Living in Place: A Study of Vitality through Sense of Place

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LIVING IN PLACE:

A Study of Vitality through Sense of Place

By

Susan M. Wylie, J.D.

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

Department of Architecture
Golisano Institute for Sustainability

ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK
DECEMBER 2017
COMMITTEE APPROVAL

“Living in Place: A Study of Vitality through Sense of Place.”
By Susan M. Wylie

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I am especially grateful to my parents, who instilled in me a passion to learn, and who supported my education in every sense. Not a day goes by that I do not think of the love and support of my family.

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ABSTRACT

The built environment can respond to human needs and influence behaviors. An approach to design that grows from essential human conditions arguably is a preferable means of structuring the built world in a responsible and sustainable manner. Although new and innovative building technologies can achieve great strides in sustainability, underlying and fundamental human needs and behaviors may be an equally important source of inspiration and creativity in the built environment.

This thesis addresses social and psychological needs of the aging population in three communities in the vicinity of Rochester, New York. Through understandings of sense of place, the inquiry is the extent to which attributes of these communities respond to such needs in a way that creates an enriching quality of life. The intent is to demonstrate that, by cultivating a sense of place through the attributes of a community, the aging population might experience enrichment and vitality in their day-to-day lives. The genesis for this study is the fact that, in the United States and throughout the world, the aging population is growing at a rate that is far greater than that of the general population as a whole. This trend is predicted to continue. Absent solutions in the structure of communities that stem from important social and psychological needs of the aging population, the elderly face risk of isolation, lack of meaningful purpose, and detachment.

This thesis proposes a model for Living in Place, which is defined as the engagement and integration of residents in the community structure to experience a meaningful quality of life, where the community as a whole benefits from the richness of demographic diversity. Rather than a model in which the aging are viewed in a state of decline, without an opportunity to contribute to the social capital of a community, Living in Place embraces a view toward continued enrichment and participation of the elderly. The proposal is that, by linking the social and psychological needs of the aging, to sociological and architectural principles of sense of place, to physical manifestations of sense of place, a model for Living in Place is achieved, and the elderly experience vitality rather than decline. As a final outcome, essential principles relating to the composition of a community emerge, through which a society-wide model for Living in Place might be obtained.
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I. Introduction

The population of the elderly in the United States is growing at a rate greater than that of the general population collectively. Projections indicate that this trend will continue. With this demographic shift of the aging population, the ability of the elderly to remain integrated in the community structure is a critical concern. At the same time, this demographic challenge presents an opportunity to consider the design, planning and overall composition of existing communities in a way that allows elders to enjoy a sustained quality of life, and where the community as a whole may benefit from the richness of demographic diversity. An extensive study conducted by the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, completed in 2014, reports that, within the next 15 years, one in five people in the United States will be at least age 65, and that the challenge to ensure that this population has the structure and support of a community to “enjoy high-quality, independent, and financially secure lives has taken on a new urgency not only for individuals and their families, but also for the nation as a whole.” (Harvard University 2014).

This thesis explores the extent to which three areas in the vicinity of Rochester, New York support and engage the aging in a manner that allows them to remain connected throughout their later years, meaning that the elderly are able to participate in and be fulfilled by their surroundings. Rather than a model in which the elderly must resort to care facilities, which can be isolated and removed from the day-to-day life of a diverse neighborhood, and which consume resources in a way that may not be sustainable, to what extent do the attributes of a community foster a fulfilling, safe and connected environment, in a way that actively addresses important social and psychological needs of the elderly and simultaneously creates demographic diversity? Is society forced to construct massive elderly care facilities not only because the population is aging at an increasing rate, but because the existing environment creates isolation, lack of social engagement, and lack of support throughout later stages of life?

While much research and resources exist that focus on the design of elderly care facilities to account for physical needs of the aging, less research addresses the well-being of the aging from the standpoint of the essential roots or features of a community. Architects and designers are skilled in the ability to accommodate the elderly from an accessibility standpoint, and experts engaged in social and psychological work recognize the need for social services within the framework of institutionalized care. However, the ability to support and engage older residents,
particularly from a quality of life standpoint, might exist within the fundamental physical attributes of our communities themselves, alleviating the need for a model that resorts to institutionalized care as the sole or primary solution.

The term “Aging in Place” is frequently used in much discussion and literature concerning the lifestyle of the elderly population. This thesis proposes an alternative and perhaps more appropriate term: “Living in Place.” Living in Place is defined as an environment that enables the cultivation and sustaining of a sense of place, meaning that the attributes of the community directly respond to and actively support social and psychological needs, to allow for engagement in the community throughout the life course and particularly in later years. The analysis is intended to reflect respect for and understanding of the potentials of the elderly population, and the richness that a community collectively may experience in designing solutions that allow the elderly to remain integrated. Whereas “Aging in Place” is a notion that is focused primarily on the physical and immediate needs of the aging and implies a state of decline and segregation from a community, Living in Place centers on an enriching and fulfilled quality of life from a social and psychological standpoint, the attributes of a community that can enable such quality of life, and the resulting value that a community experiences due to demographic inclusion. Rather than decline or detachment in later years of life, the theme is vitality throughout the life course, accomplished through sense of place.

At the outset of their text, Placemaking: The Art and Practice of Building Communities, authors Lynda Schneekloth and Robert Shibley note that the creation of place is “intensely personal” and explain that the process of placemaking involves thorough conversation with all stakeholders; the act of interrogation or series of questions to distill appropriate goals and boundaries; and, a plan of action (Schneekloth and Shibley 1995, 5 - 14). The authors write that the role of those who are involved in creating a “place” is to participate in thoughtful, careful and responsible action, which sometimes can lead to the decision to abandon a place, but more often, and as this thesis hopes to establish for an aging population, it means “staying where we are with the people of our communities and attending to our places through placemaking activities.” (Schneekloth and Shibley 1995, 18). The inquiry of this thesis centers on the manner in which our communities accommodate core human needs as residents move through later stages of life, and the fact that society should respond to those needs in the built environment. Sarah Williams
Goldhagen, an architectural theorist and writer whose studies of the links between human cognition and behavior and the built world serve as substantial insight for this inquiry, writes:

Should we be rethinking design of all kinds, including its standardization, in light of all we know about what people actually need?....The more we learn about how people actually experience the environments in which they live their lives, the more obvious it becomes that a well-designed built environment falls not on a continuum stretching from high art to vernacular building, but on a very different sort of continuum: somewhere between a crucial need and a basic human right.

(Goldhagen 2017, 40-41).

Although this thesis does not seek to replicate an entire process of placemaking, nor to design a community in entirety, it is an attempt to identify certain needs and behaviors from the standpoint of an aging population, to address how those needs might be interpreted in sociological and architectural principles of sense of place, and to propose how such principles are manifested in community attributes. The intent is to directly respond to needs of the aging through understandings of sense of place, and to then activate these ideas of sense of place through attributes of the subject communities:

![Figure 1: Graphic illustration of an approach to Living in Place, by author.](image-url)
Philip Stafford is an anthropologist, gerontologist and consultant on the subject of livable communities for all ages. In his text, *Elderburbia: Aging with a Sense of Place in America*, he closely studies social issues to establish that aging is not about time and the body, but about place and relationships. In observing an older couple on their porch swing in a community in Indiana, he writes how he came to understand “how active their lives were, that the porch swing itself was the base from which they sustained an active social life and remained connected in the community.” (Stafford 2009, 1). An approach such as this, in which the needs of the aging are addressed through what might be very achievable decisions in the structure of our communities, can lead to a sustainable model that responds to the challenges posed by current population trends. The intent of this thesis is to analyze factors that encompass the notion of Living in Place and propose core principles that emerge as applicable to society as a whole.
II. Thesis Statement and Overview of Process

Based upon various methods of research and analysis, this thesis proposes that Living in Place is a model that can coexist with and serve as a sustainable alternative to an approach in which an aging population is housed in senior centers, where the elderly arguably are segregated from the day-to-day life of the general population, and the community loses an important link in demographic diversity. The underlying premise is that, by actively supporting the quality of life of aging residents through the attributes of our communities themselves, which are tied to underlying notions of sense of place, a model for Living in Place might be enabled.

The goals of this thesis are twofold. First, the goal is to determine the extent to which three different areas in the vicinity of Rochester, New York foster Living in Place. These areas consist of Maplewood, located north of the city, Park Avenue, immediately east of the downtown area, and a neighborhood in Pittsford, located south and east of the city. These areas were chosen as case studies because of their demographic and physical differences, therefore serving as a basis for comparative analysis. The analysis is not simply an urban vs. rural comparison. Rather, the communities were chosen because of their specific differences in demographics, physical attributes, history, culture and character. Given such differences, an analysis of Living in Place becomes more meaningful in that challenges posed in varying contexts are studied and compared.

Second, the intent is to identify key concepts that emerge from the study of these communities, which might serve as principles to be applied universally to enable Living in Place. Therefore, the rationale behind the selection of the subject communities is reinforced: if core principles emerge as important to Living in Place based upon a thorough analysis of three very different communities, their validity as principles that might be applied universally is strengthened.

The hypothesis of this study is that Living in Place is achieved by: (1) stimulating social interaction by thinking of place as connections, manifested in an effective pattern of streets, formal and informal spaces, gathering places, and visual connections; (2) building a sense of purpose by thinking of place as experience and as social capital, manifested through access to nature, sensory experiences and the complexity of the environment; and, (3) fostering a spirit of belonging by thinking of place as identity, in terms of attachment, history and memory,
manifested in means of way-finding, landmarks and overall character. The framework of research and analysis to support this hypothesis consists of:

Quantitative Research: Demographics

Demographic data concerning the rate at which the population is aging in the United States is summarized, in order to demonstrate that the growth of the aging population poses a critical challenge for society. In parallel with this trend in population growth, data concerning the rate of construction of senior housing is presented, to establish the premise that society has evolved to a model of newly constructed institutions in order to accommodate the elderly and appears less focused on working with the composition of existing communities as an alternative viable solution. Finally, the demographic makeup of the subject communities is reviewed, since this body of information is most relevant when considering the needs of the residents.

Qualitative Research: Needs of the Elderly

An important step in identifying the criteria that will serve as the basis for analysis of the subject communities is a discussion of social and psychological needs of the aging. In order to be precise and relevant in the collection of data used for an analysis of the communities, concerns and values of the aging residents of the communities, as articulated by the residents themselves through the use of a survey, are explored. Sociological and psychological literature that identifies needs of the elderly is also discussed, to provide a society-wide context for the issues that the aging population faces.

Qualitative Research: Social and Architectural Concepts of Sense of Place

“Sense of Place” is a term that has many different meanings, for different purposes. This thesis explores the concept of sense of place as it is adopted in sociological and architectural principles. The intent is to propose how the identified needs of the elderly are translated into notions of sense of place.

Framework for Analysis

As the final step in setting the framework for analysis, specific attributes are identified, which are proposed as manifestations, or activation, of the understandings of sense of place. Thus, Living in Place is achieved by linking the identified needs of the elderly, to understandings of sense of place, to community attributes. This stage in the thesis is critical, as it is the final step in the thread of quantitative data, qualitative issues, and theoretical concepts, to establish a framework for an analysis of the subject communities.
Physical Observation of the Subject Communities.

To determine the extent to which our communities enable Living in Place, the communities are analyzed through physical observation, mapping and diagramming. With use of the criteria that forms the framework for analysis, the intent is to closely study attributes of the communities that either enable or impede the creation of Living in Place. Although a full set of attributes would encompass broad issues such as climate, technology and transportation, the effort is to focus on a key set of more fundamental and traditional attributes that might be available and achievable in each of the communities.

Principles that Apply to Society as a Whole

Identification of universal concepts that might apply to society as a whole is the final step in this thesis. The inquiry is whether core concepts emerge from the study of the subject communities that may serve as a basis for universal application and creation of Living in Place.
III. Key Concepts

A. Aging in Place vs. Living in Place

As the aging population continues to grow, solutions to address the needs and care of this population become increasingly important. In particular, the generation of Americans born in the years following World War II, known as the “baby boomer” generation, is now aging and contributing significantly to changing demographics. Many studies of the shift in demographics report that the ability to meet the challenge of an aging population and responding to its needs requires a better understanding of concepts such as aging, frailty, disability and appropriate interventions. “People today have fewer children, are less likely to be married, and are less likely to live with older generations. With declining support from families, society will need better information and tools to ensure the well-being of the world’s growing number of older citizens.” (National Institute on Aging 2011). Although today’s older people are generally more active and better educated than previous generations, the fact of longer life expectancies means that communities must be prepared to support the needs of the aging to an increasing degree:

Normative changes in function also occur with aging. For example, aging is accompanied by declines in visual and auditory acuity, a slowing of reaction and response times, declines in motor skills and agility, and changes in cognitive processes such as lapses in memory and attention. Thus there is a clear need for strategies to help healthy older people remain productive and independent and to ensure that those who are frail or disabled receive care and support so that they can live in their communities for as long as possible. Age-related changes in function have vast implications for the design of products, environments and activities. (Czaja and Sharit 2009).

The needs of the elderly are often associated with the concept of “aging in place.” The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines aging in place as “the ability to live in one’s own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income or ability level.” (Centers for Disease Control 2017). At a broad level, many researchers and advocates for the aging point to the following elements as those which are needed to accommodate aging in place:

- Affordable, secure and physically accessible housing;
- Affordable, safe, and reliable transportation alternatives;
- Opportunities to engage in recreational, learning, cultural, volunteering and/or social experiences; and
- Options for in-home health care or assistance with the activities of daily living.
“Aging in place” has been defined as the ability to live in one’s own home in the community, and the ability to identify resources to support personal and environmental change and respond to essential needs (Dupuis-Blanchard, et. al. 2015). The concept is frequently assessed in terms of an ecological model, in which the “capabilities of the person to meet the demands of the environment result in successful interaction,” and researchers have identified many advantages to aging in place, ranging from economics to the social and health advantages of aging at home, which include attachment to place, familiarity with the neighborhood, and the ability to maintain functional health (Dupuis-Blanchard, et. al. 2015).

More importantly for purposes of this thesis, “aging in place” implies that our later years of life are marked by intellectual decline, rather than the potential for continued vitality and intellectual growth. In his studies of the aging and their needs as they move through phases of life, Philip Stafford discusses the concept of aging in place in the sense of quality of life questions. Stafford cites the work of the philosopher Martin Heidegger, who was among the first to explore the concepts of self and place, and of being and dwelling. Heidegger proposed that “to be” is “to dwell.” As Stafford articulates and as is important for the inquiry in this thesis, the concept of dwelling can center on questions about quality of life as one moves through the life course:

Aging with a sense of place can be accomplished in many ways. The question is not whether staying put or relocating south is the right solution. The question is…can we fill our spaces with meaning and memory? Can we attain a sense of agency, where what we do makes a difference? Can we dwell in the other? Can we transform space into a place that reflects who we imagine ourselves to be? (Stafford 2009, 13 – 14).

Questions such as these provide a foundation for consideration of the needs of the elderly, and how these needs might be manifested in the attributes of our communities. Stafford cites four traditional domains of an elder-friendly community: (1) addresses basic needs; (2) promotes social and civic engagement; (3) optimizes physical and mental health and well-being; and (4) maximizes independence for the frail and disabled (Stafford 2009, 33). However, based on his view that aging is not a state of decline but is, rather, part of a life course that can be enriching and fulfilling, Stafford urges that communities embrace a different approach for the aging population:

One leading edge development among aging boomers is the ‘aging in community’ movement. Pioneers of the movement are promoting an open dialogue about the meaning
of aging and old age, suggesting we need to be more conscious of our own aging process and more intentional about the kinds of communities in which we see ourselves growing old. This philosophy has drawn together groups of like-minded boomers and elders to explore the creation of a new life-course/life-space model, sometimes intergenerational in approach.

Marketers to the boomer generation are trapped in a curious paradox. They have to segment the population by age, implicitly reinforcing the subject while simultaneously portraying age as something to be dreaded and avoided (relative to physical changes), or celebrated as a new form of freedom and leisure (relative to lifestyle and location). Perhaps the increasing focus on aging as a phenomenon of place, rather than time, will provide the necessary framework for resolving these ambiguities, and, indeed, lead to the creation of good places for boomers to grow old.

(Stafford 2009, 156 - 157).

Stafford’s thoughts on the aging process and the paradox that society faces with an aging population are instructive. A model for aging in place is intended to accommodate the physical needs of the aging, but this approach risks segregation of the aging, as opposed to inclusion; decline, as opposed to growth; and, a focus on physical needs only, rather than holistic social needs. Alternatively, the concept proposed by this thesis is one in which the aging are not distinctly set apart, but, rather, their needs are considered at the roots of the community, so that they remain integrated and fulfilled throughout life stages and so that the reciprocal relationships and benefits that might be experienced through demographic diversity may be achieved: the theme is one of vitality rather than decline. To state this approach otherwise, perhaps the collective societal responsibility is not merely to ensure that the aging have the physical care and amenities that they need to live independently, but rather, to take steps toward proactive engagement of the aging within the community structure. The concept is that Living in Place is a state in which a quality of life that is created through a stimulating and fulfilling environment is maintained throughout later years, so that the aging process is one of enrichment and respect.

B. A Definition of Community

Given that a goal of this thesis is to assess the extent to which a community enables Living in Place, an understanding of the word “community” is an important underlying step.

“Community” derives from the Latin communis, meaning “common, public, shared by all or many.” More specifically, the Latin term communis, which is the specific origination of the word “community” in English, is comprised of “com,” a prefix meaning with or together and “munis,” while the primary definition of “community” is understood to mean “a unified body of
individuals.” (Merriam Webster Dictionary). As James Kunstler proposed in his text, *The Geography of Nowhere*, the term community is frequently used to describe an integrated whole: “a living organism composed of different parts that work together to make the whole greater than the sum of its parts.” (Kunstler 1993, 147). Kunstler focuses on the idea of “connection” as that which creates a community:

The small town life that Americans long for when they are depressed by their city apartments or their suburban bunkers is really a conceptual substitute for the idea of community. But a community is not something that you *have*, like a pizza. Nor is it something you can buy, as visitors to Disneyland and Williamsburg discover. It is a living organism based on a web of interdependencies – which is to say, a local economy. It expresses itself physically as *connectedness*, as buildings actively relating to one another, and to whatever public space exists, be it the street, or the courthouse square, or the village green. (Kunstler 1993, 185 – 186) (emphasis in original).

Kunstler opines that society has lost an understanding of the consequences that result from a loss of community: “Living in places where nothing is connected properly, we have forgotten that connections are important.” (Kunstler 1993, 246). Similarly, Goldhagen directly ties the built environment to the concept of a sustainable community; the built environment affects physical health, mental health, cognitive capabilities, and the ways in which communities are formed and sustained. (Goldhagen 2017, 16 – 17). Goldhagen ties the notion of place to that of a community in which connections and meaning exist and thrive, writing:

When people lay claim to a piece of land, constructing buildings, organizing and shaping its voids into action settings, it is no longer just an abstraction, a geographic point on a map. What was once just territory becomes a *place*, which means that it is imbued with social meaning. People with stronger attachments to places enjoy an enhanced sense of well-being, stronger community ties, and a greater ability to transcend their own self-interests and conceptions and see others’ points of view.

(Goldhagen 2017, 199).

C. Distinctions in the Case Studies

As set forth in detail below in the discussion of the needs of the aging population, this thesis employed the use of a survey to obtain input from residents of Maplewood, Park Avenue and Pittsford. A key distinction with respect to understandings of “community” emerged from this survey, and recognition of this distinction is important to the goals of this thesis.

Based on the input collected from the survey, residents of Maplewood and Park Avenue express a stronger affiliation with those residents who live immediately around them; they point
to attributes of the environment that are readily available to them and literally at their doorsteps as important elements that contribute to quality of life; and, they are aware of and interested in the ongoing day-to-day life that surrounds them. Residents of Pittsford express the desire for the seclusion and beauty of natural surroundings; while they consider access to amenities and more collective activities to be a great attribute, this access is accomplished by automobile only and is removed from their immediate living space; the security that ensues from the seclusion of their home and their dependable neighbors is an important element of their well-being.

In sum, the sentiments expressed by residents of Maplewood and Park Avenue more closely reflect what is set forth above as a sociological definition of community; their home and their community largely become one and the same. For residents of Pittsford, home is a place of seclusion more than a place that is part of a larger network, and their notion of community, perhaps due to the impact of mobility, is something that extends far beyond the boundaries of their immediate neighborhood. Moreover, from a physical standpoint, as the analysis of the subject communities will demonstrate, Maplewood and Park Avenue are environments where commercial, residential and natural features must integrate with one another within immediate proximity to each other. In contrast, the neighborhood in Pittsford is purely residential, and it is only by virtue of the automobile that it becomes connected to a broader social context.

As the physical attributes of Maplewood, Park Avenue and Pittsford are later considered in the context of Living in Place in the analytical section of this thesis, these distinctions become important.
IV. Background: Our Aging Population

A. The Trend Toward an Increasingly Aging Population

Longer life expectancy rates, falling fertility rates and, in the United States in particular, the aging of the baby boomer generation, have led to an increasing population of the elderly in nearly all regions of the world (Bergman, et. al. 2013; World Health Organization 2011). With fewer children entering the population and increased longevity, older people comprise an increasing share of the overall population (World Health Organization 2011). Improved living conditions, education and health care have contributed to prolonged lifespans, yet, with prolonged lifespans, a result is an increased need for care for the elderly for longer periods of time (Bergman 2013). Trends indicate that the leading causes of death across the world have shifted from infectious and parasitic diseases, to non-communicable diseases and chronic conditions that are the result of an industrialized society and are triggered by a range of issues associated with lifestyle choices and social issues (World Health Organization 2011).

According to a 2014 report published jointly by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, those who reach age 65 have an average life expectancy of an additional 19 years as compared to 1900 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2014). As the National Institute on Aging and World Health Organization report, research shows a continuing rise in life expectancy among those aged 80 and above, leading to questions on the extent to which this increase will continue, and, most importantly for purposes of this thesis, the ability of society to sustain and support the needs of an aging population (World Health Organization 2011). The United States Census Bureau explains that, “[a]s larger numbers of males and females reach age 65 and over it becomes increasingly important to understand this population as well as the implications population aging has for various family, social and economic aspects of society.” (United States Census Bureau 2010).

United States Census data for the most recent reporting cycle reflects that, from 2000 to 2010, the population of citizens older than 65 years grew at a rate of 15.1%, with the age group of 65 – 69 growing at a rate of 30%, while the total population across all age groups grew at the significantly lower rate of 9.7%. (United States Census Bureau 2010). As of July 2016, 15.2% of the United States’ population was of the age of 65 years or older, and this figure is expected to increase to 20% by the year 2030, which is an increase of 33 million people over two decades (United States Census Bureau 2017). Similarly, between 1990 and 2010, the number of people
of age 50 or older increased by 55%, far surpassing the increase in population overall (Harvard University 2014). In 1990, adults over the age of 50 comprised at least 40% of the total population in just 5% of all counties in the United States; by 2010, this statistic had grown to 33% of all counties. (Harvard University 2014).

The “baby boomer” generation is largely responsible for the dramatic trends toward an aging population in the United States. This generation began turning age 65 in 2011 and will continue to do so for many years to come. According to recently issued data of the United States Census Bureau, the nation’s median age – the age at which one-half of the population is younger and the other one-half is older – rose from 35.3 years on April 1, 2000, to 37.9 years on July 1, 2016 (United States Census Bureau 2017). Similarly, 95% of all counties in the United States experienced increases in the median age between 2000 and 2016. In some areas of the United States, with Florida as the leading state, the rise in median age is dramatic. In Sumter, Florida, the median age jumped from 49.2 in 2000, to 67.1 in 2016 (United States Census Bureau 2017).

In sum, the population of those older than 65 years will continue to rise at a rate greater than that of our younger generations, as will the population in the age group of 45-64, indicating that, overall, the population of the United States is increasingly weighted toward the elderly:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Population or Age Group</th>
<th>2015 Population and % of Total</th>
<th>2030 Population and % of Total</th>
<th>2045 Population and % of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>321.3M</td>
<td>359.4M</td>
<td>389.3M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 18 - 24</td>
<td>31.2M = 9.7%</td>
<td>30.8M = 8.5%</td>
<td>32.4M = 8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 45 - 64</td>
<td>84M = 26%</td>
<td>82.4M = 22.9%</td>
<td>95.3M = 24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 65+</td>
<td>47.8M = 14.8%</td>
<td>74.1M = 20.6%</td>
<td>84.7M = 21.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: United States Census Data. Source: www.uscensus.gov

**B. Economic Issues and Living Patterns**

The fact of an increasingly aging population leads to an endless number of questions on economic impacts and the housing and living patterns of this population. On a society-wide basis, any attempt to design our communities in a way that allows the elderly to remain living at home will require an understanding of economic issues and the existing housing patterns of this segment of the population. Although this thesis is not intended to address such complex economic and social issues in entirety, certain key points are worthy of highlighting.
The 2010 Census reports that 28% of non-institutionalized elders live alone. (United States Department of Health and Human Services 2014). At the same time, homeownership costs are increasing, data indicate that the baby boomer generation that is contributing to the dramatic increase in the elderly population is less financially secure than previous generations, and greater numbers of elderly are living alone without family or other support. On a nationwide basis, millions of older households live in outlying areas and have limited or no access to transportation, which creates great concerns associated with loneliness and isolation. (Harvard University 2017).

