Text for Aging in Place Online Course Website:
Online Interactive Training Course "Aging in Place"
Length: 1 hour

Is your community ready for its aging Baby Boomers? With our growing population of older residents, are local steps being taken to ensure that they can live independently for as long as possible? What makes a community livable for older New Yorkers benefit people of all ages and physical abilities? This presentation provides land use planning and regulatory tools to help people in your community to age in place. Topics include a variety of housing choices, accessory dwelling units, Golden Zones, and senior friendly sidewalk and street designs. You, as local governments, have the power to do so.

Slide 1: Welcome and Instructions
This Aging in Place course should take about an hour to complete and you may print a certificate of completion when you finish. The goal of this course is to help local officials understand the policies and design that will create and encourage older New Yorkers to remain in the communities they call home.

To advance through the course, use either the slide's top link, or the arrow. Additional resources and the DOS contact information are also here.

The text version of this presentation is on the left tab, and as a .pdf on the course home page.

Slide 2: New York is aiming to be America's first Age-Friendly state!
New York is aiming to be America's first Age-Friendly state!

AARP and the World Health Organization identified eight age-friendly and livable community domains, and Governor Andrew Cuomo set these goals as part of a health initiative in his 2017 State of the State agenda.

We have the third largest number of seniors in the U.S., and they are a diverse population of a multi-generational group ranging in age from 55 to over 100, with extremely varied traits, characteristics, preferences, and needs.

As local officials, the power to plan for a livable community where people can age in place is in your hands.

Slide 3: What is Aging in Place?
According to the Centers for Disease Control, aging in place is "the ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level."

90% of those aging in place need family, friends, home health aides and volunteers to help them along the way. We want our seniors to stay in their homes, in their communities, and in New York State. To age in place as gracefully as possible, we need the benefits of a livable community.

Slide 4: Aging in Place
Aging in place means growing older without having to move into any form of institutional care. But the reality is for those aged 65 and over, seven out of 10 will eventually need some form of long-term care. The average nursing home is more than $6,700 a month. So, it makes good sense to enable seniors to live at home comfortably and safely, for as long as possible.

Slide 5: Housing No Longer Suits Independent Living
But sometimes our seniors must leave their homes and families because of housing issues. The home no longer suits independent living; they can no longer afford taxes and maintenance; or they lack nearby medical support, access to quality food, and retail shopping. Importantly, local zoning may not allow certain residential uses which would otherwise allow them (or their caregiver) to remain.

When seniors leave our state, they take more than just their suitcases. They take their pensions and buying power that contribute to the local economy. They take their opportunity to volunteer, to mentor others, and to vote. And they weaken the warp and weft of families with their notable absence.

SLIDE 6: Choosing to Age in Place
Most seniors prefer to live in their own homes for as long as possible, close to their existing social networks of family, friends, churches, etc.

> **SLIDE 6.1 A personal decision**
> There are health, economic, and emotional benefits to aging in place. Choosing to age in place over institutional care is a very personal and delicate decision involving many considerations.
>
> It depends upon how much health care is needed, the cost, and the level of assistance that family members can provide.
>
> **SLIDE 6.2: How much health care is needed?**
> Can physical and mental wellness be tended to in the home, or by visiting professionals? Is emergency care close by if needed?
>
> Telemedicine can be especially helpful in rural areas or for those without transportation options. Broadband internet service allows seniors to contact their health care provider regarding a diagnosis or prescription telemedicine through video, Web chat, or phone.
>
> **SLIDE 6.3: What is the cost?**
> According to the website longtermcareacl.com, seven out of 10 people over age 65 will eventually need some form of long-term care; less than 5% live in nursing homes. In 2016, the average semi-private nursing home room was more than $6,800 a month, which is more than three times those of non-institutional long-term care services, Medicare and Medicaid programs.
>
> So, it makes good sense to enable seniors to live at home comfortably and safely, as long as possible.
>
> **SLIDE 6.4 Filial Piety**
> Between 2000-2010, our "over 60" minority population grew by 43% (compared to the 8% growth in non-minority population); the "over 85" minority population grew by 81% (compared to 22% non-minority population). These growth rates will continue to be strong over the next 30 years.
>
> Some cultures don't believe in institutional care for their elders. "Filial piety" or respect for one's elders, is especially strong in Asian and Hispanic families, who are particularly committed to caring for their elders in homes. But home care is preferred for other reasons, such as language barriers, or unfamiliar meals.
>
> **SLIDE: 6.5: What level of assistance can family offer?**
> Even if they want to help, do relatives have the time, money, and knowhow?
>
> It's rare that seniors can successfully go it alone. 90% of those who age in place need family, friends, home health aides, and volunteers to help them.

