

# REIMAGINE LONG ISLAND: ROADMAP FOR A PEOPLE'S ECONOMY



## Endorsed by:

- Shinnecock Grave Protection Warrior Society
- Women's Diversity Network
- Planned Parenthood of Greater New York
- S.T.R.O.N.G. Youth, Inc.
- Malikah
- Planned Parenthood Hudson Peconic
- Bend the Arc Long Island Chapter
- East End YIMBY
- Four Directions Mutual Aid
- Suffolk Progressives
- Second Chance Reentry, Inc.
- Elmont Cultural Center
- OLA of Eastern Long Island
- Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Central Nassau
- New York State Nurses Association
- Long Island Progressive Coalition
- NOW Mid-Suffolk Chapter
- Sayville Citizens for Political Activation
- Rural & Migrant Ministry
- Intercollegiate Innovation Center
- Chip Williford Productions
- Presbytery of Long Island
- Indivisible Nassau County
- Planned Parenthood Hudson Peconic Action Fund
- Sisters of St. Joseph, Brentwood
- Long Island Alliance for Peaceful Alternatives
- Montaukett Indian Nation
- Suffolk County Native American Advisory Board
- Let's Visit Lee Zeldin
- Indivisible Long Island
- Nassau County Democratic Socialists of America
- Muslims for Progress
- Long Island Civic Engagement Table
- Suffolk County Democratic Socialists of America
- Cooperation Long Island
- Young Long Island for Justice
- Wyandanch Mayor's Club
- PEER: Progressive East End Reformers
- Together We Will Long Island
- Girls Inc. of Long Island
- Bayport Blue Point Indivisible
- Valley Stream Presbyterian Church
- Multicultural Solidarity Long Island
- Party For Socialism and Liberation Long Island
- Sunrise Long Island
- Long Island Activists
- New York's 2nd District Democrats
- United Nations Association of Long Island
- Save The Great South Bay
- National Institute for Reproductive Health
- South Country Community Land Trust
- Slow Food East End

*To reimagine Long Island requires an acknowledgement of the history of this land, which has been home to Indigenous peoples since time immemorial. The need to reimagine predates this current health crisis by centuries. While we know this roadmap is incomplete, we hope it can be in service of this truth in order to fundamentally change how we relate to each other and this land.*

# Reimagine Long Island: Roadmap For A People's Economy

No matter who we are, what we look like, or where we come from, our well-being is connected. From the East End to the Great South Bay to the North Shore, Long Islanders know how to weather through storms and tough times. As the pandemic continues to threaten the lives of our loved ones, most of us are trying our best to care for each other, stay physically apart, and limit the spread of COVID-19. We are care providers, teachers, first responders, family members, and working people doing the essential task of keeping our families and communities healthy and safe. We will get through this crisis by pulling together, because we know we are stronger as one.

But instead of prioritizing the health of Long Islanders, a greedy few want us to choose between our lives and our livelihoods. Instead of ensuring that every one of us can put food on the table, stay in our homes, and meet our needs, they are focused on making money off our sickness and sacrificing our safety in order to pad their own pockets. They downplay the threat and bow to extremists while pointing the finger at China and immigrants to divide and distract us. But Long Islanders know that exposing more people to this dangerous virus is a choice that we don't have to make. We will get through this by staying physically apart while we come together to look out for each other. Long Islanders will not endanger our lives to hand corporations more profits.

This virus is showing us, conclusively, that the health and well-being of one is intimately bound to the health and well-being of all. Today, thousands more of our relatives and neighbors' lives are at risk in our homes and hospitals because of corrupt leaders who left us unprepared, who bow to extremists, and who pick and choose who will live and die based on what we look like and what's in our wallets. The pandemic is highlighting the underlying problems that rendered communities more vulnerable to illness and injury. Black, brown, and Indigenous people are being hit hardest by COVID-19 because of age-old unequal policies that have denied them access to the care and resources we all need. The only way to curb this virus is by working together to deliver the testing and treatment for COVID-19 to all who need it and to provide real support for everyone struggling to get through this crisis, no exceptions. This moment seems daunting, but just as Long Islanders came together in our past to rebuild from Superstorm Sandy, we must rise to the occasion, honor those we've lost, and pursue a better, brighter tomorrow.

COVID-19 has redefined what possible means and has given us an opportunity to reimagine Long Island, create a care system and economy that serves our

needs, and put in place systems of governance that provide for all of us. We cannot go back to business as usual because business as usual is what caused this crisis. Instead, we must implement solutions that will save thousands of lives now, that will address the preexisting issues that created this problem, and that will help us overcome other pressing challenges facing our communities. If we are to get and stay well, we must ensure all of us have a place to call home, have our voices heard and rights respected in every aspect of our lives, have clean air to breathe and clean water to drink, and have access to the quality care we need. In a reimagined Long Island, we must truly respect Indigenous sovereignty, power our future with locally produced clean energy, guarantee equal justice and opportunity for all, and make sure every one of us can feed our families and make ends meet.

