

CITY PLANNERS LEADERS OF AGING  
SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS HOMES OF  
WORSHIP TEACHERS BLOCKS OF  
CIVIC ASSOCIATIONS VOLUNTEERS  
ORGANIZATIONS COOPERATION



LIVABLE  
COMMUNITIES  
EMPOWERMENT  
TOOLKIT

SCHOOL DISTRICTS NEIGHBOURHOOD  
WATCH GROUPS VOLUNTEERS AND  
STAFF AT FAITH BASED ORGANIZATIONS



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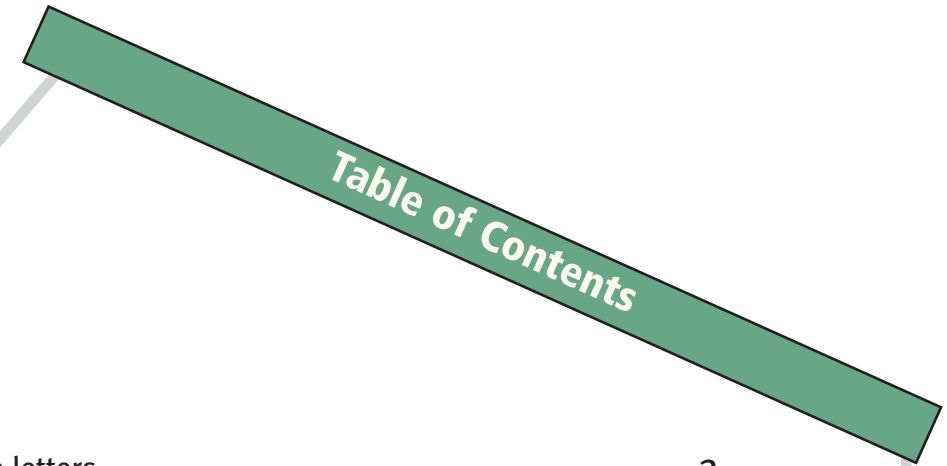


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LEADERS OF AGING SERVICES ORGANIZATION  
SCHOOL DISTRICT NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH



**Mae Carpenter**  
*Commissioner, Westchester County  
Department of Senior Programs and Services*



**Lois Aronstein**  
*AARP NY State Director*

Westchester County is a place where Livable Communities can be nurtured and grow so that our residents, no matter what age, can experience a good quality of life. The Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services and the Westchester Public/Private Partnership for Aging Services launched the Livable Communities Initiative with county-wide support and with the intention of insuring that choices and options are always available to the people who live here.

Our partnership with AARP has helped to enhance those choices and options through an exchange of ideas and solid planning, thus creating an atmosphere in which people willingly come together to make decisions about what they want their communities to look and feel like for themselves and for others who will follow them.

Together with AARP we wish to create a legacy and prepare a way for all communities to be strengthened by the people who inhabit them. This kind of strength has staying power because it is empowering. To that end, as we look at the features of Livable Communities such as housing, mobility options, well-planned roads, we are happy to say that our many hundreds of volunteers are involved in the development of each, through regional councils, task forces or coalitions.

You can create the same kind of legacy in your communities. AARP, the Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services and the Westchester Public/Private Partnership present this Livable Communities Toolkit to you. Use it as a guide to creating and building invaluable partnerships.

*Mae Carpenter*

Livable Communities are places where people of all ages and abilities have a range of housing options and travel choices that keep them safe and comfortable in their homes and meet their needs to get them safely where they need and want to go.

AARP is proud to partner with the Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services and the Westchester Public/Private Partnership for Aging Services to promote successful aging for all residents of Westchester County. This partnership strives to make homes and communities truly livable for people of all ages and all levels of physical ability. Our growing age 65+ population is beginning to approach the perfectly normal and inevitable transition from mid-life to later stages. However, this age shift should not result

in people separating from their homes and communities.

Communities today are just beginning to explore the challenges and opportunities presented by an aging population. Westchester's Livable Community initiative has taken the lead on anticipating the implications of our changing society, looking for innovative solutions, and creating communities to help all generations live safer, healthier, and more productive lives. We will continue to move forward in partnering with local municipalities on planning decisions that impact aging residents.

Working together, we can foster a society where all citizens can live with independence, choice and dignity. The key is to build communities that are livable for everyone, regardless of age.

*Lois Aronstein*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

***A legacy is an inheritance. The goal of the Westchester County Livable Communities: A Vision for All Aging –Bringing People and Places Together initiative is to create a legacy of empowerment and collaboration. We want to encourage people to come together to think, make choices, and take action in ways that will improve the quality of life for all ages.***

Slogans captivate the landscape, and mobilize people to a new approach and a new way of thinking. The slogan for Living Communities is “*Change for today and Tomorrow.*” After all, this great county was founded on a slogan that led to the revolutionary war (no taxation without representation) with the aging of our population and fewer family caregivers, Livable Communities seeks to create a “Caring Revolution.”

The partnership between Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services, the Westchester Public/Private Partnership for Aging Services, and AARP is an expansive one in which many organizations, such as not-for-profits, faith-based and academic institutions and businesses play a part. This toolkit is the legacy of those connections, a blueprint that Westchester County and AARP hope to pass on to those committed to addressing generational community needs. We are offering a methodology that has worked well in Westchester County, but is resilient enough to apply to other geographies and demographics. The process is malleable because it is grounded in education, sharing information, and seeking out the priorities and ideas of the population it serves.

Each section articulates a strategic plan developed by the Livable Communities Partners: Volunteers, Livable Communities Administration

Team, AARP and Livable Communities Connections and their Coordinators.

Westchester County adopted the Livable Communities agenda with tremendous vigor and enthusiasm. AARP brought to that the skills to turn a sense of mission into a road map. With vast fieldwork, research, and other resources at their disposal, AARP provided the critical tools to engage constituent groups in building consensus. Through community visioning, residents sit down together and work constructively to make changes in their neighborhood. With asset

mapping, students come to understand civic, social, and other institutions, to recognize the needs of an aging population, and to learn about programs and services available to older

adults and their families. Regional council meetings galvanize community stakeholders to take a step-by-step, inclusive approach to critical issues, such as mobility options and access to information. The Livable Communities project is grass-roots. It is an on-the-ground undertaking that is empowering people and causing them to take ownership of their communities.

Westchester County has the highest longevity rate of all of New York State, which is 79.2 years. The 85+ population is growing faster than any other age cohort. The time is now to create communities that respect and respond to a rapidly growing aging population. It is essential that we recognize older adults as a vital component in an intergenerational scheme. This toolkit describes various ways to make excellent use of the range of human talent and experience to strengthen communities, while also serving as a guide for designing activities that will bring people and places together.

*“Change for today and Tomorrow.”*

# PREFACE

***What I see is individuals and communities worldwide waking up to the reality of demographic aging and not knowing what to do. Physical changes like curb cuts and ramps, and technological innovations [are important, but are] not enough.... A high quality of life for older adults also requires the support of the entire community – and a different view of aging.***

***If people thought more about the entirety of their lives, rather than fearing and denying the aging process, individuals and communities would make different choices. – Andrew E. Scharlach, Professor of Social Welfare, University of California, Berkeley***

Throughout the United States, indeed throughout many parts of the world, communities are growing older, with older adults representing higher percentages of the population than ever before. Such is the case in Westchester County, New York, where the 85+ population is growing faster than any other cohort and which has the highest longevity rate - 79.2 years - in all of the state. In 2006, with the leadership of its Department of Senior Programs and Services (DSPS) and of the Westchester Public/Private Partnership for Aging Services, our not for profit established by DSPS, Westchester County made a commitment to take a comprehensive approach to making the county a “livable community” for residents of all ages, with an emphasis on addressing the urgent need to adapt communities to accommodate a growing number of older people.

Exceptional progress has already been made in three years, and the process of creating a livable community is ongoing. This Toolkit tells the story of the approach taken by Westchester County. By sharing strategies and tools that have led us to success, we hope that this Toolkit provides both

methods for continued work in Westchester County and a framework for other counties and municipalities to embark on making their communities livable across the life span.

## Defining and Bringing to Life “Livable Community”

In 2005, AARP published, “Beyond 50.05: A Report to the Nation on Livable Communities: Creating Environments for Successful Aging”. The report was based on research that had been completed in different disciplines including successful aging, housing, and travel; it provided a definition of livable communities and emphasized the types of outcomes that communities should aspire to achieve.



AARP’s definition states, “A livable community is one that has affordable and appropriate housing, supportive community features and services, and adequate mobility options, which together facilitate personal independence and the engagement of residents in civic and social life.” AARP emphasized

## Livable Communities' Early Achievements

### From 2007 to 2009, Westchester County's Livable Communities Initiative:

- Established nine Livable Community Connections – regional hubs for local grassroots organizing, programming and education
- Involved 180 people from 15 municipalities in “Visioning” exercises to explore how to enhance the livability of the local community
- Presented well over 200 of community education seminars and forums to 2,000 people throughout all 43 municipalities
- Engaged 100 volunteers to evaluate the walkability of 12 busy intersections in 8 municipalities
- Influenced the transportation department to install a new traffic light and a pedestrian crossing signals throughout the county
- Enrolled 30 volunteers to receive professional training to provide support and training to family caregivers of older adults
- Continuing participation in a Transportation Task Force to develop and implement strategies for helping older people with local transportation needs
- Created over 150 community groups county wide as “Villages” in which neighbors are engaged to help neighbors

three broad areas: community engagement, features of home and community, and transportation and mobility. AARP was not reporting on completed efforts to establish livable communities, rather it was presenting a set of principles for individual communities to bring to life.

Westchester County was among the first areas in the country to form a partnership with AARP to operationalize its Livable Communities principles. As will be described, individuals of many ages across the county in conjunction with government and private organizations became involved in helping move the county forward and in action toward making Westchester a Livable Community. Although livable communities are for people of all ages, a particular emphasis is that communities be elder-friendly.

Mae Carpenter, Commissioner of the Department of Senior Programs and Services in Westchester County, describes Livable Communities as “places that provide a better quality of life for people of all ages and enable mature adults to remain in their homes as they age with dignity, independence and civic involvement. They involve services provided by volunteers such as health and wellness programs, education and cultural events, accessible and adequate transportation, personal safety, consumer protection, and advocacy for affordable housing and safe sidewalks. The county’s efforts span disciplines, such as transportation and the arts; they involve individuals becoming involved with their neighbors and county administrators changing policies in response to civic needs voiced by local citizens.

