

**What Every Long Islander Should Know:  
We Can't Afford Any More Business As Usual**  
By Nancy Rauch Douzinas

So OSI Pharmaceuticals, anchor tenant of the Broad Hollow Biosciences Park at Farmingdale State University, is leaving Long Island. The loss of jobs hurts, and losing what was supposed to be a pillar of a new high-tech industry makes it worse.

But worst of all is Long Island's feeble effort to help the company expand right here. Compared to the responses other regions made, we didn't just lose, we failed to compete.

The Long Island *Index* has frequently reported on effective organizations in other places. The Island surely suffers from the lack of a regional Economic Development Corporation, mandated with attracting and keeping businesses here. But our deficiency goes deeper. We lack a culture of cooperative leadership that characterizes successful regions elsewhere.

You see it clearly in everything we don't do.

*Regional alliances.* I've written frequently about these broadly-based groups of stakeholders that work to build consensus on regional needs and goals. They've been making things happen for years, and not just in places like Boston and Chicago. San Joaquin has one, and the "tri-county" region of northern Kentucky. But America's premier suburb does not. What's stopping us?

*Business leadership.* Truly, to study other regions is to risk culture shock. Business associations elsewhere actually get things done. Big things. One example: a group in Silicon Valley saw permitting delays hampering the region's ability to attract new business. They sat down with local government agencies and developed an online system that now speeds approval of almost 95% of building applications.

*Effective government.* How can we prosper if local officials persist in elevating narrow concerns over critical regional imperatives? Take the brain drain. We all agree on the problem—the lack of housing options. And we know the solution—

smart growth in revitalized downtowns. Yet as years go by and we watch the problem deepen, local officials still decline to make the necessary changes in zoning.

As this column goes to press, the Long Island Regional Planning Council is moving forward on a comprehensive Sustainability Action Plan for the Island. This is just the type of thing the region needs, but—and it's a BIG but—the Council itself has no jurisdictional authority to implement the plan. Everything depends on town and county leaders stepping up in the interest of the region—exactly what has so rarely happened in the past.

Indeed, we need to break not with the past, but with our present, accustomed ways. Business as usual on Long Island is devastating even the business environment, as the OSI debacle sadly demonstrates.

Despite assets that would be the envy of most any other region, Long Island finds itself in a disturbing downward spiral. To reverse our fortunes will take a conscious commitment to doing things differently.

Public officials, business and community leaders, Long Island needs more from you. More engagement, a willingness to address the wider issue, a new spirit of cooperation. You understand the problems Long Island faces. You're the ones who can turn them around.

*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)*