Slide 7: "Livable" communities for seniors
Aging in place is not just about having the right type of housing that suits your stage in life, it's also about the bigger picture—having livable communities. There is a nationwide trend to transform cities, towns, and neighborhoods into sustainable, livable communities. Livable communities are good places to live, to work, to grow up and to grow old.

Community design that encourages pedestrian activity and allows for public transportation options helps people of all ages and physical abilities—mothers with small children and strollers, young people temporarily on crutches, people with laundry or grocery carts, and those who choose not to drive or to own a car.

As a public officer, you have an essential role in addressing aging in place, and in creating physically, economically, and environmentally healthy communities.

SLIDE 8: Livable communities' amenities
Here are just a few senior-friendly amenities that make up livable, sustainable communities.

This is checklist with some Livable Community attributes. As you click through the list, remember, if it's good for seniors, it's good for all of us!

SLIDE 8.1 AFFORDABLE HOUSING TYPES
Homes should include a wide range of styles to fit all physical abilities and budgets. And think outside the "house." A home can be congregate housing, an accessory dwelling unit, or a condo.

SLIDE 8.2 WALKABILITY
Plan for people of all ages and physical abilities. Rural and suburban areas need walkability as much as urban ones. "Context sensitive design" means that a one size fits all approach doesn't work. Sidewalks or paths create a safe way to get from place to place, and an opportunity for exercise.

SLIDE 8.3 TRANSIT CHOICE AND ACCESS
Not everyone has a personal vehicle, or the ability to drive themselves. Environmental accessibility ensures access to public transit, and the ability to move unimpeded throughout streets and between buildings.

Access to fresh foods, medical appointments, and cultural amenities keeps seniors healthier. This accessibility is a two-way street, providing caregivers with access to seniors.

SLIDE 8.4 HEALTH AND SUPPORT SERVICES
This network may include access to disease prevention and health promotion, legal assistance, senior employment services, adult day care and caregiver support, congregate meal sites, and home delivered meal programs.

SLIDE 8.5 LOW CRIME
The elderly are vulnerable to crime. Real or perceived, it can keep them indoors resulting in an increase in social isolationism, and a decrease in physical activity.

An active police force, neighborhood watch groups, and low unemployment rates keep crime rates low.

SLIDE 8.6 CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
Seniors may have more time to devote to civic engagement, and volunteer efforts. With a lifetime of talent and experience, their options are seemingly limitless.

SLIDE 8.7 SUSTAINABILITY
Developers are applying "green design" into senior living projects, similar to what's used to offices and schools. The result is energy and water conversation, gardens and open space preservation, and better air quality.

SLIDE 8.8 ADAPTIVE REUSE
The greenest building is one that already exists!

Converting existing buildings like convents and schools into senior living facilities for the public is popular today, especially when sited on prime real estate using existing infrastructure, and close to existing amenities.

Slide 9: Just How Old Is Old?
Who are our aging adults, and why is it so important that we plan for them? Demographics are reshaping our communities. New Yorkers are older, and more diverse than ever.

And just how old is old? When does one become a senior citizen? There is no official definition, but "old" seems to be based upon life expectancy, and longevity appears to be increasing. Link for New York State Demographics

Slide 10: The Young Elderly
The "young elderly" are aged 50, when senior citizen goods and services discounts often begin.

When someone began collecting Social Security benefits at age 65, they were considered a "senior." But today, those born after 1959 can't collect full benefits until they are 67 years young.

Slide 11: Age 65
When someone began collecting Social Security benefits at age 65, they were considered a "senior." But today, those born after 1959 can't collect full benefits until they are 67 years young.

Slide 12: Keep seniors in New York
Most Americans want to remain in the communities where they have long lived, whether that be a rural, suburban, or urban setting.

Some of our "young-elderly" (those aged 55-74, typically healthy and financially stable couples) have left for warmer climates, taking with them their pensions, retirement income, savings, and other assets that support our tax base and local economies.

SLIDE 13: The "Gray Drain"
This "gray drain" is not only financial, but cultural. When the young-elderly leave, there is a loss of skilled and experienced community volunteer and workers, and community-based caregivers.

