

# Planning for Age-Friendly Communities: An Assessment of Two Sussex County Communities

October 2019

*Prepared by*  
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Institute for Public Administration  
Biden School of Public Policy & Administration  
College of Arts & Sciences  
University of Delaware

*In coordination with*  
Sustainable Coastal Communities Initiative  
and the Delaware Sea Grant College Program  
University of Delaware



UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE  
**BIDEN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC  
POLICY & ADMINISTRATION**

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## Preface and Acknowledgements

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As the director of the Institute for Public Administration (IPA) at the University of Delaware, I am pleased to present the *Planning for Age-Friendly Communities: An Assessment of Two Sussex County Communities*. The assessment expands earlier work performed during the summers of 2015 and 2016, which was intended to inform planning and community engagement activities regarding the county's growing older adult population.

A recommendation of the 2015–2016 work was to use social indicator criteria, as well as current demographic and economic trends, to identify the need for greater age-friendly environments in Sussex County, such as those endorsed by AARP and adopted from the World Health Organization. This assessment report was developed in response to that recommendation and highlights IPA's applied research and technical support in two Sussex County communities with significant older adult populations and growth challenges.

IPA appreciates the continued partnership with the University of Delaware's Sustainable Coastal Communities Initiative (SCCI). Ed Lewandowski serves as the program director. I also would like to thank our partners representing the Bridgeville and Lewes communities, as well as those who helped coordinate and plan the September 2018 emergency planning workshop at the Lewes Library. Danielle Swallow, Coastal Hazards staff with the University's Delaware Sea Grant program, was integral in coordinating the workshop.

I would like to acknowledge IPA Policy Scientist Julia O'Hanlon who developed and led the work plan and authored this assessment report. Thanks also go to IPA Policy Scientist Nicole Minni who provided GIS support. Additional thanks and recognition go to IPA Graduate Public Administration Fellow Christine Hoh who provided research and staff support. Summer (2018) Undergraduate Public Policy Fellow Marissa Onesi helped edit the literature review and develop leadership capacity and readiness sections. IPA students Danielle Littmann, Kelly Perillo, Sade Bruce, and Madison Matera also made important contributions to the report and the emergency planning workshop logistics. Finally, kudos go to IPA staff members Lisa Moreland and Sarah Pragg who edited and formatted the document.

Jerome R. Lewis, Ph.D.

Director, Institute for Public Administration

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## Executive Summary

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### Background and Overview

Recognizing the intersection among various policy areas and projects related to Delaware's increasing older adult population, the University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration (IPA) has been working over the past four years to advance opportunities to address issues facing the state's older residents.

With support from UD's Sustainable Coastal Communities Initiative (SCCI) in 2015 and 2016, IPA developed a [preliminary needs assessment/environmental scan](#) of several key quality of life issues related to Sussex County's increasing older adult population. Strategies and recommendations highlighted in the needs assessment focused on the use of data-driven information and social indicators, collective and collaborative planning processes, and healthy aging frameworks.

As part of its preliminary assessment, IPA compiled a literature review and produced an inventory of current Sussex County resources for seniors and strategies for future opportunities to quantify and track quality of life indicators. Additionally, IPA staff and graduate-level students conducted [informal interviews with community stakeholders](#) and provided technical support to the Sussex County Advisory Committee on Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities and other community stakeholder groups.

Building on recommendations and criteria referenced in the 2015–2016 project deliverables, IPA expanded its work to research specific age-friendly models and strategies. Between October 2017 and June 2018, a literature review was conducted and meetings with community leaders and stakeholders of two Sussex County communities were hosted to help identify the communities' capacity to promote aging in place through aging-friendly criteria and domains endorsed by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), American Planning Association, Village to Village Network, and other nationally recognized organizations with interests in supporting and planning for communities' increasing older adult populations.

### Primary Project Deliverables (Fall 2017–Spring 2018)

1. Literature review on national models (Appendix A)
2. Two assessments of Sussex County communities using AARP Livable Communities model: Lewes (19958) and Bridgeville (19933) areas (includes unincorporated areas)
3. GIS Story Map (Appendix B)
4. GIS-generated heat map for the Greater Lewes Village Service Area (Appendix C)
5. Other related activities include:

- Planning and development of an emergency planning for older adults workshop held in September 2018 at the Lewes Public Library (in partnership with City of Lewes, Delaware, UD Delaware Sea Grant, and Greater Lewes Village Network)
- Presentation at the Delaware APA Conference held in Rehoboth Beach in October 2018
- [Delaware Beach Life magazine article contribution \(April 2019\)](#)
- Presentation at the Consortium of University Public Service Organizations held at Portland State University in April 2019

## Introduction

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The CDC and the National Aging in Place Council (2014) define aging in place (i.e., aging in community) similarly as the opportunity for individuals to live in their homes safely, comfortably, and independently, regardless of age, income, or ability. As the nation's population of older adults increases with each coming year, many communities are seeking novel ways to cultivate communities suitable for older individuals to age in place.

Individuals' desire to remain in their homes is significant because it can impact overall quality of life as well as healthcare spending. A [2009 study](#) published in *Health Affairs* found that states that expand home- and community-based health services (as opposed to services found in nursing homes and other institutions) experience long-term cost savings.<sup>1</sup>

According to the [AARP Public Policy Institute](#), almost 90 percent of Americans age 50 and over want to remain in their homes as long as possible.<sup>2</sup> As the age-friendly community concept has become increasingly popular in recent years, many communities are crafting age-friendly plans and models to help their residents successfully "age in place."

## Age-Friendly Communities

IPA's [Complete Communities Toolbox](#), discusses age-friendly communities in terms of providing affordable, accessible housing, a variety of transportation options, access to community services, and opportunities for social inclusion and engagement for all residents, regardless of age or ability.

Features of age-friendly communities include adequately timed pedestrian crosswalks, buildings with no-step entry, homes with one-level living, bike paths, public transportation, and accessible health services and recreational opportunities.<sup>3</sup>

These communities are made possible by ongoing partnerships involving community organizations and leaders, as well as members of the aging population, government leaders, business owners, planners, and interested residents and volunteers, in assessing the needs of the community and identifying ways to promote aging in place. Improving resources and access to those resources enhances the lives of the older individuals, while benefiting people of all ages within a community. The goal is to create communities that promote better mental, physical, and social well-being.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.completecommunitiesde.org/planning/healthy-and-livable/aging/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/about/info-2018/aarp-livable-communities-preparing-for-an-aging-nation.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.completecommunitiesde.org/planning/healthy-and-livable/aging/>



Several age-friendly models have been developed to assist local communities in assessing the ways in which older residents are supported. Nationally, there are many communities already using recognized models, including ones promoted by the AARP, Generations United and MetLife Foundation, and the Village to Village Network. Successful aging in place models focus on connectedness, opportunities for community engagement, and access to needed services.<sup>4</sup> For a detailed review and summary of these models, as well as examples of age-friendly communities, please see Addendum A.

The growing need for such communities reflects the changing demographics of the country. Currently, one in eight Americans is 65 or older, and that proportion is expected to increase to one in five within the next 25 years. Moreover, a [brief](#) published by the U.S. Census Bureau reports that the 65 and over population (65+) grew faster than the general population between 2000 and 2010, at a rate of about 15 percent, compared to 9.7 percent.<sup>5</sup>

## Need for Age-Friendly Communities in Delaware

Delaware is no exception to national trends. In fact, the percentage of the state's 65+ population is even higher than the national percentage—18 percent compared to 15 percent, respectively. [The Road Ahead: AARP Survey on Community Services in Delaware](#) found that 85 percent of Delawareans age 65 or older believe it is “very important” or “extremely important” to remain in their homes as long as possible.<sup>6</sup>

### Delaware's Older Adult (65+) Population 2010–2050

Currently, the 65+ population living in New Castle County accounts for 50 percent of the state's total 65+ population, followed by 34 percent in Sussex and 16 percent in Kent.<sup>7</sup> Over the next several decades, Delaware will continue to experience growth in its older adult population.

As illustrated in the chart below, New Castle County will continue to have the highest percentage of older adults in Delaware. This is based on the overall population density of the county. However, Sussex County will experience significant growth changes in its older adult populations. Sussex County's latest Comprehensive Plan update notes demographic changes.

