

## Molloy College/Gardiner Foundation Project:

### *Long Island: How Did We Get Here?*

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## Long Island: Education and Land Planning/Usage – Merged Themes

### 1. The Expansion of NYC's Suburbs:

Education	Land Use/Planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Enormous growth of Long Island's suburbs, driven by the G.I. Bill and the expansion of roads and parkways, led to large capital investment in schools between the early 1950s to the 1960s.</li><li>- A significant aspect of this expansion was systemic racism that undergirded community development, both in the GI Bill's mortgage allotments and the subsequent <i>de facto</i> and <i>de jure</i> segregation. These historic factors shaped neighborhoods and communities in ways that remain significant.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Robert Moses' various mid-20th century infrastructure projects largely contributed to the existing traffic patterns and provincial attitudes among many communities on Long Island.</li><li>- The development of the Long Island Rail Road and the Long Island Expressway during the 1950s/1960s led to housing booms in various Suffolk County regions. Following the demise of the aerospace industry, once led by Grumman, an overall shift toward an island-wide service economy from an industrial economy has continued to progress with the education and healthcare services sectors now representing the largest employers on Long Island.</li><li>- The creation of Levittown, which served as the premier suburban development model for several decades, led to the creation of various neighborhood segregation structures.</li><li>- Changing attitudes regarding home ownership and lifestyles are now very apparent. Millennials, in general, are not very interested in traditional home ownership on Long Island, given their increasing desires to be career transients and to live near various redeveloping regional transit hubs.</li><li>- Long Island's suburb model needs updating – Downtown Revitalizations are creating walkable thriving downtowns primarily designed for young people, as seen in Rockville Centre, Mineola, and Farmingdale.</li><li>- Comprehensive transport solutions are indeed needed island-wide for the further development of both east-west and north-south arteries (the idea of a north-south light rail system may still be relevant).</li></ul>

## 2. Long Island's Community Identity – “A Sense of Place”:

Education	Land Use/Planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- School districts and schools became centers of communities and high performing schools began to influence real estate markets. In turn, individual communities developed distinctive and diverse identities. Some have remained relatively stable over time, while others have changed dramatically following a variety of events.</li> <li>- Long Island has the unfortunate reputation as one of the most segregated regions in the U.S. The merging of school districts is virtually impossible due to several factors, particularly potential concerns over real estate values.</li> <li>- Many students across Long Island, even those who attend more affluent schools, live in poverty and qualify for free and reduced lunch. The existence of a “working poor” class is a systemic factor in Long Island’s story.</li> <li>-Educational leadership styles vary greatly across Long Island, e.g., there are 124 school districts on Long Island, each under the direction of a single superintendent and his/her cabinet. The growing prevalence and influence of social media have created conditions that often undermine a superintendent’s ability to address critical issues effectively.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Long Island is “unique” – it was not settled in a truly organized way, e.g., Nassau County has 3 towns, 2 cities, 64 villages, and 60 hamlets – very unlike other American counties of a similar size.</li> <li>- As agrarian economic micro-sectors became increasingly deemphasized during the past few decades, the de-ruralization of certain sectors of eastern Suffolk County occurred.</li> <li>- Disposable income disparities have led to significant quality of life differences among various communities.</li> <li>- Long Island is comprised of 2 counties of numerous communities, in which people like the local control. And some communities take extreme pride in their upheld exclusivity.</li> <li>- The need for equality on various levels is increasingly discussed at numerous societal levels. However, no clear solutions are foreseen by any elected municipal officials.</li> <li>- The Levittown model led to housing grid pattern and subdivisions, and the commutation patterns for Nassau County and then parts of Suffolk County.</li> <li>- The importance of regional geography is intertwined with local political parties’ strengths.</li> <li>- The challenge of “home rule” still prevails. However, no evidence of strong political will exists to create significant challenges to this historical concept and allow for amendments to be realized.</li> <li>- Finite quantities of land for development and the shortage of affordable housing island-wide have created a pressing issue, which will continue for the foreseeable future.</li> </ul>

