

# DRAFT VERSION

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# DEER PARK COMMUNITY VISION

## YEAR ONE SUMMARY

Vision Long Island  
07-31-2022

*Deer Park*

COMMUNITY PARTNERS:



PREPARED BY:



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

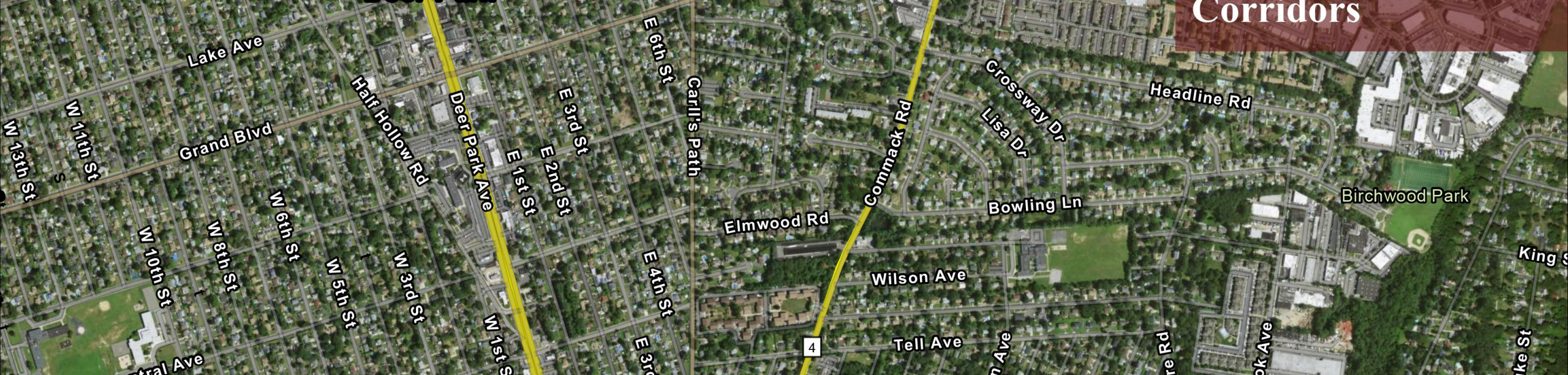


# DEER PARK YEAR ONE SUMMARY

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## INTRODUCTION

Deer Park is a large community with approximately 28000 residents living in approximately 9500 households within 6.2 square miles. Prior to WWII, Deer Park was mostly farmland with a small downtown area surrounding the intersection of Deer Park Avenue and Long Island Avenue close to the original train station.

After WWII, suburban development expanded in the area with single family homes along gridded streets and commercial and industrial development along the main roads. Deer Park Avenue was widened to a four-lane highway in the 1960s as development continued and the train station was moved two miles to the east in 1987 where it replaced both the Deer Park and Pine Aire stations.

The premise of the ongoing Deer Park Revitalization initiative sponsored by the Town of Babylon is to explore how to bring back a small downtown area or components of one.

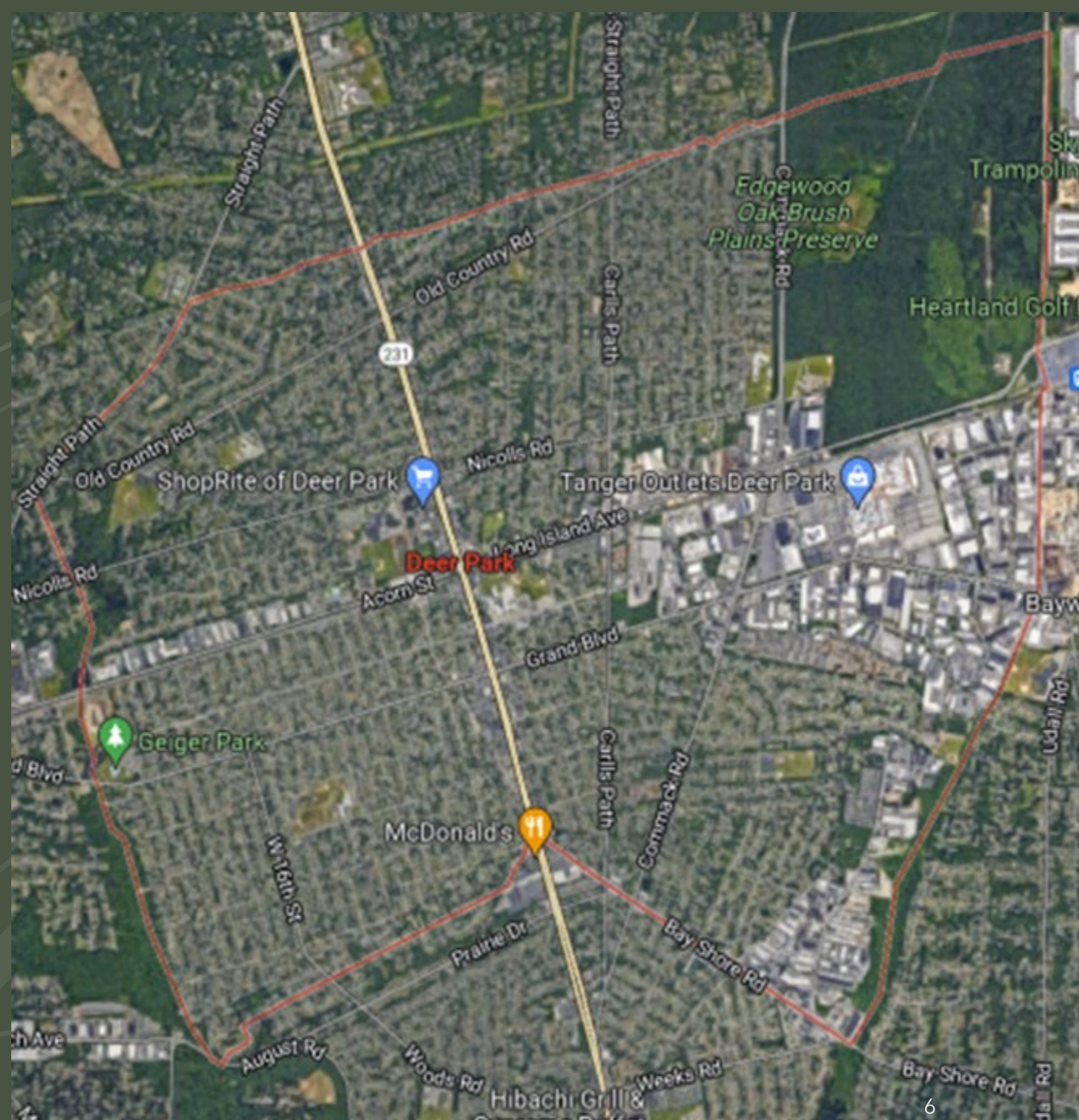
Input from the public, multiple levels of government and the feasibility of investment from small businesses, property owners will offer a path forward toward achieving this goal.

