

Master Plan for the City of **GLEN COVE**



View from Quarry's Point,
Glen Cove, L. I.



Prepared by:
Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.
Turner Miller Group
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Acknowledgements

Mayor and City Council

Ralph V. Suozzi, Mayor
Delia DeRiggi-Whitton
Nicholas DiLeo
Sean Dwyer
Michael Famiglietti
Anthony Jimenez
Timothy Tenke

Former City Council Members

Joseph Gioino
Joan Meehan
Michael Norman

Planning Board

Thomas Scott, Chairman
Stephan Gronda
Robert Jakobsze
Herbert Kaufman
Joseph Renaghan
Cynthia Rogers

Staff

Kelly Morris
Lois Stemcosky
Vincent Taranto

Zoning Advisory Committee

Stephan Gronda
Stuart Grossman
Herbert Kaufman
John Perrone
Jon Schapiro

Master Plan Task Force

Bill Archambault
Anthony Bocchino
Micheal Brown
Ada Carbone
Dan Cox
Chris Curran
Carol DiPaolo
Beth Dressler
Ellen Franck
Joan Hawkins
Carol Kenary
Bob LaBaw
Terry Moschetta
Alberto Munera
Dave Nieri
Chriss Ortiz
Charlie Parisi
Pete Rapelje
Lou Sanford
Ellen Savino
Jon Schapiro
Rick Smith
Richard Tortorici
Rev. Roger Williams
Dan Valence
Dan Vogrin

Consultants

Nicole Ogg (Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.)
John Shapiro (Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.)
Max Stach (Turner Miller Group)
Stu Turner (Turner Miller Group)

Consultants for Related Studies

Larry Rosenbloom (Urbitran, a division of DMJM Harris / AECOM)
Deborah Howes (Urbitran, a division of DMJM Harris / AECOM)

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Glen Cove’s challenge for the future is to take advantage of new opportunities to improve major corridors, Downtown, and the Glen Cove creek harbor; while at the same time assuring the high suburban quality of life enjoyed by present and future generations of Glen Cove residents.

Executive Summary

Glen Cove has a rich history, and it faces new challenges. Glen Cove has evolved from a portside hamlet in 1700, to a landscape of grand estates (with a working class center) in its “Gold Coast” heyday, to a suburb of nearly 27,000 people at present. Glen Cove is proximate to the scenic and recreational amenities of Long Island, to the urban amenities of Manhattan only 27 miles to the west, as well as to the ample employment opportunities found in both areas. (See Map 1, Location on the next page.)

