

A background image showing the silhouettes of a group of people, likely graduates, standing on a hill and throwing their caps into the air against a sunset sky. The text is overlaid on this image.

WHO IS THE NEXT GENERATION OF LONG ISLANDERS?

What are their attitudes? Will they stay or come back?

They realized decades ago.

Our region once recognized the need to appeal to young adults. In the post-WWII era that shaped modern-day Long Island, returning veterans needed affordable homes, ones that could be built quickly. Young families were crowded in the attics of their parents, while others raised two or three children in one-bedroom apartments in New York City. Soon, farmland was turned into tracts of single-family homes, and buyers showed up in the hundreds, often sleeping outside in the cold overnight to keep their places in line.

Nassau County had invented suburbia. Today's housing needs are also acute.

The suburb must again meet the needs of its young adults to ensure the future remains vital. Too many young people are living in their childhood homes because of the high cost and lack of housing to meet their needs. Rents are high and homes are expensive. Some of those born and educated here are headed to states where the cost of living is cheaper. As a result, Long Island is getting grayer, births are barely outpacing deaths, and only new immigration is stopping a total population loss.

Change is needed. But what does the next generation of Long Islanders want? What do they think about the future of our region and the ways to meet its challenges? Will they stay here, and will those who left return?

To answer those questions, our inaugural study surveyed the attitudes of Long Island's young adults today. What follows are the findings of more than 1,800 interviews with 18- to 34-year-olds either living on Long Island or who were born here. What they told us paints a picture worth paying attention to.

**High-quality, non-partisan research and analysis
about issues facing Long Island**

Funded by a charitable project grant from The Rauch Foundation

A look at young Long Islanders

Survey Methodology



Overall the study consists of
1,805 online surveys
 among adults age 18 - 34

For more results, essays, data dives
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■ Data collected February 18 – March 4, 2019

■ Average interview length: 10 minutes

1354

respondents
 live on Long Island

302

respondents
 previously lived on Long Island but now live in
 the five New York City boroughs

104

respondents
 commute to school on Long Island

45

respondents
 work on Long Island, but do not live here

Weighting:

Quotas were designed to account for Long Island living status, as well as targets by race. Long Island responses were weighted using Census Bureau data available on the overall population of Long Island counties (Suffolk and Nassau) by gender and race.



YouGov is an independent, Internet-based public opinion and research firm. It operates an online panel of 2 million respondents in the United States who represent all ages, socio-economic and other demographic types. An online panel is made up of individuals who have agreed to complete surveys via the Internet.

The survey:

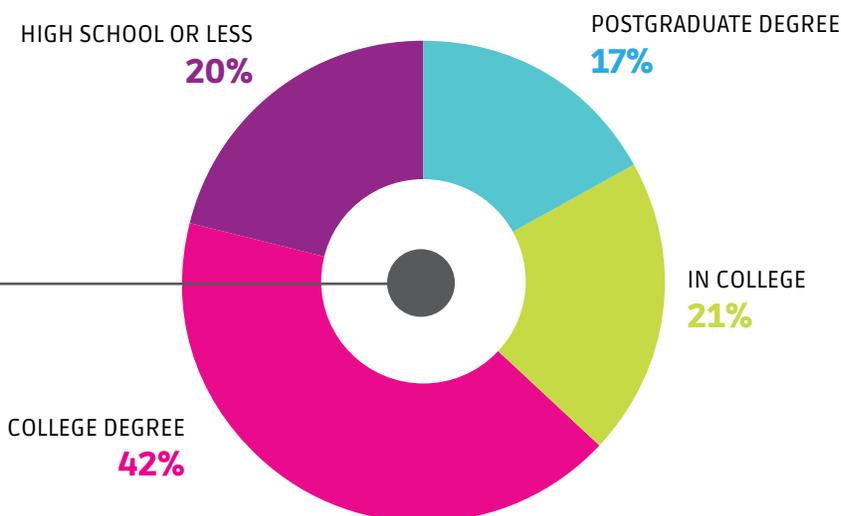
Who is the next generation of Long Islanders taking over?



Today I still owe more than \$40,000 for classes I took between 2009 and 2012. For years, I felt the weight of having loans but not owning anything.