According to a 2014 survey conducted by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), more than 75% of individuals of age 80 or older is living in their own home, and 73% of individuals of age 45 or older indicated a preference to remain living in their homes for as long as possible (American Association of Retired Persons 2014). In addition, the numbers of those who are living alone without the support of family members continue to increase. The Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University projects that the number of people over age 75 who are living alone will nearly double from 6.9 million in 2015, to 13.4 million in 2035 (Harvard University 2014). These statistics present great challenges for communities in terms of the ability to care for and sustain the elderly population, particularly among those individuals who have limited financial resources. Studies demonstrate that, as people age, they are less likely to relocate due to reasons of limited financial resources, mobility, or simply the desire to remain in ones’ home, meaning that communities must be structured in a way to support these populations. Particularly among the elderly with minimal financial resources, who must dedicate a good portion of their savings to housing costs, easy and affordable access to necessary services and amenities is and will continue to be a critical challenge (Harvard University 2014).

The Joint Center for Housing Studies further reports that the majority of older adults live in low-density suburban and rural areas, where access to support and social connection is difficult without use of a car. Significantly, within Monroe County, New York, where the City of Rochester is located, 81% of the elderly live in the suburbs (LifeSpan Organization of Rochester 2017). Only 16% of people over the age 65 in the United States live within walking distance of grocery stores, and only 7% within walking distance of other types of commercial establishments (Harvard University 2014), indicating that the vast majority of the elderly population is isolated and removed from easy access to necessary amenities.
An aging population poses a strain on economic costs, particularly in terms of the costs for institutionalization (Dupuis-Blanchard, et. al. 2015). Older adults who can no longer stay at home due to a loss of independence may require hospitalization for several months while awaiting admission to a long-term care facility, which may not be economically viable for our healthcare systems. Solutions to increase the ability of seniors to live at home are important because they may alleviate the demand on long-term care facilities.

Certain studies demonstrate that a delay in the onset of disability and dependence by just one or two years may significantly reduce societal needs for long-term care and institutional resources (Bergman 2013). From an economic standpoint alone, studies show that an increase in long-term care costs between 2010 and 2050 in developed countries is considered a higher economic risk than informal family-based care networks that are more commonly practiced in developing countries (Mrsnik 2010). In developed countries, the use of medical care services by adults rises with age, and the rising proportion of older people is placing heightened pressure on overall healthcare spending in the developed world (United States Department of Health and Human Services 2014).

C. The Current Model: Senior Care Facilities

Since the early 2000’s, the United States has witnessed growth in senior care facilities ranging from nursing homes to retirement communities and assisted care facilities. According to the National Investment Center for Seniors Housing and Care (NIC), which tracks and analyzes data concerning senior housing, the total inventory of assisted living facilities in the United States since 2006 has nearly doubled. As of the second quarter of 2017, NIC reported an occupancy rate of 89% in senior housing facilities overall and predicted an annual inventory growth of approximately 4%. Although this data indicate that the current supply of senior facilities is greater than demand, given the projections for population growth of the aging, questions arise as to whether the supply will meet demand in the future. In addition, regardless of supply, many sectors of the aging population may not be able to afford an assisted living facility and will be dependent upon their existing communities to accommodate their needs.

In consideration of the fact that construction of assisted care facilities has increased in very recent years and is likely to continue to increase, all at the cost of enormous resources, it is appropriate to question whether society might be overlooking a more sustainable and cost-effective step. If communities are physically designed to anticipate and accommodate certain
inherent needs of the aging, can the rate of new construction of care facilities be mitigated? Further, although the existing model of the assisted living home may meet the needs of the elderly in terms of amenities and medical care, does it fully address the more holistic needs of the aging, in terms of a fulfilled quality of life within a demographically diverse environment? With regard for questions such as these, a responsible and sustainable approach may be a focus on what might actually be achievable and efficient attributes of the existing community, not only to meet the needs of the aging, but to actively engage the elderly, thereby enriching the community as a whole.

D. Key Points Derived from the Demographics

The collective data and research concerning the aging population lead to several key conclusions:

- Due to longer life expectancies, the baby boomer generation, and advances in health care and education, the population of older generations in the United States is increasing at a rate that is significantly greater than the general population. By 2030, 20% of the population in the United States will be of the age of 65 or older, representing a dramatic increase from prior decades.
- As families have become more mobile and communities have dispersed, greater numbers of elderly are living alone, putting them at risk for isolation and access to care and amenities.
- The increasing aging population leads to a host of social and economic issues, as witnessed by facts such as disability and dependence concerns, where studies show that a delay in the onset of such conditions by just one or two years can result in significant savings in long term care.
- Although senior care facilities and institutions can satisfy needs of the aging, particularly with respect to medical care, and have become a viable path of housing for many, it cannot be assumed that continued trends toward housing in such facilities is a responsible or sustainable solution, while, even if such housing is made available, it may not be affordable for many sectors of the aging population.
- Solutions that work with existing community attributes can not only address the needs of the aging population but might result in a demographically robust environment overall.

While this demographic data seem daunting, perhaps it is more appropriately characterized as an important opportunity for community designers and planners. The societal issues that arise from this increasing segment of our population pose great challenges, but they also provide an opportunity to think carefully about the composition of a community from the standpoint of the essential character, attributes and framework of the environment. Can the needs of the aging, and the issues that society faces in meeting these needs, be addressed through the “roots” of a
community? We have the ability to shape the attributes of our communities in a way that can allow the aging population to Live in Place, thereby bringing value to a community in its entirety.
V. The Subject Communities

A. Location

The composition and character of the communities that are the subject of this thesis are the basis on which the analysis of Living in Place is performed. In assessing whether these communities enable Living in Place, one must first identify the nature of the residents and their living conditions, and one must first understand the physical character of the communities. The methods used to establish this basis consist of an analysis of demographic information on the communities, historic review, and physical observation, so that a comprehensive picture of the communities is established, and needs of the residents can be better understood.

Three communities located in the vicinity of Rochester, New York are the case studies for this research (Figures 2, 3). The communities consist of Maplewood, located north of the city, the Park Avenue area, located immediately southeast of the downtown area, and a neighborhood in the suburb of Pittsford, located southeast of the city. These communities were chosen as case studies because, as discussed in further detail below, they are very different in terms of their physical characteristics and demographic composition. Because the communities are so different, the value of any society-wide principles that are identified as a final step in this thesis becomes more meaningful as a set of guidelines, in that, arguably, these are principles that could apply to any community, regardless of demographics or geography.

Maplewood comprises the largest geographic area of the three communities, and its roots stem to early agricultural and then industrial development in the City of Rochester. It is bounded by the Genesee River to the east and by commercial corridors to the north, south and west. Natural features, parks, commercial sectors and residential areas exist within Maplewood. The Park Avenue neighborhood is immediately south of East Avenue, which is an historic route running from downtown Rochester to the east and south. The 490 highway runs to the south of the Park Avenue area, forming a solid boundary. Park Avenue is marked by a meandering commercial corridor, surrounded by dense residential streets and small green spaces. The neighborhood in Pittsford is south of the Village of Pittsford, and southeast of downtown Rochester. It consists of residential streets only, on a hilly terrain with large lot sizes of single family homes.
Figure 2: Location of communities. Elaborated by the author. Source: https://maps.google.com.
B. Demographic Comparison

Demographically, the population of Maplewood is the most racially diverse, the least educated and the least affluent among the three communities. Reflecting the fact that 80% of those over the age of 65 in Monroe County live in the suburbs of Rochester, Pittsford has the greatest percentage of the population over the age of 65, and the greatest percentage of persons over the age 65 who are living alone, as compared to Maplewood and Park Avenue. These figures may be due to the fact that a substantial number of senior housing, retirement communities and institutional care facilities exist in Pittsford.

The predominance of single family homes is greatest in Pittsford, where much development has occurred since 2000. In Maplewood and Park Avenue, rental space has become an increasing trend, as opposed to home ownership. The demographic statistics in the following chart provide an understanding of the populations that reside in each of the three communities:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Maplewood</th>
<th>Park Avenue</th>
<th>Pittsford</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over Age 65</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Income</td>
<td>$32,138</td>
<td>$41,954</td>
<td>$103,546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Poverty</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty Over Age 65</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Stamp Assistance</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Insurance Coverage</td>
<td>91.8%</td>
<td>86.1%</td>
<td>98.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Ownership (o) vs. Rental (r)</td>
<td>44.2% (o); 55.8% (r)</td>
<td>15.8% (o); 84.2% (r)</td>
<td>86.5% (o); 13.5% (r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Home Price</td>
<td>$78,850</td>
<td>$168,400</td>
<td>$262,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predominant Period of Home Construction</td>
<td>Prior to 1939; virtually no new construction since 2000</td>
<td>Prior to 1939; virtually no new construction since 2000</td>
<td>Greatest % 1960-1969; 38% since 1980; 10% since 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education: Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>54.2%</td>
<td>73.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>61.9%</td>
<td>77.8%</td>
<td>62.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Family Home (Detached) Residence</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>82.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over Age 65 – Living Alone</td>
<td>8.6% for owned units; 7% for rented units</td>
<td>9.8% for owned units; 4.2% for rented units</td>
<td>10.5% for owned units; 16.6% for rented units</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Summary of demographic data, based on United States Census data at https://factfinder.census.gov.
C. Methods: Physical Overview and Historical Background

Physical observation of the communities that are the subject of this work was a critical step in the methods used to collect data necessary for the analysis. Observations were made on several occasions. The purpose of such observation was to obtain a view of each community that was as accurate and realistic as possible. Visits were made to the communities during weekdays and weekends, at staggered times of the day (Observation Summary, Appendix A). By walking and bicycling the streets of each community, it was possible to observe street and sidewalk life and to attempt to understand the overall character of each area. Through photographs, mapping and sketching, as well as the use of online resources to identify precise geographic locations, the physical details of each community were obtained.

1. Maplewood

Figure 4: Maplewood overall site; see Figure 4 for partial view to scale. Source: www.maplewood.org.

The area that comprises Maplewood was first inhabited by Native Americans. With the influx of immigrant populations over several years, the development of factories and mills along the Genesee River, and the rise of Eastman Kodak Company as a center of research and manufacturing, Maplewood grew from an agricultural area to an industrial and diverse community. During the second half of the 19th century, Maplewood experienced significant growth, and stately residences were built along the main streets and boulevards of Lake Avenue, Seneca Parkway and Lakeview Park. The area also became a destination for recreation,
including steamboat excursions on the river, a hydropathic spa and resort where Nazareth Academy is now located, and the Driving Park race track. Maplewood’s urban landscape includes the Maplewood Park and Rose Garden, which was related to a master plan for city parks created by Frederick Law Olmsted and serves as an important center of the community, with annual festivals and other events. Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, founded in 1871, is located at the north end of Maplewood, consisting of over 300 acres bordering the river, and filled with historic mausoleums, shrines, and a chapel designed by Andrew J. Warner.

Figure 5: Maplewood, shown to scale, south of Ridgeway Avenue only. Elaborated by the author. Source:https://maps.google.com
At the turn of the 19th century, many of the estates and farms in Maplewood were subdivided, leading to robust construction of housing in the area. Most homes in Maplewood were constructed between 1890 and 1920 and reflect a wide range of architectural styles, including Victorian, Tudor, Queen Anne, Arts and Crafts, Colonial and Shingle. Notable architects such as Claude Bragdon and the Ward Wellington Ward firm designed homes and buildings in the neighborhood. Maplewood reflects architectural grandeur, urban landscapes, and the beauty of the Genesee River and Lower Falls, as well as many churches and schools. A large section of Maplewood was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1997 (National Register of Historic Places 2017).

More recently, housing in Maplewood has converted from single family, private homes, to a steady increase in rental units as homes have been divided and zoning regulations changed. Maplewood is a highly diverse neighborhood with an active neighborhood association that is focused on maintaining the rich cultural heritage of the community, while simultaneously encouraging growth and activities that improve the quality of life in the community. Membership in the neighborhood association is composed largely of older residents. Among the three subject communities, Maplewood is the only community with a significant industrial presence, in that Eastman Business Park sits at the northwest corner of Maplewood, at the site of what was once the largest manufacturing facility in the eastern United States.
Currently, the Maplewood community has faced increasing concerns over poverty and safety, which have become a focal point for residents. With a substantial segment of its population living in poverty (26.3%), Maplewood is challenged by economic issues. Median income levels in Maplewood are significantly lower than those of Park Avenue and Pittsford. The older generations of this neighborhood may struggle to afford relocation to retirement housing or assisted living centers, and access to affordable amenities such as food and medical care is a concern.

From a physical standpoint, Maplewood is a walkable community, with sidewalks on nearly all commercial and residential streets. Access to amenities and facilities such as churches, schools and the Maplewood YMCA is readily available, and the availability of such services is a strength of the community. However, in the commercial areas, pedestrian activity is less inviting, and the major commercial streets are barriers to direct pedestrian connection with the Maplewood Park and Rose Garden and the Genesee River, despite the beauty and appeal of these natural elements. Street patterns generally follow a grid, particularly in the residential areas, which allows for connection, although the overall pattern of the area is complex, with intersecting commercial streets and the interface of Maplewood Park and the Genesee River (Figure 5). The residential streets are densely populated, with houses in close proximity to each other, narrow streets and alleys, abundant vegetation, shared spaces, sidewalks, and, in some cases, street lights, all of which enable a closer feeling of interaction and human scale and which encourage pedestrian activity and visibility. Figure 9 illustrates the north end of Maplewood, demonstrating complexity in street patterns and types of activity and uses.
Figure 9: Diagrammatic analysis of Maplewood at north end, by author.
2. Park Avenue

The Park Avenue neighborhood sits immediately east of the downtown area and south of East Avenue, which is an historic and main thoroughfare in Rochester. It is bounded by Park Avenue to the north, and Monroe Avenue and Route 490 to the south. Development of the East Avenue corridor began in the 1800’s, with the building of stately homes and mansions, as well as attention to the planting of trees and shrubs through the influence of local nurseries, reflecting the growth and increasing economic strength of the city.

Because of its location close to mansion-lined East Avenue, the area between Park and Monroe Avenues naturally expanded over several decades and became home to upper and middle class residents. Streets were planned with attention to detail, such as Arnold Park and Oxford Street, where landscaped medians and stonework were used to bring character and beauty to the street plans, and the substantial majority of homes were built prior to 1939. As the street plans grew, lot sizes became standardized and importance was placed on visual integration of blocks. The availability of the streetcar as a means of public transportation, as well as proximity to schools, enhanced the neighborhood. Small businesses grew on Park Avenue, to serve neighborhood needs. Growth in the Park Avenue neighborhood increased significantly throughout the early 1900s, with much new residential construction during this time period.

Figure 10: Park Avenue overall site; see Figure 10 for partial view to scale. Elaborated by the author. Source: https://maps.google.com.
In 1957, with a growing demand for rental apartments following World War II, the city’s revised zoning code supported the conversion of large single family homes into multi-family units in the Park Avenue area. Traffic increased, and the neighborhood significantly changed from one dominated by home ownership to subdivided units and rental apartments. As a result of concerns over the changing character of the neighborhood, neighborhood associations grew and became increasingly active. The East Avenue Preservation District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1969 and includes Park Avenue itself, as well as certain residential streets north of Park Avenue (National Register of Historic Places 2017).

Currently, the Park Avenue neighborhood is a desirable location due to its density, vibrancy and proximity to a commercial center formed by the route of Park Avenue itself. Park Avenue originally consisted of three separate streets, which ultimately were connected, but the meandering nature of this main corridor has been preserved. The scale and winding path that Park Avenue forms, with an abundant scattering of commercial establishments and beautiful vegetation, is a great strength of the neighborhood and is highly inviting to pedestrian use, as demonstrated in the diagrammatic analysis of the Goodman Street – Oxford Street portion of the neighborhood, in Figure 14. Downtown Rochester, schools, grocery, cultural and religious
centers, and Cobb’s Hill Park and Reservoir are easily accessible by bus, bicycle or foot. City-owned bikes are available for resident use, and all parts of the neighborhood are connected by sidewalks to encourage pedestrian activity. The street pattern generally follows a grid, although blocks vary in size and form, creating much variation and interest in the physical appeal of the area.

In addition, the Park Avenue neighborhood is rich with architectural landmarks, including magnificent churches, public buildings, and private residents designed by historical architects such as Claude Bragdon, the Dryer firm, Carl Schmidt, and Frank Lloyd Wright, while the area is marked by attention to nature and plantings through the past influence of historic nurseries. The George Eastman Museum, which is a National Historic Landmark, is immediately adjacent to the Park Avenue neighborhood.

![Figure 12 (left): Historic Park Ave Hospital. Figure 13 (right): Former Park Ave Hospital today. Source for both figures: www.democratandchronicle.com.](image)

With the influx of rental housing that began in the mid-1900s and the continued appeal of Park Avenue as an invigorating and energetic section of the city, the population of Park Avenue is much younger overall as compared to Maplewood and Pittsford. Transient stay in this community is common and represents the largest segment of housing, with more than 84% of the housing in the form of rental units, and much turnover. Overall poverty in the neighborhood is surprisingly high at 22.8%, with 8.5% of those over the age of 65 living in poverty. Recently, housing costs in the Park Avenue area have risen dramatically, particularly for home ownership. Although the neighborhood’s walkability and easy access to many amenities are strengths for the older generations, if costs in the neighborhood continue to increase, the elderly may be challenged from an economic standpoint.
Figure 14: Diagrammatic analysis of Park Avenue, Goodman Street to Oxford Street, by author.
3. A Pittsford Neighborhood

Pittsford is a suburb of Rochester that lies east and south of the city. As the demographic information set forth above reflects, Pittsford is a very affluent, well-educated community that has grown significantly since the late 1900s. Much of the green space and farmland that once comprised Pittsford is now converted to neighborhoods that are accessible only by car, such as the specific neighborhood that is a subject of this thesis, located south of the Village of Pittsford.
Unlike Maplewood and Park Avenue, where most homes were constructed in the early 1900s, Pittsford experienced its greatest period of growth and building in the late 1900s, and growth since 2000 has continued.

The region that now comprises Pittsford was first settled by Native Americans, particularly the Seneca tribe. In 1788, the Native Americans were forced to relinquish occupation of all land between the Genesee River to the West and Seneca Lake to the East, and this large and fertile land eventually became subdivided over many years. Pittsford was established in 1814, and the village was incorporated in 1827. With the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, the village became a busy shopping port with access to the surrounding agricultural region. Pittsford grew as an agrarian community, where industrialization was not encouraged. Pittsford currently is known for its excellent public school system and residential areas, with abundant parks and recreation. The Village of Pittsford is marked by a thriving and well-preserved Main Street, churches, tree-lined streets and sidewalks, and immediate proximity to the historic Erie Canal.

The Pittsford neighborhood that is the subject of this thesis consists entirely of single family homes located on a dendritic pattern of streets. The neighborhood is accessible by car only, with no sidewalks or street lights along the streets, and amenities such as grocery, community facilities, churches and schools likewise are accessible only by car. As a result, pedestrian activity is virtually non-existent. Lot sizes are in the range of three to four times larger than those in Maplewood and Park Avenue, with no shared spaces other than the cul-de-sacs and streets themselves. The neighborhood sits between two patches of farmland.

The physical features of this Pittsford neighborhood encourage much privacy and tranquility. Given the overall affluence of Pittsford, it is unlikely that residents of this neighborhood will be challenged from an economic standpoint. Since this section of Pittsford that serves as a case study for this thesis is entirely residential and currently is inhabited by younger families, its
attributes are quite different from that of Maplewood and Park Avenue. As noted above with respect to the discussion on the understanding of “community,” physical distinctions such as this become important for purposes of the analytic section of this study. The fact that the Town of Pittsford maintains the largest segment of population over the age of 65 (18.8%) as compared to Maplewood and Park Avenue may be largely due to the existence of several large retirement centers and assisted care facilities in the area, as well as the fact that the elderly here may be better equipped to afford in-home care when needed.
VI. The Needs of the Aging

A. Needs as Spoken by the Aging Residents Themselves

1. Method for obtaining collective input

As set forth in detail below, this thesis considers social and psychological needs of the aging on a society-wide basis through extensive literature. An equally if not more important inquiry is to consider the needs of the aging not necessarily from the standpoint of third party research, but as the elderly themselves have articulated. Specifically, how do the older residents of Maplewood, Park Avenue and Pittsford describe aspects of their neighborhoods that are important to them? When asked what “community” means to these residents, how do they respond? What concerns are articulated by the residents of each community? This underlying inquiry is essential prior to a consideration of sociological and architectural principles that might create a sense of place that responds to the needs of this population.

The approach in which users and residents of a community provide meaningful input in identifying the desired character of the community is important in the placemaking process. For example, in describing their work to rejuvenate a church organization and complex located in a small community, Schneekloth and Shibley describe:

Our role in this process was to discover the generative themes that formed their thinking about what a church was: to confirm their image, vision, and reality and at the same time to question it, add to it, and together re-create a shared theme. We were there to facilitate their competence and to uncover with them the themes that gave them a sense of place, especially the themes that limited them. We explored the language and thoughts they used to interpret, construct and act on reality….

People know many things about the places in which they live, although this knowledge is often unstructured, informal and hesitant. It is not the kind of knowledge normally given voice in professional areas and could therefore be called a form of subjugated knowledge. A critical practice of placemaking attempts to give legitimacy to all forms of knowledge. As such, it does not privilege a single interpretation or professional perspective over the dynamics of the whole place. (Schneekloth and Shibley 1995, 5-6).

Just as Schneekloth and Shibley note the criticality of giving “legitimacy” to all forms of knowledge in a placemaking exercise, so is the input of the residents of the subject communities important to the path toward a model of Living in Place, particularly so that the social and psychological needs of these residents might be obtained.
Accordingly, the research conducted for this thesis included a survey in which older residents were asked a set of questions concerning their perceptions, priorities and needs within the subject communities. (See Survey Form and Summary, Appendix B). The survey was intended to illicit an understanding of what the residents view as necessary to live within their communities in a fulfilled way, and what they consider the term “community” to mean. Residents were asked to identify the attributes of the community that are important to them. In addition, interviews of physicians in geriatric medicine in Rochester were conducted, so that issues of particular concern for older residents in the area could be identified and understood, and interviews of members of Rochester’s LifeSpan organization, which provides healthcare and other assistance to seniors, were conducted to gain an understanding of social issues that the aging in the Rochester area might face in general.

The survey was process was approved through the Human Subjects Research Office at the Rochester Institute of Technology, which oversees the Institutional Review Board system. The survey was administered through neighborhood associations, religious organizations and personal requests. With respect to the use of personal requests, individuals were asked to complete the survey and to distribute it to others in their respective community. The only underlying criteria for participation were that the survey respondent must be of age 60 or older and must reside in one of the three subject communities. The goal was to obtain at least 20 responses within each community, but, more importantly, to obtain a sufficient number of responses in order to identify common themes. With respect to Pittsford, input was obtained from residents of neighborhoods that are comparable in size, location and overall characteristics of the specific neighborhood that is the subject of this study. An overall summary of the survey process is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Process for Survey Administration</th>
<th>Total Survey Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maplewood</td>
<td>Neighborhood association and LifeSpan organization</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park Avenue</td>
<td>Neighborhood association and personal requests</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsford</td>
<td>Religious organization personal requests</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Summary of survey process
2. Common themes

In reviewing the responses to the surveys, an effort was made to identify common themes and to study the responses according to these themes:

**Human Interaction and Trust**

Residents in each community identified human interaction as an important aspect of their well-being. Relationships with neighbors and with other residents emerges as a common theme among all communities. Residents look to their neighbors for gathering together in social engagement and for dependability; the security of knowing that a neighbor is able to lend a hand when needed is fundamental to the aging residents. In addition, in expressing their social interactions and relationship with neighbors, the notion of trust becomes an underlying and connected theme, as well as the frequent sharing of activities and the building of lasting relationships. Residents expressed:

**Maplewood**
- When I think of my community, I think of gathering places. I do not like to use the term “senior center.” For me, my community is a place where everyone can gather.
- The people who live in this neighborhood are very caring. We look out for each other. We care about each other and want to be safe together.
- We never lock our doors. We know all of our neighbors.
- We need more interaction on the streets. Most of the blocks are completely residential. The services and the public spaces are on the periphery. This is a problem. We need to integrate everything in a better way. This will make the community more connected.
- I value the activities in my neighborhood that bring different kinds of people together. It is very diverse and energizing.

**Park Avenue**
- My front porch is conducive to neighborhood interaction.
- Sidewalks are particularly important. And proximity to neighborhood commercial strip—particularly as I age.
- The more densely the areas are populated with front street access of view and interaction, the more conducive to social and safety aspects of knowing our neighbors, and more connection to events in the neighborhood.
- Park Avenue is the concentration of restaurants, small family-owned businesses; easily accessible for residents and popular gathering places for the whole county. I like living in a quality neighborhood…obvious pride shared with all who live here – the diversity of age groups, families with children, lifestyles and genuine acceptance, respect and safety for all.