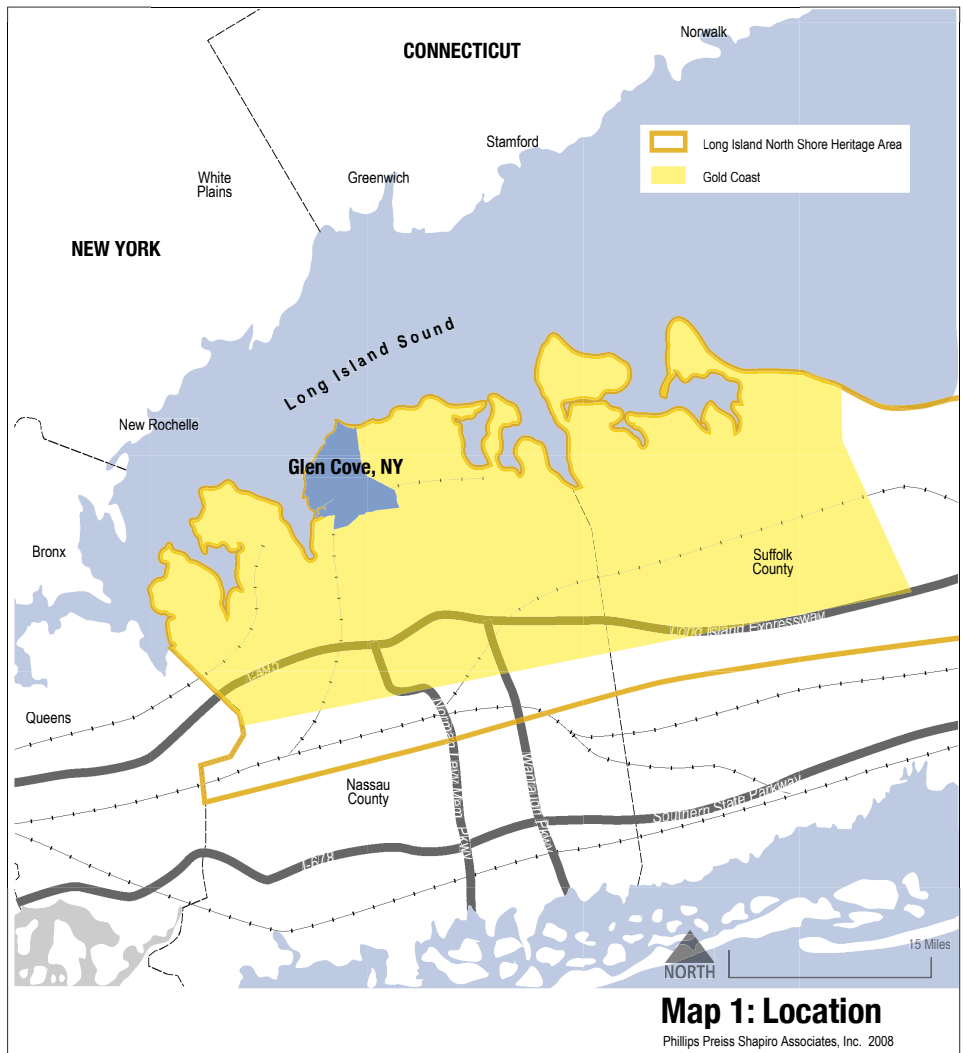
The diversity of the Glen Cove community is evident in both its development pattern and its population. While largely suburban in character, Glen Cove also includes estates and low-income enclaves, pristine natural areas and higher-density housing, and a working waterfront with a nearby downtown. (Refer to Map 2, Built Environment on page 4.) While largely built since 1950, its remaining historic buildings and scenic qualities place Glen Cove within the heart of Long Island’s affluent North Shore, at the western end of the State of the New York’s Long Island North Shore Heritage Area. The people of Glen Cove reflect the ethnic and economic diversity of the larger Metro-New York region more than most Long Island communities, with minorities and immigrants representing one-third of the population. As such, Glen Cove’s vision for the future must address both suburban and urban opportunities and challenges alike.

The proposition of this Master Plan is that Glen Cove can meet these opportunities and challenges, to become an exemplar of the new suburbia called for by its citizens, local leaders, and national planners alike. (The sidebar on the next page explains “New Suburbia” further.) The Master Plan takes an optimistic – as opposed to a defensive – position about the future of Glen Cove.

While the health of any suburb is predicated on its links to its urban core (in this case Manhattan), the future success of Glen Cove points to an increase in self-sustainability. Glen Cove is at the end of a peninsula with limited transit (due to infrequency and long travel times), as well as problematic vehicular access to the rest of the region (due to all-week-long traffic congestion). Over two-thirds of Glen Cove’s working population now commutes to jobs on Long Island.¹ Akin to island living, Glen Cove is a place

apart with an unusually strong sense and appreciation that what happens “here” affects everyone. Planning decisions should be made that not only preserve the current quality of life experienced in all of Glen Cove, but also find ways to make Glen Cove better and strengthen its network of resources. This means a targeted expansion of the local tax base, and recognition of the benefits of corridor, downtown, waterfront area, transit and civic projects that promote Glen Cove as a first-rate place to live, recreate, and for some, even work in the same community.

This plan is presented with an eye to the changing conditions in Glen Cove and the region. The era in which Long Island could grow its economy and population by build-



1. According to the 2000 Census, 70 percent of Glen Cove residents work in either Nassau or Suffolk County.

A VISION OF A NEW SUBURBIA

Nassau County communities are finding it necessary to manage the impacts of decades of sprawl development, as well as respond to the evolving needs of the contemporary suburbanites. Traffic congestion all week long, limited housing diversity for aging and vulnerable populations, and environmental problems threaten the high quality of life often associated with Long Island's suburbs. On the other hand, neighborhood and open space preservation, walkable and revitalized Downtown, targeted development linked to significant public benefits, and "green" innovations can re-invigorate Nassau County as one of the nation's premiere suburbs.

In both his 2004 and 2008 "State of the County" addresses, County Executive Tom Suozzi reiterated the importance of preparing for the next era of American suburban living. He dubbed it "New Suburbia". His call to be proactive about the challenges facing the suburbs is also consistent with a national trend toward re-tooling suburbs to meet the macro-challenges facing the nation: uncertain gas prices, coastal flooding as a result of global warming, simultaneous housing affordability and mortgage foreclosure crises, and globalization hence reduced traditional industrial activities. County Executive Tom Suozzi's vision has special meaning for Glen Cove – the municipality where he previously served as Mayor and where he still lives.