Portia Ingram, 30, Bay Shore

Before diving into the perspectives of this young adult population who live, work, study and/or were born on Long Island, the survey asked about their education levels, economic positions, racial and ethnic identities and living arrangements. These identifiers are key to understanding what shapes their attitudes and drives their views.



Education

Long Island's young adults are highly educated – and they are highly in debt because of it.

Levels of Education

Among those surveyed, 8 in 10 Long Islanders ages 18 to 34 have a college degree or are working on one. Black and Hispanic residents are more likely to have less college experience, while White and Asian residents are more likely to have a bachelor's or postgraduate degree. Nassau County has more bachelor's or postgraduate degree residents than Suffolk County.

The survey answers show how Long Islanders' level of education affects their lifestyles and shapes their views:

Less educated

- less likely to have lived off Long Island
- less likely to be employed or in a union
- less likely to own their home
- most supportive of housing-policy changes
- less likely to tune in to current events and community involvement

Highly educated

- more likely to have lived off Long Island
- more likely to be employed or in a union
- more likely to own their home
- less supportive of change that might be perceived to negatively impact house prices
- more likely to tune in to current events and community involvement

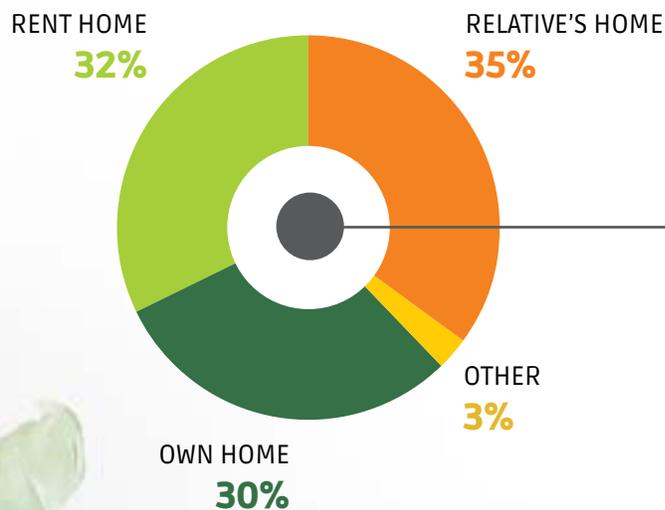
There are consequences for Long Island's high achievers, 66 percent of whom have or had loans.

More than half of those with loans say that burden has delayed life milestones, like buying a home or starting a family. Black residents are the most likely to currently have a student loan, while Asian residents are the most likely to have paid off their debt. Black and Hispanic respondents with student loans are the most likely to have delayed a life decision because of their debt.

Living Arrangements

So where do the region's 18- to 34-year-olds live?

For more than 1 in 3 of them, it's in the home of a parent or a relative, with 35 percent reporting such arrangements.



Black and Asian residents are the most likely to live with a relative, as well as those who live in Nassau County. 64 percent live in single-family homes, 17 percent in apartments, and 10 percent live in apartments within a single-family home.

67% Plan to move away from LI for more affordable housing

Even though many of those surveyed have been here for most of their lives, costs are driving some away. Eight out of 10 in this age group know someone who has moved away, and report it is most often because it's "too expensive" here.

Half of Long Island's young adults surveyed have never lived anywhere else. Among those who have, most moved to Long Island prior to high school graduation and one-third moved to Long Island either for college or employment. While there's a sizable number looking to purchase homes on Long Island in the next five years, 67 percent plan to move from Long Island to a place with more affordable housing.

Specifically, Black and Asian residents are least likely to have plans to buy on Long Island while more educated residents and Asians lean toward purchasing their first home in New York City.

55% Plan to purchase a home within the next 5 years

44% Of the above plan to purchase a home on LI



Employment & Income

■ Long Islanders in this age group are mostly employed, but still struggle to make ends meet. The survey indicates that 70 percent work full or part time and 1 in 4 report having a second job. 74 percent work on Long Island.

More than half struggle to pay monthly bills. Hispanics, in particular, report high levels of employment, but are most likely to struggle to pay monthly bills.

Income brackets determine the quality of life for young Long Islanders in this survey:

Less than \$50,000

46% polled earn this

This group struggles the most to pay rent and other bills and is more likely to have student loans impact life decisions, and they are most likely to question whether they want to stay here because of a lack of housing choices.



