

Research Report

How Age-friendly is Brooklyn? Perceptions of Seniors Aged 65+

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Introduction

This report summarizes the activities and results from research conducted during the Spring semester 2023 as part of a graduate course at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). The researchers Molly Finch, David Gilliland, and Markya Reed are graduate students in the Applied Sociology and Geography and Environmental Systems programs, and their work was performed under the direction of Marina Adler, Ph.D. and Tino Schlinzig, Ph.D. Relationships established in South Baltimore since 2015 led the instructors to meet with community partner Janet Eveland, President of Action Baybrook, to develop a research plan. Based on her suggestions and previous research results, the students conducted various asset-based and community-based research projects in Brooklyn.

Students were particularly focused on the well-being of community residents 65 years old and over, with special attention given to residents' perceptions of living conditions and neighborhood safety, usage of community assets and mobility, reliance on social networks, and changes that residents would like to see in Brooklyn. Students collected data through various methods (e.g., reviewed official statistics, mapped the neighborhood, observed, and listened to residents) and volunteered in the community to document assets and challenges, to develop an action plan, and make recommendations for change. At the conclusion of the study, students presented their findings and recommendations to the community.

The general questions guiding these research efforts intended to document the experiences of elders living in Brooklyn with a focus on the following:

1. What kinds of characteristics make a community "age-friendly," and which are present in Brooklyn? (physical, social, and service environments)
2. Which services do seniors in Brooklyn use regularly, and which services are missing or need improvement?
3. What challenges exist in Brooklyn that prevent seniors from utilizing services?
4. What are the living conditions of senior citizens in Brooklyn?
5. What do senior citizens believe should be done to improve living conditions in Brooklyn?

This report begins with statistical and demographic background information on Brooklyn and neighborhood observations. It also includes a brief literature review on "aging in place" and factors that impact the overall quality of life of senior citizens in an urban setting. The report concludes with our overall findings and suggestions for continued community restoration and action.

Demographic Profile of Brooklyn, Baltimore, MD

Although there were originally five communities on the southern peninsula of Baltimore, today only Brooklyn and Curtis Bay have survived in the area (King 2014). Brooklyn was originally annexed by Baltimore City from nearby Anne Arundel County in 1919 and it is physically separated from downtown Baltimore City by the Patapsco River. This separation from the city may have made Brooklyn and Curtis Bay an attractive location for industrial development. As such, Brooklyn has historically been the site of waste disposal and chemical production and storage. The peninsula has suffered from economic decline since the 1950s and former industries have left lasting environmental damage in the region, as described by King (2014).

Figure 1 illustrates an aerial map of Brooklyn, MD, which is located at the southernmost point of Baltimore City and shares a boundary with Anne Arundel County. Interstate 895 and Maryland Route 2 (also known as Governor Ritchie Highway) border the northern and western sections of Brooklyn. The main street that divides Brooklyn into northern and southern parts is the four-lane Patapsco Ave.

Statistics from the 2021 U.S. Census and estimates from the 2017-2021 American Community Survey (ACS) were used to create a demographic profile of Brooklyn. The data from Brooklyn's two census tracts (2504.01 and 2504.02) were used to obtain the most accurate information (Figure 2, p. 7). The combined borders of census tracts 2504.01 and 2504.02 are Chesapeake Avenue on the north, 10th Avenue on the east, the Harbor Tunnel Throughway (I 895) on the west, and the southern border runs diagonally from Frankle Street, 4th Street, to Ruth Street. The total population estimate available for this area is 7,962.

Figure 1 Map of Brooklyn, MD



Figure 2 Brooklyn's two census tracts (2504.01 and 2504.02)

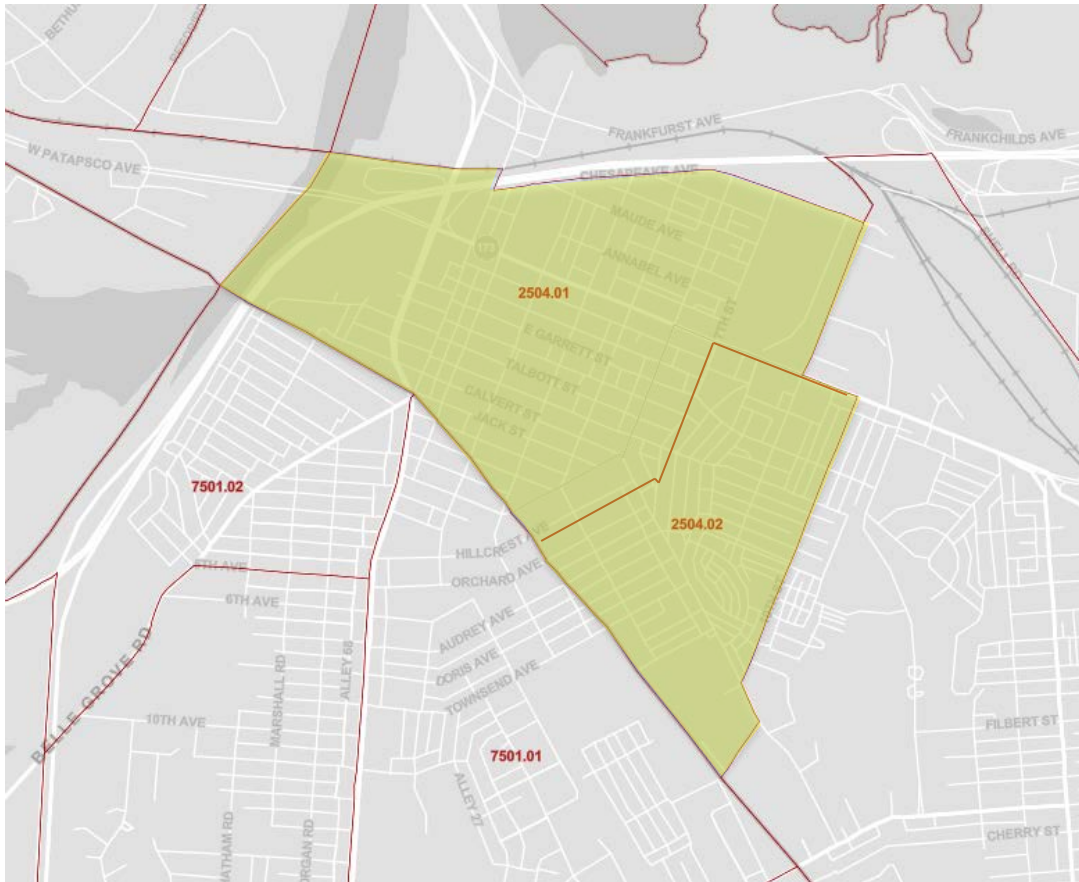


Table 1 (p. 8f.) shows basic statistic from the 2021 U.S. Census (5-year-estimates) for the Brooklyn population, including demographic characteristics, data on housing, income, and benefits, as well as internet access. Where data allow, key figures will be presented related to the age group of 65 and older. Otherwise, data are labeled as "all age groups". The table shows that the percentage of the population in this age group in both census tracts is just below 10% and below the average for Baltimore City (14.1%). Baltimore residents tend to be more women than men. In general, it is a racially diverse community. But considerable differences can be found between the two parts of the neighborhood. Whereas in the north-west part of Brooklyn (census tract 2504.01) only 26.8% is African American/Black, in the south-eastern part (census tract 2504.02) almost every second residents belong to this group (48.8%). Whereas in the north-west part of Brooklyn 40.5% of the residents are White Americans, in census tract 2504.02 than every third inhabitant belongs to this group (27.4%). Differences can be observed also in terms of available incomes. The median household income is \$39,305 and the average per capita income is \$17,492 in north-west part of Brooklyn.

In the south-eastern part instead the median household income is considerably lower, but the average per capita income of all age groups higher than of residents of the other part of Brooklyn. At the same time the share of people with income below poverty level differ significantly. This is true for almost every second person in the south-eastern part (46.6%) and for a little more than 27% of their Brooklyn neighbors. Somewhat counterintuitive, more than every third household (34.7%) of the latter make use of food stamps/SNAP benefits, compared to 29.5. This share is lower for both census tracts in households with one or more people 60 years and over (32.7% and 23.5%). In terms of housing, data show that in both Brooklyn census tracts units are much more likely to be renter-occupied than owner-occupied. The median home value is just above \$100,000 in the north-west of Brooklyn and with \$79,800 significantly below in the south-east of the neighborhood. Accordingly, the median rent is higher in the former than in the latter (\$1,196 to \$1,076).

Table 1 Key U.S. Census Data 5-Year Estimates 2021 for Brooklyn, MD
Total Population = 7,962

Indicator	census tract 2504.01	census tract 2504.02
Demographics		
Residents (all age groups)	4,256	3,706
Seniors, 65+ total	419	326
Percent seniors, 65+	9.8%	8.8%
Percent women (all age groups)	46.4%	54.7%
Percent women, 65+	52.7%	55.0%
Percent African American/Black (all age groups)	26.8%	48.8%
Percent white (all age groups)		
Percent some other race (all age groups) ¹	40.5%	27.4%
	32.7%	23.8%

¹ According to Census data, this category includes "Asian," "Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander," and "Some other race".