## 1.1 PLAN OVERVIEW & PROCESS GOALS

a. The hamlet of Deer Park is centrally located between the north and south shores of Suffolk County. This Town of Babylon neighborhood offers diversity in both its residents and businesses. For many years now, the Deer Park community has expressed its desires for change in infrastructure and physical improvements, economic development, and beautification. At the request of the Town of Babylon, Vision Long Island has begun a community charette process to develop a Vision plan and overlay zoning code that incorporates both the community desires and market realities, and helps Deer Park redefine their sense of place in western Suffolk County.

The area of study is solely focused within the Deer Park Hamlet. Primary focus is along commercial roads within the hamlet of Deer Park including:

- Deer Park Avenue, between Nicolls Road and W Bay Shore Road
- Acorn Street and Long Island Avenue, between Eastern Avenue and Carll's Path
- W Bay Shore Road, between Deer Park Avenue and Weeks Road
- Commack Road, between Nicholls Road and W Bay Shore Road



# 1.1 PLAN OVERVIEW & PROCESS GOALS

b. Throughout the process, there was a focus on key components that affect the quality of life and sense of place residents envision. These areas included:

1. Types of retail and location of a town center
2. Traffic flow, pedestrian and bike safety, and connectivity to destinations
3. Housing stock- existing housing availability, affordability, and desired types of housing
4. Community needs including open space and parks, entertainment and attractions, and beautification\*

c. The process conducted in year one, includes the following:

1. Community outreach- Vision has create an email address specifically for the Deer Park revitalization initiative ([projects@visionlongisland.org](mailto:projects@visionlongisland.org)) that allows direct communication with our team. We will also have a Facebook page that allows us as well as community organizations to provide project updates and advertise for community events.
2. Review of Existing Plans
3. Public meeting for broader outreach
4. Visual Preference Survey
5. Online Survey



## About the Consultant

Vision Long Island advances more livable, economically sustainable, and environmentally responsible growth on Long Island through Smart Growth. Smart Growth focuses on infill, re-development, and open space preservation. It supports mixed-use, mixed-income communities that are convenient, attractive, pedestrian-friendly, and that make affordable housing and public transportation desirable and realistic.

Over the past 25 years Vision has counseled downtown Villages and Towns, and has been a resource for the County, State, and Federal governments, as well as the business and civic community on downtown revitalization, planning and infrastructure.

Vision has made nearly 3000 presentations, performed over 25 community visionings and advanced over 150 public and private planning projects towards implementing the goals of Smart Growth. Over 15,000 units of transit- oriented development have been approved in our local municipalities with the support of Vision Long Island.

Vision Long Island support on the project has key staff members designated in the areas of project management, design and place making, research and plan review, community outreach and other various positions.



## DEMOGRAPHICS

Currently the population is approximately 60% white, non-Hispanic, 16% Hispanic, 11% black and 11% Asian, with 6% identifying as two or more races. Over 19% are foreign born and 26% speak a language other than English at home. Approximately 85% live in owner occupied residences.



# DATA GATHERING



## 2.1 REVIEW OF EXISTING PLANS

AND OUTLOOK FOR THE SAGTIKOS REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ZONE	
and southbound left turn at Grand Blvd.	<b>Deer Park Shopping Center Babylon</b> Located along the west side between Long Island Ave. and
bound and westbound phases Grand Blvd.	
northbound protected left Rd. at Grand Blvd.	If Tanger is <i>not</i> built, then Unicorn
of installing southbound, bound right lanes and ggs on Commack Rd. at the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide signal and timing existing traffic signal at Co Island Ave.</li><li>• Provide timing and coordinating the existing traffic signals from Quail Run to Nicolls</li></ul>
nal timing modifications on Shore Rd.	If Tanger <i>is</i> built, then Unicorn
ings on Bay Shore Rd. at	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide typical infrastructure the developments frontage</li><li>• Pay an impact fee to be applied to projects in this area.</li></ul>
edian on Burlington Ave. subject to Suffolk County k Rd. at Burlington Ave. mel northbound right and y the signal on Commack	
idening Pine Aire Dr. from way to Executive Dr.	<b>Suggested General Mitigation</b>
ll signs directing Tanger-arcus Blvd.	Other general mitigation <i>suggested</i> for the roadways within Development Zone. These improve
pproach on Grand Blvd. at	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Widen roadways to provide a</li><li>• Re-stripe existing pavements of lanes.</li><li>• Construct new access ramp State Parkway.</li><li>• Provide new signalization access points.</li><li>• Construct additional turn lanes</li></ul>
ll eastbound left turn lanes provide an eastbound left bound right-turn overlap. ears after full occupancy. control before 1 <sup>st</sup> holiday. gns, plan to be forwarded. s to this development.	

### A. REVIEW OF SELECTED GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT AREAS SUFFOLK COUNTY, NY

In 2006, Deer Park and the Town of Babylon has been designated to be included within the Sagtikos Regional Development Zone which encompasses parts of Commack (in the Town of Smithtown), Brentwood (In the Town of Huntington) and Deer Park. At the time a proposed Major Development, the Tanger Factory Outlet Center called the Arches was approved by the Town of Babylon Town Board. The 805,000 square foot development on 81 acres of land had replaced the AIL Industrial facility on Grand Boulevard east of Commack Road. The project includes the outlet center, two restaurants, and a multiplex cinema theater. A second major development project, the Deer Park Shopping Center was proposed on the west side of Commack Road and north of Long Island Ave on a ten-acre site. The proposed project would add an addition 115,000 Square Footage of retail space to Deer Park.

To address the additional growth in traffic due to the developments a series of mitigation measures has been implemented for each project. Mitigation measures for the Tanger Outlet Center included a closed loop traffic signal interconnect system on Commack Road between Nicolls Road, additional left turning lanes at several the surrounding intersections, and traffic backup queue detectors on Commack Road. Contingent on the completion of the Tanger Outlet Shopping Center, traffic mitigation measures for the Deer Park Shopping Center includes typical infrastructure improvements along the frontage of the development on Commack Road, in addition to paying an impact fee to be applied to future County projects.



## B. DEER PARK ASSOCIATION REVITALIZATION/DOWNTOWN SURVEY

Given the opportunity to comment on the best approach to addressing the speed of traffic, participants would like to either seek ways to speed up the flow of traffic or were unsure. This is a multiple-choice question with no option to add additional comments. When looking at previous questions and their comments it is clear that high speeds are an issue, but during peak hours congestion becomes a major problem as well. This can be interpreted that survey participants ideally would prefer a steady and safe flow of traffic throughout the day. When asked on how important adding municipal parking to DPA, participants responded in saying that it was not an overall top priority with a 2.5 average out of a total of 5

Participants when asked to comment on their level of satisfaction with the visual aesthetics of DPA, there was found to be an overall level of dissatisfaction with a recorded average of 2.6 out of 5. Additional comments included, old/dirty buildings, garbage, vacant buildings/empty lots, potholes, overgrowth on medians, need for pleasing streetlights/signage, and a need for a landmark/statue. Hanging flowers and winter decorations are generally well received but there is concern that there is no one maintaining them. Additional comments mention the lack of uniformity among storefronts.

