

Executive Summary

A. Introduction

As a result of issues that have arisen through the historical development of Elmont and Hempstead Turnpike as a primarily automobile-related corridor, the Elmont community has expressed a strong desire to improve its suburban condition and quality of life. They, therefore, undertook this project in order to gain control of their community. They recognized that the best way to gain control is to develop a community vision that is based upon not only their wants and needs, but also a professional approach that employs the skills and expertise of professional planners, backed by the various governmental entities that have the authority and fiscal responsibilities necessary for such a vision to succeed. This document, the Elmont Community Vision Plan, represents the collaboration of the community with professional planners and government.

B. Structure of the Vision Plan

The Elmont Community Vision Plan is designed and organized to be a tool for local government; existing organizations, clubs, and groups; public agencies; and, community members and residents. It is organized into seven chapters, as follows:

- ***Chapter I*** introduces the Plan, including its purpose and scope, and the context in which it was developed, as well as a brief discussion of the historical background of Elmont;
- ***Chapter II*** describes the extensive public participation that has occurred as part of the development of the Plan;
- ***Chapter III*** discusses the existing conditions in Elmont and identifies problems and opportunities;
- ***Chapter IV*** presents the vision itself, including a discussion of goals, objectives, and vision elements for the community as a whole, as well as specific conceptual plans for three selected areas in the community;
- ***Chapter V*** contains a Vision Statement from the community endorsing the Plan; and,
- ***Chapter VI*** details how the Plan elements will be implemented.

Also included is an ***Appendix*** that consists of more detailed discussions of the extensive public participation process.

C. Goals and Objectives

Throughout the public participation process, several goals and objectives emerged as focuses for the community. They include the following:

1. **Economy** – Improve the local economy by attracting businesses that will meet the needs of the community while generating jobs and tax revenue.

2. **Transportation** – Improve safety and access by balancing the transportation needs of pedestrians, vehicles, and public transportation.
3. **Youth/Public Facilities** – Improve, expand, and create public services and facilities, including recreation opportunities, that serve the entire community.
4. **Beautification** – Improve the appearance of the Elmont community to create a unique suburban identity as the “Gateway to Nassau.”
5. **Safety** – Improve overall public safety in terms both of vehicular/pedestrian traffic and levels of criminal activity.
6. **Zoning** – Create or revise zoning regulations to guide future development in a manner that meets local objectives.
7. **Sustainable Community** – Implement initiatives that will complement other recommendations that will ensure the success of the vision plan for all Elmont stakeholders.

D. Key Vision Plan Elements

Overall Community

Based upon the goals and objectives established by the community, specific plan elements were proposed. Key elements discussed in the Plan include:

1. Economy

- **Establish a Business Improvement District**, through which business and property owners could work cooperatively to upgrade Elmont’s commercial sector.
- **Redevelop Vacant and Underutilized Properties** along Hempstead Turnpike in Jamaica Square, west of Holland Avenue, at Lucille Avenue, and the former Argo Theater site.
- **Attract New Commercial Uses** in locations where they are compatible with the residential community and could benefit from Elmont’s excellent roadway access, including a supermarket near the intersection of Hempstead Turnpike and Elmont Road.
- **Reinforce Belmont Park-Related Uses** by attracting businesses that are specifically related to horse racing or that could benefit from proximity to this major attraction including the redevelopment of the parking lot and adjacent areas south of Hempstead Turnpike across from Belmont Park with a hotel, restaurants and quality retail.
- **Promote Limited Mixed-Use**, incorporating ground level retail with upper level office space.
- **Create a Town Center** at the intersection of Hempstead Turnpike and Elmont Road through a mix of uses, public spaces, pedestrian areas, and urban design.

2. Transportation

Walkability/Bicycle Accessibility

- **Improve Pedestrian Flow Across Roadways** through coordination with NYSDOT, including additional, well-defined crosswalks; additional medians; pedestrian countdown signals for all crosswalks; and, a reduced number of curb cuts.
- **Promote Pedestrian-Oriented Activities and Businesses** throughout the corridor to make the pedestrian/shopping experience more pleasant. This includes improving sidewalks and adding pedestrian-scale lighting.
- **Promote and Improve Bicycle Facilities** along Hempstead Turnpike via coordination with NYSDOT.