Income and Benefits

Median household income (all age groups)	\$39,205 (\$11,082) ³	\$31,924 (\$9,600)
Average per capita income (all age groups)	\$17,492 (\$2,754)	\$20,400 (\$3,977)
Percent people w/income below poverty level (all age groups)	27.0% (8.5%)	46.6% (12.0%)
Percent households w/food stamps/SNAP benefits ²³ (all age groups)	35.7% (10.9%)	29.5% (9.8%)
Percent households w/food stamps/SNAP benefits with one or more people 60 years+	32.7% (15.0%)	23.5% (16.5%)

Housing (all age groups)

Percent owner-occupied housing units (N)	34.6% (515) (9.4%)	39.7% (619) (8.5%)
Percent renter-occupied housing unit (N)	65.4% (974) (9.4%)	60.3% (942) (8.5%)
Median value, owner-occupied units	\$102,700 (\$23,759)	\$79,800 (\$21,895)
Median rent, renter-occupied units	\$1,196 (\$120)	\$1,076 (\$102)

Internet access

Households with a broadband subscription	53.3%	58.4%
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² Number in parentheses is the margin of error around the mean or percentage (\pm)

³ Food stamp/SNAP benefit estimates are for the previous 12 months

Survey results from our previous Brooklyn research (Adler et al. 2022), revealed that about 85% (11/13) of respondents over age 65 wanted to stay in Brooklyn. In addition, 69% (11/16) of these elders were white. Sixty percent (compared to 35% of those under 65) stated that they never go to the intersection of Patapsco and Hanover and 73% stated that they never visit Garrett Park compared to 45% of those under 65. Our 2019 community survey also showed that older adults (those over 55) have statistically significantly higher levels of trust in their neighbors than younger adults ($p < .01$) (Adler et al., 2020). These respondents also were likely to be homeowners and long-term residents. Those who have lived in Brooklyn for 5 or more years were found to consider the appearance of Brooklyn (for example cleanliness) less positive on average than residents who have lived in Brooklyn a shorter time. Based on these results, we asked ourselves how age-friendly the community is and how seniors themselves assess their living conditions.

Relevant Literature

Academic literature on aging has expanded as advanced nations face the challenges of aging populations. Finlay and Finn (2021) estimate there will be as many as 94 million senior citizens (65 years old and older) in the United States by 2050. Research examines many of the lived experiences of elders and the concept of “aging in place” focuses on the desire of senior residents to remain in their own homes. Studies have shown that seniors can become more highly attached to their home environment as they age, and they want to remain in place; this is also reflected in the positive views seniors have of their residences and broader living environment, even if services are perceived to be less accessible or the community to be less desirable (Kerbler, Sendi, and Filipovič Hrast 2017).

Senior citizens, and their associated needs, are often ignored in their residential communities, particularly when they live in marginalized neighborhoods (Finlay, Gaugler, and Kane 2020). Although aging in place is setting a new standard for seniors, they often need to rely on informal support networks to sustain life in an area that was not initially intended to meet the needs of an elderly population (Dobner, Musterd, and Fortuijn 2016). While this network may be composed of family members, “kinless-ness” is becoming increasingly common among elder residents with social, economic, and health risks (Margolis and Verdery 2017). Based on the biennial Health and Retirement Study (HRS), it is estimated that about 7% of contemporary adults aged 55 and older are without a spouse or biological children that typically provide the majority of care work (Margolis and Verdery 2017). This group may receive support from friends, neighbors or other volunteers that can assist where formal systems are not available. Despite having lower incomes than married peers, adults aging solo were more likely to

rely on paid caregivers (Lowers et al. 2023). Given the expensive nature of paid care, this is even less feasible for elders in a disinvested community like Brooklyn.

Social support networks can be developed in the community, such as social groups, clubs, and other forms of association. Relationships developed through engagement with other residents, including in religious organizations, may reduce stress, improve overall mental health, and provide assistance. Such social support, may also help improve overall satisfaction in life and reduce stress factors derived from financial burdens (Nguyen 2018). Interactions with religious organization congregants may serve as a coping mechanism for African American senior citizens (Nguyen 2018). Similar studies have shown that a strong sense of community may produce a positive impact on seniors, with some even expanding their interpretation of “family” to include neighbors (Padeiro et al. 2022). This may also help seniors who seek out a sense of safety due to vulnerabilities they may feel as a result of their advanced age (Kerbler, Sendi, and Filipovič Hrast 2017).

Physical environment also plays a key role in how seniors assess the quality of life in their communities. Access to green space or natural areas were assessed to be associated with improved health and wellbeing by providing a space for exercise, social engagement, and a place to relax (Padeiro et al. 2022). Smooth road surfaces, adequate pedestrian infrastructure to ensure safety, benches installed throughout a community, properly maintained paths/sidewalks, and a lack of barriers also contributed to the overall well-being of seniors. General availability of transportation services, restaurants, and healthcare services were also identified to have a positive impact on wellbeing among seniors in numerous studies (Padeiro et al. 2022).

Private investment in age-friendly communities has failed to adequately address the needs of the collective senior population, preferring to primarily cater to the seniors who are wealthy enough to afford luxury goods and services while also being healthy enough to enjoy everyday life without significant handicaps (Finlay, Gaugler, and Kane 2020). This ignores the needs of the disabled and the less affluent seniors who may still rely on wage-based employment or live on a low fixed income from various government or other retirement benefits. This issue is partly reflected in the lack of affordable housing that cater to the unique needs of senior citizens. Given the lack of affordable housing for seniors to move to, they are often forced to stay in their current (unaccommodating) residence (Finlay, Gaugler, and Kane 2020).

Methodology

Asset-based and Community-based Participatory Research Methodology

Unlike conventional research that focuses on the “deficits” and shortcomings of urban communities, the approach taken in this research is asset-based community development (ABCD) (Mathie and Cunningham 2003; Collaborative for Neighborhood Transformation) and community-based participatory research (CBPR) (Hacker 2013). Asset-based community development starts with the existing strengths and assets of the community rather than narrowly focusing only on existing challenges. Therefore, researchers recorded individual and physical community assets, community organizations and leadership to recognize them as resources with potential for improved community well-being. These resources can include:

- Individual assets (e.g. capacities, abilities of residents, leadership skills, time)
- Physical assets (e.g. parks, libraries, schools, clinics)
- Economy (e.g. local businesses)
- Associations (e.g. community associations)
- Access to other local organizations (non-profits, colleges, media, religious institutions)
- Culture, heritage, resilience

Assets were identified through participant observations (walking and observing in the community), online research, and interviews with elder community residents. Brooklyn’s assets include Garrett Park, The Children’s Guild, and United Way Ben Center, the Enoch Pratt Free Library, and various churches and schools – physical spaces that can be used for meetings and public events. Other assets include Action Baybrook, Concerned Citizens of Brooklyn, Friends of Garrett Park, Greater Baybrook Alliance, among other community associations that can be used to engage residents in neighborhood events and act as platforms to voice the concerns of residents. Also, Brooklyn has a large network of individuals who can be identified as assets, including volunteers, community organizers, business owners, religious leaders, educators, social workers, and librarians. The community has been able to forge relationships with local colleges as well. Overall, Brooklyn is relatively rich in assets compared to other historically disadvantaged neighborhoods in Baltimore City. Interactions with senior residents found that awareness of these community assets was mixed. For a partial list of senior resources and assets, reference Appendix B (p. 45), Appendix C (p. 49).

Community-based participatory research is an approach that benefits community members, social change organizations, and researchers alike. The purpose of this form

of research is to create bridges between researchers and communities, share knowledge and experience, and collaborate to develop culturally appropriate measurement instruments. This in-depth collaboration makes projects effective, efficient, and culturally relevant, and allows all who are involved to understand the nuances of the community being studied. Researchers working in tandem with communities ensures that suggestions and best practices are adapted to fit the community's needs.

The Interviews with Brooklyn Residents Aged 65+

Based on the relevant literature, the researchers selected various questions for the interviews to better understand social networks and support, services and accessibility, housing and neighborhood conditions, and senior citizens' future plans in terms of remaining in the neighborhood. In addition to general demographic information, respondents were asked questions regarding which services were most utilized in Brooklyn, what needed improvement, and which services were missing altogether from the community. Responses to these prompts offered insight on seniors' perspectives of their access to services. Senior citizens were also asked what they believed should be done to improve living conditions in Brooklyn (see the interview protocol in Appendix A, p. 41), and provided insight about their perceptions of the neighborhood in terms of the conditions on their block, the types of locations they avoided, and various elements of the neighborhood that made them feel safe or unsafe.

Community engagement is key to employing Asset Based Community Development, with researchers directly engaging their target population (and potential sample). Efforts to recruit Brooklyn residents 65 years and older for the study included flyer-ing around the neighborhood in conjunction with efforts by Action Baybrook, participating in local events, visiting churches, the public library, food pantries, and other local community services. In-person interviews were conducted in the Brooklyn community, taking place in a mix of public (e.g., the library) and private (i.e., personal residences) spaces depending on the preferences of the interviewees. Exceptions to conduct interviews via other means (telephonic or virtual) were made on a case by case basis. As an incentive to participate, the first 20 interviewees were promised a \$10 gift card to the Lidl grocery store. All interviews were recorded to facilitate transcription and analysis. The interviews were fielded between April 14, 2023, and May 9, 2023.