SLIDE 14: Fiscal impacts of leaving New York
Unfortunately, those leaving our state have high average incomes than people moving here. For example, the average adjusted gross income of taxpaying households leaving between 2008 and 2009 was $58,899, but the average income of households moving into New York was $48,432—a difference of 22%.

SLIDE 15: Seniors moving to New York
On the other end of the spectrum, many "over 80" seniors are returning to New York to live closer to their families and support systems. These people are more likely to be widowed, frail, and poor.

Slide 16: Are more seniors working today?
If it seems like there are more seniors than ever in today's workforce, it's because there are!

From 2007 to 2014, the largest growth in the labor force was for seniors aged 62 to 64; men's participation grew 2.9 %, and women's grew 4.5 %.

Some are working because they want to, others because they must. The elderly used to be among the poorest of other age groups. Today, more fall under the definition of Middle Class than ever before. When seniors stay in the workforce longer, they strengthen our communities by earning and spending more.

SLIDE 16.1 Longer and Healthier Lives
Living longer means that people have to fund more years of retirement. In addition to longevity, seniors are enjoying an increase in their quality of life, and that may also employment decisions and options.

SLIDE 16.2: Less Physical Work
Some of the employment opportunities that present themselves may be less physically demanding than a senior's prior profession, making it easier for them to continue to work, or to telecommute.

SLIDE: 16.3 Pensions
Fewer people have traditional pensions today than in prior generations, and they can't live on Social Security benefits alone. Working longer can boost existing retirement incomes. Waiting to collect future Social Security payments rises by about 8 % for each year of waiting, up to age 70.

SLIDE: 16.4 Recession Damaged Finances
It takes seniors longer to recover from financial damages due to a recession, or from catastrophic health issues

SLIDE 17: Why don't they just retire?
Don't retirement eligible workers keep jobs from younger people? Why don't they just retire?

SLIDE 18: Lump of Labor Theory
1851 Lump of Labor Theory holds that when one group enters the workforce, or stays longer than expected, then others cannot enter or will work reduced hours. Economists disagree with the Lump of Labor Theory because it presumes that there is a set number of jobs.

Let's consider the time when women entered the workforce after WWII. There weren't fewer jobs for men, as some warned. The economy simply expanded. Economists argue the same is true with older workers.

SLIDE 19: Tax impacts
It's likely that we will have more residents applying for real property exemptions, such as the STAR program for school tax relief. When more seniors enjoy a tax exemption, then the overall tax burden is distributed to other taxpayers.

Many of the State's aging immigrants will have spent none of their working careers in the United States and may not qualify for Medicare, Medicaid, or other federal assistance programs. This will increase the financial burden on state, county, and city health and social services departments, shift costs to all taxpayers, and may change overall benefit structures.

SLIDE 20: Where NY seniors actually live
Our seniors live in urban, rural, and suburban neighborhoods in almost equal percentages. As you can see from this pie chart, no one type of area is more important than the other when it comes to addressing the needs of seniors; every community must address the important issues of aging in place.

SLIDE 21: NORC
A NORC, or a Naturally Occurring Retirement Community, is an apartment building or neighborhood that wasn't specifically built for seniors—it was created by residents having aged in place. Parents who stayed on after their children moved away may now need support services to maintain their independence, improve their quality of life, and avoid unnecessary hospital and nursing-home stays.

SLIDE 22: NORC Social and health care systems

When so many seniors live close to others, they often come up with strategies to deliver a broad range of social and health care services, such as transportation and home delivered meals. NORC services are not covered by Medicare or Medicaid, although social workers can help residents gain access to these services.

SLIDE 23: Open or horizontal NORC
"Open" or "horizontal" NORCs are neighborhood based, made up of one and two family homes.

SLIDE 24: Classic or vertical NORC
"Classic" or "vertical" NORCs are housing based, made up from an apartment building or apartment buildings clustered together.

Apartment buildings not more than six stories high or housing complexes constructed with government assistance receive state funding for supportive services. Health related programming is an essential component of these NORC programs.

To qualify for State funding, a NORC must have at least 50% of its households headed by a one aged 60 or older, or have at least 2,500 residents that meet this age requirement. NORCs must be able to offer supportive services, such as service coordination, case assistance, case management, counseling, health assessment and monitoring, home delivered meals, transportation, socialization activities, home care facilitation, and monitoring.

