



Request for Proposal

New Ownership for the LONG ISLAND INDEX Project

The Long Island Index, a project of the Rauch Foundation, published its first indicator report in 2004 and has continued producing indicator reports and special analyses for the past 13 years. Our focus was initially on a sweep of indicators measuring overall progress in the Long Island region: economy, community, housing, transportation, health, environment, education, governance and the safety net. Most recently we have been concentrating on the interrelationship of three of these in particular: economy, housing and transportation.

Our goal has been to provide a non-partisan space where good information informs critical debates about the future of the region. The overarching goals that have guided the project to date are:

- Measure where we are and show trends over time
- Encourage regional thinking
- Compare our region with other similar regions
- Increase awareness of issues and understanding their interrelatedness
- Inspire Long Islanders to work together in new ways to achieve shared goals

After maintaining the research, our website and our several mapping sites, the foundation is interested in finding a new organization to manage the project and to define what a "Long Island Index 2.0" needs to be at this juncture in Long Island's future. We feel strongly that the overarching goals are still valid but that much can be altered about what we include in our studies, how we study it, how the findings are disseminated, how the research informs advocacy efforts and more.

About the Long Island Index

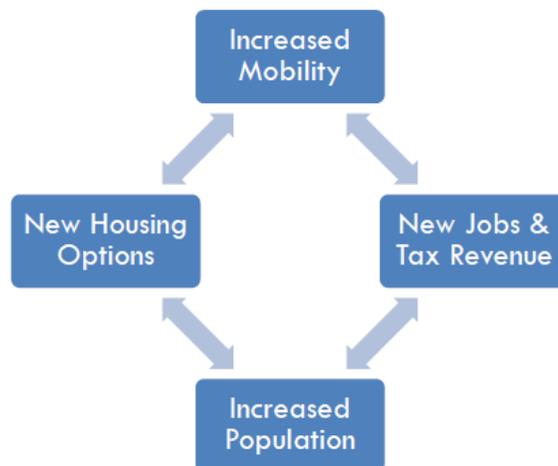
The Long Island Index began in 2004 by reporting a series of key indicators that reflect a broad picture of the region's strengths and challenges as well as conducting annual telephone-based surveys gathering residents' attitudes toward our challenges and their openness to change. For the past five years we have been focusing on exploring the interrelationships between a subset of those indicators with an

emphasis on understanding how Long Island can capitalize on our local assets in order to grow our economy, stem the tide of young people leaving and create a more equitable set of opportunities for all Long Islanders.

Long Island’s strong attachment to hyper-local governmental entities with 2 counties, 13 towns, 2 cities and 95 incorporated villages (not to mention all of our garbage districts, police districts, water districts, sewer districts, etc.) makes coordinated action across municipalities or districts one of our greatest challenges. And our 124 school districts effectively divide children into those with greater resources and those with far, far fewer.

As we have studied the problems facing our region, two key types of solutions seem to have the strongest potential to help Long island realize its potential and find greater economic development for the future. First, find solutions that bring people together across district lines to address common problems. This is well reflected in our need for a regional response to controlling pollution in our waterways – despite our over three dozen water districts. But it is no less important in our school districts where a variety of options can be considered that allow students to cross district lines and have access to greater opportunities. Some of the options we have studied include magnet schools, inter-district transfers; reevaluate how we fund school districts instead of through local commercial and property taxes.

Second, find solutions that capitalize on our existing assets. From an economic vantage, this would mean focusing on the potential to invest in the high-tech based businesses and research labs within our region to create new jobs. In coordination with the investment in these businesses there is a need to create the educational pipeline locally that develops the technical, manufacturing and engineering skills that allows today’s students to be ready to move into these new jobs.



From a community perspective, we have a tremendous need for more varied housing options and in particular those at lower prices to make it possible for more people to afford living here. Long Island has

a rich asset in our downtowns – many of which are thriving concerns for local businesses and a source of community vitality and many more of which could once again become these active centers with greater investment. Our telephone surveys confirm that residents are looking for greater housing options, are open to development in their downtowns and see these opportunities as ways to keep young people here. Our land use surveys have confirmed that the land is available for re-use in our downtowns to create greater density and fit in the apartment buildings and parking garages that will support a growing population. If only our zoning laws were updated and kept up with the changing needs of the region.

