



HUNTINGTON TOWNSHIP HOUSING COALITION HOUSING REPORT 2016

Documenting the need for more rentals and more
attainable workforce housing
December 2016

Abstract

The Town of Huntington's Horizon's 2020 plan correctly identified the need for more affordable housing. This report updates our progress toward achieving the Horizon 2020 affordable housing goal.

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Summary

- The Town will fail to meet the housing needs of its most vulnerable citizens as defined by the Rutgers University study of Huntington's housing needs, 2005-2020.
- The Town will fail to provide enough rentals as outlined in the Town of Huntington comprehensive plan, Horizons 2020.
- The Town is in the bottom tier in comparison with other Long Island Towns geographically close to us with respect to providing rentals and affordable housing, according to data compiled by the Regional Planning Association
- To address this deficiency, the HTHC calls for a 20% set aside for affordable housing for ALL projects above 10 units. This should apply to all projects regardless of zoning changes, if any. This suggestion was originally made in the Town's 1993 Comprehensive Plan.

The HTHC released a report in 2014 noting that the Town's "Five Year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Fifth Year, 2014" would fall far short of its goals. With 2020 only four years away, the HTHC has undertaken a new study to see if we will achieve the outlined housing goals by 2020. We will not.

This Study will focus on two important aspects of housing: affordable, workforce housing, and rentals, which are an important form of such housing.

Issues identified in 2008 and earlier

In 2008 the Town of Huntington commissioned a master plan, called *Horizons 2020: Town of Huntington Comprehensive Plan*.

The Horizons 2020 report noted that:

- "Except for the affluent...all segments of the population are affected by the scarcity of affordable housing in Huntington."
- "Rental housing options for Huntington's lower income residents are limited."
- "For moderate and middle income members of the local workforce, such as nurses, police officers, secretaries, and mid-level managers, choices for quality, affordable rental housing are similarly limited."
- The Town's 85%/15% ownership/rental housing ratio "falls short of providing a balance or range of choices for those with different housing needs" compared with the U.S. 67%/33% ratio.
- "The shortage of decent affordable housing has resulted in the proliferation of illegal, overcrowded, and substandard housing". It is not the renters that cause these conditions; it is the failure to meet the demand for affordable housing.¹

In 2014, the Town of Huntington released its "Five Year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Fifth Year, 2014" which had, among its objectives:

- "Increase the supply of affordable renter occupied housing for extremely low, very low and low-income households.
- Improve the condition of existing housing for renter and owner occupied households principally occupied by extremely low, very low and low income families."²

¹ Horizons 2020: Town of Huntington Comprehensive Plan, pages 127-129

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In 2008, a study by Rutgers University commissioned by the Suffolk County Legislature identified that 2,789 units of workforce housing would be needed by 2020, of which almost 40% were to be for middle-income people.³ The study's key Huntington findings regarding housing needs of housing-stressed Huntington residents and of Huntington income groups are summarized in the charts below. It should be noted that this study was published the year that the Great Recession hit Long Island and the nation. Thus, it is fair to assume that some of the needs documented in the Rutgers study, which used 2000 Census data, may have worsened between 2008 and 2014. This might explain why the Rutgers study was again presented to a committee of the Suffolk County Legislature in the spring of 2014.

Projected Increase in Workforce Housing Demand by Income, 2005-2020⁴

Town	Low Income	Moderate Income	Middle Income	Total	
				Increased Demand	Percent of Total
Huntington	803	905	1,080	2,789	7.0%

Workforce Housing Demand (Households) by Housing Needs, 2005⁵

PUMA Region	Income Constrained (Households)	Deficient (Occupied Housing Units)	Crowded (Households)	Cost-burdened (Households)	Total Workforce Housing Demand (Households)	Percentage of Total Households
Huntington	33,197	257	515	10,053	10,825	10.6%

Total Workforce Housing Demand by Housing Needs	10,825⁶
Total Workforce Housing Units Planned	592
% of Demand Satisfied	5%
Number of Units Still Needed	10,233

² Town of Huntington "Five-Year Consolidated Plan Annual Action Plan, Fifth Year 2014 (April 1, 2014 –March 31, 2015)". Page 6.

