Appendix V: Analysis of Victor's Senior
Population

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Senior Issues

The Aging of the US Population

Today, Americans are living longer, healthier lives. According to U.S. Census data, the percentage of Americans age 65 and older has more than tripled from 4.1% (3.1 million) in the year 1900 to 12.4% (35 million) in 2000. By 2020, this number is expected to increase to 16.7%, which means that almost one is every six people in the United States will be age 65 and older.

The table below shows that not only is the American population aging, but persons age 85 and older are in the fastest growing age cohort. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that this segment of the population could grow from 4 million people (1.5% of the population) in the year 2000 to approximately 19 million people (4.3%) by the year 2050.

Population Cohort Age 65 and Up: 1900-2050
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census
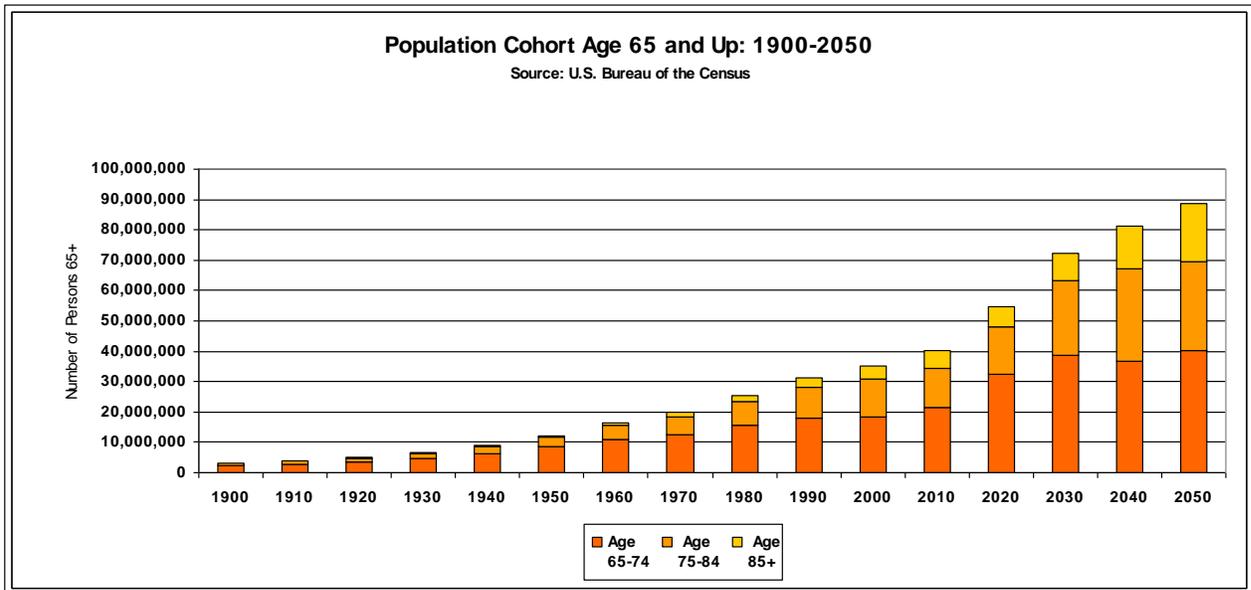
As the "baby boomer" generation (those born between 1946 and 1964) reaches and passes into retirement age, the United State is going to face a new set of challenges. More and more communities are going to be challenged to provide appropriate and affordable health care, housing and transportation services to older residents. Local governments need to take action now to ensure that they are ready to meet the changing service demands and challenges of an aging population.
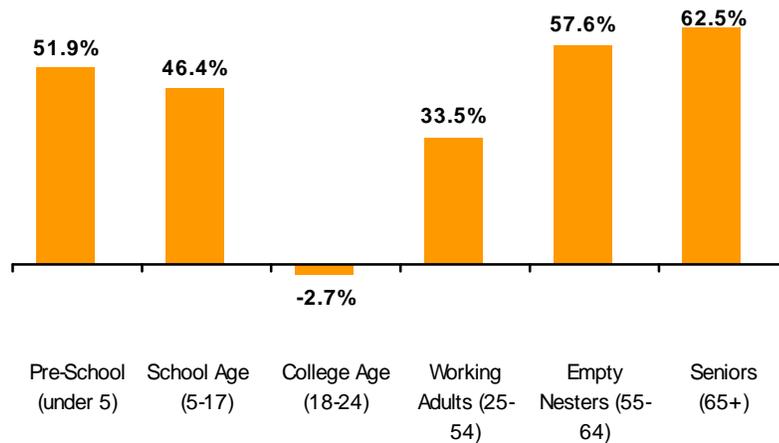
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Town of Victor Age Analysis

Like most American communities, the Town of Victor has seen an increase in the number of older residents over the past decade. In the year 2000, the U.S. Census reported that 10.2% of the Town's population was in the 65 and older age cohort. The following chart illustrates that this figure marks a dramatic 62.5% increase from the 8.7% reported in 1990.

