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Study: Great Neck tops list of most walkable LI communities



A view looking south on Middle Neck Road in Great Neck. Great Neck is Long Island's most walkable community, according to a George Washington University study. Credit: Newsday / Audrey C. Tiernan

By Danny Schrafel

Special to Newsday

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Great Neck tops the list of 13 communities that are the most walkable on Long Island, according to a new study commissioned by George Washington University.

Other top performers in the The WalkUP Wake-Up Call report released Wednesday include Westbury, Patchogue, Mineola, Huntington, Garden City and Riverhead.

The study also identifies seven “emerging” downtowns — including Mineola, Farmingdale and Wyandanch — because of factors such as new development that improves walkability.

However, Long Island’s strongest examples of “walkable urbanism” are only in the middle of the pack compared with surrounding communities, according to the study.

Long Island is “behind the 8-ball” when it comes to developing walkable downtowns, it says.

“The walkable urban places in metropolitan New York have overwhelming demand — and you’re not getting them,” Christopher B. Leinberger, professor and chair of the Washington, D.C.’s university’s Center for Real Estate and Urban Analysis, said Wednesday during a presentation at the Plainview Residence Inn.

Suburban town centers and “drive-in” locations such as shopping malls and office parks offer unique development opportunities, especially in the face of downturns in those sectors, Leinberger added. Study findings recommend investing in mass transit, fostering affordable housing and including residents in the planning of walkable downtowns.

In addition, redevelopment plans are being considered for portions of Melville and Hicksville, two of five potential future walkable communities identified in the study, said David Pennetta, a Huntington Planning Board member and Executive Director and Managing Broker for Cushman & Wakefield.

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