And last, from a transportation perspective, the Long Island Rail Road, one of the heaviest used commuter rail lines in the country, is in need of continued expansion on Long Island in order to address its aging infrastructure. Investment in East Side Access and Second Track to Ronkonkoma will have substantial impact on the local economy. But also important and less discussed is the need for the Third Track on the Main Line.

Finding the right sets of projects that will help to move forward on all of these fronts are, we believe, the initiatives needed to improve opportunities for all Long Islanders.

Key research products

Over the past dozen years or so, the Index has employed a variety of research approaches to gather information that would resonate with Long Islanders. Below is a short summary of them.

Indicators: The Index started as an indicator study in the mold of many other such studies around the country. Indicators are facts that help show how a region is doing, the way the unemployment rate helps show the health of the economy. Measuring these kinds of data helps communities to identify existing conditions, measure progress toward goals and to mobilize action to improve the region. The Long Island Index has been providing this data for almost fifteen years which allows residents, researchers, civic organizations and others to assess our change over time and evaluate our path for future action.

The goal is to measure a series of items that reflect a 360-degree view of the region from economic development to population changes, housing costs and types of housing availability, transportation, health outcomes, environmental changes and preservation of open space, governance structures and taxation, educational outcomes especially as it impacts different racial and ethnic groups across the region and the ability of the region to provide a sufficient safety net for those individuals who need more assistance.

Special Analyses: From the beginning the Index selected one topic a year to delve into in greater depth in order to more fully understand it. In 2007 we investigated the economic impact of our multiple special districts. In our opinion this study, “A Tale of Two Counties,” was one of our most successful pieces because it documented how much taxes could be reduced if we applied a more consolidated approach to managing local services. We also warned of the possibility of a significant expansion in

costs if the region cannot retain its volunteer corps of firefighters as more and more people work further from their homes.

In 2009 we focused on the issue of educational inequities between Long Island's 124 school districts and investigated a range of options that could be evaluated further for creating greater economic and financial parity between the districts.

In 2008 and 2010 we analyzed our built environment and where Long Island could build more multifamily homes in our downtowns; in 2011 we reviewed local development review processes and how they kept the region from moving forward at a faster pace.

In 2012 we considered what it would take for Long Island to become an innovation powerhouse by harnessing our considerable biotechnical assets. In 2013 we turned our attention to our transportation network and evaluated what could be achieved by expanding our existing rail network. In 2014 we drilled down on the economic benefits of building the Third Track on the Main Line of the LIRR.

Survey findings: Unlike other indicator studies around the country, the Long Island Index has embraced the use of telephone-based surveys to learn what residents think about different issues and to measure their willingness to embrace change. We believe that the surveys provide “the voice of the people” and that this has been an extremely useful tool both because of their ability to engage the media in learning what Long Islanders are thinking and to surprise readers that Long Islanders overall are more open to change than public meetings would have you believe. For example in our first year people were shocked to learn that 70% of Long Islanders were concerned that the high cost of housing would force them or family members to move out of the region and that 75% were worried about young people moving away because of the high cost of living. Even more surprising in 2010 we compared our survey findings to neighboring suburban communities and found that while our fears of young people leaving the region due to the high cost of living were at 75%, our neighbors were dramatically less worried – 44% in Northern New Jersey and 48% in Westchester and Fairfield County, CT. This difference in attitude was a strong indication that the availability of more affordable housing options, especially multifamily units, in these other suburban areas provided the opportunities for young people that our region lacked.