³ Burchell, Robert; Sean DiGiovanna; William Dolphin, Suffolk County Workforce Housing Needs Assessments and Responses, Center for Urban Research, Rutgers University, 2008.

⁴ Ibid., P 28

⁵ Ibid, P 23

⁶ The Huntington Comprehensive Plan's Call for More Rental Housing Failed to Significantly Impact Huntington's Affordable Housing Stock, October 2014, Richard Koubek, Huntington Township Housing Coalition report

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Affordable Workforce Housing: who needs it?

The Regional Planning Association, in conjunction with St. Joseph's College's Institute for Attainable Housing, has collected 2014 data on housing and wages.⁷ In 2015, Long Island's median household income was \$89,000⁸ and the median rent in Huntington is \$1559/mo⁹. The standard for affordability is that no more than 30% of your income should be used for housing¹⁰. In Huntington, 49% of renters pay more than 30%, while 28% of homeowners pay more than 30%. All told, this means over 20,800 people in Huntington are paying unaffordable prices for their housing.¹¹ This is a slight improvement over our 2014 report, when 54% of Huntington residents were paying unaffordable rents.

Most of these people work, and are people you encounter on a daily basis. Using data from the New York State Occupational Employment Statistics (OES), jobs with median incomes who would find \$1559/mo to be over the 30% of income threshold include waiters and waitresses, carpenters, home health aides, teaching assistants, retail salespeople, community workers, social services providers, buildings and grounds workers, janitors, nursing assistants, and customer service reps, just to name a few. And that's measuring the median income- young people starting out in these professions can be expected to earn much less.

People paying too much for their housing are located all over town. Using numbers of students who receive reduced lunch as a proxy, you can see that families needing help are located in every school district¹²:

Economically Disadvantaged Students by School District, Town of Huntington

District	# Students	% of Enrollment
Cold Spring Harbor	16	1%
Commack	570	8%
Elwood	450	19%
Half Hollow Hills	1516	17%
Harborfields	379	11%
Huntington	2122	48%
Northport-E. Northport	610	11%
South Huntington	2909	48%

⁷ Regional Plan Association, *Long Island Housing Data Profiles 2014*, retrieved from <http://library.rpa.org/pdf/Long-Island-Housing-Profiles-Complete.pdf>

⁸ Regional Plan Association, *Income and Jobs on Long Island, 2015*. Retrieved from <http://library.rpa.org/pdf/Long-Island-Jobs-and-Income-Factsheet.pdf>

⁹ Regional Plan Association, *Long Island Housing Data Profiles 2014*, retrieved from <http://library.rpa.org/pdf/Long-Island-Housing-Profiles-Complete.pdf>, Huntington Town page

¹⁰ For a good discussion of the 30% limit, see "who can Afford to Live in a Home?: A Look at Data from the 2006 American Community Survey by Mary Schwartz and Ellen Wilson, US Census Bureau, retrieved at <https://www.census.gov/housing/census/publications/who-can-afford.pdf>

¹¹ Regional Plan Association, *Long Island Housing Data Profiles 2014*, retrieved from <http://library.rpa.org/pdf/Long-Island-Housing-Profiles-Complete.pdf>, Huntington Town page

¹² Retrieved from data.nysed.gov, district page

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Huntington's shortage of affordable housing choices is having an especially harsh impact on young families.