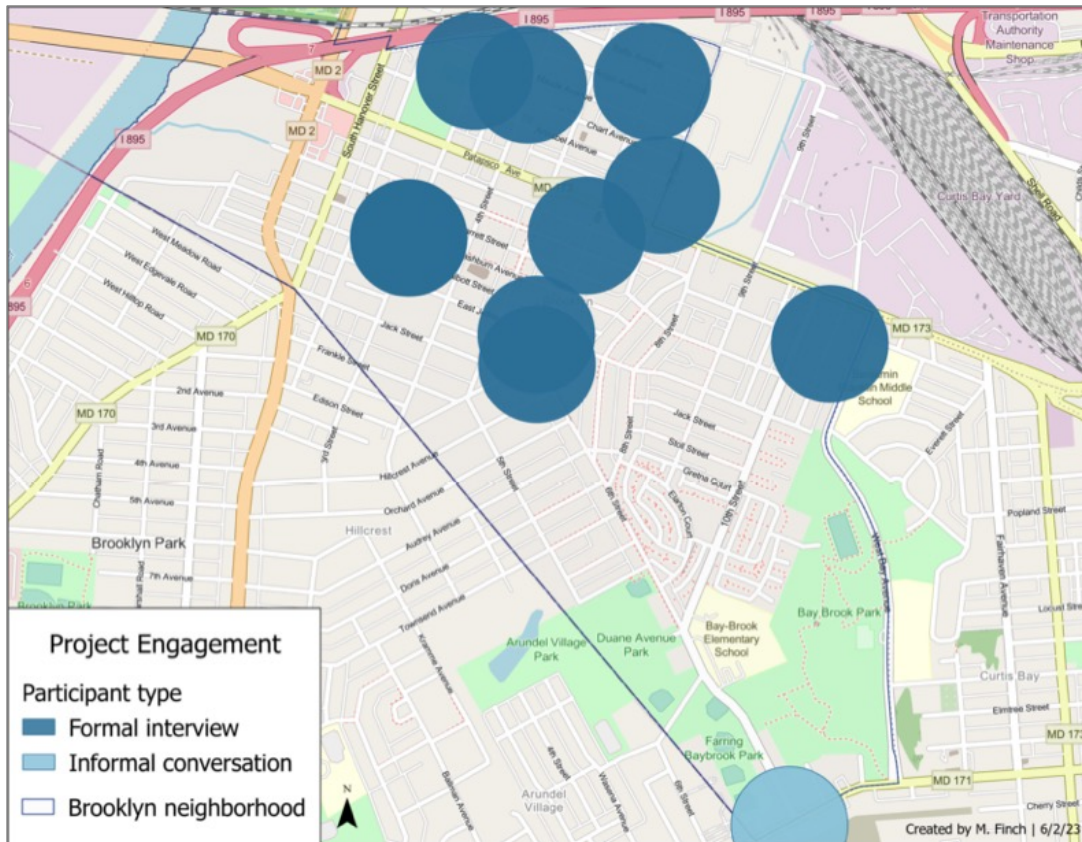
Sample

The sampling method was purposive due to the focus on a relatively small proportion of the population in a confined geographical space (Table 1). Convenience sampling was used by targeting potential interviewees in key locations (e.g., the library and food pantry) and snowball sampling was used after an interview was conducted to tap into potential local networks among the senior citizens. The overall sample is not representative of the broader population. However, in terms of local distribution, participating residents show no spatially biased concentration (Figure 3, p. 15). The characteristics of the 11 interview participants are shown in Table 2. On average, respondents were around 73 years old and had lived in Brooklyn for an average of about 35 years. In terms of race and sex, three were non-white and four were women. Nine of the respondents were homeowners, and all respondents said they plan to stay in Brooklyn in the future.

Table 2 Characteristics of the Respondents (N = 11)

	Mean	
Age	72.7	
Number of Years Lived in Brooklyn	34.6	
	N	Percent (%)
Women	4	36.4
Nonwhite	3	27.3
Rent	2	18.2
Own	9	81.8
Plan to Remain in Brooklyn	11	100

Figure 3 Locations of interviews



Analytic Strategy: Thematic Analysis

After completing the interviews, the recordings were transcribed using both manual transcription techniques and software (e.g., Otter.ai). Once transcribed, researchers conducted thematic analysis via open coding to identify key codes in each individual interview and across all of the interviews (Corbin and Strauss 1990). Researchers collaborated after developing the initial batch of codes to determine commonalities across the identified codes, ensure a higher degree of intercoder reliability, and highlight other key details that were teased out of the interview data (e.g. car ownership and educational attainment). Codes, key quotes, and other observations were annotated on a shared document available to all researchers. The coding process continued until coding saturation was attained, at which point the research team developed themes based on shared and/or similar codes.

Results

The collected data highlighted several shared concerns among the respondents. The themes extracted include Transportation and Necessary Mobility, Access to Services, Long-Term Residents' Perceptions of Neighborhood Change, Law and Order, Informal Support Networks, the Forgotten Part of the City, the Built Environment, and Food Access. Table 3 summarizes the themes alongside representative quotes for each theme. Each theme is addressed in more detail below the table.

Table 3 Themes Related to Seniors' Perceptions of Life in Brooklyn

Theme	Exemplary Quote
1. Transportation and Necessary Mobility	"We drive." (Interview 4)
	"And she says, you know, MTA stands for 'may take a while.'" (Interview 10)
	"But basically, we're about a block off the county. So we just go into the county." (Interview 3)
2. Access to Services	"Our doctors are – mine is downtown. His is out at St. Agnes. So... that's out of the area. – I mean – All my doctors are out of the area." (Interview 7)
	"The bus is convenient. I mean, I could go anywhere in the city – on a bus over here. And I go to the VA. Now I don't take the bus so much anymore because my son takes me – but – it's not too terribly challenging." (Interview 6)
	"I avoid even the library. I, it's not like it used to be, you know, I mean, it's just, everything changes, you know, that library was built. Well, when I was still in grade school, Saint Rose. And, and that changed. I mean, it's just, I just can't mean by the people that work there but I guess, you know, the people that come in there that were homeless and they have to be chased out of there, you know, they fall asleep in the chair because they have nowhere to go, you know, and it's just, it's just, you know, it's just, it's negative..." (Interview 11)

3. Long-term residents' perceptions of neighborhood change	<p>"It's not that it's the worst thing we've ever had, you know, it's not too bad of a world. Just looking at that from that aspect." (Interview 3)</p> <p>"When you've been around a long time, it never seems to be that things are better. Things are always getting worse. Because you've known so much or because you've been in a place so long. You have a different perspective." (Interview 8)</p> <p>"And also the neighborhood, I mean I'm not being derogatory, but we have a lot of Hispanics moving into the area now. I mean, we're all people." (Interview 3)</p>
4. Law and Order	<p>"Get more police!" (Interview 1)</p> <p>"We need more policing now. We need them. Well, their hands are tied. My brother's an ex-cop and he was, he said their hands are tied. He got out of it. You know what I mean?" (Interview 4)</p>
5. Informal Support Networks	<p>"I don't know if you can call him a friend, but an acquaintance I worked with for five years... this is like fifty years ago... I run into him... if I need a ride back to the store, I'll call him, and he rides me back." (Interview 11)</p> <p>"Oh, yeah, yeah. It's in the neighborhood. And you know, everybody knows everybody. And we're all like the same, you know, if you need something, you can go down 'Hey, hey Mr. [name omitted] or whatever, you know, whatever.' Or they might say, 'I don't know. You're the church. Can you give me something?' I said 'Oh, yes. Yes.'" (Interview 10)</p> <p>"I rely on my wife and kids." (Interview 2)</p>
6. "Forgotten" Part of the City	<p>"I'll tell you one thing that I hear and I personally [...] the entire 10 years I've lived here [...] Baltimore City doesn't care about Brooklyn." (Interview 6)</p> <p>"[...] We're forgotten. And I hear it from people who've lived here all their lives. – They – my neighbor across the street just said it to me last night on the phone. They've never cared about Brooklyn [...] And she's been here 30 years. – -- So -- that's how they feel. -- And that's because I think Brooklyn was an add on. We didn't– we use to be a part of Anne Arundel, I guess. But it was very confusing before I moved here - I didn't know if I was Baltimore City or -- something else - because it comes up Baltimore – and it comes up Brooklyn [...] if you go online. So you aren't</p>

	sure what's going on." (Interview 6)
	"Brooklyn is almost like the forgotten part of the city [...] Not that I'm prejudiced, but they don't do nothing for the Brooklyn residents down here." (Interview 9)
7. Built Environment	<p>"I can't afford to move anyplace else, because to live anyplace else is insane." (Interview 1)</p> <p>"We need more improvements on our streets and roads in this area..." (Interview 9)</p>
8. Food Access	<p>"The food desert we have here. It really is an issue." (Interview 6)</p> <p>"Food care, we either have to go to Walmart at Anne Arundel County, or we go to Costco, or we go up to maybe Lidl's for a while, but basically we have to travel." (Interview 9)</p>

Discussion of the Themes

1. Transportation and Necessary Mobility

"We drive."

(White woman, 76, Brooklyn resident for 50 years)

The first theme, transportation and necessary mobility, can be illustrated by statements made by multiple interviewees in the Brooklyn community. The ability to freely move around the community appears to be important among Brooklyn's senior residents. Seven of the 11 interviewees have their own vehicle that they use to drive to shops and services, and visit with others, both in and outside the Brooklyn community, while two relied on family and or neighbor owned vehicles for transportation. Only two respondents indicated regular use of the public transportation system.

"And she says, you know, MTA stands for 'may take a while.'"

(African-American man, 67, Brooklyn resident for 20 years)

Public transportation is available in the Brooklyn community through the bus service (see Figure 4, p. 20), which has been identified as problematic because it is too expensive, the locations served, and reliability, but also as free to seniors. It is regarded as both convenient to use and as inefficient with delays. One resident described an hours-long process using the busses to travel to and from stores outside of the Brooklyn community and another senior resident outright refuses to ride the bus. One resident explicitly mentioned the lack of reliable transportation for the specific needs of seniors and others in need.

Thus, seniors have a range of experiences using public transportation, they may have different ridership rates on public transportation, or that they have less direct access to public transportation due to their age. The fact that only two interviewees regularly use the bus speaks to the perceived lack of reliability of the public transportation system for senior citizens in the Brooklyn community. However, access to reliable transportation options has been shown to improve general well-being among senior citizens by expanding their ability to travel independently (Padeiro et al. 2022).