SLIDE 25: IF PLANNING FOR SENIORS IS SO GOOD THEN WHY AREN'T WE DOING IT
If planning for seniors makes so much sense, then why aren't communities doing it?

What obstructs change?

SLIDE 26: WHAT OBSTRUCTS CHANGE?

SLIDE 26.1 IGNORANCE OF THE PROBLEM
Unfortunately, planning is often reactionary, only happening when an issue is already on your doorstep. But failing to plan is planning to fail. Local officials may fail to plan for seniors to age in place because they are unaware of the need.

SLIDE 26.2: INERTIA
Many times a community recognizes that they have to address the needs of aging in place, but they don't know where to begin.

SLIDE 26.3: LOCAL FEARS OF SENIOR HOUSING
The American Dream was often defined by single family home ownership, rather than the mixed-use housing needs of seniors (apartments, elder cottages, congregate housing, etc.) Zoning may limit the home type to be built. For example, they might not allow multi-unit dwellings.

Or, zoning may not allow temporary structures like elder cottages or accessory apartments because of concerns of their having an adverse effect on surrounding property values and neighborhood character.

SLIDE 27: Aging in Place and the Comprehensive Plan
The comprehensive plan is the place for local officials, advocates for the elderly and disabled, and the general public to express the need for a built environment that accommodates the growing population of older New Yorkers. As you proceed with this course, remember that the comprehensive plan is one of the first places to address some of the challenges you've already heard about, and those to be discussed.

And the possible solutions explored later in this course that might be best for your community won't just happen overnight. The first step is planning for them, and the comprehensive plan should be the core of every

municipality's planning efforts. Local officials should refer to the comprehensive plan when they are ready to take action, and implement solutions.

SLIDE 28: Housing stock

In the process of comprehensive planning, local officials and the public should address the question of whether there is a diversity of housing options for the range of ages, incomes, and physical abilities of residents.

If the zoning regulations do not provide opportunity for multi-unit and/or workforce and affordable housing, or opportunities for senior housing, those regulations should be amended accordingly.

SLIDE 29: Land Use designations

Senior and affordable multi-family housing have been recognized by the courts as uses that local governments should encourage, because of a demonstrated need for this housing.

If zoning makes constructing affordable housing too difficult, those regulations can be challenged and will likely be invalidated as exclusionary zoning.

SLIDE 30: Senior housing as a priority

In the matter of Land Master Montg I, LLC v. the Town of Montgomery, the Appellate Division of New York State Supreme Court did just that by agreeing that the town's zoning was exclusionary, because it eliminated their multi-family zoning district.

When the Village of Harriman annexed property in the Town of Monroe that was zoned General Business, the Appellate Division agreed with the Village about an indisputable need for senior housing and that the Town's concerns about the loss of commercial property taxes would be outweighed by the benefit of senior housing.

SLIDE 31: Definition of "family"

Communities use the definition of "family" to preserve traditional residential communities and communities are constantly trying new strategies to exclude non-traditional families.

Those able and willing to provide care in their homes for an older or disabled relative or friend must be sure to review the community's zoning definition for "family", because, often times, only families are locally permitted to reside in dwellings located in residential or other zoning districts. Courts have stated that a group of persons whom are not related by blood or marriage may not be precluded from residing together in an authorized dwelling on those bases alone, if such persons live together as a functional equivalent of a family using shared kitchen and other living spaces.

For more information on regulating land use through use of the definition of "family," please refer to the New York Department of State's Legal Memorandum on the subject, a link to which can be found on this course's homepage.

SLIDE 32: Where is the best fit?

Senior housing options fit best in walkable neighborhoods, close to amenities and existing infrastructure.

Senior housing districts, or, as they are also known, age-restricted clustered housing, planned adult community, or planned retirement congregate housing communities, are becoming more common in municipalities that are addressing the need for this type of housing through zoning.

SLIDE 33: Form-based zoning

Using form based zoning, local governments can design neighborhoods that are accommodating to seniors and others who are looking for walkable neighborhoods with amenities conveniently close by.

Form-based zoning can encourage mixed use development because it focuses on a building's size and shape, and how that building relates to the streetscape, rather than on use. For example, a building can have first floor retail, second floor medical offices, and upper floor senior housing.