Glen Cove is poised to address these challenges by encouraging public transportation, creating a walkable Downtown linked to a vibrant waterfront, adopting sustainable and "green" regulations and best practices, stimulating neighborhood and corridor revitalization, and leveraging its industrial districts in connection with brownfield remediation. Glen Cove's Master Plan will make it part of a bigger Countywide and national effort for communities to make the best of the challenges of the twenty-first century.

ing on green, undeveloped land is coming to an end. Vacant land in Glen Cove is minimal, and much of it is constrained in its ability to accommodate new development by either physical limitations or community interests.

At the same time, both Glen Cove and Long Island are struggling to attract and retain younger residents and young professionals, while the senior population is growing as a percentage of the overall population. Although residents of Nassau County have among the highest per capita wealth in the nation, taxes are high. Housing is expensive. Writing about the situation in Nassau County, Bruce Katz and Robert Puentes of the Brookings Institution ask, "Do you want a future of higher taxes, lower services and a noncompetitive economy? Because that is what the county faces unless it can reverse decades of stagnation and begin to attract and retain entry-level workers."²

This Master Plan does not argue that "growth for the sake of growth" is the answer. It suggests, instead, that strategic growth, well-designed and focused in areas that can best accommodate it, provide new options to help Glen Cove address the concerns raised through the course of this effort – concerns like housing affordability and choice, community services and amenities, and transit and pedestrian improvements. Growth should be for the sake of the community, in addition to any private benefits that may occur.

In sum, the Master Plan seeks to constrain and shape future growth to preserve or enhance the character of the community and its neighborhoods, complement existing densities and development patterns, and balance a mix of uses to create a self-sustaining community.