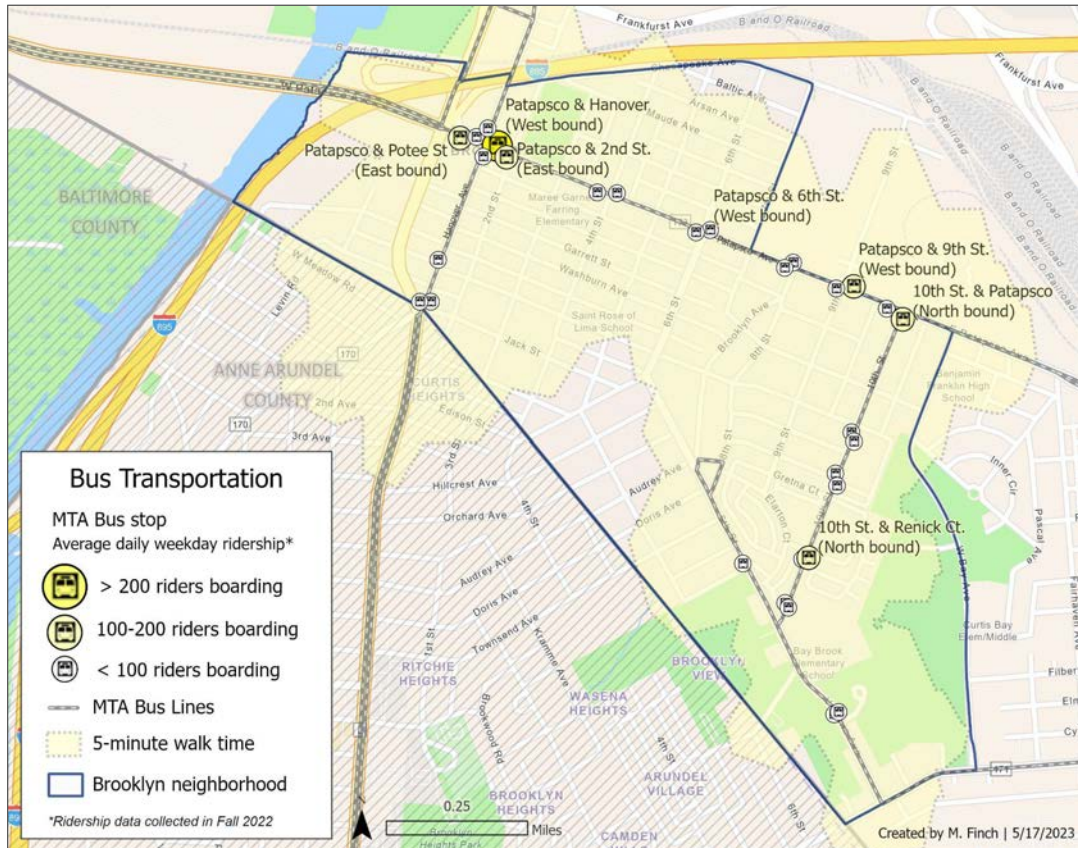
“Necessary mobility” is a theme because five interviewees indicated a need for transportation out of the community due to the lack of grocery stores, specialty healthcare services, full-service banking, and other businesses within the Brooklyn community. In fact, lack of supermarkets was one of the most frequently referenced shortcomings of the Brooklyn neighborhood, necessitating over-reliance on convenience stores and other one-stop-shops in the community or travel to surrounding areas (See also Food Access as a theme below). Personally owned vehicles were identified as the easiest way to move around the community, as they increased the sense of safety by allowing residents to avoid walking through parts of the community they want to avoid, and they reduced the amount of time spent on errands.

“But basically, we’re about a block off the county. So we just go into the county.”

(White man, 77, Brooklyn resident for 50 years)

The perceived absence of viable options to access everyday staples is a push factor that drives senior residents with sufficient means to leave the community for grocery shopping and services. This confirms previous research indicating that senior citizens benefit from having access to healthy and varied food options, to medical services, and entertainment (Padeiro et al. 2022; Finlay and Finn 2021).

Figure 4 Transit map



2. Access to Services

"My doctor is downtown. His is out at St. Agnes. So that's out of the area. I mean, all my doctors are out of the area."

(White woman, 76, Brooklyn resident for 38 years, Interview 7)

Interview participants were asked about the services that they used regularly, where they were located, and how they tended to travel to access them. The interview data highlighted services related to health care, banking, and other specific organizations.

When talking about health care services, participants shared some experiences of good service in the past, but most discussed the current need for improvements. One interviewee explained how all their medical needs used to be met at one site, but now they are required to travel all over for medical services:

"... bring Harbor Hospital back to the way it used to be. [...] my heart doctors are over there [...] it used to be, if you had [...] an illness, or an accident or anything, you went to Harbor and they took care of everything. Now [...] that Medstar come in here and [...] you gotta go to Reisterstown and all over for it. [...] My heart doctors are over at [...] Union Memorial. Well that's inconvenient for me."
(White man, 91, Brooklyn resident for 54 years)

Two interviewees stated that a nearby hospital provides limited services, which then required additional travel farther away from the neighborhood:

"If you have a heart attack, and you go to that hospital [Harbor Hospital], they're not going to keep you there. They are going to keep you alive just long enough to drive you all the way to Union Memorial Hospital because that's part of their Medstar Program."
(White man, 78, Brooklyn resident for 50 years)

All interviewees shared that they traveled to health care services outside of the Brooklyn area. Because of the travel distances, transportation to access health services was a topic that came up frequently: participants used busses, taxis, their own vehicles, and rides from family members.

"The bus is convenient. I mean, I could go anywhere in the city on a bus over here. And I go to the VA. Now I don't take the bus so much anymore because my son takes me, but it's not too terribly challenging."
(White woman, 65, Brooklyn resident for 10 years)

Those who relied on their own cars were concerned about the future, when they may no longer be able to drive:

"So far – because we both can still drive. So that, that, that's big [...] there's a lot of people that can't drive, so."
(White woman, 76, Brooklyn resident 38 years)

One participant was familiar with the mobile health service provided by MedStar regularly to Brooklyn and while he did not use it, considered it a benefit:

"I know they have the, MedStar that comes around [...] it comes like every other Saturday? [...] Yeah, it does come some Saturdays, and then some they come one day a week. So it comes like, twice a month. Over here, on Fourth Street."
(Black-American man, 67, Brooklyn resident 20 years)

Another participant voiced concerns about the three methadone clinics in Brooklyn that serve people who live inside and outside the neighborhood. She described the following:

"my biggest concern around this area is all the methadone clinics they have. I, as a tax payer, do not have a say where they [clinics] go and they're too close together and I'm tired of seeing 'em [patients] walking around like this (leaning over, head down), fall, holding on to that fence over there, [...] in the back alley where there's no lights back in this corner [...] and they shoot up and we got to pick up needles all the time out of here - that kinda stuff is annoying."

(White woman, 76, Brooklyn resident 38 years)

Two services that are located just outside of Brooklyn included senior centers and military service member organizations. The type of comments made suggest that the senior centers were considered an asset for those who could access them:

"It's [where they live] only 10 minutes away from the senior center in Glen Burnie. [...] And the senior center told me at any time you need help, I will direct you in the right direction."

(White woman, 65, Brooklyn resident for 10 years)

Another mentioned senior centers as something that they would like to have access to:

"There is no facility here, like a senior center, like they have up at Brooklyn Park Elementary School. They have a senior center built into the building there where I went to high school [...] There's no senior citizen where the health department could come in and ask questions of senior citizens. Where is your problem? What do you need?"

(White man, 78, Brooklyn resident for 50 years)

Those who mentioned the nearby American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) (3 out of 11) also visited these organizations regularly.

The library was mentioned by several participants (4 of 11). Two participants had used the library in the past when they were raising their children but do not visit it regularly anymore. Two other participants mentioned that services provided by the library, like books and internet access, were also available in their own home:

"Course, a lot of people I know – some of them go down to the library to read a book. I mean, I'm content reading in my own house."

(White woman, 76, Brooklyn resident for 38 years)

One participant actively avoided the library:

"I avoid even the library. I, it's not like it used to be, you know, I mean, it's just, everything changes, you know, that library was built, well, when I was still in grade school, Saint Rose. And, and that changed. I mean, it's just, I, I just don't mean the people that work there but I guess, you know, the people that come in there that were homeless and they have to be chased out of there, you know, they fall asleep in the chair because they have nowhere to go, you know, and it's just, it's just, you know, it's just, it's negative..."

(White man, 68, Brooklyn resident for 68 years)

Some services that were accessed both within and outside the neighborhood include greenspaces and banks. While three seniors mentioned the Arundel Federal Bank, which is still located in Brooklyn, others shared they were members of Bank of America, which had closed its branch in the past year.

"We had been dealing with that bank since 1970 when it was Equitable Trust, when it was Union Trust, then it changed over to Bank of America. Once they closed that bank down, we now have to travel all the way over to Baltimore-Annapolis Blvd to use their facilities."

(White man, 78, Brooklyn resident for 50 years)

One participant specifically mentioned being a bank member with Arundel Federal, which is in the neighborhood, because of easy access as they were getting older:

"I use the bank here... Yeah, the Arundel Federal and it's been around for over 100 years... I changed over from M&T to there because it was close. I might someday need a walker just to get to the bank, you know? You just don't know."

(White woman, 76, Brooklyn resident for 50 years)

Specific greenspaces that were mentioned included Garrett Park and the waterfront around Harbor Hospital. Participants had mixed perspectives regarding accessibility and safety. Some shared a positive view:

"Oh, yeah. I'm there all the time. [...] Yeah, they're, they're fixing it up."

(Black man, 67, Brooklyn resident for 20 years)

Others considered the park a place for violent crime:

"Over here? [referring to Garrett Park] No, ma'am. You'll get shot."

(White man, 78, Brooklyn resident for 50 years)

One participant shared that they used to like to go to the park, but due to physical limitations they no longer can.