Public Transportation

- **Add and/or Relocate Bus Stops** through coordination with MTA Long Island Bus to locations where they could better meet local demands and ease transfers between various bus lines. Potential additional bus stop locations include: westbound – Jamaica Square, Crown Avenue. Potential relocated bus stop locations include: westbound – Landau Avenue; eastbound – Butler Boulevard; northbound on Meacham Avenue – block before Hempstead Turnpike.
- **Improve the Appearance and Amenities at and Access to Bus Stops**, including aesthetically appealing, appropriately designed shelters with lighting, trash receptacles and benches, as well as the provision of crosswalks connecting to and better aligned with transit stops.
- **Expand Transit Service**, including direct and/or express service to Jamaica and Manhattan.

Area Roadways

- **Reduce Conflicts Between Pedestrian and Vehicles** via coordination with NYSDOT, including installing additional traffic signals at Wellington Road and Warwick Road; converting flashing yellow lights to full service lights (i.e., Locustwood Boulevard); synchronizing signals throughout the corridor, especially near the Home Depot shopping center; and installing traffic calming devices at locations along Hempstead Turnpike, where appropriate, to enhance pedestrian safety.
- **Reduce Impacts From Hempstead Turnpike On Neighborhoods** by preventing the use of residential neighborhoods as short-cuts. Improve the vehicular turning movements from eastbound Hempstead Turnpike to southbound Meacham Avenue through a dedicated turning lane.
- **Provide Ample and Appropriate Parking** close to the various commercial uses along Hempstead Turnpike.

3. Youth/Public Facilities

- **Develop a Community Center** near other community assets in the Alva T. Stanforth Sports Complex/bus parking area immediately west of the Elmont library to serve all community members, with activities for: seniors during the daytime; youth during the evening; and, civics/others during the nighttime.
- **Provide Additional Recreational/Open Space Opportunities** including: Opening up Belmont Park to provide “year round” recreation; providing a green/open space along area roadways to be used for walking, jogging, bicycling, etc; re-using the former Elmont Library building; and developing a skateboard park near School Road.

4. Beautification

- **Enhance Gateways** for the entryways to Elmont at the borders with Queens and Franklin Square, signaling that people have arrived in Elmont and that it is an attractive community.
- **Beautify Roadways**, particularly Hempstead Turnpike, by providing landscaping, lighting and street furniture to soften and improve the overall visual environment, perhaps through NYSDOT’s “Adopt-a-Highway” Program. Focus efforts first on Belmont Park’s frontage along Hempstead Turnpike and Plainfield Avenue.
- **Add and/or Upgrade Street Amenities** in commercial areas including: providing decorative lampposts (with flowers and welcome banners), additional/better maintained trash receptacles, and newspaper vending machines.
- **Involve the Community and Local Businesses** through a “Keep Elmont Clean” campaign that will enlist local residents and businesses in an on-going effort to beautify the community.
- **Beautify Commercial Areas** through commercial code enforcement and design guidelines.

5. Safety

- **Increase Police Presence**, especially near the Elmont Road/Hempstead Turnpike intersection, from the 5th Precinct of the Nassau County Police Department, including the deployment of additional patrol officers to be more visible during all hours of the day.
- **Form Additional Neighborhood Watch Groups** that will stay alert to unusual activity and to contact and cooperate with the Nassau County Police Department.
- **Create a Security Presence in Commercial Areas** to supplement police patrols through the use of security guards and/or BID employees.
- **Eliminate and/or Reduce Illegal Apartments** through continued improvements to residential code enforcement and increased fines.

- **Move the Post Office** from its current location on Elmont Road possibly to a location along Hempstead Turnpike, just west of Elmont Road, to reduce conflicts, provide safer to access by automobile, walking, bus, or bicycle, and reinforce community identity.

6. Zoning

- **Differentiate Among Commercial Uses** by establishing new (possibly overlay) zones, potentially including:
 - *Hempstead Turnpike Commercial;*
 - *Community/Public Facilities;*
 - *Commercial Core;*
 - *Regional Retail; and,*
 - *Belmont Park Special Use.*
- **Develop and Apply a Mixed-Use Zoning “Overlay” District** (office/residential above retail) to areas along Hempstead Turnpike.