When asked to rank visual appeal initiatives by order of importance, addressing vacant commercial properties and improving medians were found to be a top priority, followed by additional/enhance fixtures (garbage cans, decorative lighting, greenery, etc.), addressing cleanliness/litter, and renovating storefronts/buildings, respectively.

Most survey participants are in favor of designating an area of Deer Park to serve as a downtown. When asked where the downtown area should be, a three-way tie was found between Lake Ave to Long Island Ave, Grand Blvd to Lake Ave, and Long Island Ave to Nicolls Road. After further review of participants who selected “other” for a Downtown area, Nicolls Road to Grand Boulevard emerged as well. Participants were asked to consider what would be the greatest benefits of a downtown area in Deer Park. Improving the look and feel of the community, attracting new businesses, and encouraging more local foot traffic were found to be the top three results. The Community overwhelmingly would like to attract more restaurants to the area but would also like to see additional retail as well. Overall, there were requests for quality grocery stores, removal of the excessive number of nail salons/foot spas, additional locally owned family restaurant options, a butcher, a bakery, a park/picnic area with a dog park/playground, and a museum.

## B. DEER PARK ASSOCIATION REVITALIZATION/DOWNTOWN SURVEY

The survey respondents overall are in support of the installation of sewers in Deer Park and along DPA. In addition, vacant properties and code enforcement are also top concerns for the community. But while participants agree that rezoning should be a consideration there is an overwhelming objection to additional housing/apartments. It should be noted that the majority of survey respondents (69.3%) are homeowners and or are over the age of thirty-five (85.8%) which may lead to an inaccurate representation of the needs for the youth of the community at large.

Other unique ideas or suggestions included, installing a trolley system that runs north/south to Babylon, a pedestrian overpass to cross the street more safely, a designated community garden with seating, an adopt a lamppost program during holidays, and protecting against criminal activity.



## C. SUFFOLK COUNTY HIKE & BIKE MASTER PLAN:

The Suffolk County Department of Economic Development and Planning (SCEDP) has developed a comprehensive Suffolk County Hike & Bike Master Plan (the Plan) to enable the development of safe, integrated, and well-designed network of pedestrian and bicycle systems throughout the County. The implementation of the plan and its recommended improvements has the potential to expand mobility choices and improve the quality of life for County residents, reduce the reliance on motor vehicles, promote public health and boost local economic activity. SCEDP has identified over 1,000 Nodes that represent likely walk, hike, and bike trip generators and destinations points. An equity analysis has identified areas that demonstrate a need for transportation investments based on concentrations of historically vulnerable populations.

A number of specific corridors have been selected within Deer Park for pedestrian and cyclist improvements. They include a 1.7 mile shared-use path on Long Island Ave, bike lanes with signage along DPA, and a new sidewalk from Bay Shore Road to Deer Park Ave along Carlls Path. Most of these projects are still yet to be underway.



## 2.2 TRAFFIC & TRANSPORTATION

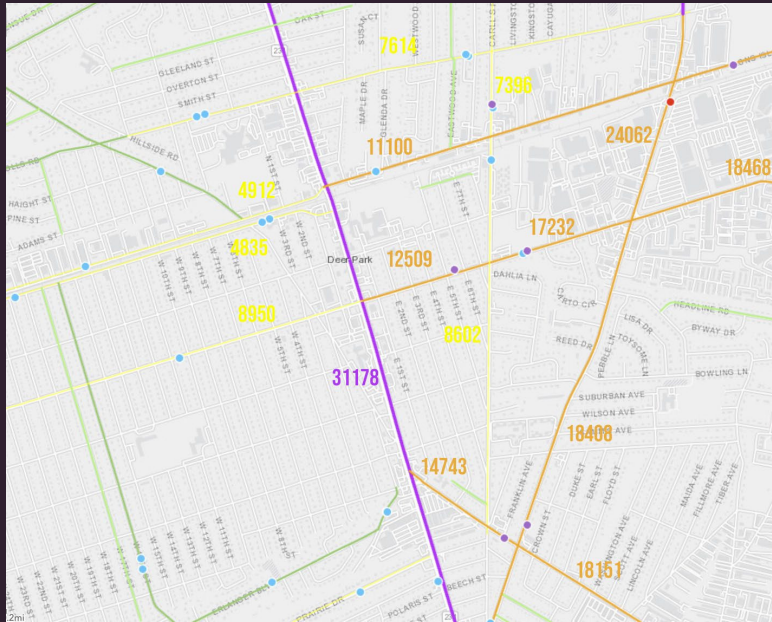


Figure 1 Average Traffic Volumes

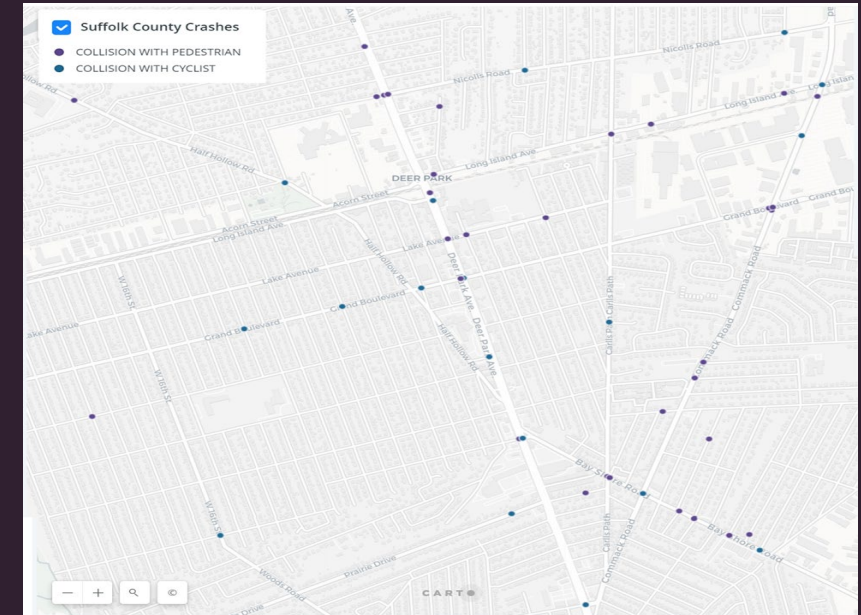


Figure 2 Locations of Pedestrian and Bike Crashes

Since much of the development of the hamlet occurred after WWII, it has been planned around driving as the primary form of transportation. Many of the roads have fairly high traffic volumes with Deer Park Avenue having over 31000 AADT (Average Annual Daily Traffic). Commack Road has over 24000 in the area close to the outlets. The remainder of the roads are under 20000 AADT. Many, if not most of the roads in the area are very wide which can facilitate speeding making them more dangerous, especially during times when traffic volumes don't cause congestion.