It's time for us to unite across our differences and rewrite the rules to ensure everyone who calls Long Island home can thrive. For too long, the greedy few have had their say over the many by keeping us divided. **By rising together, we will Reimagine Long Island and make the future together.**

We, the undersigned, representing tens of thousands of people across Long Island, put together a roadmap for how we rebuild and reimagine Long Island. We call on our local, county, state, and federal leaders to join us in making these policies and programs a reality for all of us. They are ideas that showcase how participatory democracy for land, food, housing, and workplaces is a pathway for us to live with dignity, while honoring the original inhabitants of this land, whose sovereignty and right to self-determination must be upheld, respected, and actively supported.

### **Indigenous Sovereignty**

- **Congress:** Redress for New York State's theft of 3,600 acres of Shinnecock land known as "Shinnecock Hills," which includes Shinnecock Hills Golf Course and the Stony Brook Southampton Campus. This includes passing H.R. 375 and 312 to restore the Department of the Interior's land-into-trust authority and to restore tribal land rights in the United States. Land-into-trust is an administrative process that restores the homeland of those tribes such as the Shinnecock Nation, which suffered from extensive losses. Trust land is vital to tribal nations for residential purposes and economic development.
- **New York State:** Amend the Peconic Bay region community preservation funds law allowing for alienation of preserved land from the town preservation funds to the Shinnecock Nation.

- **New York State:** Remedy over 100 years of erasure of the Montaukett people by providing state recognition and acknowledgement of the Montaukett Indian Nation.
- **New York State:** Uphold existing treaties, agreements, and land patents to ensure complete access to traditional hunting and fishing rights for all Indigenous Nations, societies, and communities on the territory of Long Island.
- **New York State:** Enact the Unmarked Burial Site Protection Act to regulate the discovery of burial grounds, human remains and funerary objects to help end the desecration of Indigenous ceremonial sites on Long Island and throughout NYS.
- **New York State:** Establish a central legislative or executive body, such as a Native American Advisory Board or Office of Indian Affairs to engage Indigenous governments on their particular matters, in recognition of the equality and sovereignty of their governments.

## Climate & Energy Justice

- **New York State:** Pass the Climate and Community Investment Act to hold corporate polluters accountable in order to ensure long-term, sustainable revenue and funding commitments for community-led climate justice programs.
- **Suffolk & Nassau County:** Establish Energy Improvement Districts (EIDs) that focus resources and set equity standards for energy democracy within communities facing high energy burdens and systemic barriers to accessing renewable energy resources:
  - Designate neighborhoods or parcels of land for rezoning and dedicated investment for locally-led development of community solar, community geothermal ground loops, and publicly owned electric vehicle charging stations;
  - Establish a dedicated trust to direct public funding, bonding, and technical assistance to EIDs;
  - Utilize community spaces such as schools, community centers, houses of worship, libraries, post offices, and parks to host both participatory energy planning processes and sites of small-scale renewable energy generation.

- **Suffolk & Nassau County:** Establish community-participatory planning for climate change impacts to ensure local, resilient responses to future storms, sea level rise, and coastal erosion.

## Food Justice

- **Suffolk & Nassau County:** Invest in small-scale, worker-owned food production, processing, and service cooperatives:
  - Expand access to equitable crop insurance, accounting, technical assistance, legal support, equipment sharing, non-GMO seed;
  - Establish procurement plans for anchor institutions, including schools, hospitals, and senior centers from local food and farming cooperatives;
  - Put city/county/town-owned vacant land into productive use through the low-cost transfer to community-managed urban farms and community gardens.
- **Suffolk & Nassau County:** Prioritize communities at the frontline of land and food injustice by expanding and subsidizing access to land, grants, insurance, training, and technical assistance for farmers from communities that have been displaced from land and impacted by economic injustice.
- **Suffolk & Nassau County:** Establish a clear pathway to worker and land ownership for farmworkers.

## Economic Democracy

- **Suffolk & Nassau County:** Play a leading role in educating workers about worker-ownership: Use community and economic development or other similar departments to provide education and technical assistance, partnering with organizations already engaged in this work. Services should support start-ups as well as include succession planning outreach, which can proactively address business owner retirement and inform owners about the possibility of selling to their workers.

- **Suffolk & Nassau County:** Invest in Native economic democracy and land justice initiatives by directing capital and training resources to support Native non-profits, worker cooperatives, credit unions, and community development corporations.

## Education Justice

- **Suffolk & Nassau County:** Prioritize the Community School model in all Long Island school districts so schools become a community hub that comprehensively address the holistic needs of students and the wider community, including but not limited to mental and emotional health services (counselors/social workers), decriminalization pathways through restorative justice initiatives and afterschool programs, health clinic services, arts programs, and community gardens.

## Housing Justice

- **Suffolk & Nassau County:** Make a significant portion of all habitable publicly-owned vacant land available to community-owned / democratically-controlled housing at nominal or below-market prices.
- **Suffolk & Nassau County:** Expedite the foreclosure of vacant properties that are delinquent in payment of property taxes, and deliver ownership of those properties to land banks accountable to local communities for development and usage in accordance with community-owned / democratically-controlled housing models.
- **New York State:** Prioritize funding for community-owned / democratically-controlled housing in all state and local housing program decisions.