7. Sustainable Community

Social Equity and Sustainability

- **Balance the Community Needs of Seniors, Teens, and Others** through activities and programs that are accessible (time, location) to all (seniors, teens/youth, various cultures), especially at the library and proposed community center.
- **Provide Workforce/Next Generation Housing** – Provide additional opportunities for those who cannot afford to rent or buy homes in the community through the development of workforce/next generation housing in appropriate locations.
- **Encourage Cooperation Between Area Schools** to provide better access to these services and facilities to the entire Elmont community.
- **Promote Environmental Sustainability** via financial and development incentives to developers to use sustainable practices.

Intergovernmental Cooperation

- **Involve the Town and Community in Local and Regional Planning Issues** by securing a “place at the table” for the Town and the community when it comes to any proposals for the redevelopment of Belmont Park.
- **Encourage Intergovernmental Planning** with representatives from the Town, County, and State proactively working together to plan, fund, and implement planning and development initiatives in Elmont and the Town as a whole.
- **Evaluate the Larger Hempstead Turnpike Corridor**, beginning at the Clearview Expressway in Queens east to NY 110 in East Farmingdale. Hempstead Turnpike.

Focus Areas

In addition, throughout the visioning process three areas were identified as locations of special focus.

1. **Meacham Avenue/Hempstead Turnpike Intersection**
2. **Hempstead Turnpike/Elmont Road Intersection – “Community Corners”**
3. **Belmont Park Frontage Along Hempstead Turnpike**

As a result, detailed conceptual vision plans were developed for these locations. Select aspects of those vision plans include:

1. Meacham Avenue/Hempstead Turnpike Intersection
 - **Provide Dedicated Southbound Right-Turn Lane** at the intersection that is similar in design to the other turning lanes on/from Meacham Avenue. In order to provide such a turning lane, the parking area at the corner of Hempstead Turnpike and Meacham Avenue would have to be redesigned and the location of the eastbound bus stop on Hempstead Turnpike would have to be moved slightly closer to the intersection with Meacham Avenue.
 - **Adjust Location of the N6 and N2 Bus Stops** in order to decrease the distance needed to transfer between the N2 and N6. In addition, a new N6 bus stop is proposed along Hempstead Turnpike at Crown Avenue to further decrease the distance to transfer.
2. Hempstead Turnpike/Elmont Road Intersection – “Community Corners”
 - **Provide a Supermarket** for residents throughout Elmont at the location of the former Argo Theatre building.
 - **Work with the Post Office to Relocate the Retail Operation to Substation** at “Community Corners” (in the vacant building across from Hendrickson Avenue Park).
 - **Work with the Fire Department** to identify an alternative location within the County for the Fire Department training facility.
 - **Improve Amenities, the Street Pattern, Pedestrian Access, the Bus Environment, and Parking** in the area through the provision of additional and upgraded facilities.
 - **Beautify and Provide Additional Landscaping and Trees** along Hempstead Turnpike and Elmont Road to buffer the roadways from the uses and improve the visual experience for pedestrians, bus riders, motorists, and residents.
 - **Redevelop Jamaica Square** with a mix of uses that complement those located in the heart of “Community Corners”.
3. Belmont Park Frontage Along Hempstead Turnpike
 - **Attract a Hotel or Conference Center to Elmont** by redeveloping the underutilized parking area south of Hempstead Turnpike. As part of that

redevelopment, an area should be provided that contains signs, monuments, a fountain, etc. to act as a visual gateway into the community.

- **Provide Beautification** through significant improvements in landscaping, trees, crosswalks, sidewalks, lighting, etc., including working with Belmont Park to better buffer their property from Hempstead Turnpike (and Plainfield Avenue).
- **Extend Retail** to include the parcels closest to the hotel/conference center as pedestrian-oriented retail, including sit-down restaurants.
- **Promote Belmont Park** via Belmont Park-oriented businesses, activities, and uses, as well as community participation and inclusion in the annual Belmont Stakes.

E. Conclusion

The Elmont Community Vision Plan sets forth a vision for the future of the Elmont community, not only in the near-term, but also over the long-term via strategic actions that will shape Elmont for the next 20 years or more. This vision is based on a holistic approach to enhancing the community and is the culmination of over two years of extensive community involvement and action, giving the community ownership of the Plan. Success of the Plan will be accomplished through the County, Town, and, most importantly, the community working together to implement strategies and key concepts. That being said, there is a role for every member of the Elmont community, resident and business owner, young and old, to be involved in building a strong future for their community.