**Pittsford**
- We are currently in an area where all of our neighbors are empty nesters and we have a great deal in common socially and professionally with them. We enjoy our neighbors and the level of privacy we have in our current setting.
• We are very socially connected to close friends that live in Pittsford. We are also socially connected, but to a much lesser extent, to our neighbors on our cul-de-sac. We have neighborhood gatherings 1 or 2 times a year. But more importantly, neighbors look out for one another and I know that I could depend on them if there is anything I needed.
• I trust my neighbors and am very grateful to be close to my church and all of the activities in the Village of Pittsford.

Access to Nature

The ability to access nature is a theme that was shared within all of the communities. In Maplewood and Park Avenue, the parks and green spaces are identified as centers of activity and community events, as well as features of beauty and respite; in Pittsford, it is the seclusion, beauty and outdoor exercise that nature provides which emerges as the dominant theme.

Residents expressed:

Maplewood
• I love to hear the children playing in the neighborhood. The sound of their voices makes me smile. I also love to hear the birds and to know that I am close to nature. But, it is also very quiet and peaceful.
• It’s nice to have parks where one can go to enjoy their beauty.
• Some of the older people lead walking tours of the river and the gorge, on the walking path along the river. It is good exercise, and it is beautiful. Many people participate, and not all of them are old people!
• The river is important, but there is no way of getting to it. This is a problem. We need better access to the river. We cannot see it from where we live.

Park Avenue
• I feel blessed to have such an excellent parks system so close by.
• There is a feeling of tranquility in our neighborhood, with beautiful trees and nature, as well as activity.
• I love the neighborhood’s residential “urban forest” that keeps the streets tree-lined. This is relaxing, beautiful and “homey.”

Pittsford
• We enjoy outdoor activities like biking, walking, golfing, etc. Easy access to parks (Mendon Ponds Park is right across the street from us), the Erie canal, golf courses, play grounds (for our grandchildren) are important physical features.
• I love being more out in the country, but not inconveniently so. It is beautiful where we live, large lots, open space, lots of trees, deer roaming everywhere that are beautiful to see (even though they eat our flowers and shrubs!). It is quiet and peaceful but we are not isolated.
• Gardens and foliage are important to me. The beauty of nature and the environment around me are a statement of endurance.
History

A strong sense of history and its importance in building a community are expressed by the residents of Maplewood and Park Avenue. The residents of these communities point to historical places as those which provide meaning in their lives and as sites of unifying activity, and they point to history and culture as reflections of important memories, which is an aspect of their community that is fundamental to them. Interestingly, while residents of Pittsford express the interest in traditional activities within the Village of Pittsford, their interest in the actual history or heritage of their immediate neighborhood and surroundings is not expressed at all.

Comments included:

**Maplewood**

- The Maplewood Rose Garden is a center of our community. It is historic. We have festivals, music and many gatherings in the garden. It is part of the history of our neighborhood.
- This is a very historic part of the city. Many roots of the city are here. We need to focus on ways to preserve these memories.
- My family was among the first to settle in this neighborhood many years ago. There is pride in this history. There are many landmarks that we must preserve. I am worried that younger generations do not respect the history.

**Park Avenue**

- I feel a deep emotional connection to my city—its history (and my own) and its rich traditions.
- This is the preserved historic residential area of the city with a consistent atmosphere of this character, especially in the varied architecture of the houses.
- The historic elementary school on our street adds to the sense of community.
- There are seven beautiful and historic churches in this neighborhood which are marks of the history of the city and its architecture.

Security

For residents of Maplewood in particular, safety and security are recurring concerns. Maplewood residents consistently express a strong need for the protection of police and fire services and the strength of community organizations as deterrents to crime. Visibility is important to these residents, as a means of bringing safety to the streets. In contrast, in Pittsford, the expression of safety is in a positive sense, rather than a concern for harm; residents describe a sense of safety that emerges mainly from their feeling of seclusion and trust in their neighbors.

The comments of residents include:
Maplewood
- We have a group in our neighborhood called “PacTac.” We walk around the neighborhood to help spot areas where we need more safety or security. We try to make ourselves known and reach out to residents to have a network where we can communicate, if there are concerns about safety.
- I think we need brighter lighting on residential streets, to deter crime. And I think we need to continue tree trimming annually to assure that tree growth is not blocking the existing lighting. I think we need to keep the police in our neighborhoods as a crime deterrent. We might ask that officers find a nearby residential street to park and do their reports and their paperwork. The presence of their vehicles deters crime.

Park Avenue
- I feel safe in my neighborhood but there is more crime than there used to be. The parking on the streets is a problem. Our neighborhood group maintains a crime report which I regularly follow.
- I value the safety and security of my home and my neighborhood.
- Many of the homeowners share pride of the architecture of their homes. With more renters and transient population, there is a sense of neighborhood “watch.”

Pittsford
- I have everything in this community for all of my needs — groceries, church, safety and the trust and companionship of neighbors. I can take long walks in the landscape. I feel secure and fulfilled. Not threatened.
- Because we live on a quiet street in Pittsford, sidewalks in our neighborhood were not needed. But certainly street lighting, at least at the entrance to the street is important. Having green space along with the residential space is also important.
- The seclusion and privacy make this area feel safe for me.
- My community is a source of stability for me. It is secure and safe.

Serving a Role
A sense of purpose and active participation in community activities emerge as very strong themes among Maplewood and Park Avenue residents. These residents participate in grass roots activity, neighborhood associations, festivals, and other activities that reflect a need and interest in vibrancy and collective energy. In contrast, while residents of Pittsford express the need to remain active, their day-to-day life is more personal and private in nature. The comments include:

Maplewood
- In our neighborhood, lots of old people help lead activities. We have gardeners that work at the community garden at the YMCA. They grow vegetables for residents. Others also work on the medians in the roads and on street corners, to plant flowers. It helps us to feel as if we are contributing to the neighborhood in a positive way.
- So many of our residents have interesting backgrounds and experience. They volunteer to give lectures or classes at our membership association. We like to think that we can
offer things that are ageless. We volunteer a lot. We like the opportunity to be a role model for younger people.

- I belong to the Maplewood Neighborhood Association and attend monthly meetings. I also attend the Police Citizen Interaction Committee Meetings (PCIC). I am a site Chair at Sacred Heart Cathedral for the Board of Elections. I lead a book club. I’m well known in the neighborhood with many contacts in the Northwest Quadrant. I also lead a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) with members all over the Northwest Quadrant and a few in other quadrants. And I volunteer with a local animal rescue group.

**Park Avenue**
- I have been president of two neighborhood associations and am very active in preservation issues, which is gratifying and definitely creates a sense of belonging.
- I love the opportunities that I get to know and work with young people. I tend to surround myself and grow close to those who share my interest in making Rochester a better place to live – through politics and work in the nonprofit arena.
- I have increasingly gravitated to more grassroots activities: helping maintain my neighborhood park, assisting refugee families, providing support to grieving families. I have also provided a variety of occasional technical support and guidance to a variety of local non-profits including the United Way, Lifespan and Catholic Charities.

**Pittsford**
- Our connections are mainly through our work and friends in Pittsford whom we have known for many years.
- We enjoy participating in the activities in the Village of Pittsford. The holidays and the Erie Canal…many activities for families and children.

**Sense of Belonging**

Within each community, residents describe their attachment to their home and surroundings as an element that greatly contributes to their happiness. This sense of attachment is subtle, subjective, and different in each community, but the idea of attachment or “belongingness” is consistently expressed by all. For example, residents of Maplewood, many of whose families have lived in the neighborhood for decades, feel an historic attachment to the community and a strong sense of responsibility for and interest in its future. These residents identify with the many transitions that Maplewood has experienced. In Park Avenue, residents feel attachment to the character of the neighborhood, particularly with respect to the architecture, density, diverse fabric of streets and buildings, and overall vibrancy. In Pittsford, the sense of belonging is one that is rooted in the sense of ownership, seclusion, and beauty of natural surroundings. Residents expressed:
**Maplewood**

- Our neighborhood is in transition. It has changed a lot. The old people who live here have institutional memory. We want to maintain our memories but we also want the neighborhood to be revived and healthy again. Some of the local businesses work with us to try to maintain a good quality of life for the neighborhood.
- For me, this neighborhood is my roots. My husband and I have decided to move to Florida next winter because we cannot tolerate the cold weather any longer, and one of our children is in Florida. But, I don’t want to leave here because this is my community!
- Keeping rental property to a minimum, to protect property values. Encouraging first time home buyers over someone buying rental property.
- Many landlords do not take care of their property. This needs to be addressed. Tenants are sometimes very loud and cause disruption. I have called the police many times because of the inappropriate noise levels.

**Park Avenue**

- I like city living: its diversity, its walkability, its culture. The older I get, the more important it is that I feel a part of a neighborhood. It is important to me to have neighbors of different ages, races, economic backgrounds. Also, my family has strong ties to Rochester and I have a number of family members who live in the area.
- The more densely populated area in our neighborhoods lends itself to greater diversity, especially in terms of age disparity. This provides more thoughtful interaction and appreciation from young to old. There is a sense of vibrancy in the area.
- Our neighborhood has experienced a lot of transition. It used to be single family homes. Now, there are many students and transients who do not take care of the property and do not have a sense of ownership in it.
- The term “community”, of course, means different things to different people. Most commonly, I suppose, it means an actual physical place. A city. A neighborhood. For me, the physical connection to Rochester is part of why it’ll always be my place: the festivals, the architecture, the majestic trees, the music, the theatre. But as importantly, in defining what I most value in a community, I would point to the traits I find in my friends. They are honest, passionate, hard-working, idealistic, undeterred by temporary setbacks, dogged in their commitment to social justice. I want to be surrounded by people who bring out the best in me and inspire me.
- Community to me means regularly feeling at home in a stable, quality, safe environment. I like long-time neighbors like myself and new neighbors who are looking for a quality, professional, historic neighborhood.
- My neighborhood is easy-access, user friendly, with many signs and landmarks that make it a destination. I am surrounded by everything I need, with grocery, restaurants, stores and library. We have quality amenities and services.

**Pittsford**

- When we moved after our kids were grown, I wanted neighbors, but not a neighborhood.
- My daughter moved back to Pittsford along with her husband and our grandchildren four years ago. I feel tremendously fortunate to have my grandchildren 10 minutes away and to be able to be part of their lives. That is family but in a sense part of my community too.
- My community is my neighborhood but also my church, the golf club and many friends.
- We raised and educated our children in this neighborhood. The memories are very strong and lasting!

3. Summary
A summary of this input from the residents of the subject communities is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Themes</th>
<th>Maplewood</th>
<th>Park Avenue</th>
<th>Pittsford</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>Interaction is important as a means to build social ties and safety</td>
<td>Day-to-day human interaction, on formal and informal levels among all age groups</td>
<td>Trust in and dependability of neighbors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Nature</td>
<td>The river and rose garden as bonding and sentimental features of the community</td>
<td>City parks provide balance to residential and commercial; grandeur of trees and shrubs</td>
<td>Seclusion, peacefulness and beauty of nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>History is part of our future; embrace and recognize history</td>
<td>Rich architectural history; heritage of development of the City of Rochester</td>
<td>History of the neighborhood and its surroundings is not articulated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Safety is a critical and ongoing concern; trust through connections and vigilance</td>
<td>Ongoing interaction and daily activity provide basis for secure environment</td>
<td>Safety is perceived due to privacy and seclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving a Role</td>
<td>Strong ties to community functions, to bring value to the community as a whole</td>
<td>Interaction with all ages; recognition that the elderly are continuity in the community</td>
<td>Roles are more personal and tied to family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td>Attachment to the history and memories of the community, with understanding of transitions in neighborhood character; concern that historic character is being threatened</td>
<td>Strong sense of the character and identity of the community; diversity in the population</td>
<td>Attachment in a more private sense: neighbors, schools, family, tranquility of the setting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Summary of survey data
B. Primary Society-Wide Needs of the Aging

This background and detail of what the residents of the subject communities consider to be important to their quality of life leads to a consideration of society-wide issues in which key needs of the aging population have been studied. The specific understandings of the residents of the subject communities, in combination with common themes on a broader basis, provide a solid foundation for the ability to interpret the needs of the aging in sociological and architectural principles of sense of place.

1. The Need for Social Interaction
   a. The importance of social interaction

Focus on social interaction for the elderly can and should be a cornerstone of design considerations in our communities if we are to responsibly address the fact that the population of the aging continues to increase and that a design that is able to adapt to the needs of the elderly and maintain a sense of place for them can help to address the significant social issue that we face in caring for this population.

Much research exists by which to study the aging process and the concept of social integration and needs in the later stages of life. In their text, *Social Integration in the Second Half of Life*, editors Karl Pillemer and colleagues assembled a body of information focusing on life-course analysis within a demographic and geographic context, in order to study the balance between integration and isolation. (Pillemer 2000). The editors describe their study as “a temporal and institutional focus to the topic of social integration, examining transitions and trajectories in the context of existing and emerging institutional arrangements that can facilitate or hamper life transitions, ongoing integrative ties, and subsequent quality of life.” (Pillemer 2000, 8). Focusing on integration for those of age 50 or older, they define social integration as “the entire set of an individual’s connections to others in his or her environment.” The definition is sociological in nature, referring to both participation in meaningful roles, and a network of social contacts (Pillemer 2000, 8-9).

The research in the Pillemer text ties social integration to the concept of “embeddedness”, meaning the degree to which an individual is embedded in a broader network of social relations. Integration “involves the formation and maintenance of a set of relations in which a person gives and receives effective support and social approval.” The ties consist of friendships and
affiliations with community organizations, particularly those in which there is face-to-face interaction and a process of identification has taken place.” (Booth 1991).

The Pillemer text explores the history underlying thoughts on social integration, explaining “social thinkers investigating the upheavals of both the industrial revolution and the political revolution in France saw individuals becoming separated from communal structures as the old world of village and church disappeared.” (Pillemer 2000, 20). Pillemer explains certain social trends that began to emerge in the 1960s, in which an attitude of individualism seemed to take precedence over the collective good, noting that the focus on individualism frustrates and impacts human desires for community, interdependence and engagement. In Pillemer’s view as well as those of much research that he cites, these concerns directly tie to the social integration of older persons and their ability to remain part of a collectively diverse environment. Finally, although the need for social integration is not limited to the elderly, Pillemer’s research demonstrates that the issue becomes more critical for the elderly because their social networks naturally diminish over time. With the aging process, the opportunities for social integration are attenuated and less frequent, the average size of social networks drops precipitously between ages 60 and 65, perhaps due to the loss of work role, and further declines occur due to the onset of health problems, loss of a spouse, loss of mobility, and declining income (Pillemer 2000, 34). In sum, the need for social interaction seems to escalate with the aging process because of the physical and societal conditions that cause the aging to become isolated.

b. **Risks resulting from social isolation**

Given the vast data on the increasing numbers of our elderly population, recent studies and publications attempt to bring awareness to the specific needs and conditions of the elderly that are associated with isolation. In research published by Current Gerontology and Geriatrics Research, the authors focus on the concept of “elder orphans”, which they define as “aged, community-dwelling individuals who are socially or physically isolated, without an available known family member or designated surrogate or caregiver.” (Carney, et. al. 2016). The researchers focus on this population as a high risk, vulnerable segment of our society, in an effort to call to action health-care providers, government agencies, and general public, to address their needs and minimize risks and consequences (Carney, et. al. 2016).

John Cacioppo is a leading researcher in the study of social interaction and its resulting health effects. He is the author of many texts, reports and studies on the concept of social
relationships and their relation to broad-based morbidity and mortality effects. Cacioppo has written:

People used to think that infants required only their materialist needs to be addressed, and the view that physical needs (compared to social needs) are of primary importance in older adults remains widely held today. The biological fact remains that we are fundamentally a social species, and our nature is to recognize, interact, and form relationships. Substantial evidence has accumulated to suggest that social relationships are important for mental and physical well-being across the lifespan.

(Cacioppo 2014, 64).

Cacioppo explains that the process of social relationships actually includes a complex set of activities, such as observation, recognition, communication skills, orchestrating many diverse relationships, navigating hierarchies, social norms and cultural issues (Cacioppo 2014). Significantly, social relationships not only impact general behavior but might also have direct effects on the brain, biology and health. Cacioppo explains that the most fundamental characteristics of isolation are the extent to which an individual is socially isolated (objective isolation) and the extent to which the individual feels socially isolated (subjective isolation): “The aversive feeling of loneliness serves to prompt us to renew the connections we need to insure survival and to promote social trust, cohesiveness, and collective action….Loneliness, if ignored, can have damaging effects that contribute to deleterious mental and physical health.” (Cacioppo 2014, 66).

Although not specifically targeted at the elderly population, recent research conducted by faculty of the Department of Psychology at Brigham Young University demonstrates the health impacts that may result from a lack of social connections, concluding that the risk associated with social isolation and loneliness is comparable to well-established risk factors for mortality, such as obesity, immunization, physical activity, substance abuse and access to health care (Holt-Lunstad, et. al. 2015). Indeed, this research concluded that individuals lacking social connections are at risk for premature mortality, that the risks of loneliness and social isolation are similar to research conducted on obesity nearly three decades ago and that the risks may reach epidemic levels as more people live alone.

In an extensive study of 755 individuals of age 60 and older with an average age of 71, research led by faculty at the University of Texas at El Paso studied the relation between loneliness and health, concluding that social isolation and loneliness can contribute to general health issues (Tomka, et. al. 2006). The study collected a vast body of research showing that
social isolation and loneliness are related to negative health outcomes, including cardiovascular health, immunity systems, and anxiety, and that social support of various types and sources is associated with positive outcomes. The research included various types of social support and their impact on the health of an elderly population, with a particular focus on emotional support, defined as “a feeling of belonging” or the “feeling that one is cared for by some significant other or others.” (Tomka, et. al. 2006, 361). The study concluded that loneliness and social support, particularly in the sense of “belongingness,” play important roles in the health of the aging population (Tomka, et. al. 2006, 378).

In research conducted by the Department of Medicine at the University of California, 1600 individuals participated in a study concerning possible connections between loneliness and the ability to perform tasks involving mobility or activity (Persinotto, et. al. 2012). The average age of participants was 71 years, and participants were asked if they felt isolated or lacked companionship. The results showed a strong correlation between those who felt lonely and the ability to perform such tasks, while loneliness was associated with an increased risk of death. Defining loneliness as the “subjective feeling of isolation, not belonging, or lacking companionship,” the researchers concluded:

Reducing the risk of adverse health outcomes is dependent on much more than medical care. This study demonstrates that loneliness is an identifiable and measurable risk factor for morbidity and mortality. Because loneliness is a subjective feeling of social distress that encompasses lacking companionship and a sense of not belonging, it is not adequately captured by qualitative measure of social isolation….Based on our findings, we hypothesize that health outcomes in older people may be improved by focusing on policies that promote social engagement and more importantly, by helping elders develop and maintain satisfying interpersonal relationships.

(Persinotto, et. al. 2012, 1082) (emphasis added).

Conclusions from this research on the risks of isolation among the aging point to the fact that isolation is a risk in and of itself, as well as a risk that can lead to greater consequences. Human behavior relies upon social interaction as a means of remaining connected within and attached to an environment, while the consequences of isolation and lack of interaction go beyond social ramifications to include a host of negative physical and mental health outcomes.
c. Loneliness among the aging and its impact on the community

Given that this thesis concerns the demographic diversity of a community as a whole, and the richness that a community might experience through a model in which the aging remain connected, it is important to consider issues associated with loneliness in the aging that have broader society-wide impacts. In 2017, IBM Corporation’s Aging Strategic Initiative published a report addressing the implications of loneliness for the elderly, noting that loneliness among the aging is a “relatively new societal issue” because of increased longevity and the continued dispersion of the extended family structure. The study focuses mainly on issues and questions concerning services and information technology as they relate to the elderly, while the report itself represents a summary of research and literature, rather than an original scholarly work. However, the observations in the report in terms of the societal-wide impact of loneliness are insightful and useful in the consideration of the structure of a community.

The IBM Report notes that, for the aging population, loneliness is “more than a state of mind – it is an emerging risk factor that has implications for personal, economic and societal well-being.” Stakeholders ranging from business leaders to planners to social service organizations are listed as those who have a “significant interests in preventing, identifying and addressing the root causes of loneliness” and that, without appropriate proactive steps, “older adults face continued detachment from the mainstream.” Similarly, the report points to literature that has identified “hidden costs” associated with loneliness, including caregivers, the impact to communities that lose contributions from older citizens as they become disengaged, and the challenges in the management of overall social care budgets, concluding that the costs “represent a public health conundrum that has the potential to worsen as the older adult population continues to grow.” (IBM Corporation 2017).

In addition, as further discussed below in connection with sociological understandings of sense of place, the IBM Report identifies the notion of social capital as linked to the aging population. Pointing directly to the role that the aging can play in society and the loss that society can experience if the aging are removed from the network of social capital, the report states:

Similar to treating physical illness, the most effective approach to addressing loneliness entails identification and taking preventive action. Knowing when people are at risk, organizations can proactively help them build and maintain their social capital, as well as mitigate the physical and social losses that naturally occur as one ages.
The invisibility of healthy, active older adults in popular culture fuels a sense of isolation and loss of recognition as valued society members. Barriers to addressing loneliness can be grouped into two types: obstacles to taking action and lack of effective solutions. (IBM Corporation 2017).

According to the Joint Center for Housing Studies report discussed above, the existing housing stock in the United States is “unprepared to meet the escalating need for affordability, accessibility, social connectivity and supportive services” that an elderly population will require (Harvard University). At a broad scale, issues of high housing costs, lack of accessibility features in the existing housing stock, deficiencies in transportation and pedestrian infrastructure that lead to isolation for older adults in particular, and the complexities of our health care system are stressing the capacity to which our society can support the needs of an increasingly elderly population (Harvard University). In sum, in both tangible ways that can be measured and quantified, and intangible ways that are more subtle and pertain to the qualitative social capital aspects of a community, the concerns associated with isolation among the aging population directly affect society as a whole.

2. Sense of Purpose

The needs of the elderly can be grouped according to several categories not unlike those first identified by the psychologist Harold Maslow. Maslow is credited with study and development of theories of self-actualization, which is the desire of humans to realize their full potential. Maslow studied mentally healthy individuals and concluded that, once basic needs are satisfied, “we may still often (if not always) expect that a new discontent and restlessness will soon develop, unless the individual is doing what he is fitted for. A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be ultimately happy. What a man can be, he must be. This need we may call self-actualization.” (Maslow 2000, 380).

Although the topic of self-actualization is a concept that is not specific to the elderly, the hierarchy of needs that Maslow developed can be a basis for studying needs of the elderly and for considering how a community might respond to and fulfill these needs. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, which culminates with the notion of self-actualization, consists of the following:

- **Physiological**: Breathing, food, water, sex, sleep, homeostasis
- **Safety**: Security of body, employment, resources, morality, the family, health, property
- **Love/Belonging**: Friendship, family, intimacy
- **Esteem**: Self-esteem, confidence, achievement, respect of others, respect by others
Self-actualization: Morality, creativity, spontaneity, problem solving, lack of prejudice, acceptance of facts

The architectural theorist Sarah Williams Goldhagen studies the teachings of philosopher Martha Nussbaum and the economist Amartya Sen, to explain the societal importance of theories not unlike Maslow’s notion of self-actualization. In her extensive insight on the link between cognition, well-being and sense of place, Goldhagen writes:

A well-ordered, ethically justifiable society, maintain Nussbaum and Sen, must guarantee more than negative freedoms, by which they mean our right to be free from political and social institutions that thwart the pursuit of basic human needs, such as to protect, feed and educate oneself and one’s family. The well-ordered, ethically just society ought to actively support and promote positive freedoms, by which they mean the liberty to develop our individual capabilities so that each one of us has the tools and positions to pursue a full, successful, and meaningful life.

(Goldhagen 2017, 276-277).

Similar to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and the importance of self-actualization, in his text, Pillemer devotes extensive discussion to the theory of “disengagement” in analyzing needs in the later stages of life. This theory begins with the observation that elderly people withdraw from social roles and that an older person begins to disengage before it is absolutely necessary from a physical standpoint. “This process removes people from vitally necessary social roles before they become incapable of performing them. Elders interact with fewer people and their role sets come to exclude roles considered vital to the larger society.” (Pillemer 2000, 21-22).

Pillemer further explains the impact of disengagement with an analysis of views first posited by the sociologist Irving Rosow. Pillemer notes that “key problems of later life are not health care or economic well-being, as important as these may be…the most significant problems of older people are intrinsically social.” (Pillemer 2000, 22). Faced with the prospect of disengagement, old people suffer from losses in social roles and group memberships, leading to alienation, isolation and role ambiguity in old age. The role of “old person” is unstructured, while society tends to devalue the elderly as a class, leading to further isolation:

…their loss of social roles and group memberships does undermine their social integration. They become marginal participants, often ignored, rejected, and discriminated against by younger persons, and in extreme cases they are seriously isolated from the life around them….Under these conditions, the social world of older people contracts. Their estrangement from previous roles and memberships deprives them of central group supports as well as responsibility, power, privilege, resources, and prestige.