Most of the main roads have sidewalks though not all are continuous or in good repair. Crosswalks are not very frequent which can lead to some crossing in between. There are bike lanes indicated along Grand Avenue as it approaches Deer Park Avenue, but they are not marked for the rest of its length. The following map shows all the locations in the Deer Park area that a person on foot or on a bike was hit by a motor vehicle during the three-year period of 2014-2016. Many of these occur along Deer Park Avenue and the other commercial corridors in the area.

## 2.2 TRAFFIC & TRANSPORTATION



Figure 3 Suffolk County Transit Map

The Deer Park train station has been relocated to the outskirts of Deer Park on the Main Line/Ronkonkoma Line, and the recently completed second and third track projects have allowed increased service on this line. There are five Suffolk Transit lines that currently serve the Deer Park area including the S2A, S2B, S23, S29, and S33. These connect to South Huntington, Farmingdale College, Wyandanch, Hauppauge, Babylon and Bay Shore. Suffolk Transit is currently undergoing a process to revamp its transit system to provide better service for riders in Western Suffolk, though it isn't yet clear how that service will directly impact Deer Park.

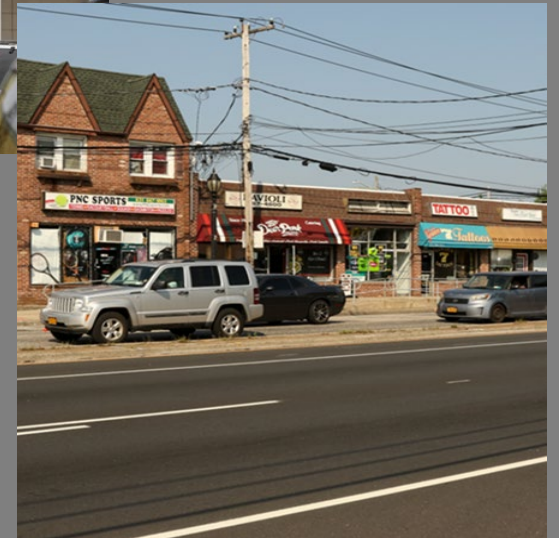
## 2.3 DEVELOPMENT

Development along the main roads is primarily commercial development. It is inconsistent along Deer Park Avenue. With a mix of smaller older buildings adjacent to the sidewalk close to the train tracks, smaller strip centers and larger shopping centers with usually a large tenant and several smaller tenants. Further east on Commack Road near the intersection of Long Island Avenue and Grand Boulevard, there are larger “big box” stores as well as the Tanger Outlets. Behind much of this development and along Long Island Avenue, there is a good amount of industrial development. Most of the other roads within Deer Park are primarily lined with single family homes. There are a few apartment complexes scattered in different locations. There does not appear to be much mixed-use development except for a few older buildings on or near Deer Park Avenue.

While the larger box stores, shopping centers and Tanger Outlets are in generally good condition, many of the older buildings along Deer Park Avenue have vacancies and are not as well maintained. There are several blighted properties in different areas around town.

Attractions and destinations are typically franchise or large businesses including the following:

- Tanger Outlets (The Arches) - 152 The Arches Cir, Deer Park, NY 11729
- Regal Deer Park – 1050 The Arches Cir, Deer Park, NY 11729
- Fabio Buttitta Pools - Acorn St, Deer Park, NY 11729
- Monster Mini Golf - 410 Commack Rd, Deer Park, NY 11729
- Geiger Park – Grand Blvd, Deer Park, NY 11729



*Deer Park*



## 2.4 HOUSING

As of the most recent available data there are 9305 houses in Deer Park, of which 8,851 are occupied, 7,269 are owner occupied and 1,584 are renter occupied. For housing density, there are 1,487 houses/condos per square mile.

The median asking price for vacant for-sale houses and condos in 2019 was \$736,364. The median gross rent in Deer Park in 2019 is \$1621. Median monthly housing costs for homeowners equates to \$2,015. Most residential properties are in good condition, though there are a number of zombie homes.



## 2.5 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Vision Long Island has been in touch with over a dozen real estate professionals over the course of the study period. These conversations were a prelude to the focus groups and one on one meetings we will have with local developers once it's clear there is community support for some forms of redevelopment. Here is some background on the market opportunities that exist.

Multifamily Housing continues to be the strongest development form in the region. Most builders and real estate professionals we spoke with felt strongly that this is the most viable option for any number of areas in the Deer Park community or in neighborhoods surrounding the community. The exodus from NYC through the Coronavirus has put a strain on local inventory and rental units are particularly in demand everywhere.

Mixed use development with a combination of office and multifamily rental of retail and multifamily rental are also in demand but function best in walkable locations or areas with sufficient parking. The Suburban office market has weakened post Coronavirus due to the still preference of some working from home. Some offices have not reset offices to fully bring back their workforce as well. This glut of Class A and B space has employers renegotiating leases and others reevaluating their space. There is an increase in shared office space following the WeWork or Work Smart model that allows businesses to have flexibility, shared space and satellite locations.

The retail market was weak headed into the Coronavirus and continues to be weak in most middle-class neighborhoods across Long Island. Vacancies persist due to online shopping and most hard good retailers are struggling. For the purpose of potential development there is a fair amount of existing shopping between the Deer Park outlet, Deer Park Avenue there are existing auto oriented retail in a number of different shopping categories.

The Industrial market is on the upswing largely due to the strong demand of logistics companies such as Amazon who have a high demand for last mile distribution centers. This trend doesn't look likely to slow down and the industrial areas that have available vacancies can become potential sites for this type of distribution. There is also an increase of locally sourced manufacturing in the food and beverage sector, among others. Increased industrial use is possible within the study area for sites zoned this use.

Independent Restaurants use has skyrocketed in recent years. With that said Coronavirus regulations, staff shortages, supply chain, inflation and spiking energy, shipping and transportation costs. Despite the massive challenges Long Islanders are fiercely loyal and have shopped local through the pandemic helping many eateries stay open. Through the visioning process and outreach to the Deer Park community there was significant interest in more eateries. All range of restaurants have fueled downtown recoveries in recent years. There is no indication that this demand is cooling off.

Day to day service items are predominate commercial use along Deer Park corridors and their viability should continue alongside consumer spending patterns. Given Deer Park's growing diversity, restaurants and services should reflect the current population of the community.

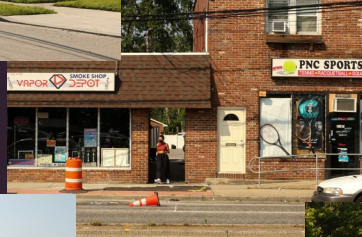


## 2.6 WALK AUDIT

Vision Long Island staff walked multiple roadways during the study period.

We observed most roadways both through commercial corridors and residential streets geared are towards automobile access at higher speeds and not focused on pedestrian or bike safety.

Note we have not done a formal walking audit with AARP that presents recommendations for Deer Park Ave, Long Island Ave, Commack Road and residential streets.

