



Rockland County: warehouses or bust? Building a brighter future beyond big boxes - by Paul Adler, Esq

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Rockland County, nestled across the Hudson from bustling Manhattan, is at a crossroads. While the last two years have seen a boom in commercial development, it's been a one-note symphony

– a monotonous chorus of rising warehouses. While these hulking structures promise short-term economic gains, we risk building a fragile house of cards if we don't diversify our development strategies.

Yes, warehouses offer a quick injection of economic adrenaline. But let's not be dazzled by the initial rush. These concrete behemoths are job generators of a specific kind – low-paying, often temporary positions that could easily be eclipsed by the rise of automation. Imagine our once-vibrant communities hollowed out, replaced by aisles patrolled by robots, their silence broken only by the hum of forklifts. Is that the legacy we want to leave for future generations?

Moreover, warehouses notoriously lack versatility. Unlike a bustling Main Street or a tech-hub office park, they have limited shelf life. Once their logistical purpose fades, they become hulking monuments to past prosperity, difficult to repurpose and often eyesores on our landscape. Who wants Rockland County known as the land of empty boxes?

The solution lies not in rejecting progress, but in embracing a more nuanced approach. We need a development ecosystem that sings a richer melody, with diverse notes of retail, office spaces, and light industry harmonizing in a dynamic symphony. Imagine vibrant town centers where locally-owned stores flourish alongside national brands, attracting residents and tourists alike. Picture technology hubs buzzing with ideas, injecting our communities with intellectual capital and high-paying jobs.

This requires a shift in perspective. Our zoning regulations, currently tuned for the monotonous drone of boxy warehouses, need to be reorchestrated to accommodate a fluid, diverse economy. We need flexible codes that encourage mixed-use developments, allowing businesses to adapt and thrive as the economic landscape evolves.

Building a vibrant, resilient Rockland County doesn't mean turning our back on economic opportunities. It means recognizing that a one-song playlist risks a dull performance. We need a development chorus that reflects the richness and potential of our communities, a symphony of diverse enterprises that creates jobs, fosters innovation, and builds a sustainable future for generations to come.

So, Rockland County, let's raise the curtain on a brighter future. Let's not settle for the monotonous drone of the warehouse waltz. Let's build a future where the music of commerce fills our streets with opportunity, diversity, and the promise of a vibrant tomorrow.

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