Interactive Maps: In 2008 we began working with the CUNY Mapping Service at The Graduate Center / CUNY to develop a series of interactive maps showing a wide range of data elements including land use, census data, retail information, downtown vitality, service providers including all special districts as well as other data on transportation, brownfields, food deserts, school districts and more. These are available at www.longislandindexmaps.org. The maps have been heavily used by civic organizations, professional groups, consultants, students and even several elected officials and their staffs have found the data easier to gather on our maps than from other government sources. We have tried to build the maps to intersect with our reports – when new research is published we consider what maps will enhance the reports and allow users to dig down and see how the issue affects their community.

Build a Better Burb: In an effort to help Long Islanders visualize what changes to the built environment could look like the Index ran two design competitions: Build a Better Burb Design Challenge and ParkingPLUS. We also developed a website, www.buildabetterburb.org, where some of the best designs for creating greater density as well as a sense of community and reimagining parking options were presented. In 2015 the Rauch Foundation transferred ownership of the site to the Congress for New Urbanism (CNU) and they are now maintaining the site and the associated social media properties.

Efforts to communicate our findings

In order to continually expand our audience, the Long Island Index has used numerous vehicles to communicate our research findings. Initially we were able to rely on traditional media to spread news of our findings and stories on TV, radio and in Newsday, the NY Times and other local newspapers were plentiful. But as these media properties have declined in recent years, we looked for new opportunities to get out our stories. To that end we designed our website to make our reports easily available and all of our charts, maps, infographics easy to download and reuse.

In addition to our website, www.longislandindex.org, we developed several videos over the years to interest people in our key issues and to understand the interrelationship between our challenges. Our first video, *The Clock is Ticking*, was one of our most successful ones because it had a succinct message and engaging and memorial images.

In addition to writing a regular column in local papers for many years we also have produced infographics to distill our findings into a short format that can be easily distributed.

Most recently we have begun to use the Index blog and a series of cartoons by former Newsday cartoonist Walt Handelsman as a way to draw attention to the issues we believe are the most critical. We have also produced two-page flyers with key statistics about core Long Island challenges and sent them to all Long Island elected officials.

We are interested to hear how a new organization would think about communicating their message to a wide audience. What tools would be the most helpful to them and how would they expand their audience beyond what we have been able to achieve?

What we are looking for

We are looking for an organization that has a strong, passionate voice to contribute to helping Long Island develop to its fullest potential.

We believe that organizational independence is critical for success of the project. A research project that must be independent from the political, ideological or commercial interests of a larger organization.

Maintaining an independent voice that can address regional issues on Long Island has been a cornerstone of the Index success to date and one that we see as vital to continue.

We are looking for an organization with a clear vision for the future and an understanding of how their research would contribute to moving that vision forward.

There are many ways to address the challenges facing Long Island and we are looking for an organization that wants to address it in a regional manner – including Nassau and Suffolk together in their research, proposed solutions, etc.

We want an organization that is a recognized and well-respected leader in their area of expertise and that has on staff, or is planning to hire, the necessary skill sets to develop high quality research products.

Our interactive maps have been one of our strongest assets and we want any organization that would continue the Index work to have a plan for maintaining and expanding the maps component.

We are interested in an organization that has a strong interest in working collaboratively: to nurture relationships with other organizations and to promote public/private partnerships. We are not interested in an organization that retains all decision-making, advising and the development of the work product within their offices without input from a larger range of individuals. To date the Long Island Index has maintained an Advisory Committee comprising individuals from civic organizations, universities, not-for-profits and businesses to provide counsel on key projects and issues to be researched. We specifically chose to exclude all elected officials, politicians, those running for office or government employees in order to ensure that we free of any political pressures. We would expect any new organizational home to continue to maintain an Advisory group or a Governing committee that would review decisions, research plans and weigh in on research questions to be pursued. To ensure carry through of the Rauch Foundation principles that have guided the Long Island Index to date, the foundation would want to have a seat on the new Advisory or Governing Committee that would be formed.

What we are *not* looking for

It is not necessary for an organization to continue to address every indicator topic that the Index originally measured.

