# Chapter 7. Unmet Needs and Service Redundancies

### Introduction

Chapter 5 presented extensive information about the number and location and of the three target populations in Nassau and Suffolk counties and the characteristics of the transportation services that are available to those individuals. In this chapter, that information is analyzed to evaluate how well the transportation services that are available to the target populations meet their mobility needs. The discussion of service gaps and unmet transportation needs for these three groups also draws on comments made by transportation providers and members of the public in survey responses, stakeholder interviews, workshops, and focus group meetings.

Coordination of transportation services can not only help to address service gaps, but also to eliminate overlapping services and/or duplicative administration or management. Therefore, redundancies that appear to exist among the public transit and human services transportation services currently provided on Long Island are also presented in this chapter.

Opportunities for addressing unmet needs and service redundancies are then identified, together with potential barriers and obstacles to coordination efforts.

### Service Gaps and Unmet Needs by County

Gaps in existing transportation services and other unmet transportation needs in each Long Island county are identified below.

### Nassau County

The sections that follow discuss the mobility needs of each of the three target populations in Nassau County. First, the locations of each target population, detailed in Chapters 3 and 5, are compared to the activity centers introduced in Chapter 6 to identify travel patterns. Then, the services that are available to individuals in that group, which were identified in Chapter 4, are reviewed to determine the level of access that each target population currently has to important destinations. Service gaps and unmet needs are then summarized. Finally, comments from stakeholders, members of the public, and representatives of the target populations add more detail about transportation needs.

#### **Travel Patterns**

#### **Older Adults**

Census block groups in Nassau County in which the highest numbers of older adults reside are found throughout the towns of Hempstead and North Hempstead and in the southern half of the Town of Oyster Bay. With respect to the density of older adults, measured by population per square mile, the block groups in which older adults are most heavily concentrated are located in Hempstead and North Hempstead along the Queens border. Pockets of concentration of older adults are also found throughout the southern half of the county. Densities of this target population are highest in the cities of Glen Cove and Long Beach.

As shown in Figure 6-1 in Chapter 6, activity centers and key destinations for older adults, which include senior centers and adult day program sites, medical facilities, human service agency program locations, shopping centers, and town centers and other public buildings, are generally concentrated in the western half of the county. Activity centers are also located in the southern portion of the Town of Oyster Bay.

Although there are exceptions, identified later in this chapter, many of the activity centers to which older adults need access are located in the same areas in which large numbers of older adults reside or are concentrated. The primary travel patterns for this group are therefore likely to be within each city or town, and between Hempstead, North Hempstead, and the southern portion of Oyster Bay. It is important to remember, however, that even though target populations and key destinations are located in many of the same communities, the specific activity centers or facilities to which individuals need access may not be the ones that are located in the city or town in which they reside.

As noted in Chapter 6, several adult day health program sites located in Suffolk County and in Queens are open to residents of eastern and western Nassau County, respectively, making access to those locations from Hempstead, North Hempstead, and Oyster Bay important as well.

#### Persons with Disabilities

The distribution of persons with disabilities in Nassau County is very similar to that of older adults. Census block groups in which the highest numbers of persons with disabilities reside are located in the Town of Hempstead and in the southern end of the Town of North Hempstead. The block groups in which this target population is most heavily concentrated are found the City of Long Beach; throughout the center of North Hempstead, running east and west; and in the southeastern section of North Hempstead.

Persons with disabilities require access to the same types of activity centers listed above that are important to older adults (with the possible exception of senior centers and adult day program sites). Other destinations that are likely to be of interest to persons with disabilities in the county include major employers, employment and training sites, and colleges and universities, which are also shown in Figure 6-1. As for older adults, key destinations for persons with disabilities in Nassau County are generally located in the same communities in which members of the target population reside – in the towns of Hempstead and North Hempstead in particular.

#### Persons with Low Income

Fewer persons with low income reside in Nassau County than older adults or persons with disabilities, and there are fewer Census block groups in which members of that target population are concentrated. The block groups containing the highest numbers of persons with low income are found in the central and eastern sections of the Town of Hempstead, along the Meadowbrook State Parkway. Block groups with the highest densities of persons with low income are located in the same areas.

Access to all of the various types of activity centers and key destinations shown in Figure 6-1 is important to persons with low income, as it is to persons with disabilities. Travel within Nassau County for this target population for work, training, shopping, medical care, and business with social service agencies, is likely to be from Hempstead to destinations in Hempstead and North Hempstead and, to a lesser extent, in the southern half of the Town of Oyster Bay. Members of

this population are also likely to need access to opportunities for employment and/or training in Suffolk County.

#### **Available Transportation Services and Service Gaps**

Figure 7-1 identifies the transportation services that are available to each of the target populations in Nassau County and summarizes key characteristics of those services.

#### Fixed-route Services and Gaps

Members of all three target populations are eligible to use the general public fixed-route transit services that are provided in Nassau County. As detailed in Chapter 4, public fixed-route transit services in Nassau County are provided by MTA LIRR, MTA LI Bus, Long Beach Transit (operated by the City of Long Beach), and the City of Glen Cove. Factors that may limit the usefulness of those services to the target populations include geographical coverage, distance from stops or stations to homes or destinations, days and hours of service, service frequency, and accessibility. Those aspects of rail and bus service in Nassau County are summarized below.

LIRR serves Nassau County in the north with the Port Washington and Oyster Bay branches; in the south with the Far Rockaway, Long Beach, Hempstead, and Babylon branches; and through the middle of the county with the Port Jefferson and West Hempstead branches. Service is provided seven days a week. Though some branches of LIRR operate fairly frequent service, many of the trains running on branches with frequent service do not stop at every stop along the line. Another aspect of LIRR service that may pose a barrier to some travelers in Nassau County is that several stations on the Babylon branch are inaccessible to persons using wheelchairs. Further, because LIRR service is oriented to and from Manhattan, there is very limited north to south service in Nassau County, unless a passenger only needs to utilize a single branch from origin to destination. Finally, in most cases, the high level of service terminates after Huntington, making commuting to destinations in Suffolk County difficult.

MTA Long Island Bus operates at least 50 routes, many of which run seven days per week. Service is relatively frequent during peak periods, with average headways between 10 and 25 minutes.