Change in Population by Age, Town of Victor, 1990-2000

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This growth trend in the elder population in the Town of Victor is expected to continue into the future. Both the Town and Village experienced a significant increase in population since 1960.
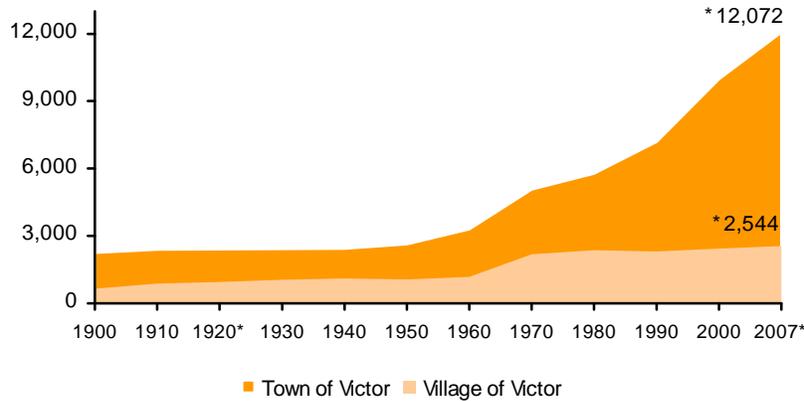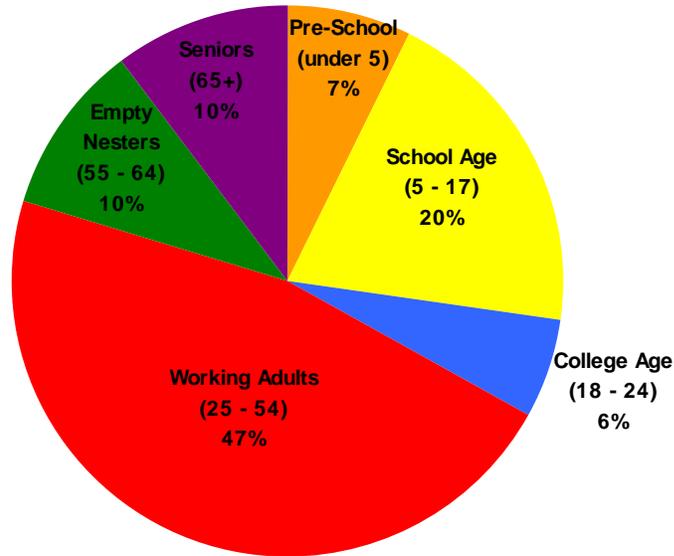

Examining age cohorts are important when a community is planning for its future. What types of services to certain age cohorts require? For instance, housing that is appropriate for seniors might not be the same type that adults between ages 25 and 54 desire. School age children might have different recreation needs than adults. Currently, ten percent of Victor is comprised of senior citizens, and school age children represent twenty percent. However, despite Victor's population growth across nearly all age groups, the College Age category has declined in population since 1990.

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Population Composition by Age: Town of Victor, 2000

Approximately 28.9% of the Town's population is comprised of persons 55 years or older. The substantial empty nester and senior population, combined with the progression in aging of the population, indicates that a greater demand for senior housing and senior services may be needed in the community.

Aging in Place and Livable Communities

In 2007, Clarity® and the EAR Foundation commissioned a study to better understand the health and lifestyle needs of America's aging population. One of the key findings of the study was the fact that 89% of those surveyed expressed that they wanted to continue to live in their own homes and communities – or "age in place."

Aging in Place is defined as,

> *"a comprehensive community driven strategy to give Americans the services, opportunities and infrastructure so that they can grow with dignity in their own homes while remaining active and engaged members of their communities."*[1]

The purpose of this report is to provide planning and design recommendations that will facilitate aging in place in the Town of Victor. Making a community livable for all ages will require local decisions makers and community leaders to focus on ways to address physical environment

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[1] Kopff

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issues like access to health care and support services, housing, transportation, and open space and recreation.