### How to Use This Toolkit

One of the goals of the Westchester County Livable Communities initiative is to extend the urgent work we do today and create a legacy – one of empowerment and collaboration— for tomorrow. We want to encourage people to come together to think, make choices, and take action in ways that will improve their quality of life. Drawing on our early success, the Westchester

County Department of Senior Programs and Services, the Westchester Public/Private Partnership for Aging Services and AARP have continued our partnership by creating this Toolkit, which presents the blueprint that Westchester County and AARP used to address generational community needs. The expansive methodology we utilized invited many types of organizations, such as not-for-profits, faith-based and academic institutions and business to play a part.

### This toolkit is designed to be used by

CITY PLANNERS LEADERS OF AGING SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS AT FAITH BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND HOUSES OF WORSHIP TEACHERS CIVIC ASSOCIATIONS BLOCK CAPTAINS VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS SORORITIES AND FRATERNITIES ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS SCHOOL DISTRICTS ELECTED OFFICIALS AND THEIR STAFF NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH GROUPS ALL THOSE WITH AN INTEREST IN STRENGTHENING THEIR COMMUNITY!

We are offering a methodology that has worked well in Westchester County, but is resilient enough to apply to other geographies and demographics. The process is malleable because it is grounded in education, sharing information, and seeking out the priorities and ideas of the population it serves.

Each section articulates a strategic plan developed by the Livable Communities Partners: Volunteers, Livable Communities Administration Team, AARP and Livable Communities Connections and their Coordinators. The Toolkit provides an overview of Westchester County and some history of what we have accomplished through our Livable Communities Initiative. We then take you through some key steps that are involved in bringing this approach to your community.

The Toolkit concludes with reports that provide in-depth results based on Westchester County's

experiences and templates that can be utilized elsewhere in the county and in other regions and communities. If you are located in Westchester County, the Toolkit can give you ideas about how to participate in the county's initiative. If you are from any other area, we hope that our experiences can inspire you to take this approach in your community and the Toolkit will provide you with methods for implementation.

The time is now to create communities that respect and respond to a rapidly growing aging population. It is essential that we recognize older adults as a vital component in an intergenerational world. This toolkit describes various ways to make excellent use of the range of human talent and experience to strengthen communities, while also serving as a guide for designing activities that will bring people and places together.



Photo by Rebekeh Nemethy

Dr. Kathleen Golisz, Professor of Occupational Therapy at Mercy College in White Plains, NY, performing a 12 point CarFit assessment for safety.

## Part 1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

### Background

Each chapter in human history poses its unique challenges to a society. We find ourselves in the early 21st century with a host of issues peculiar to our time and place, among them the fact that we are living longer, and doing so in surging numbers.

According to a 2007 census series study published by the Brookings Institution, "The aging of the baby boom generation makes pre-seniors [ages 55-64] this decades' fastest-growing age group, expanding nearly 50 percent in size from 2000 to 2010. This group will be more highly educated, have more professional women and exhibit more household diversity than previous generations entering traditional retirement age."

How and where we age is part of our national agenda, but at the same time, it is an intensely local matter. It embraces influencing federal government policy and addressing the capacity of communities to fulfill simple and important tasks, such as ensuring that an older neighbor has a ride to the doctors' appointments. Bringing these, and other perspectives, together is the goal of the White House Conference on Aging, which is held every 10 years — most recently in 2005, where strategies and suggestions that support effective planning for the current aging population and the future of 78 million baby boomers were adopted.

The 2005 White House Conference on Aging Final Report is a compendium of the priorities of the 1,200 delegates who attended. Within this compendium - resolution #18 specifically speaks to "Our Communities" and recommends the development of programs that support successful "Aging In Place". What has emerged is the foundation for Livable Communities: affordable and appropriate housing,

adequate transportation options, and supportive networks and services which together promote independence, dignity and the engagement of residents in civic and social life.

Westchester County had itself been invested and influential in the White House Conference on Aging. In preparation for the decennial conference, the Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services (WCDSPS), the county's Area Agency on Aging, held 10 mini conferences to address critical quality of life issues affecting older adults and their families. To help influence national policies on aging WCDSPS convened 18 caucuses comprised of 270 volunteers. The caucuses developed 97 quality of life resolutions that were forwarded to the national conference.

The following year, 2006, the Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services and the Westchester Public/Private Partnership for Aging Services (PPP), spurred by their leadership roles at the conference in Washington, D.C., launched their own multi-year project under the banner "Livable Communities: A Vision for All Ages – Bringing People and Places Together."

Westchester County's notable population of older adults (in 2007, nearly 190,000) places it in the vanguard of what will be this nation's largest group of adults on record. Experiencing this demographic shift before the rest of the country, and with an agglomeration of cities, towns, villages, and rural areas and an equally diverse citizenry, Westchester is a capsule of what Livable Communities advocates are looking to explore.

Paramount among that group is AARP, whose guidance and collaboration are invaluable to this endeavor. As a leading organization with the tools to build consensus and put plans into action, AARP is the ideal partner to "bring people and places together" to shape a world in which to grow well, whether up or old.

## Westchester County Profile

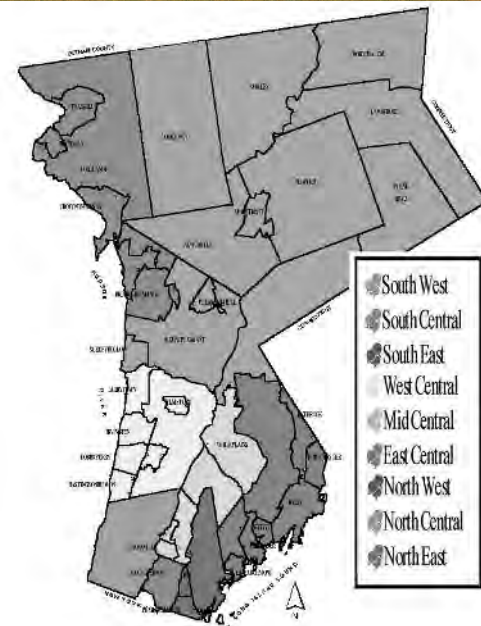


Photo by Rebekeh Nemethy

View of the Hudson River in Westchester County.

Westchester County is the eighth largest county in New York State with a total population of 923,459 according to the US Census 2000. In 2000, persons aged sixty plus represented 18% of the County's total population at 187,000. However, those aged 85 and older are the fastest growing population, with an increase in population of 24% between 1980 and 2000. This increase is likely due to improved health care and access to care. In addition, while "younger" older people (those in their 60s and 70s) often migrate out of the county, this temporary out-migration often results in a re-location back to the county in their advance years and when they are in need of services and want to be near their families. The number of older adults age 60 and over has represented a larger proportion of the Westchester population in each succeeding decade. We are witnessing a major demographic shift not quite seen before in our county's history.

While the older adult populace increased by significant percentages, the overall population, has in comparison, experienced only modest growth. Also, census data reports that by the year 2020, the elderly population will have grown by 37%. One in every five Americans is expected to be a senior by 2050. One in every five Westchester resident is an older adult now. This burgeoning growth in both the numbers and proportions of aging individuals is expected to create major challenges. These very notable statistics give just cause to the development of the Westchester County Livable Communities: A Vision for All Ages – Bringing People and Places Together Initiative.



Department of Senior Programs & Services  
Regional Area Services Map

## The Westchester County Approach

Westchester County and AARP adopted the Livable Communities agenda with tremendous vigor and enthusiasm. Joining forces with the county in 2007, AARP brought the skills to turn our sense of mission into a road map. With vast fieldwork, research, and other resources at their disposal, AARP provided the critical tools to engage constituent groups in building consensus. Westchester County brought to the effort a determination to build a comprehensive and holistic county-wide initiative. Our approach, which can be replicated and adapted by other communities, is both vertical and horizontal in its structure and content. It is vertical in that the infrastructure of the Westchester County Livable Communities Initiative involves grassroots organizations throughout the county and works its way up to the key county policy makers. Our structure facilitates communication of needs and interests of older adults up to county leadership. It is horizontal in that we work across disciplines, looking at an array of issues – transportation, civic engagement, health promotion, housing, arts, lifespan education, walkability, and many more.

Westchester's Livable Communities Initiative has incorporated residents' input from the start. Through community visioning, residents sat down together and worked constructively to set an agenda for change in their neighborhood. With asset mapping, students came to understand civic, social, and other institutions, to recognize the needs of an aging population, and to learn about programs and services

*“I am very excited to be participating in the Soundview Apartments Village Community... It's a wonderful way for my neighbors in the apartment and I to share ideas, discuss issues, and be a part of improving life for Westchester County seniors.”*

– Jessie Reznitsky

available to older adults and their families. Regional council meetings continue to galvanize community stakeholders to take a step-by-step, inclusive approach to critical issues, such as mobility options and access to information. The Livable Communities initiative is an on-the-ground undertaking that is empowering people and inspiring them to take ownership of their communities.

Westchester County's vertical strategy to implementing Livable Communities involves the utilization of an infrastructure that is grounded in establishment of local "villages". Villages are all sorts of groups, many that previously existed through established organizations such as houses of worship, arts organizations, neighborhood watches, and senior housing. Other villages are newly formed based on neighborhood proximity. Participants receive training through the Livable Communities Initiative and the groups are then officially designated as a "Village". The Villages are the grassroots source of information and support that contribute to

changes needed to help make the immediate neighborhood meet the standards for a Livable Community. Throughout Westchester County, Village members have been responsible for many of the initiative's accomplishments.

Information is carried from and to the villages through an infrastructure that includes regional centers throughout the county and county-wide agencies. Early on, the County Executive, the county's highest elected official, mandated that all county agencies

participate in the Livable Communities Initiative. This mandate was enthusiastically embraced. With leadership from the Department of Senior Programs and Services, county agencies such as the Department of Health, the Parks Department, the Traffic Safety Office, the County Office for Women, the Department of Environmental Facilities, and Westchester Consumer Protection have all contributed creatively to the overall County-wide effort. Similarly, non profit organizations and businesses of all types have become involved. It is this multi-disciplinary approach that makes the initiative “horizontal”, across interests and expertise.