Currently, Sussex County's 65+ group makes up approximately 25 percent of the county's total population. By 2050, this will increase to approximately 29 percent. The percentage of the

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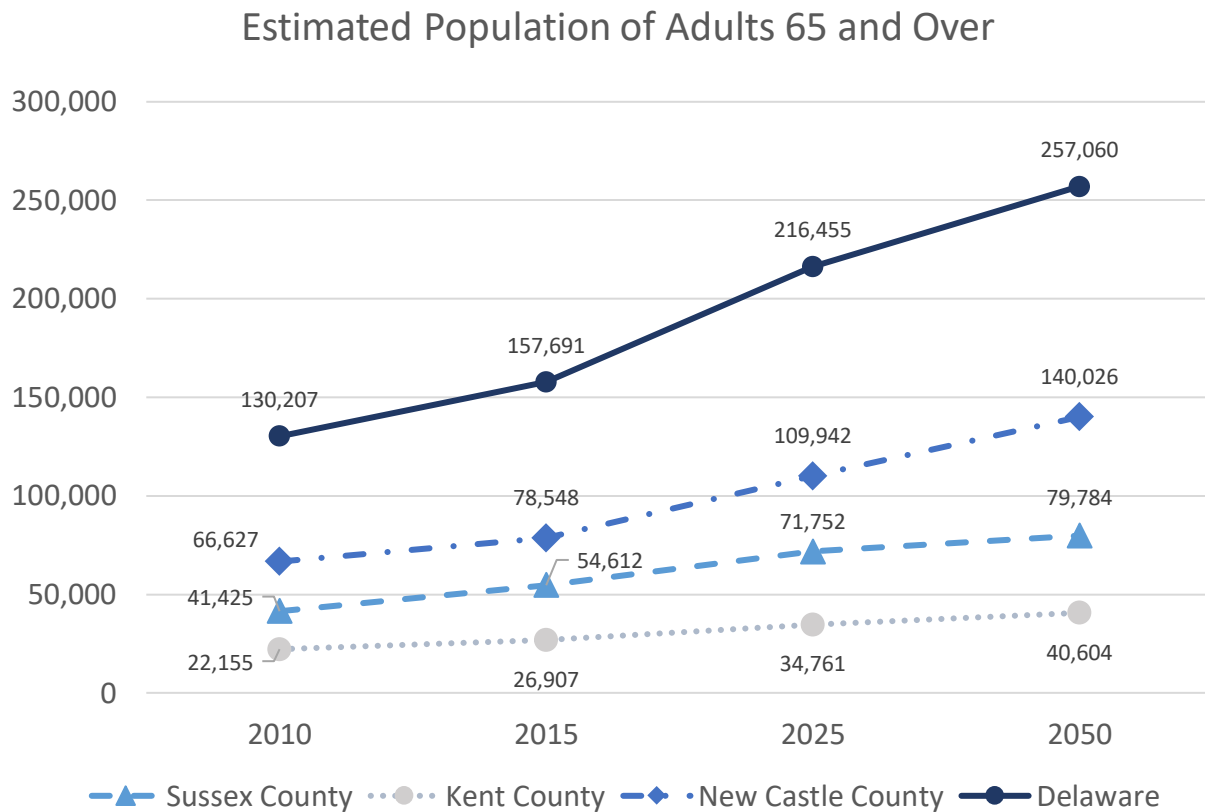
<sup>4</sup> Shih, Regina A., Joie D. Acosta, Emily K. Chen, Eric G. Carbone, Lea Xenakis, David M. Adamson, and Anita Chandra, *Improving Disaster Resilience Among Older Adults: Insights from Public Health Departments and Aging-in-Place Efforts*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-2313-CDC, 2018. As of August 05, 2019: [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR2313.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2313.html)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-09.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/old-learn/research/the-road-ahead-survey-on-community-services-in-delaware-2009-aarp.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://stateplanning.delaware.gov/demography/dpc.shtml>

county’s 85 and older (85+) population is also projected to significantly increase over the next three decades.<sup>8</sup>



Source: Delaware Population Consortium, 2019

Sussex County hosts many assets and amenities worth celebrating and leveraging—features that make it attractive and appealing to retirees and their families. Concurrently, as the area’s population grows, county and community leaders face critical challenges in meeting long-term transportation, housing, and social service needs. Identifying land-use planning policies and other strategies that promote healthy aging is essential for residents to remain active and safe in the communities they call home.

## Local Governments’ Role in Promoting Age-Friendly Communities

State, county, and community leaders face significant challenges and demands related to meeting long-term housing, transportation, and health and social service needs. Specific barriers to age-friendly communities include lack of cooperation, communication, and public

<sup>8</sup> <https://stateplanning.delaware.gov/demography/dpc.shtml>

participation in local planning and development projects. Additionally, a lack in leadership capacity and community readiness can pose barriers. Other barriers can include restrictive zoning laws that prohibit certain types of housing stock or universal design standards that might be more conducive to older adults or multigenerational families.<sup>9</sup>

Age-friendly strategies are key to healthy and complete communities that benefit an area's entire population. Examples include adapting zoning laws to allow for the construction of multigenerational communities, integrating land-use and transportation planning to include Complete Streets concepts, and incentivizing the use of universal design standards.<sup>10</sup>

## Delaware Communities in Action

To address the needs of the state's growing older adult population, many Delaware communities can use age-friendly tools, resources, and strategies to assess their specific demographic trends, as well as their social and quality of life indicators that may contribute or prohibit aging in place.

Using AARP's comprehensive and holistic livability model, IPA facilitated community conversations with working groups representing the Bridgeville- and Lewes-area communities. These communities are considered Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) and, due to the percentage of older adults living in these areas, working groups were asked to consider their biggest concerns related to residents' abilities to age in place. Groups included local elected officials and/or administrative staff, city managers, planning consultants, and nonprofit leaders.

Discussions with community representatives focused on specific trends and issues related to recent growth in their older adult populations. As part of these discussions and based on applied research, IPA developed inventories of current policies, programs, services, and opportunities for aging in place. Using AARP's eight domains of livability, inventories were then organized to assess each community according to:

- Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
- Transportation
- Housing
- Social Participation
- Respect and Social Inclusion
- Civic Participation and Employment
- Communication and Information
- Community Health Services

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.completecommunitiesde.org/planning/healthy-and-livable/barriers/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.completecommunitiesde.org/planning/healthy-and-livable/support/>

Inventories and assessments completed are not exhaustive, nor did they include objective measures. However, they can be used by community leaders and stakeholders to leverage existing policies and programs and to identify strategies and partnerships that promote more formal, age-friendly initiatives. Furthermore, each community boasts unique livability aspects that should be recognized as best practices in Delaware and nationally. As part of the overall review and assessment, a [GIS Story Map](#) was developed to bring together various elements of this work, including the domains of livability, current demographics data, and other community-specific information. Please see Addendum B for a screenshot of the GIS Story Map.

## An Assessment of Two Sussex County Communities

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### Lewes Community at a Glance

In comparing demographic trends among Sussex County ZIP Codes, the 19958 area is prominent in its high percentage of older adults. With over 50 percent of the population aged 65+, communities representing the 19958 ZIP Code are particularly noteworthy. Out of the 2,887 residents of the incorporated area of Lewes, 1,461 of those individuals are 65+.<sup>11</sup>

The City of Lewes and nearby unincorporated neighborhoods are very attractive, high-demand areas for older adults. Coastal proximity, along with a unique, rich history, growing medical community, and accessibility to major transportation routes and resources are appealing features for both native Delawareans and retirees from other states. Other popular community amenities that promote healthy aging include easy access to parks, beaches, walking/biking trails, and other cultural and recreational activities. Additionally, there are a variety of community-based supports and resources offered by local senior centers, cooperative networks, and other nonprofits.

Housing, transportation, and access to medical and community services have been identified by local leaders and community-based representatives as barriers to aging in place. Of particular concern are residents in the greater Lewes area (outside of the incorporated boundaries) who might be more vulnerable to social isolation and health risks. Recognizing this issue, the Greater Lewes Community Village (The Village) requested a [heat map](#) of its current service area, which aims to identify service-delivery and networking gaps (see Addendum C).

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<sup>11</sup> Sussex County Delaware, *Comprehensive Plan*, "Chapter 2: Population and Demographics," <https://sussexplan.com/app/uploads/2017/11/plan-02.pdf>

## Leadership Capacity and Readiness – Lewes Area

*Based on AARP's Selection Criteria to Join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities*

Leadership and Readiness Factors	Lewes Area (19958)*
Community Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Village is an aging in place champion and serves as an important community resource for older adults.</li> <li>• Community representatives, including Village representatives, are concerned about underserved populations in the 19958 ZIP Code.</li> </ul>
Demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over 50 percent of the population is 65+.</li> <li>• City and community leaders identify the need for more intergenerational activities.</li> <li>• University of Delaware (UD) presence and partnerships with local leaders (e.g., Osher Lifelong Learning Program and other UD resources) is an educational asset.</li> </ul>
Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The area relies heavily on seasonal ecotourism.</li> <li>• They city maintains a strong and robust historic business district.</li> <li>• The city collaborates with Delaware Economic Development Office (DED0), which aids and provides support for regional planning.</li> </ul>
Government Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local elected leaders identify emergency preparedness for older adults as a primary aging in place concern and ongoing issue.</li> <li>• According to the city’s current Comprehensive Plan, community leaders identify the growing older population as a “top challenge” facing Lewes today.</li> </ul>
Health and Wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beebe Healthcare is expanding capacity and services to accommodate the growing population of older residents in and around 19958.</li> <li>• Beebe Population Health programs support older adults in the community with outreach, prevention, and transitional services.</li> </ul>
Transportation and Walkability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trail connectivity to the downtown area, the City of Rehoboth Beach, and among subdivisions, provides easy access to shops and the Lewes Library.</li> <li>• This is a walkable, bicycle-friendly community.</li> <li>• Local leaders acknowledge transportation-related concerns, including issues with traffic congestion and lack of parking, especially during the summer season.</li> <li>• There is an acknowledged need for improved pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit networks.</li> </ul>

\*includes City of Lewes and unincorporated areas of 19958

## Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

### *Parks for All Ages*

Within the limits of Lewes, there are a number of public protected land areas including Great Marsh Preserve, Lewes Boat Ramp, Otis H. Smith City Dock, Zwaanendael Park, Canal Front Park, Mary E. Vessels Memorial Park, 1812 Memorial Park, George H.P. Smith Park at Blockhouse Pond, Lewes Beach, Cape Henlopen State Park, the Alfred A. Stango Park, Lewes Little League, and Angola Neck Nature Preserve. There are other natural areas within the city limits and many trails that are developed or being expanded.