Existing Resources for Seniors

There are a number of support systems and programs for the elderly already in place in the Town of Victor. This section of the report provides an overview of the local- and county-sponsored services currently available to seniors.

Town of Victor Senior Citizens Group
The Victor Senior Citizens Group meets twice monthly on the 2nd and 4th Monday for a luncheon, and every Friday they gather to play cards. For more information, contact the Esther Green, the Senior Citizen's Coordinator at 585.924.2285.

Town of Victor Parks & Recreation Department
The Town's Recreation Department sponsors various Senior Programs throughout the year, including a wellness series, exercise programs, a Wii bowling and golf leagues, tax assistance, a defensive driving course, cooking and craft classes, and monthly events including lunch and a movie matinee.

A complete listing of Senior Programs is provided in the quarterly Recreation Brochure, available on the Town's website.

Ontario County Office for the Aging
The Ontario County Office for the Aging provides services that enrich the lives of community residents age 60 years and older and their caregivers.   These services are designed to support independent living and improve the quality of life of the County's senior citizens.

> General Services:
> > Friendly Visitor/Telephone Reassurance Program
> > Recreation Programs – ceramics, bingo, crafts, trips, parties and movies
> > Senior Education – computer classes, Men Making Meals
> > Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP)
> > Legal Assistance – wills, powers of attorney, entitlement applicants and appeals.
> > Information & Assistance, Public Information – website, Senior News Beat Newsletter
> > Personal Emergency Response System (PERS)
> > Volunteer Assistance – Transportation and light household or yard tasks

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Long Term Care/In-Home Services:

> Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP)
> Medication Management
> Caregiver Support Programs
> Volunteers – Gift Giving Tree at the holidays

Nutrition Services:

> Nutrition Program – provides meals to seniors in a congregate setting as well as delivery to their homes
> Long Term Home Health Care Program Meals
> Nutrition Education and Counseling

Other Services:

> Long-Term Care Insurance Education and Outreach Program (LTCIEOP)
> Seniors and Lawmen Together (SALT Council) - Provides monthly presentations related to seniors and public safety.

Needs of Senior Citizens

In a recent article, the AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) stated. "State and local governments can have an enormous impact on a community. As professionals responsible for looking out for the public interest, planners must strive to evaluate and plan for the needs of older adults."

To get a better understanding of the needs of senior citizens nationwide, the AARP conducted a series of focus group meeting with older residents across the country to identify elements that characterize an elder friendly community. Their responses are provided below:

> Nearby quality health facilities
> Reliable public transportation system
> Variety of housing types
> Safe and secure environment
> Access to shopping
> A physical environment that fosters walking ("walkability")
> Opportunities for recreation and culture.

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Goals and Recommendations

"A window of opportunity exists now for planners and policymakers to prepare to address the needs of an aging society."

- US Census Report, 1985

A report led by the National Associates of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) found that only 46% of American communities have begun planning to address the needs of the aging baby boomer generation. Is the Town of Victor prepared to effectively meet the needs of its growing aging population?

This section of the report identifies goals and recommendation designed to address the needs of senior citizens as identified by the AARP.

Goals
To achieve the vision of an elder-friendly community, the following goals were established to guide decision-making. The goals address a variety of issues that were identified by senior citizens through preparation of national surveys and focus group meetings.

Health
Goal: Ensure access to health care and supportive services.

For most aging Americans, health and wellness is their number one priority. Those communities that have the capacity to both address *and* prevent health problems increase the ability of their residents to age successfully in place. This includes accessible hospitals and clinics, transportation services to health care facilities, access to fresh, locally grown food, and programs that encourage active living among older adults.

Recommendations:

> **Provide Recreational Opportunities**
Studies show that recreational opportunities for senior citizens can have a positive impact on their physical, mental and emotional state. The Town should continue to support recreation programs for older residents through their Parks and Recreation Department, as well as promoting parks and recreation facilities with walking/bicycling trails, benches and fitness facilities that will accommodate and attract older residents. Recreation programs should be designed specifically for seniors and could include walking programs, exercise, dancing, and swimming classes.

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> **Support Farmers' Market**
Medical research has linked poor diets and physical inactivity among older adults to an increase in the likelihood of developing physical and mental problems including diabetes, heart disease, and arthritis. In 2000, the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) reported that poor diet and physical inactivity were responsible for an estimated 4000,000 deaths per year in the United States. Many experts believe these two factors will soon surpass tobacco use as the nation's primary cause of death. In addition to providing seniors with recreation programs designed to encourage active living, the Town should also continue to support the local farmers' market, which provides residents with fresh, healthy, locally grown food.