SLIDE 34: Floating districts
Floating zones are used to site senior housing close to services, or mixed-use zones that integrate businesses and services that all ages and mobility levels can use.

A floating zone is a zoning designation, such as a "Senior Housing District." The zone "floats" and isn't depicted on the zoning map until an application for a specific parcel received, reviewed and approved by the local governing board.

When the governing board grants final approval and adopts the floating zoning district, then the zoning map is amended to depict and include the new floating zone district.

SLIDE 35: Overlay district
The "overlay district" is similar to a floating district because it also has regulations established to achieve a specific public purpose, but it already exists on the zoning map.

For example, a senior housing overlay district may be applied over conventional zoning districts for areas that require special attention, like a waterfront district. This district might be close to amenities and features such as public transit, parks, hospitals, and restaurants.

SLIDE 36: Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)
ADUs can be permanent or temporary homes. They can be inside the existing home, like a "granny flat," or attached to the existing home, like an addition known as a "mother/daughter," or detached like a garage apartment. They enable seniors who are no longer able to maintain a home alone to continue living independently, with the support and security offered by caregivers living in the main house or in the ADU.

They may take the form of "accessory apartments" or "cottages" that can be integrated into existing single family neighborhoods, providing low priced housing alternatives. They have little or no negative impact on the character of the neighborhood.

SLIDE 37: ADUs in Urban Neighborhoods
State law adequately provides for local governments to plan for seniors in neighborhoods zoned for two, three, or multiple-family residences.

In cities, villages, and neighborhoods across New York and much of the United States in the late 19th and much of the 20th century, young families often started out in one of the flats in a two- or three- family house owned by older relatives.

Tax incentives for single-family home ownership and the supply of new, detached housing in the suburbs resulted in the migration of many of these families out of tight-knit neighborhoods to suburban areas zoned for single-family residences. Many of those neighborhoods have experienced disinvestment in recent years as a result of fluctuations in the housing market.

Opportunities exist for those willing and able to invest in the rehabilitation of those buildings to provide a similar family dynamic to what established these neighborhoods. Younger relatives can live in upper flats, while older and disabled relatives occupy first-floor flats.

Slide 38: Evolution of Housing in Suburban Neighborhoods
Accessory dwelling units can also be permitted in suburban areas zoned for single-family residences.

One option is that they be allowed by right—that is, with a building permit and perhaps the satisfaction of general criteria, such as that the applicants satisfy the municipality's definition of a "family".

BUT "as of right" generally means there is no review by a planning board or other discretionary review board, provided the dimensions of the addition or freestanding accessory dwelling unit meets the height, setback, and lot coverage requirements of the zoning regulations.

SLIDE 39: ADU considerations
Introduction: Here are some examples of other things to consider when planning for Accessory Dwelling Units.

> **SLIDE 39.1 Age-limiting construction**
> Limiting ADU construction to homes of a certain age may stabilize neighborhoods and encourage infill development by using existing homes. This could discourage sprawl and take advantage of existing infrastructure.

> **SLIDE 39.2 Parking/minimum lot**
> Less stringent parking and minimum lot size standards can encourage more ADUs where they may be otherwise prohibited if they did not meet the current zoning requirements. For example, excessive parking standards could be relaxed because a senior may not use the usual 2 car parking space that some apartment conversions require.

> **SLIDE 39.3: Application process**
> A cumbersome application process could result in illegal ADU conversions. People avoid going through the proper channels, which are there to ensure the occupants' health and safety, to create apartments. Some landlords create illegal rentals to generate rental income. Others need to make living arrangements quickly for their loved one.

> **SLIDE 39.4: Annual review**
> Renewing permits for ADU's is a good idea. New changes in technologies or housing standards should be incorporated into your review. An automatic review period could ensure that your housing varieties are keeping pace with trends and needs of the aging population and surrounding community.

SLIDE 40: Universal design
The purpose of universal design is to make everyday tasks easier for people of all ages, sizes, and abilities—including the elderly and the disabled. It is applied to all buildings and their components and is applied to all buildings. Universal Design tries to simplify life for everyone by making more housing usable by more people at little or no extra cost.

While this design approach applies to products and buildings, it may also be applied to neighborhoods by increasing visibility—for both seniors and their care givers.

SLIDE 41: Transportation planning

> **SLIDE 41.1: Transportation choices**
> A greater number of mobility and transportation alternatives are needed, along with more innovative, affordable, and accessible options. These alternatives can reduce our reliance on personal cars, and on fossil fuels in general.