The City of Long Beach and the City of Glen Cove each operate small scale fixed-route operations. In both cases, transit service operates within the city limits and serves the respective LIRR stations. Some of the Long Beach routes are in service on Saturdays or Saturdays and Sundays, and have relatively long spans of service. The Glen Cove services operate only on weekdays, and offers either limited numbers of trips or limited hours of operation.

As demonstrated by Figure 4-3 in Chapter 4, train and bus coverage is good in the western half of the county, in the Town of Hempstead, where there are also large pockets of target populations and activity centers. Though oriented in an east to west fashion, LIRR service in this area is fairly frequent and operates nearly 24 hours per day. There are also MTA LI Bus routes that travel from most directions toward the Village of Hempstead, where there is a significant concentration of both activity centers and target populations. Similarly, the City of Long Beach, south of the Town of Hempstead, is dense with both target populations and activity centers. Multiple MTA LI Bus routes as well as Long Beach Transit service operate in Long Beach, as does the Long Beach branch of the LIRR, though train frequencies are very low outside of peak time periods, with the exception of summer weekend service.

# Figure 7-1 Public and Private Transportation Service Availability in Nassau County

Provider/Service	Service Area	Trip Purposes	Older Adults	Persons with Disabilities	Persons with Low Income
General Public Transit S	ervices - Fixed-route				
MTA Long Island Rail Road	Nassau and Suffolk counties and NYC	Unlimited			
MTA Long Island Bus	Nassau County and parts of Suffolk County and Queens	Unlimited			
City of Glen Cove	Glen Cove	Loop Bus - unlimited Commuter Bus - employment	О	o	О
General Public Transit S	ervices - Paratransit				
MTA Long Island Bus Able- Ride ADA Paratransit Service	Nassau County	Unlimited	<b>a</b> k	■ *	■ *
Long Beach Transit ADA Paratransit Service	City of Long Beach	Unlimited	■ *	■ *	■ *
Municipal or Community	Demand-response Services				
City of Glen Cove	Food shopping shuttle from Glen Cove Senior Community Service Center	Shopping	0		
FISH of New Hyde Park	New Hyde Park Garden City Park	Medical			
FISH of Wantagh	Wantagh, North Wantagh Bellmore, North Bellmore	Medical			
Town of Hempstead Dept. of Senior Enrichment	Town of Hempstead	Senior centers, shopping, outings, special events	•		
Town of North Hempstead	Most North Hempstead Communities	Shopping Community centers Special events	•		
Town of Oyster Bay	Most Oyster Bay communities	Shopping Food shopping	О		
Jewish Association for Services for the Aged	Long Beach area	Shopping	•		
Facility or Program Serv	ices for Members, Participant	s			
Community and Family Residences, Inc.	Nassau County and communities in Brooklyn, Queens	Day programs		•	
Developmental Disabilities Institute	Nassau County	Day programs		•	
Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc.	Nassau County	Day programs			

• Weekday service only

Monday through Saturday

Monday through Friday, plus Sunday

Monday through Sunday

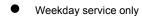
\* If ADA-eligible

O Partial weekday service only

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Provider/Service	Service Area	Trip Purposes	Older Adults	Persons with Disabilities	Persons with Low Income
JCC of the Greater Five Towns	Hempstead – Hewlett, Woodmere, Cedarhurst, Lawrence, Inwood, Lynbrook, Valley Stream; Queens East Rockaway and parts of Far Rockaway	JCC programs and activities, outings to NYC and eastern Long Island	•	•	
Long Beach Medical Center	Long Beach, Island Park, Point Lookout, Atlantic Beach, Freeport, Baldwin, Woodmere, Cedarhurst, Merrick, Lynbrook, Oceanside, Lawrence, Rockville Centre, Inwood, Valley Stream, East Rockaway, Bellmore, Wantagh	Medical	•	•	
The Rehabilitation Center	East Meadow Old Bethpage	Volunteer employment, community outings		•	
St. Charles Hospital	Glen Cove, Hempstead, North Hempstead, Oyster Bay	Medical	•	•	•



Monday through Saturday

Partial weekday service only

Ο

Monday through Friday, plus Sunday

Monday through Sunday

\* If ADA-eligible

Other areas of the county, especially the northern portion of Oyster Bay and the area between Glen Cove and the Suffolk County line, receive considerably less bus service and have very few LIRR stations. Though target populations are limited in these areas, important activity centers such as the Oyster Bay Town Center, Town of Oyster Bay Senior Community Service Center and several medical facilities are located there.

In summary, fixed-route service gaps and issues in Nassau County include the following:

- Distance to/from stops and stations may be problematic for members of the target populations
- The northeastern portion of Nassau County is served by fewer bus routes and rail stations than the rest of the county
- Services are oriented in a mostly east-west direction, which makes north-south travel difficult
- LIRR service does not run frequently to all stations outside of peak commuting hours, and not all stations on the Babylon Branch are accessible for individuals who use wheelchairs

#### Demand-response Services and Gaps

Two of the public transit operators provide ADA complementary paratransit service in Nassau County – MTA Long Island Bus (Able-Ride) and Long Beach Transit. ADA services mirror (or exceed) the days and hours of operation and other characteristics of the fixed-route services and impose no restrictions on trip purpose, but are only available to individuals whose disability

prevents their use of accessible fixed-route services. In addition, the \$3.75 one-way fare for Able-Ride service is high for some travelers, especially those who make frequent trips to work or other destinations.

Also shown in Figure 7-1 are the demand-response transportation services provided by the cities and towns or community organizations, and services provided by other organizations for their clients or individuals who participate in their programs and activities. While a number of these community transportation services are open to older adults and/or persons with disabilities, limitations in service area, days and hours of operation, or eligible trip purposes result in service gaps for those target populations.

Most of these providers serve all or part of one Nassau County city or town, or a city/town and the surrounding communities, and do not cross town or county boundaries. This makes intercommunity trips either impossible or time-consuming for older adults and persons with disabilities. Demand-response service for older adults and/or persons with disabilities is generally provided on weekdays, during traditional business hours. Service in the evening hours and on weekends is limited, with only two providers operating service on either Saturday or Sunday and only one provider running regular service later than 6:00 PM. Evening and weekday service is especially important to those persons needing transportation to work, especially in employment sectors that typically operate on multiple shifts, such as retail and home health services.