\$50,000 to \$99,999

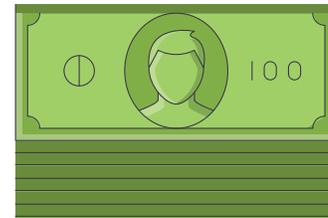
27% polled earn this

They had a higher likelihood of living off Long Island at some point, and now back, they struggle to pay rent or buy homes. They are less likely to pay for childcare, and their views resemble the high-income group more closely than the low-income bracket.

\$100,000 or more

19% polled earn this

As the most satisfied with Long Island, they answered as least likely to leave, most likely to own their own homes and prouder to live on LI than other income brackets.



\$50,000 or less

Nearly 4 in 10 live in home of parent or relative

12%
OWN

40%
RENT

\$50,000 or more

More than 1 in 5 live in home of parent or relative

50%
OWN

28%
RENT

In the survey, non-White residents and residents from Nassau County were more likely to say they knew people turning down well-paying jobs on Long Island, which poses an economic challenge for the region worth exploring.

Who are they?

65%

Interact with another race or ethnicity daily

65%

Say their neighborhood is diverse

62%

Say K-12 prepared them for a multicultural world

Here's a snapshot of how Long Island's racial and ethnic makeup has evolved.

In 2017 on Long Island...

While 86 percent of those 65 years and older were White alone, 69 percent in Gen Z (those younger than 24) were White alone. This shift occurred as the populations of Blacks, Asians and those of mixed race increased with each generation.

Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Estimates

Let's explore the Long Island experience through the lenses of different races and ethnicities based on their survey answers:

HISPANICS

Hispanic Long Islanders face many economic challenges, with annual incomes generally under \$50,000 and lacking a college education. Many work full time and wish to buy a home on Long Island, but many are also likely to leave for cheaper rent. They support policies to increase access to affordable housing.

ASIANS

Despite their lower incomes, Asian Long Islanders are not as financially stressed, not struggling as much with bills or student loan debt. Many are students, have higher-education degrees, or both. They say they want to buy homes in New York City and experience better nightlife, but they plan to return to Long Island for retirement. They also support policies to increase access to affordable housing.

BLACKS

There's distress among Black Long Islanders. Lack of education and employment opportunities leave many living with relatives and unable to access the region's amenities. They struggle with housing costs, childcare bills and student loans. They like Long Island the least and are the most likely to leave. They support policies to increase access to affordable housing.

WHITES

Facing economic challenges and increasing housing costs, this group believes Long Island's glory days have passed, leaving Whites with a dim view of the future here. Despite having the most income, education, and access to amenities, most Whites are not satisfied, particularly with the cost of living.

The survey: What do they think? Perspectives & attitudes



Thanks to a high tax burden mixed in with student loan debt, vehicle expenses, and many other ever-increasing expenses that come along with home ownership, it is nearly impossible to maintain a lifestyle that we want for our children.

**John Schneidawin, 32,
North Babylon**

■ There is one thing that Long Island’s young adults agree on no matter what their backgrounds: Long Island’s parks, beaches and outdoor attractions are what they most love about life here and are primarily what keeps them here. Other high-scoring reasons to stay are access to education and shopping.

Their biggest gripe with Long Island is taxes across the board, even for those who rent or live with relatives.

Race determined other concerns about the region. White residents in this age group worry about the cost of living, while Asians say crime/violence is a big concern. Black young adults have a hard time with access to jobs, while Hispanics struggle overall with the cost of living.

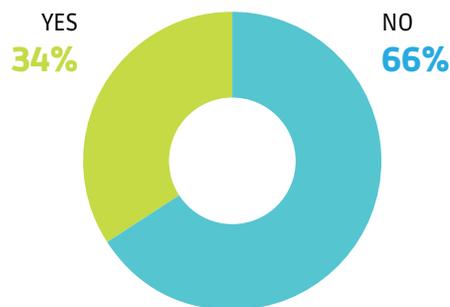
This generation also has strong opinions on housing, diversity, community involvement and transportation.

Community Involvement

■ This generation of Long Islanders is invested in its communities and what’s going on in the world.