Westchester County, New York is taking a holistic

and comprehensive approach to achieving its primary goal: supporting Westchester older residents who want to grow older in their own homes. The Livable Communities approach taken by the county is grounded in knowledge gained from data collected using diverse methodologies. These data provided the Initiative with a picture of available resources, gaps and residents’ priorities. In conjunction with data collection is the commitment from county officials and key partners to establish a strong infrastructure to address diverse needs and interests. The following chapters lay out data collection methods used and describe the Initiative’s unique and replicable infrastructure.

### A PERSONAL ACCOUNT

#### Lavinia Smith

Lavinia Smith loves it when people ask her what’s so great about aging in a livable community village.

“It’s an enriched community,” she says. “People care about one another, they talk about their concerns, are therefore better able to advocate for change, and they derive benefits from interacting with individuals considerably younger or older than they are.”

Lavinia, who describes herself as “86 years young,” is an active resident of the Vernon Heights section in Mount Vernon. A former school teacher who retired in 1980 – “I don’t feel I stopped,” she says – Ms. Smith “gives” as well as “receives” from her neighbors by counseling area children and teens about career choices and healthcare.

“A livable community is enhanced by intergenerational activities. Every child should be exposed to seniors – and vice versa,” she declares.

And she is on the “receiving” end of village life by benefiting from neighbors who volunteer to shovel walks and/or serve on neighborhood watch committees that identify area strengths and needs.

Another positive note about her neighborhood’s “village” approach is the recognition that there are new population sectors that should be welcomed as neighbors.

“We have many Hispanics and Asians moving into Mount Vernon so we make a special effort to welcome them. And we’re eager to benefit from what they can teach us about their cuisine, holidays and customs,” she says. “In short, the more people we can involve in the cultural life of our community, the richer our community becomes.”

## Part 2 DATA COLLECTION FOR PROGRAM PLANNING

While Westchester County had made an up front commitment to implementing the AARP Livable Communities Principles, the county required information in order to create an initiative that responded to community members’ interests and made best use of existing resources. To that end, the Initiative collected three types of data over time:

- An extensive project of asset mapping – identifying formal and informal organizations, institutions and relationships that contribute to the value of each community – was implemented.
- AARP conducted a formal telephone survey of 800 older adults, asking questions related to satisfaction with life in the county.
- One hundred eighty adults participated in visioning exercises throughout the county to set priorities for local activities.

### Surveying the Scene

As part of the planning efforts for Livable Communities, AARP New York administered a telephone survey of 800 Westchester County residents ages 50 and older. AARP conducted the interviews in both English and Spanish and weighted the study’s results by age and gender. In conjunction with other valuable information yielded from previous initiatives sponsored by Westchester County, the survey provided additional information about community satisfaction in a number quality of life issues.

The input from the respondents provided insights about what residents want and need from their communities. The survey asked questions about community satisfaction in a number of areas – infrastructure, policy, programs, services and the general day-to-day issues that define the characteristics of a community. The survey results were distributed to Livable Communities Connections Coordinators, regional council members, municipal taskforces and other interested groups.

Approach AARP New York for assistance with collecting data. Other sources of expertise in evaluation can be found at colleges and universities, research institutes, and consulting firms. Using outside evaluators strengthens a study’s credibility.



Photo by Rebekeh Nemethy



Portions of the study can be found in the template and report section of this toolkit. Here are just a few findings from the age 50+ group that answered our questions:

## Results From AARP Survey

### Satisfaction with Community

- About two in three of those surveyed say they are extremely or very satisfied with their community.
- Seven in ten rate their community as excellent (14%), very good (26%), or good (31%). Nearly three in ten rate their community as fair (18%) or poor (10%).

### Desire to Remain in Community

- Nine in ten say it is extremely (27%), very (45%), or somewhat (19%) important for them to remain in their community for as long as possible.
- The respondents have lived in their community an average of 30 years. In fact, nearly two in three (65%) have lived there for over 20 years.
- Most own their homes (87%) and live in a one-family house (66%).
- Only about one in ten (9%) think they will move out of their current residence in the next two years.

### Problems cited

- Not enough affordable housing (67%)
- Heavy traffic (58%)
- Streets/sidewalks that need repair (47%)
- Lack of involvement in community improvements (45%)
- Proximity and limitations of public transportation (42%)

Again, note that you can use a number of methods to gather community input but whatever method you choose, make it user friendly, consistent and, whenever possible, share results with the respondents.

## Identifying Assets

The oft-quoted axiom “It takes a village” — traditionally completed by “to raise a child” — captures the value of a community’s collective wisdom and talent, skills and organizations. Invaluable as those pooled assets are to nurturing the young, so can they be

harnessed to ensure the quality of life for older people. It takes a “village”, literally and figuratively, to build a livable community, and it takes a powerful assessment tool to set that process in motion. In Westchester County, the tool used was “asset mapping” — listing a range of community assets and placing them on actual maps to create a visual picture of a community’s resources.

## The Formal and the Informal

In 2006, Westchester County, a uniquely diverse and densely populated region, undertook a multi-year initiative to identify the formal and informal assets throughout its 43 municipalities. Formal assets are the tangibles — the religious and educational institutions, government agencies, and outreach programs that have known constituent groups, but also possess the potential to be more broadly utilized — or served — by older adults. A community’s informal assets are less concrete and typically more representative of the unique relationships and ad hoc networks that arise from individuals’ shared interests and activities. These are the often obscure, yet vital situations that provide the sense of engagement and security that are at the heart of the aging in place agenda. There are instances, certainly, where formal and informal intersect or co-exist; where the structure and functions of the former give rise to the latter. As an example, a house of worship falls into the category of formal asset, whereas a church choir, which offers its members the cultural enrichment of music and the social benefits of interaction, is an informal asset.

Asset maps that were created for the Initiative provided groundwork to Regional Livable Community Connections (LCC) throughout the county. The maps provided in-depth information from which the LCCs could then conduct outreach.

## Taking Stock, Taking Charge

Asset mapping is a structured, disciplined approach to taking inventory of the resources embodied in people and public and private enterprises. Asset mapping’s value is not only in making these resources more widely recognizable and available, but in the discovery of how much more capital —

human, in particular — there is to be tapped in any given city, town or neighborhood.

Creating an asset map is also a means of forming and strengthening alliances, whereby different advocacy groups can locate one another, share data, and join forces toward a common goal. For instance, a parent organization seeking more walkable routes to school might find an ally in a senior citizen group lobbying for safer sidewalks.

On a more personal level, asset mapping can help an individual find a particular service, i.e. a veterinarian who makes house calls, an expert in elderlaw, or an arthritis-friendly exercise class. And finally, asset mapping is an empowering process. The recognition that previously unheralded resources exist; the

*“I’m proud to live in a county that is actively trying to improve seniors’ lives ”*

– Reverend William Weisenbach  
pastor, First Presbyterian Church of Katonah,  
participant in asset mapping exercise

discovery that like-minded citizens are concerned about an issue; the direct access to opportunities to volunteer one’s time or display one’s artwork, all mobilize residents — of every generation. At the same time, asset mapping can document gaps in services and highlight areas of

need, galvanizing grassroots, civic and governmental groups to take action.

Organizations and institutions can conduct similar assessments on a smaller scale, re-examining their own services and resources with an eye toward the aims of livable communities. Some 40 members of Westchester’s clergy, representing churches, synagogues, and mosques, gathered in January 2007 at Manhattanville College in Purchase to discuss their role in creating a sustainable environment for older adults. After hearing from several speakers about the challenges faced by older adults, the clerics engaged in an exercise where they identified programs, people, and other assets in their communities that could be of value to mature residents.

## An Intergenerational Approach

Providing a comprehensive analysis of a community's assets is a dynamic way to become more informed about and involved in the social, economic, and cultural order. For students at Iona College in New Rochelle, it was also an opportunity to learn about aging issues in theory, and the application of research on the subject in practice. A two-day, 1-credit undergraduate course — “Community-Based Research: Formal Asset Mapping for Livable Communities” — focused on producing a database of 14 Westchester municipalities' businesses, civic organizations, health and wellness services, recreation centers and parks, and transportation operations, among other formal assets.

This was an exercise in asset mapping/resource identification using the internet. While the project could have been completed at a desk with a computer and a telephone, a few, more curious students visited various programs to learn more about available services to older adults. They also made suggestions about enlarging the research categories.

This practicum yielded not only a database and directory, but also some 90 maps that were shared with the County's Geographic Information Systems, where they are being used by the planning department and made available to community groups.

Thinking critically about how public and private facilities, institutions, and programs contribute to the ability of individuals to age in place, which was one of the primary objectives of the course, also invited these young adults to see themselves in the context of changing demographics, with career opportunities they might not otherwise have encountered or considered.

Asset mapping is an exercise in analysis. By teaching students how to catalog a community's resources and contemplate how those resources can better serve older generations, we offer the young a rubric for taking a personal inventory of positives toward achieving their own potential.

Although asset mapping was initially conducted on a broad scale, a community's assets continually change. Further in this Toolkit, we'll describe our Village model. As the Livable Communities Initiative grows, members of Villages throughout the county are given the tools to create their own local and personal asset inventories. Whether conducted for a city of 68,000, among a roomful of religious leaders, or by a group of neighbors, asset mapping — like so many projects designed to support an aging population — ultimately promotes a more compassionate community for all ages.

### Creating a Vision

Ultimately, it was essential to a Livable Communities Initiative that its activities reflect the priorities and interests of county residents. To that end structured “Visioning” exercises are recommended. Westchester County's Initiative conducted these exercises with almost 200 people from different parts of the county. Participants in Visioning were recruited through the Livable Communities' Regional Centers (LCCs) and AARP who sent a joint letter inviting people to attend the daylong event. The large response reflects the

strong interest of community members in shaping the future of their communities.

### Design of Visioning Exercises

Visioning is a form of group brainstorming. The overall purpose of the exercise is to bring individual perspectives together so that they can be integrated into a vision of the future — a coalition-based and practical agenda — that reflects common goals. The structure of the exercise allows it to be conducted with groups of all sizes. In Westchester, three sessions were conducted in different parts of the county. One group included 30 people, another had 50, and the third site had 100 participants. Visioning is a day-long activity requiring two trained facilitators. AARP New York provided experienced facilitators for Westchester County. Facilitators in Westchester used a technique called “Technology of Participation”® to run the brainstorming sessions and collect data. Technology of Participation® was developed by the Institute of Cultural Affairs whose web site describes the process and tells you how to contact a trained facilitator.