(Pillemer 2000, 23).
Pillemer explains research conducted over several decades, showing that social integration in the form of involvement in multiple roles supports well-being. “In sum, the literature on social support and on multiple roles shows a degree of consensus unusual in social research: social integration does matter. Greater embeddedness in social roles and in networks of social support helps promote health and happiness in the second half of life.” (Pillemer 2000, 25).

These notions of disengagement and loss of purpose also have been studied from a scientific standpoint. In a study of community residents where the average age was 81 years, and an overall age range of 65 to 93 years, researchers identified six themes as critical to the ability of the residents to remain living in their homes (Dupuis-Blanchard 2015). In addition to the more immediate or tangible needs including access to services, housing conditions, general physical health, and income, the researchers identified social support and attitude, and self-determination, as critical to the residents’ ability to remain in their home. These latter themes are closely related to the idea of self-actualization and role identity:

A positive attitude was described by older participants as essential for aging in place. Such an attitude was defined as being optimistic about the future and believing that one can adapt to any circumstances. Although many participants mentioned the difficulties of staying in their home, the advantages seemed to outweigh any challenges. Many of the advantages mentioned by older participants and family members included quality of life, tranquility, independence, and socializing. Nearly all participants were adamant about staying in their homes for as long as possible....Self-determination was also an important element of autonomy and aging in place, and was defined as doing what is needed to stay independent. (Dupuis-Blanchard 2015).

3. Trust

As the survey of community residents demonstrated, the theme of trust is one that repeatedly emerges among the aging. Residents point to their ability to trust their neighbors and their community systems as important aspects in their well-being and sense of security. While trust is cited as highly important to the community residents, it is a topic that, in isolation, seems less well researched in terms of needs of the elderly. However, trust is a concept that underlies many of the more fully explored themes that pertain to aging, and, for this reason, it is worthy of discussion. For example, as the discussion on sense of place will address, architectural theorists have noted that, without trust, meaningful relationships cannot be built. Trust arguably underlies the potential for serving a purpose within a community, in the sense that, the fostering of trust will generate interdependencies among members of a community. Sociologists such as Andrew
Dannenberg, Howard Frumkin and Richard Jackson have written extensively on the fact that the aging represent a “vulnerable” population and that, as such, their longing for trust is heightened. (Dannenberg, Frumkin and Jackson, 2011, 129 – 145).

Recent studies on a society-wide level have demonstrated the strong connection between trust and well-being, particularly among the aging. For example, in a recent study conducted at the University of Buffalo, researchers concluded that, while the inclination of the elderly to readily trust others can, in many cases, be a concerning liability, at the same time, the notion of trust is highly important to an overall sense of well-being (Poulin and Hasse 2015). Underlying this research was the premise that, importantly, certain age-related changes may actually “represent gains in functioning,” as opposed to decline. The research demonstrated that the capacity to build trusting relationships is among the functions that improve with age and that a basic sense of trust is not only fundamental in early childhood but appears to benefit a sense of well-being throughout the lifespan, and particularly in later years: “the bidirectional association between trust and well-being shows that not only is trust a resource for well-being, but well-being also serves as a resource for adaptive interpersonal functioning.” (Poulin and Hasse 2015, 619). Not only did older adults show higher interpersonal trust as compared to younger adults, but the higher level of trust predicted higher well-being in terms of life satisfaction, happiness and general health. The researchers conclude that “an aging world may become a more trusting world and that heightened trust may represent a resource rather than a threat for well-being throughout the life span.” (Poulin and Hasse 2015, 619).

As set forth in the discussion on sense of place which follows, sociologists and architectural theorists have focused on the notion of trust in assessing a community structure. A prime example is that of Jane Jacobs, whose work in observing the patterns of streets and sidewalks and their ability to spark social interaction is fundamentally grounded in the concept of trust; without an underlying capacity for and nurturing of trust among both residents and visitors of a community, social interaction is impeded. Similarly, James Kunstler writes that trust is a concept that helps cultivate social capital, while economic theories on societal structures have pointed to trust as a driver of economic and social sustainability (Knack 2001). In this sense, trust, social interaction and the sustainability of a community are closely related concepts, and, as research by those such as Poulin and Hasse demonstrate, the capacity for trust and its resulting impact on well-being strengthen throughout the life course.
Research such as this closely parallels the sentiments expressed by the residents of Maplewood, Park Avenue and Pittsford. The notion of trust breeds a sense of security and the capacity to develop greater social interaction, while the “age-old” phrase of “trusting ones neighbor” takes on great meaning for the holistic building of a community. Particularly in Maplewood, where residents express concern over safety and security, trust becomes an important catalyst in building a secure environment.

C. Conclusions: The Needs of the Aging Serving as a Basis for Living in Place

Based upon the survey of the residents of the subject communities and the literature that addresses society-wide needs of the aging, social and psychological needs of the elderly can be identified to serve as the basis for this Living in Place study. As set forth at the outset of this research, an understanding of the underlying concerns and needs of the aging, and what they consider to be important for an enriching quality of life, are the foundation on which the subject communities might be assessed, in the path to Living in Place. The common themes that emerge from the understandings and values of the community residents, together with the issues that permeate society on a broader basis, are captured as follows:

- **Interaction:** The need for social interaction and its link to both physical and mental health are expressed strongly in the reviewed literature, while the theme of interaction with others, particularly in the sense of trusting relationships and their association with the fostering of a secure environment, is identified as important to the well-being of residents. The need for interaction that stimulates social relationships and encounters, from intimate to informal, is underscored by the community residents and by sociological research as important to the fostering of quality of life for the aging.

- **Sense of Purpose:** Particularly in consideration of the benefit that might ensue to all residents of a particular community that is demographically diverse, the ability of the elderly to play a role and contribute to their environment in a meaningful way, whether it be through collective activities or through more interpersonal relationships, is a strong indicator of the quality of life of the aging population. Their continued integration, especially in the sense of reciprocal contributions, is important for the aging themselves and for the community as a whole.

- **Spirit of Belonging:** Although it may be the most subjective of the social needs addressed in this study, a sense of belonging is a theme that is expressed by the
residents and is reflected in many of the concepts explored in sociological literature, closely relating to the concepts of interaction and sense of purpose. Feelings of attachment, history, memory and a reaction to the overall character of an environment are sentiments that the residents themselves express and that may in fact foster the ability of a community to sustain itself.

The IBM Report on aging concludes that the rate at which the aging population is growing is creating a situation in which we much consider a “redesign” of our “whole society” and that the potential exists to “engage with new and existing industries, organizations and agencies to create more holistic solutions that better support the aging population.” (IBM Corporation). This way of thinking poses an enormous challenge. However, in starting with an understanding of the core needs of the aging as a framework by which to approach the composition of our communities, perhaps it is possible. As set forth above, the path of this thesis is to translate the values and needs of the aging through the building of a sense of place, and to then make manifest certain notions of sense of place through community attributes, to build a model for Living in Place. The very “roots” or features of existing communities, some of which may be straightforward and others more complex, might be the method of “redesign” suggested in the IBM report. Phillip Stafford is again instructive:

Good design of elder-friendly spaces must be based on a framework that integrates the social and the physical – that brings together designers across the spectrum. Design principles, moreover, should emerge from an understanding of the lifeworld of the prospective users – the kind of understanding that derives from close observation of how people live and what they value.

(Stafford 2009, 142).
VII. Framework: The Needs of the Aging Interpreted in Sense of Place

The preceding literature review, data and research establish that our aging population is growing and is posing critical issues as well as opportunities for society. The elderly in the communities that are the subject of this thesis have an understanding, or at least an idea, of community, based on what they perceive to be their quality-of-life needs, while, on a broader basis, studies have identified important social and psychological needs of the elderly.

The remaining path of this study is, first, to discuss the manner in which the identified needs of the elderly might be interpreted in sociological and architectural principles of sense of place, and, second, to propose how these understandings of sense of place are physically manifested in community attributes, allowing for an analysis of the subject communities. In connecting the needs of the elderly, to understandings of sense of place, to physical attributes, a path forms for to build communities that allow our aging to Live in Place, experiencing a fulfilled quality of life.

This assessment is not formulaic; rather, by virtue of the fact that the notion of sense of place is complex and often more theoretical than scientific, the assessment itself it is theoretical. Moreover, the ideas associated with sense of place do not work in silos. Concepts overlap and are highly nuanced, and the proposed framework for analysis does not work in a mutually exclusive manner; the use of certain physical attributes may very well serve more than one underlying need. Finally, this thesis does not attempt to prove that the proposed community attributes do in fact support the needs of the elderly; any attempt to do so likely would require many years of observation and data collection. Rather, the intent is to propose a structure by which to link the identified needs of the elderly – interaction, sense of purpose, and a spirit of belonging, as specifically defined above - to understandings of sense of place, expressed as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs of the Aging</th>
<th>Translated in Notions of Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interaction:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Place as Connections:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social interfaces, from casual to intimate, built from visibility and trust</td>
<td>Intersections in day-to-day lives and activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sense of Purpose:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Place as Experience and Place as Social Capital:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A role within the community that brings value, individually and collectively</td>
<td>A sense of moving through, being within, and contributing to an</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>environment, on a personal level and for a greater good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spirit of Belonging:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Place as Identity:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A sense of stability, comfort and inner security</td>
<td>Attachment based upon character and context, history, and memory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Framework for Sense of Place analysis
VIII. Understandings of Sense of Place

So what links these examples: a child’s room, an urban garden, a market town, New York City, Kosovo and the Earth? What makes them all places and not simply a room, a garden, a town, a world city, a new nation, and an inhabited planet? Our answer is they are all spaces which people have made meaningful. They are all spaces people are attached to in one way or another. This is the most straightforward and common definition of place – a meaningful location.

(Creswell 2004, 12).

Tim Creswell’s comments on “place” provide an appropriate introduction for a challenge of this thesis. The idea of “sense of place” has been defined in many ways. It is a concept that is highly personal and subjective. It is not the same for everyone. The architect and historian Dolores Hayden refers to place as “one of the trickiest words in the English language” and explains the breadth of the term, writing that professions including architects, photographers, cultural geographers and poets have “relied on sense of place as an aesthetic concept but often settle for ‘the personality of a location’ as a way of defining it.” (Hayden 1995, 15). Moreover, the concept of sense of place is one that, although rooted in much history, recently has become the subject of “scholarly renaissance” across many disciplines (Adams, et. al. 2001).

In the discussion that follows, the intent is to set forth various understandings of “sense of place,” from both sociological and architectural perspectives, and to propose how these understandings might represent an interpretation of the needs of the aging as discussed above.

A. Stimulating Interaction: Place as Connections

As long as humans have dwelled on earth, we have found ways to make our places meaningful. The making of places – our homes, our neighborhoods, our places of work and play – not only changes and maintains the physical world of living; it also is a way we make our communities and connect with other people. In other words, placemaking is not just about the relationship of people to their places; it also creates relationships among people in places.

(Schneekloth and Shibley 1995, 1).

This excerpt from Schneekloth’s and Shibley’s work captures a common theme in the idea of place. Connections among people, and the way in which we can use architectural and social constructs to accomplish connections, are widely recognized as core principles in the creation of sense of place. In his text, Life between Buildings, Jan Gehl focuses on the opportunities for interaction that can arise based upon careful attention to detail in spaces between buildings, advocating that it is the space between buildings, rather than the buildings themselves, that
should be a priority in the design of a community. Gehl writes that a form of social activity, from low to high intensity, formal or informal, occurs each time two people occupy a space, and that architects and planners can affect such possibilities: “Wherever there are people…it is generally true that people and human activities attract other people.” (Gehl 2011, 14 – 23). Similarly, Goldhagen points to the ability of a place to strengthen and enable humans’ inherent need for social interaction:

Humans are decidedly social beings. The individual and social worlds that we inherit and create are strongly influenced by the places where our engagements and interactions transpire. Places situate us as individuals among others, and places help us become and sustain ourselves as members of the many overlapping social groups through which we live our lives. (Goldhagen 2017, 181).

Christopher Alexander and colleagues’ A Pattern Language is a well-known treatise that proposes an approach to design in which each physical element within a neighborhood, community or other space has meaning only when it is connected to other parts. Physical elements are not mere objects but comprise orders of connecting relationships. Alexander and his colleagues proposed, for example, that the front of a house is to be understood not just as a wall with holes in it, but as a connection between the house and the street. Therefore, the front of the house is not a shell, but a relationship between two places. In extending these theories to the environment as a whole, Alexander’s premise is that the whole built environment consists not of physical things per se, but of relationships between and within other spaces.

Proposing that elements are to be connected through patterns, which can be repeated again and again, and that each element functions only when it is part of a connected whole, Alexander provided a language for design and building in way that encourages the development of human connections and interaction. Alexander’s patterns were based on human emotional and psychological needs, such as the need for green spaces, light, socialization, contemplation, and activity. In other words, and for purposes of the Living in Place framework that this thesis proposes, it is through the detailed, thoughtful physical connections of spaces in our environments by which we might activate human connection, and, in the case of the aging in particular, stimulate the important need for social interaction. Moreover, Alexander included “old people everywhere” as one of his guidelines, proposing that the presence of the elderly contribute to meaning within the environment. Phillip Stafford comments on Alexander’s guideline as follows:
The guideline works at both the micro and macro levels, for both the physical and the social environments. Once applied, we might see more park benches, better placement of bus stops, retired tutors in every school, more old people in advertisements, more old people in parks watching children play, juxtaposed adult and child day care, more ramps, wider doors, better lighting, and a likely consequence, safer and more sociable streets. (Stafford 2009, 142).

With respect to a community or neighborhood-wide system, connectivity is often defined or established through the street pattern. Howard Frumkin defines connectivity as “how destinations are linked through transportation systems,” noting that one means of considering the connectivity of a neighborhood is the ease of “going around the block.” (Frumkin 2004, 7). Frumkin explains that a well-connected street network is one that will encourage and allow human interaction with many street linkages and that the street arrangement with the greatest connectivity is the grid pattern, which forms a regular system of intersections forming small blocks. Similarly, in a consideration of sustainable communities, Patrick Condron writes that an interconnected system provides more than one path to reach a certain point, which inevitably results in interaction (Condon 2010, 39). In contrast, a dendritic system organizes streets into a hierarchy depending upon the amount of traffic that they will carry, with major streets at the core, to funnel traffic across the region, and residential “arterial” streets at the edges, with few or no connections between them (Frumkin 2004, 10). Condon describes the dendritic system as one in which the dead-end predominates, and only one path exists from point to point (Condon 2010, 39-40).

Interestingly, however, the grid design that easily can create many connections and opportunities for interaction is not necessarily accepted by all as the optimum means of responding to human behaviors with respect to orientation and opportunities for interaction. Goldhagen explains that the human brain actually orients itself through a hexagonal system of connections, which was adopted by architects such as Frank Lloyd Wright. Goldhagen writes that a network of cells in the human brain continuously works to update our position in relation to objects, but the grids that our brains construct in this process are not right-angled. Rather, our brains “nonconsciously imagine a hexagonal lattice of points, and locate the place of our body with reference to two objects in space, forming an equilateral triangle with the hexagonal grid.” (Goldhagen 2017, 67). In designing community networks, perhaps this spatial organization most appropriately responds to the manner in which humans navigate through space. Similarly, Jan Gehl points to the medieval city as the type of city which is most conducive to human
interaction, given that the medieval cities developed organically, at a human scale and based largely upon time and activities experienced outdoors, rather than time indoors. Rather than a grid pattern, where all streets are linear and of the same dimensions, Gehl writes that the medieval city “was not a goal in itself, but a tool formed by use” and that the result of this process, where streets meander and public spaces are interspersed, “offer extremely good conditions for life between buildings.” (Gehl 2011, 41 -43).

In his architectural explorations on the concept of assemblage, Kim Dovey describes the process as a whole that is formed from the interconnectivity and flows between constituent parts. Although his studies focus on the urban context, Dovey’s principles provide insight in establishing an idea of place that arises from connected parts, both physical and non-physical, to form a whole:

Assemblage is a useful way of re-thinking theories of place in terms of process, identity formation and becoming....An assemblage is a whole that is formed from the interconnectivity and flows between constituent parts – a socio-spatial cluster of interconnections between parts and wholes emerge from the flows among them….To take an example at the urban design scale, a street is not a thing or a collection of things. The buildings, houses, shops, signs, shoppers, cars, hawkers, rules, sidewalks, goods, trolleys, etc. all come together to become the street, but it is the assembled connections among them that are crucial – the relations of buildings to sidewalk to roadway; the flows of traffic, people and goods; the interconnections of public to private space, and of the street to the city. An assemblage is dynamic – it is the flows of life, traffic, goods and money that give the street its intensity and its emergent sense of place. (Dovey 2012, 353).

Jane Jacobs is among the first writers and theorists of the 20th Century to critically focus on the structure of our communities and the urban context in particular. Her most known text, The Death and Life of Great American Cities, is often cited by planners and architects and has served as a reference for urban planning for many decades. In Jacob’s view, a city’s streets and sidewalks are its most “vital organs,” and a “fundamental task” of streets and sidewalks is to create an atmosphere of safety for the residents. “The bedrock attribute of a successful city district is that a person must feel personally safe and secure on the street among all these strangers.” (Jacobs 1961, 29 - 30). In observing conditions where security or safety is threatened, Jacobs notes that such conditions are not confined to dark areas of inner cities or in the oldest sections of cities but that, in her opinion, the problem is most serious in “genteel-looking quiet residential areas.” (Jacobs 1961, 32).
Jacobs devotes a good deal of her text to an analysis of the social contacts that emerge from city streets. Underlying her observation is the human need for security that is fulfilled through such contacts, and by which social contact is in fact made possible. Jacobs writes that the social function of sidewalks is to “bring together people who do not know each other in an intimate, private social fashion and in most cases do not care to know each other in that fashion.”

Importantly for purposes of this thesis, a critical component of Jacobs’ study is the principle of trust: “The trust of a city street is formed over time from many, many little public sidewalk contacts.” In speaking of the many conversations and encounters that build from interaction on a city street and sidewalk, Jacobs writes:

Most of it is ostensibly utterly trivial but the sum is not trivial at all. The sum of such casual, public contact at a local level – most of it fortuitous, most of it associated with errands, all of it metered by the person concerned and not thrust upon him by anyone – is a feeling for the public identity of people, a web of public respect and trust, and a resource in time of personal or neighborhood need. The absence of this trust is a disaster to a city street. Its cultivation cannot be institutionalized.

(Jacobs 1961, 56).

Not unlike the intersections and understandings that stem from a street and sidewalk pattern, Jan Gehl has written extensively on the patterns and relationships between public and private space as a means of determining human behavior and social contact in particular. The focus of his text, *Life Between Buildings*, is the important role that all spaces – both built and unbuilt – play in the network of human interaction. Gehl is particularly concerned with an analysis of the hierarchy of spaces and how they work together to influence human behavior:

Establishing residential areas so that there is a graduation of outdoor spaces with semipublic, intimate, and familiar spaces nearest the residence also makes it possible to know the people in the area better, and the experience of outdoor spaces as belonging to the residential area results in a greater degree of surveillance and collective responsibility for this public space and its residences. The public spaces become part of the residential habitat and are protected against vandalism and crime in the same way that the residences themselves are safeguarded.

(Gehl 2011, 60-61).

Gehl further explores the manner in which dimensions of spaces or between spaces is designed, observing that these dimensions can influence social contact, writing of the use of distance to regulate the “intimacy and intensity in various social situations and to control the beginning and end of individual conversations.” For example, Gehl writes that a front yard with a depth of just three feet is too small, because undesired contacts cannot be avoided. However,
“where front yards are too deep, conversations cannot get started.” The “ideal” depth, in Gehl’s view is ten feet (Gehl 2011, 63). Further, in parallel to the thinking of Jacobs, Gehl views street patterns and public squares as essential to the connections in the built environment, particularly in order to provide a sense of centering and orientation, a theme which Christian Norberg-Schulz greatly explores as discussed in sections that follow.

As the communities of Maplewood, Park Avenue and Pittsford are analyzed, the notion of place as a series of connections becomes important in the ability to stimulate social interaction. The preceding studies of place as connections provide guidance in physical attributes that might include street and sidewalk patterns, formal and informal spaces, and gathering spaces, as elements that could well foster social interaction among aging members of these communities. With use of guidance provided by the preceding architectural and planning theories, the goal becomes the identification of physical attributes in the roots of our community structure that serve as manifestation, or activation, of place as connections.

B. Building a Sense of Purpose: Place as Experience and as Social Capital

This thesis proposes that the need for purpose, as articulated by the aging residents and explained in the literature addressing society-wide concerns, might be expressed through understandings of place as experience and social capital. The proposal is that communities that are equipped with attributes that foster a meaningful experience in daily life and that generate valuable interdependencies might in turn allow the aging to feel purposeful through roles that contribute to a holistic and sustainable community.

1. Place as Experience

The geographer Yi-Fu Tuan is credited with early notions of sense of place in terms of location. Tuan argued that space is defined by a set of locational parameters, but place is created when space is infused with meaning. More specifically, Tuan proposed that it is human experience in space, known as phenomenology, or humanistic geography, that creates place; space becomes place when it possesses the qualities of “unplanned human encounter.” (Tuan 2001, 143). Although Tuan’s studies first began in the field of geology, the notion of phenomenology has been embraced in a range of fields and adaptations. Phenomenology has been broadly defined as the “universal and absolute laws that govern the spiritual and psychological workings of humans.” (Adams, et. al. 2001). The architect Bernard Tschumi is among the many proponents of the concept of human experience through space in the design of
the built world. Tschumi sets forth the proposition that space is neutral, and the events that take place in space are those which provide meaning to it; an experience through a space might include unexpected and unprecedented meanings, interactions and events. Tschumi writes of a concern over “decentering,” apparently meaning a condition in which the human experience is no longer the means for understanding a space. (Tschumi 1989).

Studies in sociology, psychology and geography have focused on this concept of “phenomenological geography” to attempt to understand the nature of human dwelling and the creation of a sense of place. These studies look to movement through space and the unfolding of activities that take place on a regular, repeated basis, to identify and describe humans’ attachment and connection to a place and to provide a definition for place. The terms “time-space routine,” “body-ballet” and “place ballet”, the latter of which is a concept often used by Jane Jacobs in her studies of urban life, are often used to describe the concept of an experience unfolding in a space. As David Seamons describes in his text, *A Geography of the Lifeworld*:

In a supportive physical environment, time-space routines and body-ballets of the individual may fuse into a larger whole, creating a space-environment dynamic called place-ballet. The place-ballet is a fusion of many time-space routines and body-ballets in terms of place. Its result may be an environmental vitality like that found in the streets of Boston’s North End or New York’s Greenwich Village. It generates a strong sense of place because of its continual and regular human activity. (Seamons 1979, 159).

Seamons writes that the regularity of certain movements and actions through space create familiarity and attachment, or a “continuity grounded on bodily patterns of the past.” (Seamons 1979, 160). Seamons goes on to explain that, as people come together in time and space out of their regular and repeated routines, a sense of place evolves; the place itself takes on meaning by virtue of the activity within it. More specifically, Seamons points to the importance of regularity in day-to-day activity in a community to foster order, but in parallel, this same regularity can allow “a progression of shifting events and episodes” to occur and that this is what is meant by “place ballet.” (Seamons 1979, 162-163). For Seamons, then, “place is a dynamic entity with an identity” and place-ballet is “an environmental synergy in which human and material parts unintentionally foster a larger whole with its own special rhythm and character.” (Seamons 1979, 163).

This idea of regularity in which an experience can unfold is echoed in the words of James Kunstler:
Despite the nearly universal imposition of the straight grid, with all its weaknesses, America’s small town streets at their best had some powerful saving graces. The houses were scaled generously – families were larger then, and multigenerational. The procession of porches along the street created a lovely mediating zone between the private world of the home and the public world of the street, further connected and softened by the towering elm trees and the lush foliage.

The organic wholeness of the small town street was a result of common, everyday attention to details, of intimate care for things intimately used. The discipline of its physical order was based not on uniformity for its own sake, but on a consciousness of, and respect for, what was going on next door. Such awareness and respect were not viewed as a threat to individual identity but as necessary for the production of amenity, charm and beauty. These concepts are now absent from our civilization. We have become accustomed to living in places where nothing relates to anything else, where disorder, unconsciousness and the absence of respect reign unchecked. (Kunstler 1993, 185).

Christian Norberg-Schulz has written extensively on notions of experience and “being” and their ties to the built form. He links the creation of place to ones use, or experience, within it, proposing that architecture should represent the act of living. Norberg-Schulz points to vernacular architecture, where the built form grew from the purpose it was to serve and the surrounding context, “is the origin of the art of the place as a response to the question of living, or inhabiting.” (Norberg-Schulz 2000, 231). Norberg-Schulz explains that being in a place entails the comprehension of the existing environment and that this comprehension is – in a poetic sense – naturally linked to the use of the place. More specifically, referring to Heidegger, Norberg-Schulz cites what he views as a critical link between “construct” and “inhabit” in bringing meaning to the built form: “To construct and to inhabit express therefore the way in which man is in the world.” (Norberg-Schulz 2000, 233).