"Well, it use to be I, I'd like to go up to the park, but I can't walk – so – I can't get up there no more."

(White man, 91, Brooklyn resident for 54 years)

Other services mentioned and considered either not currently accessible included affordable options for senior housing, house care and maintenance services, and homeownership.

Figure 5 Map of Places Respondents want to Avoid

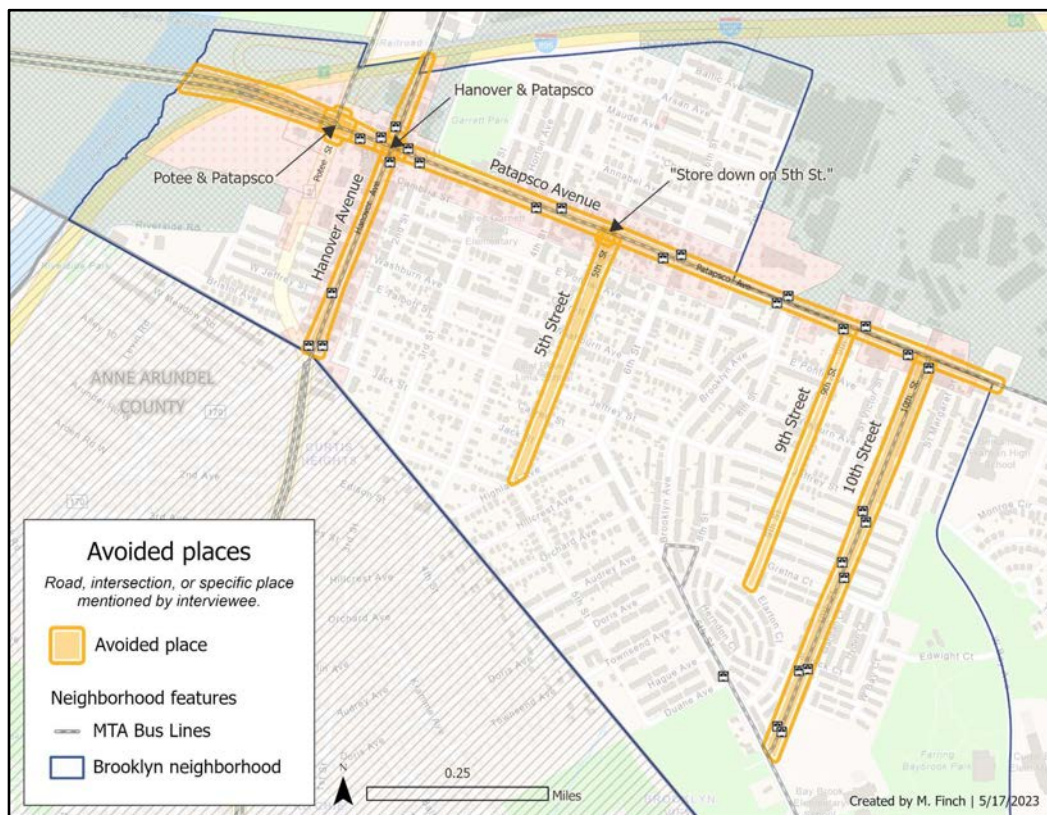
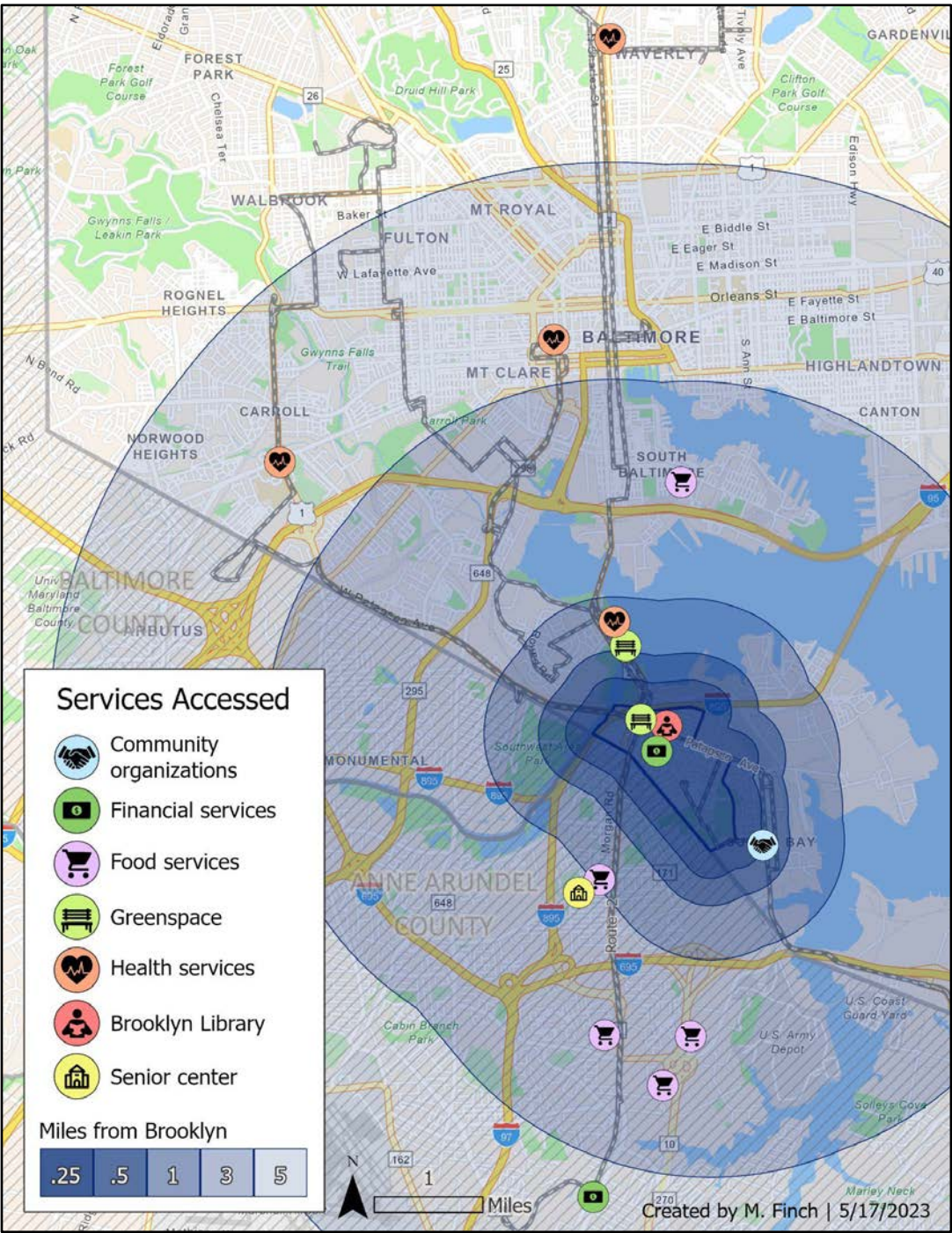


Figure 6 Map - services access w/distance indication



3. Long-term residents' perceptions of neighborhood change

"It's not that it's the worst thing we've ever had, you know, it's not too bad of a world. Just looking at that from that aspect."

(White man, 77, Brooklyn resident for 50 years)

Generally, neighborhood transformation is a social phenomenon widely discussed in urban sociology. The changes in urban areas are either described as gentrification processes and the displacement of vulnerable social groups or as neglect and demise of neighborhoods, with various gray areas in between (Nguyen 2018). We focused on the changes perceived by long-term residents of the neighborhood. While the interview data reflect various changes in the built environment, the business structure, and available services, the change in socio-economic composition of community residents was a main concern. The reoccurring narrative of long residing seniors is one of a neighborhood perceived to be in social decline:

"When you've been around a long time, it never seems to be that things are better. Things are always getting worse. Because you've known so much or because you've been in a place so long. You have a different perspective."

(White man, 91, Brooklyn resident for 54 years)

Previous research shows that rapid transitions in housing tenants increase the likelihood of social distancing between the new arrivals and the prior residents based on socio-demographic characteristics, such as age, race, and ethnicity. At the same time, the poverty status of residents in low-income neighborhoods tends to remain unchanged (Hipp 2020; Theodos, Coulton, and Pitingolo 2015). According to Davis et al. (2023) "othering," a loss of social connections, and the "witnessing of an erasure of what was" contribute to social and cultural displacement. Our interview data suggest that the recent changes in Brooklyn's racial, ethnic, and social composition is experienced as growing disintegration and a loss of social neighborhood bonds.

"It's dangerous after 6 o' clock. They're bad people. They come down and say hello to us, but you don't want them to say hello [laughs]."

(White woman, 65, Brooklyn resident for 10 years)

Framed in terms of us vs. them, interviewees emphasize that critical issues, such as a lack of safe public spaces and poor housing conditions are due to external forces, i.e., “other people,” who are often outsiders, who do not belong to the “original community” and do not share the same values. This notion of difference is also attributed to racial and ethnic background. Official statistics (see the section “Demographic Profile”) show a remarkable change of Brooklyn’s racial/ethnic composition over the last ten years, reflecting a decline of the white population. It is respondents in this very group who stress those changes, as the following quote exemplifies:

“And also, the neighborhood, I mean I’m not being derogatory, but we have a lot of Hispanics moving into the area now.”

(White man, 77, Brooklyn resident for 50 years)

And with demographic changes come changes in local culture and economy that are noticed in everyday life:

“Well, that has some kind of Arabic or whatever stuff on a wall down there, and then they opened a little convenience store. It used to be a nice place called Sanford’s, was a clothing store. I got expensive nice clothes, you know, for work, but all that’s changed. So we’ll see where it goes”

(White woman, 76, Brooklyn resident for 50 years)

These changes are perceived to be accelerating as part of a general social and cultural transformation. At the same time, some interviewees have a perspective that interprets these changes in relative terms. An 77-year old recent immigrant from Latin America, for example, describes living conditions and neighborhood qualities in Brooklyn as positive and even normalizes the presence of crime. Compared to his country of origin, he assesses Brooklyn as “not too bad of a world.”