The facilitation methods used for Visioning are predicated on inclusion, building consensus, and empowerment, which are the cornerstones of AARP's “Participatory Strategic Planning.” The following steps were implemented for each Visioning event:

*“The citizenry makes the difference – they pay attention to their communities and do what needs to be done to make their communities better”*

– Mae Carpenter, *Commissioner*

- Tables are placed throughout the room and participants are assigned to work at one table for the day.
- Each table has index cards to record the group's answers to questions posed by the facilitator.
- Four questions are asked over the course of the day:
  1. What are the overall strengths of our region of the county?
  2. What are the overall weaknesses of our region of the county?
  3. What changes would you like to see in your community in the next three to five years?”
  4. What are practical and innovative actions that will build on our strengths and resources, deal with our challenges and move us toward our vision?
- For each question, people at the tables have their own discussions and fill in cards with their answers
- The cards are placed on a “sticky wall”, a large piece of cloth the size of the walls; cards adhere to the cloth.
- Each table assigns a spokesperson to share the responses of the table with the full group.
- The overall group then discusses its priorities for the region.
- Facilitators synthesize results, creating an Action Plan document with tables specifying a Practical Vision and Strategic Directions for the region.
- Documents from the three regions are shared with county leaders to set direction for programs that span the county.
- Each regional LCC receives its Visioning document to assist with local planning.

Ask AARP New York if it can provide support with the Visioning process.

Each of the three forums held in Westchester was effectively a workshop that A) yielded six to eight core elements of what a Livable Community in that particular part of Westchester County would look like; B) categorized existing strengths to be drawn upon and weaknesses to be overcome; and C) distilled three feasible and innovative strategic directions key to fulfilling the participants' collective vision. The latter category included "Educating and Communicating," "Planning Our Future Infrastructure," and "Adapting

Housing and Mobility Opportunities for Aging in Place." So, while asset mapping identifies and maximizes the community's resources, visioning charts clarify its ambitions. Visioning activities propose that soliciting the broadest possible range of knowledge from and hopes for the community fosters a more passionate group of stakeholders. The process holds that people involved in formulating steps of action are more likely to take them.

## Visioning Results

The Strategic Directions documents from two areas, Southeast and North East Westchester County use different language, but have some of the same priority areas when looking ahead three years. Themes that arose in both discussions included:

- Improved transportation options
- Expansion of intergenerational initiatives and intergenerational interdependence
- Income security through tax reform
- Housing options that encourage aging in place

These results influenced program planning. With the strong interest in expanding transportation options, Westchester County held a "Good to Go" conference in 2008. The conference explored issues of mobility, transportation and walkability.



## On-going Data Collection

A Livable Communities Initiative does not only collect information at the beginning of the project. Rather, data collection is an on-going process that informs community activities.

Westchester County has made use of AARP's community survey guides, available for free on line as part of the Livable Communities: An Evaluation Guide ([http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/il/d18311\\_communities.pdf](http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/il/d18311_communities.pdf)). These are tools for community residents to use to assess: walkability of intersections (length of time of traffic light walk signs, etc), safety (tallying such items as street lamps), public transportation (where are pick up and drop off points, schedules, etc), shopping (location of grocery stores relative to residential areas, etc), housing, health services,

recreation and cultural activities, and caring community. One hundred volunteers used the walkability survey to assess Westchester's intersections in one afternoon.

All "Villages" throughout the county have access to the Livable Community Village Needs/Interests Survey Booklet. This booklet provides members of Villages with a structured approach to assessing a range of interests and concerns in their immediate community. The booklet includes questions on 21 different topic areas, including caregiving, transportation, tax relief, and financial and legal support. Using the booklet is a method for bringing neighbors together to discuss common concerns and build networks in the process. The completed assessment is shared with the Regional Livable Community Connection coordinator to help with planning projects in the area.

## Part 3 BRINGING THE VISION TO LIFE

### A PERSONAL ACCOUNT

#### Bishop Benoni Ogwal-Abwang

A native of Uganda who came to the United States in 1987 and moved to the Webster School neighborhood of New Rochelle seven years ago, 65 year old Bishop Benoni Ogwal-Abwang says the major benefit of living in a "help thy neighbor" community is the feeling of security that he and his family have.

"It's wonderful to know our neighbors care and that our homes are safe when we're away. There are no fears; only a feeling of security," he says.

Bishop Ben, as he is known to his friends, cites his neighbors' response to snowstorms as an example of "village style" living. He says one of his neighbors has a snow blower that he brings out after every snowfall so area teens and adults can jointly use it to clear driveways and walkways. Equally important, he adds, this is a way of life that can be established in every part of the county.

"All it takes is a willingness on the part of community residents to communicate," he notes. "Reach out to neighbors, find out what they like and dislike about the neighborhood, what they need, how they can help others and how they think collaborative efforts within the community can generate positive results. It's so, so important that we know what can be done and why we should commit to getting it done".



### A Holistic and Comprehensive Initiative

Concurrent with collection of data, Livable Communities established an infrastructure that enables the initiative to take a holistic approach to meeting a wide range of community needs. The infrastructure is integrated into county government and present throughout communities.

The Livable Communities Initiative is guided by the philosophy that we look at and address the diverse assets (strengths of the community and of individuals) and needs that contribute to quality of life across the life span, with an emphasis on older adults. Specific activities are guided by residents’ priorities.

So, when we think about a livable community, we consider how people of all ages can maintain involvement in their communities through volunteerism, life long learning, continued opportunities for employment and advocacy. Citizens work together as advocates on issues they identify on the local level. We address overall well being by ensuring access to strong health and wellness programs and by enhancing intergenerational and arts programs. We directly deal with issues of safety with pedestrian and driver safety programs and even by changing traffic lights and street signs. These are only a few of the examples of the Westchester approach. The above illustrates the breadth of our efforts.

### Establishing an Organization

The importance of the Livable Communities Initiative to Westchester County is reflected in the commitment of county leadership. When the County Executive indicated that the initiative was a county priority, all county departments enthusiastically embraced working with the Department of Senior Programs and Services to consciously explore and adjust how the services and programs they provide contribute to the well being of older adults. Commissioners and Directors became active members in the Initiative’s Advisory Council. Many departments implemented innovative new programming to promote Livable Communities. Furthermore, there are a continually growing number of private institutional partners from business, faith based organizations and academia involved in Livable Communities. The most prominent and active of these is the AARP New York State Office. It is this comprehensive infrastructure that enables Westchester to take its holistic approach to making the county a place committed to enhancing quality of life for all ages, with an emphasis on older adults.

The multi-faceted challenges of developing a county-wide Livable Communities Initiative call for the counsel and example of experts in the varied fields that Livable Communities embrace. Ideally, a core panel of professionals, the *Advisory Council*, mirrors many of the component features — housing, transportation, planning, communication, recreation, and healthcare, among others —

in the Livable Communities profile and lends important credibility to the initiative’s future. Westchester’s Advisory Council is comprised of nationally known experts in aging and community development. In addition, Directors and Commissioners from County departments serve on the Council. The Council literally advises the project team on the direction of the initiative – get their input. Local members helped recruit participants for community visioning and help to market the program and get people involved. The Council holds formal meetings annually. In addition, we call on various members informally for help, depending on their expertise and the issue at hand.

The next tier, which combines leadership and tactical skills, is occupied by the *Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services*, an Area Agency on Aging, and the *Westchester Public/Private Partnership for Aging Services (PPP)*. The Department of Senior Programs and Services, a government agency, is a key component of the PPP, a dynamic coalition of governmental bodies, business leaders, voluntary service agencies, and consumers that develops resources to ensure that older adults can age in place with independence and dignity. When the PPP adopted Livable Communities as a signature component of its mission and message of empowerment, this countywide project was formally set in motion.

The complexity of features and consultations involved in developing Livable Communities calls for a

### Financing the Initiative

Westchester’s Initiative is an inter and intra government public private partnership. Funding comes from multiple sources: senior programs and services, private foundations, AARP, and the Westchester Public Private Partnership on Aging, which does its own fundraising. Substantial in-kind support is provided by local partners. Generous donors provide free meeting space for educational forums, equipment, printing, refreshments and professional services – such as marketing and educational services.

*Project Administration Team* that has the infrastructure to support the operation “on the ground.” With valuable decision-making and delegating experience, the team, which includes AARP, Partners for Livable Communities, a Project Chief Executive, an Executive

more and diverse settings, made for a perfect fit with the County.

This winning partnership continues to be strengthened with each activity that renders Westchester County neighborhoods more close-knit



Photo by Rebekeh Nemethy



Director, a Deputy Executive Director, and Livable Communities Connections Coordinators, is responsible for overseeing the many layers of interactions and communications that produce the cooperative fabric essential to the project’s success.

### Forging Partnerships

Coming to terms with a rapidly expanding aging population poses unprecedented challenges; how we face them will affect not only older adults but the entire social fabric. What is clear is that no one group, industry, science, or profession can adequately address or answer all of the questions posed by this elder boom, which is why Livable Communities is a partnership-building initiative.

AARP was integral to the planning of the Westchester Livable Communities project. The organization’s in-depth involvement in Livable Communities surveys around the nation, and its eagerness to see the assessment process unfold in

and age friendly. Our mutual goals cemented the union, and success has confirmed its soundness. All of the existing research our partner AARP has prepared and presented points to the importance of establishing, cultivating and reinforcing alliances such as ours among all sectors of the community. The chief reason for doing so is to create a base for the long-term sustainability that we count among the core values of virtually any effective program.

#### Through these partnerships we:

1. Serve the best interest of our residents.
2. Develop new resources that will benefit communities.
3. Maximize existing resources
4. Expand the network of support for people of all ages.

In addition to AARP, the Initiative has many other partners. These include regional businesses, members of the faith based community, and are colleges and

universities. Joining forces we have promoted passion and pragmatism, solidarity and leadership. Tackling problems, together we have created opportunity.



### Partnering with Business for a More Livable Community

The Livable Communities Initiative has reached out to establish partnerships with members of the Westchester County business community. At a 2007 Business to Business Forum, Pace University Michaelian Institute, MetLife Mature Market and Westchester’s Department of Planning collaborated on a presentation describing the mature market’s potential. Older households in Westchester County fall in a range of income groups. According to 1999 data, 17% of older households (age 65+) had incomes of \$100K+, and 35% had incomes of under \$25K per year. However, when data for Baby Boomers are taken into consideration, it becomes evident that Boomers will control the vast majority of the county’s wealth in the next 20 years. Already, in Westchester County “aggregate 50+ income in 2006 is over \$15 billion annually.” (Migliaccio, J., 2007, Forum Presentation: “Boomers, Seniors and Business: Turning Livable

Communities into Expanding Markets”).