Goldhagen’s theories of place and design are similarly centered on the human experience of a place, emphasizing that experience is grounded in our sensory perceptions and internal thoughts. Goldhagen explores this concept through human cognitive processes:

The cognitive revolution’s complete rethinking of human experience reveals much that should make us all reconsider what we know about design. We respond to our environments not only visually but with our many sensory faculties – hearing, and smelling, and especially touching, and more – working in concert with one another. These surroundings affect us much more viscerally and profoundly than we could possibly be aware of, because most of our cognitions, including those about where we are, happen outside our conscious awareness. The leaders of the cognitive revolution reveal –perhaps most inadvertently –that our built environments are the instruments on which this orchestra of our senses plays its music….Most surprisingly, our emotions, our imagined bodily
actions, and especially the memories that we develop of them are embedded in our very experiences of built environments, and loom large in how we form our identities. (Goldhagen 2017, 38-39).

Goldhagen explains that “cognition is the product of a three-way collaboration of mind, body and environment” and that the “physical environments that a body inhabits greatly influence human cognitions.” (Goldhagen 2017, 47) (emphasis in original). She studies architecture through what she considers a newly developing paradigm in which human thought is “neither logical nor linear, but associative and nonconscious.” (Goldhagen 2017, xii).

Goldhagen discusses the many aspects in which humans experience a place by virtue of deep cognitive processes and describes her text as a call to action to “develop, fund, and implement research programs that will expand our knowledge base about the ways we live and can live in buildings, landscapes and cities.” Moreover, she explores the impact of our environment as a means of establishing identity:

All kinds of design elements influence people’s experiences, not only of the environment but also of themselves. Good design – thoughtfully composed ordering systems and patterns, sensuously active materials and textures, deliberately constructed sequences of spaces – create coherent places that have a powerfully positive effect on people. Urban spaces, landscapes and buildings – even small and modest ones – profoundly influence human lives. They shape our cognitions, emotions and actions, and even powerfully influence our well-being. They actually help constitute our very sense of ourselves, our sense of identity. (Goldhagen 2017, xxiii - xxiv).

Goldhagen highlights the importance of experience in a place in recognizing that “the built environment is anything but static and inert,” writing:

Perpetually, dynamically, actively, we are engaging with the places, spaces, and objects of our surroundings: buildings, parks, squares with or without sculptures, streets, all the time relating them with our whole bodies, and with our egocentric and allocentric mind-sets, with all of our senses. (Goldhagen 2017, 113).

Further, for Goldhagen, it is not just the built environment that influences human behavior. Equally important is our interaction with nature: “Nature’s geography and physical elements radically shape human cognitive experience in myriad ways. Nature restores us….Human life in the natural world gave rise to and shaped the structures and capacities of our minds and bodies.” (Goldhagen 2017, 136-137). Advocating that good design should respond to and entice sensory experiences, Goldhagen writes that “people yearn for visual, textural and olfactory complexity”
within their surrounding environments (Goldhagen 2017, 27-28). In a similar fashion, Jan Gehl explores in great depth the role of the senses, particularly vision and sound, writing that knowledge of the senses is a necessary prerequisite to the building of an experience within a space: “Familiarity with human senses – the way they function and the areas in which they function – is an important prerequisite for designing and dimensioning all forms of outdoor spaces and building layouts.” (Gehl 2011, 63). Gehl encourages a design in which the system of public spaces is as compact as possible, so that the distances for pedestrian traffic and sensory experiences are as short as possible: “It is nearly always more interesting to be in small spaces, where both the whole and the details can be seen – one has the best of both worlds.” (Gehl 2011, 91). Most importantly, Gehl writes of the human scale, which he views as crucial in our experience of space:

The design of buildings in relation to relevant human dimensions is crucial – how much can be reached on foot from a given point, and how much it is possible to see and experience. The “dense-low” building project with a great number of houses placed around an intricate path system does not automatically represent a noteworthy concentration of activity, even where building density is high.

Conversely, the village street with its two unbroken rows of houses oriented toward the street represents a clear and consistent assembly of activities. The placement of the buildings and the orientation of the entrances in relation to the pedestrian routes and areas for outdoor stays are the determining factors in this connection. (Gehl 2011, 83).

Gehl goes so far as to identify the specific dimensional properties that foster our use of the senses, all of which becomes critically important when planning space, noting that human movement is limited to horizontal motion at three miles per hour and that our sensory apparatus is finely adapted to this condition, that our senses are frontally oriented, and that our sense of sight is distinctly horizontal, where our horizontal visual field is considerably wider than vertical.

The sense of place that nature creates for the aging in particular has been the subject of research that crosses both architectural and sociological principles. In a study of 91 older adults ranging in age from 64 to 91, researchers at the University of Illinois found a direct link between access to green outdoor spaces and the strength of neighborhood social ties and sense of community (Kweon, et. al. 1998). The researchers note that physical settings influence older adults’ sense of well-being to a greater extent than younger generations, because the elderly are more sensitive to environmental variation. The study of Kweon and his colleagues included
research showing that inner-city residents dislike and fear barren, treeless spaces, but that the addition of trees and grass dramatically changed their preferences, to spaces that they would use (Kweon, et. al 1998, 836). Significantly, the researchers found that, not only did the presence of nature produce a sense of well-being and social ties, but the caring for nature produced a sense of purpose among the aging residents (Kweon, et. al. 1998, 837). Thus, a sense of purpose emerges from the interaction with nature.

In a similar manner, this thesis proposes that the need for “purpose” might be met by a physical fabric that encourages interdependent uses. Jacobs’ often-cited study and description of the intricacy of a well-working community lends support for this hypothesis. Jacobs advocates for “close-grained diversity of uses” and “constant mutual support, economically and socially.” (Jacobs 1961, 14). Jacobs explains that security and interdependence are maintained “by an intricate, almost unconscious, network of voluntary controls and standards among the people themselves, and enforced by the people themselves.” (Jacobs 1961, 32). In Jacobs’ view, a sense of safety and security is created when the streets are: well-used, with a clear demarcation between what is public space and what is private space; equipped with “eyes on the street,” where the street is marked by “natural proprietors” created by the orientation of the buildings to the streets; and, met with a regular stream of users. Jacobs’ solution is that streets must give people a reason for using the sidewalks, to draw people from place to place, to create an environment for safe behavior, and to attract others to use the sidewalks through the notion of “people’s love of watching activity and other people.” (Jacobs 1961, 36 – 37). Jacobs concludes, “The greater and more plentiful the range of all legitimate interests that city streets and their enterprises can satisfy, the better for the streets and for the safety and civilization of the city.” (Jacobs 1961, 41). Where a city is working successfully, there is a balance of both order and freedom:

This order is all composed of movement and change, and although it is life, not art, we may fancifully call it the art form of the city and liken it to the dance – not a simple-minded precision dance with everyone kicking up at the same time…but to an intricate ballet in which the individual dancers and ensembles all have distinctive parts which miraculously reinforce each other and compose and orderly whole. The ballet of the good city sidewalk never repeats itself from place to place, and in any one place is always replete with new improvisations.

(Jacobs 1961, 50).
2. **Place as Social Capital**

The notion of social capital and what it means for a community is often discussed in sociological literature that attempts to define sense of place. In their text *Urban Sprawl and Public Health*, Howard Frumkin and his co-authors explain that, beginning in the early 1900s, researchers in various fields began to study the idea of “psychological sense of community,” meaning “a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members’ needs will be met through their commitment to be together.” (Frumkin et. al. 2004, 161). Frumkin points to four aspects that underlie social capital: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection.

In studying how communities and neighborhoods function, researchers have focused on the concept of a “civil society” that consists of the “world of voluntary, purposeful associations distinct from government, where citizens come together according to their interests, beliefs and goals.” (Frumkin, 2004, 162). For Jane Jacobs, these associations form among the streets and sidewalks of our neighborhoods, at the “small quotidian dramas of sidewalk life.” Jacobs observed that these interactions are valuable to the life of a community because they create conviviality and trust, “a feeling for the public identity of people, a web of public respect and trust, and a resource in time of personal or neighborhood need.” (Jacobs 1961, 73).

Frumkin explains that the notion of social capital was first introduced in 1916 by L.J. Hanifin, to refer to “those tangible substances that count for most in the daily lives of people: namely, good will, fellowship, sympathy and social intercourse among the individuals and families who make up a social unit.” (Frumkin 2004, 162). If social capital exists, then both freedom and security can coexist. The author explains that the political scientist Robert Putnam was among the first to coin the term “social capital,” defining it as the “collective value of all social networks (who people know) and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other (the norms of reciprocity).” Frumkin explores the extent to which social capital has declined in our society, possibly due, at least in part, to urban sprawl, by restricting the time and energy that people have available for civic involvement, reducing opportunities for spontaneous, informal social interaction, privatizing the public realm, creating homogenous communities, and, importantly, “disrupting continuity of community life as people age.” (Frumkin 2004, 172 – 173):
A homogenous neighborhood of four-bedroom houses and large lots might appeal to a family with small children. But when the children have grown up and left for college and the couple wants to downsize, the neighborhood offers no options. Typically, the now middle-aged parents will sell their house and move to a different neighborhood that offers smaller houses, apartments or condominiums. This discontinuity – the systematic departure of families after about twenty years of living in a neighborhood – cannot be good for social capital.


Frumkin’s conclusion regarding the importance of social capital and its future in suburban communities is instructive:

Social capital is the glue that helps bind communities together. It consists of attitudes such as trust and reciprocity, and behaviors such as social networking and civic participation. Urban sprawl seems to undermine social capital….In any case, the decline in social capital is worrisome, since social capital is an important contributor to good health. It seems to take a “village” not only to raise a child, but also to support an adult, and to look after the elderly. In sprawling regions, with little that resembles a village either architecturally or socially, and with deficits in social capital, we may forfeit critical opportunities to promote health across the life span.

(Frumkin 2004, 184-185).

The idea of interdependency and the richness that a community may develop through a diverse demographic and social infrastructure is also important to an understanding of the term community. For example, Schneekloth and Shibley point to several recipients of the Rudy Bruner Award in the United States as examples of successful placemaking. As a program begun to award efforts in community or social rejuvenation in planning and design, the authors explain that the Rudy Bruner program is “an inquiry into urban excellence established to identify and honor urban places that effectively integrate economic, visual, and social perspectives and that are considered ‘excellent’ by the many people involved in the process of making and maintaining them.” (Schneekloth and Shibley 1995, 149). The authors describe several recipients of the award as examples of placemaking, noting that applicants for the award appear to be rooted in crises, opportunities for empowerment, or acts of political and personal courage (Schneekloth and Shibley 1995, 152).

Among the many recipients of the Rudy Bruner Award is the Pike Place Market in Seattle, Washington. The market was first begun by farmers in the early 1900s and grew as a highly successful destination within the city of Seattle over many decades, offering fresh produce directly to residents of Seattle in a vibrant, active setting. Following the rise of refrigeration and chain supermarkets in the 1950s, the market declined and eventually became a subject for urban
renewal in the 1960s, with plans for demolition of the market in favor of new construction. Fortunately, as a result of a widespread initiative across many constituents and stakeholders in the community, the market was saved and revived in a manner that offers the sale of fresh produce from local farms, while providing a wide range of diverse social needs to many segments of the population, creating a rich system of interdependence that mutually benefits members of the community. In describing the success of the Pike Place Market, Schneekloth and Shibley write:

The Pike Place Market is a community that functions as a distinctive, yet unpretentious, urban place. Its social structure is based largely on the interdependence of many people in the market area: Elderly and indigent residents depend on farmers for some of their surplus food; farmers rely on shoppers to help retain an agricultural way of life; children in the daycare center learn about diversity through exposure to make residents and visitors; and the daycare relies on volunteers from the Market’s senior citizen center. The interdependency between the people who work in, live in and visit the Market creates a fully functioning social ecosystem.

In the complex ecology of the Market, the child-care center supports the immigrant farmers selling in the Market while it offers a mission for the senior center; the food bank is stocked, in part with the less salable but still healthful foods from the farmers; elderly housing overlooks the shopping street, Steinbrueck Park and parking lots, thus establishing a local Crime Watch; and the health center serves the needs of farmers, vendors, elderly, homeless and children. (Schneekloth and Shibley 1995, 170-172).

Although the Pike Place Market, within a city as large and vibrant as Seattle, is on a scale that is more complex than that of the communities that are the subject of this research, the importance of interdependence among all members of a community, whether in a thriving city or a quiet neighborhood, is great. If communities embrace all segments of the population, the community as a whole becomes richer and more sustainable; it acts as an ecosystem in which residents contribute to and benefit from interaction with each other.

Jan Gehl writes that integration in planning is crucial for the well-being of a society: “Integration of various activities and functions in and around public spaces allows the people involved to function together and to stimulate and inspire one another…the mixing of various functions and people makes it possible to interpret how the surrounding society is composed and how it operates.” (Gehl 2011, 101). Gehl’s close observation of the transition zones between public and private spaces is central to his studies and is in many ways a tangible expression of the fostering of social capital through the built environment, and the close attention to “edges”
become fundamentally important to the vitality of a community. Gehl points to a study conducted in Australia, in which it was observed that the greatest number of regular, informal interactions among residents in a community took place on porches, in front yards, or over the fences between yards and sidewalks. Gehl advocates for flexible boundaries that function as connecting links, both physically and psychologically. Edges are formed at intersections of natural elements, such as the edge of a forest, as well as details such as colonnades, bollards on a street, niches in a façade, recessed entrances, porches and verandas. Each of these is an opportunity to stop, linger and experience an environment, and each contributes to an ongoing interdependence of spaces. Moreover, Gehl’s comments underscore the notion of purpose, and social interaction, that can stem from the design and use of our spaces:

If the garden is located where people can pass by or where there is a good view of other activities, work in the garden is often combined with other, recreational and social activities. The useful is combined with the pleasurable....It can be noted that many people – not least the oldest residents – spend considerably more time on gardening than can be justified in any way for horticultural purposes. This emphasizes how important it is that in public spaces in residential areas there are not only opportunities for walking and sitting, but also opportunities to act, things to do, activities to be involved in.

(Gehl 2011, 119-120).

Rather than treating the aging population as one whose needs are best met when the aging are segregated from the general population, as do current models of assisted living, the notions of social capital and interdependence allow us to consider the value that the elderly can bring to a community. As discussed above, a sense of purpose can enhance the lives of the elderly themselves; at the same time, a community as a whole might benefit from the value that our older generations might contribute. Stafford notes:

Our enormous and rapidly growing older population is a vast, untapped social resource. If we can engage these individuals in ways that fill urgent gaps in our society, the result will be a windfall for American civic life in the twenty-first century.

(Stafford 2009, 32).

Stafford cites the collective knowledge of our elder population, which he characterizes as “a virtual treasure trove of information,” as a critical element of a community: “The vast fund of information held by the oldest members of the group enables them to play significant roles in the conversation.” (Stafford 2009, 108-110). In sum, a recognition of the value that an aging population can contribute to a broader network is tied to the idea of sense of place. If we build communities that not only enable but encourage interdependence among demographically
diverse residents, we can foster a human network that is collectively and reciprocally enriching. And, as the preceding research sets forth, it may be through the use of attributes such as the sensory experiences, access to nature, and complexity in uses in an environment, through which place as experience is activated, and through which a sense of purpose for the aging might be built.

C. Enabling a Spirit of Belonging: Place as Identity

The proposal that a spirit of belonging might be fostered through the concept of place as identity is highly theoretical and difficult to address. A sense of belonging, and a sense of identity, are understandings that are unique to an individual. However, as the following architectural principles discuss, the notion of place as identity has been explored through objective concepts of attachment, history and memory, and it is proposed that these concepts might in turn foster a spirit of belonging in a community.

1. Place as Identity and Attachment

An appropriate point to begin the discussion of place as identity is again with the writings of Christian-Norberg Schulz. Norberg-Schulz focuses on the essential human need for dwelling as the basis from which an identity in a place is formed. Norberg-Schulz defines dwelling to include more than shelter. Dwelling is a holistic attachment to a place that encompasses:

- To meet others for the exchange of products, ideas and feelings, allowing one to experience life as a multitude of possibilities.
- To come to an agreement with others through the acceptance of common values.
- To be oneself, in the sense of having a small world of our own.

(Norberg-Schulz 1985, 7).

Norberg-Schulz explores the ability of architecture to “satisfy the need for dwelling, in the existential sense of the word,” leading to the extent to which humankind’s wish for belonging and participation is fulfilled. For Norberg-Schulz, the action of dwelling implies the establishment of a meaningful relationship between man and a given environment; in the sense of belonging to a certain place (Norberg Schulz 1985, 13). He describes four modes of dwelling which collectively comprise the total environment, consisting of settlement, which is the “stage where natural dwelling takes place;” urban space, in which humans come together in their diversities, experiencing the richness of a collective world; the institution, in which agreement takes place as a result of common interests and values; and, private dwelling, which is the privacy of a home.
To arrive at a general understanding of dwelling, Norberg Schulz asks whether these modes have a common denominator, which he traces back to the concept of identification. Identification means to experience a “total” environment as meaningful. Identification does not mean the physical attributes of an object; it is not the appropriation of a world of things in a material sense, but rather, an ability to interpret the underlying meaning. Norberg-Schulz proposes that, through orientation in a space, we establish a sense of identity and attachment. Orientation is the path. It is the means by which we move through space and in which we come to understand and grow attached to our environment. Orientation implies structuring the environment into domains by means of paths and centers. The tension and rhythm between center, path and domain become orientation. Norberg-Schulz writes that the process is not just movement; that oversimplifies the concept. Rather, it is the spatial and geometrical organization within the environment, allowing certain actions to occur within each domain, that results in an identity of place:

Man’s environmental image thus comprises more or less extended domains which are distinguished by a certain qualitative uniformity. We orientate with and in relation to these domains, which have a unifying function in existential space. They fill out the network of paths and make it become a ‘space.’ If we think of our own country, or the earth as a whole, we primarily think of domains: fields, lakes, deserts, mounts and oceans, which form a continuous mosaic. Because of their general properties, domains function as potential places for man’s actions. Orientation, therefore, implies structuring the environment into domains by means of paths and centers.

(Norberg-Schulz 1985, 24).

In a more tangible manner, Jan Gehl explains the use of streets and squares to provide a sense of identity and, in particular, intimacy. Gehl explains that, in suburban areas and certain building projects, the approach to design of a space has become diluted and spread out, such that streets become roads and squares become “huge, open, nondescript areas devoid of people.” In Gehl’s view, this leads to a condition in which “individual activities have been dispersed in time and space, preventing the establishment of more intimate and better-used public spaces. (Gehl 2011, 89).

Finally, Norberg-Schulz proposes that the various concepts of settlement and dwelling are critically important for the establishment of a sense of place. If we lose these concepts, we risk loss of our sense of place: “To serve as a goal, a settlement has to possess figural quality in relation to the surrounding landscape. It is this quality that makes it possible to call the settlement a place.” (Norberg-Schulz 1985, 33). Norberg-Schulz advocates that the built
environment risks “loss of place” and the creation of “alienation” if “the unity of nature breaks
down and the settlement loses its coherence, to the point that upon arrival it is no longer possible
to distinguish it as a figural entity.” (Norberg-Schulz 2000, 309). In writing of the importance of
settlement as a center and basis from which orientation begins, Norberg-Schulz states:

Today settlements do not have walls and gates anymore, and only rarely they appear as
figures in the landscape. Their skyline is not distinguished by symbolic forms such as
towers and domes, but rather by high-rise office buildings which hardly embody any
deeper understanding of the world….The loss of the traditional settlement, and hence the
loss of place, is therefore not an unexpected consequence of a new way of life, the but
result of conscious theories of planning. Cities destroy the landscape rather than bringing it
close. Thus we do not only lose the gathering center, but also its world. In general it is
becoming ever more evident that the loss of the figurally defined settlement has brought
about a weakened sense of human belonging and thus a dangerous loss of identity.
(Norberg-Schulz 2000, 49).

The notion that architecture possesses an underlying identity is widely explored in the
theories of Louis Kahn, whose writings reflect a humane and spiritual approach to design. Kahn
considered the essence of the “thing” as the driving force of design and proposed that each
design project should begin with the question, “What does a building want to be?” For Kahn, the
purpose of design is the physical manifestation of identity, and design has its beginning in
feeling. He believed that architecture begins with unmeasurable concepts and an understanding
of the underlying nature of that which is to be built, becomes measurable in the process of
design, and, once finished, again becomes unmeasurable because it possesses its own identity.
Kahn’s explanation of house and home illustrates his beliefs:

Reflect then on what characterizes abstractly House, a house, home. House is the abstract
characteristic of spaces good to live in. House is the form, in the mind of wonder it should
be there without shape or dimension. A house is a conditional interpretation of these
spaces. This is design. In my opinion the greatness of the architect depends on his powers
of realization of that which is house, rather than his design of a house which is a
circumstantial act. Home is the house and the occupants. Home becomes different with
each occupant.
(Kahn 1961).

Goldhagen observes that our cognitive understanding of and familiarity with our
surroundings can impact our sense of well-being and security, writing that “elderly people tend
to be better off staying in long-familiar habitats than moving to unfamiliar surroundings.”
Describing the prospect of moving ones parent to a senior care center, Goldhagen underscores
the importance of attachment to place that can emanate from a sense of belonging and identity:
A more practically appointed, conveniently situated house would ease her daily burdens, yet your mother’s emotional and physical health could deteriorate more rapidly. Why? Because her cognitive experience of leaving her longtime abode will deleteriously affect her body’s physical health. Mind and body are one: what she thinks about relocating to new surroundings trumps the pragmatic benefits they’d offer. (Goldhagen 2017, 91-92) (emphasis in original).

2. Place as History and Memory

Closely related to the notion of place as identity is the concept that a sense of place derives from historical meanings and memories, much of which is challenged in today’s society given increasing mobility. In a study funded by the National Institute on Aging, researchers explored notions of place affiliation in the context of a mobile society, and, in particular, the concept of home. The authors note that place identity involves significant affiliation of self with place, in both quantitative and qualitative analyses. In studying the migration of a defined population of both old and young generations, the researchers found that older migrants were more likely to “construct their sense of home around the dwelling place and on the basis of long-term prior experience.” (Cuba and Hummon 1993, 567). Their findings suggest that the concepts of history and memory are particularly important for the aging in their feelings of sense of place. The teachings of Christian Norberg-Schulz are once again instructive, writing that “history has a fundamental function in the formation of the art of the place.” (Norberg-Schulz 2000, 222). It is perhaps due to the fact that society is increasingly mobile that a sense of place as history and memory becomes more valuable: “Since time and space are intangible and dauntingly infinite, we cling intellectually and emotionally to our experiences and memories of the material world that is so reassuringly solid.” (Adams et. al. 2001).

In her text, *The Power of Place*, Dolores Hayden explores the idea of sense of place in an urban context from the standpoint of social history. Hayden discussed the manner in which communities and professionals might nurture a sense of place through the memorialization of history. Hayden writes that sense of place is an aesthetic concept that is generally understood as “the personality of a location.” (Hayden 1995, 15). In Hayden’s view, an urban landscape is a record of history:

Public space can help to nurture the profound, subtle and inclusive sense of what it means to be an American. Identity is intimately tied to memory: both our personal memories (where we have come from and where we have dwelt) and the collective or social memories interconnected with the histories of our families, neighbors, fellow workers, and ethnic communities. Urban landscapes are storehouses for these social memories, because
natural features such as hills or harbors, as well as streets, buildings and patterns of settlement, frame the lives of many people and often outlast many lifetimes. (Hayden 1995, 9).

Hayden explains that, whereas social memory relies on storytelling, place memory is a means to “help trigger social memory through the urban landscape.” Hayden writes of “place memory” as “the stabilizing persistence of place as a container of experiences that contributes so powerfully to its intrinsic memorability.”

An alert and alive memory connects spontaneously with place, finding in it features that favor and parallel its own activities. We might even say that memory is naturally place oriented, or at least space-supported. Place memory encapsulates the human ability to connect with both the built and natural environments that are entwined within the cultural landscape. It is the key to the power of historic places to help citizens define their public pasts: places trigger memories for insiders, who have shared a common past, and at the same time places often can represent shared pasts to outsiders who might be interested in knowing about them in the present.

Historians are just beginning to explore the intricate relationships among history, place-specific memory, and the preservation of the urban landscape. The power of place – the power of historic urban landscapes to help nurture ordinary citizens’ collective memory – remains untapped until these relationships are better understood. The urban landscape is not a text to be read, but a repository of environmental memory far richer than any verbal codes. (Hayden 1995, 46, 227).