One-third identify themselves as being in local leadership-type roles (political, business or philanthropic) and two-thirds show interest in getting involved in the future, with all minority groups more active than Whites. As education level increases, so does the likelihood that the residents are active in their local communities. Hispanic, Asian, and more-educated residents most want to be involved in civic leadership in their community in the future.

Currently in Local Leadership



Interested in Civic Leadership



Attention to Public Affairs

29%
MOST OF THE TIME

37%
SOME OF THE TIME

30%
NOW AND THEN/NEVER

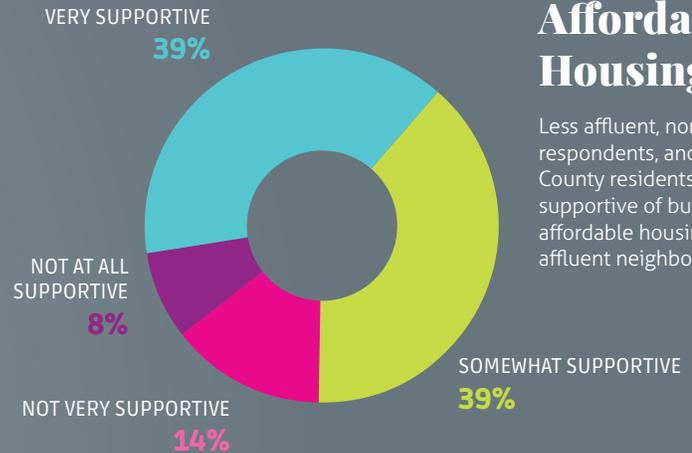
Housing

Changes to municipal housing policies, mostly through rezoning, are popular among everyone surveyed – all races and ethnicities, education levels, incomes and residents of both counties. Given that more than 2 in 3 Long Islanders in this age group report either renting or living in the home of a relative, most in single-family homes, this finding is not surprising.

There is wide support for more variety in housing stock among an age group that says it wants to be more engaged in public policy. This is especially true among non-Whites and those with a high school education. Generally, those with lower incomes have the strongest desire for housing options that would be less expensive than a single-family home.

Affordable Housing

Less affluent, non-White respondents, and Nassau County residents, are more supportive of building affordable housing in affluent neighborhoods.



While all groups want more housing options, non-White respondents and Nassau County residents are more supportive of the construction of housing stock they can afford in more affluent neighborhoods.

The neighborhoods this generation wants are those found in many downtowns. Most want to live in places that support small businesses and independent stores, and ones that are close to a vibrant and pedestrian-friendly business district, train or bus stop.



Diversity

A majority value living in communities with different racial and ethnic groups. When asked about their ideal neighborhood racial breakdown, more than 30 percent responded that race didn't matter. White and higher-income residents reported more daily interactions with persons of other races or ethnicities more often than the other groups surveyed, even though non-White respondents said their neighborhoods were more diverse. Hispanic and Asian respondents said they feel the most prepared for a multicultural world because of their K-12 education.

Overall, 82 percent were positive about growing diversity.

68%

Racial and ethnic diversity is important

77%

Diversity in schools is important

82%

Feel positive about growing diversity

Yet the reality is that they also want to be surrounded by those like them in the future.

