

Mapping Long Island’s Rentals

Background

The Long Island Index has mapped 1,456 rental buildings and 882 coops and condos across both counties as part of the Index’s research project to understand multifamily, rental housing on Long Island. The Index has also identified 113 projects (rentals and coops/condos) that are in the pipeline – ranging from those that have been proposed to those that are currently under construction.

This is the first time that data on multifamily housing locations has been collected comprehensively islandwide for the purpose of publicly mapping and analyzing Long Island’s rental apartment housing stock. (Spatial analysis for this report was prepared by the Center for Urban Research at the CUNY Graduate Center. See methodology and data sources in Appendix A.)

All told, Long Island’s existing 2,338 multifamily buildings represent approximately 162,000 apartment units. The 113 pipeline projects – if they are all built as currently planned – would bring another 26,000 units of housing to the region. The following table presents these statistics.

	Built		Pipeline	
	Buildings	Apartment Units	Buildings	Apartment Units
Rentals	1,456	83,344	77	20,544
Coops and Condos	882	78,956	36	5,551
TOTAL	2,338	162,300	113	26,095

With the importance of transit-oriented housing to Long Island’s future, we analyzed the mapped data to learn more about the history and current practice of building near or far from LIRR train stations. The analysis below focuses on rental housing because Long Island’s affordable housing problems¹ can best be addressed by expanding access to reasonably priced rental apartments.

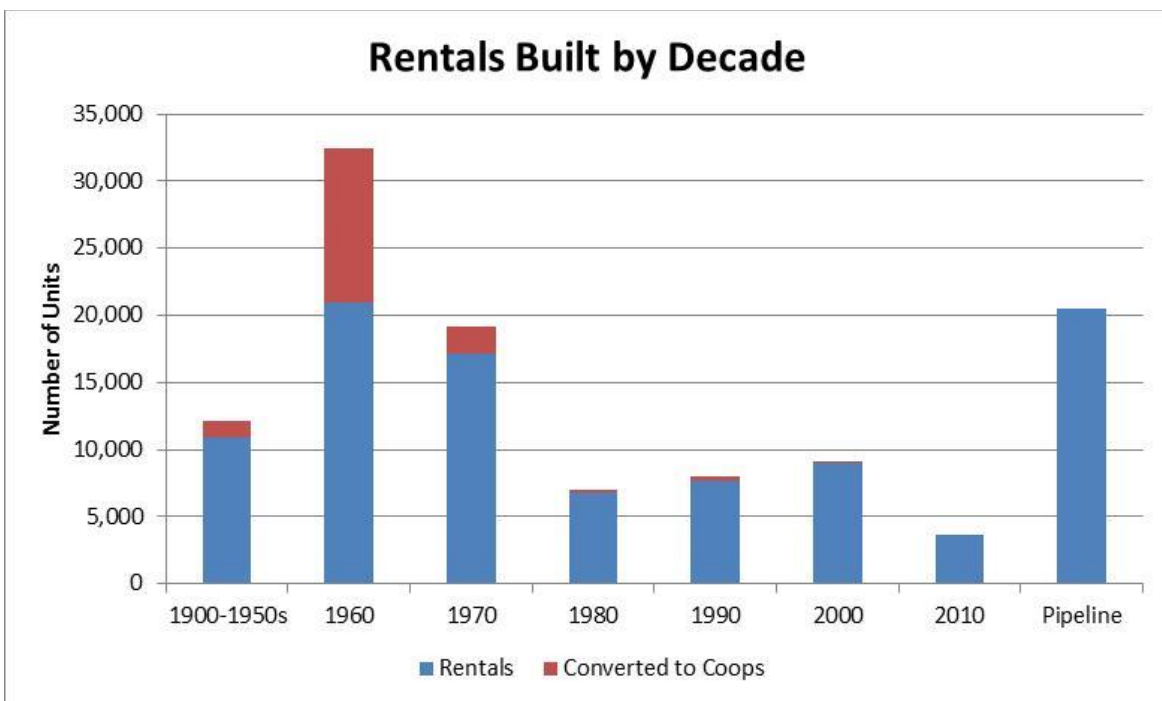
¹ See the recent Long Island Index [report on the need for more affordable housing](#), entitled, “Long Island’s Needs for Multifamily Housing: Measuring How Much We Are Planning to Build vs. How Much We Need for Long Island’s Future.”

We found that:

- Historically, a substantial amount of rental housing on Long Island was built near train stations (through the 1960s), but the number of rental units built near LIRR stations from the 1970s to 2000 fell steadily;
- Only 30% of Long Island’s existing rental units in apartment buildings are within a half-mile of a train station; and
- In recent years (since 2000) the number of rental units near train stations has increased, but that appears to be only a temporary reversal: the percentage of planned rental units near train stations has once again fallen (only 27% of the proposed rental apartments in Long Island’s pipeline are within a half-mile of a train station).