Most of the community transportation providers identified in Figure 7-1 limit trip types in some way. Day program transportation, medical, and food shopping trips are the types of trips most commonly allowed by these providers. In many cases, trip type restrictions are in place because organizations do not have the funding to provide unlimited service. Limited allowable trip types may mean that an individual has a transportation option for some types of trips and not others, and generally prevent access to "quality of life," trips, which can be important in maintaining independence and social and community ties, especially for older adults.

None of the community transportation services shown in Figure 7-1 are designed to help persons with low income to access employment or training opportunities. When fixed-route services do not operate in the areas or at times of day when work trips are needed, persons with low income may be without transportation options. Moreover, members of this target group are not eligible to use community transportation services for other types of trips, such as shopping, medical appointments, or personal business, unless they also meet eligibility requirements related to age or disability.

The lack of options for home healthcare workers to travel to their clients' homes is a particular problem in Nassau County. Many home health workers who reside in southern Nassau County or New York City and provide personal services to older adults and persons with disabilities are often unable to get to their clients' homes at an appropriate time, due to a combination of lack of fixed-route options and ineligibility to use demand-response service (services that they would be eligible to use for trips with their clients).

Demand-response service gaps may be summarized as follows:

 ADA paratransit services are widely available in terms of geographic coverage and days/hours of service, and may be used for any trip purpose, but individuals must be ADA-eligible in order to use them

- Other demand-response services are provided only for human service agency clients or program participants
- Options for persons with low income who do not meet eligibility requirements related to age or disability are particularly limited
- Service areas are often limited to one town or one town and the immediately surrounding communities
- Most services are available only on weekdays, during normal business hours
- Most demand-response providers limit eligible trip purposes

#### Other Transportation Needs

There are several aspects of transportation services, apart from service areas, days and hours of operation, and allowable trip purposes, that are of concern to members of the target populations.

#### Affordability

The affordability of transportation services is a concern to members of the three target populations. Fares for LIRR (which range from \$3.75 for a one-way trip within one zone to \$23 one-way from the eastern end of Suffolk County to Manhattan) and Able-Ride service (\$3.75 for a one-way trip), in particular, can be difficult to fit into limited budgets.

#### Information

Numerous public transit and community transportation providers have been identified through this study and it is likely that the general public and human service agency staff members are unaware of the types of transportation options that are available to them. A directory of county and inter-county transportation services would allow the public to utilize all of the available resources. As an example, the Nassau County Department of Senior Citizen Affairs currently publishes a directory of services available to older adults in the county.

#### Assistance

The level of assistance available to passengers varies among the community transportation providers identified. In some cases, door-to-door service is available while in others, service is limited to curb-to-curb transportation. Many people need a significant level of assistance in order to be able to access transit, with some people needing help from within their home to their destination. Home healthcare workers or escorts can be helpful in this regard. The level of assistance that is provided is of special concern to older adults.

#### Public Input

The following service gaps and other transportation issues were identified by participants during workshops held in Nassau County with transportation providers and members of the public, and focus group meetings with members of each of the target populations. (A complete summary of comments made by focus group participants in both counties is provided later in Figure 7-3.) It should be noted that this section reports the comments made by participants in various public outreach activities, which reflect the perceptions and views of those individuals, but does not attempt to verify the accuracy of comments about current transportation services.

#### Fixed-route Bus and Train

- Additional service hours are needed, perhaps even 24/7 service; the current span of service is not long enough to allow people to participate in evening events, meetings or other activities, or to work non-traditional hours
- Some people lack the ability to navigate a fixed-route transit system, regardless of how much travel training is provided
- The level of assistance provided to passengers is not adequate
- All fixed-route buses should be low-floor vehicles
- Over-crowding prevents people who use wheelchairs from riding
- Fares are too high
- The quality of transit information could be improved
- Access to and cleanliness/maintenance of LIRR stations could be improved
- LIRR fares to Manhattan are too high
- LIRR service is infrequent outside of commuter hours
- North-south travel is difficult
- Travel times are long, partly because service is oriented in an east-west direction
- Transfers between bus routes or between bus and train service are difficult because schedules are not coordinated
- Transfers are valid for two hours only, which is not long enough when waits between trips are long or buses are delayed
- Transfers cannot be used on a single bus route, which discourages linked trips
- Limited Sunday service affects mobility
- Some employers do not consider public transit service reliable and will not hire individuals without a car and a license
- Locations that are difficult to reach using transit service include:
  - Bethpage, Garden City, Uniondale (the Department of Social Services office) and Levittown in Nassau County and Bay Shore, Mastic, Shirley, Moriches, Bellport, and Melville in Suffolk County
- Higher paying jobs are available in Manhasset, Syosset, Farmingdale, Jericho, and Hicksville in Nassau County, and Melville, Dix Hills, and Hauppauge in Suffolk County
- Connections between Levittown (Town of Hempstead) and Hicksville (Town of Oyster Bay) are poor

#### ADA Complementary Paratransit Providers

- The \$3.75 one-way fare for Able-Ride is too expensive for some people
- Curb-to-curb service does not adequately serve everyone. There are residents who require door-to-door, or even door-through-door, transportation service.
- All Able-Ride vehicles should be low-floor vehicles

- Dialysis patients need service that is more reliable than Able-Ride can currently provide
- More vehicles are needed to accommodate demand
- The reservation period is too long
- Reservations for next-day service are not available
- Reservation systems should accommodate riders with a speech impediment; for example, by offering an e-mail reservation option

#### **Private Providers**

- Taxi companies are not always willing to participate in voucher programs, because of the perceived inconvenience and small amount of money involved
- Due to the limited availability of accessible taxi cabs, it is difficult to schedule a ride in an
  accessible vehicle
- Taxi operators should not charge an additional fee for transporting a customer who uses a wheelchair

#### Unmet Needs

- A centralized transportation information and referral service
- More individuals would travel to the following locations if transportation were easier:
  - Regional airports
  - Roosevelt Museum
  - Jones Beach Theater
  - Eisenhower Park
  - Walt Whitman Mall
  - Courthouses
- Express bus service between Nassau County and Queens

#### Job Access

• It is difficult for home healthcare workers and personal care attendants living in the southern half of the county (or in New York City) to travel to the homes of their clients.