### *Spaces that Promote Healthy Living*

In addition to popular seasonal destinations, the Lewes community has a variety of outdoor areas that be enjoyed year-round. With such a high concentration of 65+ residents living close the area's parks, it is important that outdoor spaces are accessible and safe and offer activities that are suitable for all age groups and activity levels. The community offers parks, natural areas, beaches, and trails that individuals of all ages can enjoy. For example, The George H.P. Smith Park at Blockhouse Pond has a trail system for those who enjoy walking, as well as ample seating for those who prefer simply relaxing in nature. The playground is accessible for children or grandchildren. There are also opportunities to fish and place bocce ball or horseshoes.

### *Opportunities to Expand Current Spaces*

As referenced in its 2015 Comprehensive Plan, the City of Lewes aims to protect the area's outdoor spaces and parks and identify opportunities to develop open spaces among community subdivisions. This would provide additional social interactions between neighbors. Another objective outlined in the plan would support local businesses setting up shop closer to the community's beaches. Lewes is also in the process of working with the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) to expand upon the number of outdoor activities that will be available to residents, such as canoeing, kayaking, hiking, and biking. Opportunities for parklets, intergenerational community gardens as described by Project for Public Spaces, are also worth considering.

## Transportation

### *Complete Street Principles*

Many Complete Streets principles are underway or have already been implemented. This includes the area's sidewalks and trails that connect the downtown, incorporated area of Lewes to a variety of amenities and resources, including city hall, the library, shops, parks, and restaurants. Newer subdivisions just outside city boundaries are also easily accessible by walking, biking, or using a wheelchair.

## *Current Transportation and Mobility Options*

### DART First State Fixed-Route Options

Beginning in September 2018, DART First State (facilitated by the Delaware Department of Transportation's Delaware Transit Center), expanded two popular "[beach bus](#)" routes, to include year-round service, operating every 30 minutes Monday through Saturday. Route 201 provides service from the Lewes Park and Ride lot (along Route 1) to the Tanger Outlets shopping area, Rehoboth Beach Park & Ride, and the Rehoboth Beach Boardwalk. Additionally, Bus Route 204 provides service to downtown Lewes and the Cape May-Lewes Ferry Terminal. Fares are reasonably priced and can be paid for via daily passes and a mobile payments. DART options can ease traffic congestion and parking stress.

### Greater Lewes Community Village

The Greater Lewes Community Village (The Village) is "a volunteer, nonprofit organization dedicated to helping older adults live independently as long as possible. The Village provides volunteer support, services, and programs that enhance the lives of members by helping them remain engaged in a variety of social, educational, and cultural activities."

The Village is based on a national model and is an affiliate of the Village to Village Network of over 200 villages throughout the United States. The organization offers many volunteer opportunities to support aging in place. Transportation services include driving members to doctor's appointments, social or cultural activities, and grocery stores. This transportation program provides the comfort of services through volunteers within the community. Services are particularly comforting for individuals who live outside the incorporated area of Lewes and/or are not near fixed-route options.

### Lewes Senior Center

The Lewes Senior Center, located on the westbound side of Route 1 near the Nassau Bridge, provides daily transportation to and from the center, as well as weekly trips to local grocery stores, banks, and other places of interest. With a two-day notice, transportation to medical appointments are also available. Annually, the center offers four major trips using a 16-passenger bus.

### Harbour Lights CHEER

The Harbour Lights CHEER center also offers daily transportation to and from the center. A dollar donation is requested. This center offers weekly transportation to the post office, grocery stores, banks, and pharmacies. The location of this center is very convenient for residents of the adjacent Harbour Towne Apartments. Harbour Lights CHEER coordinates occasional dinner trips, mall outings, and other recreational trips.



## ITNSouthernDelaware

This organization is a local volunteer affiliate of a national nonprofit model. Transportation credits can be earned by serving as a volunteer driver or issued in exchange for vehicles through the organization's CarTrade program. They can be shared among friends, traded among communities, or saved for future transportation needs. Currently, the organization is offering full transportation services in and around designated areas of the county (mostly in the eastern, more coastal areas). To assess the program's reach and effectiveness in the 19958 area, information on the number of trips, trip types, and individuals served will be valuable.

### *Potential State and Local Partnerships*

Future transportation and mobility options could be possible through partnerships among local nonprofits, DART First State, and nearby medical providers. In particular, mobility on demand pilot projects for non-emergency medical trips would assist residents in more rural areas who do not drive and cannot access fixed-route services. DTC, working with IPA, hopes to identify such opportunities through its statewide [Mobility in Motion](#) initiative. Existing committee work related to coastal area transit and transportation issues should also be considered. These include the Five Points Transportation Study Working Group and other advisory groups.

### *Future Mobility Challenges*

Despite the variety of opportunities to safely walk or bike in and around Lewes, transportation and mobility limitations are recognized by community stakeholders as significant challenges to aging in place. A primary concern is the number of people who still drive when they retire to the area and are likely to face driving and mobility challenges as they age.

Mobility concerns were underscored during an emergency planning event held at the Lewes Public Library in September 2018. A majority of older adult attending the event indicated that they still drive. However, the same participants indicated that "having transportation to shelters or other safe places" is a primary concern related to emergency planning. Most also reported that their primary supports (e.g., family, friends) reside in other states. As non-natives retire to the area, transportation options will become an important aging in place indicator. Weather events such as nor'easters and hurricanes pose coastal flooding risks and present specific transportation and mobility concerns for the area's older adults. This is particularly relevant to individuals living alone and those with health contingencies during emergencies.

## **Housing**

### *City Housing Goals and Affordability*

When it comes to housing, MetLife's model for building "age-advantaged" communities recognizes that households can host multiple generations. Additionally, many seniors living on their own often have fixed incomes. Therefore, affordable housing policies that acknowledge

the need for older individuals to live with or near younger family members is key to creating age-friendly communities. This coincides with Lewes's most recent Comprehensive Plan update to work on creating more affordable housing options, preserve existing affordable housing, and assist residents in their ability to age in place. Completed in 2015, the plan reported that as a city, Lewes recognizes the importance of affordable housing but has limited ability to address this issue on its own. In addition to recognizing the need for additional affordable housing options, Lewes states a goal of working to preserve the affordable housing already within city limits. Housing values in the area create challenges for residents trying to secure affordable housing. Regional market conditions exacerbate this issue.

As a coastal community, Lewes has a median housing price much higher than that of the county or state. The City of Lewes recognizes that many individuals working in Lewes cannot afford to live within city limits. One-third of homeowners in Lewes (and over one-third of rental households) pay over 30 percent of their monthly salary solely on housing. As housing rates rise, older adults, specifically those on fixed incomes, may have a harder time staying in Lewes.

Although housing affordability is identified as a significant issue in the Lewes community, the city's Comprehensive Plan lists its first housing-need strategy as to "assist residents to remain or age in place." Lewes identified three different opportunities to address this strategy: (1) evaluating building, zoning, or historic preservation regulations for low-income households, (2) permitting accessory dwelling units in residential areas, and (3) promoting awareness of available housing support programs offered by the county, state, and private sector. Lastly, Lewes indicates plans of participating in regional opportunities to achieve these housing strategies. These regional opportunities include coordinating with other coastal towns and working with county and state officials to create a regional housing plan. The Comprehensive Plan denotes that a shift in housing will occur in the next 20 years. Lewes's plan predicts the aging population will favor downsizing and moving nearer to community amenities, yet there is no specific strategy regarding this issue.

### *Current Resources and Options*

While many older adults want to downsize as they age, individuals often want to remain in the homes they have lived in for years. Whether retirees are moving to smaller homes in the area or locals are wishing to preserve their current housing situations, local support services are important in helping people achieve their goals. Through dedicated volunteer members, the Village assists community members in the 19958 area with household chores, light home maintenance, pet sitting, and transportation to local places of interests and medical appointments. They also refer members to electricians, plumbers, and other services.

Another important local resource is [EmpowerAbility](#). This is an occupational therapy company that works with people of all ages to provide environmental modifications to homes and living spaces. It helps to link individuals with resources and provides consultations on projects that

promote aging in place and to assist people who may be transitioning back to living at home after hospitalization. EmpowerAbility also provides consultations for the development of independent living communities.

It is also important for services and resources to be in close proximity to where older adults live. Harbour Towne Apartments, for example, are conveniently close to the Harbour Lights CHEER center. Residents are within walking distance to a senior center that offers transportation to shopping centers and recreational trips and provides health education classes, fitness programs, congregate meals, social activities, and prescription pick-ups.

Villages at Five Points is another well-connected community with multiple housing options and within walking distance of restaurants, shops, and professional services. A DART bus stop is located within the community. Residents are connected to resources directly within their community, but also have the option to travel outside of the community without driving. In addition, the community features a playground and a trail that connects to the larger trail network into the City of Lewes.