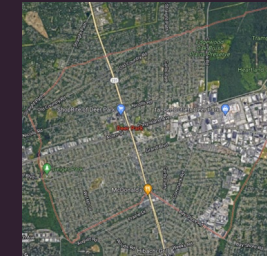


### THESE ARE SOME PRELIMINARY CONCEPTS THAT CAN BE EMPLOYED:

- Need to narrow lanes and drop the “design speed” of the road not just the “posted speed”. This area has had many deaths due to roadway induced speeds.
- All roads can be narrowed to 11 ft lanes. 13 ft lanes belong on the LI Expressway not through local neighborhoods.
- You can have posted speed limits below 30mph. Municipalities can drop speeds to 25mph. NYS law changing this regulation was passed in recent years.
- NYS and Suffolk County and Town of Babylon have laws on the books to advance Complete Streets that can help guide this process
- Speeding which is one of the major concerns we hear everywhere. When pedestrians are hit by motor vehicles at 30mph or lower there is a higher likelihood they will survive. When the crash occurs at over 30mph they are likely to die.
- There are opportunities for increased walking, biking, outdoor dining and central gathering spaces, public events from pandemic for mental health, physical health and support of local businesses.
- Coordination is needed with Suffolk bus service to see if they are maximizing ridership and if working members of the community are being serviced.
- The Safe Routes for School funding or program and safety issues around schools is an opportunity as we saw a large number of students walking through the community crossing over dangerous roads.
- There is funding for pedestrian safety, bike improvement funding that is available on the Federal and State level. The federal infrastructure act has funding in these areas.

### TRAFFIC CALMING TREATMENTS THAT CAN BE EMPLOYED INCLUDE:

- Road narrowing
- Lane narrowing
- Medians
- Bulb outs
- Crosswalks
- Countdown timers
- Street trees
- Parklets
- Roundabouts
- Speed tables
- Wider sidewalks





## OUTREACH

- Meet and connect with key stakeholders
- Present data and answer key community concerns
- Attend community meetings
- Public input meeting
- Social media presence

# 3.1 INDIVIDUAL & SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

Meet and connect with key stakeholders – Vision met individually with government, civic, business and community representatives or in small/focus groups. These meetings were to provide input into land use opportunities and goals for revitalization. Meetings were conducted both virtually and “in person” at the stakeholder’s preference.

Vision Long Island created a stakeholder list of all available stakeholders in Deer Park including (but not limited to):

- Community civic groups
- Chambers and business groups
- Religious organizations
- Sports groups
- Fire & rescue
- Food banks/pantries
- Advocacy groups
- Resource centers

In speaking with these groups, Vision was able to gain input on the community’s goals, get information on upcoming community meetings, as well as receive direction on other key stake holders to reach out to.



Common responses included:

- traffic calming & road safety: along the major roadways, there is a lot of congestion during peak times and high speeds during off hours
- roads are in poor conditions, lines and crosswalks difficult to see, street trees need to be cut back
- sidewalks need major attention: many are in poor shape and/or lead to “nowhere”
- beautification: landscaping and lightings to create more of a sense of place
- an identifiable downtown that will help with taxes, provide affordable housing , and create a destinations outside of Tanger
- infrastructure improvements: specifically sewers, however, need a way to offset the cost

*Deer Park*

## 3.2 COMMUNITY MEETINGS



Traffic Calming? - How  
Town Presence - more  
Get more public involved  
Don't tear front town until bulldozers  
2023 study?  
Town Transparency  
LIA Beautification/clean up  
- sidewalks  
- lights  
No more PILOTS to Tanger



2021

- August 17- Deer Park Chamber of Commerce
- August 26- Deer Park Chamber of Commerce
- August 27- Walking Tour
- September 15- Deer Park Community Association
- October 20- Deer Park Community Association
- November 30- Deer Park Board of Education
- November 6- Movie Night (DPCA)
- Dec 8- Deer Park Drug Prevention
- December 8- Sons of Italy
- December 14 - Deer Park Board of Education
- Dec 15- Deer Park Community Association

2022

- February 23- Deer Park Community Association
- March 9- Deer Park Community Leaders Meeting
- March 16- Deer Park Community Association
- March 22- Deer Park Board of Education
- April- 12 - Deer Park Board of Education
- April 26- Deer Park Board of Education
- April 26 - Deer Park Fire Department
- April 27 - Dinner with Community Leaders

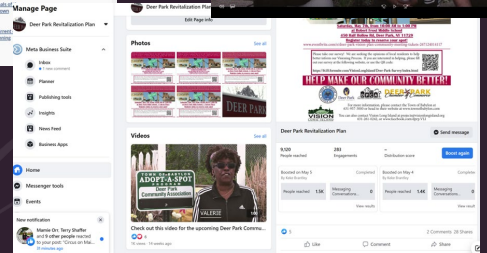
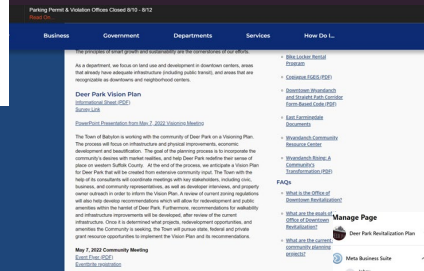
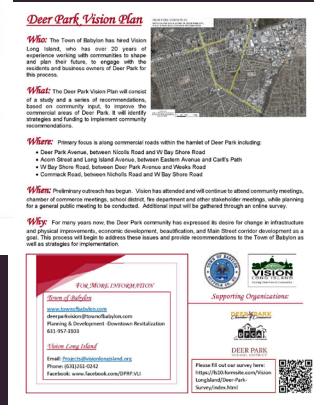
# 3.3 SOCIAL MEDIA & PRESS

A. **Social Media**- In addition to posting on the Vision Long Island social media pages, there is a dedicated Facebook page created for this project under the title Deer Park Revitalization Plan. That page is connected to many of the existing community pages in Deer Park. On there we were able to share information about the project, survey links, upcoming community events, and perform a social media blitz for the charette. Both the charette and the closing of the survey posts were boosted to ensure it reached the maximum number of people.

B. **Dedicated Email** -There is also a dedicated email address (projects@visionlongisland), where folks could send their questions, share the survey, and any other communication needed. After the charette, residents sent in additional ideas they had regarding the charette as well as questions.

C. **Press**- To increase awareness of the project, Vision released a press advisory prior to the event and contacted several news outlets. This allowed for notification of the charette through local media outlets. The charette itself also received coverage through several media outlets.

D. **Commercial** - With the assistance of several community leaders, 2 video commercials were created to promote the visioning process and community meeting.



# 3.4 ADDITIONAL OUTREACH

A. **Phone Calls** - members of the Vision Long Island made phone calls to various community groups, elected officials, businesses, and residents to both gain input on their viewpoint of Deer Park as well as to advise of the charette. The calls included interviews to gain an “on the ground” perspective as well as to identify key stakeholders we may have missed. They were able to share their thoughts with us and direct us to any other community residents or businesses that may be relevant.

