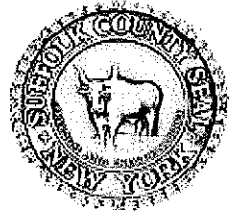




## LONG ISLAND REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL



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August 8, 2017

Ms. Jennifer Casey  
Chair, Suffolk County Planning Commission,  
Members of the Suffolk County Planning Commission  
P.O. Box 6100  
Hauppauge, N.Y. 11788-0099

Re: Heartland Town Square

Dear Chair Casey and Members of the Suffolk County Planning Commission:

The Long Island Regional Planning Council (LIRPC), a bi-county organization comprised of elected officials, business executives and other Long Island stakeholders, provides focus on issues best handled on a broad geographic scale and fosters the development of regional comprehensive planning. The Council serves as a leading advocate for major issues affecting the Island's economic, social and environmental well-being.

The Council identifies, designates, monitors and advocates for projects that the Council has voted and designated "Projects of Regional Significance." There are specific guidelines and criteria for such projects including:

- Economic Development – Projects projected to be in excess of \$100 million in Capital Costs
- Housing – Projects which will produce a minimum of 50 units of next generation workplace or affordable housing units
- Transportation – Projects which can significantly affect mass transit on Long Island or projects which will significantly affect traffic on a multitown basis

Projects can be designated as "Projects of Regional Significance" by meeting any one of the aforementioned criteria as well as other criteria. The projects are monitored by the LIRPC on a continual basis with input provide by the Council as needed to expedite the review process so that a timely resolution and appraisal of such projects can be achieved.

The LIRPC designated the Heartland Town Square as a "Project of Regional Significance" meeting all of the above criteria on May 20, 2008, nine years ago.

Since that time the LIRPC has continually advocated on behalf of the project, including a recent letter of support to the New York State Department of Transportation for improvements to the Sagtikos/Sunken Meadow State Parkway and an appearance and statement of support for the project before the Islip Town Board on April 26, 2017. This is one of the most important regionally significant projects for Long Island and it has taken more than fifteen years for the project to finally receive approvals. The approval by the Suffolk County Planning Commission on February 1, 2017 and the approval by Islip Town Board on July 18, 2017 allowed the project to move forward and there was a collective sigh of relief that "Heartland's Eternal Slog" (Newsday 1/9/17) was finally over.

Yet a subsequent Newsday article on 7/24/17 "Zoning Overturn Explored" stated that Suffolk County Planning Commission was exploring legal options to overturn the Islip Town Board's zoning change.

That there could be another bureaucratic hurdle thrown at this proposal after 15 years is not acceptable. The project is a game changer for Long Islanders that will diversify our housing stock providing housing for young people and empty nesters. It will create jobs, help retain a strong, diverse workforce, and increase our tax base, including real property tax revenue, income tax revenue and sales tax revenue. It is a unique opportunity to affect the quality of life for Long Islanders and promote economic development in a regionally significant way for decades.

The LIRPC strongly recommends that the Commission not take any action that would further delay this project.

Sincerely,



Richard V. Guardino, Jr.  
Executive Director  
Long Island Regional Planning Council

cc: Steve Bellone, Suffolk County Executive  
DuWayne Gregory, Presiding Officer, Suffolk County Legislature  
Angie Carpenter, Town of Islip Supervisor  
Members of the Islip Town Board  
Sarah Lansdale, Director of Planning, Suffolk County Planning Commission