Knowledge of the potential of the senior market encourages businesses to tailor their products and services to meet older adults’ needs. This is a “win-win”, garnering more income to the businesses, while Westchester’s mature residents have enhanced products and services that help them maintain good lives in the community.

**The types of business that may be attracted to the Initiative’s message include:**

- Builders of affordable housing
- Specialists in universal design
- General contractors
- Health care providers
- Financial planners
- Lawyers
- Travel agencies
- Fitness centers
- Transportation carriers

One such business is *Red Oak Transportation*, a successful transportation and limousine company. According to Ed Stoppelmann, the President of Red Oak, “we know that mid-day is a relatively quiet time for our car service and that the hours between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. are good times for area older adults to shop and/or attend social and cultural events.” So based on what he considers “a match made in heaven”, his firm is aggressively reaching out to Livable Community Villages and other organizations that work with older adults to provide car and bus services at reduced rates during those “low use” hours.

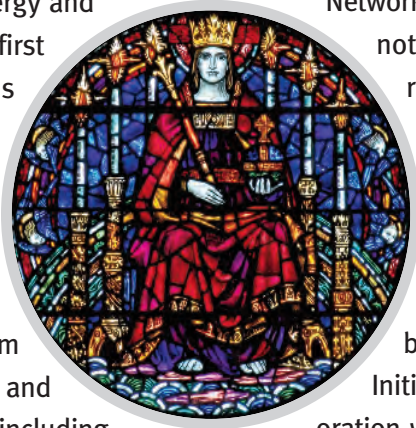
Westchester area businesses have also made substantial in-kind donations to the Livable Communities Initiative. Donors have given supplies and services, such as help with marketing and providing free educational programs to older adults in community settings.

## Involving Houses of Worship

From the onset, the Livable Communities Initiative has involved houses of worship and other faith based organizations in its activities. There are over 700 houses of worship throughout the county. Clergy and congregation members are often the first point of contact for people's questions and concerns; they are trusted to pursue the interests of members and of the immediate neighborhood. Early on, in January 2007, Westchester County officials convened an interfaith meeting of over 40 clergy to orient them to the Livable Communities concept and ask for their help. "County officials, including the County Executive, appealed to the clergy to map out programs, people and other assets in their communities that can be of value to older adults." Interviewed by Gary Stern of the Journal News (1/25/07), several of the clergy who attended were enthusiastic about the initiative. As one pastor stated, "I'm sure there are thousands of things we can do, but the question is whether people have the energy to do it. But I certainly intend to remain involved and find out."

Mirroring the initial meeting from 2007, in October 2009 a luncheon was held with more than 40 area clergy preceding a major county event, the "Livable Communities: A Vision for All Ages Connecting People and Places Conference". The lunch discussion was led by the Executive Director of the Peninsula Clergy Network in San Mateo, California. The conversation explored ways congregations can collaborate with the private and public sectors in promoting the "neighbor to neighbor" concept of helping older adults enjoy happy, active and healthy lives in their homes and communities of choice.

More than 350 people attended the regional conference that followed. There, the guest from California, along with three pastors from Westchester County presented a workshop titled Communities for All Ages through Congregational Engagement. The workshop was designed to build knowledge, understanding and



working relationships between clergy, civic and community leaders within the livable communities framework. The panelists explored the role of civic participation by congregations by looking at the Peninsula Clergy Network as one such model. This workshop did not promote a particular faith or seek religious solutions to civic and secular issues; rather it provided information on relationships and networks that foster awareness, understanding and community engagement.

Indeed the faith community has been involved over the course of the Initiative. The efforts of one pastor in collaboration with a Livable Communities Connection were largely responsible for the eventual placement of a traffic light at a dangerous pedestrian crossing. Churches, synagogues, and faith based service organizations have established numerous local "Villages", the grassroots bases for the initiative's infrastructure.

*St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Hartsdale has an announcement on its web site:*

[www.saintandrewshartsdale.com](http://www.saintandrewshartsdale.com)

*St. Andrew's Church will be a source of community information for senior citizens and their caretakers. Click this link! and then look under the "outreach" section for livable community updates and a calendar of local health promotion events for older adults. Congregants at St. Andrews can now learn about Livable Communities activities through their trusted church web site.*



*Livable Communities Workshop Breakfast.*

## Part 4 INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY

With a commitment from County government, great guidance from AARP, and visions for strengthening our community, our primary task was to create an infrastructure that would draw in older adults and their younger neighbors as participants in a county wide effort. That structure has three tiers: 1) Regional Livable Communities Connections (LCC) – organizational entities responsible for on the ground administration of Initiative activities, 2) LCC Projects – specific programs that are implemented in that region of the county, and 3) Villages – networks of people with shared interests, embracing neighborhood associations, houses of worship, congregate housing and civic and social organizations.

### Livable Communities Connections

An important step in building the Livable Communities Project into an expansive, countywide initiative was the establishment of nine Regional Livable Community Connections (LCCs) to provide local and focused support, education and advocacy. The nature of Westchester County is particularly amenable to a regional approach. The county is diverse in many ways that makes it essential to avoid a uniform approach to local programming. There are areas of great wealth and areas of poverty. While some of the county is hilly, there are numerous walkable downtown areas. Many areas have no access to public transportation and others have easy access to buses, trains and vans. There is religious and ethnic diversity as well. The Regional LCCs provide information about unique regional and local priorities and are able to implement programming that is most relevant to the immediate geographical area.

To establish the LCCs, Westchester County invited qualified local agencies and community groups representing not-for-profit organizations to submit proposals

to develop a community plan to A) establish a Livable Community Connection B) set up Livable Community Regional Councils and C) create Municipal Livable Community Task Forces (replicas of the Regional Council) in areas where there are more than one municipality. LCC's are located at a variety of types of organizations, including a community college, county family services agencies, Jewish Family Services, and a residential geriatric center.

Each LCC coordinates its region's livable community development, beginning by designating a Livable Community Coordinator who is responsible for responding to and taking action on inquiries regarding all aspects of Livable Communities. The Coordinator identifies gaps in regional programs and services, while arranging workshops, forums and other public events where people can get informed about and learn to advocate for livable community elements as wide-ranging as accessibility, the arts, caregiving, consumer protection, cultural diversity, money management, legal services, tax reform, and volunteerism.

The Livable Community Connection Coordinator also works with local government leaders, community groups and individuals to promote and implement the livable community's vision.

Since the designation of Livable Community Connections in 2007, a host of activities have been coordinated with AARP at the center, using that organization's tools, facilitators, or planning skills to carry out the activity. As community education, advocacy and training projects grow the numbers of volunteers, the LCC activities also grow, which means each Livable Community Connection's calendar of events is usually robust and filled with exciting information and opportunities.

Regional Council members, in their roles in this initiative, have helped to attract and leverage resources of all types.

Westchester County raised funds from multiple sources to provide support to agencies to carry out LCC activities. Not all areas that want to implement a Livable Communities program will have the financial capacity to distribute a Request for Proposal to develop LCCs. The important point to remember is that when developing a Livable Communities Project, one size will not fit all. The Livable Communities Connections model allows communities to examine issues that are germane to a specific region and develop strategic plans to address those issues.

**Westchester County's nine Livable Community Connections are run by not-for-profit organizations that oversee activities involving multiple municipalities. Through varied marketing measures, Westchester County residents are encouraged to contact the LCCs to get involved.**

- **North West at Westchester Community College:** Briarcliff Manor, Buchanan, Cortlandt, Croton-on-Hudson, Ossining, Peekskill
- **North Central at Family Services of Westchester:** Mount Kisco, Mount Pleasant, New Castle, Pleasantville, Sleepy Hollow, Yorktown
- **North East at ALOFT:** Bedford Lewisboro, Mount Kisco, North Castle, North Salem, Pound Ridge, Somers
- **West Central at Westchester Jewish Community Services:** Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, Elmsford, Greenburgh, Hastings-on-Hudson, Irvington, Tarrytown
- **Mid Central at ElderServe Safe Center for Seniors:** Eastchester, Scarsdale, White Plains
- **East Central at Family Services of Westchester:** Harrison, Larchmont, Mamaroneck, Port Chester, Rye/Rye Brook
- **South West:** City of Yonkers Office for the Aging
- **South Central:** Mount Vernon at Family Services of Westchester
- **South East:** The New Rochelle Office for the Aging in partnership with United Hebrew: New Rochelle, Pelham/Pelham Manor

## Livable Community Connection Projects

The Livable Community Connections are the engines that propel municipal and regional activities. Since the development of the nine LCC regions in Westchester County in 2007, each has hosted exceptional projects that deal with many of the urgent issues of aging. The LCC's primary responsibilities are to coordinate and provide information, consultation and advocacy, identify gaps in services, coordinate education and training programs, and work with community groups and individuals. Experts who donate their time to Livable Communities conduct many of the educational programs. To date, LCCs have hosted projects on a wide range of topics of interest to the communities; these include:

- Advocacy Skills Training (communicate with elected officials)
- Caregiving (learn more about support services for caregivers)
- Diversity-cultural sensitivity training (working with Westchester government liaisons for ethnic/immigrant groups, the disabled, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender)
- Education (life-long learning and skill development)
- Employment (ageism in employment, workforce retooling and retention)
- Environment (environmental protection, energy conservation, smart growth)
- Health and Wellness (assistive technology, exercise, mental health care navigation, nutrition)
- Housing (alternate housing options, affordable housing, home redesign)
- Legal Services (financial abuse, guardianships, healthcare proxies, housing evictions, power of attorneys, wills)
- Leisure and Enrichment (arts, entertainment, recreation)
- Long Term Care Services (adult day care, end-of-life



*Livable Communities Conference.*

- palliative care, home care services, long term care insurance, Medicaid, Medicare, assisted living, skilled care nursing facilities)
- Money Management (bill-paying services, estate planning and investing)
- Planning and Zoning (road design, sidewalk design, signage)
- Retirement (downsizing, time management, volunteerism)
- Safety and Security (consumer education, disaster planning, elder abuse, neighborhood watch)
- Transportation (older drivers, public transportation) Programs like "Walkability" and the "Get Around" initiative focused on multi-modal transportation needs. Both projects were designed by AARP, which provided the necessary tools for volunteers to get directly involved in planning municipal events while also becoming knowledgeable about the issues of mobility and accessibility.

