop a long-range plan for the city's continued sustainability. The specifics of the plan, which Aggarwala explained in detail, are second to none not only in their comprehensiveness, but in their boldness to tackle the issues that will confront us in the next thirty to fifty years as urban centers continue to grow at the expense of the environment and infrastructure, much of which was built over a century ago.

New York City is projected to house 9.1 million people in the year 2030, welcoming over 1 million additional residents and creating 750,000 more jobs. However, this increase poses dangerous risks if not carefully managed. "How do we continue on a trajectory while creating an inflection point for sustainability?" Aggarwala asked. The beauty of the plan, he said, is its ability to balance the objectives of sustainability and growth.

PlaNYC addresses broad, open-ended questions with specific answers. How, for instance, can the city provide housing for 1 million more New Yorkers? One way is to utilize the sixty miles of former shoreline industrial sites on tap for redevelopment, which would add a significant number of units.

The plan is split into five main areas, each of vital importance to the city's future: land, water, air, transportation, and energy. The land aspect encompasses housing as well as the need for open space. By 2030, the city expects to provide enough parks so that every New Yorker is no more than a ten minute walk from one. Another essential component to sustainable land will be the cleanup for 7600 acres of brownfields, three-quarters of which are not currently part of state cleanup programs.

Though a difficult figure to grasp, more than 1.1 billion gallons of water are transported to the city's five boroughs daily from watershed areas owned by the city in the Catskill Mountains – Cannonsville, Pepacton, Neversink,



Roundout, Schoharie, and Ashokan Reservoirs – and Westchester's Croton Reservoir. The water is clean enough that it does not have to be treated, an envy of cities nationwide. However, there are only two tunnels that can transport the water, both built over 100 years ago and with myriad small leaks. Neither has been repaired since opening, and the city fears that one may eventually cease working, causing a potentially deadly disaster for millions of New Yorkers. To enable the city to prevent this from occurring, a new water tunnel has been under construction 650 feet below ground for nearly thirty years, and will continue for many more.

The quality of urban air is also of major concern. PlaNYC introduces several initiatives to curb vehicle and building emissions by, for example, curbing energy demand. The plan also embraces alternative energy strategies to stem dangerous amounts of pollutants inhaled by the city's residents. Pollution, of course, comes with a price, and some of its appalling consequences are the asthma rates and accompanying hospital visits in certain areas of the city, such as the Bronx, that are astronomically higher than the national average. Aggarwala sees New York having the cleanest air of any big city in America by 2030; to accomplish this, the city must undertake sweeping initiatives. The most controversial, by far, is its plan for congestion pricing.



One of the major problems with New York – especially Manhattan – is congestion. Certainly not unique to the city, it still poses hurdles for millions of workers, truckers, and tourists trying to enter the city every day. The pollution it creates is in all cases detrimental. The mayor proposed a congestion pricing system, similar to programs in London and Stockholm, which charge a daily fee for cars and trucks entering the city past a certain point. In New York's case, that point would be 86th Street and below in Manhattan, at \$8 a day for cars and \$21 a day for trucks. The city projects that congestion pricing will significantly reduce traffic in Manhattan, and will invariably shift motorists onto mass transit systems.

decreased over time. After previously committed federal funding, there is still a \$30 billion gap to finishing these projects. Revenue from a congestion pricing plan, controlled through a potential new authority called SMART, would help to finance these plans.

Finally, all the elements of PlaNYC tie into energy and power consumption. How can we sustain a city with 9.1 million people with such a looming energy crisis that has international implications? Aggarwala spoke with passion of the plan's initiative to curb electricity demand by 30%. In turn, the goal will be to reduce greenhouse gases by 30%, and make New York a major player in the effort to mitigate the effects of climate change.



East Side Access Project Route, MTA

To prepare for this new influx, several long-term solutions have broken ground or will very shortly. A proposal for a Second Avenue subway line has existed for decades, but the funding has finally been committed, and it looks to be an economic driver for the East Side once it's finished. Another initiative is East Side Access, which will create the possibility for trains from Long Island to stop at Grand Central Station, significantly shortening the commute times of thousands of people. It will also improve Long Island's access to the rest of the region and New England by providing a connection to the Metro North Railroad.

These new transportation initiatives will hopefully draw more transit-oriented development, bringing people back to living within ½ mile of subway stations, which has

lasting partnerships with all parts of the New York region to sustain life into the 21st century.

In response to Aggarwala's presentation, Michael White, director of the Long Island Regional Planning Board, and Steve Bellone, Babylon Town Supervisor, were enthusiastic about the mayor's prospects. White agreed that the city and Long Island must work together to solve the problems of the future, declaring, "We're with you." Bellone, in accord, said, "We're ready for the challenge."

Long Island, Aggarwala argued, is an important part of the plan. The Island is home to tens of thousands of commuters who contribute to the city's economy every day by working in the city. Its residents also contribute to the regional economy, which keeps New York strong. Certainly, for these reasons and more the city affects Long Island and vice versa. There is a true incentive to form

MAJOR THEMES:

This year's institute focused on helping the Island's leaders make their communities more sustainable through transit-oriented and walkable development, a stronger connection to the Island's ecological foundation, and vibrant environments that foster green economic development.

Transit-oriented and Walkable Development

Land use and development patterns play an unsurpassed role in determining what mobility options are available in any community. The strategies to enable walking and biking in centers that support regional transit for the island fall into two broad categories: reinforcing and creating mixed-use centers and reinventing the suburban strip.

Mixed-use Centers

The Island has a strong foundation of compact, walkable nodes of activity arranged along an extensive regional rail network. New projects such as East Side Access and the third track to Mineola will expand the viable New York City commuter-shed and allow for better intra-Island usage. As gas prices rise and congestion steadily increases, demand within these centers will similarly grow. Though passed over for decades for malls and large-lot subdivisions, downtowns such as Hempstead can capture the lion's share of the Island's growth, provided that a smart planning framework are put in place today to ensure that new development contributes to the long-term potential of these places. Similarly, locations like the Republic Airport environs offer grand opportunities to create new transit-oriented centers around an expanded LIRR for the 21st century.

Reinventing the Strip

The suburban commercial strip is one of the most prevalent development conditions in Nassau and Suffolk counties. Devising strategies for transitioning these automobile dominated landscapes into mobility corridors that provide transit options while enabling bicycle and pedestrian activity is the first step towards reinventing this ubiquitous form of development.

The East Main Street corridor in the East Patchogue hamlet of the Town of Brookhaven is one of many such corridors leading out of a village or center that peters out as it leaves the walkable core. While an LIRR station is a long-term possibility in the area, taming the automobile here makes sense for its short term walkability, aesthetic, and quality of life value. The corridor could serve as a ra-

dial extension of the village character rather than a disconnected appendage to its east. Route 110 presents a corridor at a different scale, similarly prevalent on the island. While walking along the street's entire length may not be likely, creating walkable nodes that form the backbone of a potential light rail (LRT) or bus rapid transit (BRT) line along the corridor is a viable and laudable vision for the future.

Linking Communities to the Island's Environment

Often, one has little sense of the Island's natural features when navigating the area's highways or arterial roads. As is typical of post-war development patterns, little effort has been made to ensure that one perceives the forests, rivers, and bays of the Island. And while we have created impressive networks of parkland, public open space, and other environments for leisure, these don't always serve the direct needs of the communities in which they are located. A reconnection to the surrounding environment and better utilization of the Island's valuable recreational spaces were themes touched on in each of the four case studies.