- A 2014 study found that 75 percent of young people, ages 20-34, said the lack of affordable housing options on the Island may limit their ability to stay.¹³
- Because Long Island lacks affordable rental housing, there were 15% fewer 25-to-34-year-olds in 2009 than there were in 2000, a larger decline than in any other part of the New York metropolitan region.¹⁴
- A 2014 study found "a huge exodus of young people, especially from mostly white, higher-income Long Island neighborhoods" like the Town of Huntington due to the lack of affordable rental housing.¹⁵
- This brain drain is a threat to the LI economy and a net loss to taxpayers who spend on average \$300,000 to educate a child, grades K-12, only to see them leave the Island because, in part, they can't find affordable rental housing here.

Long Island business leaders have long recognized that the shortage of affordable housing imperils the future of Long Island's economy and tax base.

- A 2013 study concluded that "the shortage of affordable rental homes is already straining Long Island's economy, and will make it much harder to compete for jobs in the years ahead."¹⁶
- Newsday reported on June 5th, 2014, that Computer Associates was moving their headquarters off LI, joining "a parade of [almost 30 companies] that have done so".¹⁷
- Recognizing the threat to the LI economy, the Long Island Association has as one of its 2016 priorities, to "Support specific mixed-use and rental projects that are significant to our region"¹⁸

Progress Report

Horizons 2020 chided the Town of Huntington for having an 85%/15% ratio of owners to renters, vs a national average of 67%/33%. By way of comparison, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, Westchester County's housing stock is 38% rental, Bergen County's is 35% rental, Nassau County's is 19.8% rental, and Suffolk County's is 20.7% rental.¹⁹ In the 2014 RPA data, the Town has not increased the percentage of renters, but the percent owning has declined; the ration is now 82%/15% (the balance were vacant). Huntington has one of the most skewed ratios amongst the Long Island towns closest to us geographically:

¹³ Winslow, Olivia, "Young adult survey: LI needs more housing options, jobs to keep us here," Newsday, June 10, 2014.

¹⁴ The Long Island Index, 2010 report

¹⁵ Winzenberg, David. "Young, Restless and Getting Out of Here, Fast," Long Island Business News, February, 2014

¹⁶ Regional Plan Association, Long Island Community Foundation, Ford Foundation. "Long Island's Rental Housing Crisis," September, 2013.

¹⁷ Ryan, Joe. "CA Shifts HQ to Manhattan," Newsday, June 5, 2014

¹⁸ <http://www.longislandassociation.org/assets/downloads/LIA2016PrioritiesandInitiatives.pdf>

¹⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

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Ownership vs. Rentals by Town, 2014²⁰

Town	Own	Rent
Smithtown	86%	11%
Oyster Bay	84%	11%
Huntington	82%	15%
Hempstead	76%	19%
Brookhaven	74%	19%
North Hempstead	74%	20%
Islip	72%	21%
Babylon	71%	23%

One of the major reasons for this is that we have one of the lowest percentages of multi-family housing:

Percent Multifamily Housing, by Town, 2014²¹

Town	% Multifamily
Huntington	9%
Smithtown	9%
Oyster Bay	11%
Brookhaven	15%
Babylon	18%
Islip	18%
Hempstead	21%
North Hempstead	24%

The way the town's two-family home law is written, in order to have a legal two-family home you must show "extreme hardship" (undefined). There is also a five-year residency requirement before you can apply for a permit for a two-family home, and a number of restrictions including no "exposed cellars, large attics, tall roofs, multiple driveways, multiple decks, and prominent secondary dwelling entrances." The five-year resident restriction essentially means you cannot build a two-family home in Huntington by first intent, as you would need to leave the second half of the home empty for the first five years.

With little free space left to build on it is difficult to imagine many large multifamily projects can still be built, which makes it important to include affordable options in large projects currently proposed such as Renaissance Downtown's Huntington Station project, Matinecock Court, and the upcoming proposals in the Melville Employment Center.

²⁰ Regional Plan Association, Long Island Housing Data Profiles 2014, retrieved from <http://library.rpa.org/pdf/Long-Island-Housing-Profiles-Complete.pdf>.

²¹ *ibid*

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Huntington is also in the bottom half of the neighboring towns when ranked by the amount of HUD units²² provided, both in absolute number and as a percent of total population.