#### Medical

- Nassau County residents (veterans) need transportation to the Northport VA Hospital in Suffolk County
- Service to important medical destinations, such as Long Island Jewish Hospital and North Shore University Health Systems, with fewer transfers is needed

#### Infrastructure

• Research into appropriate warning devices and wayfinding techniques should be conducted. Audible tones, audible information systems, and accessible pedestrian signals are needed to provide equal access to all persons.

- There are too few bus shelters and benches
- Legible signage is needed on all cross streets and buildings
- Pedestrian safety issues, such as lack of sidewalks, dangerous crosswalks, short pedestrian light cycles, lack of enforcement of traffic laws make travel by transit difficult
- Many key destinations throughout the county do not have sidewalks and passengers are required to navigate dangerous parking lots to get to building fronts
- Inaccessible information, sidewalks, and pedestrian signals limit the ability of persons with vision impairments to use transit service

### Suffolk County

The mobility needs of each of the three target populations in Suffolk County are discussed below. First, the locations of each target population, detailed in Chapters 3 and 5, are compared to the activity centers introduced in Chapter 6 to identify travel patterns. The services that are available to individuals in that group, which were described in Chapter 4, are then reviewed to determine the level of access that each target population currently has to important destinations. Next, service gaps and unmet needs are summarized. Finally, comments from stakeholders, members of the public, and representatives of the target populations add more detail about transportation needs.

#### **Travel Patterns**

#### **Older Adults**

Census block groups in which the largest numbers of older adults reside are found in the western section of the county—from the Riverhead/Brookhaven line and west—and along the North and South Forks. As noted in Chapter 3, older adults make up over 20percent of the populations in the South Fork towns of Shelter Island and Southold. In terms of the density of this target population, block groups in which older adults are concentrated are also located in the western half of the county, particularly in the towns of Babylon, Brookhaven, Huntington, and Islip.

As shown in Figure 6-3 in Chapter 6, activity centers and destinations of interest to older adults, such as senior centers and adult day program sites, medical facilities, human service agency program locations, shopping centers, and town centers and other public buildings are located mainly in the western end of the county, as well as in the centers of Riverhead, Southampton, and Southold. Older adults living in the western end of the county are likely to make the majority of their trips within their town of residence or to other western Suffolk County communities. (As in Nassau County, the particular medical or adult day care services to which individuals need access may not be those located closest to their homes.) It is likely that older adults living in the East End communities have a need to travel even farther outside of their towns of residence to the western end of the county, particularly for medical or shopping trips, but perhaps for adult day care services as well.

#### Persons with Disabilities

Persons with disabilities reside in much the same areas in Suffolk County as older adults, but Census block groups that contain the highest numbers of persons with disabilities extend farther toward the Brookhaven/Riverhead line. The block groups in which persons with disabilities are concentrated are found in the southern portion of Babylon, and in Islip and Brookhaven.

Many of the activity centers that are important to older adults are also key destinations for persons with disabilities. Likely travel patterns for this target population are also similar to those of older adults: trips within towns or between communities for those living west of the Brookhaven/Riverhead line, and between East End communities or to the western portion of the county for those living in East End towns.

In addition, persons with disabilities are likely to need access to employers, colleges and universities, and employment and training sites, all of which are also shown in Figure 6-3.

Although several employment and training sites, major employers, and colleges are located from the Brookhaven/Riverhead line east, most of these key destinations are also found in the western section of the county.

#### Persons with Low Income

The majority of persons with low income in Suffolk County reside in Census block groups located in the western half of the county, as well as in sections of the towns of Riverhead and Southampton and, to a lesser extent, the towns of Southold and East Hampton. Persons with low income are concentrated primarily in block groups located in Babylon and Islip, but pockets of concentration are also found in Huntington and Brookhaven.

All of the activity centers that are key destinations for persons with disabilities are also of importance to persons with low income. As for the other target populations, major travel patterns for this group are likely to be within individuals' town of residence and to neighboring towns for those living in the western section of the county, and within their town, to other East End towns, and to the western communities for those residing on the East End.

#### Available Transportation Services and Service Gaps

Figure 7-2 identifies the transportation services that are available to each of the target populations in Suffolk County and summarizes key characteristics of those services.

### Figure 7-2 Public and Private Transportation Service Availability in Suffolk County

Provider/Service	Service Area	Trip Purposes	Older Adults	Persons with Disabilities	Persons with Low Income	
	General Public Transit Service	es - Fixed-route				
HART	Town of Huntington Unlimited 🗖 🗖					
MTA Long Island Rail Road	Nassau and Suffolk counties and NYC	Unlimited				
Suffolk County Transit	Suffolk County	Unlimited				
Village of Patchogue	Patchogue	Unlimited	•	•	•	
	General Public Transit Service	es Paratransit				
SCAT ADA Paratransit Service	3/4 mile around SCT bus routes	Unlimited	•	□*	□*	
HART ADA Paratransit Service	Huntington and transfer point with SCT in Smithtown	Unlimited		•	□*	
HART Paratransit Service (for transportation-disadvantaged residents and non-driving older adults)	Huntington and transfer point with SCT in Smithtown	Unlimited		□*	•	
	Municipal Demand-respon	se Services				
Town of Babylon Senior Citizens Division	Babylon	Various	•	•		
Town of Brookhaven Senior Citizens Division (Jitney service)	Brookhaven	Various	•	•		
Town of East Hampton Senior Citizens Division	East Hampton		•			
Town of Huntington Senior Citizens Division	Huntington		•	•		
Town of Islip Disabled Services/Therapeutic Recreation	Islip	Various		*		
Town of Islip Senior Citizens Division	Islip	Various	•			
Town of Riverhead Senior Citizens Division	Riverhead	Various	•			
Town of Shelter Island Senior Citizens Division	Shelter Island		•			
Town of Smithtown Senior Citizens Division	Smithtown		•	•		
Town of Southampton Senior Citizens Division	Southampton	Various	•	•		
Town of Southold Senior Citizens Division			•			
Weekday service only	Several days/week		onday throu	igh Saturday		

Monday through Friday, plus Sunday Monday through Sunday O Partial weekday service only