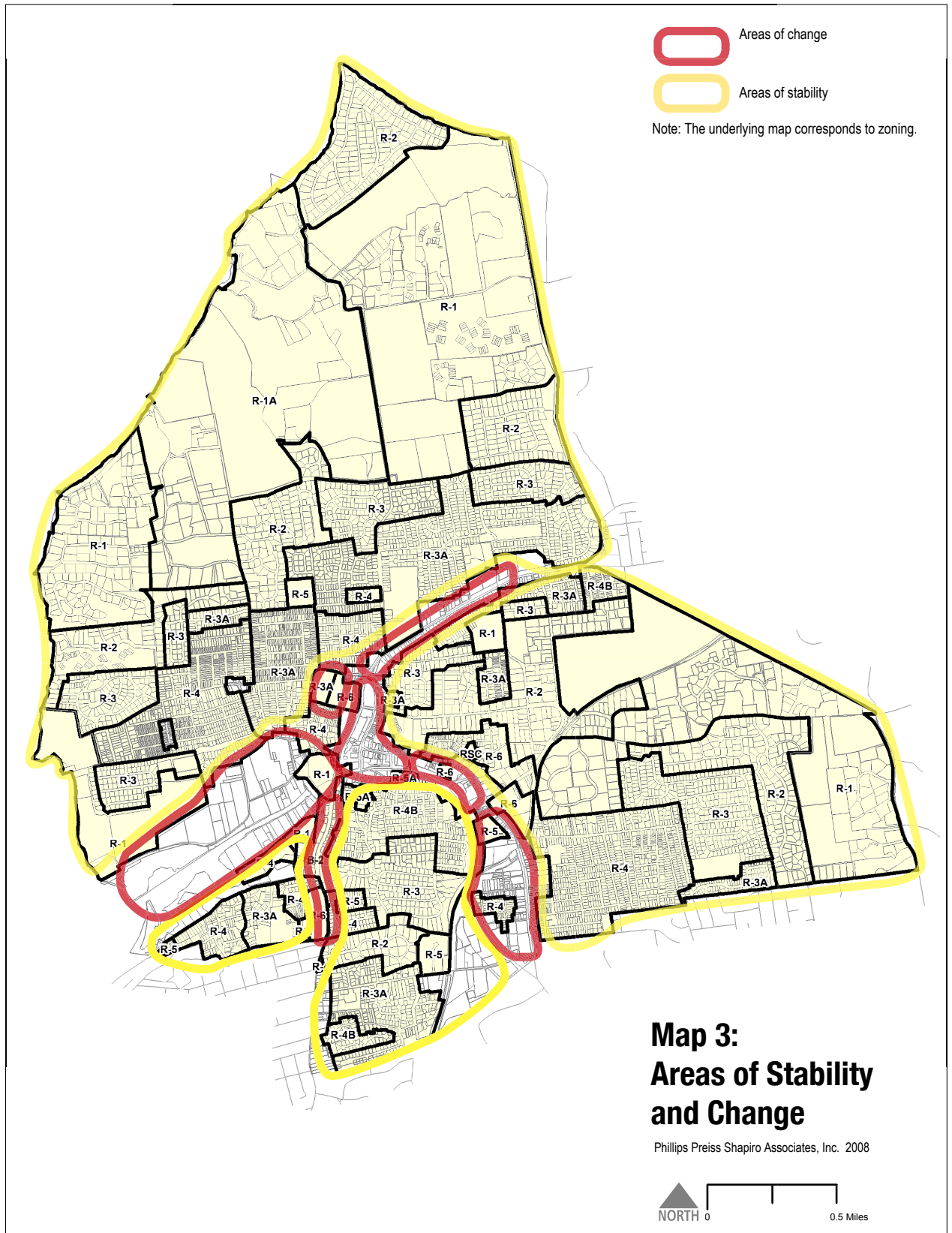
AREAS OF STABILITY, AREAS OF CHANGE

The Master Plan is therefore also a management plan. How Glen Cove evolves is a matter of many forces outside of its control, but also choice – choices of zoning, open space protection, infrastructure and investment. (See Map 2, *Built Environment on the next page.*)

In order to clarify those investments and decisions, the Master Plan distinguishes between areas of stability and areas of change. (See Map 3, *Areas of Stability and Change on page 5.*)

2. "Extreme Makeover: Nassau," by Bruce Katz and Robert Puentes. New York Times, January 29, 2006.





Areas of Stability represent the bulk (well over 90 percent) of Glen Cove, including most residential neighborhoods plus protected lands like parks and natural areas. In these areas, the focus is on community preservation – making sure that new development is minimal and consistent with the established development pattern. In many parts of the Areas of Stability, there would be little benefit derived from additional growth, and the policies and strategies focus instead on limiting development and targeting investment to help preserve the valued suburban character and quality of life that is characteristic to Glen Cove’s neighborhoods.

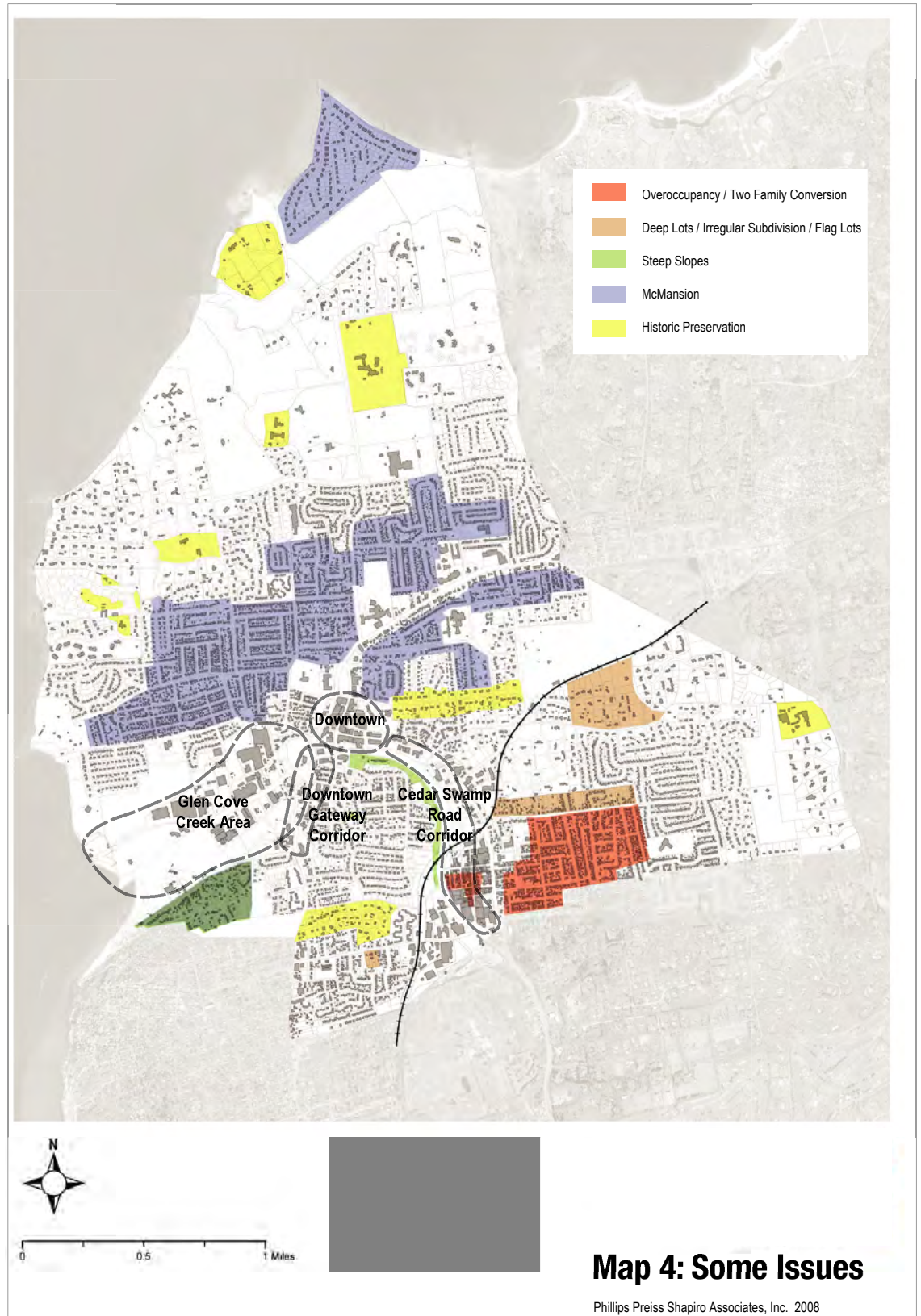
Areas of Stability refer to intent as well as fact. There are many issues to attend to in these areas, with mind to assuring their stability and value in the future. These include the following (*also see Map 4, Some Issues*):