If Long Island does not concentrate its future building in transit-oriented areas, we are in danger of missing the opportunities for greater reliance on rail to connect our region instead of being as dependent on our cars.

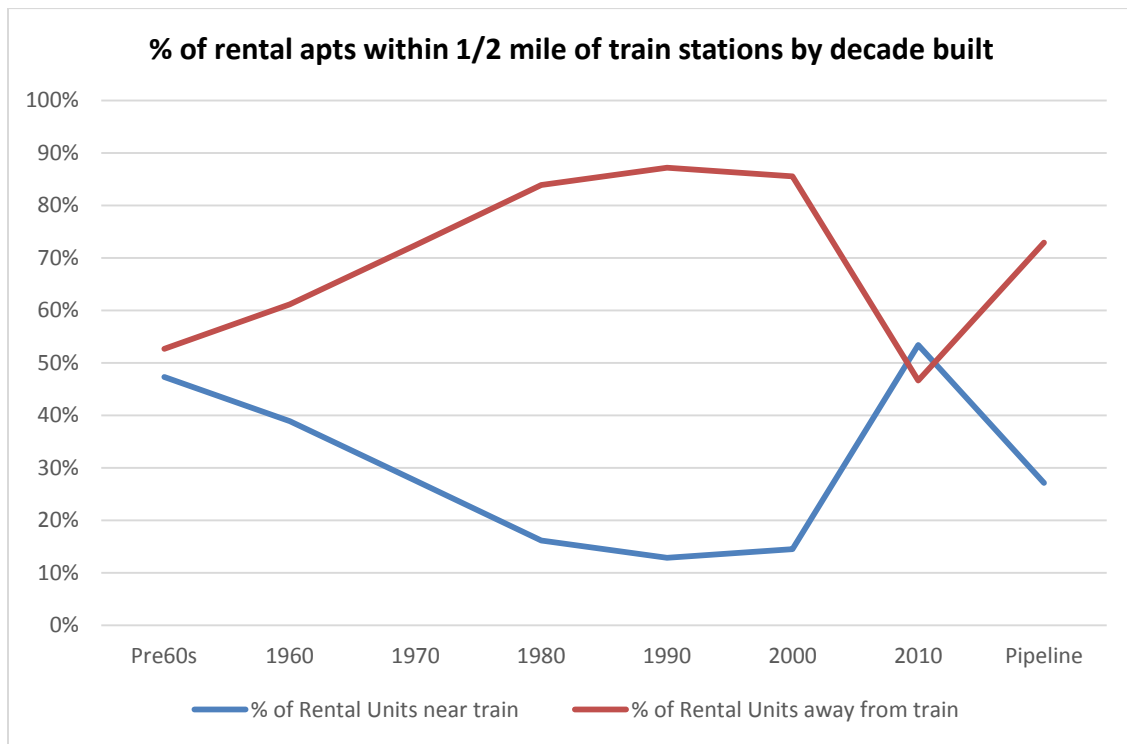
Historical Background



Long Island, like many suburban communities in the 1960s, pursued building a large number of apartment complexes, particularly garden style apartments. In addition to the apartments that we currently have in our housing stock there were also over 15,000 units of rental apartments that were built largely in the 1960’s that converted to coops and condos in the 1980s. The chart above highlights this history.