Affordable Housing Units, by Town, 2014²³

Town	# HUD units	as % of pop.	pop
Babylon	2,679	1.3%	213,805
Hempstead	9,519	1.2%	761,975
Islip	3,663	1.1%	335,916
Brookhaven	5,182	1.1%	486,868
Huntington	1,835	0.9%	203,447
Smithtown	1,051	0.9%	118,057
Oyster Bay	2,435	0.8%	294,307
North Hempstead	1,071	0.5%	227,029

What have we been building?

The HTHC has been tracking the projects that have been proposed around town. We try to track all projects with two or more units, and spot builds if they are designated as affordable. The current status is in the table below. The projects in red lettering are projects that were noted in our 2014 report. Projects that do not have submitted proposal yet, such as the MEC project, have been left with no data but are included on projects we are tracking.

²² The HUD units comes from a section on the RPA report that comes from the "HUD picture of subsidized housing 2013" and is total units available through all HUD programs, including public housing, section 8, section 236, moderate rehab, and other multi-family.

²³ Regional Plan Association, Long Island Housing Data Profiles 2014, retrieved from <http://library.rpa.org/pdf/Long-Island-Housing-Profiles-Complete.pdf>.

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Town of Huntington Building projects 2008- 2015									
name	street	Neighborhood	status	Total u	# own	# rent	# affordab	55+	
Hilltop Homes	East Main & Centershore Dr	Centerport	complete	9	9	0	1		0
Oheka Castle	East Gate Drive	Cold Spring Harbor	approved	190	190	0	0		190
Stone Ridge Estates	Deer Park Avenue	Dix Hills	approved	40	40	0	5		40
Deer Park Ave, eastside N of LIE	Deer Park Ave, eastside N of LIE	Dix Hills	Early stage	na	na	na	na		na
The Seasons at Elwood	Oak Tree Dairy, Elwood Road	Elwood	proposed	256	256	0	34		256
Harborfields Estates	Pulaski and Lake road	Greenlawn	complete	47	47	0	2		0
Matinecock Court	Elwood & Pulaski Road	Greenlawn	approved	146	76	70	146		0
Avalon Bay	5th Street	Huntington Station	complete	303	0	303	43		0
32 East 6th street	32 East 6th street	Huntington Station	complete	2	1	1	2		0
126 East 10th Street	126 East 10th Street	Huntington Station	complete	1	1	0	1		0
Country Pointe- Beechwood	5th Street	Huntington Station	under construction	76	76	0	11		0
Columbia Terrace- vets	Columbia Street	Huntington Station	approved	14	0	14	14		0
Renaissance Gateway Plaza	1000-1026 New York Avenue	Huntington Station	proposed	68	0	68	13		0
Northridge	corner of Northridge & NY Avenue	Huntington Station	approved	16	0	16	0		0
Renaissance Artists Residences	New York Avenue	Huntington Station	proposed	49	0	49	9		0
Creekside by the Harbor	Creek Road	Huntington Village	complete	19	0	19	3		0
Heatherwood	Girard St	Huntington Village	complete	12	0	12	0		0
Losquadro Ice House	50 Stewart Avenue	Huntington Village	under construction	26	0	26	0		0
Sidney Mack Building	230 New York Avenue	Huntington Village	under construction	14	0	14	0		0
Classic Galleries	Stewart Avenue	Huntington Village	under construction	10	0	10	0		0
next to Red restaurant	425 New York Avenue	Huntington Village	under construction	10	0	10	0		0
Next to Storyville	41 Green Street	Huntington Village	under construction	5	0	5	0		0
10 Wall Street	10 Wall Street	Huntington Village	under construction	4	0	4	0		0
Above Lemon Tree	328 Main Street	Huntington Village	under construction	2	0	2	0		0
next to Sip Tea Lounge	288 New York Avenue	Huntington Village	under construction	2	0	2	0		0
over Red Restaurant	417 New York Avenue	Huntington Village	under construction	2	0	2	0		0
Renaissance Northridge	New York Avenue	Huntington Village	approved	16	0	16	0		0
30 Prospect Street	30 Prospect Street	Huntington Village	proposed	11	0	11	0		0
Behind Albert's Mandarin Gourmet	269A New York Avenue	Huntington Village	proposed	20	0	20	0		0
vacant lot Stewart & Girard Street	30 Stewart Street	Huntington Village	proposed	12	0	12	0		0
FAD Building	415 New York Avenue	Huntington Village	proposed	7	0	7	0		0
Parking structure	various possible	Huntington Village	Early stage	na	na	na	na		na
The Club at Melville-3 income bands	25 Deshon Drive	Melville	complete	261	261	0	261		261
Highland Greens	Ruland Road	Melville	under construction	117	117	0	117		0
Melville Employment Center	Huntington Quadrangle	Melville	Early stage	na	na	na	na		na
The Preserve at Indian Hills	BreezeHill Road	Northport	proposed	108	108	0	0		108
Kensington Estates (Hunt. only)	border w Oyster Bay	West Hills	proposed	66	66	0	9		66
			totals	1941	1248	693	671		921