The Main Street corridor in East Patchogue crosses the Swan River and its floodplain, yet there is no direct way to access the waterfront or the scenic bays further south from the strip itself. The design of the corridor's redevelopment should emphasize this aesthetic and recreational resource as a foundation of the area's character rather than an obstacle to be passed over. Similarly, in Wyandanch, the Route 110 Corridor, downtown Hempstead, and the Village of Stewart Manor, development should be organized around a series of public spaces. While not all neighborhoods on the Island can orient themselves towards a river valley or a preserved forest, public squares and recreational facilities can be a man-made environmental backbone of urban character.

It is essential that the redevelopment of village and hamlet centers such as Wyandanch and Hempstead include new public squares, green streets with ample street trees, and station area plazas distributed throughout revitalized areas, ensuring that all residents, workers, and visitors have ample access to the environment even in higher density centers. The Route 110 Corridor could be transformed into a robust boulevard, a green linkage connecting the southern bays with the harbors of the north shore. Public spaces and recreational facilities should be calibrated to the needs of local communities and access should be ensured to all area residents. Stewart Manor represents a small community with robust recreational opportunities for its size, but ample programming and better access are neces-

sary to ensure full utilization of those assets. Long Island contains one of the greatest combinations of shoreline and forestland in the northeast and it is essential that, as the Island continues to grow and prosper, the connection to these ecological assets remains strong.

Green Economic Development

All of the case studies focus on creating vibrant communities that have the ability to attract the residents and jobs that have made Long Island the competitive place it has been for the past half century. As the Island has grown, challenges of congestion, loss of open space, and lack of affordability have combined to threaten its competitiveness in the coming decades and beyond. The conversion of forests and farms to low density residential development and office parks can no longer be the development model of the Island's future. The leaders of the Island's communities must look for opportunities to foster growth in vibrant centers with a variety of housing types and mobility

options. These are the community types that have been so successful at attracting the nation's creative class and the jobs that inevitably follow. Enhancing a region's quality of life has become a key factor in successful economic development. One of the Island's traditional strengths is its industriousness and ingenuity in the technological sectors of the economy. A common vision shared by the Mayors and Supervisors at this year's Institute is one of a regional economy that harnesses the incredible talent found on the Island to ensure a strong base of technologically advanced green industry that serves to preserve and improve the local, national and global natural environments. While ensuring growth in the green technology sectors requires much more than physical planning, each of the strategies outlined in this report aim to enable such growth on the Island and to create environments that are attractive to our nation's next generation, the driving force behind bringing this country toward sustainability.

THE SOUTH SHORE ESTUARY RESERVE BAYWAY

The South Shore Estuary Reserve Bayway will eventually and dramatically increase public access to Long Island's beautiful South Shore. For the most part, the Bayway will tie together existing parks, community centers and waterfronts in an effort to encourage usage among residents and tourists alike. Part of the effort will include a new and improved website, coordinated signage and enhanced roadways that will all vastly improve accessibility to the shore. Mixed use areas, the theme of this year's Long Island Mayors' and Supervisors' Institute, will dominate the most popular areas along the Bayway. Restaurants, cultural activities and residential neighborhoods will emanate from the Bayway's main focal points, maritime centers, which will feature working waterfront uses such as boat building, fishing and ferries, along with access to the waterfront.

Similar to the major case studies discussed in this report, the Bayway will create additional open space through trails and bikeways, but the bulk of the emphasis will be placed on uniting the hundreds of recreational areas along the South Shore – parks, trails, bike paths, golf courses, marinas, and watersports centers – through added linkages. Of course, the project will also provide added environmental treatment to the vicinity surrounding the Bayway.

One of the more exciting elements for water enthusiasts will be the Bayway's water trail, creating a boating network establishing connections between the maritime centers, recreation areas, and the



shoreline. The existing transportation linkages will be made more pedestrian friendly while providing parking that will not detract from the beauty of the physical landscape.

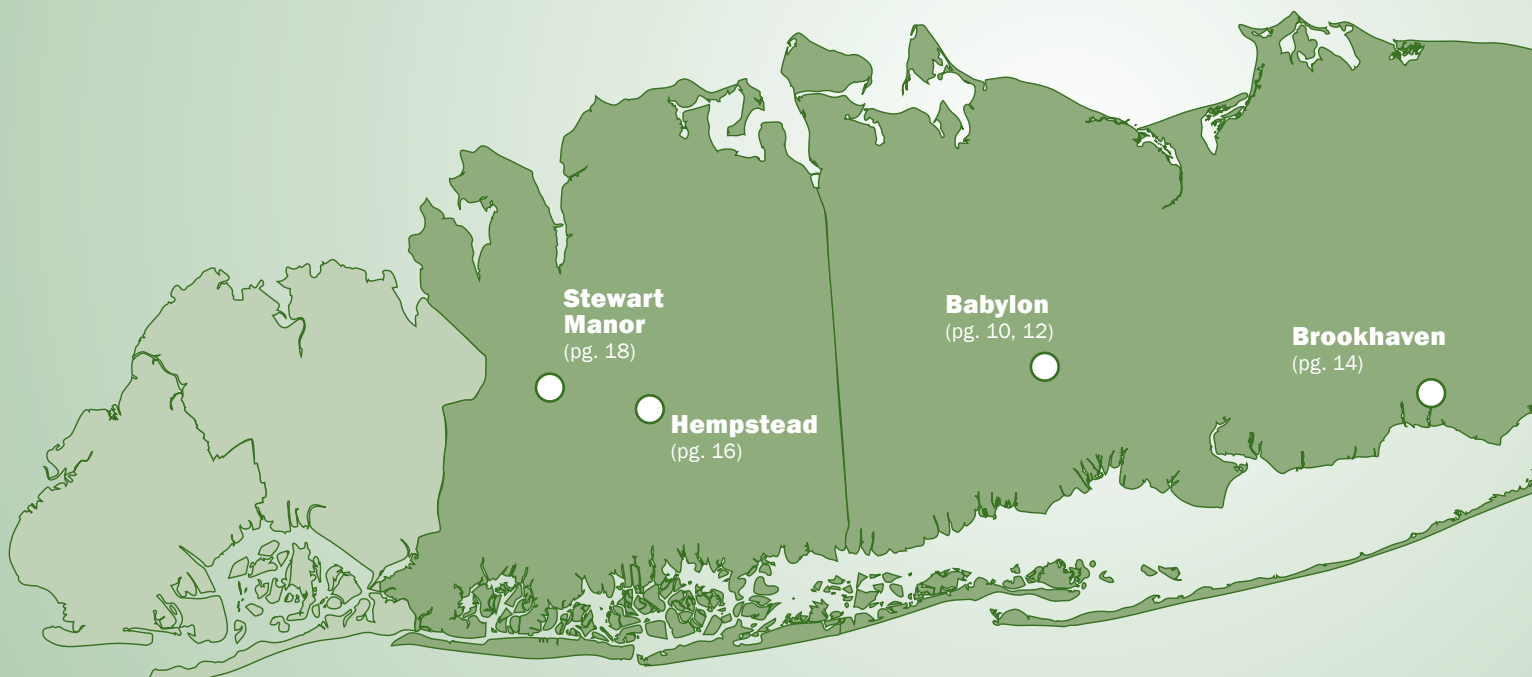
The Bayway, when completed, will greatly benefit the South Shore region. Not only will it allow for superior access for hundreds of thousands of people wishing to enjoy the natural beauty of the South Shore Estuary Reserve, but it will also boost regional tourism while enhancing the history and culture of the South Shore.