In Hayden’s view, common urban places have the power to evoke visual and social memory; the urban landscape is an underutilized resource for public history. Similarly, the environmentalist Kaid Benfield has written that older properties constitute a “shared cultural legacy,” which “remind us where we are, and where we came from.” Kain advocates that those buildings or places which we choose to preserve are just as important as resources that we choose to conserve, particularly in that the memorialization of history can “nourish the human spirit.” (Benfield 2014, 71). In a similar approach, Goldhagen writes extensively on the connection between the physical environment and its ability to shape memory and, thereby, an attachment to a place:

When remembering a certain event from our past, we recall images, patterns, and impressions from many systems of sensory cognition, scattered in many parts of the brain. We also now know that these memories, which in sum help us to constitute our past, can be consolidated only by being linked up with our cognitions about physical locations and place. Put another way, what we know about how memories are consolidated in the brain reveals that the physical environment we inhabit during a given experience centrally
figures in the memory itself. In the contemporary world, where our environments are overwhelmingly built environments, what this means is that the buildings, landscapes and urban areas we inhabit are central to the constitution of our autobiographical memories, and therefore to our sense of identity. Our very sense of *who* we are and have been is inextricable from our sense of *where* we have been and are. (Goldhagen 2017, 83) (emphasis in original).

Goldhagen explains that the sensory components that we associate with a given memory “powerfully influence the meaning we assign” to environments, such that “our experiences, and then the memories of our experiences, are necessarily, fundamentally embedded in environments,” emphasizing that the “cognitive mechanics of autobiographical memory *restitutes the built environment inside us.*” (Goldhagen 2017, 85, 88) (emphasis in original). Goldhagen feels strongly that the built environment must go beyond fulfilling human physical and biological needs, stating that, “because the built environment is integrated into our self-identity and conceptions of others, it plays an active and central role not just in how we construct ourselves and our pasts, but also in how we, singly and together, move forward in the world.” Goldhagen proposes that the built environment becomes a repository of memory of the past and meaning for the future, writing that the built environment is important not only for how we act in the present, but how we will conduct ourselves in the future: “If our understanding of others, our understanding of the world, and our understanding of our very selves are all inextricably enmeshed in our physical environments, then the importance we should accord the built environment and its design in our lives, our societies, and politics becomes well-nigh unbounded.” (Goldhagen 2017, 88).

These concepts of history and memory are powerful indicators of place, although the challenge for purposes of this thesis is to activate this meaning of place through the use of community attributes. The preservation of an historic building, or the use of markers throughout a neighborhood to record events in history, might seem obvious as examples of place as history and memory, but more subtle solutions might also exist, such as the successful integration of the newly built with the old. Similarly, the importance of the presence of symbols in the composition of our communities is underscored in the studies of Philip Stafford. Although Stafford’s work is more closely aligned to sociological principles than it is to architectural thought, his references to symbols and the meaning that they carry are important as the physical aspects of a community are considered. Stafford closely studies the concept of memory and its
ability to produce an attachment to place, writing that “[s]ediments of meaning and memory are laid down over time when we dwell in a place.” With his background in anthropology and the study of aging, Stafford discusses the work of the ethnographer Barbara Myerhoff and the concept that memory is expressed through the fusion of “symbol and object.” The meaning that is brought to life through symbols is the power of memory. Stafford writes:

This is the ritual use of memories – they carry participants beyond words and word-bound thought…at these times symbols do not merely point to things beyond themselves…they call into play imagination, emotion, and insight…making present the meaning of symbols known to us not by intelligence and reason but in experience….Not simply self-serving, memory reenters the social world as a cultural resource – a device by which people do things together. Moreover, memory does not merely represent or signify the group, but helps to build it, to sustain it in an active, constitutive process. (Stafford 2009, 86-87) (emphasis in original).

Stafford proposes that memory is to be understood not only as a personal experience, but “as it lives outside of people’s heads” and “in people’s lived, collective and bodily experience of place.” Discussing much research on the importance of memory in building an attachment to place, Stafford concludes that “making a move to a new environment challenges one’s place identity, a well of meaning derived from the personal memories and symbolic significance associated with place.” (Stafford 2009, 89). Stafford devotes much analysis to interviews of residents who point to specific aspects in their home as a spark for many memories; an arch over a garden is not merely an entryway to the garden, but a connection to memories of family and events. Stafford observes:

So memory of home is not merely symbolic, representational. Rather, it draws upon one’s whole being as it is recollected. The proper study of it is not semiotic, but phenomenological….A good place has a kind of mirror quality because it helps us to remember ourselves to ourselves. (Stafford 2009, 90).

The preceding study teaches that, at a minimum, sense of place is complex. It is not a straightforward, methodical or mathematical exercise. It has been studied through principles that are based largely in theory, rather than fact, and, for this reason, the remaining discussion in this thesis becomes the greatest challenge and opportunity, as it proposes that attributes which are primarily physical and identifiable in nature might serve as manifestations of sense of place, thereby stimulating social interaction, building a sense of purpose, and fostering a spirit of belonging. The intent is to activate these notions of sense of place through the attributes of a
community structure, to address the needs posed by our aging population and to further community enrichment as a whole.
IX. Framework: Activating Sense of Place through Community Attributes

The ultimate step in framing the process for a physical analysis of the subject communities is to propose means by which understandings of sense of place are manifested in the attributes of our communities. This step represents the final link in the path toward a framework for Living in Place, tying the needs of the aging to understandings of sense of place, and then identifying the attributes of our communities by which sense of place takes shape. It is at this juncture in which the attempt is to activate a sense of place. As the preceding study has demonstrated, the notion of sense of place is nuanced, complex, and subjective. A sense of place is not something that, in and of itself, can be created. Rather, it is the result of the presence of attributes, both tangible and intangible, that convey a meaning. As Tim Creswell discusses, the most common definition of “place” is “a meaningful location.” What, then, are the attributes of the subject communities that make these communities meaningful, and, importantly, that respond to the social and psychological needs of the aging?

Just as the manner in which the needs of the elderly are addressed through interpretations of sense of place is theoretical and cannot necessarily be proved, so too is the attempt to demonstrate how a sense of place is expressed or represented in the environment. The identification of features that express a sense of place is largely subjective. However, this approach is in fact one that communities embrace on many different levels and in many different sectors. As recently as October 2017, the Landmark Society of Western New York, which is based in Rochester, announced its “Five to Revive” for the upcoming year. Five to Revive is an annual project of the Landmark Society in which properties that are considered worthy of preservation from an historic and social standpoint are designated for rehabilitation efforts. The list of properties for the upcoming year includes not just specific buildings, but the category of “Front Porches.” The announcement of the Five to Revive properties states:

While garages are a dominant feature of the façade of many newer suburban houses, front porches make a different social statement. They’re an extension of the interior living space, connecting the private life of the occupants to community life outside, and, as the Landmark Society description says, they invite “approach and interaction.” Front porches direct life from inside the house outward. Rather than seeming to be barriers, they seem welcoming.

(Towler 2017).
Thus, it is recognized within our immediate environment that the attributes of a property might convert a “place” to a “sense of place.” As set forth at the outset of this thesis, the hypothesis is that Living in Place is the result of: (1) stimulating interaction by thinking of place as connections, manifested public-private interfaces, an effective pattern of streets, formal and informal spaces, gathering places, and visual connections; (2) building a sense of purpose by thinking of place as experience and social capital, manifested through access to nature, sensory experiences and the complexity of the environment; and, (3) fostering a spirit of belonging by thinking of place as identity, history and memory, manifested in means of way-finding, landmarks and overall character. With use of the foregoing architectural and sociological principles on sense of place as a guide, the nature of each of these attributes is considered as:

**Place as Connections**
- **Public-Private Interfaces**: The meeting points of the public and the private realm. Are these barriers, or are they invitations for interaction at various levels?
- **Pattern of Streets**: A street pattern might be composed of grids, dendritic strings, long blocks, short blocks, residential areas and commercial centers. To what extent does the pattern lead to connections?
- **Formal and Informal Spaces; Gathering Places**: What are the shared connections between spaces? For example, do residents share a driveway or a garden, or is the boundary of the home and its immediate surroundings restricted? Does a community possess gathering places, such as parks or simple green spaces, which invite interaction?
- **Visual Connections**: Connections might exist through strong visual pathways. To what extent are the collective parts of a community linked by visual cues?

**Place as Experience and as Social Capital**
- **Access to Nature**: The ability to access and participate in natural surroundings can greatly enhance a sense of well-being and purpose. Do the subject communities integrate nature in a way that invites participation and a sense of fulfillment?
- **Sensory**: As the literature on sense of place demonstrates, our ability to see, hear, touch and smell our environment enhances our experience within a space and often makes it a lasting one.
- **Context**: Particularly as we consider the importance of social capital, do our communities reflect interdependencies and complexity in their overall composition?

**Place as Identity**
- **Way-Finding**: Are the subject communities marked by centers, signage, and other features that enable way-finding and navigation, as opposed to a community that essentially exists in a vacuum, void of features that represent its orientation within a broader environment?
- **Landmarks**: Remembrances of history, important works of architecture, significant natural features, and even organizations such as religious, civic or social associations can serve as landmarks, instilling memories and attachment within a community.
• *Overall Character:* Perhaps the most difficult definition within the attributes of a community is that of its overall character. What is the nature of the community? Is it interesting, vast, isolating, intimate, friendly? What are the characteristics that cause people to decide to live and stay within a community?

The overall framework for analyzing Living in Place in the subject communities is thus summarized as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs of the Aging</th>
<th>Translated in Notions of Place</th>
<th>Manifested in Community Attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interaction:</td>
<td>Place as Connections:</td>
<td>Opportunities for Connection:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social interfaces,</td>
<td>Intersections in day-to-day</td>
<td>• Public-Private Interfaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from casual to</td>
<td>lives and activities</td>
<td>• Street Patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intimate, built</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Formal and Informal Spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from visibility,</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Gathering Places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trust and safety</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Visual Connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Purpose:</td>
<td>Place as Experience and</td>
<td>Access to Nature:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A role within the</td>
<td>Place as Social Capital:</td>
<td>• Built and Unbuilt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community that</td>
<td>A sense of moving through,</td>
<td>Sensory:</td>
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<tr>
<td>brings value,</td>
<td>being within, and contributing</td>
<td>• Views, Sounds, Smells</td>
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<tr>
<td>individually and</td>
<td>to an environment, on a</td>
<td>Context:</td>
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<td>collectively</td>
<td>personal level and for a</td>
<td>• Density</td>
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<td></td>
<td>greater good</td>
<td>• Varied and Interdependent Uses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belonging:</td>
<td>Place as Identity:</td>
<td>• Overall Fabric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A sense of stability, comfort and inner security</td>
<td>Attachment based upon character and context, history, and memory</td>
<td>Way-Finding:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Centers and Orientation</td>
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<td>• Pedestrian Experience</td>
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<td>Landmarks:</td>
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<td>• Signs and Symbols</td>
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<td>• Historical Foundations</td>
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<td>• Organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Overall Character</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Framework for Living in Place analysis
Figure 18: Graphic representation of Framework for Living in Place, by author.
X. The Method of Analysis of the Subject Communities: Physical Observation and Application of Sense of Place

A. Stimulating Interaction through Connections: Public-Private Interfaces, Street Patterns, Gathering Spaces, Visual Connections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction: Social interfaces, from casual to intimate, built from visibility, trust and safety</th>
<th>Place as Connections: Intersections in day-to-day lives and activities</th>
<th>Opportunities for Connection:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Public-Private Interfaces</td>
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<tr>
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<td>• Street Patterns</td>
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<td>• Formal and Informal Spaces</td>
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<td>• Gathering Places</td>
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<td>• Visual Connections</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The attributes of a community that might lead to interaction among residents are, in general, those which will enable physical intersections in the day-to-day life of residents. As set forth in the literature on needs of the aging, the risk of adverse health outcomes resulting from isolation is dependent on more than medical care and must embrace practices and policies that “promote social engagement” and which “help elders to develop and maintain satisfying interpersonal relationships.” (Persinotto 1082). The notion of place as connections proposed by the architectural and sociological studies discussed above serves as guidance in assessing the ability of the subject communities to stimulate human interaction:

- As Alexander teaches, are the subject communities marked by patterns that physically and visually connect people and places?
- Are the street patterns linear and regular, or are they varied and more organic in nature?
- Is a grid pattern of streets most effective in promoting connection, or, based on the studies of Goldhagen, are oblique connections more closely aligned with humans’ cognitive functions and therefore more effective in stimulating interaction?
- Is the public-private interface one that invites conversation, or one that creates a barrier? Based on the guidance of Gehl, to what extent does the space relate to a human scale that promotes interaction?
- Are the communities marked by formal and informal spaces and gathering places, i.e., the spaces between buildings encouraged by Gehl, that help to bring residents together, either briefly or for an extended duration?
- Are the various parts of a “place” linked, or are they disparate and isolated? For example, is a street connected to the space around it through a series of linkages, as Kunstler explored?
These observations serve as a method to assess Maplewood, Park Avenue and Pittsford, to determine the ability of these communities to stimulate interaction among residents. Jane Jacobs writes, “A good city street neighborhood achieves a marvel of balance between its peoples’ determination to have essential privacy and their simultaneous wishes for differing degrees of contact, enjoyment or help from the people around. This balance is largely made up of small, sensitively managed details, practiced and accepted so casually that they are normally taken for granted.” (Jacobs 59). What are the details in the subject neighborhoods that, consciously or subconsciously, lead to connections?

An initial start in the assessment of the existence of connections in the subject communities is to observe the interface between the private space of the home and the public space of the street. In each community, the following typical conditions exist:

Figure 19: Maplewood homes. Source: Author’s photo.

Figure 20: Park Avenue home. Source: Author’s photo

Figure 21: Pittsford home. Source: Author’s photo.
Figure 22: Section diagram, typical house-street interface, by author. Refer to Figure 19 for corresponding Maplewood image, Figure 20 for corresponding Park Avenue image, and Figure 21 for corresponding Pittsford image.
The above sectional view and images (Figures 20 – 22) and the plan view below (Figure 23) demonstrate that, in Maplewood and Park Avenue, not only is the physical connection between the private and the public realms a much shorter distance, but the space between house and street becomes an opportunity for informal connection. The grassy median and sidewalk bridge the private and public spaces, allowing an opportunity for encounter and interaction. The front porch and its steps to the front yard are an extension of the home and create a framework for visual and actual connections; in the words of the Landmark Society and its recognition of the importance of the front porch, the porch is “an extension of the interior living space, connecting the private life of the occupants to the community life outside.” In this sense, the porches of Maplewood and Park Avenue play an important role in the growing of a social network and the building of community; the built form directly influences social interaction.

Moreover, the scale of the space in Maplewood and Park Avenue is intimate and at a human level. As Jan Gehl advocates in the “ideal” dimensions to promote interaction, the typical yard in Maplewood is just ten feet in depth; the front yards of homes in the Pittsford neighborhood are six times as deep. The physical dimensions of these spaces either invite or dissuade social interaction. In Pittsford, the desire for more privacy and green space overtakes the subtle details of connection; the open front porch, sidewalk and median have been replaced by a continuous stretch of lawn and driveway connecting directly to the street, with no intervening opportunity for interaction. The garage or parking area is no longer separate from the house, as in Maplewood and Park Avenue, but is a large part of it. These physical attributes result in little opportunity for contact outside of the automobile or the home. The garage occupies nearly one-half of the façade of the house, and residents go directly from their car to the interior of the home; the automobile has become a resident of the house.
Figure 23: Plan view, typical house-street interface, by author.
1. Connections within Maplewood

Among her many observations, Jacobs writes of the idea that the identity and character of a community and its ability to produce a trusting, safe environment derive from its streets and sidewalks. In districts that are successful, “streets are never made to disappear. Quite the contrary, where it is possible, they multiply.” (Jacobs 1961, 185). “Frequent streets and short blocks are valuable because of the fabric of intricate cross-use that they permit among the users of a city neighborhood.” (Jacobs 1961, 186).

This guidance of Jacobs is instructive in observing the street patterns of Maplewood. Here, the streets create both opportunities and barriers to connection. Within the residential areas, the grid-like blocks allow for regular intersections. Particularly within the blocks that sit in the interior of the community, closer to Maplewood Park and the River, the street pattern is tight and intricate (Figure 24). These streets likely were the older section of the community, as they are closer to the site of historic industry. This pattern influences more regular human contact, simply by virtue of the many intersections. In contrast, the longer residential blocks to the west are less effective in creating a steady pattern of constant intersection. Most notably, and as residents of Maplewood themselves have noted, the wide, linear commercial streets in Maplewood impede connections, minimizing permeability between residential and commercial areas, and blocking the important connection to Maplewood Park, the historic area of the community, and the River. Residents expressed concern over the fact that residential areas are “completely residential” and that services and public spaces are disconnected in a peripheral manner, posing difficulty for the aging in particular when amenities are needed, and creating an environment in which stark boundaries can impede interaction. The commercial streets bear no meaningful relation to the residential and natural areas that border them, while they disrupt continuity and linkage between the various parts of the Maplewood neighborhood overall (Figure 25).
Figure 24 (top): Maplewood street patterns (see version to scale in Section V). Elaborated by author. Source: https://maps.google.com. Figure 25: Maplewood street analysis, by author.
Maplewood is replete with homes that were built in the early 20th century, where the front porch was an integral part of the fabric of the community (Figures 26, 27). As discussed above, the front porch is an extension of the home, connecting private life to public life, and welcoming social interaction from the formal to the casual. Unfortunately, over time, as depicted below in Figure 30, front porches have been enclosed for the sake of privacy. As a result, the inviting and open porch now becomes a wall to the exterior, and an opportunity for social interaction and visual connection is removed.

An important observation in the analysis of Maplewood is the close fabric of the residential streets, where homes are tightly packed in a pattern of density, in which human interaction is almost inevitable. (See Figure 9 in Section V). A critical concern for the residents of Maplewood was that of safety and security and the need for visibility to the street to help address such concerns. Residential density can be a means of doing so. The micro-analysis of a typical residential street shown in Figure 28 demonstrates the shared spaces of sidewalks, front and back yards, and even driveways and parking spaces along the streets. Even the small stretch of space between each home becomes shared space, rather than segregated or isolated space. This is a neighborhood where human connections can stem from the density of homes and the spaces between them. As Jan Gehl explains in the studies of place as connections, it is these informal spaces between buildings where human interaction may often be most likely to occur, and where planners and designers should focus. Further, particularly within the smaller residential blocks in Maplewood, the rhythm of these spaces becomes a pattern not unlike that advocated by Alexander, and, through this regularly repeated rhythm, connections become stronger.
Figure 28: Analysis of density and shared spaces in typical Maplewood residential street, by author.
As shown in the images of the homes of Maplewood, with their front porches reaching into the public realm, and in the density of the residential street patterns, where homes are directly opposite each other, visual connections exist throughout the community as important links to establish interaction and relationship of spaces. This is a residential community where, in the guidance of Jacobs, trust can arise by virtue of strong visual links and contacts, and where the relationships in spaces parallel the connections of which Christopher Alexander speaks. Certain visual links also remain between the natural setting of Maplewood Park and the residential sections to the west. For example, as Figure 31 at least suggests, views from the park to residential areas are captured to some extent.

However, as the diagram in Figure 25 illustrates, Maplewood has lost many of the visual links that helped to unite and create interaction between the various parts of the community. The commercial corridors in the street patterns shown above have literally cut off the visual link from commercial, to residential, to natural; thus, in this case, the patterns of grid-like blocks break down. Unlike the strong connection to the River that permeated Maplewood for decades, the River now is hardly visible due to the broad stretches of commercial corridors (Figure 32). The low-rise commercial buildings and fences that surround Maplewood Park are ineffective in creating a connection to this green space; rather, the view is that of a wall of commercial buildings that border the park (Figure 33). Unlike the patterns that exist in the residential streets, which the teachings of Alexander and others might support, the visual and actual patterns become disconnected in the commercial-residential-natural intersections.
2. Connections within Park Avenue

The street patterns of the Park Avenue community are among its greatest assets. As the residents of this neighborhood expressed, the density of the streets and their many intersections produce a continuous opportunity for interaction. Residents pointed to the dense population of the area, providing visibility, and “social and safety aspects of knowing our neighbors, and more connection to events in the neighborhood.” Park Avenue is marked by irregular small streets and alleys near the commercial center, which create interest and spontaneity, the tightly packed, small residential blocks, where a human scale of interaction is fostered, and the longer residential blocks, where a certain regularity and pace in the street pattern exists, all of which translates into a network in which, not unlike Jacobs “dance” analogy, activity occurs regularly and spontaneously. (See Figure 14 in Section V). Within this neighborhood, in the words of Frumkin and Condon, the “ease of going around the block” stimulates interaction. Further, although the pattern is predominantly a grid, it is not monotonous. Triangular spaces and oblique intersections, reflecting principles advocated by Gehl and Goldhagen, create variety and richness in the overall street pattern, so that regularity is interspersed with variation. As observed in the discussions on sense of place, each street has a character of its own, but it is part of a larger network, producing interaction and interest.
The commercial stretch of Park Avenue itself is inviting, rather than a barrier to connection. Unlike Maplewood, where the commercial streets cut off interaction between different sections of the community, and where their linear and wide nature promotes speed rather than a slower pace at a human scale, the central corridor of Park Avenue, with the tight intersections of residential streets, help to stimulate and unite interaction at many different levels. As the result of three separate streets that were ultimately combined to form one, Park Avenue winds along in subtle changes of direction, promoting a slower pace and even a pause at various corners (Figure 35).

Figure 34: Park Avenue streets. See version to scale in Section V. Elaborated by author. Source: https://maps.google.com.

Figure 35: Street pattern analysis. Elaborated by author. Source: https://maps.google.com
In a similar way, the front porches that flank nearly every home in Park Avenue create a potent visual connection between the private and the public realm. As shown in Figure 36, even the tree lines at the front of the homes, along the curb, contribute to the many visual connections throughout the neighborhood, from intimate to grand.

![Figure 36: Park Avenue homes. Source: www.citynewspaper.org.](image1)

The human scale of the Park Avenue neighborhood is underscored in its network of formal and informal spaces and gathering spaces. The sidewalks of Park Avenue act as vibrant spaces in and of themselves. They are pathways for activity, connection and encounter, as much as they are means of transportation (Figures 37, 38). As Jan Gehl might observe, the sidewalks are not an afterthought, and they are not leftover space. They actively link the public space to the private space and constantly allow for intersections in day to day life. Moreover, the interspersing of shared spaces, intricately connected as part of the fabric of the environment, regularly occurs along the commercial line of Park Avenue. In places such as Barrington Park (Figure 39), the open sharing of space is tucked within and relates to the commercial and the residential, surrounded by a mix of housing types and even a bus stop, to allow for much
interaction, interdependencies, and activity. This is an environment which largely mirrors the connections and patterns advocated by Christopher Alexander, where each space becomes a connection to the next, and each space has meaning by virtue of this relationship. These are patterns which Alexander might label as "alive."

As shown in Figure 40, the informal spaces among and between homes in Park Avenue are constant opportunities for interaction. Here, as observed in Maplewood, in a densely packed residential area, it is the shared spaces between and among structures - - the yards, gardens, driveways, sidewalks and walkways between homes - - where interaction can and does regularly occur, through an intricate and complex pattern. Figure 40 illustrates the housing and street pattern along one of the smaller blocks of the neighborhood, where homes are small and tightly packed, and streets are narrow or dead-end alleys.

Figure 39: Barrington Park Green, by author.
Figure 40: Park Avenue density and shared space analysis, by author.
3. Connections within Pittsford

Writing of her observations of suburban development, Sarah Williams Goldhagen is critical of the inability of suburbs to foster connections and networks among residents, due to their isolating nature. Goldhagen observes that suburbs lack meaningful patterns and that the suburban landscape “discourages people from developing a meaningful sense of place.” Although the suburb creates a quiet and private environment, Goldhagen argues that socialization is lost for the sake of isolation, writing that suburbanites “lose out on the well-established psychic and social benefits of being enmeshed in closer and looser networks of people.” (Goldhagen 24-25).

The street pattern of the neighborhood in Pittsford that is a case study for this thesis echoes the concerns of Goldhagen. The streets here are virtually unconnected, arranged in a long, winding dendritic manner, without sidewalks or street lights, all of which presents little opportunity for interaction. The streets seem to be designed around the mobility of the car and ample placement between homes, rather than human scale or pedestrian use. The observations of James Kunstler in his critique of suburban development become applicable. As set forth above, Kunstler theorizes that community exists by virtue of the logical relationships between and among buildings and spaces. He fears that, due to their lack of this type of connectedness, the suburban development becomes a “conceptual substitute for the idea of community.” (Kunstler 185-186). Indeed, despite repeated visits to this neighborhood in Pittsford, and as the images that follow will demonstrate, not once were any residents observed walking in the streets or in their yards; the only observation of the residents in this neighborhood was that seen in their cars. Each street is isolated in itself, and the streets bear no connection to the surrounding farmland or forest (Figure 42). Although the street patterns perhaps relate to the rolling hills of the landscape, they do not, much like the disjointed commercial corridors in Maplewood, engage the surrounding spaces in an active and meaningful way. They are parts that do not effectively link to the whole of the environment.
In a similar manner, the visual connections in this neighborhood in Pittsford do not present opportunities for human interaction, as demonstrated by the strength of the front porch in the Maplewood and Park Avenue communities. Here, rather than front porches that face each other and invite both virtual and actual human contact, the front porch has been replaced by the garage, which consumes nearly one-half of the façade of the home. As opposed to an inviting space that reaches from the privacy of the home into the public realm, the porch is displaced to the back of the house in the form of a large deck, looking out to the open landscape beyond, with minimal
connection to context or human scale (Figure 43). The strong visual presence of the street itself does not connect the homes; instead, it is a means of transportation only, bounded not by a sidewalk, but by a gutter (Figure 44). As expressed above in the teachings of Kim Dovey, which, admittedly, were focused on urban environments, a street “is not a thing or collection of things.” Rather, it is a series of assembled connections which come together to create a dynamic whole. The street in this neighborhood in Pittsford is a means of transportation, but it seems ineffective as a reflection of human connection.