- Subdivisions of large lots long viewed as open space, notably including former estates
- Increasing density due to conversions – both legal and not
- Building on flag lots, on steep slopes, and in non-designated wetlands
- Building (and expansions to create the equivalent of) outsized homes discordant with their context (e.g., “McMansions”)
- Undesirable changes to Glen Cove’s small but essential inventory of historic buildings
- Use of local residential streets as bypasses.

Areas of Change include particular parts of Glen Cove that offer opportunities to accommodate future growth while meeting other community and public objectives. These areas include:

- Areas along select commercial or industrial corridors, especially near train stations, where reinvestment could improve the function and appearance of the areas
- Underutilized land in and near Downtown Glen Cove
- The Glen Cove Creek area, outside of protected natural areas.

In these potential Areas of Change, new buildings or the rehabilitation of existing buildings could accommodate growth in a number of ways – filling in vacant lots,



rebuilding on former industrial sites and polluted “brownfields”, and improving economic vitality.

Areas of Stability and of Change are not mutually exclusive. First, each part of Glen Cove can be thought of as located on a continuum from change to stability. Second, in stable residential neighborhoods there often are areas that would benefit from change, such as stagnant commercial development that would benefit from revitalization and possibly provide some neighborhood services. These areas, due to their lack of reinvestment, have a negative visual impact on the surrounding area. Similarly, Areas of Change may include viable residential and commercial pockets that should be treated as Areas of Stability in the specific review of development applications.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Neighborhood Goals and Objectives

Protect and enhance Glen Cove’s established residential neighborhoods, while providing a variety of housing options to meet the needs of current and future residents.

1. Protect the scale, density and character of Glen Cove’s stable and well-maintained neighborhoods.
2. Accommodate a diverse population by providing a variety of housing options, in terms of type and affordability.
3. Require any redevelopment of large parcels, such as estate sites, to meet the highest standards for site and building design, mixture of uses and housing types, and protection of historic resources.
4. Develop creative strategies to address issues of overcrowding and illegal uses in struggling neighborhoods.
5. Generate administrative and regulatory changes that advance the City’s and community’s goals.

Connections Goals and Objectives

Adjust the transportation network to place greater emphasis on pedestrians, bicyclists and especially transit, mindful of the impact of vehicular congestion and auto-oriented development on the quality of life and image of Glen Cove.

1. Maintain roadway efficiency with balanced roadway regulations.
2. Enhance the accessibility and convenience of public transportation options.

3. Improve pedestrian and bicycle amenities citywide, but especially with destinations in mind.
4. Improve the appearance of Glen Cove’s gateways and corridors, including selective development in commercial corridors.