Babylon This case study presents three focal elements: Route 110, Wyandanch, and the connection between the two. First, the Route 110 Corridor, an automobile-centered furniture row, has a strong future as a mixed-use center for green industry. Beyond Route 110 and Republic Airport, the struggling community of Wyandanch, one of the poorest on Long Island, is slated for major mixed-use and open space redevelopment. The third element connects Wyandanch, which has a train station currently dominated by park-and-ride, to Route 110, by reopening the LIRR station at Republic Airport (near Route 110), and providing a bus rapid transit line or light rail on Route 110. With the concurrent establishment of Babylon as a pioneer of green industry, this multi-phase plan will create hundreds of skilled jobs for the people of Wyandanch and offer them a practical means of getting there.

Brookhaven The stretch of East Main Street just east of the prosperous commercial center of the Village of Patchogue has long been neglected as the hodgepodge of commercial and retail uses and has become abandoned and uncoordinated. In a bold new effort, the town wants to create a mixed-use center, incorporating affordable housing and successful retail with a pleasant pedestrian realm that will decrease automobile traffic. In addition, the nearby environmental assets, such as Swan River, are excellent sites for popular parks and a connection to the proposed South Shore Bayway. This project presents an interesting opportunity for inter-municipal cooperation between the town of Brookhaven and the village of Patchogue, both of which stand to greatly benefit from the area's revitalization, as they can discuss issues of land annexation and sewer district extension as ways of ensuring the success of the new development.

CASE STUDIES

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Stewart Manor
(pg. 18)

Hempstead
(pg. 16)

Babylon
(pg. 10, 12)

Brookhaven
(pg. 14)

Hempstead For many years, Hempstead Village's downtown economy has moved toward obsolescence, losing shopping traffic to suburban malls. The village, in collaboration with Urban America, devised a plan to convert the 26 acres of remaining properties, abandoned parcels, and surface parking lots into a vibrant mixed-use area with high-rise housing and retail shopping. There is not yet public or political consensus over the details of the plan. The revitalization would fully harness the village's excellent transit access and take advantage of future improvements such as East Side Access while attracting new jobs and tremendously increasing tax revenue. However, there are some important elements missing from the present plan, including sufficient new open space. The Resource Team advised Hempstead on creating performance standards and design guidelines for the single developer.

Stewart Manor Stewart Manor's case study incorporated two major themes – better use of open space and mobility. The two sites in the small village that the Institute examined were recreational fields on the north side of the LIRR tracks and the village pool, on the south side of the tracks. These two areas – major recreational outlets in the 0.25 square mile village – are currently not utilized to their best potential. The current under-used baseball fields near an elementary school can be converted to open fields, or perhaps a track. Parking at the pool can be altered, either by changing the design or moving to an adjacent location, creating more space for additional recreational uses. Another theme that emerged from discussion was the importance of negotiating the barrier posed by the LIRR tracks, perhaps by considering an attractive pedestrian bridge over the railroad connecting the two facilities.



BABYLON: Wyandanch

Supervisor Steven Bellone

Suffolk County

Square Miles 53

Population 213,988



KEY ISSUES

Improve the economic condition of Wyandanch

Leverage the railroad station for economic development

Reconnect the hamlet with surrounding parkland and ecological assets

Transform Straight Path Road into a walkable "Main Street"

BACKGROUND

The first stop after crossing into Suffolk County traveling east along Robert Moses' Southern State Parkway is the town of Babylon. The town lies on the south shore, encompassing part of Fire Island, the Great South Bay, and Jones Beach Island. Home to over 216,000 people, it spreads over 53 square miles.

As is the case with many Long Island towns, Babylon itself is a collection of smaller villages and hamlets. One of those unincorporated hamlets, Wyandanch (population 10,500), is one of Long Island's poorest communities, with an average median income \$22,000 less than the town's average median income of \$62,000. Its poverty rate, 16.4%, is almost three times that of the entire town (5.9%).

One element of a multiple-part case study, Wyandanch contains a variety of land uses as well as many brownfield sites with particular redevelopment challenges. Along with an economically disadvantaged population, it also faces a dearth of services such as banks, and is even home to an abandoned McDonalds; all of which stymies economic growth. Despite this, the transportation access in the hamlet – a LIRR station and bus terminal – is robust and presents many economic opportunities. Currently, however, the residents of Wyandanch are infrequent users of their own mass transportation outlets, as the hamlet has become a park-and-ride for surrounding neighborhoods. East Side Access, when completed in 2013, may place further pressure on the parking needs of the station, but could also bring additional economic investment to the community. Recently, Supervisor Steve Bellone commissioned Wyandanch Rising: The Vision, a plan by Sustainable Long Island to attract investment and job opportunities to the area. It envisions Wyandanch as a center of green innovation, home to the zero-energy house, the first such home on Long Island.

While mass transit access to Manhattan will be strengthened in the coming years, Wyandanch is predominantly connected to regional job centers in points west by automobile, locking out many of the distressed hamlet's carless workers. One of these centers, the Route 110 Corridor, is a furniture-store-dominated commercial strip with no nearby train station. The area directly west of Wyandanch is composed of hundreds of acres of cemeteries, a golf course, and Republic Airport, all of which act as geographical barriers to this job corridor.

RESOURCE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Supervisor Bellone and the Town of Babylon have already begun work on a challenging plan to connect Wyandanch to the vast commercial resources surrounding – but largely inaccessible to – the hamlet. However, his larger goals include changing the land use dynamic of the Route 110 Corridor. Bellone's vision is to transform the area from a strip of big-box furniture retail into a hub of green industry.

The long-range plan should consist of three major phases: Wyandanch, Route 110 Corridor (including the airport), and the connection between the two areas. These phases should then be broken down into smaller implementation steps.

One of the key elements of the entire plan is to provide economic opportunities to Wyandanch's population. This includes creating design standards to enhance the built environment of the community as well. Elements taken for granted by so many other communities – street lighting fixtures, medians, tree planting, trash receptacles, etc. – must be brought to Wyandanch. Naturally, economic investment should follow. Currently, all buildings in the immediate area are one story; the town should allow some moderate-sized buildings (such as 3-4 stories) to be developed. There is also an opportunity to create a greenway from Wyandanch to the Great South Bay, simultaneously connecting small businesses in the community.

The angular intersection between Straight Path Road (Route 2), Long Island Avenue, and Long Island Rail Road forms the natural geographical and economic center of Wyandanch. Straight Path Road, which currently forms the northwestern border of the expansive train station parking lot, should effectively become the main street in any community design plan offered, with retail and residential buildings creating a street wall that encourages pedestrian uses. North Eleventh Street could also be extended through the current parking lot as a boulevard lined with street level activity, creating a green, landscaped access point to areas north of the train station.

However, there are several limiting factors affecting future growth opportunities. The firehouse, which sits south of the intersection with accompanying surface parking, has little intention of moving. Also, the health center in the southwest quadrant of the intersection has a lease that does not end until 2014. Still, some immediate opportunities do exist, such as creating a parking deck on the current brownfield northeast of the intersection. The town should also discuss the potential of a SUNY-Farmingdale branch in the area that could create additional jobs.



SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

A new boulevard is created out of the current station parking lot, providing an active, pedestrian-friendly access point to areas north of the station.

New development lines Straight Path Road, encouraging pedestrian activity along this new 'Main Street' a revitalized Wyandanch center.

A newfound public space draws pedestrian traffic from the station to the north.



A tree-lined greenway leads south of the station to recreational areas further south.

Structured parking on an abandoned site allows for intensification near the station.

BABYLON: Republic Airport

Supervisor Steven Bellone

Suffolk County

Square Miles 53

Population 213,988



KEY ISSUES

Transform automobile-oriented nature of Route 110 Corridor

Discover connections between distressed Wyandanch and job-centered Route 110

Identify methods of leveraging the Republic Airport for economic development opportunities

Explore transit opportunities at Republic Airport and along Route 110

RESOURCE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Plans for the Route 110 Corridor are more complex, and must concurrently examine land use and transportation alternatives. In addition to potentially reinstating an LIRR station at Republic Airport, a light rail line is being considered for Route 110 leading north from the Airport to Huntington. These initiatives work jointly to combat the area's heavy dependence on the automobile. A more cost effective alternative for the corridor may be bus rapid transit, but the success of either would depend largely on land use and design decisions in the communities through which it would pass. In either case, mixed use development in much of this area – in coordination with a broad transit-oriented development (TOD) plan – would make it more pedestrian-friendly and create mobility alternatives to the car.

A new LIRR station at the airport forms the foundation of the economic development strategy for the Corridor and the town. Even without light rail or bus rapid transit, an interim mobility solution should include a variety of transportation demand management strategies in cooperation with the companies located along Route 110. The existing concentration of office uses indicate that shuttle services to this new station coupled with subsidized transit passes and parking fees could seriously reduce congestion along the corridor. In addition, potential development of premier office space and residential development northwest of the Route 110/Conklin Road intersection would form an anchor adjacent to the station that would be supportive of the LIRR service. Focusing economic development in this area on green technologies will be in line with the town's broader sustainability goals and will ensure that the jobs that will be created here will be lasting, as the nation and globe become increasingly invested in our ecological and social future.

Creating a new node of intensity and activity directly adjacent to the station will provide a unique environment on the south shore and offer robust economic development opportunities for the town, but it will only be the first step in Route 110's transition to a more sustainable corridor. Design measures such as converting the Route into a boulevard with aggressive greening and pedestrian amenities will begin to make walking a viable alternative. Ensuring that there are several walkable nodes of activity along the corridor will continue this trend and provide the distribution of density and land uses necessary to support potential future light rail or bus rapid transit service.

About three quarters of a mile north of the Republic Airport LIRR station, SUNY Farmingdale is the next logical stop on a light rail or bus rapid transit line along Route 110. Institutional campuses on the Island may present one of the best opportunities to create a development type that is more attractive to young professionals so desperately needed in the Island's workforce. Higher density housing and mixed use development have proved difficult

to construct in many of the Island's more established communities, even as national trends indicate that walkable, mixed-use environments are more successful at attracting the creative class, posited by many as the driving force of the 21st century economy. A new station at the intersection of Route 110 and Melville Road could serve to draw the university towards the corridor forming a new development at the intersection which integrates the ingenuity and vibrancy of the university campus with a mixed use and walkable community in the station area. The airport and SUNY Farmingdale nodes could serve as the foundation for a reinvented Route 110 corridor which provide both housing and job opportunities that will allow Long Island to compete against comparable communities across the nation for the young and talented elite through a combination of affordability, vibrancy, and unique character.

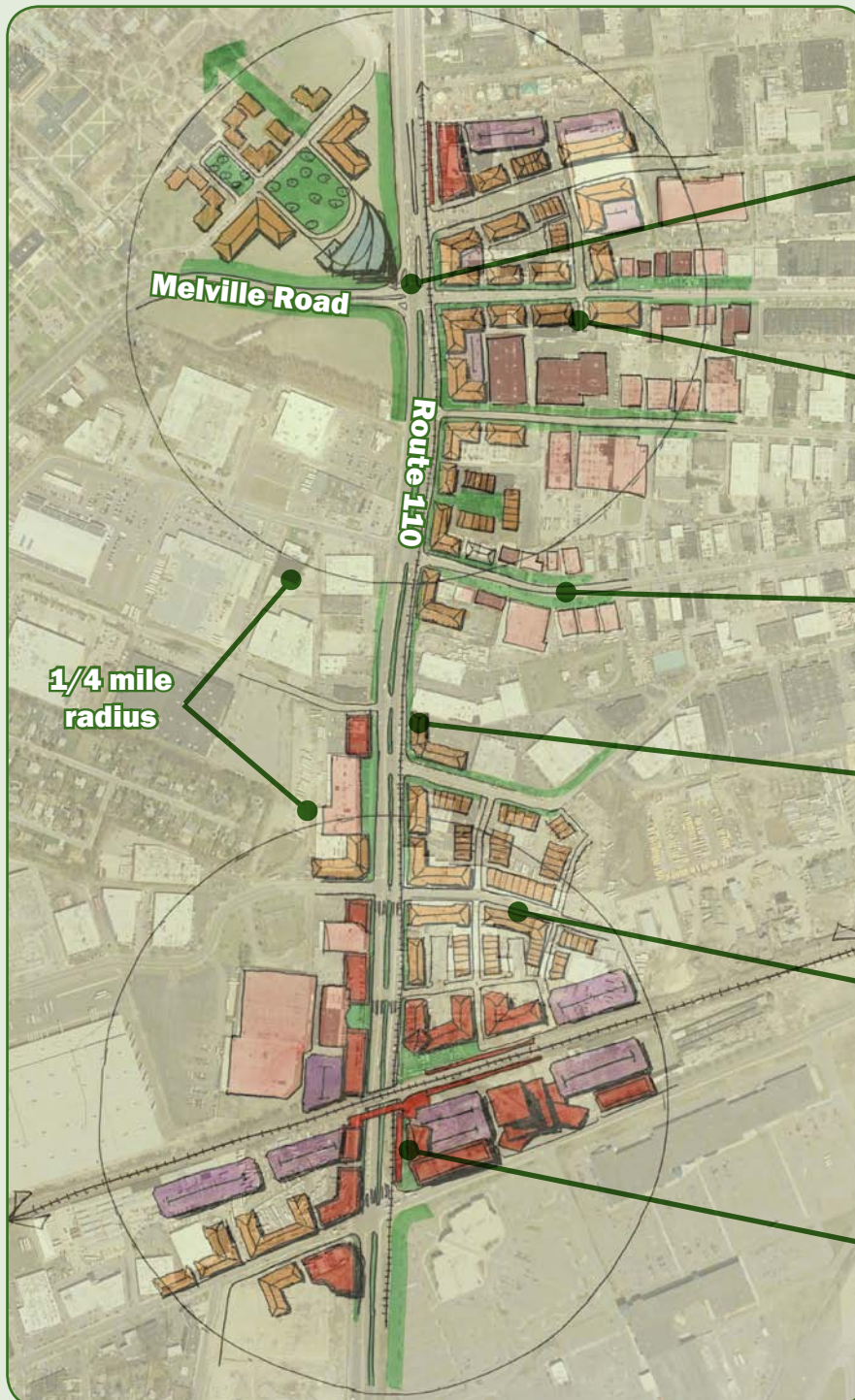
Finally, there must be a viable connection between the currently distressed community of Wyandanch and the job-plentiful Route 110 Corridor. A new train station at Republic Airport would allow for a rail commute between Wyandanch and the base of the 110 job corridor. A seamless connection to future transit service heading north will provide safe, inexpensive, and efficient access to the jobs leading north into Huntington. Additional social measures such as job training for green industries and local hiring programs should be examined to ensure that the residents of Wyandanch and other local communities reap the benefits of this vast economic development opportunity.