### 3. Immigration on Long Island:

Education	Land Use/Planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The changing demographics of Long Island's public schools, and the challenges to properly serve growing immigrant communities was an important story discussed by all our interviewees. While demographic changes can be tied to federal law, historically, there is a unique story for Long Island because of its location as a New York suburb and proximity to New York City.</li> <li>- African Americans, Latinos, and Asians now comprise 35% of Long Island's population, an increase from 23% in 2000.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>- The increase in the Latino population presents numerous challenges for school districts across Long Island, resulting in varied approaches to meeting the ENL population's needs. However, among their educational challenges, schools have not yet found definitive answers.</li> <li>- Academic tracking is also a related and ongoing obstacle to student achievement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Long Island's geographical diversity led to its development. Originally, waves of people fled NYC's tenements for Long Island.</li> <li>- Many different cultures have flocked to Long Island. Now, existing and developing micro-cultures are driven by new streams of immigrants and demographic occupations, especially large Asian and Latino groups, along with the classic Brooklyn and Queens families coming to Long Island.</li> <li>- Immigrants' shared values continue to be based on the American Dream: to own a home, send your children to good schools, and to enjoy the fruits of your labors.</li> <li>- Vibrant downtowns have been designed to strengthen villages' quality of life supporting the new American Dream for young people and immigrants to move from apartments or condos into houses that are being vacated by empty nesters.</li> <li>- When immigration from NYC began, independent niches were carved out that led to the creation of school districts, sewage areas, fire districts, and parks, etc.</li> </ul>

### 4. Sources & Uses of Taxes:

Education	Land Use/Planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The support for schools is based on a system strongly bound by tradition of tying property taxes to school funding. This has resulted in rather dramatic disparities in distributions of financial support across school districts and educational quality in the country.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Outdated municipal zoning codes, based on a colonial agrarian economic societal structure, no longer have any relevance, and cause very challenging development and taxation situations that continue to this day.</li> <li>- Significant missed opportunities occurred during the 1960s to establish practical and beneficial legislation concerning land usage and development, especially in eastern Suffolk County. This consequence was identified as one of the most contributing factors for</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> *Long Island Index*, 2018.

	<p>contemporary political gridlock concerning municipal zoning codes and home rule statutes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- These zoning codes still dictate various important measures and structures, especially governing the formation and geographical definition of school districts and land development projects.</li> <li>- Rising municipal land fees are increasingly augmenting tax bases to meet unfunded liability mandates.</li> </ul>
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#### 5. Individuals Interviewed for the Project:

Education	Land Use/Planning
<p><b><u>Education:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Founder/director of a writer's workshop</li> <li>-Superintendents of two Nassau County school districts</li> <li>-Superintendents of two Suffolk County school districts</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Land Use:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Attorney</li> <li>-Officer &amp; an educator of housing education</li> <li>-Officer &amp; regional manager of land/sustainability consulting company</li> <li>-Professor of health rehabilitation sciences, public university</li> <li>-Social work professor, public university</li> <li>-Long Island regional planner</li> <li>-Attorney, state politician and Nassau County mayor</li> <li>-Tax attorney</li> <li>-Realtor</li> <li>-Town historian in Suffolk County</li> <li>-Mayor in Suffolk County</li> <li>-Long-time resident of Nassau County</li> <li>-Officer of a real estate company</li> <li>-Former Nassau County Executive</li> <li>-Administrator of a nonprofit for critical land</li> <li>-Director of a Boys and Girls Club in Nassau County</li> <li>-Director of a local Chamber of Commerce in Nassau County</li> </ul>

## **Long Island Region Historical Timeline – Education & Land Use/Planning:**

1524: Italian explorer, Giovanni da Verrazzano, sailed to the New World, and entered what is today New York Harbor. He encountered the Lenape tribe (later named the Delaware by Europeans), who inhabited the western end of the island. The eastern end was inhabited by tribes that belonged to the Montauk-Narragansett language group. A Native American name for the island is Paumanok, “the island that pays tribute.”