\* If ADA-eligible

NA = Information not available

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		Trip	Older	Persons with	Persons with Low
Provider/Service	Service Area	Purposes	Adults	Disabilities	Income
	Facility or Program Services for M	embers, Participa	ants		
Commack Senior Center Y- JCC	Based on membership	Trips to center	•		
Community and Family Residences, Inc.	Suffolk County	Day programs		•	
Community Programs Center of Long Island	Babylon, Brookhaven, Islip, Smithtown	Day programs	•	•	
Clubhouse of Suffolk	Ronkonkoma, Riverhead areas	Trips to facilities for activities, programs		•	
Developmental Disabilities Institute	Suffolk County	Day programs		•	
EAC, Inc.	Suffolk County	Employment Child care			
Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc.	Suffolk County	Day programs			
Family Service League	Babylon, Huntington, Islip, Smithtown	Day programs	•	•	
Federation of Organizations	Suffolk County	Senior volunteer employment Mental health programs			
Homeworks of Suffolk	Suffolk County	NA			
Independent Group Home Living Program	Suffolk County	Day programs			
Jewish Association for Services for the Aged	Town of Smithown	JASA senior center Shopping	О		
John J. Mather Memorial Hospital	Brookhaven, Islip, Riverhead, Smithtown	Psychiatric programs	•	•	•
Little Flower Children and Family Services of New York	Wading River, Town of Riverhead, residential locations in Suffolk County	Various			
Maryhaven Center of Hope	Babylon, Brookhaven, Islip, Riverhead, Smithtown	Various			
St. Charles Hospital	St. Charles Hospital Designated radius of hospital in Port Jefferson		•	•	•
			If veterar	ns in SCUV housi	ng programs
Suffolk County United Veterans	Brookhaven, Huntington, Riverhead, Smithtown	Various			
UCP of Greater Suffolk	Babylon, Brookhaven, Huntington, Islip, Riverhead, Smithtown	Day programs			

• Weekday service only

Several days/week

Monday through Sunday

- Monday through Saturday
- O Partial weekday service only

Monday through Friday, plus Sunday
 \* If ADA-eligible
 NA = Information

NA = Information not available

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#### Fixed-Route Services and Gaps

Older adults, persons with disabilities, and persons with low income are all eligible to use the general public fixed-route services available in Suffolk County. As detailed in Chapter 4, public fixed-route services in Suffolk County are operated by the Long Island Rail Road, Suffolk County Transit, Huntington Area Rapid Transit, and the Village of Patchogue.<sup>1</sup> Characteristics of Suffolk County's fixed-route transit services that may result in service gaps for the target populations are discussed below.

In Suffolk County, the LIRR operates on four branches. The Port Jefferson branch serves the northern portion of the county as far as Port Jefferson. The Babylon branch continues from Massapequa Park in Nassau County to Babylon. From Babylon, the Montauk Branch continues to Montauk at the end of the South Fork. Service on the Ronkonkoma branch runs through the middle of the county to Greenport near the end of the North Fork.

Though Suffolk County is served by the LIRR, service can be infrequent. For example, the North Fork, served by that portion of the Ronkonkoma branch between Ronkonkoma and Greenport, sees four trains each day. In addition, headways on the Ronkonkoma branch heading east can be over an hour long, and only some trains stop at every station along the branch. Though service to the South Fork is a little more frequent, especially in the summer months, there is still a general lack of frequency there and not all stops are served. In winter, only two morning trains (one of which arrives in Patchogue at approximately 2:00 AM) continue on from Patchogue to Montauk.

Additionally, as is the case in Nassau County, LIRR service in Suffolk County is oriented toward Manhattan. In fact, the four LIRR branches operating in Suffolk County are almost perfectly parallel, with no option for north to south train travel, even with a transfer, within Suffolk County.

Moreover, not all LIRR stations are fully accessible. Six stations on the Babylon branch are inaccessible to persons using wheelchairs.

Suffolk County Transit operates 52 fixed bus routes countywide. SCT service is provided Monday through Saturday, from approximately 5:30 – 7:00 AM until 6:30 – 8:00 PM. While there is good coverage and service frequency in the western half of the county, the East End, where population and development is less dense, sees fewer routes and less frequent service. Because of this, trips to or from the East End may be time-consuming and require multiple transfers, and stops may not be located close to a rider's origin or destination.

Both the Town of Huntington and the Village of Patchogue operate fixed-route, circulator services within their municipal boundaries. HART provides service within the town on weekdays and Saturdays, at frequencies of one and two hours, respectively, and weekday connections between the Huntington Station of the MTA Long Island Rail Road and the surrounding area. HART routes also connect with SCT bus routes at certain transfer points.

The Village of Patchogue operates four general public bus routes that circulate throughout the Village between 9:00 AM and 4:30 PM on weekdays, with about two hours between trips. There is no evening or weekend service.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> In addition, Stony Brook University and Dowling College each operate on-campus and shuttle services for students, faculty, and university visitors.

The span of service and service frequencies may limit the usefulness of these fixed-route services as a means of traveling to and from work. In some cases, people have only a single opportunity to catch a train or bus to or from their place of employment. This is especially true for people who are required to make transfers to complete their trips. In other cases, many employees also need to travel when fixed-route transit service is not in operation, such as in the late evening and on Sundays. Fixed-route service is not likely to be an option for those who work in retail or third-shift sectors, or who need to be at work very early in the morning.

In summary, fixed-route service gaps in Suffolk County include the following:

- Fewer bus routes provide service in the eastern portion of the county;
- Weekday and evening services are limited, and no service is provided on Sundays;
- Frequency on some bus routes is one or two hours between trips;
- Frequency of LIRR service, particularly to the North and South Forks, is limited outside of peak commuting hours, and not all stations are served on every trip; and
- Some LIRR stations on the Babylon Branch are not accessible for persons who use wheelchairs.

#### Demand-response Services and Gaps

Suffolk County Accessible Transportation (SCAT) and HART both provide ADA complementary paratransit service within Suffolk County. ADA services are available during the days and hours of fixed-route bus service operation, cover the same geographic area, and may be used for any trip purpose, but an individual must have a disability that prevents his/her use of accessible fixed-route service in order to be eligible.

Figure 7-2 also shows the demand-response services that are operated in Suffolk County by municipalities, and services provided by other entities for clients or program participants. These community transportation services serve members of the target populations (typically older adults and/or persons with disabilities), but many impose restrictions that leave individuals with unmet transportation needs.

