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Letters: Housing options for Long Island

January 8, 2015



While it's notable that Long Island is moving forward on some of its larger-scale, transformative projects, caution should still be taken in celebrating the recent multifamily housing trends ["Finally, we're on the move," Editorial, Jan. 2].

Among Long Island's urban planners, there is no consensus on the theory that young adults are leaving -- which has justified the increase in density. The "brain drain" is a weak foundation on which to stake the Island's economic future. Policymaking should be driven by scientific data.

When there is a cohesive, unified regional effort driven by professional planning, instead of the patchwork of municipality and vested stakeholder interests driving our narrative that we've seen in the last decade, then we should celebrate our accomplishments.

Rich Murdocco, Syosset

Editor's note: The writer blogs about Long Island development at TheFoggiestIdea.org.

Newsday's Jan. 2 editorial and the Jan. 4 business story "Rentals reshaping downtowns" had some good news for Long Islanders hoping to see more diverse housing that might keep people and businesses from moving away.

At long last, there appears to be growing public recognition that the single-family home that "served Long Island for decades can no longer sustain us," as the editorial said. Smart-growth developments are actually underway in key places like Hempstead, Wyandanch and

Huntington Station, and they will provide multifamily housing, more rental apartments, downtown revitalization and proximity to transit.

Our supply of rental housing has finally increased, from 17 percent of housing stock in 2008 to 21 percent in 2013. But our share is still behind Westchester, at 39 percent. And, as Newsday pointed out, we still need a significant increase in affordable housing, particularly rentals, as these new projects go forward.

The available rentals are mostly market rate, ranging from \$2,000 to \$3,500 a month. Using the standard that one-third of a family's income should go toward housing, this means that a family would have to earn \$72,000 to \$126,000 a year. That's way beyond the incomes of most young people.

Richard Koubek, Dix Hills

Editor's note: The writer is the president of the Huntington Township Housing Coalition.

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