1609: Henry Hudson, commissioned by the Dutch East India Company, sailed to the New World, and explored a broad river that today bears his name. It separates the northeastern region of New Jersey and the lower region of New York.

1624: The first Dutch settlement is established in the region that became the colony of New Netherland. The Dutch colonial rule lasted for 40 years.

1637: Lion Gardiner, the first English settler in the region, settled on a small island located between Long Island’s eastern forks that bears his surname to this day.

1640: British settlements on the eastern end of the island began under the jurisdiction of the New Haven and Connecticut colonies. The Southold and Southampton settlements began.

1644: Village of Hempstead was originally settled.

1648: Village of East Hampton was founded.

1653: Village of Huntington was founded.

1655: Village of Brookhaven was founded.

1664: The British army conquered the colony of New Netherland that was later renamed New York, in honor of the Duke of York.

1665: The Duke’s Laws, which dictated nearly every facet of life, were introduced across the island. These laws included the forerunners of the provisions for the establishment of municipal zoning codes.

1665: Village of Smithtown was founded.

1668: Village of Glen Cove was founded, and it later became a city in 1917.

1727: Riverhead was established as the seat of government for the Suffolk region, as a jurisdiction of the original county of the Province of New York.

1754 – 1763: The French and Indian War occurred. The British and colonists’ victory, aided by Native Americans, united the colonies, and led to their economic and military strength. The New York colony was now a prominent region for trade with a growing population.

1775 – 1783: The American Revolutionary War occurred. The largest battle, The Battle for Long Island, occurred across Kings County (today, the borough of Brooklyn), and was won by the British, who controlled most of the entire island throughout the war.

1776: The New York colony declared its independence on July 9, joining the 12 other colonies to form the United States of America.

1783: The last regiment of British troops retreated from New York City. Upon their exit, Gen. George Washington entered the city in triumph.

1792: Town of Riverhead was founded.

1827: New York formally outlawed slavery. Compared to any other state, New York had the greatest number of Underground Railroad affiliated organizations.

1830 – 1930: Population of the entire island approximately doubled every 20 years during this period.

1836: The predecessor to the Long Island Rail Road (oldest railroad in the U.S.) began service from lower Manhattan ferry terminal through Brooklyn to Queens.

1844: By this date, the railroad was completed to reach the island's east end.

1872: Town of Babylon was founded.

1883: Brooklyn Bridge was completed and opened, linking Manhattan to Brooklyn.

1890 – 1954: During this period, more than 12 million immigrants were processed through Ellis Island. Waves of immigrants, originally from eastern and southern Europe, created the island's diverse cultures, and were primarily exhibited by large Jewish American, Irish American, and Italian American populations that typically first settled in Manhattan.

1898: Kings County and portions of Queens were consolidated into the City of Greater New York.

1899: Nassau and Suffolk counties were established subsequent to the separation from Queens County.

1900: Mineola officially became the Nassau County seat of government.

1904: The first New York City subway line opened, and the system grew rapidly linking Manhattan to Brooklyn and Queens.

1908: Long Island Motor Parkway opened, stretching from the Queens neighborhood of Kissena to Suffolk's Lake Ronkonkoma. It was one of the first limited access motor highways in the world.

1913: The community of Long Beach became an incorporated village, and then became a city in 1922.

1916: Roosevelt Airfield was established in eastern Garden City. It closed in 1951, and it was later redeveloped into mid-density housing developments, commercial properties, and Hofstra University.

1920 – 1939: The first era of suburbanization of the island occurred.

1929: Jones Beach State Park opened.

1939: LaGuardia Airport was opened for commercial flights.

1944: G.I. Bill of Rights Act – as a result, the populations of Nassau and Suffolk counties skyrocketed.

1947: Levittown (formerly the hamlet of Island Trees) officially began as a suburban entity with 300 families occupying Levitt & Sons homes.

1948: Idlewild Airport (later renamed, John F. Kennedy Airport) was opened.

1954: U.S. Supreme Court Landmark Case: *Brown v Board of Education*.