4. Law and Order

“Get more police!”

(White woman, 65, Brooklyn resident for 10 years)

Crime appears to be a significant factor for Brooklyn seniors, with 10 of 11 respondents citing specific instances of crime in their neighborhoods. Examples of these crimes include auto larceny, drug trafficking, and sex work. Four respondents expressed a desire for increased police presence or action, and two respondents want to see military intervention via the National Guard. One respondent in particular, a white man, who has resided in Brooklyn all his life, described how he had been assaulted in Brooklyn several

years ago. Another resident, a white woman, spoke of robberies just blocks from her home. These criminal activities deter seniors from participating fully in their community and increase their desire for proper law enforcement.

"We need more policing now. ...[But] an ex-cop [she knows] said their hands are tied. He got out of it. You know what I mean?"
(White woman, 76, Brooklyn resident for 50 years)

Our findings are consistent with current literature (Rypi 2012) showing that elderly people are the age group most afraid of crime. Some seniors, however, see themselves as able to avoid being victims of crime through their actions, such as forming relationships with the police, isolating themselves in their homes, or calling out those who engage in illegal activities in their immediate neighborhoods.

5. Informal Support Networks

"I don't know if you can call him a friend, but an acquaintance I worked with for five years. This is like fifty years ago. I run into him [and] if I need a ride back to the store, I'll call him and he rides me back."
(White man, 68, Brooklyn resident for 68 years)

Previous research has found a decline in social relationships as people age. This decline is related to retirement from work, loss of close family members, and emerging health concerns, that prevent seniors from fully participating in social life. Seniors also find themselves separated from their adult children for greater periods of time. Due to these life changes, senior citizens rely on varying sources of informal support.

Senior citizens have long lasting relationships with local friends in urban neighborhoods. These consistent interactions result in informal support when they may need help from neighbors (Oh and Kim 2009; Cantor and Brennan 1992; Wellman and Wortley 1990). Elderly residents are also more likely to report a strong sense of social trust of those who reside in their neighborhoods (Hunter 1974).

"It's in the neighborhood. And you know, everybody knows everybody. And we're all like the same, you know, if you need something, you can go down 'Hey, hey Mr. [name omitted] or whatever, you know, whatever.' Or they might say, 'I don't know. You're the church. Can you give me something?' I said 'Oh, yes. Yes.'"
(African-American man, 67, Brooklyn resident for 20 years)

Of the eleven respondents in our study, seven mentioned that they liked or knew most people who lived in their neighborhood. Several respondents reported leaning on their neighbors for support or extending support to those who lived around them.

| "I rely on my wife and kids."

(Jamaican-American man, 67, Brooklyn resident for 27 years)

Senior citizens who reside with family members often rely on their spouses or adult children to assist them with daily tasks or transportation. A Mexican immigrant who has been living in Brooklyn for only four years, lives rent-free with one of his adult daughter and son-in-law who assist him with transportation and translation. Language barriers prevent him from forming strong ties with his neighbors, none of whom speak Spanish, so he relies on his family members. Another man, a first-generation immigrant who moved to Brooklyn 27 years ago, explained how he relied on his wife and two college-educated sons for assistance.

6. "Forgotten" Part of the City

"I'll tell you one thing that I hear and I personally [...] the entire 10 years I've lived here [...]: Baltimore City doesn't care about Brooklyn."

(White woman, 65, Brooklyn resident for 10 years, Interview 6)

There were direct and indirect statements about Brooklyn being neglected by officials in Baltimore City. There were two interviewees who directly stated that Brooklyn is "forgotten":

| (continued from previous quote)

"We're forgotten. And I hear it from people who've lived here all their lives. They – my neighbor across the street – just said it to me last night on the phone. They've never cared about Brooklyn. [...] It was very confusing before I moved here. I didn't know if I was Baltimore City or – something else – because it comes up Baltimore - and it comes up Brooklyn, if you go online."

(White woman, 65, Brooklyn resident for 10 years)

"Brooklyn is almost like the forgotten part of the city, and Curtis Bay and Baybrook are always recognized up there by the projects. Not that I'm prejudiced, but they don't do nothing for the Brooklyn residents down here."

(White man, 78, Brooklyn resident for 50 years)

Brooklyn's isolated geographic location in South Baltimore parallels the seniors' perception of being forgotten, ignored, and left to their own devices. This is visually reflected on the map (Figure 1): the neighborhood has a major highway across its northern side, the Anne Arundel County boundary on its southern side, and the Patapsco River on its western side, with only two major roads connecting the neighborhood to the rest of the city.

Indirect statements about a sense of neglect experienced by Brooklyn included examples of self-reliance and distrust of public officials and government services. These statements refer to the challenges residents are facing in the community.

Self-reliance was shown through interrupting crime, sweat equity, and self-advocacy. Several participants mentioned taking action against nonviolent crime happening in their neighborhood, including starting informal block watches, talking directly with offenders, and neighbors helping neighbors. One participant stated how crime is hard to get rid of:

"Listen, when they talk about crime, you know, crime is everywhere. You ain't gonna get rid of it and to be honest, man can't stop crime. You know, we have to change the heart of people. And that's what I'm all about."
(Jamaican-American man, 67, Brooklyn resident for 27 years)

Others mentioned picking up a variety of trash and waste in the neighborhood:

"We clean up vomit, we clean up condoms, we clean up, you know, waste, people waste, human waste, we pick up dead bodies, and that's happened."
(White woman, 65, Brooklyn resident for 10 years)

"I go on the trash detail usually five in the morning, you know, I pick up the trash..."
(White man, 68, Brooklyn resident for 68 years)

One participant shared about how residents advocated for the maintenance of a neighboring property by the city after the original caretaker retired:

"They have – somebody had retired and they weren't taking care of it but I called downtown and they're like "well that's the city" – well I kept fighting and said no, they've been taking care of it from the – so they said as soon as they hired somebody new – so now that guy I talk to and he waves to me when he's cutting the grass now and all, so they maintain it."
(White woman, 76, Brooklyn resident for 38 years)

Residents also advocated for the removal of squatters from a vacant house close to their block who were engaged in criminal activities:

“Yeah, that was a squatter house for an entire year. Until they finally, after many calls, many calls, and so much mayhem”

(White woman, 65, Brooklyn resident for 10 years)

Distrust in government services was evident when participants talked about lack of action by government officials, the city not meeting basic infrastructure needs, and concern over taxes. Two participants specifically mentioned the lack of action by public officials and one mentioned corruption as an issue that was inhibiting positive change.

"I don't want to sound that negative, but as many times as I've talked to politicians, they are going to promise you the moon and you don't even see half of a moon, you see nothing. It still stays black, where nothing gets done. So it's like me talking to that wall."

(White man, 78, Brooklyn resident for 50 years)

Related to infrastructure issues, participants were concerned about the poor condition of Patapsco Avenue. One participant expressed irritation that city funding was used to build a new facility in a nearby neighborhood while basic infrastructure needs like improving Brooklyn streets are not met.

Three participants mentioned concern around taxes and one of whom specifically mentioned a new required annual tax form for homeowners. They saw this as an unnecessary burden on senior citizens that could jeopardize their housing stability if they failed to submit it. Most of the senior citizens we interviewed are homeowners and plan to remain in Brooklyn into the future.

"Our [...] Mayor decided that every year we got to fill out a form for our taxes if we own our house. Now. If we're [older senior citizens with disabilities], how the heck do you – why should you have to do that? He done it for one reason. Because people are going to forget to fill that paper out. And he can jack their taxes up. "

(White man, 91, Brooklyn resident for 54 years)

Statements about an officially neglected Brooklyn and its residents highlight the need for self-reliance that many interviewees felt. The stated challenges are considered to be the responsibility of local government, and the unmet needs can be disheartening for senior citizens who reside there. The lack of support from public officials may reduce the overall well-being of the senior citizens.

7. The Built Environment

"I can't afford to move anyplace else,
because to live anyplace else is insane."
(White woman, 65, Brooklyn resident for 10 years, Interview 8)

Literature on aging in place paints a multifaceted picture that divides the economically affluent and able-bodied from the poor and disabled (Finlay et al., 2021). While all of the senior residents intend to remain in place for the future, 4 of the seniors cannot afford to live elsewhere, regardless of any desire to leave the community. Four other seniors indicate that they are content to remain in place due to their comfort with their home, their age, or their lack of desire to renovate a new home. The need to remain in place reflects a desire to remain connected to the community, to their long-time home, or to a sense of belonging or independence that may be lost by moving.

“We need more improvements on our streets and roads in this area.”
(White man, 78, Brooklyn resident for 50 years)

References to public infrastructure in the community are made in multiple interviews. Road surfaces are poorly maintained, vehicles in the community will speed through stop signs, highlighting road safety issues, there are limited parking options on some streets in the community causing minor conflicts, and certain areas lack sidewalks for pedestrians, with an emphasis on children's safety. Residents also had concerns regarding the lack of bus stop benches and covers to make bus services more accessible to seniors and those with disabilities, particularly considering that the bus service is frequently delayed and may require a longer wait-time. Accessibility-related issues and physical barriers are of significant concern to elders who may suffer from physical impairments or may be more prone to accidents (i.e. falls).

A desire to access green spaces (a natural area with trees, grass, shrubs) such as in gardens/yards, in a public park, or more green plants, trees, and shrubs throughout the community, was also frequently referenced by seniors. Green spaces were identified as improving general well-being of senior residents in the literature (Padeiro et al 2022). Improving accessibility to the green spaces in the community (i.e. Garrett Park) or creating additional green spaces may improve the wellbeing of senior residents.