![Figure 43: Back deck and yard. Source: Author’s photo](image)

![Figure 44: Street view. Source: Author’s photo.](image)

Although these features of Pittsford may not be conducive to the need for social interaction as expressed in the literature review, and, in this regard, they may not be appropriate as a model for the aging population on a broad basis, they arguably do reflect the priorities and attributes expressed by the residents of Pittsford, as demonstrated by the survey results. Whereas residents of Maplewood and Park Avenue express principles that reflect traditional notions of “community”, residents of Pittsford articulate the desire for seclusion and natural beauty in a “neighborhood.”
The cul-de-sacs in this Pittsford neighborhood essentially represent the only “shared space” within the area. Unfortunately, however, rather than spaces that invite interaction or gathering, the cul-de-sac is a point of turnaround for vehicles. It bears no sense of connection to the surrounding homes or landscape and serves mainly to direct traffic in a circle, at the end of the street; even the vegetation at its center struggles to survive (Figure 45). Again following the guidance of Jan Gehl, the cul-de-sac is treated as leftover space as opposed to a place for gathering. Similarly, unlike the density and small, intricate spaces between homes in Maplewood and Park Avenue, each home within the Pittsford neighborhood is a separate entity, with distinct boundaries. Here, yards, driveways and green spaces are distinct private spaces, reducing opportunities for interaction and connection. Rather than a pattern in which homes are directly and visually opposite from each other, and in which the homes frame in-between spaces that are of a human scale and that invite interaction, the homes in Pittsford are isolated in and of themselves, and the vast spaces between them are not of a scale that suggests intimacy (Figure 46).
Figure 46: Pittsford neighborhood, density and shared space analysis, by author.
In his analysis of suburban communities, James Kunstler explains that zoning laws which first began in the 1960s directed that homes must be built on a minimum (rather than maximum) amount of acreage. The intent was to preserve green space, but the opposite occurred. Green space was consumed rather than saved, as the limitation on acreage required the building of homes further out into the countryside. Jan Gehl echoes this concern in observing that, in suburbs, outdoor space is focused on private activity and that “communal outdoor activities have been reduced to a bare minimum because of street design, automobile traffic, and especially the wide dispersal of people and events.” Gehl states that, as a result, “life between buildings has been phased out.” (Gehl 2011, 36 – 47). Although the neighborhood in Pittsford that is the subject of this case study does reflect the desire for privacy and green spaces that residents articulate, it parallels the concerns voiced by Kunstler and Gehl.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense of Purpose: A role within the community that brings value, individually and collectively</th>
<th>Place as Experience and Place as Social Capital: A sense of moving through, being within, and contributing to an environment, on a personal level and for a greater good</th>
<th>Access to Nature: Built and Unbuilt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensory: Views, Sounds, Smells</td>
<td>Context: Density Varied and Interdependent Uses Overall Fabric</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To build a sense of purpose for the aging, the premise is that a community that fosters place as *experience* and as *social capital*, through access to nature, sensory impressions and an overall context of varied and interdependent uses, can allow the aging to serve important roles, meeting a need for personal fulfillment throughout later stages of life, and contributing to the interdependencies within a community. The research of Pillemer demonstrated that a loss of meaningful roles within society can lead to a condition in which the aging become “marginal participants, often ignored, rejected and discriminated against.” (Pillemer 2000, 23). Again looking to the literature of architects and theorists as discussed above, the notion of place as *experience* and as *social capital*, to build a sense of purpose, might exist in inquiries such as:

- To what extent do the communities represent a phenomenological experience, in which the movement through space takes on a meaning by virtue of the activity within it, not unlike the theories proposed by Tuan and Seamons? What are the small details in the composition of a space that encourage activity and meaning within it?
- As Goldhagen advocates, do spaces promote a cognitive exercise between mind, body and the environment? In her observations of the experience within a space, Sarah Williams Goldhagen states that “people yearn for visual, textural and olfactory complexity.” (Goldhagen 2017, 27).
- How is the overall environment integrated within day-to-day life, and how does it contribute to the act of inhabiting and experiencing a space?
- Do our communities represent the honest and active integration of nature, or is the natural landscape an afterthought?
- To what extent have we equipped spaces with multiple uses, even in a simple way? The placement of a bench along a sidewalk encourages the acts of pausing, sitting or
reading, mixed with the act of walking. The placement of a small garden along the curb means that the acts of cultivating and nurturing are intertwined with mobility.

- Do Maplewood, Park Avenue and the neighborhood in Pittsford include and reflect affiliations among the many different members of the community, where trust and interdependencies can arise, for the overall good of the community?

Using guidance of this type as a method for observation, and based on the underlying premise, it might be possible to assess the extent to which each of the communities fosters a sense of place as experience and as social capital and thereby helps to build a sense of purpose for the residents. The dedication of a trail within Maplewood Park creates an experience that brings meaning, unity and purpose within this space (Figure 47). The dramatic views to the field and forest in the neighborhood in Pittsford may or may not create an honest and active relationship with nature (Figure 48). On a smaller scale, the act of a resident in sweeping the sidewalk in Park Avenue perhaps reflects purpose, a role, and meaning (Figure 49).

Figure 47 (top left): Trail Dedication, Maplewood. Source: www.democratandchronicle.com  
Figure 48 (top right): View to forest – Pittsford. Source: Author’s photo.

Figure 49: Park Avenue resident, sweeping the sidewalk. Source: Author’s photo
1. Experience and Social Capital within Maplewood

With its border of the Genesee River and the Maplewood Rose Garden and Park, the natural features of the Maplewood area are fundamental to the sense of community, as residents of Maplewood have expressed. The natural beauty of the Park and the River are vital pieces of the greater whole that represents Maplewood, promoting a cognitive exercise between residents and the environment, as Goldhagen advocates. Despite the disconnection that has occurred with the introduction of the commercial corridors, residents of Maplewood embrace nature, and it becomes a source of purpose, unity and fulfillment for them, directly paralleling research such as that of Kweon and colleagues discussed above. For example, the Maplewood Neighborhood Association has led efforts to beautify curbsides in both commercial (Figure 50) and residential (Figure 51) areas, with attention to natural features. It is these “smaller” interactions with nature that help to instill meaning and purpose for the older generations; here, as Jan Gehl advocates, nature takes on a relationship with the human scale and becomes part of the sensory experience in daily life. The annual events and festivals at the Maplewood Rose Garden engender pride in the community, attracting residents as well as members of other communities.

Figures 50–51: Curbside beautification. Source: Author’s photos.
The cohesive and active neighborhood association in Maplewood is a means for residents to unite in activities that bring value and purpose to the community. The LifeSpan organization at the YMCA also serves an important role for the aging, promoting activities such as a community garden, neighborhood walks, and exercise. The survey data collected from residents of Maplewood demonstrate that this is a community where active involvement in organizations for the betterment of the neighborhood is an important part of the lives of older residents. This is a community in which interdependencies are fostered by the role of social organizations and where roles for the elderly in particular contribute to the value of the entire community, much like the teachings in social capital set forth above. The diversity among residents in Maplewood, as reflected in the demographic data, fosters engagement among residents of many different backgrounds and ages. Each of these features is an important aspect in building social capital within Maplewood, paralleling the literature discussed above. Residents of Maplewood expressed the desire to hear birds sing as well as children play; these features are indeed present in Maplewood, and they are a reason that people choose to live here and stay here.
Nonetheless, despite Maplewood’s strengths with regard to its natural features and its strong sense of community purpose, the disconnections in the overall context and character of Maplewood remain stark and obvious. As noted above, a meaningful connection between residential, commercial and natural spaces is lacking, challenging the overall context of Maplewood to function as a cohesive whole. Particularly in the commercial sections, the experience as one moves through space is neither friendly nor inviting; the creation of a meaningful phenomenological experience as set forth in the teachings of Tuan, Seamons and Tschumi is challenged within Maplewood’s commercial streets. Less than one mile from the beauty of Maplewood Park, and on the border of residential streets, is a commercial section that is uninviting to pedestrian activity (Figures 57-60). These streets contain little vegetation, active sidewalk life, or permeable street frontage. Residents have expressed concerns over crime and transitions in housing patterns that threaten the stability of the area, and many residences exhibit lack of care and maintenance. From an overall standpoint, the residential, commercial and natural areas of Maplewood seem to operate independently as opposed to a community where the
experience across all environments, and the residents within them, are effectively united and meaningful.

Figure 57: Commercial frontage on Driving Park

Figure 58: Restaurant next to historic church

Figure 59: Deli and grocery on commercial strip

Figure 60: Homes on Dewey Avenue

Source Figures 57 – 60: Author’s photos.
2. Experience and Social Capital within Park Avenue

One resident of Park Avenue described its natural beauty as an “urban forest.” The vegetation, small parks and gardens throughout Park Avenue are integrated in the community in a manner that strongly contributes to an affiliation with the senses, and which helps to unite the environment as a whole. While green spaces such as the Park Avenue Green on Barrington Street are “built” nature, they become an active and important part of the fabric of the community. The presence of nature is not an afterthought in this community and is, in fact, part of the heritage of the area. Park Avenue is a community where interaction with nature, in either a quiet way by stopping on a bench, or in an active way through the planting of a common garden at the end of a block, is part of the day-to-day life of the area. Residents here take pride in the care of their natural environment, instilling a sense of purpose throughout the community.

Figures 61 – 65 (clockwise from top left): Barrington Green Park: Street beautification; bench at Barrington Green Park; bench at bus stop on Park Avenue; bench at church on Park Avenue. Source Figures 61-65: Author’s photos.

The vitality of street life that residents of Park Avenue expressed is evident in the built environment that surrounds them; the environment encourages and fosters an active and engaged life on the streets and sidewalks of the community. In parallel with the notions of social capital and sociological understandings of “community” as discussed above, Park Avenue reflects, in
the words of James Kunstler, “a living organism based on a web of interdependencies.” And, at the risk of an overly poetic observation, a “place ballet” occurs on the streets of this community on a daily basis. Residential streets are tightly connected to vibrant commercial areas, yet the distinction between public and private is, importantly, maintained. (See Figure 14 in Section V). From annual summer festivals (Figure 66) and events at local schools (Figure 67), to the casual ability to walk or bike on the sidewalks and streets of Park Avenue (Figures 68, 69), energy, activity and participation across all age groups are encouraged and enabled in this community. Looking to the words of David Seamons in discussing the notion of place as experience, Park Avenue reflects an environment where people come together in time and space out of their regular routines, and a resulting sense of place evolves by virtue of the activity within the space.

In recalling the input of residents of Park Avenue, members of this community expressed the strength of diversity, walkability, and culture, and the importance of “different ages, races, and economic backgrounds.” These are attributes that contribute to the overall social capital of Park Avenue. Neighborhood groups and preservation organizations within Park Avenue bring together residents of different ages and backgrounds. Moreover, through its intricate network of streets and blocks, this sense of vitality and activity is integrated within the overall residential and commercial fabric and context, rather than separate from it. The context of Park Avenue is one in which residential streets, with their open front porches, are just blocks from the commercial center, all of which is at a scale that is human, accessible and inviting.

Figure 66 (left): Park Ave Festival. Source: www.park-avenue.org. Figure 67 (right): Concert at Francis Parker School. Source: Author’s photo
While a sense of purpose is built in Park Avenue through more visible spaces and access to natural beauty, at the same time, the small details throughout the neighborhood – such as the scattering of free book nooks along the residential streets, or the efforts to beautify a simple line of markers at the end of a block – reflect the pride and fulfillment that residents embrace in their homes and environment (Figures 70 – 72). These are lasting, enduring qualities, as the residents themselves have expressed. These details form the important “edges” in the day-to-day experience of the community. As Jan Gehl instructs, an edge might consist of a recessed entrance, a niche in a façade, bollards on a street, or colonnades; an edge is an opportunity to stop, linger and form a human experience, and, quoting Christopher Alexander, if the edge fails, the space never become lively.
3. Experience and Social Capital within Pittsford

The experience with the natural world and sensory impressions in the neighborhood in Pittsford are starkly different from that of Maplewood and Park Avenue. The vast green spaces, farmland and forest that surround the homes in Pittsford form an observed landscape, rather than a participatory one. In fact, as new homes are built, the boundaries run to the edge of the forest wall, without an effort to bring human scale to that boundary (Figure 73). Although a view to the surrounding landscape offers beauty and tranquility, and although these views literally border the back yards of the homes, the landscape seems to exist separately from the residences. The landscape is a backdrop rather than an integrated part of a greater whole. (Figure 75). It provides privacy and seclusion to the residents who live within the borders of these natural features, but the residential property is disconnected; the landscape acts as a boundary, rather than an active part of the residential streets.

Figure 73 (top left): New construction – view to forest. Figure 74 (top right): Rear view of homes in Pittsford. Figure 75 (bottom): Pittsford home on cul-de-sac. Source: Author’s photos.
The physical features of this neighborhood in Pittsford reflect and encourage an experience that is very private in nature. Interaction stemming from collective activities or uses does not exist within this neighborhood on a day-to-day basis, because it is built for the sole purpose of housing. A resident returning home at the end of the day need not even step outside in order to enter the home, going directly from the garage to the interior, and to then to the private pool in the backyard (Figure 76). The homes sit in isolation, each as a clearly separate and independent unit. Through the teachings of Christian Norberg-Schulz, it was learned that an experience in an environment enfolds as a sense of dwelling emerges from and is connected to the landscape. Within this neighborhood in Pittsford, the homes appear to be dropped upon an existing and rich landscape, rather than growing from it or part of it. Although these physical features of the experience within this neighborhood do reflect priorities and desires of residents, as the survey data reveal, one questions whether the neighborhood will have the capacity to sustain residents into their older years, given broader needs of the elderly as discussed above.

Figure 76: Rear view of Pittsford home, with pool. Source: http://redbarnproperties.com
C. Fostering a Spirit of Belonging through Identity: Way-Finding, Landmarks and Character

| Belonging: A sense of stability, comfort and inner security | Place as Identity: Attachment based upon character and context, history, and memory | Way-Finding:  
- Centers and Orientation  
- Pedestrian Experience  

Landmarks:  
- Signs and Symbols  
- Historical Foundations  
- Organizations  

Overall Character |

The ability of a community to foster a spirit of belonging is perhaps the most subjective of the concepts explored in this study. This thesis proposes that it is through place as identity, manifested in means of way-finding, landmarks and overall character, through which a spirit of belonging is fostered. This premise is based upon theorists who propose that identity results from an attachment that stems from character and context, history and memory:

- To build the sense of identity as Christian Norberg Schulz describes, do our communities reflect the features of settlement, centering and orientation? Although something as simple as signage is a means of way-finding, the intent here is deeper. Does the community as a whole provide a sense of orientation and familiarity, so that our presence within it is relevant and meaningful? Is there in fact a sense of centering, from which the environment grows?
- To what extent do spaces relate to the surrounding landscape? Are they contextual, or are they disjointed?
- Do the streets, squares or intersections serve to both connect and unify an environment, particularly from the pedestrian standpoint, so that activities within them are intimate and meaningful, as Jan Gehl proposes, rather than, in the words of Gehl, “dispersed, nondescript and void of people?”
- Importantly, what are the markers of history in these communities? Do they possess either physical or figural landmarks, which serve as reminders of the community’s larger role in society as a whole, and which provide meaningful memories? As the studies of needs of the aging have demonstrated, particularly in the work of Hayden and Stafford, history and memory contribute greatly to a sense of attachment for the elderly.
- How might we describe the overall character of the environment, through the nature of its landscape, streetscapes and its architecture? What is the personality that is communicated by the built environment?
The notion of belonging seems quite different in each of the subject communities, most likely because of their individual histories and demographic composition. For residents of Maplewood, a spirit of belonging, particularly as articulated by the older residents, stems from the rich and important heritage of the community and its place within the development of the City of Rochester (Figure 77). For Park Avenue, attachment grows from the interconnected character of the community, its local roots, its architecture, and its vibrancy (Figure 78). For Pittsford, the spirit of belonging is more individual and private, rather than part of a collective whole, with less reference to the historical beginnings of the neighborhood and more importance placed on individual ownership and vast space (Figure 79).

Figure 77 (left): Maplewood History. Figure 78 (right): Stevers Candy on Park Avenue. Source: Author’s photos.

Figure 79: Pittsford home, farmland. Source: https://maps.google.com.
1. Identity of Maplewood

Among the three communities that are the case studies for this thesis, Maplewood likely has experienced the greatest amount of transition and change. It has evolved from a region of agricultural and then industrial growth, to the building of stately homes and the planning of parks by the famed Frederick Law Olmsted, to a neighborhood that has become more transient, mobile, and commercial, threatening the overall security and stability of the neighborhood. In some cases, connections to history remain strong, such as the presence of the Maplewood Rose Garden and Park, and its connection to Claude Bragdon’s YMCA building, as a center of the community (Figures 80, 81). In other cases, history is less preserved and is more distant. What was once the Driving Park Raceway, which brought amusement and activity to the area, is now a nondescript commercial strip (Figures 82, 83).

Figure 80 (left): YMCA and Rose Garden, circa 1920. Source: www.gannettcdn.com. Figure 81 (right): YMCA and Rose Garden today. Source: Author’s photo.

Figure 82 (left): Original Driving Park Raceway. Source: http://www.cityofrochester.gov. Figure 83 (right): Driving Park Blvd. today. Source: Author’s photo.

Residents of Maplewood express the fear that younger generations will not embrace or maintain the memories of this community. Maplewood seems to cling to markers and physical signs of the past history of the area. A landmark such as the fountain in the Maplewood Rose
Garden, or the windows and detail of an historic church on Dewey Avenue, are distinct markers of history (Figures 82 – 84). As Philip Stafford’s studies demonstrated, it is fusions of “symbol and object” such as these that become particularly important for endearing a spirit of belonging. Stafford’s observations on the importance of memory bear repeating: “symbols call into play imagination, emotion, and insight….memory does not merely represent or signify the group, but helps to build it, to sustain it in an active, constitutive process.” (Stafford 2009, 86-87). Perhaps equally if not more important than these physical markers is the ability of Maplewood to foster “landmarks” through its associations of members of the community. The Maplewood Neighborhood Association and the LifeSpan organization at the YMCA serve as important organizational attributes of the community, especially for the aging population who play active roles in these associations (Figures 87, 88). These associations provide a source of stability and strength to the elderly within Maplewood and help to define the identity of Maplewood for the aging population in particular.

Figures 84 – 86 (left to right): Historical images of fountain, church and retail. Sources: Author’s photos.

Figure 87 (left): LifeSpan’s Lily Café at the YMCA. Source: http://www.staticisquarespace.com. Figure 88 (right): Music at the Lily Café. Source: http://www.rochesterymca.org
Historically, Maplewood’s evolution and development is not unlike that which Christian Norberg-Schulz advocates as the basis for identity within a community. Maplewood first sprung from the roots of the landscape itself; the Genesee River was a source of fertility in the surrounding landscape, and then a source of power and transportation for growing industries. Maplewood Park and stately residential areas developed naturally from the border of the River. Today, Maplewood’s markers of way-finding and orientation still exist. In small details, such as stone pillars which mark the entrance to a street or feature of the landscape, we see the memory of efforts to highlight a destination (Figures 89-91). In larger ways, such as the well-connected residential blocks, we see a neighborhood that grew organically, in step with the growth of the community as a whole. In this sense, Maplewood has a history of “center” and settlement, contributing to its spirit of belonging. As one older resident indeed expressed, Maplewood represents her “roots.” Its history and memories foster her sense of belonging.

Figure 89 (top left): Entry to Lakeview Park residential. Figure 90 (top right): Entry to Maplewood Park and Rose Garden. Figure 91 (bottom): Entry to River Trail. Source: Author’s photos.
Particularly with these strong neighborhood associations and connections to history, Maplewood’s identity is visible and indeed spoken. Unfortunately, much of its physical appearance and the more recently built environment pose a challenge to the ability to maintain the cohesive sense of identity and belonging by which Maplewood has been known for so many years. Looking again to the guidance of Jacobs, the absence of a vibrant pedestrian life on the commercial streets of Maplewood breeds a lack of trust, which Jacobs characterizes as “a disaster to a city street.” One question is whether the commercial strips of Maplewood, which bear little resemblance to the history and heritage of the area, have challenged the spirit of belonging within Maplewood and have caused a change in its character and identity, and, as set forth above, have physically divided, rather than united, the community (Figures 92-95). That said, given that Maplewood is a community that grew from waves of immigration and diversity, perhaps these transitions represent a new chapter in Maplewood’s continued diversity, and an opportunity to strive for a new sense of identity and attachment.

Figures 92-95 (clockwise from top left): International grocery; Delicatessen; Commercial strip on Dewey Ave.; Seafood market and grocery. Source: Author’s photos.
2. **Identity of Park Avenue**

The input of residents of Park Avenue reflects that, for them, community means attributes such as a “physical connection” marked by architecture, festivals, majestic trees, music, theater, and strong friendships. They point to “feeling at home in a stable, quality, safe environment” as qualities that engender a spirit of belonging. This community springs from and revolves around the central corridor of Park Avenue itself, which threads together, in an integrated yet organic way, the commercial, residential, natural, and, importantly, pedestrian aspects of this community. In again looking to the guidance of Christian Norberg-Schulz, Park Avenue reflects “tension and rhythm between center, path and domain,” with the commercial avenue acting as a center of the community, the intricacy of intersecting street patterns, the density of homes that bear a strong relationship to each other and to the surrounding context, and the resulting vibrant pedestrian and street life.
Not unlike Maplewood, the Park Avenue community provides a sense of way-finding through its small but important details of signage and street lights (Figures 97, 98, 100). On a broader scale, however, the overall means of orientation and “grounding” within Park Avenue is connected and integrated. Whereas Maplewood’s commercial areas represent disconnects and breaks from the historic character of its community, Park Avenue reflects a consistent attention to human scale and intimacy, in an effective and unifying manner. The character of this neighborhood is one in which quiet residential streets are just steps away from vibrancy of an inviting commercial center and the life on a sidewalk café (Figures 99, 101, 103).
Moreover, Park Avenue provides a sense of grounding and centers not only through the commercial corridor and the residential blocks, but in the small details, from a private entry to an apartment building, to the playfulness of a sculpture garden, to a walk on a tree-lined sidewalk (Figures 104-106). In the words of James Kunstler and his observations of the historic American “small town” street, Park Avenue reflects a community where awareness and respect for “what is going on next door” seems evident. The built environment communicates and fosters a spirit of attachment and an understanding of the human role within the environment.
Finally, history and memory are well-preserved throughout Park Avenue. Much of its original landscaping and architecture remains intact and is a source of stability and permanence in the community. From treasures such as the Boynton House by Frank Lloyd Wright (Figure 107), to the continued maintenance and beautification of vegetation in sections such as Oxford Street (Figures 108, 109), to the adaptive reuse of historic structures including the original Rochester library (Figures 110, 111), Park Avenue has preserved much of its important history, as a strong contributor to its identity and the sense of attachment that it inspires. As residents expressed through the survey process, value is placed on the “historic residential area of the city” and the consistent attention to “character and architecture.” These attributes of Park Avenue’s built environment reflect these ideas and tie to a spirit of belonging.
Figure 107: The Boynton House, Frank Lloyd Wright. Source: [https://www.beroarchitecture.com](https://www.beroarchitecture.com)

Figure 108 (left): Historic Oxford Street. Source: [www.usgwarchives.net](http://www.usgwarchives.net), Figure 109 (right): The Oxford Street Mall today. Source: [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com).

Figure 110 (left): Original Rochester Library. Source: [www.usgwarchives.net](http://www.usgwarchives.net). Figure 111 (right): Library today (retail space). Source: [www.democratandchronicle.com](http://www.democratandchronicle.com)
3. Identity of Pittsford

The analysis set forth above illustrates that the neighborhood in Pittsford is starkly different from Maplewood and Park Avenue. As discussed in the initial overview of the subject communities, rather than an environment where commercial, residential and natural features must integrate with one another in close proximity, the neighborhood in Pittsford is purely residential, and it is only by virtue of the automobile that it becomes actually and physically connected to a broader context. The input of residents of Pittsford points to trust in their neighbors and the enjoyment of their surroundings as their identity with their environment; however, their sense of attachment and spirit of belonging seems to stem primarily from a sense of privacy and ownership, rather than from a grounding in their built environment in a participatory sense.