The comprehensive vision put forth by the town will no doubt be expensive to implement. However, this need not be prohibiting. The town has ambitiously begun to find sources of money, which include funding for a sewer study, a brownfield opportunity grant, a federal EPA grant, a FTA transit grant, a community health center, and a Restore New York grant that provides funding for asbestos removal.

Supervisor Bellone's grand strategy for Wyandanch and the Route 110 Corridor is bold and visionary. The framework to strengthen the economic link between the two areas – including a reopened train station, a walkable grid, access to the bay, and a host of new economic development in Wyandanch – will also reinforce Babylon's commitment to creating an environmentally sound community to live and work in. Through the aforementioned improvements, Babylon can fashion itself into a center for green technology and industry and a true sustainability model not only for the surrounding region but for Long Island and the nation as a whole.



SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS



SUNY Farmingdale campus extends towards an LRT or BRT stop, creating a new mixed-use tech village.

Higher density development is organized in close proximity to stations.

Robust landscaping makes the corridor and surrounding industrial zone more hospitable.

Route 110 becomes a green boulevard linking southern bays to north shore harbors.

New streets form smaller walkable blocks as a framework for future development.

Parking is wrapped within development or placed as a buffer along the LIRR corridor so as to not detract from the pedestrian realm.

BROOKHAVEN

Supervisor Brian X. Foley

Suffolk County

Square Miles 531.5

Population 474,438



KEY ISSUES

Develop a plan for the neglected East Main Street corridor

Strategize on key ways of pulling together various resources

Encourage green development

Reconnect the urbanized portion of the town with the surrounding environmental assets

BACKGROUND

The Town of Brookhaven, the largest in Suffolk County, has nearly half a million residents and covers 531.5 square miles of central Long Island, stretching from the North shore to the South shore. Over 50% of the town's area is comprised of bodies of water. The town has eight incorporated villages, each with its own mayor and board of trustees. Roughly 28,500 people live in these villages, leaving 94% of Brookhaven's population living in unincorporated hamlets, which are supervised by the town itself.

Until the mid-twentieth century, Brookhaven was able to avoid much of the runaway development its peers in Nassau County to the west saw, thanks largely to the town's distance from New York City. The majority of the town's population boom took place after World War II, as jobs moved further from the region's core and commute time tolerances increased. When East Side Access is completed within the next decade, the commuter-shed will expand further outward, and the population may continue to grow.

The focus of this study is the area just east of the incorporated Village of Patchogue, on East Main Street. Unfortunately, unincorporated areas directly adjacent to incorporated ones (villages) are typically the most neglected in a town. There is no better example of this than the area of study. On Main Street traveling east from Patchogue, one sees a stark contrast between the two stretches of road. In the village, few properties are vacant and a vibrant commercial corridor exists, while east of the village the aged streets, hodgepodge of uses, an abundance of surface parking and noticeable vacant properties contribute to blight.

Of the many unoccupied parcels on the corridor, there are several notable examples that draw negative attention to the blight. The Plaza Theater, a long-vacant entertainment venue, is currently the subject of a legal battle between its owner and Suffolk County, which wants to condemn the site and use it for workforce housing. An abandoned Caldor Plaza, which sits on land previously utilized primarily as an area to grow flowers, is in need of a new use. A big-box development is not favored by town officials, and any medium or dense residential will likely not fare well either, as the public generally opposes more rentals or workforce housing, both seen as too transient. The last focal point of the corridor is the health center, which draws significant traffic to the area and increases parking needs.

RESOURCE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

One essential component of the plan will be the integration of Swan River into any redevelopment. In the past, urban development has often pushed rivers to the fringe by burying them underground or placing them in the shadow of buildings and roads. Instead of accepting this impractical use of the natural environs, any future plans for the site should orient themselves around the river as a

focal point of growth. There are three principal alternative treatments for Swan River. The first incorporates the river as the centerpiece of a new park leading to the floodplain at the intersection of East Main Street and South County Road, while the second encourages urban "hardscape" development oriented towards the river, much like successful projects in Providence and other cities. Finally, there is a hybrid alternative that would incorporate both a park and mixed-use development.

The corridor is envisioned as an eastern gateway to the central village of Patchogue, starting from planned residential areas in the eastern end of the corridor, moving toward a park at the floodplain, and finally directed to the main commercial area. Roundabouts in the area would act as excellent traffic-calming devices, while the large number of commercial properties in the encompassing school district will more than offset any potential losses in residential property tax revenue that plans for workforce housing might cause.

There is speculation that the health center will move to a nearby hospital, creating developable land in addition to the Caldor's site, the Plaza Theater, and a vacant car dealership. These sites – along with Avery Housing, the HUD senior housing built during the Carter administration – should be incorporated into the plan.

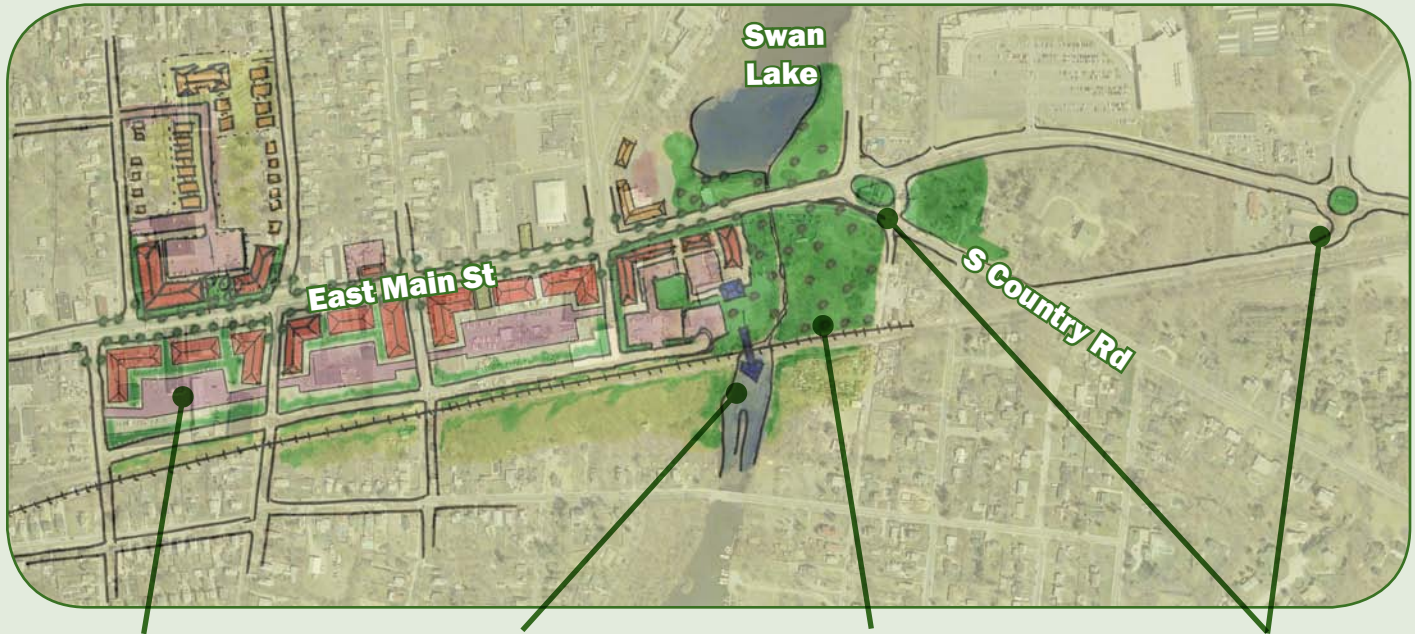
Strategies aimed at combating the seemingly inevitable situation of neglected unincorporated areas on the fringes of prosperous villages must be considered. The town should entertain a discussion with Patchogue's mayor, Paul Pontieri, Jr., to see if the village would consider extending its border slightly east from its current location to Swan River, the natural boundary between the village and the hamlet of East Patchogue. This extension would cover the majority of the corridor, potentially shifting some of the burden of revitalization onto the village, which would gain additional tax revenue from a sensible land annexation. In considering the needs of East Patchogue, the town should also discuss with Pontieri the possibility of extending the village's sewer district in order to provide stable infrastructure that can promote development.