71%

Want to live near people with views like theirs

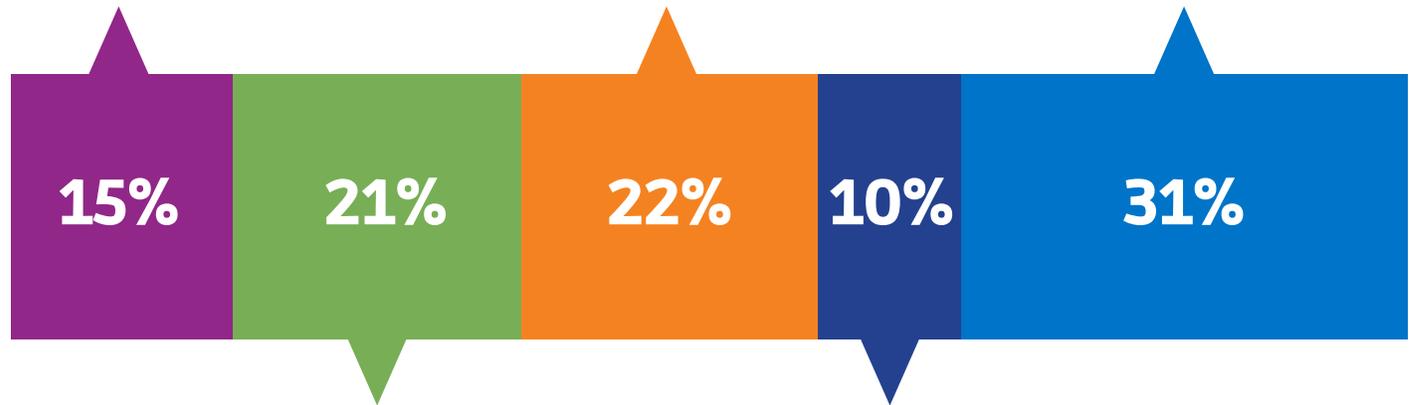
58%

Want to raise their children in a neighborhood where half or more share their ethnicity

Almost all neighbors share your race or ethnicity

About half share your race or ethnicity

Race doesn't matter



About three-quarters share your race or ethnicity

About one-quarter share your race or ethnicity

Transportation

■ Long Island is a car town and this generation doesn't appear to want to switch gears.

Nearly 9 in 10 respondents think owning a car is necessary to live on Long Island, and more than 80 percent of those surveyed say they mostly use a car to get to work or school. White residents think a car is more necessary, as do residents with college experience and residents from Suffolk.

The arrival of ride-sharing services like Uber and Lyft to the area has had an impact. While 21 percent of respondents report using them at least once weekly, 32 percent say ride sharing could replace owning a car.

Public transportation is used weekly by only 3 of 10 of those surveyed. Asian residents are more likely to travel using public transportation.

More than 60 percent report commutes under 30 minutes.



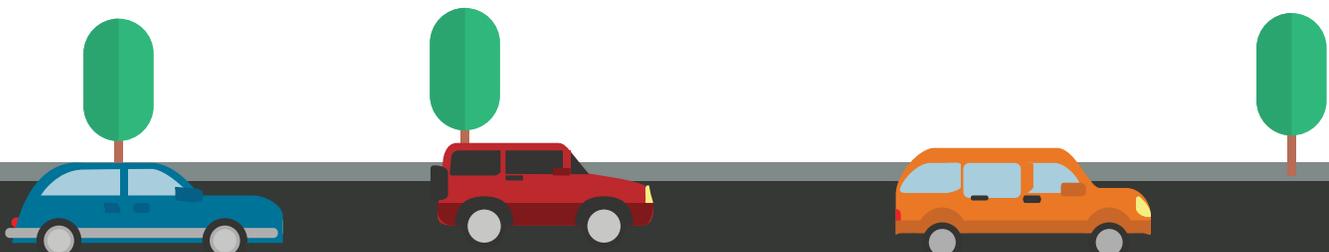
WORK FROM HOME

Drive times



See perspectives on innovation, environment, marijuana legalization, law enforcement

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The survey: Will they stay or come back?



When faced with the question whether to leave or not, both my wife and I chose to raise our daughter on Long Island. However, what used to be a simple decision has become more complex in recent years as disparate economic, social, and environmental pressures increasingly mount.

Richard Murdocco, 32, Commack

■ The survey asked this generation to rate everything they like and dislike about Long Island – and their answers can be useful when crafting public policy about Long Island’s future.

Are they proud to be Long Islanders? Do they see a bright future here? Will they plant roots on Long Island and stay? These are all essential questions.

The survey also took the first-ever pulse of young adults who were born on Long Island but currently live in the five boroughs of New York City. Do their views of their home region differ from those who stayed? Will they return?

Likes and Dislikes

Universally, parks/beaches/outdoors is the most-liked aspect of Long Island among all races and income levels of those who live here.

Their second and third picks, however, diverged a bit based on race:



HISPANICS

Safety and food culture



ASIANS

Safety and access to quality education



BLACKS

Quiet/subdued noise levels and ease of access to shopping/hobbies



WHITES

Ease of access to shopping/hobbies and access to quality education

More results

While Asians followed by Hispanics and Blacks reported liking Long Island’s diversity, only 12 percent of Whites rated it as an asset.