The good news is that the ratio of rentals to ownership is moving in a direction that will help the housing crisis: the ratio of ownership to rentals above is 66%/34% as compared to the current 82%/15%. Also notable is that 35% are affordable, and 34% are for seniors.

On the downside, the total number of 671 affordable units falls far short of the 2789 units the Rutgers study says we need by 2020. This means we can continue to expect overcrowding and illegal rentals to persist for the near future.

Particularly hard hit are the young: only 21% of the units are affordable units not set aside for seniors. We graduate approximately 3200 students a year from our high schools, but we have built/are building only 141 units to house them over the last 8 years.²⁴

²⁴ Retrieved from data.nysed.gov, district page

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Graduation Statistics, Huntington Schools		
School District	2014	2015
Cold Spring Harbor	177	155
Commack	605	613
Elwood	197	205
Half Hollow Hills	778	841
Harborfields	259	288
Huntington	264	265
Northport-E. Northport	516	479
South Huntington	382	424
totals	3178	3270

What will we be building?

There are several significant projects that are in the proposed and planning stages. These include:

The Seasons at Elwood- The Seasons at Elwood will be condominiums limited to homeowners who are 55 years of age and better.²⁵ The Seasons are expected to add 34 units to our affordable housing stock.

The Preserve at Indian Hills²⁶ - The Preserve at Indian Hills has submitted a plan to the Town of Huntington to preserve the Indians Hills Country Club in perpetuity. The plan calls for the preservation of 120 out of a total of 143 acres. The 55 and older Townhomes will be situated in three separate areas that will not impact the vistas of the Club from Breeze Hill Road and Fresh Pond Road. The alternative plan, for an as-of-right single-family subdivision for over 100 single-family homes, would severely impact the entire area and force a closure of the golf course. The Preserve plans for no affordable housing.

Renaissance Downtowns projects

- ***Gateway Plaza-*** Located at 1000-1026 New York Avenue, this mixed use building will contain approximately 16,000 sq ft of retail, with 33 studio apartments, 33 one bedroom apartments, and built-in parking for residential and retail
- ***Artists Residences-*** located across New York Avenue from Gateway plaza in the far end of the LIRR lot, these 49 units will have both galleries and living space for artists, similar to the ArtSpace concept
- ***Northridge-*** Located at the corner of Northridge Street and New York Avenue, this building will have approximately 6200 sq ft of retail and 16 one bedroom apartments, with parking in the rear.

While these projects have no units defined as affordable under HUD guidelines, their provision for studios and one bedrooms at market rates well below rental units in Huntington village are “affordable by design” and will add a range of housing options currently absent from the Huntington market.