#### *Alternative Options: Accessory Dwelling Units*

Accessory dwelling units (ADUs), also recognized as an accessory apartment, second unit, or “granny flat,” have been identified by many age-friendly resources as a great opportunity to promote to aging in place. These units are located on a single-family lot, whether attached or detached from the primary residential unit, and are smaller living facilities for individuals.<sup>12</sup>

ADUs typically have fully functioning kitchens, a bathroom, living, and sleeping spaces. Benefits of ADUs include affordability for both property owners and those who want to live close to family and friends. Homeowners and occupants benefit from living close to one another through assistance with household chores and an increased sense of security. Communities benefit from land conservation and an increase in affordable housing options. ADUs can be aesthetically pleasing and aligned with the community character and can be less expensive to build compared to new construction.<sup>13</sup> Lewes’s current zoning permits do not permit ADUs in most residential areas. However, as the demand for affordable senior housing increases, zoning ordinances and policies that permit ADUs in some areas of Lewes might be an option worth considering.

The Delaware State Housing Authority (DHSA) offers resources that stress the benefits of ADUs, including housing affordability. Its [online publication](#) provides recommendations to local governments, as well as county-based economic, housing, and demographic trends.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.completecommunitiesde.org/planning/healthy-and-livable/adu/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.completecommunitiesde.org/planning/healthy-and-livable/adu/>

## Social Participation

### *Senior Center and Homebound Meal Programs*

Opportunities for social participation are readily available among in and around Lewes. A variety of programs and services are available at senior centers and other community-based organizations.

For example, the Lewes Senior Center provides technological support for members and participants, including cell phone/tablet/laptop assistance. Providing technical support for seniors promotes opportunities to connect with family, friends, and neighbors and identify area services and resources to help with day-to-day living, social supports, emergency planning, and recreational activities. Harbour Lights CHEER offers a variety of activities including exercise programs, support groups, craft classes, health seminars, concerts, games, and educational and cultural trips.

For older adults unable to participate in senior center activities or a congregate meals programs, there are homebound meals services. These services provide a daily check-in, while ensuring a hot meal. Meals on Wheels Lewes-Rehoboth is a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with over 140 area volunteers who deliver to a growing number of clients. The mission of Meals on Wheels Lewes-Rehoboth is “to provide nutritionally balanced, home-delivered meals to homebound elderly and disabled citizens in an effort to reduce institutionalization.”

### *Volunteer and Neighborhood Support*

Access to and support from friendly community faces is also available through The Village. The Village is a member-based organization that screens volunteers from the Lewes-area community who are willing to assist others with light house maintenance, technological assistance, and transportation to/from medical appointments or other errands. The organization also provides access to monthly educational and social activities, such as a book club. It provides vendor referrals and is designed to help keep older adults part of the community. Being a designated volunteer also provides an important and unique opportunity to stay socially engaged.

In response to The Village’s request, a [heat map](#) of the organization’s current membership and volunteer base was created (see Addendum C). The map identifies where organizational vendors are in relation to where members live. While most members are currently located within the city limits of Lewes, there are several living in the greater (unincorporated) Lewes area. Additionally, most vendors are located outside the city limits.

## Respect and Social Inclusion

As acknowledged at the September 2018 emergency planning session held at the Lewes Library. During an interactive polling session with area older adults, many indicated that they are not living near their family or friends. When asked about primary support networks, most participants indicated that these exist in other states. Retirees who move to the Lewes community may not have children or grandchildren nearby. As described by AARP intergenerational activities are an opportunity “for young and old to learn from one another, honor what each has to offer and, at the same time, feel good about themselves.”

### *Intergenerational Activities*

An intergenerational program called the L.E.A.P. program comprises volunteers striving to increase the quality of reading education for area schools. The program uses trained therapy dogs. L.E.A.P. stands for Literacy Education Assistance Pups.

The Lewes Library hosted World Knit in Public Day. Intergenerational opportunities allow for the aging population to share their talents and knowledge with youth and for youth to share the spirit and love of learning with the older generation. This will be increasingly important for the Lewes community, particularly given the number of retirees moving to the area from other states. Many are coming to the area without their extended families nearby. Partnerships with the Cape Henlopen School District are opportunities to initiate or expand current intergenerational activities in the community.

### *Educational Opportunities*

The Osher Lifelong Learning Program at the University of Delaware provides continuing educational opportunities for older adults in the community. As an academic cooperative for adults 50+, the program provides opportunities for individuals to enjoy classes, teach, share ideas, and travel. It is located near downtown Lewes.

## Civic Participation and Employment

### *Access to City Resources and Information*

Within the City of Lewes’s boundaries, city hall, the police department, and the Board of Public Works, are within walking distance of many downtown homes, as well as Second Street. The post office is also located near downtown shopping—accessible by walking or biking.

### *Employment and Volunteer Opportunities*

Volunteer opportunities are often available through the Greater Lewes Community Village, homebound meal programs, and the area’s senior centers. For example, the Lewes Senior Center has volunteer opportunities for driving, kitchen assistance, and building maintenance.

Coastal Concerts, which promotes classical music appreciation through live concerts, outreach, and educational activities, looks for new board members and volunteers.

Volunteer opportunities are often made available through the Lewes Library and Chamber of Commerce websites. Sussex RSVP also finds matches personal interests and skills of adults 55 and older and collaborates with community organizations.

In addition, area senior centers provide volunteer opportunities for younger seniors who are not ready to participate in some center activities but have skills or trades that provide educational or technological assistance to older seniors or peers.

## Communication and Information

### *Local Media*

The *Cape Gazette* serves as one of the area's primary sources for local news, weather, business information, real estate, and events. As both an online and printed media outlet, the *Cape Gazette* also provides information about age-specific programs offered throughout Lewes and Sussex County such as fitness and nutrition classes, chronic disease forums/workshops, and support groups. In addition, the *Cape Gazette* offers rates for seniors living in and out of Sussex County.

WBOC-TV 16, an affiliate of CBS and a member of the Associated Press, is a regional television news source serving the entire Delmarva Peninsula, including Sussex and Kent Counties.

The station has become known to the community as "Delmarva's News Leader." In addition to headlining news, the outlet features local experts (e.g., regional medical providers) and interest stories about people or events happening around Sussex County. WBOC's website provides news, weather, and sports updated regularly.

### *Community Resources*

The City of Lewes and the surrounding area are well served by community organizations and facilities that help provide important and relevant information to all residents. The new public library, Greater Lewes Community Village, and Lewes Senior Center are community assets that provide resources specific to the area's older adult population. These include technological assistance, information on events and activities, and national, state, and county trends and topics.

### *Emergency Planning and Hazard Mitigation Efforts*

Social vulnerability refers to a community's resilience when confronted by external stresses on human health, natural or human-caused disasters, or the outbreak of diseases. [CDC's Social Vulnerability Index \(SVI\)](#) uses census (tract-level) variables to aid local officials in identifying communities that may need hazard preparation or disaster recovery support.

Of relevance to the Lewes area are communication and information on emergency planning and hazard mitigation. While emergency planning continues to be an important topic for all communities in Sussex County, areas with a high concentration of vulnerable populations can be disproportionately impacted by storms, floods, and other emergencies because of limited mobility and resources to evacuate and/or manage disruptions from such events.

As more retirees move to the coastal areas and build homes in and around floodplain areas, county- and local-level planning protocols, outreach, and training should be developed in collaboration with state and federal agencies, emergency responders, healthcare providers, and community-based organizations serving older adults and persons with disabilities.

The City of Lewes uses the services of its volunteer fire department, as well as a professionally trained and managed police department to address day-to-day emergencies that may occur. In the event of a natural or technological emergency or disaster, the [City of Lewes Emergency Operations Plan](#) (LEOP) is activated to coordinate an organized approach to managing an effective response. The LEOP was updated in early 2006 and is available on the city's website.

Recognizing the importance of appropriate communication and emergency planning information, the City of Lewes and the Lewes Board of Public Works have subscribed to CodeRED, an emergency notification system to alert property owners and residents of information they need to know in the event of local emergency or disruption in service. Alerts are sent via text, telephone call, email, and social media. For residents living within the incorporated area of Lewes, this system provides an additional alert and notification system beyond the Sussex County Smart 911 system.

Annually, the City of Lewes Hazard Mitigation Team holds an outreach event related to flood risks and emergency planning topics, which helps address outreach recommendations in the 2011 City of Lewes Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan. This year, in partnership with UD's Delaware Sea Grant program, the City held a workshop titled, "Ready or Not: Emergency Planning for Older Adults or People with Disabilities" on September 21, 2018, at the Lewes Public Library. Sea Grant provided outreach, logistics, and extension support. Partners included the Greater Lewes Community Village, UD's Institute for Public Administration, City of Lewes Board of Public Works, Beebe Hospital, Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, Delaware Emergency Management Agency, Citizen Corps, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, Sussex County, Sustainable Coastal Communities Initiative, and Brandywine Valley SPCA.

The goal of the workshop was to promote awareness of emergency planning steps and provide concrete takeaways to participants. The workshop included exhibits from the partners and presentations, interactive components including laptop registration stations for CodeRED and Smart 911, and completion of File of Life emergency health information cards. These cards

organize critical health insurance, emergency contact, and medical information in one place—a small magnetic card that can be attached to a refrigerator or file drawer and grabbed on short notice by emergency responders or an individual if there is a need to evacuate or go to the hospital. Participants also listened to presentations on evacuating and sheltering options, creating plans to address emergency communications, addressing health and mobility needs, building emergency supply kits, and strengthening support networks. During the workshop, participants also completed surveys and live polling questions that helped to illuminate the needs of this population in the City of Lewes and greater Lewes area. Particularly striking was the discovery that 76 percent of the participants do not have an emergency communications plan in place, despite 60 percent indicating that family and friends live in other states. This information begs additional outreach to ensure that Lewes residents have contingencies in place to stay in communication with their support networks before, during, and after major events.