The top dislike is the same among all groups in this generation – housing costs. This was followed by overall affordability and ease of transportation. These shared and strong grievances are not different from those voiced by older generations. But this age group has fewer barriers to leaving and starting lives elsewhere.

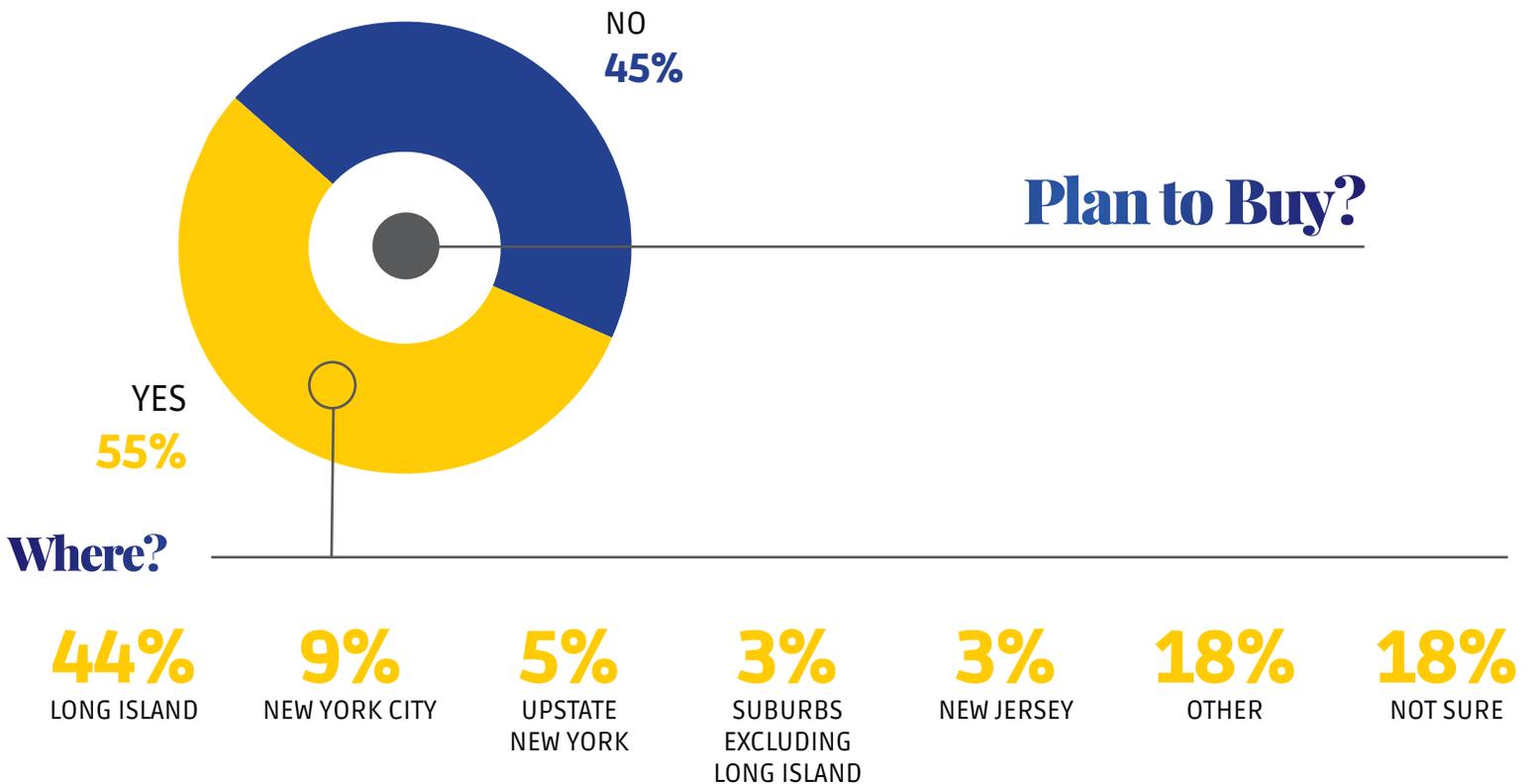
Long Island's Future

In 2017, the percentage of Long Island's population ages 55 and older rose by 16 percent, while that of ages 34 and younger dropped. A series of questions in the survey aimed to determine whether the younger generation sees a future here.