Already, the corridor is set to see infrastructural improvements, with Suffolk County's plans to repave East Main Street in the near future. Though the repaving will be controlled at the county level, the town, by ensuring that the resulting streetscape is conducive to pedestrian uses, can harness the improvements to promote development. The repaving of the street presents an opportunity to install street furniture and trees to the corridor's sidewalks. The town should promote a green center and green commercial district accompanied by a potential art zone.

Finally, to form a true downtown atmosphere, Brookhaven must adhere to strict downtown design standards, with priority from the village border east to Swan River. During the Institute, Supervisor Foley outlined the



SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS



Parking is moved behind street-fronting buildings.

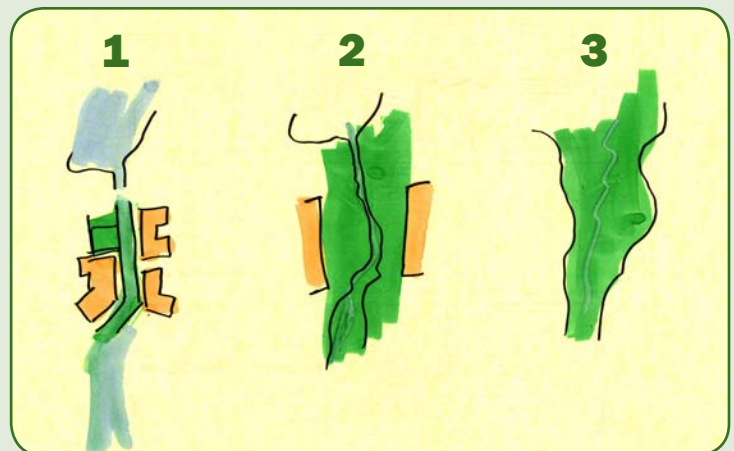
Swan River is the central piece of a new park around which development is oriented.

A conservation easement ensures the permanent protection of the forested area between East Main and South Country

Roundabouts form the gateway to East Main Street and act as traffic calming devices.

“five Foley principles of planning and design,” including: superior building materials, excellence in site planning/design, green building, generous landscaping, and good architecture. These principals should be incorporated into design standards that include architectural cohesiveness, transit-oriented development in conjunction with the nearby Patchogue LIRR station, utility investment, and the elimination of surface parking in front of storefronts. Though the plan will be well-integrated, planners must take each block into consideration independently, as each has its own issues and potential. This process will raise difficult questions about how to accomplish the town’s stated goals, especially considering the complexities of coordinating infrastructure and utility investment.

The plan should move forward with careful sensitivity to neighborhood input. It may be wise to present the Swan River park phase first, emphasizing the environmental benefits offered to a public that is generally perceived as opposing more urban forms of development. Further phases of the plan should be presented and explained as a scaled re-development of a dying commercial strip into a mixed-use center and gateway to the existing village of Patchogue.



The three alternative treatments for Swan River include (1) an urban “hardscape” form of development along the river, (3) a reclaimed floodplain serving as the centerpiece of a new park, and (2) a hybrid of the two.

HEMPSTEAD

Mayor Wayne J. Hall Sr.

Nassau County

Square Miles 3.7

Population 52,528



KEY ISSUES

Revitalize the downtown area to compete with regional shopping destinations outside of village

Contribute more to the municipal tax revenue that sees 40% of its base as tax-exempt

Ensure that the proposed redevelopment plan fits the needs of the village

BACKGROUND

Popular for decades as a shopping haven on Long Island, downtown Hempstead Village has seen economic decline since the advent of malls and, as a result, its 26 acres have not attracted much new development. The village itself, the largest in New York State, was incorporated in 1853 and today has over 56,000 people in an area of just 3.7 square miles.

As shops moved out, abandonment, empty lots, and an abundance of surface parking moved in. In response to the blight that engulfed much of downtown Hempstead, several administrations have tried to wage redevelopment efforts, with little success. A previous mayor attempted to bring big-box development to the area, which would be detrimental to the village setting.

In addition, Hempstead's taxes are among the highest on Long Island, stemming largely from the fact that it has a remarkably small tax base. Of all properties in the village, 39.1% are defined as tax-exempt uses such as county, town, church, and 501(c)(3).

Despite these setbacks, Mayor Wayne Hall has worked hard to attract new developers, and his work has resulted in a three phase development proposed by Urban America. The proposal, which promotes transit-oriented development (TOD) and walkable, mixed-use housing and retail, emulates developments like downtown Bethesda, Maryland and City Place in West Palm Beach, Florida. It proposes several high-rise, 12-story residential buildings to provide the density needed to support added outdoor shopping. The plan has the capacity to dramatically change the landscape of the village's downtown. However, the village should ask questions and ensure that certain essential planning aspects are represented in the development proposal.

RESOURCE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Though most of the planning for the new downtown Hempstead development has already been completed, it should still be subject to questions from the village. There are portions of the plans that the village should reexamine and reevaluate with the help of the region's planning talent. The development should be couched within a larger downtown revitalization effort and not exist as a stand-alone project, isolated from its context.

One of the most advantageous qualities of downtown Hempstead is its proximity and accessibility to the rest of region. The Hempstead Transit Center, which is the terminus of LIRR's Hempstead branch line, is a major multi-modal transportation hub for Nassau County, serving also as a major stop on several LI Bus routes. Though the current plan incorporates some aspects of TOD planning, there is certainly room for more. For example, infill development between existing buildings could create a continuous street wall on the main streets surrounding the

train station, allowing for a more pedestrian-friendly environment. The impact of parking resources are mitigated by moving lots to the centers of blocks or constructing multi-level parking garages wrapped in retail. Potential traffic could be further reduced through transportation demand management (TDM) measures.