### *Open Data*

Most recently, the City of Lewes, working with IPA's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) services team, initiated an open data project that offers a [Gallery of Maps and Mapping Applications](#) created by the city and other agencies. The online gallery allows the city to provide effective services most efficiently and gives visitors access to useful planning information through GIS without special software. The GIS tools are maintained by city, county, state and federal agencies through the city portal. Each map and map application allows users to see location-based details, obtain access to current data, print maps, and share tools that are publicly accessible online through the City of Lewes's website.

The types of maps and mapping applications that are conveniently available on Lewes's map gallery include a map of impervious surface areas, a story map application that showcases parks and recreational areas, the city's evacuation zones and links to pre-disaster planning materials, a map of the recycling areas and pick-up days, and an interactive map application showing the city's zoning. Since the map is linked with the online code, all information is regularly updated.

In addition, the gallery includes a flood planning tool to assess risks of specific locations, a Delaware Floodplain map, a story map application of Delaware Watersheds, and a Scenic Tour of the Delaware Byways—Historic Lewes Byway: Gateway to the Bayshore. These resources are all located in one place, are accessible to the public, can be used at any time of the day on any type of device, and are interactive and user friendly. A background in mapping is not necessary. Residents who are new to the area can easily learn more about what Lewes has to offer, what their flood risks are, where the parks and recreational areas are located, and when their recycling materials are picked up. Moreover, these tools are useful for city officials because they identify major flood risk areas in relation to where older adults live and whether there are accessible evacuation routes.



## Community Support and Health Services

### *Access to Healthy Foods*

The Historic Lewes Farmers Market (HLFM) is a nonprofit, community-based, producer-only farmers market that began in 2006 by a group of volunteers. Over the years, the market has expanded to 30-plus vendors that provide fresh, locally grown produce, eggs, and meats. Additionally, the HLFM offers workshops by local chefs who use food from the market, master gardeners, wellness providers, and sustainable agriculture experts. It is open every Saturday and Wednesday mornings at three area sites in the area.

Llyod's Market is a small, but accessible grocery store in downtown Lewes. It has been open nearly 50 years and carries locally grown produce and fruit seasonally, as well as a full range of other products. It is compact and affordable.

Full-service grocery stores are also located in the greater Lewes/Rehoboth area. These include ACME Markets, Weis Markets, Giant Food, Food Lion, and Walmart.

### *Access to Medical Providers and Health Services*

Beebe Healthcare has served the Lewes area for over 100 years. During this time, the hospital has been located downtown and served as community focal point. As the Lewes/Rehoboth area has grown, Beebe also has grown and is now investing and expanding its reach and presence in Sussex County. This includes the development of the Beebe Tunnell Cancer near Route 24, new imaging centers, physical therapy services, and walk-in clinics. Beebe's Center for Robotic Surgery, slated to open in 2022, will offer advanced robotically assisted procedures for patients in the region.

Other programs and services offered through Beebe Healthcare include its Adult Activities Center at Gull House. This is a structured and supervised adult day care opportunity developed for functionally impaired persons who are 60 years of age or older.

Beebe's Population Health Department supports healthy living and helps prevent illness among residents and visitors to the area. Free health screenings for blood pressure, cholesterol, osteoporosis, and skin cancer are available. The department's CAREs program is a transitional program whereby medical professionals assist people with chronic illnesses in learning how to manage medical conditions and stay independent and at home for as long as possible.

Nearly 20 years ago, Beebe began distributing File of Life packets. These are free, plastic, magnetized packets that help individuals document and have available medication information easily accessible in the event of a medical emergency. Over 60,000 File of Life packets have been distributed.

### *Community-Based Health and Wellness Programs*

In addition to preventative health services and the CAREs program, Beebe's Population Health Department offers support groups, educational workshops, and community events. The Lewes Senior Center offers free blood pressure monitoring, exercise classes, and monthly medical counseling and resources through Highmark Blue Cross. Harbour Lights CHEER offers a variety health and exercise programs, including Tai Chi, Yoga, Zumba, and Wii™, support groups, and health seminars.

### *Healthy Environments and Recreational Opportunities*

Biking and walking opportunities in the community promote overall better health and wellness by offering easy access, safe environments, and linkages to community resources and downtown offerings. As referenced by the AARP, "Communities benefit when they have access to healthy food options, opportunities for walking, biking, and exercise, and access to health facilities."<sup>14</sup>

New and expanded biking, walking, and hiking trails in and around Lewes provide numerous opportunities for healthy living. This includes the Junction & Breakwater Trail that allows for easy access to community services such as the Lewes Library and downtown and connects to other area trails and communities. Most recently, the Georgetown-Lewes Trail offers six miles of walking, biking, and wheelchair accessible trail access with end points at Gills Neck Road, at the northern terminus of the Junction & Breakwater Trail and Log Cabin Hill Road.

## Summary

Overall, the Lewes community has significant strengths in communication and information available to older residents, particularly related to collaborative planning and with an emphasis on emergency planning. Community leaders recognize more can be done to educate residents about the potential impact of weather-related emergencies and how to appropriately plan. Amenities including state and local parks, walking/biking trails, and other historical buildings promote healthy living for all ages. Additionally, community supports through area senior centers, health services, and The Village provide important outreach and referrals, social networks, and transportation services. Educational and cultural activities are readily available and include important opportunities for socialization, lifelong learning, and civic participation. Areas worth further consideration and analysis include the area's housing stock and affordability, specialized transportation and mobility partnerships, and the needs of homebound or transportation-disadvantaged individuals who cannot easily access social supports and community resources.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://blog.aarp.org/2013/04/15/10-principles-for-creating-age-friendly-communities/>

## Bridgeville Community at a Glance

Like the Lewes community, the Bridgeville area, compared to other Sussex County ZIP Codes, is also prominent in its high percentage of older adults. Bridgeville's 2006 Comprehensive Plan highlights how the area's demographics have changed over the past decade. Since the Comprehensive Plan was developed, the town's 2018 plan update further emphasizes significant increases in its older adult population, along with related economic and housing-related challenges. The 2018 plan update indicates that the median age of the community's residents has significantly increased (exceeding that of Sussex County and the state of Delaware), and that the percentage of the area's 65+ population has almost doubled.<sup>15</sup>

The Bridgeville community has a lot to offer in terms of its unique charm, local events, and historical aspects. Town officials recognize the opportunities to grow economically and to address the evolving needs of its citizenry. Bridgeville also takes great strides in communicating information to residents through its website and soliciting information to inform its comprehensive planning process.

As a NORC, the town is challenged to address the needs of a newer retirement community and those of native Sussex Countians who have a long history in and around the Bridgeville community. While the growing Heritage Shores community offers numerous programs, supports, and educational opportunities for older adults, more connectivity among various neighborhoods in and around the area are important in maintaining a unified community. Affordable housing options, along with additional parks and recreational opportunities, could help bridge segregated areas and populations in and around Bridgeville. Additional health services and transportation options are also important in making the community more complete. Finally, identifying opportunities for peer-based and intergenerational volunteerism could serve to connect the people of Bridgeville in meaningful and supportive ways.

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.cedarcreekplanners.com/bridgeville-comprehensive-plan/>

## Leadership Capacity and Readiness – Bridgeville Area Community

*Based on AARP's Selection Criteria to Join the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities*

Leadership and Readiness Factors	Bridgeville Examples
Community Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A community survey was conducted as part of the town’s most comprehensive planning process.</li> <li>• The Bridgeville Public Library offers programs and services for citizens of all ages.</li> <li>• Bridgeville Senior Center is an important hub for seniors in the area.</li> <li>• Public feedback has indicated a desire for the development of additional access to natural open spaces.</li> </ul>
Demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The area’s 65+ population has doubled since the last census.</li> <li>• Community members recognize a “split community” (Heritage Shores and the rest of Bridgeville) that could better connect residents.</li> </ul>
Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The town has a central business district.</li> <li>• There is potential for funding to develop the downtown area through the state’s DDD program.</li> </ul>
Government Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number one goal of Bridgeville’s 2018 Comprehensive Plan is to make the town a more age-friendly and unified community, with a concentration on ensuring shopping and other services are accessible to the aging in place population.</li> </ul>
Health and Wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The town recognizes a need for additional public parks and recreational opportunities.</li> <li>• Bridgeville Senior Center is a CHEER congregate nutrition site and provides homebound meal services.</li> <li>• Nanticoke Health Services in Seaford is the closest hospital.</li> <li>• The Sussex Health Coalition develops important partnerships and connections related to addressing the area’s social determinants of health.</li> </ul>
Transportation and Walkability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is mile-long bike path connecting Heritage Shores to the Bridgeville Public Library.</li> <li>• There are current plans to extend curbs into parking lanes to shorten pedestrian parking distance and visually narrow the street.</li> <li>• There is recognition that better signage might promote pedestrian safety.</li> </ul>

Leadership and Readiness Factors	Bridgeville Examples
Transportation and Walkability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In a recent community survey, 94% of respondents indicate support for better sidewalks within residential neighborhoods; 78% indicated support for new or improved sidewalks along major roads, and 83% supported the need for additional bike paths along major roads.</li> <li>• There is an acknowledged need for traffic-calming measures, as well as better connectivity between newer and older subdivisions and communities in and around the town.</li> </ul>

## Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Public feedback obtained by city officials indicates that Bridgeville residents desire additional opportunities to access to natural open spaces. This includes more connectivity among different areas of the community. While new or expanded spaces might be considered in the future, the community boasts several noteworthy outdoor spaces and buildings that support community members of all ages.