Historically, this neighborhood in Pittsford comprised one large tract of farmland. Now, the farmland is a defining boundary of the neighborhood, rather than an effective part of it, and although the farmhouse that once served as a center and focal point of this area still stands, it is distant and largely hidden from view, and the homes in this tract bear no relation to it (Figures 112, 113). From the standpoint of a spirit of identity and attachment, the views of theorists such as Goldhagen are worth repeating, in which she expresses that when “people lay claim to a piece of land, constructing buildings, organizing and shaping its voids into action settings, it is no longer just an abstraction, a geographic point on a map. What was once just territory becomes a place, which means that it is imbued with social meaning.” (Goldhagen 2017, 199). The neighborhood in Pittsford does, in its own way, reflect a social meaning, although it is not one that appears supportive of the needs of the aging as discussed in the sociological and psychological literature. Similarly, Phillip Stafford’s questions are those that might be posed to this neighborhood in Pittsford in terms of its ability to engage the elderly: Can we fill our spaces with meaning and memory? Can we transform space into a place that reflects who we imagine ourselves to be?” (Stafford 2009, 13-14). In observing this neighborhood in Pittsford, the question is whether it remains a point on a map, which could be anywhere, or whether it is integrally connected to its context and environment and, in turn, creates a sense of permanency and belonging for residents.
Figure 112 (top): View to original farmhouse. Figure 113 (bottom): View to farmland. Source: Author’s photos.
D. Conclusions Drawn from these Case Studies

1. Overall Conclusions

These observations of Maplewood, Park Avenue and Pittsford lead to many conclusions about each case study and the extent to which their attributes engage our aging population in a way that stimulates interaction, builds a sense of purpose, and fosters a spirit of belonging. Such conclusions, however, are relevant only if they tie to the demographics of each community and the needs and priorities expressed by residents, as set forth in the early stages of this thesis. It is somewhat straightforward to step back and assess these communities from the standpoint of a generic approach. For example, it is generally understood that social interaction is healthy, both physically and mentally, for all members of society (not just the elderly), regardless of their demographic makeup, and that connections such as a pattern of streets or sidewalks can help to fulfill this need. The more difficult task is to assess whether the attributes of each community can in fact lead to the model of Living in Place that this thesis proposes, with respect to the particular needs, priorities and overall social conditions of the respective residents and the elderly in particular.

As the demographic data reflect, Maplewood is a community of much diversity, with the greatest poverty and lowest income levels as compared to the other case studies. Maplewood has changed from an area where single family, owner-occupied homes were most prevalent, to a community where transient residents and rental properties are growing. The older residents of Maplewood express strong attachment to the history of their community, the beauty and importance of natural features, and the unity and purpose that comes from associations such as the Maplewood Neighborhood Association and LifeSpan. These features foster a spirit of belonging in the community, through identity and attachment. In parallel, however, residents are concerned with crime and safety, and with the disconnections that have resulted from commercial corridors and certain residential blocks, where the opportunity for meaningful social interaction and pedestrian experience breaks down.

The many shared spaces, overall density and the character of the homes, with their proximity to the public interface and their inviting front porches, are opportunities for connection, and thereby social interaction for the aging, within Maplewood. In a neighborhood where residents are concerned with safety, and where they may not have the ability to afford alternative means of living or transportation, the tight networks of the Maplewood community
are fundamentally important for its aging residents in particular. At the same time, the marked disconnection of commercial, residential and natural areas defeats efforts toward unity. While the ties to nature are strong, they are less well integrated throughout the environment as a whole. A sense of purpose for the aging might be fostered through events such as the Maplewood Rose Festival, or on a smaller scale through the beautification of neighborhood streets, yet barriers to a cohesive, overall character within the community exist, due to more recent commercial development that does not relate to its surroundings, and due to the disconnection between the various sectors of the community. And, while history and memory are strongly preserved in many aspects of the community to foster a spirit of belonging, the commercial strips seem to have turned their backs on that history, and older residents fear that memories are lost as younger generations move to the area.

The Park Avenue community seems to possess all attributes that might contribute to Living in Place, yet, surprisingly, the total population of elderly residents here is smaller than that of Maplewood and Pittsford. Park Avenue perhaps is a victim of rising housing costs and gentrification. The influx of younger generations, the increase in rental properties as far surpassing home ownership, and the rising cost of living in this area challenge the ability of the older residents to remain. Nonetheless, with a community that is entirely walkable, dense, connected, historic, beautiful and vibrant, Park Avenue’s built environment is one that can shape the quality of life of its residents in an enduring and lasting way, allowing the aging in particular to experience a fulfilled quality of life, and resulting in an environment that is rich in interdependencies. The attributes of Park Avenue, particularly its human scale, network of intricate streets, public-private interfaces, and interspersing of beautiful natural elements, foster all of the needs of the aging addressed herein: social interaction, purpose and belonging. As the older residents of Park Avenue themselves have expressed, there is a strong sense of permanency and stability, engendering a feeling of overall personal security and, as articulated in the survey information and in the literature review, trust.

The neighborhood in Pittsford presents a quandary in an analysis of Living in Place, mainly because the views and priorities of its residents seem to contrast with much of what the society-wide literature on needs of the aging teaches. The neighborhood in Pittsford lacks traditional connections that might stimulate interaction, such as a connected network of streets or a tightly knit public-private interface; it bears little connection to the landscape that surrounds it; it lacks
common or shared spaces; it makes no reference to history. Current residents in this section of Pittsford are primarily families. The inquiry becomes whether, as children grow and the parents age, this neighborhood could sustain a holistic quality of life for an older population, in keeping with the needs cited as important in the preceding social and psychological literature.

Ironically, the demographic data demonstrates that the elderly population of Pittsford is greater than that of the other two communities, and that 81% of those over the age of 65 in Monroe County live in the suburbs. One questions whether this data is due to the fact that the suburbs see the greatest amount of institutional care facilities, perhaps because the neighborhoods themselves are not equipped to support the needs of the aging. Moreover, in light of the study herein, one questions whether a community such as this neighborhood in Pittsford could in fact engender a sense of vitality for an aging population in the context of the identified needs. Nonetheless, with an affluent population for which mobility or affordability of amenities are not an issue, and for whom the seclusion and privacy of a neighborhood that is surrounded by a vast landscape are priorities, perhaps Living in Place is indeed met with respect to the interests and values of the residents of Pittsford. Residents of Pittsford expressed their feelings of security and fulfillment in their surroundings. As learned from the guidance provided by Schneekloth and Shibley, the practice of placemaking must give legitimacy to all forms of knowledge, without privilege to a single interpretation.

2. Areas for Further Research

An entire set of physical, social and economic factors that should be included in an exhaustive analysis of these communities is beyond the scope of this thesis. For example, the climatic and microclimatic conditions in these communities would be an initial topic of research in any design work. Transportation resources also are fundamental to a community structure; in Maplewood and Park Avenue, use of bus, foot and bicycle might all be viable options that affect the building of a community, while in Pittsford, mobility is dependent on the automobile. A thorough study of mobility patterns would be important as a topic for further research, and may affect outcomes, while, in recognition of current realities, the ability to access and use different forms of communicative technologies could significantly impact the lifestyles of an aging population. Finally, a thorough observation of the day-to-day lives of residents of these communities, the activities in which they participate, and their actual interaction with the
environment, conducted over the course of many months, are the type of data to be gathered to fully explore how the built environment may or may not allow for a model of Living in Place.

The intent of the foregoing analysis was not to exhaust such a list attributes, and the observation of daily lives over the course of many months was beyond the scope of this thesis. Rather, the intent was to highlight and focus on certain core attributes of these communities that are closely connected to understandings of sense of place, particularly because these attributes represent fundamental “roots” in the community structure that might be optimized to help bridge the needs of the aging and Living in Place.

While recognizing that a complete process of placemaking must account for all known physical, social and economic factors, this study teaches that Living in Place might be accommodated in many different ways and contexts. That which is appropriate in one community may not work in another, due to social, economic and environmental challenges. Nonetheless, the goal is to identify unifying principles that, just like Norberg-Schulz’s ideas on dwelling, or Christopher Alexander’s patterns, might be applied to any community, regardless of context or demographics. The fact that certain unifying principles might indeed emerge from the study of the three very different communities that served as the case studies for this research lends credibility to the identified principles. This then leads to the final part of this thesis, proposing key principles that can be derived from the observation and analysis of the subject communities which, regardless of social or physical differences, might apply to society as a whole to enable Living in Place.
XI. Principles that Apply to Society as a Whole

At the outset of this study, it was important to discuss certain key concepts. First was the definition of community as it is understood in sociological studies. Second was the distinction between Aging in Place and Living in Place. It is appropriate to return to these concepts as a concluding step in this work, based upon the study of the needs of the aging, as addressed and translated in notions of sense of place, and as manifested in attributes of the subject communities.

The definition of community established that the word is derived from the Latin suffixes “com,” meaning together, and “munis,” meaning links, and that a primary understanding of community is “a unified body of individuals.” (Merriam Webster Dictionary). The observations of Maplewood, Park Avenue and Pittsford reveal that “community” takes on different meanings within each context. In Maplewood and Park Avenue, the notion of community in a traditional sociological sense is strongly exhibited, although the extent to which the respective built environments of each community supports this notion varies. For residents of the Pittsford neighborhood, their immediate surroundings reflect an environment that is far more private and secluded in nature, and that which they view as “community” depends upon access to amenities that go beyond the reach of this physical neighborhood. Therefore, the idea of community is different in each case study, yet still important to each.

Further, this work established a definition of Living in Place that is intended to be quite different from what has commonly been understood as Aging in Place. Living in Place is a state in which a quality of life that is created through a stimulating and fulfilling environment is maintained throughout our later years, allowing the aging process to be one of enrichment and respect, rather than decline. Living in Place is, as the roots of the phrase itself encompass, vitality through sense of place. Specifically, this means a community that engages its residents, so that a quality of life may be experienced through social interaction, a sense of purpose, and a spirit of belonging, and so that the community as a whole may benefit from demographic diversity.

Now, in stepping back to think of these concepts based upon that which has been learned in the study and observation of Maplewood, Park Avenue and Pittsford, it is appropriate to propose fundamental attributes that emerge as applicable to society on a broader basis, to further Living in Place for the greater good. The principles that might serve as essential attributes to foster
Living in Place again stem from the derivation and primary understanding of the word “community.”

\[
\text{Com} = \text{Together} = \text{Centers} \\
\text{Munis} = \text{Links} = \text{Intersections} \\
\text{Community} = \text{Unified Body of Individuals} = \text{The Human Scale}
\]

In considering the observations of the subject communities, the attributes of *centers*, *intersections* and *the human scale* seem to be those which consistently contribute to Living in Place, regardless of demographics or physical context. These are attributes which appear in both obvious and subtle ways and which cross each of the needs for social interaction, sense of purpose, and spirit of belonging.

Centers become those spaces or qualities which serve to “ground” a community. They may be physical centers, such as Maplewood Park or the commercial vibrancy of the Park Avenue corridor. A center might even be a subtle detail, such as a park bench that becomes a regular place to pause on a daily walk. Moreover, centers can be figural, such as strong ties to history, memory and organizations that help to unify and sustain a community. In Maplewood, the Neighborhood Association serves as an important social center for the community, just as the Maplewood Park and Rose Garden serve as a center of activity, nature and history. A center is more than a geographic location; it is a source of activity and energy. In the Park Avenue neighborhood, the commercial center formed by inviting cafes and retail establishments are a focal point of the community, bringing together residents of all backgrounds and ages. The strong link of the Park Avenue corridor as a center of the community is a point from which activity can grow. On a smaller level, the front porch becomes a center on an intimate scale, from which relationships might be sparked. Within the neighborhood in Pittsford, one questions whether a unifying center exists, and what this might mean for long term sustainability as a community. A center is a point of arrival, but it is also a point from which a community can grow and can experience unity; it is a point of stability and permanence, yet also a point around which a community can evolve. In this sense, centers are very closely related to the understandings of sense of place as experience, social capital and identity. Centers can help to build a sense of purpose, because they are unifying and are a genesis for activity, and to foster a spirit of belonging, because they serve to ground an environment in permanency.
Intersections are those attributes that bring people together. In the Pittsford neighborhood, the intersections, for better or worse, take place on a more private level, in a backyard or in the home itself. In Park Avenue and Maplewood, the intersections occur on a front porch or a sidewalk, or within the density of residential streets, where spaces that are used every day might, spontaneously, become opportunities for sharing. Intersections may or may not occur throughout an environment as a whole. In Maplewood, a lack of meaningful intersection is witnessed between the commercial, residential and natural. In Park Avenue, the intersections that occur even on intimate levels such as the Barrington Green or the connections in tightly knit street patterns, where public life and private life cross, become important and vital to the sustainability of the community. In Pittsford, the intersection of residential space with the vast landscape around it seems one that is observed rather than participatory, but it nonetheless is an intersection that forms a type of meaning. It is through intersections in day-to-day life that social interaction is fostered, and place as connections is expressed.

Finally, the importance of human scale in the attributes of the community structure emerges as a strong principle. Absent a scale within our communities that relates to the actual presence and role of humans, our environments cannot be understood or approached. Human scale brings meaning to an environment. The scale of the home-street interface in Maplewood and Park Avenue is far different from that of the neighborhood in Pittsford, translating directly to an understanding of the private-public interface, and the ability to connect and interact. Similarly, the scale of the pedestrian experience while walking along the cafes that line the commercial centers of Park Avenue is much different from the scale of the pedestrian experience (or lack thereof) on the commercial corridors that seem to divide Maplewood. There is a very human scale that exists when observing children at the Maplewood Playground, or at the Francis Parker School that is intertwined with the residential life of Park Avenue, or in the act of a resident sweeping the sidewalk outside of her home. Human scale is that attribute which crosses each of the senses of place discussed herein: connection, experience and social capital, and identity.
This thesis has represented an attempt to inherently understand certain core needs of our aging population, to deeply consider the grounding and meaning that can arise from associated notions of sense of place, and to identify and assess what might be a response to these needs within the roots of an environment, where sense of place is activated in community attributes, for the good of not just the elderly, but a community as a whole. The needs of the aging will vary from one geographic and demographic context to the next, but this thesis has attempted to identify social and psychological needs that weave through a population in general, and the aging in particular, regardless of context. Moreover, the research teaches that notions of sense of place are subtle and subjective, yet they too share common principles such as meaning, belonging, attachment, and a sense of inner security. The hope is that by binding these core needs of the aging with the highly intellectual, yet real, notions of sense of place, and activating these notions through attributes of the environment, Living in Place is achieved, allowing vitality for the aging and for the community as a whole.
APPENDIX A: Methods and Record of Observation of Communities

Maplewood
- Visits to the area on several occasions during the months of June, July, August and September 2017. Specific areas included residential streets, commercial streets, the Maplewood Park and Rose Garden, Eastman Business Park and surrounding areas, and the Genesee River Trail.
- Visits made by car, foot and bicycle.
- Days and times of visits included weekdays and weekends. During the week, visits were made during morning and late afternoon hours. On weekends, visits were made during the middle of the day.
- Method of recording observations with each visit included sketches, diagrams, mapping and photos.
- Observation also included two visits to the Maplewood YMCA, to generally observe the activity, informally talk to older members and to meet with representatives of the LifeSpan organization at the YMCA, and participation in one meeting of the Maplewood Neighborhood Association, to understand the nature of the organization and issues that it addresses.

Park Avenue
- Visits to the area on several occasions during the months of June, July, August and September, for the purpose of recording observations. Specific areas observed included primary intersections on the commercial corridor of Park Avenue, nearly all residential streets, and green/park areas including the Oxford Mall, Barrington Park Green, and the park at the Rochester Museum and Science Center.
- The author also resides in this neighborhood, and personal observation is made on a daily basis.
- Visits were made by foot and bicycle.
- Days and times of visits included weekdays and weekends, at morning, mid-day and evening hours.
- Method of recording observations with each visit included sketches, diagrams, mapping and photos.

Neighborhood in Pittsford
- Several visits were initially made to various neighborhoods in Pittsford, in order to identify a neighborhood with characteristics that are significantly different from that of Maplewood and Park Avenue. The neighborhood that runs off of Pittsford-Mendon Road was ultimately selected, as generally representative of the neighborhoods in this suburb, and as one with features that are much different from that of Park Avenue or Maplewood.
- Once identified, visits were made to the neighborhood by bicycle and car, on five occasions throughout July, August and September.
- Visits were made on two different week days, at morning and late afternoon hours, and on three different weekend days, at mid-day hours.
- Method of recording observations with each visit included sketches, diagrams, mapping and photos.
APPENDIX B: Survey Form and Overall Summary of Comments

This survey is conducted by a student in the Master of Architecture program at the Rochester Institute of Technology. The survey relates to research for the student’s thesis in the Architecture curriculum, in which the student is studying certain aspects of communities in and near Rochester. You are invited to participate in this research because you are a resident of one of the communities that is part of the study. Your participation is voluntary and confidential. You may choose not to participate in the survey and may withdraw at any time. If you choose to withdraw, you will not be penalized. The survey does not contain any identifying information about you. Your answers will be used for scholarly purposes only. If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Susan Wylie at smw1072@rit.edu.

Thank you for your participation!

What is your age? ___________

In what part of the city of Rochester or surrounding area do you live? (Please identify your street name and the area by neighborhood name, such as “Maplewood”, “Park Avenue” or “Pittsford”).

________________________

How long have you lived at this address? ________

What aspects of the neighborhood in which you live are important to you?

Why are these aspects important?

Are there any physical features of the neighborhood that are important to you? (Examples might be parks, sidewalks, transportation, commercial, lighting, safety features, amenities, etc.). Please be as specific as possible in describing these features, and why they are important to you.

Do you wish to remain living in your neighborhood? Why?
Do you know others who live in your neighborhood? Please be as specific as possible in describing how you know others, and the level of interaction that you have with them.

Are there any features or attributes of your neighborhood that you consider to be useful in communicating or engaging with others who live in the neighborhood?

Do you have any concerns about your neighborhood or things that you would like to see changed? Why?

List any community activities or associations in which you participate.

How would you describe the character of your neighborhood?

Please feel free to describe any other aspects or features of your neighborhood that are important to you.

What does the term “community” mean to you and where you live?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Date Sent</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Comments (&quot;Mult&quot; = at least 3 similar comments)</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MPUld</td>
<td>27-Sep</td>
<td>Nbr Assoc</td>
<td>Have lived in MPU since I was child and intend to stay.</td>
<td>Belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28-Sep</td>
<td>LifeSpan</td>
<td>YMCA and MNA are sources of activity. (mult)</td>
<td>Interaction, Purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(20 Replies)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(13 Replies)</td>
<td>Need interaction. Most blocks residential. Services and public spaces on periphery. (mult)</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Neighborhood is not as safe as prior years. Need more police patrol. (mult)</td>
<td>Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Use of YMCA regularly. Member of MNA for many years</td>
<td>Interaction, Belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Park, Rose Garden, River trail. (mult)</td>
<td>Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>We do not lock doors. We know neighbors. (mult)</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Community = gathering places. Where all can gather.</td>
<td>Interaction, Belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lighting needed on streets for safety. (mult)</td>
<td>Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Neighbors look out for each other. (mult)</td>
<td>Interaction, Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Children in neighborhood, sounds</td>
<td>Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Safety is an issue. Housing has changed. Too many rental properties are not maintained. (mult)</td>
<td>Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Support of family helps remain in neighborhood.</td>
<td>Support - general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Transportation and services</td>
<td>Amenities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parks to enjoy beauty (mult)</td>
<td>Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Walks on river trail (mult)</td>
<td>Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rose garden = center. Festivals, history. (mult)</td>
<td>Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Do not plan to stay - moving to Fl. But roots are here.</td>
<td>Belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Historic part of city. (mult)</td>
<td>History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Work in neighborhood and intend to stay as long as employed.</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Family settled here. Pride in history. Landmarks (mult)</td>
<td>History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Landlords do not maintain prop. Noise. This is concern.</td>
<td>Security, Belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Paclac group. Spot areas re safety. Network. (mult)</td>
<td>Security, Purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lead activities. Community garden Medians. Serves purpose. YMCA is source of activity. (mult)</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Walking on sidewalks important. Walk to stores (mult)</td>
<td>Interaction, amenities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Residents w backgrounds. Volunteers. (mult)</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Neighbors good friends. Dependability. Safety (mult)</td>
<td>Interaction, Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Concern re retail and commercial. Too many tattoo parlors.</td>
<td>Amenities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Belong to MNA and YMCA. Attend meetings. (mult)</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Police citizen committee and CERT. Book club.</td>
<td>Interaction, Purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Neighborhood in transition. Memory. Work w businesses</td>
<td>Belonging, Hist, Purp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Keep rental prop to minimum. Protect property.</td>
<td>Belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Concern: LL do not take care of prop. Disruption. Noise. Know neighbors thru MNA; see them on street, walking</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Important to maintain park, river trail</td>
<td>Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Character is historic but changing</td>
<td>Belonging, History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Neighborhood in transition (mult)</td>
<td>Belonging, History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>River is important but no way to get to it.</td>
<td>Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Value activities that bring people together (mult)</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tranquility and activity. Trees and nature</td>
<td>History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Architecture (mult)</td>
<td>History, Belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Easy to walk and bike (mult)</td>
<td>Interaction, amenities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Urban forest.&quot; Tree-lined streets. (mult)</td>
<td>Nature</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Excellent park system. Green spaces but activity (mult)</td>
<td>Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Front porches. Conducive to interaction. (mult)</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sidewalks are important. Proximity to commercial strip w restaurants and stores (mult)</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park Av</td>
<td>Sept 28</td>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>Tranquility and activity. Trees and nature</td>
<td>Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-Oct</td>
<td>(13 Replies)</td>
<td>Architecture (mult)</td>
<td>History, Belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28-Sep</td>
<td>Nbr Assoc</td>
<td>Easy to walk and bike (mult)</td>
<td>Interaction, amenities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(15 Replies)</td>
<td>&quot;Urban forest.&quot; Tree-lined streets. (mult)</td>
<td>Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Excellent park system. Green spaces but activity (mult)</td>
<td>Nature</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Front porches. Conducive to interaction. (mult)</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sidewalks are important. Proximity to commercial strip w restaurants and stores (mult)</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Particularly as age, proximity to stores important
Densely populated. Know our neighbors. Connected to
activities in neighborhood. (mult)
Christmas festival every year
Park Ave Fest every year (mult)
Park Ave is concentration of restaurants, business (mult)
Living in quality neighborhood. Share pride.
More crime than there used to be. Rental prop. (mult)
Diversity of age groups. More young people. But
concern over maintaining property. Noise.
Families with children, diversity. (mult)
Intend to stay as long as I can
Easy access to downtown, parks, stores (mult)
Historic. Near East Ave. Eastman House, churches,
schools (mult). Community - diversity, cultural
Security can be concern but we know neighbors. Feel
safe in general. (mult)
Neighborhood association and preservation association
(mult). Volunteer common activities (mult)
Respect for maintaining heritage of area (mult)
Cobbs Hill Park is closely located.
Use bus and walk. I no longer drive. Need family.
Deep emotional connection to city - history, traditions
This is preserved area of city. Consistent atmosphere
of architecture, especially houses
Historic school adds to sense of community.
Seven historic churches in area. Marks of history and
architecture.
Parking on streets is problem (mult)
Maintain crime report for neighbor assoc.
With more renters, there is sense of "watch"
Value safety and security of home.
President of neighbor association. Gratifying,
Opportunities to work w young people. Grassroots
activities w many organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept 29</td>
<td>Individuals (14 Replies)</td>
<td>Good schools and safety were initial reasons for living here (mult)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Important to have access to many parks. nature. (mult)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>All neighbors are empty nesters. We have great deal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>in common thru social and professional networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Important to have secluded, private setting. (mult)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Socially connected to friends that live throughout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pittsford.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Socially connected to lesser extent with neighbors on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>cul-de-sac.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Neighbors are very trustworthy, dependable. (mult)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Have everything I need - access to church, nature, good neighbors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(mult)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trust my neighbors. Grateful for all activities near me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Participate in many activities in Village. (mult)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Intend to stay as long as we can but more than we need.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoy outdoor activities. Hiking, biking, parks and golf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>nearby (mult)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gardens and foliage are important. Beauty of nature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(mult)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Involved in community and professional groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of our friendships are through professional or social activities such as golf, tennis.</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy access to parks, village, Erie canal (multi)</td>
<td>Nature, amenities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have everything for my needs - groceries, church, safety, trust and companionship of neighbors (multi)</td>
<td>Interaction, Security</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel safe and secure. Not threatened.</td>
<td>Security, Belonging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We live on quiet street where sidewalks are not needed. Need street lights at entrance only.</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seclusion and privacy feel secure (multi)</td>
<td>Security, Privacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I drive to everything I need.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community is source of stability.</td>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intend to stay as long as possible (multi)</td>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connections through work and social networks (multi)</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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REFERENCES


Towler, Mary Anna. “Preservation Focus.” Rochester City Newspaper, October 18, 2017.