Somewhat lacking in the current plan is the provision of open space. The new residential population will require additional ground-level open space in the form of parks or pedestrian plazas. Pocket parks, for example, could link both the train station and one of the proposed large developments on the southern side of the area to an existing park in the center of the village.

Long Island Railroad's East Side Access, when completed in 2013, will fundamentally change the economic landscape of Long Island, and could impact Hempstead in an especially remarkable way. Easily within an hour's commute to Manhattan, Hempstead could be a center of transit-oriented development with a variety of shopping and entertainment options. Such qualities could attract young professionals and empty nesters, who currently make up 60% of tri-state households. This demographic is less likely to be concerned about Hempstead's poorly performing school district, which, incidentally, would significantly benefit from increases in tax revenue without having to deal with a large increase in the student population. Still, developers should look into constructing low-rise family units.

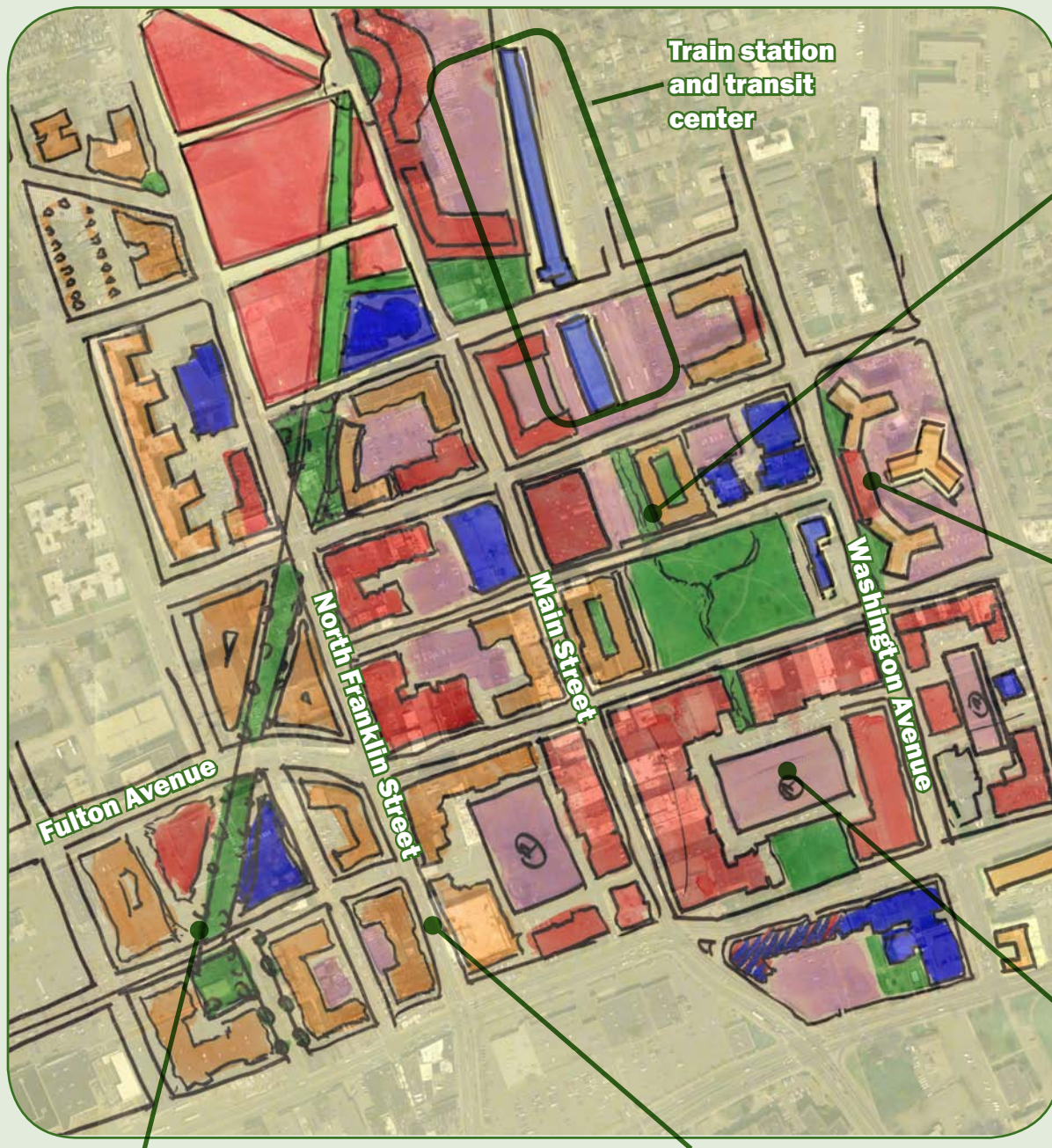
The sort of development planned for Hempstead is also a boon for the state, as residents will reap the benefits of recent spending on such projects as East Side Access. The areas surrounding the developments should be laid out for future phases of development, potential sites for those displaced by gentrification in Brooklyn, for example, because of Hempstead's draw of a city-like atmosphere and affordable real estate.

There will be particular challenges given that there is only a single developer for the entire project. If the market were to sour, investors could abandon the entire project, leaving Hempstead in a precarious situation. Performance standards should be written into the deal to ensure a sense of security. Design guidelines for this and the surrounding area would ensure that future redevelopment plans retain the positive core elements of the current vision.

The plan has faced setbacks, most notably from the Village Board of Trustees, which is split in terms of support. As of August 2007, the public is largely against the project, so much work remains to promote this economic opportunity for Hempstead. RPA will continue to support this development project – in a recent August New York Times article, "Hempstead Village Divided on \$2 Billion Comeback Plan," senior planner David Kooris expressed his encouragement. "It could be transformative — it could make a 'there' there."



SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS



A new park forms a diagonal green axis through blocks and creates a pleasant pedestrian gateway to the train station

New development is mixed-use and oriented toward the street

Pocket parks create new pedestrian links between the village's main amenities

Infill development between existing buildings creates a continuous street wall along the village's major streets, enhancing the pedestrian experience

Wherever possible, parking is moved to the center of the block

STEWART MANOR

Mayor Joe Troiano

Nassau County

Square Miles 0.25

Population 1,881



KEY ISSUES

Plan for the long-term sustainability of the village pool and adjacent country club

Identify enhancements for underutilized recreational fields owned by the local school district

Overcome accessibility barrier caused by LIRR tracks through village

BACKGROUND

Stewart Manor, one of the smallest villages on Long Island at 0.25 square miles, is home to approximately 2,000 residents. A Brooklyn real estate company developed the area in the late 1920s looking to offer the peaceful amenities of the suburbs while retaining the distinct residential character of New York's largest borough. Today, the village is nearly all residential, with a small commercial strip with few vacancies near Village Hall.

In 1927, the year the village was incorporated, Long Island's first public pool broke ground in Stewart Manor. Expanded in 1972, the pool is now extremely popular among village residents, especially seniors. The country club next door can seat up to 225 people for dinners, weddings, and other events. Unfortunately, due to the town's limited area, there is little room to expand this public amenity.

The town would like to see tennis courts as part of a future expansion; however, the town just renewed its 15-year lease with the country club operator complicating any redevelopment plans.

A recent plan proposed for the country club would have moved the parking – currently in the back abutting the railroad tracks – to the front, eliminating the gazebo and some of the green space presently there. The plan would allow parallel parking, creating more capacity. The resulting space in the back would house the tennis courts. This plan failed to win public approval.