> **First Responder Training**
To address the needs of an aging population, many communities have started to provide special training to public safety personnel and other first responders to deal with the specialized needs of seniors.

Housing
Goal: Provide a variety of quality housing options that will enable residents to "age in place."

A recent housing survey, conducted by the AARP, indicated that 83% of those surveyed want to stay in their current homes for the rest of their lives. Allowing for a diversity of housing types in Victor, including service-oriented housing, will provide the opportunity for residents to remain in the community and age in place.

Traditionally, as we age, our housing needs change. Many empty nesters find that the house in which they raised their family is now too big and they want to relocate to a smaller, more manageable property. Others may find that they must modify their existing home to allow for greater accessibility.

This section of the report identifies various policy tools that municipalities can use to increase the diversity and availability of affordable housing options in their community. Senior housing may be in the form of independent living options such as an apartment or accessory unit or in the form of senior housing facilities that provide various levels of care.

> **Assess Current Land Use Plans**
Encourage new housing development, especially senior housing, to locate near existing near medical services, basic amenities (grocery store, drug store, bank, etc.) and transportation routes.

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Incentive zoning can be used to encourage developers to locate elder friendly housing in locations with close proximity to transit services and facilities such as grocery and drug stores, medical buildings, parks, and senior centers.

> **Encourage Mixed-Use Development**

Mixed-use developments can range from apartment units located over retail space, to large-scale planned unit developments. One way to encourage affordable housing options for seniors in Victor is to amend local zoning ordinances to allow higher density residential development in commercial areas.

The benefits of introducing mixed-use development projects to a community include:

o Residents are close by to work, services and public transportation
o New housing opportunities can be created in areas previously reserved for commercial, office and light industrial uses
o Higher density residential may be more accepted in a commercial area than in traditional single-family residential zones
o Cost savings to developers through shared parking, maintenance and security
o Commercial uses can help subsidize workforce housing units.

Retirement Planning Community Zoning
Several communities have created Golden Age or Senior Zoning districts
Village of Massapequa – Senior Zoning Options
 "Golden Age Housing Zone" – purpose of law is to provide affordable owner-occupied housing for seniors located in site in close proximity to necessary facilities, service and transportation.

> **Review Zoning and Building Codes**

The Town should review and, if necessary, update their zoning ordinance and building codes to allow for a variety of senior-friendly housing types within existing neighborhoods.

Both the Town and the Village have Senior Citizen Housing Districts within their zoning code. The Town currently has 2.59 acres, or 0.01%, zoned for senior housing units. These are unmapped districts that are created by the Victor Town Board.

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Incorporate senior-friendly housing options in the zoning code, including:

> **Accessory Dwelling Units**
One tool that is used by communities to increase the availability of senior housing is the accessory dwelling unit, also known as in-law apartment, second unit, or Granny Flat. An accessory unit is an additional living unit, located on the same parcel as a single-family residence. Accessory units provide a complete small residential unit (living space kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom), and typically involve the renovation of a garage, basement family room, or attached shed.

The benefits of accessory apartments or dwelling units include:
o An increase in the supply of affordable and workforce housing units.
o Relatively easy way to increase the workforce housing stock without local government expenditures or subsidies.
o Accessory units provide workforce housing rental opportunities in desirable single-family neighborhoods.

> **Elder Cottage Housing Opportunity (ECHO)**
Another alternative to serving older residents within single family housing districts is to allow ECHO housing. An ECHO housing unit is a temporary, manufactured home, which can be added as a separate structure on the same property as a single-family home belonging to an adult child or another relative.

> **Small Lot and Small Lot Districts**
Single-family homes on large lots can be cost prohibitive for many older residents. Allowing a reduction in minimum lot sizes for single- and multi-family units can reduce land acquisitions and development costs, increase density, and thus create opportunities for senior housing, and smaller houses for empty nesters.

> **Encourage Universal Design**
Universal design is term used to describe features that create a "barrier free" home accessible for all inhabitants. Universal design features can include a no-step entry, doorways that are wide enough to allow wheelchairs to pass (32-36 inches wide), floors and bathtubs with non-slip surfaces, and lever door handles and rocker light switches.

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The Town should encourage the adoption of universal design principles into current building practices. This practice has been successfully implemented in the City of Arvada, Colorado where they recently adopted an ordinance that mandates that 15% of new home construction of all types include universal design concepts.

