



23rd Annual LI SMART GROWTH AWARDS SPOTLIGHTS THE RESULTS OF LOCAL PLANNING

“650 business, civic and government leaders set to celebrate the work of local planning for critical projects in downtown revitalization, affordable housing, walkability & infrastructure”

At last year’s Awards event the **“Planned Locally” Campaign** was launched, which worked to spotlight local planning by civic organizations, chambers, and local municipalities. The Campaign also pushed back on overreaching agendas from both NYC and Albany and fought for our fair share of dollars to support local infrastructure. Here is a brief progress report:

To be certain, “Planned Locally” has been well underway. **Of Long Island’s 100 downtown business districts, nearly 50 have revitalization plans and are actively moving downtown projects forward. All told, over 17,500 units of transit-oriented development housing have been approved over the last eighteen years**, along with countless other downtown projects. **Over 45 downtown districts have at least one multifamily housing project, and many are working on multiple.** There are **over 10,000 units of multifamily housing going through the planning process right now** in communities across Long Island

We reported last year that in the span of the previous 10+ years, during 132 of 150 public hearings for transit-oriented development, affordable housing, and downtown projects, there had been more supporters than opponents, which had resulted in a record number of approvals. Over the last year, however, due to the impact of the pushback on housing mandates there has been increased opposition to housing and distrust of large projects. Since last year’s Awards event, only 8 of 15 public hearings had more local supporters than opponents at project hearings.

Infrastructure investment is important to local planning as well. **Over 20 communities across Long Island are actively seeking funding for, currently planning, or otherwise supporting new wastewater treatment systems** to protect water and accommodate growth.

Our **dangerous roadways** are a priority, as well. **30 communities are seeking changes to their commercial and residential streets through traffic calming and speed reduction.** Meanwhile, 20 communities have done walking audits, with more on the way. And over **40 traffic calming projects have been completed over the last decade**, but many more are needed.

Lastly, our **downtowns** are working hard on the local level to **create, manage, and promote events** to draw in tourism. Through them, we keep prosperity local with Long Islanders spending their dollars in their home communities by Shopping Local, which pays for and boosts local services. During just one three-month period last year, there were **over 400 well attended events in 80 different communities.** These arts, music, cultural, food and beverage, and community-based events have seen massive draws with hundreds and, in many cases, thousands in attendance.

This year event attendees will be asked to assist in the “Planned Locally” campaign by joining their civic, chamber and community organization to assist the process of reinvesting in our communities.

Long Island is a community of communities, and change happens on the local level. The 2024 Smart Growth Award honorees exemplify local leadership through their work to build affordable housing, help in our downtowns, clean up our environment, create vital infrastructure, and make our roads safer. These projects, individuals, and resulting accomplishments build up trust in local communities to demonstrate that change can be a positive experience.