B. **Flyer Drops** - Throughout all of the main commercial corridors, the flyer with survey (created by Vision Long Island and approved by the Town of Babylon) was handed out to passers by. This process was done on a series of days leading up to the charette.

# SURVEY

The online survey generated 157 responses. It was shared on Facebook through the Deer Park Revitalization Plan page that was created for this project. Ads were run to promote the survey along with the public visioning meeting to further the reach. Additionally, the Deer Park Community Association shared posts on their page and it was shared on five different Deer Park Facebook community groups.

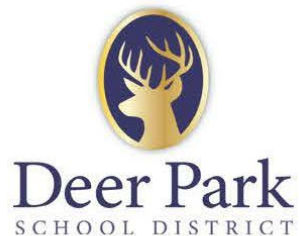
The survey focused on several areas regarding the future development of Deer Park. Business and Main Streets, Traffic and Pedestrian Safety, Housing, Community Needs and Revitalization Goals. The questions were designed to determine what respondents felt about existing conditions in Deer Park, what they would like to see changed and how they felt about potential redevelopment options.

out our survey at the following website, or use the QR code:

<https://fs10.formsite.com/VisionLongIsland/Deer-Park-Survey/index.html>



# HELP MAKE OUR COMMUNITY BETTER!



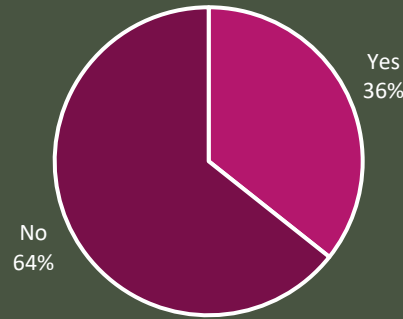
# 4.1 BUSINESS & MAIN STREET

Respondents generally felt that Deer Park did not provide enough retail options. Almost 2/3 felt this way with the remaining portion generally content with what is currently available. Among those that felt that it was lacking, there is a strong desire for more restaurants and smaller retail options. The other choices for large retail, office and medical uses had significantly fewer responses.

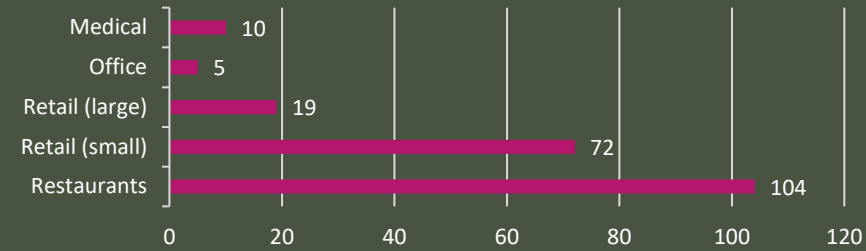
Most respondents felt the need for a “Main Street” by a 3:1 margin. There were many different responses as to where they envision it located. Many felt that Deer Park Avenue is the best place as it was historically the “Main Street” until it was widened in the second half of the 20th century. Others felt that Commack Road, Long Island Avenue, or Grand Boulevard were the most suitable. Some identified particular sections of road (ie. Deer Park Ave from Nichols to Grand).

Regarding new development in a potential Main Street area, the largest portion of respondents felt comfortable with a maximum height of two stories, with a smaller portion comfortable with three and a several more with four. A number of respondents were only comfortable with single story development.

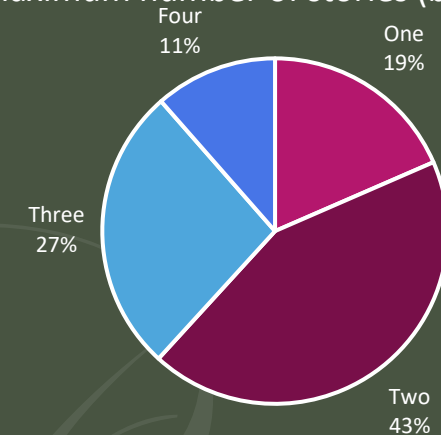
Are there enough retail options?



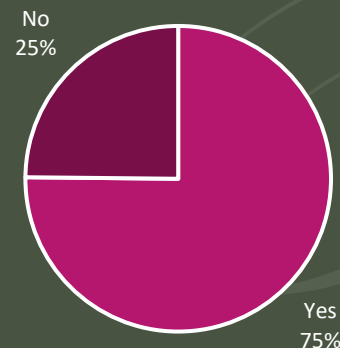
If no, what would you like to see?



What is the maximum number of stories (building height/floors)?



Do you feel Deer Park needs a "Main Street"?



## 4.2 TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

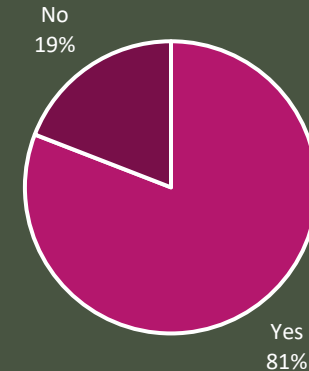
The next series of questions focused on the roads and transportation within Deer Park and where there is a lack of infrastructure. Overwhelmingly, with a 4:1 margin, respondents felt that there needed to be more sidewalks in Deer Park. This isn't surprising since only the major thoroughfares have any sidewalks at all. A majority, though not as large felt that Deer Park needed more bike lanes.

When asked which roads needed sidewalks, responses varied. Many highlighted the gaps in the sidewalks along main roads, for example Grand Avenue from 24th all the way to Tanger on both sides, where it currently only has it on one side and there are gaps in many locations. Others focused on the lack of sidewalks on all of the side streets.

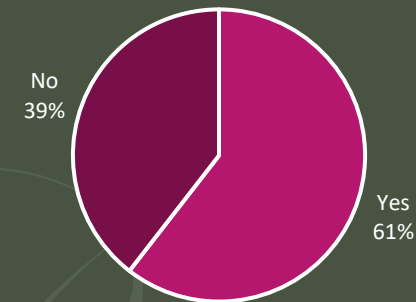
When asked which roads have the most traffic congestion, main roads were not surprisingly, the biggest culprits.

When asked which roads had the most problems with speeding, Deer Park Ave was one of the most frequently mentioned (presumably during hours when congestion is not present) and a number of other major roads were as well. Many noted that the residential side streets had a lot of speeding with a few comments referencing drivers not stopping at stop signs. Given that the street network in Deer Park is primarily an orthogonal grid with wide roads, this isn't surprising.

Do you feel Deer Park needs more sidewalks?



Do you feel Deer Park needs more bike lanes?

