



For Immediate Release

**Long Island Index Announces the “Build a Better Burb” Ideas Competition for Retrofitting Long Island’s Downtowns**

*Distinguished Jury of Professionals and Academics to Award \$22,500 in Prizes  
The Long Island Index People’s Choice Award to be Selected by the Public*

Garden City, NY (March 31, 2010) – Suburban New York isn’t nearly as built out as it seems. As the [Long Island Index 2010 “Places to Grow” report](#) showed, there is acre after acre of opportunity to do a better job of building on Long Island. How? By tapping into the hidden capacity of the “underperforming asphalt” found in dozens of downtowns in New York’s Nassau and Suffolk Counties. In order to generate the best and boldest ideas for exploiting this potential, the *Long Island Index* today announces the “Build a Better Burb” ideas competition for retrofitting Long Island’s downtowns. The competition is open to anyone interested in shaping the future of Long Island; architects, urban designers, planners, students, and visionaries are all encouraged to participate.

Competitors are encouraged to work in collaborative teams and must register on the website, [www.buildabetterburb.org](http://www.buildabetterburb.org) before June 21, 2010. At least 20 finalists will be selected by a blue-ribbon panel of jurors who will award a guaranteed first prize of \$10,000 and \$10,000 in additional prizes. The public will be invited to vote for a *Long Island Index* People’s Choice Award and there will be a \$2,500 prize awarded to the top project submitted by a student currently enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate program. Finalists will be announced July 6, 2010 and the winners will be announced in September 2010.

According to Nancy Rauch Douzinas, president of the Rauch Foundation and publisher of the *Long Island Index*, “The postwar ‘first’ suburbs, exemplified nationwide by Long Island’s own Levittown, are now pushing sixty years old and the needs of these communities have changed dramatically over the years. Now is the moment to address contemporary challenges by retrofitting the prewar suburban landscape of small towns and train transit that languished during decades of construction of new highways, shopping malls, gated subdivisions, and far-flung office parks.”

Ann Golob, director of the *Long Island Index*, stated, “Building suburbia in the old way is no longer working. The goal of the competition is to widen the debate of Long Island’s future. How much and what type of new development is desirable and achievable and how do we keep housing costs down and taxes affordable? Other suburban regions have found ways to do this, why can’t we?”

This competition is an open call for bold new ideas, not an awards program for actual Long Island projects in progress. Contestants should consider creatively retrofitting or redeveloping existing downtowns that are economically productive, environmentally sensitive, socially sustainable and aesthetically appealing. Proposals may be prototypical or customized to a particular downtown. “There should be no preconceptions about what is or is not possible” said competition advisor June Williamson, co-author of *Retrofitting Suburbia*. “What would you do in these acres of opportunity? Build a car-free community for thousands? Plant an oasis of urban agriculture? Produce renewable energy and provide well-paying green jobs? The possibilities are endless.”

The best ideas, designs, images and videos will be selected as finalists by a diverse jury of distinguished academics and professionals. They are:

- **Allison Arieff**, design journalist, contributor to the *New York Times* "Opinionator" blog and GOOD Magazine
- **Teddy Cruz**, principal of Estudio Teddy Cruz, San Diego
- **Daniel D'Oca**, partner at Interboro, New York, and assistant professor, Maryland College of Art
- **Walter Hood**, professor of landscape architecture, UC Berkeley, and principal of Hood Design\*
- **Rob Lane**, director of the Design Program at the Regional Plan Association
- **Paul Lukez**, principal of Paul Lukez Architecture, Boston, and author of *Suburban Transformations*
- **Lee Sobel**, real estate development and finance analyst, U.S. EPA: Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation
- **Galina Tahchieva**, partner at Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company, Miami, author of the forthcoming *Sprawl Repair Manual*
- **Georgeen Theodore**, partner at Interboro, New York, and associate director of the infrastructure planning program at the New Jersey Institute of Technology

Jury Coordinator:

**June Williamson**, associate professor of architecture, City College of New York/CUNY, and co-author of *Retrofitting Suburbia: Urban Design Solutions for Redesigning Suburbs*  
\*invited

There is no fee to enter the competition. Finalists' projects will be publicized in a broad media campaign over the summer to encourage the public to vote and comment on a *Long Island Index* People's Choice Award. Other exciting initiatives to disseminate the work of the finalists and winners may include a publication, museum exhibition, and a traveling video exhibition to be shown in libraries, schools and other public forums throughout Long Island. The instructions for submitting your next great idea can be downloaded at [www.buildabetterburb.org](http://www.buildabetterburb.org).

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**About the Rauch Foundation:** The *Long Island Index* is funded by the Rauch Foundation, a family foundation headquartered in Garden City, New York. In addition to funding the *Long Island Index* for seven years the Rauch Foundation commissioned The Long Island Profile Report and a series of polls on Long Island to determine how the region is faring. The *Long Island Index 2004*, *Long Island Index 2005*, *Long Island Index 2006*, *Long Island Index 2007*, *Long Island Index 2008*, *Long Island Index 2009* and *Long Island Index 2010* are all available for download at [www.longislandindex.org](http://www.longislandindex.org). The *Long Island Index* interactive maps, an online resource with detailed demographic, residential, transportation and educational information, is also accessible from the Index's website.

Media Contact:

Deanna Morton, InfiniTech

516-829-5502

[dmorton@infinitechpronline.com](mailto:dmorton@infinitechpronline.com)