## Making our Streets Safer for Pedestrians

In response to advocacy efforts regarding pedestrian safety conducted by the LCCs and AARP New York, the New York State Department of Transportation installed a new traffic light at a major intersection in Tarrytown. Wanting to build on this success, 140 LCC volunteers from all over the county spent one day to conduct the Walkability project. Wearing bright red tee shirts with the slogan "Taking Steps Toward Walkability", they were placed at twelve busy intersections in eight different municipalities. Armed with stopwatches, tape measures and clip boards, the volunteers used AARP's Walkability survey to assess 60 items at each intersection. They recorded whether the intersection needed a traffic light, if roads with two or more lanes had a median strip and whether the sidewalks have curb cuts for individuals with wheelchairs and baby strollers. Results were sent to the respective LCCs. One intersection reported to be particularly hazardous was surveyed during the project and, through the advocacy efforts of the LCC Regional Council and AARP, a pedestrian countdown signal and tactile curb cuts were installed there to improve safety.

There were no walk or yield signs. It was one area that seemed to be forgotten. It's now a much safer crossing for seniors. – Bishop Dr. Wilbert G Preston, Christ Temple – Greater International Pentecostal Holiness Church, Greenburgh

## Livable Communities Village Approach

*“I’m excited to be part of this process. I believe strongly in the concept of people being able to age in place and having a structure they can tap into that helps with this goal.”*

—Carolyn Van Ness, Volunteer outreach recruiter, Ossining

Livable Communities Villages are the latest incarnation of the Livable Communities Project. This grass-roots component is at the core of the initiative. By the end of 2009, there were nearly 100 Livable Communities “Villages” throughout the county. A Village is a collective of people with a like interest who gather to learn from and participate in Livable Communities. Any kind of community group may become a Village. Ultimately through the Villages, members are given education and tools so that they can take a neighbor-to-neighbor approach to looking out for one another and so that they can have a choice in shaping local policies and priorities. In this format, we are essentially applying fresh nomenclature and context to a traditional social concept: The groups we belong to — our community-based and civic organizations, houses of worship and neighborhood associations and even our homeowners and apartment associations — are mini villages, and we are members of that village. When a member of the village is no longer able to attend meetings or may need a service they can no longer arrange for themselves, are other members of the village willing to help out? More often than not they are. This project, through

Since we know that at least 90% of all older adults would like to remain in their homes as they age, we recognize the need to harness the informal, village support system to support this wish.

the Livable Communities Village designation element, helps groups of all types access the information and assistance they need to foster livability for all village members whether they are actively involved or not.

The LCC’s, in part using asset maps for their regions to identify potential participant groups, have conducted outreach to encourage local groups to sign up to be Villages. Community groups request to have a Livable Community Village presentation made to them. Presentations, made by volunteers from the LCC or by the Regional Coordinator, are conducted for approximately 30 minutes including questions and answers. At the conclusion of the presentation, the presenter can designate the group as a Village by completing an official participation form. Each designated Village receives a certificate of acknowledgement from Westchester County.

### Benefits of becoming a Village include:

- Free community education seminars and forums for all ages
- Methods to assess members’ interests and needs, talent and skills
- Access to a wealth of resources in print and electronic formats
- Ongoing Village Coordinator training
- Guidance building alliances among community groups to better serve the members of the Village
- Models for creating innovating volunteer services to match the needs of Village members
- Advocacy tools and information to address the needs of older adults

The Village is encouraged to complete the Livable Community Village Needs/ Interests Survey Booklet. The booklet identifies more than 20 quality of life issues such as caregiving, fraud protection, community watch, housing and long term care. The intent of the survey process is to help groups to identify and prioritize issues, develop strategies, explore resources and finally form an advocacy agenda.

## A PERSONAL ACCOUNT

### Jane Pepino

Jane Pepino had a good feeling about living in a “village” type community in the 30 years or so after she and her husband, Roy, moved to Somers in 1969. She’d like to have that feeling again.

And now, despite the fact that many of her Somers neighbors have left the area after sharing similar experiences ranging from child-rearing to empty nest living, she’s well on her way to once more being part of a “help thy neighbor” community.

“There was a period of time in which Roy and I felt separated from our neighbors as younger people moved into the area, raised children and spent their weekdays commuting to jobs,” she recalls. “We missed having neighbors whom we could rely on to run errands if we were sick, join us in social activities and organize block parties.”

But things are starting to look better now. Jane attributes this to the work of *At Home in Somers*, a non-profit organization she founded with friends more than a year ago to keep people active and connected. “We’re basically promoting the idea of togetherness through better information and socialization,” she says. *At Home in Somers* is officially designated as a Livable Communities Village.

She and other *At Home in Somers* advocates are reaching out to neighbors to find out what their needs are. They’re also gathering information on available services, encouraging people to ask questions about sources of assistance and promoting the ideas of information sharing and intergenerational socializing.

“There’ve been positive signs of change,” Jane notes. “One younger neighbor has introduced an annual barbecue, Roy and I have new friends and we’re starting to believe we’re living in a village again.”

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## Part 5 SPECIAL PROJECTS THAT ADVANCE THE AGENDA

As Livable Communities moves forward, we look at ways that we can reinforce our efforts to enhance the quality of life for Westchester County older adults and further strengthen the likelihood that residents will be able to stay in their own homes as they age. Two county wide projects were implemented in 2009 and 2010, both designed to advance this agenda. The Livable Communities Caregiver Coaching (L3C) program engages volunteers to provide support to family caregivers of older adults. A unique web portal provides depth and breadth of on-line information about Livable Communities to area residents.

### Livable Communities Caregiver Coaching Program

The 33,000 caregivers living in Westchester County spend an average 62.6 hours per week caring for someone 60 years of age and older (NYSOFA, 2009 – AoA, 2009.) Many of them struggle to find information and navigate unwieldy systems theoretically designed for their support. Still more would like someone who is knowledgeable, empathetic and non-judgmental to help them make informed decisions to meet their many challenges and responsibilities. The Westchester Public/Private Partnership for Aging Services (PPP), the Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services (DSPS) and Fordham University's Ravazzin Center on Aging, formed the L3C program to respond to these needs, thus fulfilling an increasingly important mission to support caregivers of the growing numbers of older adults.

The L3C program prepares volunteers for an enhanced good neighbor role as Caregiver Coaches – people who provide support and information to family caregivers. They are stabilizing forces and sounding boards. Coaches receive training using a curriculum developed by the Fordham Ravazzin Center on Aging, to help them to effectively work with caregivers to support them and help them become more

knowledgeable about a wide range of available options and resources.

In Westchester County, caregivers and coaches are recruited through not-for-profits agencies that are a part of our aging network. These agencies have contacted their clients and made them aware of

To obtain permission to use the L3C curriculum in your community, contact the Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services.

the program. Press releases, news articles and presentations made by the L3C director also boosted recruitment. Applications are completed by both caregivers and coaches before they join the program - matches are made according to the coaches and caregivers' availability to talk by phone at certain times of the day. There may be some specific need or request that the program takes into account when making a match. For example, if a caregiver asks for a coach who is familiar with certain types of cancer or Alzheimer's disease, the program will try to find a coach who prefers to work with caregivers dealing with these diseases.

Once matched, the coach and the caregiver meet in person. After that, most coaching is done by telephone. The role of the coach is to be a sounding board. The program director monitors the pair to ensure that good matches are made between caregivers and coaches. If either or both persons are not pleased, they can expect an immediate response from the director. In one instance, scheduling was a problem and both coach and caregiver were rematched. In most cases, the matches are working out very well, with both volunteers and caregivers expressing a great deal of satisfaction with the program.

### A PERSONAL ACCOUNT

#### A Coach and Caregiver Form a Strong Connection

Kevin Smith, age 46, along with his wife, Marcia, signed up to be volunteer Caregiver Coaches, having learned about the program through their church. Kevin was drawn to L3C by childhood memories of witnessing the strain of his grandmother's "senility" on his parents.

"The training gave an awareness of things to look out for when dealing with a caregiver. I learned how to comfort the person without being directive, help open his mind as to what his options are. We talk every other week. I give him the breaks he needs when he has stress and needs someone to talk to. If he calls in the middle of the week, I know that he is stressed. Most of the time we talk, we don't talk about things that are heavy. It's a great relief to take our minds off of what's going on around us and give us a moment to breathe. I know that I have a friend that I'll have for the rest of my life."

Lawrence Cunningham, age 51, is concerned about both of his parents. His 85 year old father is primary caregiver for his 80 year old mother. She is bedridden and has dementia. Lawrence wants to make sure that his father can maintain his health, while his mother receives the care she needs.

"The program gives someone to bounce things off of. When you talk to family, there's an emotional agenda. He doesn't have the emotional attachment and we've now become friends. You think you're on this island, but you're not. You know that there are other people going through the same situations. I become stressed out by worrying about what will happen. My mother has diabetes on top of the Alzheimer's and the fall. When I talk to Kevin, I get a new perspective and a new outlook."



Kevin Smith (left), Caregiver Coach, is a strong support to caregiver Lawrence Cunningham.

Photo by Rebekeh Nemethy

## Livable Community Connection Projects

The Livable Communities Westchester web portal is a collaboration of the virtual kind between Westchester County Department of Senior Program and Services (DSPS) and AARP. The DSPS site, <http://www.livablecommunitieswestchester.org/>, and the AARP New York site, [www.aarplivability.org](http://www.aarplivability.org), are linked in a way that says “Let’s create a Livable Westchester Together.” Providing an easy way to navigate web resource allows Westchester residents to maximize their understanding of Livable Communities resources and activities and to become more deeply involved in the initiative.

The web portal offers a consistent, easy-to-use interface which flows from the home page down through every area of the portal. The web portal contains a number of links, including AARP, DSPS, a calendar of events, other county agencies, the Westchester Public/Private Partnership for Aging Services and more. The Livable Community Connections, along with contact information, regional council member lists, and activities, are all listed on the portal. The portal also provides an opportunity for the visitor to link into Mapping Westchester, a Geographic Information Service, in which a Livable Communities application allows the visitor to put in an address, click on a particular item like food pantries and find all food pantries in the area up to 10 miles away. Asset maps are on the web portal; icons identify where various formal assets are located such as schools, houses of worship, libraries and more.