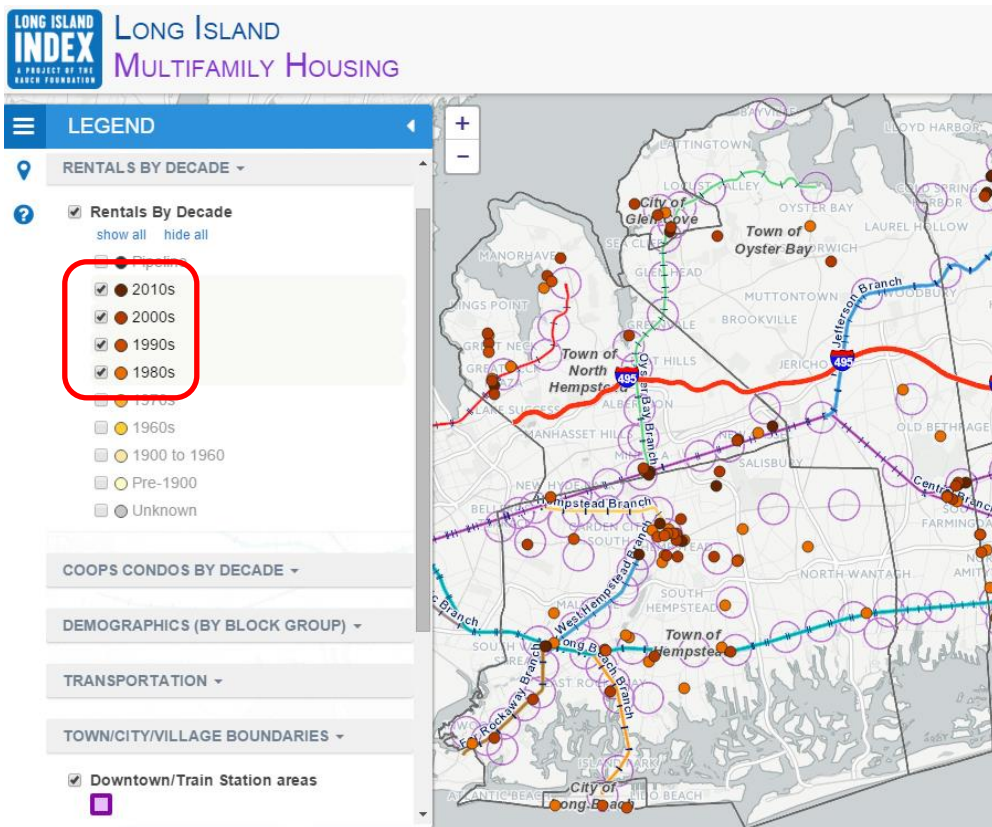
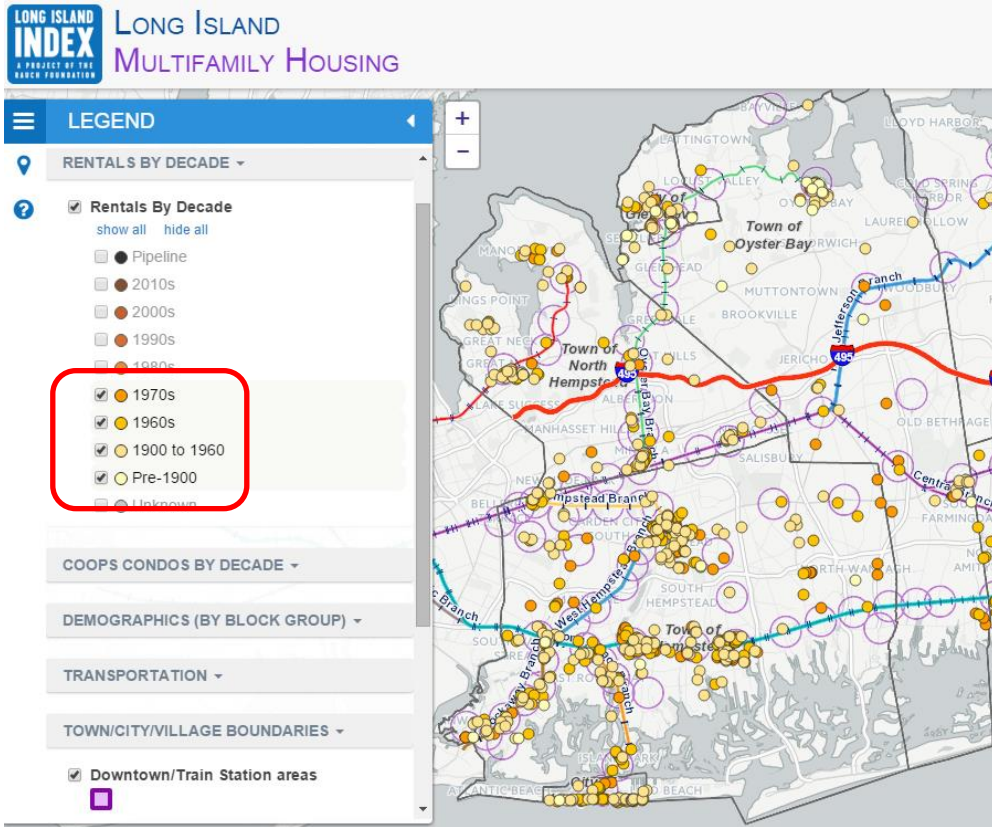
Where did we build?

Prior to 1950 when fewer families owned cars, rental apartments were more likely to be centered near train stations. Starting in the 1960s the percent of building that took place within a half-mile of train stations declined steadily every decade as the chart below illustrates, while the percent of rental units built farther from LIRR stations increased.



The trend reversed itself in recent years, but this appears to be a temporary change. For those projects in the pipeline to be built, less than 30% of the apartment units are near train stations and more than 70% are slated for construction away from LIRR stops.