Are you proud to say you are from Long Island? 85 percent say they are. More of those who are Hispanic and in the age group between 20 and 24 are the proudest. Lower-income and less-educated residents are less likely to say so.

Is the future of Long Island bright? 62 percent surveyed say yes. 75 percent of Asians and 70 percent of Hispanics are optimistic about the future, while Whites and Suffolk County residents have the dimmest outlook for Long Island's future. Income has no impact on this point of view.

If you're planning to buy a home in the next five years, where are you most likely to purchase? 44 percent overall say they would buy here. Asians are the least likely to buy on Long Island followed by Blacks. Half of all Whites and Hispanics would buy here. 15 percent of those with post-graduate degrees say they would buy homes in New York City.



How would you rate Long Island as a place to raise children?

Overwhelmingly, 85 percent of young adults say Long Island is an excellent or good place to raise kids. Wealthier and more-educated groups are even more positive about raising children here. Among the groups, Blacks are the most negative about raising kids on Long Island.

Leaving Long Island

■ In possibly the most consequential finding of our survey, only 4 in 10 members of this generation expect to live on Long Island when they retire.

67% plan to move to a place that is more affordable in the next five years.



One in four said they love Long Island and would never leave. Blacks surveyed are the most interested in leaving, while Asians are the most interested in staying.

The biggest reason for leaving? **The cost of living.**



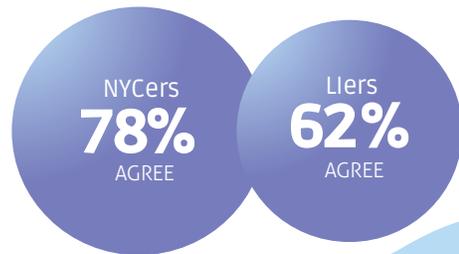
Long Island Natives Living in New York City

■ It's a common story: The kids leave for college and don't come back.

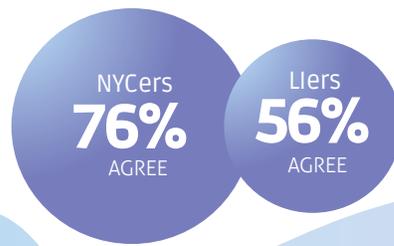
But why? To find out, we surveyed 18- to 34-year-olds who were born on Long Island but currently live in the five New York City boroughs.

It turns out this group isn't fed up with the suburbs that spawned them; it's quite the opposite. They actually hold more favorable views about Long Island when compared with Long Islanders in this age group who live here, consistently answering more positively.

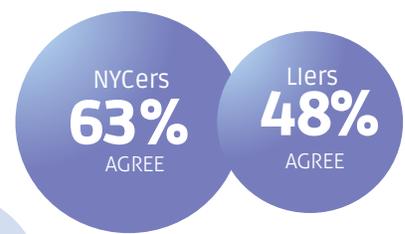
Future of Long Island is bright?



LI on right track for environmentally sustainable future?



LI has enough 21st century jobs?



Will they return?

The survey asked what these individuals value in a community, and they list diversity, renewable energy and farm-to-table foods. The region lacks some of this. In all cases, respondents express more interest in change than current Long Island residents.

WHAT'S IMPORTANT?



Here’s a look at how native Long Islanders now living in NYC compare with those on Long Island.

Current Long Islanders

- Less likely to hold at least a 4-year degree compared with current New York City residents.
- Less supportive of housing policy changes compared with current New York City residents.

Current New York City Residents

- More likely to be civically engaged compared with current Long Island residents.
- More likely to think ride-sharing could replace owning a car than current Long Island residents.

Both groups positively rate LI as a good place to raise kids

Why won't they return?

The top reason preventing their return is not all that surprising – “it’s too expensive.” Other big barriers are the lack of professional opportunities and that their friends no longer live here.

It's too expensive
22%



**New conversations
are starting daily.**

**Discuss
Long Island's future at
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*Appreciation to Kevin Law and the Long
Island Association for hosting this special
event.*

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