

**What Every Long Islander Should Know:  
“Treasure Map”**

By Nancy Rauch Douzinas

Not to toot the *Long Island Index*'s own horn, but something every Long Islander should know about is our new interactive map. It's an amazing resource.

It's not just me—everyone says so. Articles about the map have run in the *The New York Times*, *Newsday*, *Long Island Business News* and more. Five thousand people checked out the map the first two days it was live.

For five years the Index has been publishing all sorts of data and analysis about Long Island. Our hope has been that better information about our region will help citizens and leaders make good decisions for our future.

The new map takes this idea a big step further. It brings together in one place an unprecedented wealth of data—from the Census Bureau, state and county offices, planning agencies—then lets you sort the information and see it as never before.

It's something like other online maps you may have used, at Google, perhaps, or Mapquest. But instead of giving the address of restaurants and such, this one tells you about Long Island land use, population, and housing. Who lives where, by income or racial diversity. Where new development is, or the most rental units, or high-end housing.

Pick a topic, pick a location.

Want to know how much open space and parkland is left in your town? What about home prices or availability of multi-family housing? Zoom in to any location, or zoom out and see the whole Island. A click gives you charts comparing the data by community, town, and Island.

What else do you want to know? Population density? Income? Diversity? The map doesn't just tell you: it shows you.

For policy wonks, the map is even more: a presentation tool that makes it easy to create and share maps on specific topics for analysis and discussion.

But the map is meant for everyone: to satisfy—and stimulate—their curiosity. It's not just about answers. Most important is the questions you may find yourself asking.

That's really what the project is all about. In order to meet the challenges we face—the housing crisis, brain drain, and sky-high taxes to name a few—we need not just good information, but good minds thinking about and using that information.

The more people start wondering about things on our Island . . . the better the questions we start asking . . . the more conversations those questions spark . . . the closer we will move toward solutions.

So log onto the Index website and start playing with the map. We're pretty sure it will answer a few questions you have. More importantly, it might get you asking questions you never thought of.

*Nancy Rauch Douzinas is president of the Rauch Foundation, a Long Island-based family foundation. The “Long Island Index” provides data about the Long Island region, in order to promote informed public debate and sound policy making. For more information visit our Website:*  
[www.longislandindex.org](http://www.longislandindex.org)