8. Food Access

"The food desert we have here. It really is an issue."

(White woman, 65, Brooklyn resident for 10 years, Interview 6)

One of the basic needs (and rights) is access to affordable healthy food. It is a major factor influencing health conditions and overall well-being (Cain et al. 2022). In accordance with the results from our 2022 survey "Learning About Community Needs and the Baltimore Builders Program in Brooklyn" (Adler et al. 2022), the interview data of this year's study confirm that food access is (still) a central issue in Brooklyn. Senior residents in particular discussed access to more nutritious foods for affordable prices. They would like to see more grocery stores in their immediate neighborhood. The existing local shopping facilities do not to meet these requirements, as one interviewee pointedly highlights:

"It's these mom and pop stores that these people go to and it costs a fortune. I'm sure they got a lot of money on a food stamp card, but it's highway robbery."

(White man, 68, Brooklyn resident for 68 years)

The observed high level of attendance at Brooklyn's food pantries suggests that people were constrained in their food choices due to residents' socio-economic conditions (see Table 1, p. 8, Households w/ food stamps/SNAP benefits). Relatedly, access to food is also closely linked to unequal access to mobility (see the Transportation and Necessary Mobility theme above). The lack of grocery stores in Brooklyn, forces residents to travel long distances.

"Food care, we either have to go to Walmart at Anne Arundel County, or we go to Costco, or we go up to maybe Lidl's for a while, but basically we have to travel."

(White man, 78, Brooklyn resident for 50 years)

Those who do not own a car or cannot rely on the support from family members, but are dependent on public transportation, are at a particular disadvantage. This perpetuates social inequalities, regardless of age. Seniors also have special requirements if it comes to food. Or they are not able to prepare meals on their own – one of the basic conditions for aging in place. One senior resident pointed out:

"Seniors need other types of food. Something like that, if they can't cook, some place they could walk to and maybe get help. Just to see, I might have a cold, just to see someone to help me get through that, or give 'em a light lunch or something, that would be nice."

(White woman, 76, Brooklyn resident 38 years)

Previous research also highlights the connection between food access and housing. Poor housing conditions are widespread among food bank users and policy interventions are needed. Against the background of an increasingly challenging housing market, especially those households experiencing housing insecurity often also experience food insecurity (Clair et al. 2020; Fletcher, Andreyeva, and Busch 2009). Additionally, housing insecurity and poor housing conditions are associated with poor health (Garret et al. 2021; Cutts et al. 2011).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Our 2023 research project examined the varying experiences of citizens aged 65 and over living and utilizing services in Brooklyn, MD. More specifically, we focused on the context of elder residents' perceptions about housing conditions, safety concerns, and options for future renewal.

Our findings suggest that seniors in Brooklyn are largely disconnected from the services and events offered within the neighborhood. Reason for this include a lack of knowledge of opportunities, limited transportation options, and a general hesitation to get involved because of crime in and around highly trafficked areas. Seniors frequently referenced going outside of the community in order to avoid areas that they considered to be less safe, with both homes and personally owned vehicles designated as safe spaces.

The community has a relatively large number of assets, especially in terms of services and green spaces, but they are underutilized by seniors. Green spaces were highlighted as an area of interest for multiple interviewees, drawing attention to the disconnect between residents and community resources. Engaging the senior community on their specific concerns regarding the green spaces in the community, such as Garrett Park, could improve the overall lived experience of seniors.

Increased awareness of the strengths that already exist in the community can be an incentive to participate in improvements and in attracting new residents. Improvements within the community can help drive the overall development of the community to a more viable model that can support the revitalization of businesses, services and infrastructure.

While most residents and community leaders care deeply about their community, the lack of resources and political buy-in limits the amount of change that can be realized in the short-term. Focusing on existing assets and resources could allow the community to meet some basic needs by serving residents locally. Neighborhood beautification and greening initiatives are one example of how the community can seize opportunities while using their own abilities to change the appearance of the community and also strengthen social ties among residents.

Our preliminary results indicate that any plans for neighborhood renewal should not only focus on the physical conditions and safety in the community, but also on how to increase the level of trust and social engagement among residents. Several interviewees in this study indicate that they could not connect to people from outside their own neighborhood, which they defined as a single block or street. This is a significant limitation for those elders because they are potentially overlooking some of the people who may have the skills, time, and desire to support elders during a time of need. Expanding social bonds beyond one's block will create a more cohesive community that links the existing "pockets of trust" based on common needs. Ultimately, many of the concerns raised by the senior residents were not specific to seniors – they are communal issues. Connecting residents to one another in the community is the only way that these issues can be addressed.

Evidence suggests there is a need to move towards prevention and away from crises intervention to allow elders to continue to live safely, independently, and in healthy conditions at their homes. One option would be to offer free advice and information on housing and care options. This includes connecting housing, health care and social care, ranging from general information about housing and care options to tailored casework including one-to-one advice, advocacy, and practical assistance. A good practice example is the "FirstStop" services in the UK that operates at three levels: (1) general information about housing options, e.g., helplines, community support and information points, websites, etc., (2) advice and more 'individually tailored' information, via local information and advice agencies, and (3) one-on-one advice, advocacy and practical help (Cooper and KHC Consultancy Ltd 2015).

Previous research also suggests that when housing units become available for rent or purchase in economically distressed neighborhoods, practitioners and policy makers should encourage non-poor households to join the neighborhood. Findings suggest that local initiatives could take a more proactive stand in managing the existing housing stock and mobility (Theodos, Coulton, and Pitingolo 2015, 132).

Specific Suggestions for Action

- Create a centralized, accessible place where seniors can connect with each other and other residents in the neighborhood.
- Programs and policies to support volunteer help for older adults could be broadened to include nonfamily caregivers (Lowers et al. 2023). Connect seniors to youth through a program, like the Baltimore Builders program.
- Identify alternative transportation options that currently exist in Brooklyn that could be connected to seniors.
- In addition to using email groups, which some seniors use, include alternative news media to share information about events/programs, like local TV news channels.
- Connect with groups already doing community safety work in the neighborhood, like Safe Streets, to help with concerns around particular intersections.
- Increase communication efforts directed by informing elder residents of resources and positive developments in Brooklyn, such as free health care services at the Enoch Pratt Free Library Branch, community association meetings, etc. Clearly, these activities also should be publicized extensively in order to promote a positive image of Brooklyn.
- Create an updated resources sheet for senior residents in Brooklyn to help spread awareness of resources that already exist (see draft in Appendix B, p. 45).
- Create how-to documents or resources for particular services like grocery delivery, taxiCard, etc.
- Make events and meetings more accessible to elder residents by arranging transportation so that they can be included and become more visible.
- Sustain an effort to create a network among the various neighborhood blocks. This may be facilitated by having block and backyard meetings to bridge the “pockets of trust” we found in the interviews.
- Make green spaces more age-friendly and accessible. This could be done by installing more benches and planting more trees.
- Increase access to fresh food through a local supermarket, farmers markets, community gardens or food co-ops.
- Install traffic-calming measures and pedestrian safety tools to enable safe access to community resources and assets. Functional crosswalks, sidewalks, bike lanes, speed bumps, speed cameras, red light cameras are all possible measures to be considered.
- A larger study that focuses on residents older than 65 in the Brooklyn and Curtis Bay areas would be helpful to validate the findings for the entire Baybrook area. Only including residents in Brooklyn may be too narrow, considering how frequently interviewees indicated they would go into Curtis Bay or had a social circle that extended into Curtis Bay.

- Move from crisis intervention to prevention: create free services for advice and information on housing and care as well as tailored practical help to improve housing conditions through interventions such as small interior and exterior reconstructions (barrier-free access to the house, easy-access showers and tubs, etc.).
- Strengthen local initiatives for managing the existing vacant housing stock and housing mobility.

Future Research in Brooklyn

As part of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) community engagement initiatives and specifically the Master's Program in Applied Sociology, we plan to continue research projects with residents of Brooklyn and Curtis Bay in the future. Because we are dedicated to community-based participatory research, we are open to community partners' suggestions about research needed to help improve community well-being. We welcome collaborations with non-profit organizations and community associations.

This study experienced limited success in recruitment. A broader recruitment initiative that includes Curtis Bay could provide a more nuanced dataset to analyze, particularly if the sample is representative of the population. Our non-random interview sample included only a small number of people of color and renters. Future research should incorporate a more diverse sample of the population in order to gain a stronger understanding of how intersectionality may impact lived experiences in the community. An expanded research initiative focusing on how community members across different groups (based on age, race, gender, socioeconomic status, educational attainment, rent/own...) interact with one another could assist in identifying how to better draw community members together to address common issues.

One possible research initiative based on this effort could be assessing the viability of an elder-youth mentoring or educational and assistance program. This type of program was proposed in multiple interviews, which indicates a potential interest in creating an intergenerational community activity.

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Appendix A The Interview Protocol

UMBC / SOCY 680 Community-based Participatory Research

Spring 2023

Project: Brooklyn 65+ The lived experiences of Brooklyn elder residents

Prof. Marina Adler, Molly Finch, David Gilliland, Markya Reed, Falk Tino Schlinzig

Version: April 5, 2023

A. PREPARATION

- Check that your recording device is working and you have enough battery power.
- Have paper and pen for notes ready.

B. INTRO

- Hello, my name is [INSERT NAME]. I am a graduate student at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. We are doing interviews with senior 65 and older residents in this area. I would like to speak to you about your experiences living in Brooklyn in general, but also specifically about your housing situation, the services you use in the neighborhood and support that you may receive from your neighbors. The results will help us to inform local decision-makers and community associations about the needs of elders in the community.
- Your participation is voluntary and all information you provide is strictly confidential. You can stop the interview at any time. The first 20 interviewees who complete the interview will receive a \$10 Lidl gift card.
- I would like to record the interview with my cell phone so that I can transcribe it later for analysis. Do I have your permission to record the interview?"
- If yes, start recording. State the date, time of day, and place.