Traditionally, information is shared through basic materials like papers, articles and the like. The AARP + DSPS web portal expands the communication process. It brings to life a growing innovative partnership as it continues to flourish. Technology is a way to keep connected and communicate. New information and communication technologies have been seen to offer a means by which the paradigm shift towards conversational models of learning can be realized. The AARP + DSPS web portal has tremendous capability for replication and is inexpensive to reproduce. As a premiere showcase for communicating successful activities using some of the latest methods, the web portal is fast becoming the way to link communities and the world. Please visit our web portal to learn more: [www.livablecommunitieswestchester.org](http://www.livablecommunitieswestchester.org)



A portion of [www.livablecommunitieswestchester.org](http://www.livablecommunitieswestchester.org) main page

## Part 6 THE FUTURE OF LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Westchester County’s Livable Communities initiative has many years ahead of it. We know that the relationships between Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services, AARP and other partners strengthen our ability to make this county a place where people of all ages feel like they belong. We believe that a major focus in making a project like this one successful is to ask questions and then listen. The diverse residents and other stakeholders in these 43 municipalities are accustomed to having their voices heard here. The initiative is designed to respond to the interests and concerns expressed by those voices. The project’s infrastructure – grounded in our Village model – empowers residents to take action on their expressed priorities and to be a support to one another.

Westchester County’s Initiative is particularly ambitious. The partners obtained the resources to implement a project of this scope and had the support of key community players needed to put the plan into action. This program can be fully replicated and adapted for other communities or components of it can be implemented on a smaller scale. If you want to try implementing a Livable Communities, but don’t have resources and support for a comprehensive initiative, study the issues and plan strategically. When selecting issues to tackle pick the “low hanging fruit” first; that is, take on issues that are really doable. Also, engage volunteers to assist you in your efforts; volunteers can be helpful in all sorts of roles – ask them how they want to help. There are many free resources to help you with planning; we particularly urge you to look at AARP’s web site for materials on Livable Communities.

**No matter the size of your initiative, the following steps are key to a successful Livable Communities program:**

1. Make the decision that you want and need livable communities – buy-in from community stakeholders is essential.
2. Identify the assets in your community – that is, the people, places and things that make it of value.
3. Sponsor community visioning – through whatever structure is developed ask people what they want and what they see for the future of the community; explore the community identity.
4. Create an organizational structure that will facilitate your efforts – this structure must be one that is malleable to ideas and community centered.
5. Make partners – of all types. In addition to partners within the aging community (AARP, long term care providers, social service agencies), even the most unlikely partnership will have some benefit when it comes to livable communities. Look to businesses, community-based organizations, academia, foundations, and civic and social organizations.
6. Engage intergenerational populations – this will ensure sustainability; it is important that each age group understand the goal of the project
7. Bring people together as much as possible – so that they may share their concerns and ideas for resolutions to challenges. Going to people in their own communities is one of the most effective ways to engage residents.

Finally, be flexible – a livable communities project is meant to be a multi-year initiative; know that you’ll never be finished – not if you’re doing the job right.

### What is the difference between a “web portal” and a “web site”?

A portal is generally a vehicle by which to gain access to a multitude of 'services'. A web site is a destination in itself. The web portal provides so many links to various sites that one could call it a one-stop shop for learning about Livable Communities, volunteerism, civic engagement, effecting change and getting involved.

Here are two links to learn more about this exciting partnership:  
[www.livablecommunitieswestchester.org](http://www.livablecommunitieswestchester.org) & [www.aarplivability.org](http://www.aarplivability.org)

# Part 7 LIVABLE COMMUNITIES RESOURCES

Each phase of the Livable Communities Initiative offer tools that assist and inform our residents about the resources that exist to help them remain in their homes as long as possible. Building Livable Communities is an investment in Aging in Place. A portal is generally a vehicle by which to gain access to

a multitude of 'services'. A web site is a destination in itself. The web portal provides so many links to various sites that one could call it a one-stop shop for learning about Livable Communities, volunteerism, civic engagement, effecting change and getting involved.

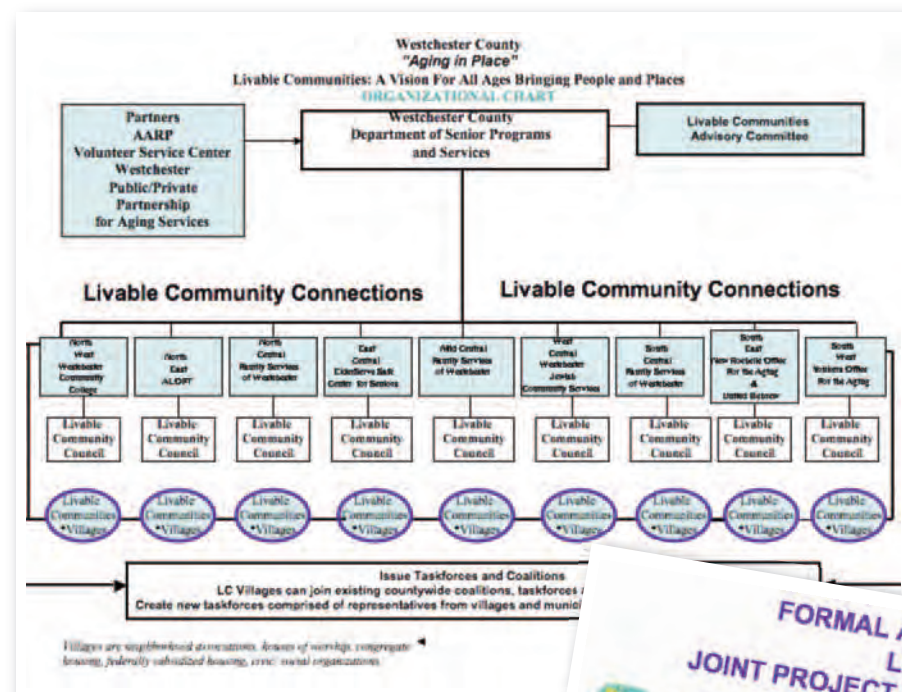
## Livable Communities Needs & Interest Survey

PLEASE FAX THIS FORM TO THE NUMBER BELOW AS YOU COMPLETE COLUMNS 2 THROUGH 8 ON PAGES 1-37  
**VILLAGE SURVEY REPORT FORM**  
 Village Participation # \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code(s):  
 Village Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Countywide  
 Org. Y N \_\_\_\_\_  
 # of Members: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Municipality(ies): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Service Category: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Check if members will advocate for this issue: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Indicate area(s) of participation: \_\_\_\_\_  
 1. Attend Meetings \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. Direct Service Provision \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. Receive Education \_\_\_\_\_  
 4. Donate Financial Resources \_\_\_\_\_  
 5. Donate Talents \_\_\_\_\_  
 Community Safety  
 Consumer Protection  
 Cultural Enrichment  
 Education  
 Employment  
 Environment  
 Financial & Legal  
 Fraud Protection  
 Health & Wellness  
 Housing  
 Intergenerational  
 Long-Term Care  
 Property Taxes  
 County/School Safety & Security  
 Service Assistance & Socialization  
 Transportation  
 Volunteerism  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 PLEASE FAX THIS FORM TO THE WESTCHESTER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SENIOR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES - 9 SOUTH FIRST AVENUE - MOUNT VERNON NEW YORK 10558-ATTN: COLETTE PHIPPS (814) 813-6399 For questions call (814) 813-6441

**Mapping Westchester County Livable Communities Application User Guide**

This Initiative of Livable Communities: A Vision for All Ages-Bringing People and Places Together is a collaboration among the Westchester County Department of Information Technology, the Department of Senior Programs and Services, and AARP. As always, we continue to strive to provide our communities and residents with options to support mobility, independence and an improved quality of life.

## Livable Communities Organizational Chart



## Livable Communities Mapping Westchester User Guide

## Livable Communities Formal Asset Mapping with Iona College

**FORMAL ASSET MAPPING LEGEND JOINT PROJECT WITH IONA COLLEGE**

- Recreation, Leisure & Fitness
- Transportation
- Houses of Worship
- Education & Lifelong Learning
- Health/Mental Health/Wellness
- Housing
- Senior Services
- Youth Services
- End Of Life Services
- Community Organizations
- Arts & Cultural Heritage
- Census Highlights
- Public Services

## Livable Communities Community Visioning Workshops

**WEST CENTRAL REGION - STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS: Focus For Action**

What are practical and innovative actions that will build on our strengths and resources, deal with our challenges and move us toward our vision?

<b>Develop Mechanism To Increase Health and Wellness Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Change and increase Midway Home Care benefits to cover additional services</li> <li>Create mechanisms for more health/wellness opportunities</li> </ul>	<b>Create Cultural and Social Opportunities Mobile- and Home-Bound Seniors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create additional services for seniors (e.g. social services, transportation, cultural enrichment)</li> <li>Design arts spaces for homebound seniors</li> </ul>	<b>Leveraging Opportunities for Enriched Living and Wellness</b>
<b>Create and Enhance Affordable Accessible Mobility Options</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and update service contracts to eliminate barriers</li> <li>Develop parking of accessible taxis in public transportation options</li> <li>Coordinate with transportation providers</li> <li>Conduct a large community audit of accessibility (Winter/Transportation, etc.)</li> <li>Develop transportation system issues that will provide greater mobility via public or private options</li> <li>Facilitate concrete streets through coordination (with designers) and mapping</li> <li>Regulate taxis through the county instead of municipalities</li> </ul>	<b>Create Several "Ageing in Place" Projects in the County</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create grassroots "Ageing in Place" projects in this County</li> </ul>	<b>Adapt Housing and Mobility Opportunities for Ageing in Place</b>
<b>Demystify Politics of Self Advocacy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with local village, county and state</li> <li>Offer to know where the assets are</li> <li>Use planning research to identify potential assets to be used together to reach funding more affordable (e.g. housing, aging in a community)</li> <li>Public village leaders to four senior centers</li> <li>Local leaders specifically deal and push leader for senior programs and services</li> <li>Focus legislative language the public can understand</li> <li>Streamline government budgets acting education and major senior services resources</li> <li>Vote for candidates who don't play politics upon the vote</li> <li>Collaborate with other organizations</li> <li>Develop systems to understand the process of politics so they can have problems addressed by the appropriate entity</li> </ul>	<b>Identify and Enlist Volunteers in Volunteer Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create incentive (certifying, motivating, flexible) program to engage more volunteers in (e.g. tax credits, recognition volunteer experience)</li> <li>Invite of leaders in the team corporate partnerships, and coalition of university health administrator and students to address the needs of the community</li> <li>Develop coalition of volunteer drivers for wheelchair accessible vans for disabled seniors at 80% of the cost</li> <li>Call for the good state's volunteerism</li> <li>Facilitate volunteerism opportunities for fundraising (e.g. walking and bicycling) through city</li> </ul>	<b>Educating For Community and Political Action</b>
<b>Enhance Community Housing &amp; Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formulation of facility &amp; program to increase children can provide needed certification</li> <li>Collect local community the demographic information</li> <li>Develop affordable housing pilot for</li> <li>Allowing a portion of zoning laws for lease construction projects</li> <li>Create housing equity exchange</li> <li>Expand affordable housing for middle-income communities</li> </ul>	<b>Educate and Inform Community</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define assets</li> <li>Create the better list of services with accessibility and equity</li> <li>Create marketing and media campaign</li> <li>Create resource guide listing all organizations/resources available in the community</li> <li>State roles/mission to provide essential and basic needs/resources (corporate and business)</li> <li>Inform community of local communities' needs - create needs and resources</li> <li>Publicize needs and proposals to local community support</li> <li>Media outlets: find local community support</li> </ul>	<b>Educating For Community and Political Action</b>

### WHO is involved in a Livable Community Village

YOU and neighborhood groups that want to build and sustain a high quality of life for all generations.