1958 – 1969: The Long Island Expressway is initially extended from Queens through Nassau County, and later completed through Suffolk County to Riverhead.

1962: U.S. Supreme Court Landmark Case: *Engel v Vitale* (New Hyde Park). The court's ruling: State of New York's voluntary prayer allowance in public schools violates the First Amendment establishment clause.

1965: Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) passed, which allocates federal funds for Title I and bilingual education.

1965: Immigration Act of 1965 passed, which revokes quotas resulting in waves of immigration from Asia and Latin America.

1967: Taylor Law passed, which grants the rights for collective bargains to government employees; however, the law makes striking by government employees illegal.

1972: Title IX passed, which prohibits all forms of discrimination in public schools based on gender.

1973: Rehabilitation Act passed, which provides Section 504, i.e., the provision of civil rights for students with disabilities.

1974: Equal Education Opportunities Act passed, which prohibits discrimination and mandates action to overcome barriers to equal protection. The act protects rights of English language learners.

1974: U.S. Supreme Court Landmark Case: *Milliken v. Bradle*. The court's ruling: municipal suburbs are not responsible for segregation, thereby clarifying the distinction between de jure and de facto segregation.

1975: The Education of All Handicapped Children Act passed, which included the provision of the "least restrictive environment" to benefit the child's needs within the educational setting.

1977: U.S. Supreme Court Landmark Case: *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*. The court's ruling: public sector unions can require non-members to pay "agency fees."

1978: The longest teachers' strike in NYS history occurred – in the Levittown district (53 days).

1980: The Refugee Act of 1980 admits refugees for humanitarian purposes. More than 3 million immigrants entered the U.S. under this law.

1982: U.S. Supreme Court Landmark Case: *Island Trees Board of Education v. Pico*. The court's ruling: public schools cannot remove books from school libraries because of their content.

1984: Emergency Immigrant Education Act provides funding to schools to offset cost of large numbers of immigrants.

2002: No Child Left Behind Act passed, which began the emphasis on standardized testing measures.

2009: American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (including the Race to the Top) was passed. As a result, New York adopted the APPR and Common Core Learning Standards.

2010: Patchogue teens sentenced for the 2008 murder of an Ecuadorian immigrant deemed a hate crime.

2015: A reported 150,000 New York students Opt-Out of annual standardized tests.

2017: New York Civil Liberties Union releases report finding 20 percent of NYS schools illegally discriminate against immigrants by barring enrollment.

2017: Hempstead and Wyandanch school districts are rated as being in "significant stress" by the N.Y. State Comptroller (the highest degree of fiscal stress assessed to any non-urban districts in the state).

2018: A reported 50 percent of students on Long Island Opt-Out of English language arts standardized tests.



2018: Nassau County officials and prominent commercial property developers announce a new \$1.5bn “Nassau Hub” project adjacent to the Nassau Coliseum that calls for 500 housing units, office and biotech research space, retail establishments, and two hotels.

2018: N.Y. State accepted the \$1.2bn Belmont Arena project’s draft environmental impact statement. The project will include a sports arena, hotel, and retail complex adjacent to the horse racetrack.

2019: U.S. Supreme Court Landmark Case: *Janus v. AFSCME*. The court overturns *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*, potentially defunding teachers’ unions.

### **From the Literature:**

Florida, R. (2012). *The rise of the creative class – Revisited*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

1) Preface, p. x:

“...less expensive path to revival was to improve neighborhood conditions with smaller investments in everything from parks and bike paths to street-level culture that would make people’s everyday lives better, improve their underlying quality of place and signal a community that is open, energized, and diverse.”

“...forward-looking communities are...busily reclaiming their disused waterfronts and industrial areas and transforming them into parks and green spaces...suburbs are seeking to remake themselves into better, more livable communities by adding transit, shoring-up their arts and culture scenes and developing pedestrian-friendly town centers that are filled with the best of features of real cities.”

2) p. 395:

“Quality of place, density, walk-ability, and open-mindedness and diversity are things large numbers of people not only desire, but are willing to pay more for.”