All ten Suffolk County towns provide transportation service for older adults through the Senior Citizens Division, service that is supported financially by the Suffolk County Department for the Aging. Persons with disabilities are also eligible to use the Babylon, Brookhaven, Huntington, Smithtown, and Southampton services. While a variety of trip purposes are allowable, medical trips receive priority. Services are typically available on weekdays only, during normal business hours, and remain within town boundaries.

The remainder of the transportation programs shown in Figure 7-2 are open only to agency clients or participants in particular programs. In several respects, these programs are broader than the ADA paratransit or municipal services: about half a dozen organizations operate service throughout the county or beyond, while the other services each cover several towns; a number offer service to persons with disabilities, and a few to persons with low income; and some services are provided on weekends and/or evenings. However, their focus on transporting individuals to a specific program or facility does not make them options for the other types of trips that eligible riders need to make.

To summarize demand-response service gaps in Suffolk County:

- ADA paratransit services cover a wide area and offer more extensive service hours and allowable trip purposes, but individuals must be ADA-eligible in order to use them.
- Municipal services provide an option for older adults (and in a few cases, persons with disabilities), but days and hours of service are limited, and trips stay within town boundaries.
- A number of organizations provide service for members of all three target populations throughout wider service areas and during longer hours (in some cases), but service is available only to agency clients or program participants.

#### Other Transportation Issues

As in Nassau County, issues of affordability, level of driver assistance, and availability of information about transportation services are also of concern to members of the three target populations in Suffolk County.

#### Public Input

The following section outlines some of the comments received during public and transportation provider workshops and focus group meetings in Suffolk County with regard to gaps in service and other transportation issues. This list reflects the opinions of individuals attending the meetings and focus groups. (Please see Figure 7-3 for a summary of all comments made by focus group participants in both counties.)

#### Fixed-route Bus and Train

- Fare integration among transit providers is needed, along with new fare instruments/ media
- If buses were more accessible, people would not need to use SCAT
- Information is not available in accessible formats; people with vision impairments who use screen readers cannot access online information in PDF format, for example
- SCT span of service is too short; earlier morning, later evening, and Sunday service is needed
  - Service, retail, hospital jobs require working later shifts
- Jobs are more available in spring and summer; additional bus service is needed then
- Some routes require waiting 45-60 minutes, then transferring
- Not all stops are announced
- Transfers and connections are not coordinated
- Buses are in poor condition
- Persons with low income cannot access jobs where transit service is not available
- Routes are oriented east-west, with very few north-south routes
- LIRR service is accessible to people with vision impairments; stops are announced

#### ADA Complementary Paratransit Providers

- SCAT has reliability and on-time performance issues. People who need to use SCAT to get to work cannot because they don't get to work on-time.
- Trip denials often occur.
- Travel times are sometimes long.
- On-time window is too long; riders have to wait outside for vehicles.
- Have to call too far in advance for a ride.
- Hold times are too long to make a reservation and, when you do get through, service is already booked.

#### Non-profit Providers

• Service areas have been reduced due to the recent increase in the cost of gasoline

#### Unmet Needs

- Agency clients need a way to make trips that are not provided, such as quality of life trips
- East End towns lack access to inter-community demand-response trips
- Locations that are difficult to reach include Stony Brook University Hospital, Smithaven Mall, and South Shore Mall in Bay Shore

#### Job Access

- Days and hours of service, especially evening and Sunday service for employment trips
- More service in spring and summer, when more jobs are available

#### Infrastructure

- A centralized public transportation information and referral service
- At bus stops:
  - Tactile warning strips (however, one participant warned that tactile strips signal danger to a person with a vision impairment)
  - Better signage
  - Better enforcement of parking bans at bus stops
  - Not all have sidewalks
  - Not all have shelters, benches
- More sidewalks and crosswalks are needed

### Figure 7-3 Summary of Focus Groups

Issue Categories	Nassau	Suffolk
Persons with Disa Existing Service Needs and Gaps (continued)	<ul> <li>Reservation system should accommodate riders with a speech impediment, i.e. an emailed reservation option</li> <li>Need more buses on the roads to accommodate demand</li> <li>Vehicles are difficult to ride in a wheelchair – too much jostling</li> <li>Paratransit buses do not kneel like public transit buses do</li> <li>Drivers talk on their phones, text, read maps and listen to the radio loudly</li> <li>Drivers do not know how to get around the county</li> <li>Drivers not paid enough and use it as a stepping stone to public transit driving</li> </ul> Taxis: <ul> <li>Preferred to Able-Ride for doctor's appointments</li> <li>More accessible taxis</li> <li>Taxis should not charge for taking a passenger who uses a wheelchair (enforcement)</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Taxis:</li> <li>Some refuse riders with service dogs a ride</li> <li>Drivers drive dangerously</li> <li>Miscellaneous:</li> <li>Suffolk Independent Living Organization ran a van for its members, and there were many senior jitney services that picked up clients for activities. Both were terminated because of funding cuts</li> </ul>
Strategies	<ul> <li>Priorities:</li> <li>One fare, one transfer credit across the public transit system</li> <li>Sensitivity training for all drivers and telephone operators</li> <li>GPS in paratransit vehicles</li> <li>Accessible pedestrian signals and intersections; Braille on bus shelters</li> <li>Medicaid taxis</li> <li>Working audio technology – audible bus stop announcements</li> <li>Overall vehicle maintenance for paratransit buses, especially the shocks</li> <li>Accessible buses with very visible yellow stripes on steps</li> <li>Make accessible transit information (pamphlets and maps) and Braille on bus shelters</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Priorities:</li> <li>More hours in the evenings and on Sundays</li> <li>More routes and destinations on fixed-route service</li> <li>More frequent fixed-route service</li> <li>Better bus stops</li> <li>Awareness training for drivers – both fixed-route and paratransit</li> <li>Accessible information – bus stop location, signage</li> <li>Public education</li> <li>Express bus to the city</li> <li>Disability awareness and public education campaign</li> </ul>
lssue Categories	Nassau	Suffolk