- Community based and civic organizations
- Neighbors of elderly
- Government officials
- Cultural groups
- Neighborhood associations
- Senior clubs
- Social organizations
- Senior centers
- Senior housing and apartment associations
- The business community
- Schools, colleges, libraries
- Adult children of seniors
- Grandchildren
- Young people who can learn from seniors
- Baby boomers
- Organizations serving people with disabilities
- And the 167,000 seniors in Westchester

**Everyone will benefit from living in a community that successfully addresses the needs of seniors.**

*"The soul of the community lies in its villages."*

For more information visit [www.westchestergov.com/livablecommunities](http://www.westchestergov.com/livablecommunities)

### HOW to become a Livable Community Village

Sign up your group to enjoy the benefits of becoming a Livable Community Village by calling 914-813-6406 at the Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services.

- It is recommended that one member be the contact person to receive and exchange information.
- Begin the exchange of information by reaching out to the Regional Livable Community Connections Board below.

### Livable Community Village Approach

**Regional Livable Community Connections (L3C)**

North West L3C: 18 Westchester County College, 1000 Westchester Ave., Westchester, NY 10598-3000, 914-585-3000

East L3C: 14141 Tarrytown Rd., Tarrytown, NY 10590, 914-833-3200 ext. 161

South West L3C: 4000 Westchester Ave., Westchester, NY 10598, 914-585-3000

South East L3C: 4000 Westchester Ave., Westchester, NY 10598, 914-585-3000

West L3C: 4000 Westchester Ave., Westchester, NY 10598, 914-585-3000

### WHAT is a Livable Community

It is a community that offers seniors the opportunity to add life to their years by staying in their own homes or apartments, affordable, accessible housing options in their community with:

- A wide range of recreational, social and cultural activities
- Good healthcare
- Public transportation plus walkable streets
- Provision of a positive future for the future

And, most importantly, it has a "village" personality.

### WHAT are the benefits of becoming a Livable Community Village

- Free access to continuing educational seminars and forums for all ages
- Participate in a free village survey of members' interests, needs, talents and skills
- Collaborate and build partnerships with community groups to better serve the members of your village
- Create and develop innovative volunteer teams to match the needs of your village members
- Provide your members with advisory tasks and role rotation to address the needs of seniors

### WHAT is a Livable Community Village

Livable Community Villages are networks of people with shared interests. And the good news is such villages already exist throughout Westchester in the form of neighborhood associations, houses of worship, congregations, housing and civic and social organizations.

- People of all ages interact
- Helping one another in a way of life
- There is a commitment to safety and care setting around

For more information contact: Sharon Schubert, 914-813-6407, [shs@westchestergov.com](mailto:shs@westchestergov.com)

### WHY a Livable Community Village

- There are some 162,000 people over the age of 60 in Westchester or roughly one in five residents. This number will rise dramatically as the Baby Boomers age.
- More than 80% of older adults want to stay in their own homes.
- Cost of nursing home care exceeds \$12,000 per month. Living at home when appropriate is better and less costly.
- Roughly 25% of older adults find it difficult to afford the cost of private automobile. They need public and volunteer transportation and a pedestrian-friendly environment.
- Seniors living alone account for 39% of the County's single-person households and 76% of those seniors are women.
- People over the age of 85 constitute the County's fastest growing population sector.
- There is a shrinking number of available paid and family caregivers. Seniors need and rely on each other.
- Studies show that interaction with other people protects and enhances the quality of life for seniors.

Meeting the goals of development and maintaining Livable Community Villages is necessary for you and your loved ones.

Community Village Approach Brochure

### Westchester County Livable Communities: A Vision for All Ages - Bringing People and Places Together

Robert P. Amato, Westchester County Executive  
County Board of Legislators

### Livable Community Village Needs/Interests Survey Booklet

Village Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Region: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Village Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Municipality/Town: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tel #: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ L3C Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Village Participants: # \_\_\_\_\_

DEPARTMENT OF SENIOR PROGRAMS & SERVICES  
Mae Carpenter, Commissioner

Livable Communities Needs & Interest Cover

### Livable Communities Create the Good - Walkability Project

create the good AARP

Tips, Tools and Resources for Organizers

### Sidewalks and Streets Survey

Sidewalks and Streets Survey is designed so that communities can make walking safer by teaching small groups to take simple "walkability" surveys and to take recommended actions for community improvements. Your involvement will make a difference to people you care about.

**INCLUDED IN THIS KIT:**

- 1 Safe Community Walkability Tool Kit: Step-by-step Approach
- 4 Sidewalks and Streets Survey
- 13 Take Action: How to Improve Your Community Rating From the Sidewalks and Streets Survey
- 15 Further Steps to Improve Your Community's Rating

### Livable Communities Caregiving Coaching Brochure

*"There are only four kinds of people in the world - those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers and those who will need caregivers."*

Rosalynn Carter, Former First Lady and President of the Board of Directors, Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving

### L3C Program Sponsors

- Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services through its Livable Communities: A Vision for All Ages - Bringing People and Places Together initiative.
- Westchester Public-Private Partnership for Aging Services
- Fordham University's Ravazzini Center on Aging
- Volunteer Center of United Way of Westchester and Putnam
- Volunteer Center of United Way of Westchester and Putnam

The Livable Communities Caregivers Coaching (L3C) program is spearheaded by the Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services. It is part of the department's Livable Communities: A Vision for All Ages - Bringing People and Places Together initiative.

Livable Communities work to develop senior-friendly locations where older adults can age in their homes with independence, dignity and civic involvement. The initiative has received national awards and has been identified by AARP as one of three Livable Community models in the United States.

### Livable Communities Conference Announcement

SAVE THE DATE

October 2, 2009

Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services

### Livable Communities: A Vision for All Ages Connecting People and Places

8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Westchester Marriott  
670 White Plains Road, Tarrytown, NY 10591

For more information or early reservations, call 914-813-6406 or visit: [www.westchestergov.com/livablecommunities](http://www.westchestergov.com/livablecommunities)

### Livable Communities Conference Program

Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services  
Mae Carpenter, Commissioner

### FIRST REGIONAL CONFERENCE: Livable Communities: A Vision for All Ages Connecting People and Places

October 2, 2009  
Westchester Marriott  
670 White Plains Road, Tarrytown, NY 10591

Workforce Development  
Transportation  
Legal and Financial  
Intergenerational Programs  
Environment  
Caregiving  
Houses of Worship  
Planning and Zoning  
Advocacy  
Livable Communities Models  
Arts  
Affordable Housing  
Technology  
Universal Design

PREPARING COMMUNITIES FOR THE ELDERING PROCESS

# Part 8 LIVABLE COMMUNITIES URL CONNECTIONS



[www.westchestergov.com/seniors](http://www.westchestergov.com/seniors) - The Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services, an Area Agency on Aging advocating to ensure that needed resources and support services are available to older adults.

[www.westchesterpartnership.org](http://www.westchesterpartnership.org) - Westchester Public/Private Partnership for Aging Services develops resources to provide myriad services that help seniors age with independence and dignity in their home communities.

[www.aarplivability.org](http://www.aarplivability.org) - a webportal among AARP, Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services and the Westchester Public/Private Partnership for Aging Services.

[www.Livablecommunitieswestchester.org](http://www.Livablecommunitieswestchester.org) - Webportal among AARP, Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services and the Westchester Public/Private Partnership for Aging Services.

[www.livable.com](http://www.livable.com) - Partners for Livable Communities Partners for Livable Communities is a national, nonprofit leadership organization working to improve the livability of communities by promoting quality of life, economic development, and social equity.

[www.volunteer-center.org](http://www.volunteer-center.org) - The Volunteer Center of United Way The Volunteer Center is a central place for volunteers to get matched every day – it is also where nonprofits and businesses come for training and support in creating effective volunteer programs.

[www.aging.ny.gov](http://www.aging.ny.gov) - New York State Office for the Aging in cooperation with county and borough programs for aging in New York City, helps to guide elders, their families and caregivers to opportunities that enhance their lives. Our office is also charged with advocating for our elders at every level of government and throughout our local communities.

[www.naa.org](http://www.naa.org) - National Association of Area Agencies on Aging and umbrella organization advocating to ensure that needed resources and support services are available to older Americans.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services along with the Westchester Public/Private Partnership for Aging Services and AARP New York have worked jointly since 2007 on the Westchester County Livable Community Initiative. We wish to acknowledge the following organizations and persons for the expertise and enthusiasm they bring to this invaluable partnership.

**Mae Carpenter**

*Commissioner, Westchester County Department  
of Senior Programs and Services*

**Dozene Guishard**

*Executive Director  
Westchester County livable Communities Initiative*

**Colette Phipps**

*Deputy Executive Director  
Westchester County livable Communities Initiative*

**Lois Aronstein**

*AARP NY State Director*

**William Stoner**

*AARP NY, Associate State Director,  
Livable Communities*

**Michael Olender**

*AARP NY, Associate State Director*

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