



Long Island leaders attend Smart Growth Summit

December 26, 2011 - Long Island

Recently, over 1,000 Long Island leaders gathered for the 10th Annual Smart Growth Summit. Ideas were generated, inspiration and passion brought forward from a cross-section that included elected officials, small businesses, chambers of commerce, civic leaders, developers, architects/engineers, planners, not-for-profits and concerned citizens. Most importantly, action has firmly taken place on an Island anxious about change.

In numbers, 37 Smart Growth projects with 4,900 units of housing have been approved over the last five and a half years, with over 5,000 additional units currently under review. This year we have seen approvals for Sandy Hills in Middle Island, the Glen Cove Piazza, New Village in Patchogue, Avalon at Huntington Station and a zoning plan for mixed-use in the Village of Farmingdale.

These actions are just a sampling of the following 10 challenges ahead for the Smart Growth movement:

- 1) Remove financing barriers to Smart Growth projects on the federal level with Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac reform. Break down state and local regulatory roadblocks to transit-oriented development.
- 2) Incorporate mixed-use development building types into energy efficiency and renewable programs.
- 3) Implement the Complete Streets legislation and develop traffic calming projects at pedestrian safety "hot spots"
- 4) Ensure that federal transportation bill funding makes it to LI for transit, "fix it first" and pedestrian safety projects.
- 5) Implement the Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Act with increased funding for wastewater treatment.
- 6) Design our communities with young people and aging baby boomers who are soon to be seniors.
- 7) Support our small businesses who are the lifeblood of our downtowns.
- 8) Incorporate arts, music, food and culture as part of our downtown planning.
- 9) Make stronger partnerships with community leaders in the process of revitalization and ensure diverse voices in these planning efforts.
- 10) Take steps to finally approve at least one new town center proposal with Heartland, Glen Cove waterfront and the Nassau HUB as prime candidates.

The now 50-member LI Lobby Coalition will take many of these initiatives to Albany and Washington, but thankfully some of our elected officials are already listening. NYS senator Jack Martins and existing and newly elected officials strategized on how to strengthen Smart Growth policies. Nassau County executive Ed Mangano pledged not to give up on making the Nassau HUB a mixed-use center. Most importantly, U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer announced support for

increased infrastructure investment in our downtowns properly planned with civics, small businesses and local governments.

Thankfully there are now thousands of Long Islanders who are working together to take these ideas back to their downtowns and advance Smart Growth initiatives. In the coming year, we need to use our skills and collective talents to strengthen already great places and create some new ones for the next generation of Long Islanders. President John F. Kennedy put it best: "Together we have been partners in adversity - let us also be partners in prosperity."

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