Bridgeville is home to the Bridgeville Historical Society Park. Additionally, the Society purchased and renovated the first firehouse (1911) into a small museum—Old Firehouse Museum. The museum is open on the first Sunday of each month between April and October. Adjoining property was purchased for a small community park that has a bandstand for summer concerts and activities. The Delaware State Historic Preservation Office assisted the town in establishing a historic district. Bridgeville is also on the loop of the Southern Delaware Heritage Trail.

## Transportation

### *Public Transit and Transportation Options*

Public transportation in western Sussex County is more limited than in the eastern side of the county. The Nanticoke Health Services Community Needs Assessment (2016–2019), cites this issue in relation to accessibility to healthcare services in the area. The transportation section of the assessment report notes that “while public transportation is improving, it remains a challenge for those who do not own their own vehicle.” The report also points out that transportation will likely remain a barrier to healthcare services because of the area’s rural geography.

While Nanticoke Health Services provides transportation to its patients for appointments and treatments at the facility, individuals must first qualify and then schedule through the patient care area of their treatment. This can be challenging for older adults and prohibitive to certain individuals who don’t qualify as well as for no-car households.

DART's Route 212 provides daily, fixed-route bus service and has 30 stops departing from Georgetown Transit Hub and ending in Woodlawn Avenue in Delmar. Several stops along this route are in Bridgeville, including areas along Main Street.

### *Community-Based Options*

The Bridgeville Senior Center, conveniently located in downtown Bridgeville, offers daily transportation to and from the center. The center also offers transportation to grocery stores and doctor appointments for members who take part in center activities two or more days of the week.

In addition, the Greenwood CHEER center provides transportation to and from the center. This service is available daily for those aged 60 and older. The center provides transportation to the bank, post office, grocery store, and pharmacy. Other programs include fitness classes, support groups, congregate lunch, recreational trips, support groups, and health seminars. This center distributes Meals on Wheels for qualifying Sussex County residents aged 60+.

## **Housing**

According to its updated Comprehensive Plan (2018), no other municipality in Sussex County has experienced a growth rate in property values and number of housing units like the Town of Bridgeville. In fact, over the past several decades, the town's median home value increased by 184 percent—a faster rate than Sussex County and the state of Delaware. The plan cites the gradual build-out of the Heritage Shores community as a primary reason for this growth. Bridgeville's population has increased considerably in the last ten years. Moreover, as this housing development is "age-restricted," the associated population increase is made up almost entirely of those aged 55 and older.

### *Affordability*

The town's most recent Comprehensive Plan also cites American Community Survey (ACS) information that details residents' housing-related financial burdens. This includes statistics showing that over 30 percent of current residents are spending a significant amount of their monthly income on housing-related expenditures. Newer retirees to the Bridgeville area are spending a large amount of their income on homes with more amenities but may not be struggling to cover monthly expenses. Renters, however, may be experiencing more burdens. The plan discusses the DSHA's suggestion that the community "would benefit from small- or moderate-scale rental projects that are at or just below market rates."

As part of the plan update, a survey of town residents indicated preferences that residents perceive Bridgeville as split between the Heritage Shores community and other areas. Over half of the respondents indicated that they considered Bridgeville a retirement community.

### *Alternative Options and Residential Preferences*

The Comprehensive Plan references “the missing middle,” which helps explain the need to realign the town’s housing portfolio to attract more working individuals and families including teachers, nurses, and government employees. Alternatives to current options could include a town-like development of diverse and affordable housing styles that promote walkability and a more intergenerational community. Based on the area’s percentage of older adults, aging in place strategies are specifically cited. This includes opportunities for age-friendly alternative housing options such as cohousing, house sharing, villages, and accessory dwelling units.

## **Social Participation**

### *Community-Based Activities*

The Bridgeville Public Library offers a variety of free materials, programs, and services for a variety of ages and abilities. It promotes genealogy research and a local history collection. The Heritage Shores community offers monthly and daily entertainment activities, including karaoke, wine and beer tastings, trivia nights, and live music.

The Bridgeville Senior Center offers a variety of social activities for older adults in the community, including weekly bible study, arts/crafts, congregate meals, and low-impact exercises. The center provides transportation to and from the center, as well as to local stores for shopping. CHEER Senior Services offers homebound services to eligible residents age 60 and over throughout Sussex County.

### *Municipal Events and Festivals*

The annual Apple Scrapple Festival celebrates and promotes several leading and local industries —apples and scrapple. Since 1992, the annual event draws over 20,000 visitors. T.S. Smith and Sons Farm and RAPA Scrapple products are showcased. The event has become a significant fundraiser for local community organizations and brings awareness to Sussex County’s agricultural profession.

## **Respect and Social Inclusion**

The Bridgeville Public Library offers programs for various generations and serves as primary source of community activity. The Adults Corner offers basic computer and technology assistance, adult craft nights, and yoga. These activities provide free help, social support, and inclusion. The Genealogy Room offers *Scharf’s History of Delaware* and *Bridgeville: A Community History of the 19th Century*.

Heritage Shores offers many dining options, a golf course, and a state-of-the art wellness center that promotes physical activity. Many of its facilities are open to the public, making it an intergenerational community asset. Additionally, Heritage Shores is now home to the area’s

Osher Lifelong Learning Program at the University of Delaware. Classes are held at the Heritage Shores community one day a week from 9:00 a.m. until about 5:00 p.m.

## **Civic Participation and Employment**

The mission of the Bridgeville Historical Society is to “collect, preserve, and share the history of Bridgeville, Delaware, and the northwest quadrant of Sussex County, Delaware, in order to educate present and future generations.” This group provides an opportunity for locals to share historic information with non-native retirees who have moved to the area as well as intergenerational education to the area’s youth.

Other active civic groups include the Bridgeville Lions Club of Lions Club International and the Kiwanis Club of Bridgeville. Many volunteer opportunities are available through these groups as well as the Bridgeville Senior Center.

## **Communication and Information**

The town website provides a wealth of information related to government business, current events, activities, and community events. The town’s website includes detailed information on the town’s Moderately Priced Housing program, the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan 2016 Update, and its latest Comprehensive Plan update (2018). Residents are able to pay water/sewer and other miscellaneous bills online. The Bridgeville Public Library offers free Internet access and access to a variety of community resources, technology classes, and archived information.

Like the Lewes area, Bridgeville’s primary television news station WBOC-TV 16, an affiliate of CBS and a member of the Associated Press, is a regional news source serving the entire Delmarva Peninsula, including Sussex and Kent Counties.

While Bridgeville is not recognized by community leaders as a highly vulnerable area for natural disasters or weather-related emergencies, the area is located along one of Sussex County’s primary westbound evacuation routes. Its geographic position, coupled with the community’s older adult population, justify additional information gathering and sharing among local first responders, town officials, and residents about emergency planning risks, evacuation activities, and impacts.

## **Community Support and Health Services**

### *Access to Healthy Foods*

T.S. Smith and Sons is a traditional farmers market selling fresh, locally grown produce. Food Lion is the only full-service supermarket/grocery store in the area. Several convenience stores are in the area. Congregate meals are offered at area senior centers, which provide



opportunities for social inclusion and help defend against the effects of isolation and related health issues.

### *Access to Medical Providers and Health Services*

Nanticoke Health Services, the closest hospital to Bridgeville, is about 15 miles away. A closer medical services option is the Nanticoke Health Pavilion Bridgeville (also known as the Bridgeville Medical Center). Nanticoke Health Services maintains a strong commitment to leveraging current outreach services and programs that support a healthier population in the areas it serves. As referenced in its 2017–2019 Community Needs Assessment Implementation Plan Year 1 of 3, community outreach and partnering is a large component of the organization’s mission. This includes maintaining and growing partnerships with other area healthcare organizations, state agencies, and health-related committees and coalitions. These types of partnerships will remain important in addressing the primary health-related issues facing rural, western Sussex County. Priority issues include cervical and lung cancer, mental health and substance abuse, obesity, and women’s health.

### *Community-Based Health and Wellness Activities*

One of the organizations that Nanticoke Health Services partners with to address health-related issues and priorities is the Sussex County Health Coalition. The coalition exists “to engage the entire community in collaborative family-focused effort to improve the health of children, youth, and families in Sussex County.” Additionally, nearby senior centers such as the Bridgeville Senior Center and the Greenwood CHEER Senior Center provide important community-based health support. These centers offer exercise programs, health and wellness speakers, nutrition and diabetes support, and blood pressure screenings. They also offer some health screenings and transportation to medical appointments.

### *Healthy Environments and Recreational Opportunities*

The area’s senior centers offer a variety of physical activities and health and wellness programs. Additionally, the Heritage Shores community offers amenities such as golfing, walking and biking trails, tennis, and ballroom dancing.