Huntington Village parking structure- Plans have been submitted to the town, at least one of which had a housing component, but the town has tabled this issue for 2017 citing budget reasons.

²⁵ The Seasons at Elwood web page, <http://seasonsatelwood.com/>

²⁶ The Preserve at Indian Hills web site, <http://northwindgroup.com/preserve-indian-hills/>

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Melville Employment Center (MEC) master plan- Town has been holding community hearings, and it should be issued in final form in December 2016. Proposals mooted so far could contain 500-660 units of housing, much of it centered around the Huntington Quadrangle which would be converted to mixed use. However, we believe there will be no affordable element unless there is a change in current affordable zoning requirements. We believe the zone should have a 20% set-aside for workforce housing.

Kensington Estates²⁷ - Kensington Estates is a proposed 55-and-over luxury gated townhouse community located in West Hills. The 18.6 acre parcel is partially located in both Nassau and Suffolk counties, in the Towns of Oyster Bay and Huntington respectively. Kensington Estates plans a total of 83 residences. The site plan includes over 6 acres of green space that preserve the existing natural vegetation on the site. Our survey only counts those units that would be on the Huntington side of the line. This should add 9 affordable units on the Huntington side.

Benefits of Rental Housing

According to the Regional Planning Association, every 100 new units of rental housing generates 32 local jobs, \$2.3 million in income and \$395,000 in tax revenue annually.²⁸ Their 2013 report also noted that “on average, the Hudson Valley, northern New Jersey and southwestern Connecticut have two-and-a-half times the number of available rental homes per household than Long Island, making it difficult for Nassau and Suffolk to attract skilled workers and young professionals.”

Increasing the rental stock is good for local businesses, which is in turn good for the town’s tax base.

Housing for Veterans

The Town has taken a strong step to aiding our veterans by permitting the building the Columbia Terrace building. We feel this building will be sufficient for existing veterans housing needs within the town of Huntington.

Conclusions and Recommended Actions

The Town has made some progress toward making Huntington an affordable place to live since our last report, but the improvement has been small and does not come close to meeting the needs of the community when it comes to affordable housing.

Conclusions:

1. Despite the Town’s 2008 Comprehensive Plan criticism of the 85%/15% home ownership/rental ratio, the Town’s planned construction since 2008 barely moves the ownership/rental ratio and is still well below the 67%/33% U.S. ratio for rentals.
2. The 153 units of affordable rental housing being built constitute only 22.8% of the 671 affordable units (ownership and rental) planned or completed since 2008 when the Comprehensive Plan called attention to the “limited” supply of rental units in Huntington.

²⁷ Kensington estates website, <http://triangleequities.com/kensingtonestates/>

²⁸ Long Island’s Rental Housing Crisis, Regional Planning Association, September 2013, p3.

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3. The 671 units of planned affordable housing provide only 6.2% of the 10,825 units projected by the Rutgers study to meet the needs of housing-stressed Huntington residents who are income constrained, cost-burdened or living in deficient or crowded housing.
4. Despite the Town Comprehensive Plan's call for more affordable housing, as well as the Rutgers study analysis of the need for more affordable housing, the Town plans to add only 671 units of affordable ownership and rental housing, far below the Rutgers study projected need of 2,789 units for low, moderate and middle income people.

Recommended actions:

1. The Town should continue to lend its full support to Renaissance Downtown's Huntington Station Project, while monitoring it to ensure the units stay at a moderate price. While the units do not meet HUD's standard for affordability, their small size and moderate rentals rates are a welcome increase in both the number and price range of rentals in the community.
2. The Town should fully support and push forward the development of Matinecock Court, the subject of a 1988 US Supreme Court decision. We need this housing. This has been delayed long enough.
3. The Town should amend its bylaws so that any construction involving 10 or more units will require a 20% set-aside for affordable units.
4. The Town should specifically apply a 20% affordable set-aside to the potentially large infill projects put forth by the Melville Employment Center.