The Long Island Index's interactive multifamily housing map – accessible at <http://multifamily.longislandindexmaps.org> – also visualizes this trend. For example, the following two screenshots of the mapping site show the patterns of rental apartment buildings in Nassau built in the 1970s or earlier (the first image) compared with those built after the 1970s (the second image). Each image also highlights the downtown areas within a half-mile of LIRR stations in Nassau, shown as purple circles.



In total how many of our rentals are near train stations?

Rental apartment buildings are located near most of the 97 LIRR stations in Nassau and Suffolk counties (69 stations, or 71%, have apartment units within a half-mile). However, only 30% of Long Island’s current rental apartments (25,000 out of a total of just over 83,000) are within a half-mile of the train station.

Where are the most rentals found?

Of the downtown areas within a half-mile of LIRR stations across Long Island, the downtown areas in Hempstead and Freeport top the list with far more rental apartments than any others. The following table presents these statistics.

Station Name	# Rental Units	% of Total
Hempstead Station	4,253	17%
Freeport Station	2,550	10%
Rockville Centre Station	1,774	7%
Great Neck Station	1,244	5%
Long Beach Station	1,191	5%
Mineola Station	1,179	5%

These two areas combined have more than one-quarter of the apartment rentals located near train stations throughout both counties (the two together also represent 12.5% of all Long Island rentals). Rockville Centre is next with seven percent, and the downtown areas in Great Neck, Long Beach, and Mineola each have five percent of the island’s rental units that are near train stations.

And the other stations?

Once we leave the top 6 stations above, the others drop off in terms of the volume of housing very quickly. 21 station areas have fewer than 100 units of rental apartments, 38 have between 101 and 500 units and 4 have between 501 and 700 units. (See Appendix B for full list.)

Which branch line of the LIRR has the most apartments near a station?

The Babylon Branch, with both Rockville Centre and Freeport along its path, has the most rental apartments. The Hempstead Branch is next because it terminates in the village of Hempstead. The third runner-up is the Montauk Branch with Patchogue and Bay Shore boosting the number of rentals for the line overall.

In Summary

The most recent Long Island Index survey found that while 15% of the survey respondents were currently living in an apartment or townhouse, in just five years 29% wanted to live in that type of housing – almost double the current number. Will Long Islanders find that housing here? Will they be able to afford what

they do find? These are two of the big questions that the region is facing as we address our decades-long decline in building multifamily housing. An additional question is whether they will find the housing near the train stations so they can avail themselves of public transportation and begin to break some of our dependence on our cars.

APPENDIX A

Data on rental and coop/condo housing locations analyzed for this report was provided to the Long Island Index through subscriptions with Costar and REIS Services as well as data provided by the counties and several town websites. This information was updated and/or corrected and supplemented based on research undertaken by Index staff, including extensive cross-referencing with other multifamily housing lists provided by the Suffolk County Planning Department and others. Many thanks to Sharon Mullon for her assistance in gathering and cross-checking various lists as well as others who reviewed and validated our database.

The housing locations were mapped using an address mapping service provided by the NYS Geographic Information System (GIS) Program Office (<http://gis.ny.gov/gisdata/inventories/details.cfm?DSID=1278>). The housing locations were analyzed in proximity to train stations by comparing each housing site with data from LIRR approximating the center of each station, as well as a half-mile around each of these station points.

APPENDIX B
Rental Apartments within 1/2 mile of LIRR Stations

More than 1000 units

Hempstead
 Freeport
 Rockville Centre
 Great Neck
 Long Beach
 Mineola

Between 101 and 500 units

Brentwood
 Cedarhurst
 Huntington
 Great River
 Kings Park
 Port Jefferson
 East Rockaway
 Lynbrook
 Centre Ave
 Sayville
 Babylon
 Roslyn
 Hampton Bays
 Lawrence
 East Williston
 Islip
 Wyandanch
 West Hempstead
 Baldwin
 Amityville
 Oakdale
 Oyster Bay
 Copiague
 Country Life Press
 Glen Street
 Deer Park
 Westbury
 Oceanside
 Woodmere
 Floral Park
 Gibson
 Ronkonkoma
 Hewlett
 Port Washington
 Smithtown
 Riverhead
 Island Park
 Sea Cliff

Fewer than 100 units

Bellmore
 Syosset
 Greenport
 Garden City
 Hicksville
 Lindenhurst
 Bethpage
 Wantagh
 Glen Cove
 Hempstead Gardens
 Malverne
 Montauk
 Northport
 Bellerose
 Greenvale
 Manhasset
 Southold
 Central Islip
 Glen Head
 Greenlawn
 Merrick

Between 501 and 700 units

Patchogue
 Farmingdale
 Bay Shore
 Valley Stream