

STATEMENT REGARDING 2010 NASSAU COUNTY MASTER PLAN DRAFT

I'm Barbara Epstein, The Nassau County League of Women Voters Affordable Housing Director. The League of Women Voters of Nassau County is a non-partisan organization that encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League of Women Voters of Nassau County believes that in order to meet the current and future housing needs of its residents regardless of economic circumstances, there should be a diversity of affordable housing opportunities and types (ownership, rentals, single and multiple dwellings for seniors, workforce, etc.).

The lack of affordable housing is a prescription for economic disaster. This lack of housing options has forced large numbers of residents to leave Long Island. From 1990-2006, 20% of Long Islands 18-34 year olds left at a rate that is 5 times the national average. We also have the lowest rate of rental units to housing stock in the U.S. (17%). We support mixed use development particularly in our downtowns, since there is little available land to develop. Downtowns have the potential to provide affordable housing needed to retain young workers and seniors, both essential to Long Island's economy and social future. This revitalizes these communities and puts residents nearer to various forms of transportation and helps ease some of the traffic problems.

Long Island needs new businesses to grow, new businesses need new workers, workers need affordable housing options.

The utilization of the brownfields for this kind of development would be beneficial. All of this being said the Long Island Index, former County Executive Souzzi's New Suburbia 90/10 master plan as well as the 1998 Nassau County Comprehensive Plan have all made similar points to those you have presented in this draft.

Two of the biggest hurdles are NIMBYism and the zoning and local control by municipalities.

This master plan has very good ideas and recommendations. We now need action, not just another document that sits on a shelf.

We look forward to being able to be of assistance in the future.

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