Read informed consent:

C. INFORMED CONSENT

- Thank you for agreeing to participate. This is a brief recorded interview about your life in the Brooklyn community. Participation in this study is voluntary and does not involve risks beyond those typically found in daily life.

- Your information will be kept private. However, Maryland law does require us to report any mentions of maltreatment, abuse, or neglect of children/minors that you may share as part of our research.
- This recorded interview should take only 20-30 minutes to complete. Please respond to each question to the best of your knowledge.
- Do I have your consent to conduct the interview?

D. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Please tell me your age, gender, and racial identification.
- How long have you lived in Brooklyn?

Opening Question

- Tell me - what is it like to live in Brooklyn as a senior citizen?
Probe: Ask the respondent to elaborate on specifics they mention.

Social Network and Support

- If you need support in your everyday life, who can you rely on and how do they provide it?
Probe: Who do you have regular contact with? (e.g., family members, friends, neighbors, club members ...)

Services and Accessibility

- What kinds of services do you use regularly? (Health care, library, food pantry ...) How do you get there? (car, public transportation, walking ...)
How about other places in Brooklyn? (parks, ...)
- What are the challenges that prevent you from using certain services, e.g. health challenges, opening hours, distances, etc.?
- What services for seniors do you feel meet your needs? Which do you think should be improved?
Which ones are missing?

Housing and Neighborhood

- Please tell me about your housing situation?
Do you own your home or rent?
Does anyone live with you?
- What are the conditions like on the block where you live?
- What kinds of places do you avoid in Brooklyn? Why?
How safe do you feel walking around in Brooklyn?
Specifically, what makes you feel safe? What makes you feel unsafe?

Future in Brooklyn?

- If Brooklyn received a large grant to improve living conditions for residents 65+, what suggestions do you have for how to spend that money?

Closing question

- Do you see yourself staying in Brooklyn in the future?
Probe: If the respondent does not want to stay in Brooklyn: Where would you prefer to live and why?
- Do you have any additional comments or questions?

Thank you for taking the time to speak to us. You have helped us very much.

Do you know anyone else who is a Brooklyn resident 65 and over who may want to be interviewed? Can you give me their contact information?

E. FOLLOW-UP

- Record the time of the end of the interview.
- Capture important insights and impressions in memos right after the interview.

Appendix B Resources for Seniors in Baltimore City

Resource	Programs offered
<p>Civic Works Elder Services</p> <p>https://civicworks.com/programs/elder-services/ 2701 Saint Lo Drive Baltimore, MD 21213</p> <p>Office: 410-366-8533 Email: info@civicworks.com</p>	<p>City for All Ages:</p> <p>Offers a comprehensive fall prevention program that makes homes safer for older adults living in Baltimore City. Provides fall prevention information, safety repairs, referrals to supportive services, and occupational therapy.</p> <p>Eligibility: Baltimore City resident, aged 65 and older</p> <hr/> <p>Housing Upgrades to Benefit Seniors (HUBS):</p> <p>Places social workers and case managers in 6 sites across Baltimore that are located in East and North Baltimore to facilitate aging in place (Banner Neighborhoods on Pulaski Highway, Civic Works on Brehms Lane, Keswick Multi-Care Center on West 40th Street, Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland on South Haven Street, Sinai Hospital of Baltimore and Comprehensive Housing Assistance (CHAI) on West Belvedere Avenue, and St. Ambrose Housing Aid Center on East 25th Street).</p> <p>These case managers may be able to assist eligible older adults with aging-in-place services like home safety improvements, rehabilitation, weatherization, and energy efficiency upgrades. More information can be found in the program brochure: https://civicworks.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/HUBSNov12018.pdf</p> <p>Eligibility: Baltimore City resident, aged 65 and older, 80% or below the Baltimore Metro Area Median Income</p> <p>Contact for more information: 443-470-9871 / hubsintake@civicworks.com</p>

	<p>Contract Work:</p> <p>City agencies, hospitals, and local nonprofits can contract experienced Civic Works Elder Services construction staff members to provide fall prevention, safety modifications, and minor home repairs for clients.</p> <p>Contact for more information: Lauren Averella (laverella@civicworks.com, 410-449-2322)</p>
(Civic Works Elder Services, cont.)	<p>Donation Closet:</p> <p>Inventory includes medical goods such as wheelchairs, walkers, rollators, portable commodes, or shower chairs. Current Donation Closet inventory can be viewed online: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1gv8DU6WcA1HtNYs60DMgxe3w4MnikJQKW0vWwBewKd4/edit#gid=1076996937</p> <p>To request items from the Donation Closet fill out this form: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfIS-x1bYoZOWumOtkeky2PsyXJPA1HrfFI0279vF9RuZ_lyQ/viewform</p> <p>For questions or additional assistance call 443-461-4692.</p>
<p>Maryland Access Point (MAP) of Baltimore City</p> <p>MAP sites provide face-to-face counseling on older adult program options.</p>	<p>MAP Benefits CheckUp:</p> <p>Free and confidential questionnaire to help determine programs and service eligibility for individuals 55 and older. Call the office (410-396-2273) to receive a questionnaire through the mail or download form directly off the MAP website.</p>
<p>https://health.baltimorecity.gov/node/543</p> <p>Baltimore City location: Division of Aging & CARE</p>	<p>MAP Options Counseling:</p> <p>Talk with qualified staff to identify long-term goals, needs, and challenges and get assistance locating and connecting with available public and private services. Designed to fit your preference and financial options. Call the office to learn more.</p>

<p>Services 417 E Fayette St., 6th Floor Baltimore, MD 21202</p> <p>Office: 410-396-2273 (Available M - F, 8:30- 4:30) Email: map.bchd@baltimorecity. gov</p> <p>(Baltimore City Division of Aging & CARE, cont.)</p>	<p>MAP Resource Request:</p> <p>Can provide additional information on resources like: gold cards, housing lists, taxi card applications, water discount applications, and energy assistance applications. Call the office to learn more.</p> <hr/> <p>TaxiCard Program</p> <p>Program that provides monthly subsidy to travel using taxicabs. TaxiCard can be used with participating taxicab companies to pay for an entire fare or a portion of the fare 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Participant cost is based upon whether your income is under or over \$1,132.50/month. Read the program brochure to learn more: https://www.caretaxicard.com/Images/TaxiCard%20CARE%20Brochure.pdf</p> <p>Registration is required. You can enroll online or print off form to complete and mail in; learn more on the website: https://www.caretaxicard.com/Registration.aspx</p> <p>Eligibility: Baltimore City resident, aged 60 or older.</p> <p>Phone: 410-664-1123, Mon. - Fri. 8AM - 5PM Website: www.caretaxicard.com</p>
<p>Abilities Network</p> <p>https://abilitiesnetwork.org/who-we-help/senior-citizens/</p> <p>8503 LaSallee Road Towson, MD 21286</p> <p>Office: 410-828-7700</p>	<p>Move Management:</p> <p>Assists older adults moving into retirement living. Offers supports for before, during and after moving. Unclear who is eligible and what the cost may be.</p> <hr/> <p>Concierge Services:</p> <p>Staff help with errands like grocery or personal shopping, laundry services, pick up/drop off services, appointment scheduling with transportation, and others.</p>
<p>Maryland Legal Aid</p> <p>https://www.mdlab.org/</p> <p>500 E. Lexington St.</p>	<p>Provides free legal aid to financially qualifying Marylanders and senior adults (60+).</p> <p>Foreclosure Legal Assistance Project: 888-213-3320 Represents low-income homeowners at all stages of the foreclosure process. Advice and referrals to other</p>

Baltimore, MD 21202	resources are available to applicants that are unable to be represented.
Office: 410-951-7777	Long-term Care Assistance Project: 866-635-2948
Office Hours: M - F, 9AM - 5PM	Provides free legal assistance to help low-income people obtain long-term healthcare.
Walk-in Intake Hours: M, W, F 9AM - 2:30PM	Maryland Senior Legal Helpline: 866-635-2948
	Free telephone service for people living in Maryland who are 60+. Attorneys who staff the helpline provide legal advice, brief legal services, or a referral to another lawyer. Provides legal support to seniors without seniors having to leave home.

Appendix C Services list | Type, Name & Location

Community Organizations

American Legion (1527 Cherry Street, Baltimore, MD)

Financial services

Arundel Federal (333 E. Patapsco Ave.)

Bank of America Branch (7206 Ritchie Hwy., Glen Burnie, MD)

Food services

Giant on Fort Ave. (857 E. Fort Ave., Baltimore, MD)

Giant in Glen Burnie (6636 Ritchie Hwy., Glen Burnie, MD)

Costco (575 E. Ordnance Rd., Glen Burnie, MD)

Lidl's (5722 Ritchie Hwy., Brooklyn Park, MD)

Walmart (6721 Chesapeake Center Dr., Glen Burnie, MD)

Greenspace

Garrett Park (3560 Third St., Baltimore, MD)

Harbor Hospital waterfront (3001 S. Hanover St., Baltimore, MD)

Health services

Harbor Hospital (3001 S. Hanover St., Baltimore, MD)

Saint Agnes Hospital (900 S. Caton Ave., Baltimore, MD)

Union Memorial Hospital (201 E. University Pkwy., Baltimore, MD)

Veterans Affairs Medical Center (10 N. Greene St., Baltimore, MD)

Library

Enoch Pratt Free Library - Brooklyn Branch (300 E. Patapsco Ave., Baltimore, MD)

Senior center

Brooklyn Park Senior Center (202 Hammons Ln., Brooklyn Park, MD)