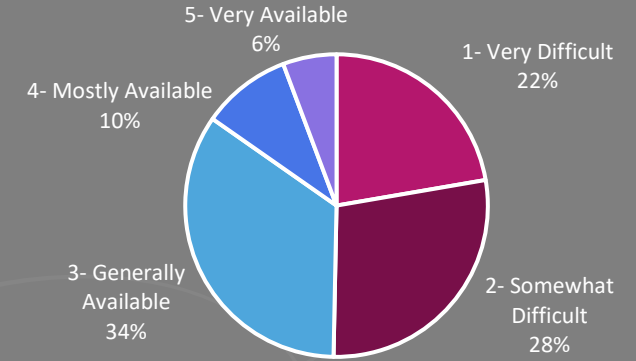


## 4.3 HOUSING

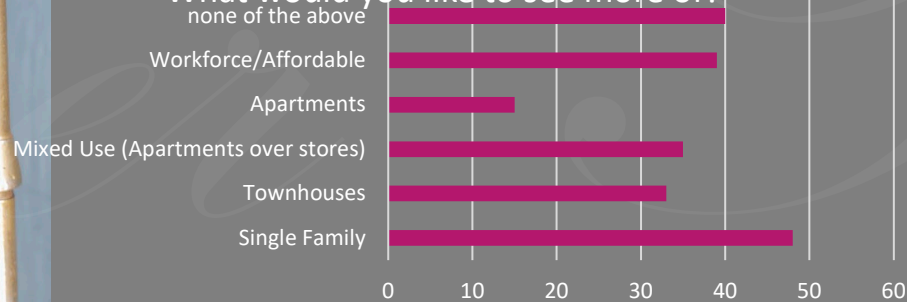
Most respondents felt that there were enough housing options already in Deer Park. When asked what housing types they would like to see more of, many didn't want any, or simply more single-family houses. However, there were many that wanted to see more of one or more types of the multifamily options presented including townhouses, apartments, mixed use development or workforce housing.

Respondents were evenly split with half feeling that the available housing is within reach financially for most people while half felt that it wasn't affordable for most.

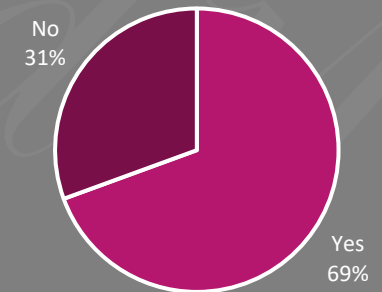
Are the available options affordable or within reach of most?



What would you like to see more of?



Are there enough housing options?



## 4.4 COMMUNITY NEEDS AND REVITALIZATION GOALS

Overwhelmingly, respondents felt that Deer Park needed sewers as well as more dedicated public, open and green spaces. Both had at least 80% in support.

Geiger Park was the most commonly visited park, followed by Edgewood, Pine Acres, Belmont and Birchwood.

Almost half the respondents felt that Deer Park Ave was most in need of beautification. Long Island Avenue and Commack Road also received a lot of votes, and some responded that all areas needed beautification.

The number one thing that people felt was missing from Deer Park was entertainment which got 74 votes. Restaurants were a distant second with 24 votes, followed by sewers, storefronts and walkability.

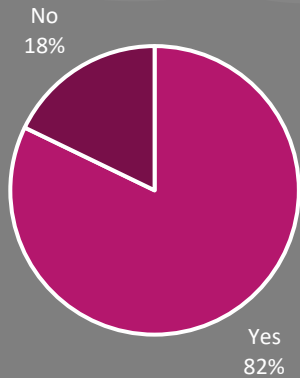
Traffic was seen as the number one challenge in Deer Park currently, followed by parking, empty properties, sewers and crime.

Respondents felt that beautification should be the top priority for this plan, followed by walkability, sewers, traffic and safety.

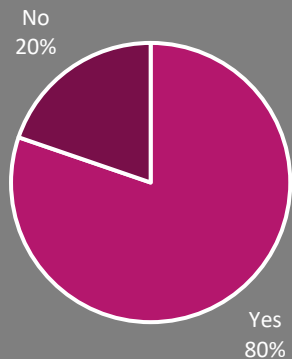
When asked what they would like to see changed, better traffic and walkability were the top two responses, followed by more storefronts, restaurants and crime rates.

Finally, The top five things that were listed as what they love about Deer Park are the community, good schools, access to roads and stores, diversity and the people of Deer Park.

Do you feel Deer Park needs sewers?



Do you feel Deer Park needs more dedicated public/open/green spaces?





**YOU are invited to help guide the future of your community!**  
 Join us in person on Saturday, May 7th from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the Robert Frost Middle School, located at 450 Half Hollow Rd as we discuss the future of Deer Park. This community meeting will be hosted by the Town of Babylon and Vision Long Island, and is the first community meeting that will discuss revitalization efforts for Deer Park. Residents and businesses are invited to participate in an interactive planning strategy regarding traffic improvements, sidewalks, walks, economic development, housing, beautification, and more...  
 -Light food and refreshments served-



**Saturday, May 7th, from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM**  
**at Robert Frost Middle School**  
**450 Half Hollow Rd, Deer Park, NY 11729**  
**Register today to reserve your spot!**

[eventbrite.com/e/deer-park-vision-plan-community-meeting-tickets-267124014117](https://eventbrite.com/e/deer-park-vision-plan-community-meeting-tickets-267124014117)

Please take our survey! We are seeking the opinions of local residents to help better inform our Visioning Process. If you are interested in helping, please fill out our survey at the following website, or use the QR code:

<https://fs10.formsite.com/VisionLongIsland/Deer-Park-Survey/index.html>



**HELP MAKE OUR COMMUNITY BETTER**



For more information, please contact the Town of Babylon at 631-957-3000 or head to their website at [www.townofbabylon.com](http://www.townofbabylon.com)

You can also contact Vision Long Island at [projects@visionlongisland.org](mailto:projects@visionlongisland.org), 631-261-0242, or [www.facebook.com/dprp.VLI](http://www.facebook.com/dprp.VLI)



# CHARRETTE

## DEER PARK VISIONING PLAN COMMUNITY MEETING



May 7, 2022

Robert Frost Middle School

450 Half Hollow Road

Deer Park



As part of Phase 1, Vision conducted a community-wide meeting, in collaboration with the Town of Babylon and local organizations to gather input from the community and determine community desires for revitalization, assess progress, and evaluate recommendations.

Held on Saturday, May 7th, at the Robert Frost Middle School in Deer Park, over 200 residents, business owners, elected officials & staff attended; sharing concerns, ideas and key issues to improve their community. The visioning session included: Opening Remarks; Opening Presentation; Hopes & Horrors Exercise; Questions & Answers; Design Tables; Presentation of Design Tables; and Wrap Up and Next Steps.

Babylon Town Supervisor Rich Schaffer welcomed attendees by pointing out just how special Deer Park is and always has been - with great families, schools, merchants, and parks. "We have a great mix in this community," Supervisor Schaffer explained. "We want to continue offering a great quality of life to our residents and their children. We can't make decisions about what's best for Deer Park without your input. That is what today is all about. This is where the hard work starts."



# CHARETTE EXERCISES

## PRESENTATION

Community members were then presented with a power point by Vision Long Island's Placemaking Director Elissa Kyle.

The presentation includes: an overlay of the project, outreach and input review, preliminary survey results, walkability and safety, what makes a main street, private sector vs. public sector, and existing conditions. After the presentation, there was a q&a session.