Just north of the Long Island Railroad tracks (on the Hempstead branch line), and close to the town's northern edge, sits Stewart Manor Elementary School, built in 1954 as part of the Elmont Union Free School District. The school's two baseball fields are underutilized, and the village would like to transform them into more accessible public recreational uses.

RESOURCE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Though in two separate locations, the improvement of the public recreational facilities at both Stewart Manor Elementary School and the village pool should proceed with shared resources and a common goal.

The mayor should first gather public input about future potential uses for the baseball fields. After the village considers public opinion, the mayor should proceed with a plan in conjunction with the Elmont School District. Then the mayor and a committee can examine the design and green-ing guidelines for the fields.

The pool renovation will likely cost more money and, as such, require a more detailed set of plans. First, the mayor must make concessions with the public, especially in terms of parking. Parking must be understood as secondary or tertiary to public use and green space. There are a few options for the location of the tennis courts. While the "curb appeal" of the current club is one of its defining features, there may be a potential design that incorporates tennis courts on the south side of the building. Through the addition of a gazebo or another architectural feature, the courts could be masked from the road and the suburban character of the club retained. The Village could also study building tennis courts on a platform above the parking behind the country club. Though this would be a costly alternative, it would be a very efficient use of space and could turn into an attraction unto itself as a unique tennis experience on Long Island.

As for the fields, there are several options available. Regional cooperation is strongly encouraged, and Garden City could potentially cede its nearby soccer fields to development, while forming a partnership with Stewart Manor to change the baseball fields to soccer fields for inter-village use. This strategy could also yield a running track.

Governmentally, the village should establish recreation programs in cooperation with the school to further enhance interaction between the school and the village, while increasing municipal revenue.

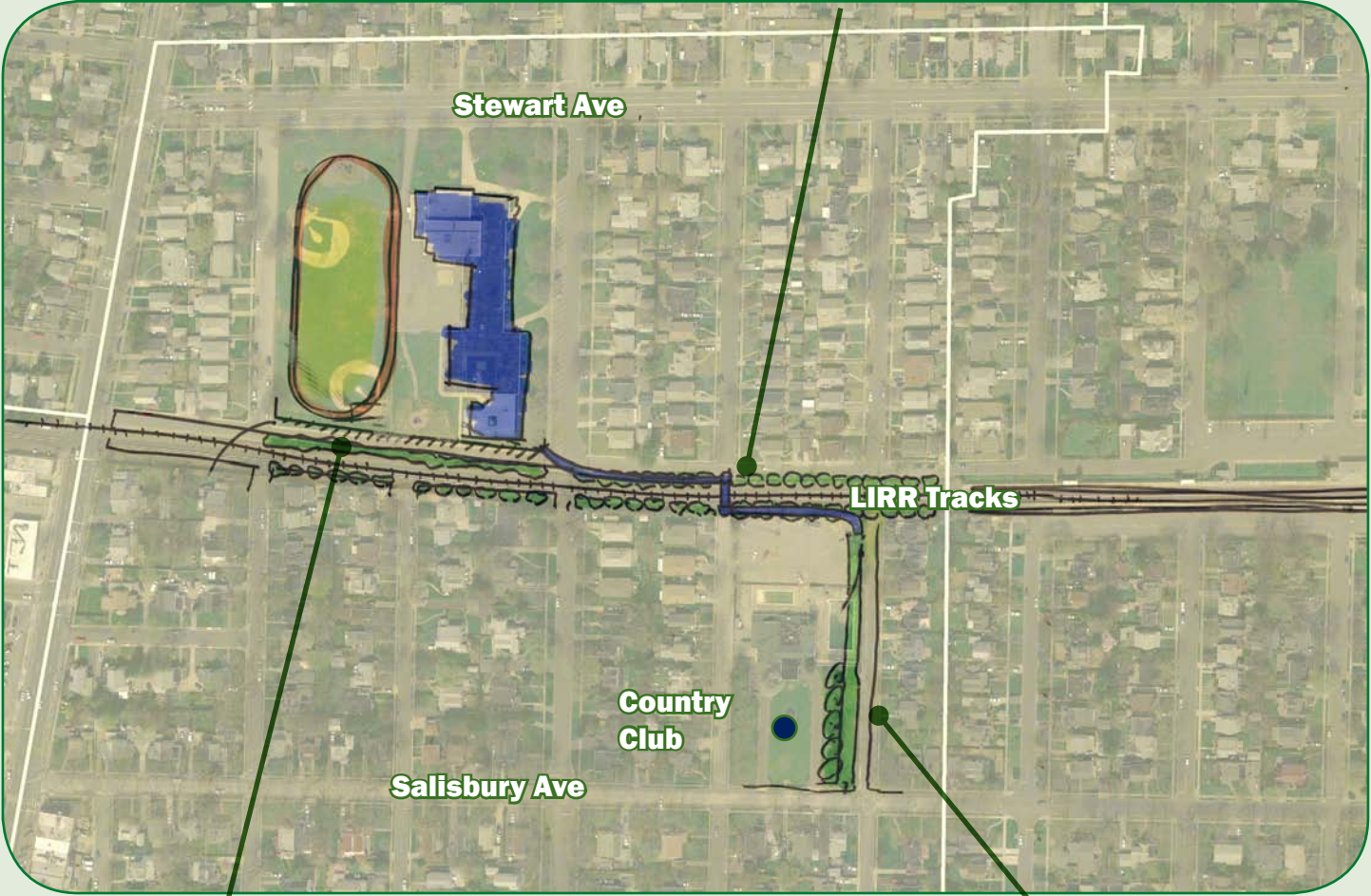
Stewart Manor should also begin the process of planning a connection between the two primary recreation destinations within the village limits. The railroad presents a difficult barrier to creating an easy link, but a bit of creative effort could easily yield innovative and attractive solutions. A pedestrian-only overpass could provide a safe, attractive link not only between the two recreational areas, but between the entire northern and southern portions of the village. On the southern side of the tracks, pedestrians would encounter a tree-lined green corridor leading directly to the country club. Such improvements could encourage pedestrian travel within the village, while potentially serving as a model for other railroad crossings throughout densely settled Long Island.



SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

A pedestrian overpass negotiates the barrier posed by the LIRR tracks, creating a major pedestrian link between Stewart Manor's main recreational areas, as well as

between the northern and southern halves of the village. To make it visually attractive, the bridge could be decorated with children's art or designated as part of a local 'nature trail'



North Avenue is made into a through street, with parallel parking for teachers along the northern side of the street

A tree-lined corridor connects the base of the pedestrian bridge with Salisbury Avenue

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Regional Plan Association (RPA) is an independent regional planning organization that improves the quality of life and the economic competitiveness of the 31-county, New York-New Jersey-Connecticut region through research, planning, and advocacy. Since 1922, RPA has been shaping transportation systems, protecting open spaces, and promoting better community design for the region's continued growth. We anticipate the challenges the region will face in the years to come, and we mobilize the region's civic, business, and government sectors to take action.

RPA's current work is aimed largely at implementing the ideas put forth in the Third Regional Plan, with efforts focused in five project areas: community design, open space, transportation, workforce and the economy, and housing. For more information about Regional Plan Association, please visit our website, www.rpa.org.

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