> **Support Home Modification Programs**
Home modifications can promote independence among older residents and prevent accidents.
Examples of home modifications to improve safety include installation of grab bars and transfer benches in bathrooms, and ramps and handrails for home access.
Potential sources of funding for Home Modification programs include Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Older Americans Act Title III monies administered by the County Office on Aging.

> **Create a Property Tax Work-Off Program**
Changes to the cost of housing, including increases in property tax, are generally felt the most by senior citizens or others on fixed income. One way to help this sector of the population is by allowing them to "work off" a certain portion of their property taxes. Successful programs have been implemented in Greenburgh, New York, Aiken, South Carolina, Douglas and Boulder Counties in Colorado, and several communities in Massachusetts.

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Mobility and Transportation

Goal: Provide pedestrian and transportation systems that area accessible to all persons.

The Baby Boom generation (the 77 million people born between 1946 and 1964) is synonymous with mobility and freedom. Their lives have been linked to the automobile. Two rights of passage for this generation were obtaining a license to drive and buying their first car. Baby boomers are also the first generation to be raised largely in automobile-dependent suburban or rural areas. In order for baby boomers, and other seniors, to maintain their sense of independence, freedom and connectivity to the community, local governments are going to have to think about making modifications to existing transportation and mobility systems.

Like many American communities, the Town of Victor will be challenged to understand and to respond to the changing mobility needs of the rapidly growing number of aging baby boomers and existing seniors in their community. This will include a review of the availability and conditions

Walking

One of the best ways for older Americans to maintain a mobile lifestyle and remain engaged in their community is through walking. Walking also benefits the physical, mental and spiritual health of older populations. Studies have shown that walking reduces the risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, glaucoma, and cancer.

For some seniors, a poorly designed or maintained physical infrastructure can make walking difficult or impossible. The AARP recently surveyed older Americans who didn't walk in their community to identify the reasons why. Their responses were as follows:

> Distance between destinations
> Difficulty walking
> Poor sidewalks
> A lack of places to rest
> Fear of crime.

To ensure that Victor is a pedestrian-friendly community for all residents, the following recommendations are provided:

Sidewalks and Walkways
> **Conduct a Walkability Audit**
> The Town should conduct a walkability audit, specifically developed to address the concerns of the elder community. The audit should identify pedestrian hotspots, address barriers to walking like crossing time and overgrown bushes and trees, and continuity of sidewalks.

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> **Review Sidewalk Standards**

A number of America's communities are starting to change community design standards to become more age friendly. The Town of Victor should review, and if necessary, update their sidewalk standards.

- o <u>Width</u> – Sidewalks and walkways should be wide enough to accommodate two people walking side by side, or one pedestrian and a wheelchair.
- o <u>Grade</u> – When designing sidewalks, communities should avoid changes in grade and irregular textures that may crate safety hazards. ADA guidelines suggest that pedestrian access should not involve slopes greater than 5%, and standard ramps should have a grade no steeper than 8%.
- o <u>Materials</u> – To reduce the risk of falls, sidewalks surfaces should be smooth and made on nonporous materials.
- o <u>Curb Cuts</u> – Seniors with mobility impairments who rely on wheel chairs or walkers on pedestrian curb cuts
- o <u>Maintenance</u> - Communities should conduct annual audits to assess sidewalk safety and provide regular maintenance to address uneven or deteriorating sidewalks.
- o <u>Snow Removal</u> - Consider mandatory snow removal ordinances that require residents to clear sidewalks within a specified period of time.

Crosswalks and Signage

> **Design Safe Street Crossings**

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that seniors are more likely than any other demographic to suffer a fatality as a pedestrian when involved in a car crash. To increase pedestrian safety, crosswalks should be marked with reflective road paint and/or caution lights. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) recommends that to further protect elderly pedestrians, where appropriate, crosswalks should be built or "raised" so that they line up with the curb. The raised crosswalk forces drivers to reduce their speed and acts as a senior-priority traffic calming measure.

> **Adjust Pedestrian Control Signal Timing**

The Federal Highway Administration Highway Design Handbook for Older Drivers and Pedestrians: Recommendations and Guidelines (December 2000) recommends that control signal timing be adjusted to allow older residents sufficient time to cross the street. Research suggests that most seniors have a slower gait and shorter stride than the rest of the population. To ensure

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that seniors have sufficient time to safely cross the street, it is suggested that pedestrian control signal timing be based on an assumed walking speed of 2.8 feet per second, as opposed to the traditional 4 feet per second.

> ### Provide Refuge Areas

One of the barriers to safe pedestrian travel are wide streets that can be difficult for senior to cross. The ADA recommends that multiple lane roads include a wide median refuge island with benches, plantings and shelters.