> Palm Beach County, Florida has a "Seniors in Motion" program aimed at those aged 85 or older living in gated communities or remote areas to advise them of their transportation options, such as free fixed-route service and reduced fares on door-to-door service.

> Eugene, Oregon has a "Bus Buddy" program that in the program's literature, "teaches seniors how to ride the bus in a relaxed way by breaking down barriers and building confidence."

Peoria, Illinois demonstrated that public transportation can be brought to seniors living in very rural areas. Two rural transportation systems teamed up to provide service to supermarkets, hospitals, and shopping centers. To introduce seniors to this service, they issued free passes and later a discounted fare of fifty cents a trip.

SLIDE 41.2 Enhanced street signage

Eyesight, physical ability, and response time can be compromised by the aging process or by conditions of birth or by life events. Conventional street signs, signals, and road markings may not serve their driving needs, particularly in congested, confusing, high-speed areas.

Some senior-friendly street signs could include extra-large lettered overhead street name signs and reflective pavement markers.

Advanced lane assignment signs help driver's reduce last minute decisions and lane changes at intersections.

SLIDE 41.3: Senior Zone
"Senior Zones" are similar to School Zones, which have the purpose of raising a driver's awareness that they are entering an area where they must exercise additional caution. Usually "Senior Zones" contain a facility catering to seniors.

Factors such as roadway and driveway characteristics, average daily traffic volumes, crash rates, facility population, posted speed limit, and pedestrian activity are reviewed, evaluated, and prioritized to determine if an area is eligible for "Senior Zone" designation."

SLIDE 42: Complete streets for seniors
In New York, public projects with federal and state funding subject to DOT oversight must consider Compete Streets design principles.

A "complete street" is designed for people of all ages and abilities, pedestrians, drivers, public transportation riders, and bicyclists.

There is no one design prescription; they are "context sensitive," meaning that a complete street in a rural area will look quite different from a complete street in a highly urban area. But both are designed to balance safety and convenience for everyone using the road.

Slide 42.1: Too long streets
Very long streets can be inconvenient to cross at distant intersections.

This leads to illegal and dangerous midblock crossings if seniors are step out between parked cars where drivers would not expect to find people.

SLIDE 42.2: Too Wide Streets
Wide or multi-lane streets are difficult for seniors and the disabled because they may not have enough time to complete their crossings.

Streets of four or more lanes are unsafe for any pedestrian to cross, and where possible crossings should include islands for people to rest or to take refuge from oncoming traffic.

SLIDE 42.3: Curb extensions
Curb extensions and raised pedestrian crossings can address these concerns. Curb extensions can be used

mid-block or at intersections, reduce the crossing distance, and limit the time that pedestrians are exposed to traffic.

Minimum curb extension length typically equal to full width of the crosswalk.

SLIDE 42.4: Raised Crossings
Raised pedestrian crossings can improve visibility, both for the driver and the crosser, because the entire intersection is raised higher than the road.

High visibility materials and colors can also draw more attention to the intersection, and also help to slow traffic.

Slide 42.5: Non-grid style street
Non-grid style street design makes pedestrian access and navigation difficult for seniors. The spaghetti-like network of streets that are common in suburban developments can be confusing.

Cul-de-sacs and other dead end streets do not promote connectivity, result in heavier traffic on collector streets, and make travel more challenging for first responders.

For these reasons and others, this type of street design is falling out of fashion in many places and like mixed-use development, municipalities are returning to planning for more traditional gridded street patterns.

SLIDE 43: Americans With Disabilities Act
About 70% of Americans will be temporarily or permanently disabled at some point in life.

Disabilities can take many forms and are more widespread than folks realize.   These include hearing and sight impairments, mobility limitations, and heart disease.

NYS Building Code incorporates ADA and requires pedestrian facilities be planned, designed, constructed, and maintained to accommodate people with disabilities.

This applies to new construction and reconstruction, such as barrier removals.

SLIDE 44: Senior sidewalk design standards
Introduction: Sidewalk design standards and guidelines can increase walkability and safety for seniors and the disabled.

Remember the difference between guidelines and standards: guidelines are recommendations and standards are required. Here are a few items that basic sidewalk design generally address.

SLIDE 44.1 Uniform widths
The minimum width for sidewalks is 4 feet, commonly seen in residential areas.