## Summary

Overall, the Bridgeville community has significant strengths in social opportunities and civic participation for residents of all ages, particularly related to the area’s history and culture. The town’s planning, vision for future growth, and leadership capacity is also noteworthy. Bridgeville’s recent Comprehensive Plan update (2018) details specific challenges and opportunities related to the area’s increasing older adult population. It also cites age-friendly strategies and policies that can be considered to address the community’s housing and economic challenges. Areas worth further consideration and analysis include the area’s housing

stock and affordability, connectivity among areas of town, and emergency planning efforts targeted to older adults and persons with disabilities. Moreover, access to alternative transportation options and medical services are areas that will be important considerations for the community as its retirees age.

## Considerations for an Age-Friendly Delaware

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As Delaware's older adult population grows, developing and implementing age-friendly strategies will become increasingly important for local leaders, community stakeholders, and the business sector. Successful strategies will depend on partnerships that leverage and enhance existing programs and services while creating new and innovative opportunities for high-quality, healthy living standards among the state's native and newer 65+ populations.

Communities with significant demographic shifts and those with environmental and social vulnerabilities are most pressed to address opportunities for older community members to age in place. These include municipal and unincorporated areas of Sussex County, such as the Lewes and Bridgeville communities. Each has unique challenges and opportunities based on its respective geographic, demographic, economic, and cultural compositions. Climate issues exacerbate such these challenges. In a recent report published by Climate Central and Zillow (2019), Sussex County ranks third-highest nationally among counties in the number of new homes built in the ten-year risk zone.

Delaware's state and local amenities provide substantial opportunities to live, work, and play at all life phases. The development and expansion of statewide trail systems and recreational opportunities provided by state and local parks, waterways, and greenspaces are prime examples. The availability of various community-based resources that support healthy aging are also worth noting. Such resources include local senior centers, libraries, neighborhood and historical associations, and village networks.

Potential areas of greatest need and work throughout Delaware include affordable and accessible housing. This is particularly true in areas throughout Sussex County. Community and individual housing issues include diversity in housing stock as well as outreach, education, and awareness of options for implementing home modifications. Changes or amendments in local zoning codes will be a factor in determining whether or not new housing stock and modification projects are feasible.<sup>16</sup>

Limited public and community-based transportation options for vulnerable populations are also a continuous concern. Access to non-emergency medical transportation will be particularly critical as more rural and coastal communities in Delaware grow. Projections for Sussex County's 85+ population are likely to create substantial demand for mobility options near primary healthcare providers and specialists.

Lastly, local governments and community members can take part in educational and training opportunities to guide planning efforts aimed at more age-friendly communities that address

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.climatecentral.org/news/ocean-at-the-door-new-homes-in-harms-way-zillow-analysis-21953>

the specific needs of their residents. Topics may include providing emergency planning preparation for vulnerable populations, addressing multi-generational or diverse housing needs, attracting and creating accessible and affordable development for new or expanded health resources and facilities, and working with community stakeholders on expanding or creating partnerships that support successful aging in place. Other community and statewide capacity building efforts should consider technical assistance that promotes broader recognition of local aging in place efforts and potential funding opportunities for communities to advance such initiatives.

## Addendum A: Literature Review

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### Age-Friendly Models

Assessing community resources that promote healthy, active, and independent living is the first step in developing aging-friendly strategies appropriate for communities and their residents. Once an assessment has been done, communities can begin to make plans for improvements based on their findings. These action plans can be formulated using models such as those endorsed by AARP, MetLife, and the Village to Village Network.

#### **AARP Livable Communities**

AARP's Livable Communities model strives for older adults to age comfortably within their own homes, while ensuring they are still active and engaged members of their communities. To help communities achieve more age-friendly communities that support both independence and community engagement, AARP's model focuses on the eight areas domains of livability from the World Health Organization's Age-Friendly Cities and Communities initiative: outdoor space and buildings, transportation, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, communications and information, and community and health services.

AARP's model provides holistic insight on what areas communities should focus on but, like many models, does not provide objective measurement tools and resources to fully evaluate communities. Instead, the model provides a general process that towns and cities can adopt, and, if done successfully, these communities can become members of the national age-friendly network. The benefits of being part of this network include access to a global network of participating communities, connections to aging and civil society experts, and opportunities for peer review and regional and national partnerships.<sup>17</sup>

The process of becoming a member typically begins with a concerned group of community members coming together to work with local officials and other residents to share concerns and identify issues and service gaps. Thereafter, the community shares this information with AARP to make an age-friendly action plan tailored to help voice and advocate for their specific needs. After the community has been accepted as an age-friendly member, a portion of its action plan is posted on AARP's website as an accessible model for others.

Example: The Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh Action Plan is the culmination of nearly two years of community participation and planning. In September 2015, the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County joined the World Health Organization (WHO) and

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2014/an-introduction.html>

AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities, kicking off a five-year planning, implementation, and evaluation cycle.

Together, we will...work to improve entry points, participation, and navigation to new options and opportunities—within neighborhoods and health systems—for people of all ages and abilities. Focusing on mobility, affordability, and navigation, we will:

- Improve access to safe, welcoming walkways and streets
- Expand options for transportation, housing, and health services
- Connect people with resources and services that meet their needs and honor their preferences

Pittsburgh and Allegheny County have a Visitability Design Tax Credit, awarding up to \$2,500 for new construction projects with features that make it easy for anyone to live or visit (e.g., no-step entrances, hallway widths that are at least 36 inches, and wheelchair-accessible bathrooms with lever handles). While other communities still push for visitability legislation, our region was among its earliest adopters. Pittsburgh's ordinance passed in 2004.<sup>18</sup>

## Generations United and MetLife Foundation Model

The goal of MetLife's model is explained in its resource, "Creating an Age-Advantaged Community." This model provides information on ways to create an age-friendly community, with special attention on a strong intergenerational base.<sup>19</sup> The model offers several steps in achieving its ideal complete community.

The first recommended step is to gather interested groups that will plan and brainstorm ways to connect multiple age groups. This central network helps to create additional community ties among sectors of the community, such as local governments, the business community, and the nonprofit sector. The second step is to research and develop a map of age-friendly and intergenerational assets already present. From there, the third step is to speak with community members, gathering input on gaps in services or possible issues they are facing. Finally, the groups are encouraged to present their research to government officials and other community members, highlighting the importance of creating an intergenerational-friendly community, and recommendations for achieving this goal. The model is organized according to six areas of focus: housing, transportation and safe neighborhoods, health care and supportive services, general retail and services, social integration, and education and employment.

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/livable-documents/documents-2017/AgeFriendlyPittsburgh-ActionPlan-2017-20.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> [http://eisnerfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/IG-Communities\\_Creating-an-Age-Advantaged-Community-Toolkit.pdf](http://eisnerfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/IG-Communities_Creating-an-Age-Advantaged-Community-Toolkit.pdf)

Youth support for older adults with household chores and socialization is emphasized and discussed in terms of housing and intergenerational volunteerism. The model also focuses on flexible, accessible transportation services with travel training for all ages.<sup>20</sup>

Example: The Home Safety Program, a program of the Volunteer Center of the Virginia Peninsula, is a youth-led program in which youth visit the homes of older adults who are living independently, perform a safety assessment, and provide safety and disaster kits.<sup>21</sup>

## Village to Village Networks

The Village to Village Network model was formulated to address the conflict between the desire for older adults to continue living in their homes and the limited options older adults may have if they do not qualify for Medicaid or financial supports. Village networks are a grassroots-led effort that emphasizes the provision of supportive services (e.g., transportation, home maintenance, companionship) and referrals to existing community services.<sup>22</sup>

Villages help link their members with age-friendly personal care, cleaning, yard care, and financial services that are available within their communities. Villages are unique in that they rely heavily on volunteers, who provide services such as household chores, transportation, and socialization. These villages are focused on creating communities in which seniors have access to the resources they need, are emotionally supported, and are living within interconnected communities so they feel as if they can live independently.<sup>23</sup>

Villages are typically funded through membership fees and, due to this, many of the seniors living within this model tend to be from the middle class. With funding coming directly from members, the villages have more autonomy in the types of services and providers they utilize. Therefore, this model is a consumer-driven model and must work to serve the specific needs of their community members.

Example: Greater Lewes Community Village hosted the Lewes Chamber of Commerce Mixer, its monthly member event, to promote its programs and services. “This was a wonderful opportunity to help the chamber to see what the Village does,” said Bennett Connolly, Village president.

