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Long Island Index 2004 Highlights

Our Region's Population is Growing and Diversifying with Continuing Segregation By Race and a Significant "Brain Drain"

- Recent population increases are largely the result of immigration and the growth of racial and ethnic minorities. The rapid expansion of the Latino and Asian population is a central demographic dynamic on Long Island.
- The median age in Nassau and Suffolk has been rising for decades. Now, with the aging of the Baby Boom generation, more Long Islanders are entering their late 40s and 50s.
- The region is experiencing a "brain drain" with a 20% decline in its 18 to 34 year old population between 1990 and 2000, five times the national average.

Long Island is the Nation's First Mature Suburb; Development Patterns Are Changing

- Following several decades of growth, there is very little undeveloped land left on Long Island that is not protected open space.
- Although development was most rapid in the 1950s and 1960s when population growth was surging, developed (or "urbanized") land has grown much faster than population. In 1995, Nassau County was 88% urbanized while 64% of Suffolk's land area was developed.

Information and Communications, Health and Business Services Jobs are Growing While Technology Manufacturing Jobs and Regional Average Pay Declines

- The fastest growing industry clusters were Information and Communications Services (2.3%) Health (2.2%) and Business Services (1.9%).
- Job losses took place in Technology Manufacturing where 29,200 jobs were lost between 1990 and 2003. This was followed by Diversified Manufacturing with net losses of 2,800 jobs.
- Regional average pay peaked in 2000 and has declined by 6% between 2000-2003. Average pay on Long Island is now only \$1,693 higher than the US average.

The Region's Productivity and Innovation Are Increasing but Patents are Declining

- Regional value added per employee, a measure of productivity has continued to rise in inflation-adjusted terms at an annual rate of 1.3% since 1990.
- Patents per 100,000 are down from a 1998 high. The patent category with the greatest growth from 1997 to 2002 was pharmaceuticals.

Growth Yields Mixed Results For People and Communities

- There is a mismatch of concentrations of housing on Long Island and the region's major employment centers. There is also a lack of public transportation options from one to another.
- Over the last two decades, automobile ownership has grown much faster than population, and people are commuting longer to get to work.
- Overall, approximately 34% of Long Island's households (owner- and renter-occupied combined) have monthly housing costs that exceed 30% of monthly income (i.e., the housing is considered unaffordable).
- Home prices have skyrocketed with the ratio of home prices to median family income increasing from 2.5 times to 4.5 times between 1992 and 2003.
- Poverty persists amidst regional affluence with about 154,000 residents living below the federal poverty line.

Educational Outcomes Are Mixed

- Long Island students significantly outperform student statewide on the Grade 4 English Language Arts and Grade 8 Mathematics Exams.
- In the nine highest need/ lowest resourced school districts, the poverty index and the number of students designated as having limited English proficiency has increased substantially in the last 10 years.

Environmental Stewardship is Not a Regional Strength

- Between 1997 and 2001, consumption of electricity increased by 16%, higher than the state or national average.
- Long Island uses 1.64 pounds per capita of pesticides, almost double the state average of 0.89.

Government Performance Shows Room for Improvement

- Both Nassau and Suffolk County each receive low grades on measures of Government Performance.
- Bond ratings are on the rise in both counties.
- Voter turnout is low for local elections.