> ### 10-Second Delay

Thirty-five percent of all pedestrian fatalities involve senior citizens. One way to improve the pedestrian environment for seniors is to prohibit drivers from turning during the first 10 seconds of a traffic signal phase. This delay provides senior with the additional time they need to ascend the curb and begin a safe crossing unobstructed by turning vehicles.

> ### Signal Display Educational Plaque
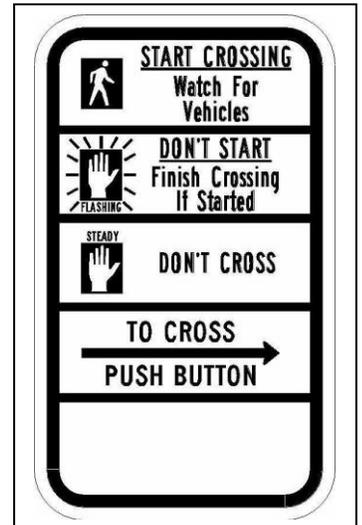
Personal Safety

For older residents to remain active and engaged in their community, they must feel they are in a safe Enhanced Design (CPTED) is a new approach to crime prevention that relies on design that eliminates or reduces criminal behavior while encouraging people to "keep an eye out for each other." Some communities that have employed CPTED have seen as much as a 40% reduction in criminal activity. According to the National Community Development & Crime Prevention Institute, the four strategies of CPTED are[2]:

1. *Natural Surveillance* – A design concept directed primarily at keeping intruders easily observable. Promoted by features that maximize visibility of people, parking areas and building entrances: doors and windows that look out on to streets and parking areas; pedestrian friendly sidewalks and streets; front porches; adequate nighttime lighting.

2. *Territorial Reinforcement* – Physical design can create or extend a sphere of influence. Users then develop a sense of territorial control while potential offenders, perceiving this control, are discouraged. Promoted by features that define property lines and distinguish private spaces from public spaces using landscape plantings, pavement designs, gateway

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[2] http://www.cpted-watch.com/

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3. *Natural Access Control* – A design concept directed primarily at decreasing crime opportunity by denying access to crime targets and creating in offenders a perception of risk. Gained by designing streets, sidewalks, building entrances and neighborhood gateways to clearly indicate public routes and discouraging access to private areas with structural elements.

4. *Target Hardening* – Accomplished by features that prohibit entry or access: window locks, dead bolts for doors, interior door hinges.

To create a safe, secure and comfortable environment for walking in Victor, the Town should employ CPTED techniques that discourage criminal activity. Recommendations include:

> **Design and implement a "lights on for safety" program that helps residents and local businesses use outside lights to make people feel safe.**
> A safe neighborhood is one where people feel secure day or night. Building owners – both residential and commercial – can add to a sense of safety by leaving a porch light, doorway light or display window light on at night. This strategy has the added benefit of making commercial areas feel more vibrant. This strategy is particularly important for downtown neighborhoods, although it could be used anywhere residents feel the need for additional security.
>
> Building owners could use photocells to trigger lights as soon as it gets dark. The city should encourage the use of energy efficient light bulbs in all lamps. This is important for cost reasons as well as environmental ones. The city might subsidize or work with a neighborhood association, utility, or local corporation to subsidize light sensitive and energy efficient outdoor safety lighting systems.

> Safety training for seniors by local police
> Senior patrol units
> Encourage Neighborhood Watch Programs
> **Maintain Clear Sight Lines**