While we have a strong preference to fund just one organization that has a strong vision for the Long Island Index, we would consider the possibility of funding two organizations if each is focusing on a different set of issues/indicators/challenges. In practical terms this means that if you would like to submit a proposal that focuses on just a select number of interrelated issues, please do so.

We are not looking to fund an organization that will develop academic papers for publication in academic journals. Our goal is to have a new organization continue to produce research that is readily accessible to a wide audience outside the academic traditions.

We are not looking for someone to necessarily duplicate what we have done in the past. We think the Index is ripe for a re-visioning and we welcome new ideas about how to use research, surveys, mapping and any other possible tools to address Long Island's future.

We support advocacy work but we feel it is critical to maintain a separation between the research and advocacy parts of the organization. It is critical to us to continue the non-partisan nature of the research findings.

What assets we will transfer

We will transfer all online assets to the new organization which includes:

www.longislandindex.org

www.longislandindexmaps.org

<http://multifamily.longislandindexmaps.org/>

<http://historiccensus.longislandindexmaps.org/>

<http://mydistricts.longislandindexmaps.org/>

In addition we will transfer our social media assets on Facebook.

We are happy to share any of our background materials that would be helpful to a new organization including: worksheets, charts, survey finding details, etc.

How much we will fund and for how long

We are interested in funding one (or at the most two organizations) that best meet the objectives we have laid out. Assuming an organization continues to meet its' agreed upon milestones, we are open to funding the project for multiple years to ensure its success. We have some flexibility in the size of the grant that we would consider and have earmarked significant dollars to ensure the success of a new organization.

When we get to the final stages of reviewing proposals one serious consideration will be the ability of the organization to continue without Rauch funds after the grant period. In addition to the funding that we will make available, we would expect the new organization to contribute as well or to do additional fundraising to make up the additional budget shortfall.

Request for proposals

The foundation would like to receive proposals from organizations that are interested in maintaining and expanding the work of the Long Island Index project. If you have questions, please contact Ann Golob, Director of the Long Island Index at: agolob@rauchfoundation.org.

All proposals will be reviewed by a committee of approximately six people which will include Foundation Board members, Foundation staff and at least two other individuals who have been closely associated with the Index for many years but are independent of our Board or staff.

Timeline

April 12, 2016	RFP distributed
June 1, 2016	Notify Ann Golob via email (agolob@rauchfoundation.org) of your intent to submit a proposal
September 1, 2016	Submit proposal – see description below for proposal format
October 1, 2016	The Rauch Foundation will notify up to six of the organizations that their proposals have passed the first round and they will be asked to come in for an interview.
October – November 2016	Interviews with organizations
December 1, 2016	A maximum of three organizations will be asked to submit a more extensive proposal including budgets, project timelines, Advisory Committee members and project team members. You will also be asked to define your request for funding from the Rauch Foundation and your plan to replace Rauch’s funding.
February 1, 2017	Proposals from three organizations due
February – March 2017	Interviews with organizations
April 1, 2017	Final decision announced
April – December 2017	Development of final research materials by Rauch Foundation and transfer of materials to new organization
January 2018	Release of final Rauch Foundation report which could include a joint report from Rauch and the new organization

Proposal Description – Due September 1, 2016

Proposals should contain the following information.

(1) In no more than five pages please describe what your “Long Island Index 2.0” would look like.

As part of that description please answer the following questions:

- a. What are the key challenges that you would like to address for Long Island?
 - b. What is your vision for what Long Island needs to do to address these challenges?
 - c. What type of research/data would you expect to do?
 - d. Who would be your primary audience for the research?
 - e. What type of outreach would you plan to do to publicize your findings?
- (2) A description of your organization
- (3) Name of a primary contact person with address, phone number, email and organization website
- (4) Biography of the key individual(s) who will be leading the project
- (5) A copy of the organization’s tax exemption letter from the IRS
- (6) A copy of the organization’s most recent audited financial statements
- (7) A list of the organization’s board members and their professional affiliations

One final note: Please be candid in your assessments of what you feel the Index has or has not been able to achieve and therefore what you believe a revamped project would need to address.