Downtown Goals and Objectives

Encourage an active, inviting and well-connected Downtown, designed to respect the pedestrian and the existing character of historic buildings, while accommodating a mix of uses and appropriate redevelopment for residents and visitors.

1. Protect and enhance Downtown’s historic scale and character.
2. Enrich the mixed-use character of Downtown.
3. Create an “arts and entertainment” district.
4. Enhance walkability and amenities.
5. Support the business community’s revitalization efforts.
6. Address perceived and actual parking problems.
7. Improve connections to the rest of the Glen Cove.

Waterfront, Parks & Natural Resources Goals and Objectives

Maintain Glen Cove’s Creek’s maritime character, as well as manage redevelopment to encourage increased accessibility and recreational amenities along with a mix of complementary uses.

1. Protect natural resources and environmental features.
2. Maximize use of existing open space and recreational resources.
3. Create a network of linked resources.
4. Leverage past and future investment to maximize public amenities and benefits.

With respect to Glen Cove Creek and its waterfront:

Respect the natural and scenic resources that define Glen Cove’s unique character, promote sustainability practices, and, at the Glen Cove Creek waterway, amplify park amenities, public access and boating activity, linked to complementary development.

1. Preserve the Glen Cove Creek’s recreational maritime vitality, while revitalizing its waterfront with mixed-use development and destination activities.
2. Create a green network linking the esplanade, Garvies Point Preserve, Pratt Memorial Park and Maccarone Memorial Stadium.

3. Link the waterfront's development, destinations and improvements to Downtown's revitalization, as well as to "gateway" improvements.
4. Continue to improve environmental conditions along the waterfront, building on the City's considerable success in cleaning up brownfields.
5. Moderate the impacts of new development in terms of scenic resources, traffic, etc., and forestall industrial uses that create additional brownfields.
6. Create a sustainable neighborhood that is, to the maximum extent possible, consistent with Glen Cove's sense of place and community character.

IMPLEMENTATION

Foremost, under New York State law, a Master Plan provides the underpinning for zoning and other land use regulations; and the zoning ordinance and City Code provides the major implementation tool for the Master Plan.

The overall objective of the zoning update associated with this Master Plan is to craft a new Zoning Ordinance that:

- Is an effective tool for implementing the Glen Cove Master Plan
- Responds to community concerns about the scale and character of development in residential neighborhoods
- Promotes appropriate redevelopment in Downtown and the Glen Cove Creek waterfront, and allows for mixed use opportunities along specific commercial corridors
- Provides tools to help ensure that historic, scenic and natural resources are respected by any new development
- Presents clear and effective design review and development approval processes
- Complies with State and Federal requirements and current case law
- Is clear, concise, understandable and easy to use.

The new zoning map will closely correspond to the current zoning map, consistent with the Areas of Stability approach. (*See Map 5, Current Zoning, and Map 6, Proposed Land Use Plan, on pages 12 and 13.*) The new zoning map and regulations will recognize and take into account the existing conditions—the nuances of the on the ground reality—better than the existing map and regulations. The district

boundary and name may not change but more defined regulations, such as defined guidelines, would be included in the district regulations.

Some areas will be rezoned for different uses and / or densities, consistent with the Areas of Change approach. At the Glen Cove Creek waterfront, the new zoning regime will yield (compared to earlier zoning) results that would entail lower buildings, more suburban street patterns, better public views, and stronger assurances that the park amenities will be timely and can be enjoyed by all Glen Cove residents. In Downtown, the new zoning will enable development to go forward that is already allowed but thwarted due to current parking requirements. New corridor zoning will yield more attractive and less congested corridors.

In addition to potential use and density changes, the new zoning will include new subdivision requirements, new restrictions on undersized lots, a new definition of height, “contextual” guidelines in which new residential structures must fit within a specific building envelope which encourages desirable scale and character, and new regulations that will apply to all districts (such as only permitting one accessory garage on each property).

In sum, this Master Plan will guide land use and policy decisions – what can be built, when, where, and how; and relates these decisions to other key factors – including demographic shifts, market realities, transportation, natural features, and historic resources. This effort grew out of the recognition that the current Master Plan and basic zoning regulations, each at over 50 years old, are dated. Neither fully addresses a variety of issues and trends, including changing demographics, the waning of waterfront industry, and the revitalization of traditional downtowns. Glen Cove needs a more comprehensive vision for addressing future changes.

This Master Plan is that blueprint. But it too should not be allowed to become dated. As such, the City should review progress on its recommendations annually, and subject it to a full update ten years hence, in year 2019.