## HOPES & HORRORS

Assistant Director Tawaun Whitty led the community in the next through the next exercise. Community members expressed their "hopes and horrors". In this exercise, participants were able to create a list of current likes and dislikes of the community as well as wants and unwanted goals for the future. As each item was mentioned, it was recorded on the corresponding list.

## PRIORITIZING DOTS

Upon entering, each participant received a series of color-coded stickers. During this portion of the program, they were allowed to vote on what are the priorities to them of those listed on hopes and horrors. They were also shown maps of the community where they could also place indicators of their likes and dislikes.

## DESIGN TABLES

The design tables then allowed community members to get into groups where they worked with oversized maps of the focus areas and marked up what and where they would like to see change and what that change should look like. They drew their ideal impression of what that street should look like. The maps were broken up into major corridors as well as some overall maps.

The group then chose a spokesperson to summarize and present their work to all community members.



## COMMENTS

- Too many gas stations, fast food, & smoke shops
- Need for luncheonettes or cafes. Come type of after school hang out/food place
- Old Fire House on Deer Park Ave (next to Kristy's smoke shop) historic building, one of the few originals remaining; possibility to revitalize for new use but retain history "Firehouse Café"
- Shade structures/canopies at playground equipment. Not usable in the summer because of heat/sun
- Pedestrian Traffic from High school at dismissal through CVS parking lot. Pedestrian infrastructure improvements? Students walking through parking lots/drive-thru lanes, etc.
- Dumping on Long Island Ave
- More unified/consistent looks of building facades/storefronts
- Clean up automotive uses along tracks on LI Ave
- LI Ave from DPA to Carll's Path presents best opportunity for a Main St improvement
- Utilizing Edgewood Preserve as a green space opportunity to connect with LI Ave and Train station
- Bike Paths to connect to Train Station, which already has biking infrastructure such as bike storage
- Parking is crucial for revitalization and downtown improvements
- Anti-neon sign/light up box sign sentiments

## SOME OF WHAT WE HEARD



## COMMUNITY VISION

Ideas included upgrading playgrounds, beautification and cleanup of parks and businesses, including near the high school, added parking and gathering areas, especially along Long Island Avenue, added bike paths for connectivity, and safer walkability, especially along Commack Road.

## COMMON HOPES & HORRORS RESPONSES

Some examples of what the attendees saw as Hopes included better parking, an entertainment hub, basic façade improvements, walkability, traffic calming, tax incentives, revitalized library and roadway improvements. Horrors included high cost of living, lack of community center, illegal dumping, the Deer Park Motel, vacant storefronts, zombie homes, poor roads, and the dangerous condition of Route 231.

# 6. FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

## 6.1 CHALLENGES

There are many challenges to the creation of a new downtown or bringing back the older shopping district. Some issues include lack of shared parking; massive north south traffic that largely doesn't make Deer Park a destination; limited vacancies for redevelopment, and not completely unanimous desire by community for new development.

## 6.2 OPPORTUNITIES & NEXT STEPS:

We have heard a lot of feedback from Deer Park residents and business owners, school district officials and leaders and members of many local and fraternal organizations. From that input, we believe the following are opportunities and priorities:

**-Wastewater Treatment:** We have heard clearly that a top priority for residents and business owners is to secure wastewater treatment. Neighboring communities have been able to hook up to sewers and the community is hopeful that they can have the opportunity. Until recently community leaders have not been consistently vocal on this issue. With NYS and potentially federal funding available this is the time to do proper technical studies, advocacy and public education.

**-Creating Mixed Use Development to Anchor a Downtown:** Most of the community wants some form of a downtown or focal point for Deer Park. Currently there are no central shopping or Main Street destination. There are some vacancies on Deer Park Ave and LI Avenue that could serve this purpose as well as other areas. This option would include rental housing combined with commercial retail or office space. The community expressed lower density options rather than the taller buildings seek in Patchogue or other communities. Immediate action items include creating an overlay zoning code to allow this type of use along with communication with local developers to see what investment is feasible.



- **Safe Streets for Pedestrians and Bicyclists**: Complete the Walking Audit and then ensure that the Town, County and State are securing transportation grants to help calm traffic and reduce speeds.

- **Create a Destination with Public Gathering Space**: The Deer Park community currently has no dedicated space for folks to come together for various holidays, events. This could include a Gazebo and sound system to see if a range of local events can be managed. The action item here is to build in a space within a proposed development or seek public grant dollars to secure the location. Private grant dollars can assist with the capital cost, initial plantings and equipment.

- **Beautification**: Some members of the community wanted to see more beautification projects. Some initial funds have been set aside for this and others could be pulled together from private funds.

- **Restaurants**: The opportunities to see more restaurants advance in Deer Park is strong. Despite the many operational challenges there is a strong demand. A delegation of civic and chamber and real estate leaders should essentially get involved in recruiting and potentially helping site new cuisines from other downtowns. Some very popular food trucks may also be ready to take a storefront and open in Deer Park.

- **Financing**: The regular question that is asked is who pays for the revitalization. The bulk of the cost of redevelopment is from private investment. The roadway improvements, initial sewer construction funds and other public benefits are public grants. Corporate funding and sponsorship can fill some of the gaps as well.

- It is worth noting that this is a multi year process with many opportunities to invest, shape the projects and continually educate and involve members of the community. Leadership and consensus are the most important part of this process and public meetings and hearings will continue throughout the duration of the project.



# ADDENDUM

## EXISTING REPORT SOURCES

Deer Park Chamber of Commerce. 2019. *DPA Revitalization/Downtown Survey*.  
<https://www.chamberofdeerpark.org/public/dpa-downtown-revitalization-survey-results>

*Deer Park, New York*. Deer Park, New York (NY) profile: population, maps, real estate, averages, homes, statistics, relocation, travel, jobs, hospitals, schools, crime, moving, houses, news, sex offenders. (n.d.). Retrieved July 23, 2022, from <https://www.city-data.com/city/Deer-Park-New-York.html>

*Deer Park, NY (New York) houses and residents*. Deer Park, NY (New York) Houses, Apartments, Rent, Mortgage Status, Home and Condo Value Estimator, Cars, Bedrooms, Owners, Prices, Averages, Residents Info. (n.d.). Retrieved July 23, 2022, from <https://www.city-data.com/housing/houses-Deer-Park-New-York.html>

Korb, P. (2021, March 12). 1 Dead in 4-Car Crash in Deer Park. *Patch*. Retrieved from <https://patch.com/new-york/deerpark-northbabylon/1-dead-4-car-crash-deer-park>.

Suffolk County Department of Planning. 2008. *A Review of Selected Growth and Development Areas Suffolk County, New York*.  
<https://www.suffolkcountyny.gov/Departments/Economic-Development-and-Planning/Planning-and-Environment/Research-and-Statistics/Publications>

## MEDIA & OTHER LINKS

<https://www.newsday.com/long-island/suffolk/deer-park-revitalization-vision-long-island-k1ayuiid>

## MEETING NOTES & PHOTO GALLERY



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