Older Adults		
Existing Service Needs and Gaps	<ul> <li>General: <ul> <li>North-south travel is difficult</li> <li>Pedestrian safety issues – lack of sidewalks, dangerous crosswalks, short pedestrian light cycles, lack of enforcement of driving rules</li> <li>Poor connections between Levittown and Hicksville</li> <li>Lack of express buses between Nassau County and Queens</li> <li>Poor quality of transit information</li> </ul> </li> <li>Fixed-route: <ul> <li>Buses stop running too early in the evening</li> <li>Long travel times –because bus routes are too east-west focused</li> <li>No next-day reservations</li> <li>Door-to-door service instead of just curbside</li> </ul> </li> <li>LIRR: <ul> <li>Stations can be difficult in terms of access and cleanliness/maintenance</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul> <li>General: <ul> <li>No information on available services</li> </ul> </li> <li>Senior Center Transportation: <ul> <li>Babylon senior center does not accommodate purely social visits</li> </ul> </li> <li>Paratransit: <ul> <li>SCAT on-time window too long, customers are forced to wait outside for vehicles</li> <li>Have to call too long in advance for SCAT rides*</li> <li>Too easy to miss SCAT trips because drivers don't announce their arrival at senior centers when riders are waiting inside</li> </ul> </li> <li>*Customers may make SCAT reservations from the day before the trip up to seven days in advance.</li> </ul>
Strategies	Improvement suggestions:         • Local shuttles to community facilities and events         • Senior discounts on taxis (most seniors are unaware of the very limited program in Great Neck)         • More frequent fixed-route bus service         • More weekend bus service (and later evenings)         • Better access to bus stops (pedestrian accessibility, sidewalks, shelters, etc.)         • Better availability of transit information (to allow alternatives to driving)	<ul> <li>Mobility Solutions:         <ul> <li>Shorten advance notice requirement for SCAT reservations to the day before the trip*</li> <li>More bus shelters</li> <li>Later evening hours for public transit</li> <li>Taxi companies with rates that facilitate travel to multiple stops, evening travel</li> <li>More literature/pamphlets should be available at senior centers and public places to summarize transportation options</li> <li>Senior centers should provide such information to all new members</li> <li>Subsidized taxi services for seniors</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Issue Categories	Nassau	Suffolk
Older Adults		
Strategies (continued)	Possible Solutions, in order of importance:         Accessible taxis         Community shuttle routes         Subsidized taxi programs         Improved LIRR station accessibility (e.g., Great Neck)         Later bus service hours         Flex/route deviation services         Paratransit feeder services         Notification from paratransit drivers when arrival is delayed         Weekend bus service         More frequent bus service         Better north-south transit connections         One-seat ride to NYC on Able-Ride         Volunteer driver programs and/or programs to reimburse friends who drive         Better transit/travel information (universally desired)         Improvements to Able-Ride (universal)         Pedestrian safety improvements (universal)	<ul> <li>Fixed-route buses designed for seniors (service routes, community bus services)</li> <li>*Customers may make SCAT reservations from the day before the trip up to seven days in advance.</li> <li>Priorities, not ranked in order of importance:         <ul> <li>More fixed-route geographic coverage</li> <li>More frequent fixed-route service</li> <li>Weekend fixed-route service (better weekend service is more important than later weekday hours)</li> <li>Better availability of centralized transit information</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

lssue Categories	Nassau	Suffolk
Persons with Low	Income	
Existing Service Needs and Gaps	<ul> <li>General: <ul> <li>Locations that are difficult to reach:</li> <li>Bethpage, Garden City, Bay Shore, Mastic, Shirley, Moriches, Bellport, Melville and Levittown</li> <li>Uniondale (DSS office)</li> <li>Garden City, Massapequa and Bethpage (DMV offices)</li> <li>Higher paying jobs are also available in Melville, Manhasset, Dix Hills, Syosset, Farmingdale, Jericho, Hicksville, and Hauppauge</li> <li>Some employers require a car and license to get a job and do not consider public transit reliable</li> <li>Fares too high</li> </ul> </li> <li>Fixed-route: <ul> <li>Buses not always reliable</li> <li>Are not scheduled for timed transfers with trains or other buses</li> <li>Transfers valid for only two hours – not sufficient, especially with long waits and delayed buses</li> <li>Transfers not allowed on same bus line, discouraging linked trips</li> <li>Limited Sunday service in Nassau hurt mobility</li> <li>Too few bus shelters and benches</li> </ul> </li> <li>LIRR: <ul> <li>Often unavailable</li> <li>Drivers take more than one trip at a time</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul> <li>General: <ul> <li>Locations that are difficult to reach:</li> <li>Stony Brook University Hospital, Smithaven Mall and South Shore Mall in Bay Shore</li> <li>Express bus service to NYC is good</li> <li>Stigma attached to not owning a car</li> <li>Cannot access jobs where transit service is not available</li> <li>Routes are oriented east-west, with very few north-south routes</li> <li>No sidewalks or crosswalks</li> </ul> </li> <li>Fixed-route: <ul> <li>Indignity to stand on roadside with no bus stop signs or shelters while waiting for the bus</li> <li>Lack of bus shelters and benches one of biggest problems</li> <li>No Sunday or holiday service keeps people from working at service and retail jobs</li> <li>Buses stop running too early (one participant rode bicycle from late shift at entry-level hospital job)</li> <li>Service levels are not enhanced in the spring and summer when jobs are more readily available due to the seasonal population.</li> <li>Transfers and connections are not coordinated</li> <li>Buses do not begin operating early enough</li> <li>Buses stops located in areas that are very pedestrian unfriendly</li> </ul> </li> <li>Taxis: <ul> <li>Fares are expensive and inconsistent</li> <li>Different drivers charge different fares for the same trip</li> <li>Cannot be flagged; inconvenient to calls</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