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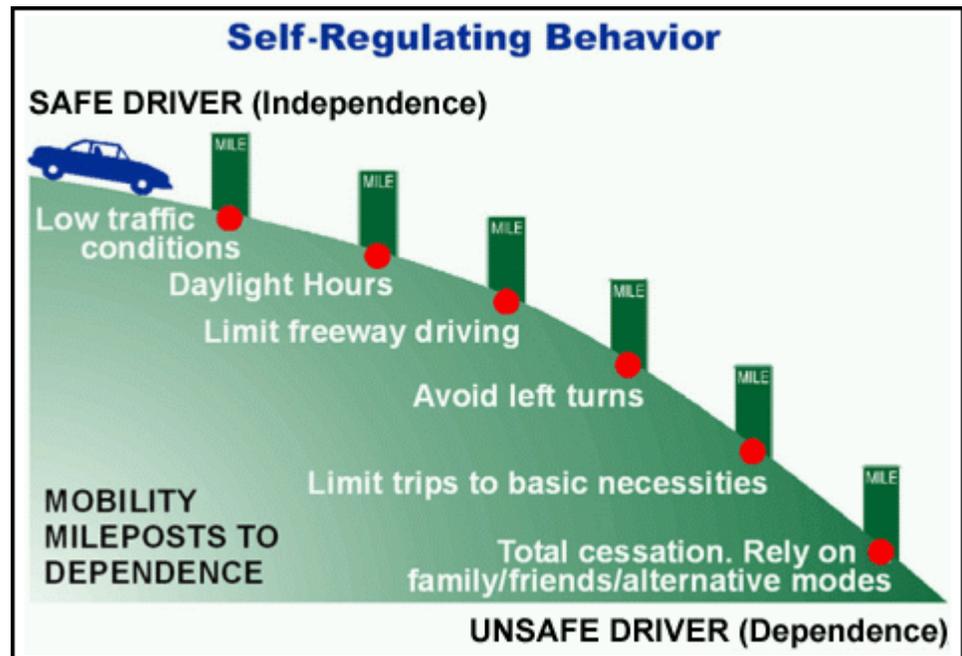**Driving**

Data provided by the US Department of Transportation indicates that the number of older drivers has increased dramatically over the past twenty years. In 1980, there were 8.8 million licensed drivers age 70 and over in America. This figure rose to 18.9 million by the year 2000 – a 111% increase.

Projections indicate that over the next decade, the number of older licensed drivers will continue to increase. By the year 2020, it is estimated that there will be more than 40 million licensed drivers ages 65 and older in America. Statistics also predict that not only will there be more older drivers on the road in the future, but they will be driving greater distances. Most baby boomers moved away from urban areas to raise their families in the suburbs or in rural communities, away from core services and public transportation access.

Making the Roads Safer for Older Drivers

As we age, physical changes occur that affect our ability to drive safely. Research shows that after the age of 40, our visual ability, reaction time, and flexibility begin to diminish.   Many seniors begin to regulate and limit their own driving based on these physical changes. The graphic below, designed by they Maricopa Association of Governments in Arizona, depicts this self-regulating behavior using "Mobility Mileposts to Dependence."

Self-Regulating Behavior

SAFE DRIVER (Independence)

Low traffic conditions
Daylight Hours
Limit freeway driving
Avoid left turns
Limit trips to basic necessities
Total cessation. Rely on family/friends/alternative modes

MOBILITY MILEPOSTS TO DEPENDENCE

UNSAFE DRIVER (Dependence)

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There are several strategies that a municipality can employ to make the roads safer for the elder community. Community's that plan ahead can incorporate the changes recommended below into future street upgrade and improvement projects.

> **Enhanced Street Signs**
> Overhead street signs should be easy to read from a distance for both older drivers and pedestrians. Street signs with large lettering (six to eight inches), plain fonts (without serifs), and non-reflective surfaces are the easiest for seniors to read.

> **Dedicated Left Turn Lanes**
> Left-hand turns can create challenges for older drivers. Studies indicate that with each advancing year after the age of 65, the odds of getting into a crash that involves turning left increases by 8%. One way to increase elder safety is to create dedicated left-turn lanes, with protected left-turn green arrows during widening or street upgrade projects. Another safety measure is to install bi-directional turn lanes, which provide refuge for drivers waiting to turn from a two-lane street.

> **Install Brighter Traffic Lights with Longer Waiting Periods**
> The Federal Highway Administration recommends that traffic signals be brighter and larger. Many communities have made the switch to LED bulbs, which provide energy-saving benefits as well as reduced maintenance costs, and replaced traditional eight-inch lenses with larger 12-inch lights.   Traffic signals should also be programmed to include longer time periods when traffic from all directions have a red light so that traffic can clear.

> **Revised Warning, Stop and Yield Sign**
> To increase visibility, some communities have installed larger, brighter road signs that are designed for 20/70 visual acuity.