In medium density areas with townhouses, that increases to 6 feet to accommodate more users at one time.

In urban corridors where pedestrians travel in both directions at once, sidewalks are 10 feet.

SLIDE 44.2 Uniform surfaces
Uniform surfaces make it easier for seniors and the mobility impaired to travel.

It's also very helpful for the visually impaired to anticipate that their next step will not be a surprise.

Surfaces can be concrete, brick, pavers, etc., so long as they are in good shape.

SLIDE 44.3 Maintenance
Who is responsible for repairs or snow removal, the property owner or the municipality?

Remember to include responsibility this in your local regulations.

SLIDE 44.4 Amenities
Seniors are more likely to walk where amenities make it more pleasant.

Street trees provide shelter from the sun. Benches provide short respites, and lights add security.

SLIDE 44.5 Consider powered and manual wheelchairs
It's best to avoid building sidewalks on steep slopes because it's difficult for powered and manual wheelchairs to maneuver. They can become unstable, so sidewalk grades should not exceed 5 percent.

If building on steep terrains can't be avoided, consider widening sidewalks in these places so that wheelchairs can travel in a zig zag fashion, thereby reducing the grade.

SLIDE 44.6: Diminish Cross-slope
Sidewalks with a cross slope greater than two percent require a wheelchair user to use much more energy to offset that gravitational pull, otherwise that force may direct them into the curb and street.

A good sidewalk design keeps the cross elevation steady.

SLIDE 45: Emergency preparedness
SLIDE 45.1 Special needs for vulnerable populations
Emergencies take many forms, such as bad storms, water main breaks, chemical spills, flu outbreaks, or acts of terrorism.

Do you have a disaster preparedness plan that takes into consideration the special needs of the elderly of all physical abilities and their pets? Emergency plans can be separate plans or can be addressed in the local comprehensive plan.

And are your residents aware of these options before disaster strikes?

SLIDE 45.2 Pet evacuations
During Hurricane Katrina, many seniors put lives in jeopardy--their own, and first responder's--when they refused to evacuate without their pets.

Now federal and state laws mandate that we plan for pet evacuations, including transit options for those traveling with pets.

The Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards (PETS) Act (42 U.S.C.A. § 5196a-d (2006)) requires the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to develop emergency preparedness plans to include people with pets and service animals during a major disaster or emergency.

SLIDE 45.2: Customize your plan
Response plans for elderly people and people with disabilities may differ in urban vs. rural settings. Should seniors shelter in place, leave for a emergency shelter, or evacuate the area completely?

Plans should focus on emergencies most likely to occur in your area, so that seniors will not feel overwhelmed. A well planned, regularly reviewed emergency plan, together with community drills and coordination with recovery and remediation plans, promotes fast, efficient, smooth-operating responses during all types of emergencies, reducing disaster-related injuries and trauma, and saving lives.

Is there an alternative emergency warning system to accommodate elderly or other people with hearing or vision impairment?

Are emergency warnings and evacuation instructions communicated in ways that accommodate non-English-speaking people?

How will you handle frail or non-driving grandparents who are responsible for picking up children when an emergency closes the school?

Slide 46: Fostering "Aging in Place"

As you have learned in this course and likely elsewhere, the need for local governments to remove barriers to and assist those endeavoring to enable New York's older and disabled populations to age in the communities of their choice is a state priority and a priority for many local governments as well. Because land use and development decisions are made at the local level, local officials have a great influence in helping their communities to be the kind of places in which all people can grow up, thrive, and grow old.

This course provided you an introduction to the regulatory and programmatic tools to incentivize a mix of housing choices for older and disabled New Yorkers and the general population of your town, village, or city. You are encouraged to use the resources on this course's home page to learn more about this important initiative that will benefit all New Yorkers.

Slide 47: Resources for more information
We encourage you to continue learning more about Aging in Place, and many other topics on land use planning, regulations, and procedures.   The Department of State's James A. Coon Technical Series offers many publications and legal memoranda, some are attached to this course. Our Local Government Training Program offers online courses as well as on-site training; please visit our online calendar for training offered by the Department of State, other state agencies, and local government and academic membership organizations:

Our staff is available to provide technical assistance to local government officials during regular business hours. Here is our contact information: http://www.dos.ny.gov/lg/contact.html

Additional Training Opportunities: http://www.dos.ny.gov/LG/lgtn_calendar.html