lssue Categories	Nassau	Suffolk
Strategies	<ul> <li>Priorities: <ul> <li>Improved coordination with transportation and human service agencies (better information and coordination with DSS)</li> <li>Employer van service from Roosevelt/Hempstead to key job centers</li> <li>Education and outreach to Social Services staff so they consider transportation as part of their job placement program</li> <li>Develop major transit transfer points at LIRR stations with coordinated schedules</li> <li>More point-to-point service (with no transfer in Freeport or Hempstead) with direct routes from Roosevelt into Suffolk County, and service between Glen Cove, Hempstead, Freeport, Lakeview, Roosevelt, and Long Beach.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Other Mobility Solutions: <ul> <li>More point the neighborhoods with higher unemployment)</li> <li>Creation of an online trip planner (like hopstop.com, but for Long Island)</li> <li>Provision of telephone information about transit after 5:00 PM</li> <li>Improved transit service frequency</li> <li>Promotion and implementation of employer-subsidized pre-tax transportation voucher programs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Priorities: <ul> <li>A strategy (to be determined by planners) to make Suffolk County Transit more accountable. There was discussion about establishment of a countywide transit entity</li> <li>Designated bus stops with signs and provide schedules and safe pedestrian access</li> <li>Bus service frequency improvements (especially on Routes 8A and S92)</li> <li>Bus service to train stations further west on Long Island so people have more opportunities to travel to New York City on the LIRR</li> <li>A staffed telephone information number during all operating hours.</li> <li>Longer service hours on buses.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Other Mobility Solutions: <ul> <li>Coordinated transfers at hubs</li> <li>Shorter travel times (for some routes)</li> <li>Restructured Route S66</li> <li>Sidewalks</li> <li>Bus replacements</li> <li>Cannot use MTA cards on Suffolk County buses (should be seamless transfers)</li> <li>Open train stations so bus riders can use facilities (restrooms and waiting rooms)</li> <li>Increased use of carpooling</li> <li>Expanded volunteer driver program</li> <li>A flex-route service along the 8A bus route</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### Service Redundancies by County

Overlapping transportation services in each county are identified below.

### **Nassau County**

Figure 7-4 shows the transportation providers that serve older adults and persons with disabilities in each city and town in Nassau County (none of the community transportation providers identified herein offers service specifically for persons with low income). As can be seen, a number of organizations provide transportation service to these groups in each community, particularly in the Town of Hempstead. Two organizations transport program clients with disabilities to and from day programs and serve all of Nassau County (and some also serve Suffolk County and parts or all of New York City). These include: Community and Family Residences and Developmental Disabilities Institute. While service may be provided for different types of allowable trips, and service delivery methods vary, there may be some potential for coordinating these services.

Not only are these organizations transporting similar types of customers in the same areas at approximately the same times of day, they are all engaged in performing the functions that go along with operating a transportation service: determining eligibility; taking reservations and scheduling trips; seeking, obtaining and managing funding and other resources; hiring, training, and supervising drivers and other staff members; and obtaining and maintaining vehicles.

### Suffolk County

Similarly, multiple service providers in Suffolk County currently transport similar rider groups in many communities. Providers that serve older adults and persons with disabilities in each town are shown in Figure 7-5. Town divisions of senior citizens provide service to persons with disabilities and/or older adults within each town, while a number of community-based organizations transport older adults and persons with disabilities to programs and activities in the same communities. In addition, Suffolk County provides ADA paratransit service to eligible individuals with disabilities throughout the county. However, although services may overlap in terms of eligible riders, service area, and days/hours, they are not completely duplicated because trip purposes are limited in some cases.

As in Nassau County, several providers that offer transportation service to programs and facilities to clients with disabilities serve all of Suffolk County (and sometimes beyond). These include:

- Community and Family Residences, Inc.;
- Developmental Disabilities Institute;
- Family Residences and Essential Enterprises;
- Federation of Organizations;
- Homeworks of Suffolk;
- Independent Group Home Living Program; and
- EAC, Inc.

### Figure 7-4 Service Overlaps, Nassau County

Community	Glen Cove		Lon	Long Beach Hempstead				Hempstead	Oyster Bay			
Transportation Provider	Older Adults	Persons with Disabilities										
Able-Ride MTA Long Island Bus		•		•		•		•		•		
City of Glen Cove food shopping shuttle	•											
Community and Family Residences, Inc.		•		•		•		•		•		
Developmental Disabilities Institute		•		•		•		•		•		
Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc.		•				•		•		•		
FISH of New Hyde Park Volunteer Driver Program					•		•					
FISH of Wantagh Volunteer Driver Program					•		•					
JCC of the Greater Five Towns					•	•						
Jewish Association for Services for the Aged			•									
Long Beach Medical Center			•	•	•	•						
Long Beach Transit ADA Paratransit Service				•								
St. Charles Hospital	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•		
The Rehabilitation Center						•				•		
Town of Hempstead Department of Senior Enrichment					•							
Town of North Hempstead							•					
Town of Oyster Bay									•			

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## Figure 7-5 Service Overlaps – Suffolk County

Community	В	abylon	Bro	ookhaven	East	t Hampton	Hu	ntington		Islip	Ri	verhead	She	Iter Island	Sn	nithtown	Sou	thampton	S	outhold
Transportation Provider	Older Adults	Persons with Disabilities																		
Community and Family Residences, Inc.		•		•		•		•		•		•		•		•		•		•
Clubhouse of Suffolk																				
Commack Senior Center Y - JCC																				
Community Programs Center of Long Island	•	•	•	•																
Developmental Disabilities Institute		•		•		•		•		•		•		•		•		•		•
Educational Assistance Corporation (EAC) , Inc., under contract to Suffolk County Dept. of Social Services																				
Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc.		•		•		•		•		•		•		•		•		•		•
Family Service League, Inc.	•	•																		
Federation of Organizations		•		•		•		•		•		•		•		•		•		•
Homeworks of Suffolk		•		•		•		•		•		•		•		•		•		•
Huntington Area Rapid Transit (HART) ADA Paratransit Service								•												
Independent Group Home Living Program, Inc.		•		•		•		•		•		•		•		•		•		•
Island Nursing and Rehabilitation Center																				
Jewish Association for Services for the Aged																				
John T. Mather Memorial Hospital			•	•																
Little Flower Children and Family Services of New York																				
Long Island Center for Independent Living																				
Maryhaven Center of Hope		•		•																
Peconic Bay Medical Center																				
St. Charles Hospital																				
Suffolk County Department of Public Works, Transportation Division Suffolk County Accessible Transportation (SCAT)		•		•		•		•		•		•		•		•		•		•
Suffolk County United Veterans			•	•					1											
Town of Babylon Senior Citizen Division	•	•																		1
Town of Brookhaven Jitney Service	•	•					Ī		1								Ī		Ī	1
United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Suffolk, Inc.		•		•																1