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Public Transportation

For nearly 7 million older Americans, driving in no longer an option.[3] Many of these residents, especially those located on the urban fringe, rely on public transportation and/or volunteer driving programs to remain mobile and connected to the community. To increase the scope and effectiveness of alternative transportation options available to older residents, the Town of Victor should consider the following transportation planning recommendations:

> **Create Elder Friendly Public Transportation Systems**
There are several steps a community can take to improve access to and the convenience of public transportation for older residents, including:
  o Purchase low-floor buses that are easier for older residents to board.
  o Provide large-print transit schedules.
  o Ensure that transit stops offer shade, seating and shelter from the elements.
  o Provide circulator service (small shuttle buses) that connects seniors residing in outlying neighborhoods to downtown, senior centers, and medical facilities.
> **Research Funding Options**
Federal funding is made available to New York State for projects that advance ADA compliance, transit accessibility and connectivity. Eligible projects include the purchase of public transportation vehicles and the provision of transportation services (paratransit) for seniors and persons with disabilities.
When installing or upgrading bus stops, consider
The town should conduct a review of existing public transportation systems. To
  > Providing mobility options – transit, paratransit, volunteer drivers
> **Promote Compact, High-Density Development**
Promote the development of retirement communities and senior housing options near existing shops, services and public transportation routes.

Implementation Plan

At the most basic level, this report identifies the critical steps necessary to support "aging in place" in the Town of Victor. The recommendations are provided as a guide to those who participate in the effort to create a livable community. Achieving these goals will require the efforts of local government, federal and state funding, and the participation of volunteers throughout the community. No one single person or group will be able to

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[3] AARP

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achieve the goals independently. It will command the determination, strengths and diversity of many offices, agencies and volunteers working towards a common vision.

This section of the report proposes a strategy to coordinate these efforts incrementally for long-term success.

Step 1: **Establish a Livable Community Task Force**

Population trends for the Town of Victor indicate that as the "baby boomer" generation ages and approaches retirement, the Town can expect a significant increase in market demand for senior housing, services and amenities. To address these changing needs, the Town should create a Livable Community Task Force comprised of town staff, members of both the current senior community and the "baby-boomer" generation, and representatives from local and regional senior citizen organizations, such as Victor's Senior Citizen group and the Ontario County Office for the Aging. Together, this group can develop an implementation plan to address the needs of the growing senior population in Victor

Step 2: Conduct a Town-Wide Analysis

To gain a better understanding of the needs of Victor's senior residents, the task force should conduct a comprehensive town-wide analysis. There are several free, on-line assessment tools readily available to communities to measure their aging-readiness, including:

> *Livable Communities: An Evaluation Guide*
The American Association for Retired Persons (AARP) Public Policy Institute created an assessment and education tool designed principally for use by private citizens and civic groups. The evaluation guide includes a series of community self-assessment surveys, step-by-step instructions for conducting a community survey, and actions steps that groups can take based on their survey findings. A downloadable copy of the evaluation guide can be found at http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/il/d18311_communities.pdf

> *The Michigan Community for a Lifetime Toolkit*
The *Community for a Lifetime Toolkit* is a free comprehensive assessment tools that was designed to assist Michigan communities in developing elder friendly communities. The toolkit walks users through a series of assessment questions developed to generate community discussion and assist in

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gathering information on ten key livability categories including walkability, access to health care, safety and security, housing availability and affordability, and transportation. A copy of the toolkit can be downloaded at http://www.otsego.org/efc/assessment_tool.pdf.

> *The AdvantAge Initiative Survey*

The Advantage Initiative, a group dedicated to creating vibrant and elder-friendly communities, conducted 30-minute telephone interviews with over 5,100 randomly selected people aged 65 and older to assess how they were currently fairing in their communities. The survey focused on four key areas where communities can make a difference in the lives of seniors: housing, maintenance of physical and mental health, independence for the frail, disabled and homebound, and opportunities for social and civic engagement. For more information about the AdvantAge Initiative, and the online toolkits, visit their website at http://www.vnsny.org/advantage/index.html

Step 3: Engage Older Residents in the Planning Process

Older residents are often the most The task force should also consider engaging older residents in the planning process by convening a focus group or public forum to identify issues and opportunities. Meetings should be held during daytime hours, and at easily accessible locations such as a Senior Center.

Step 4: Prepare an Implementation Matrix

Upon completion of the town-wide analysis and public forums, the task force should prepare an Implementation Matrix (a sample form has been provided on the following page). The matrix should include the following information:

> Recommendations that address important senior issues
> Potential implementation partners
> A priority ranking for implementation (high, medium or low).

Prepare Recommendations - The task force should review the recommendations provided in this report and, if necessary, develop additional strategies needed based on the results of the town-wide analysis and public forum.

Identify Implementation Partners - The Task Force should identify partners in the community that can aid in the implementation of recommended strategies. Partners could include: staff from various town and village departments, such as planning, public works, law

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enforcement, engineering, and parks and recreation; local senior service providers; the business community, including the Chamber of Commerce; the medical community; and volunteers from civic organizations.

Prioritize Recommendations – Each recommendation should be assigned a priority ranking.