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<sup>20</sup> [http://eisnerfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/IG-Communities\\_Creating-an-Age-Advantaged-Community-Toolkit.pdf](http://eisnerfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/IG-Communities_Creating-an-Age-Advantaged-Community-Toolkit.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> [http://eisnerfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/IG-Communities\\_Creating-an-Age-Advantaged-Community-Toolkit.pdf](http://eisnerfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/IG-Communities_Creating-an-Age-Advantaged-Community-Toolkit.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> Greenfield, Emily A., Andrew E. Scharlach, Amanda J. Lehning, Joan K. Davitt, and Carrie L. Graham. A Tale of Two Community Initiatives for Promoting Aging in Place: Similarities and Differences in the National Implementation of NORC Programs and Villages. *The Gerontologist*. Volume 53, Issue 6. December 2013. Pages 928–938. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnt035>

<sup>23</sup> [https://www.vtvnetwork.org/content.aspx?page\\_id=22&club\\_id=691012&module\\_id=238482&actr=4](https://www.vtvnetwork.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=691012&module_id=238482&actr=4)

A group of dedicated local residents, including Village volunteers, is sowing the seeds to establish a community garden in Great Marsh Park in Lewes. Lewes Community Gardeners, a nonprofit under the auspices of Greater Lewes Foundation, took up the cause of a community garden to help end hunger in Sussex County and to ensure the garden plots are accessible to people of all abilities. (Visit [LewesCommunityGarden.org](http://LewesCommunityGarden.org).)<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> [https://s3.amazonaws.com/ClubExpressClubFiles/492141/documents/06-2019\\_The\\_Voice\\_of\\_the\\_Village\\_1679138755.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAIB6I23VLJX7E4J7Q&Expires=1564777615&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3D06-2019\\_The\\_Voice\\_of\\_the\\_Village.pdf&Signature=e%2BpZ8XPX4DPpBzhB02yqVm7wi4E%3D](https://s3.amazonaws.com/ClubExpressClubFiles/492141/documents/06-2019_The_Voice_of_the_Village_1679138755.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAIB6I23VLJX7E4J7Q&Expires=1564777615&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3D06-2019_The_Voice_of_the_Village.pdf&Signature=e%2BpZ8XPX4DPpBzhB02yqVm7wi4E%3D)



## Addendum B: GIS Story Map

### Aging-Friendly Communities


Planning for Aging-Friendly Communities

- Introduction
- Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
- Transportation
- Housing
- Respect and Social Participation
- Work and Civic Engagement
- Communication and Information
- Community and Health Services
- Additional Resources

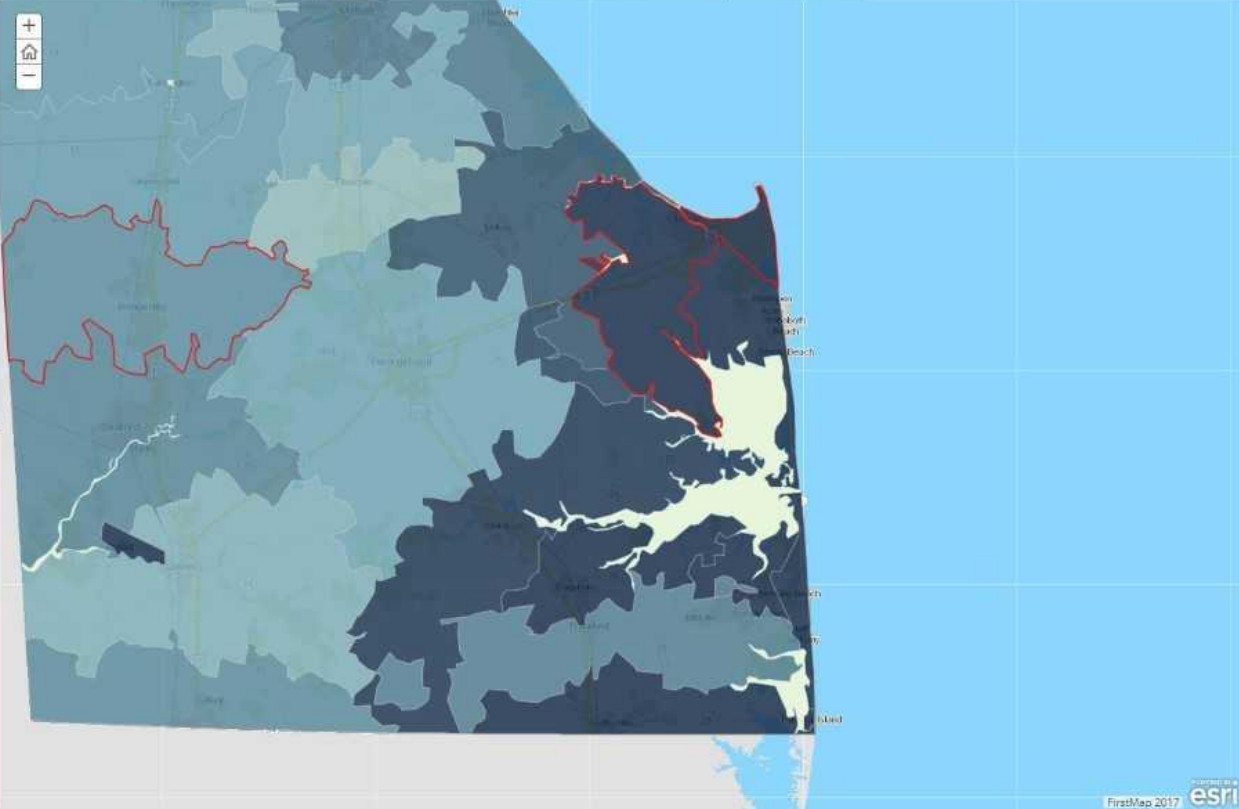

#### Introduction to Aging-Friendly Communities

Following the [AARP's 8 Domains of Livability](#) this map will tell the story of the two zipcodes in Sussex County, Delaware and their efforts of creating aging-friendly communities.

"Aging-friendly" communities are communities that provide affordable, accessible housing, multiple modes of transportation, access to community services, and engagement opportunities for all residents, regardless of age or ability. This allows for personal independence in their daily life. In order to age in place, a community must be livable. This map is showing the percentage of the 65 and older population in Sussex County, Delaware. The darker the blue the higher the percentage. By 2030, Sussex County will likely experience the largest percentage increase of seniors.

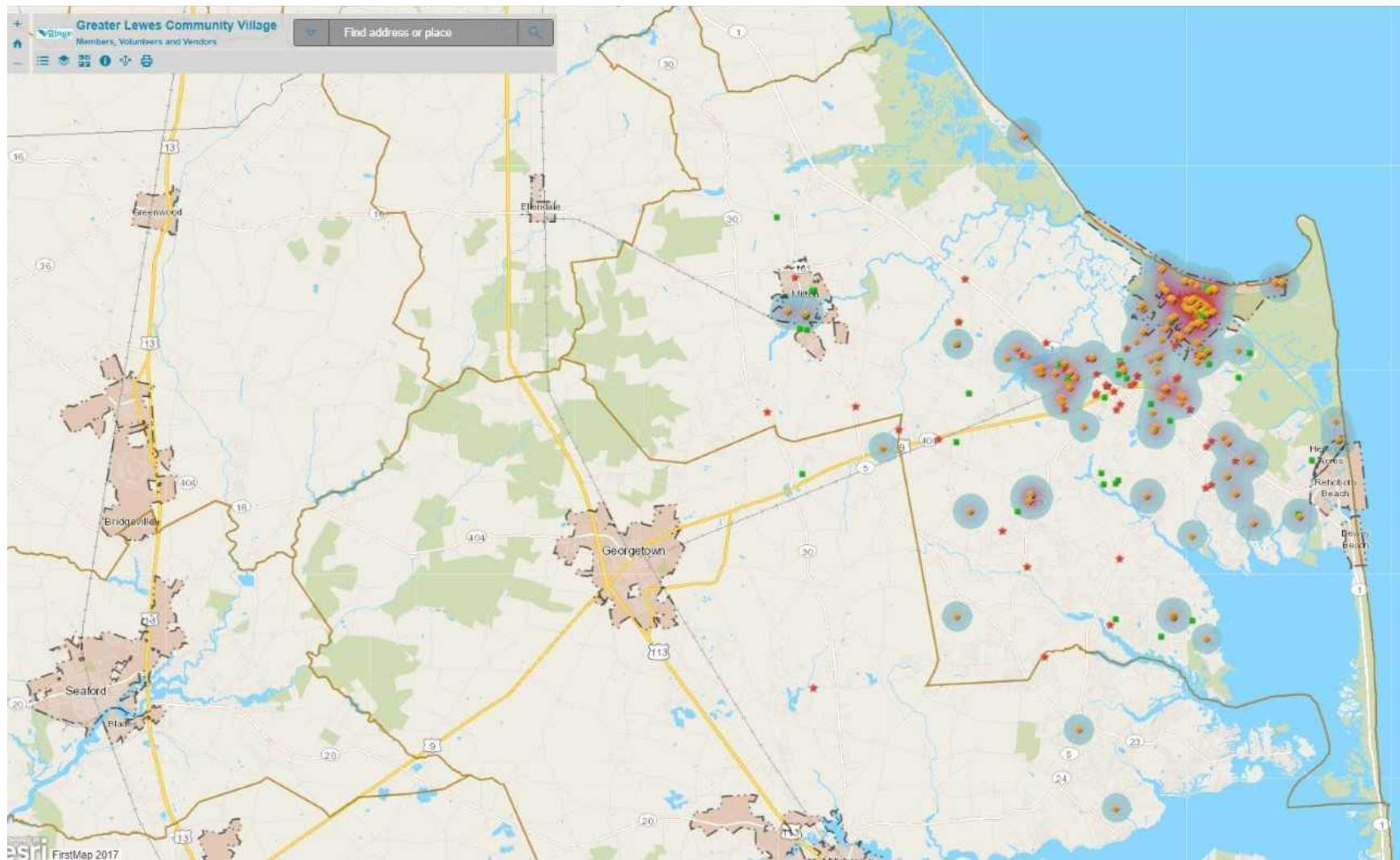


Shown above is the Historic Lewes Farmers Market. Farmer's markets are a great way to socialize with people in your community and support local foods that are healthy for you.



FirstMap 2017 esri

## Addendum C: Greater Lewes Village Service Area





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