Building Established Suburbs Upwards:

Case Studies of New Development Projects in Long Island, NY

A thesis submitted by

Jeanette Rebecchi

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning

T U F T S   U N I V E R S I T Y

November, 2011

Advisor
Professor Justin Hollander

Reader
Peg Barringer

Table of Contents

Abstract

This thesis focuses on the barriers higher density suburban infill projects face during the municipal review and permitting phase, and why some projects are ultimately approved and others are not by the local governing body. Relevant literature commonly cites zoning and regulatory issues, lack of leadership by local officials, poor outreach and communication amongst stakeholders, and community opposition as significant barriers. Two Long Island, New York case studies are used in this thesis, AvalonBay in Huntington Station and the New Village in Patchogue. They examine what development barriers were in place within the community, and why the New Village was granted an approval by the local Board and AvalonBay was not. What was found was that while both projects did comparable levels of community outreach, other important factors such as historic and contemporary events, social media, municipal procedure, government structure and leadership, and the design of the project appeared to impact success or failure.

Chapter 1: Introduction

It is often promoted in the field of urban planning, that a well-crafted, engaging community outreach campaign can stem the tide of community opposition against a development project. Much research has been conducted into what makes a successful community outreach effort. However, why is it that no matter how much outreach is done for a particular proposal, some higher density suburban projects are still not approved by local residents and ultimately the town or city authority?

In 2002, the Mineta Transportation Institute (MTI) conducted surveys and interviews with 200 city and county planning directors in California representing districts carrying almost 58 percent of the state's population. They found that resident opposition to higher density infill development (development that occurs on underutilized parcels within existing neighborhoods) is the most significant planning barrier in nearly all localities (Schreiber, Binger, and Church 2003). Increased traffic and changes to community character and property values, as well as overburdened municipal services, fear of crime, and discomfort with other ethnic and racial populations were cited in the MTI study as underlying concerns. The public's general lack of understanding about the benefits of these types of smart growth strategies was also cited. MTI's (2003) recommendations in the report *Making Growth Work for California's Communities*, focused on improving community participation during the planning process, recommending more funding for community engagement activities, more skills training for planners, as

well as developing guidebooks and visualization tools to overcome what they perceived as potentially debilitating community opposition to future smart growth development projects (Schreiber, Binger, and Church 2003).

In a follow up 2004 report, *Higher Density Plans: Tools for Community Engagement*, MTI conducted a review of recommended tools and techniques that have been developed for working with residents and stakeholders during the planning process. Multiple case studies were conducted focusing on successfully implemented high density infill projects, examining what community engagement strategies may have contributed to their success (Schreiber, Binger, and Church 2004). However, the MTI report did not examine why other high density infill projects failed to be approved despite efforts to engage the public.

While the 2004 MTI study chose to only focus on successful projects, crucial information about why other projects ultimately failed is also needed. Importantly, many critical questions remain unanswered such as does a high quality, participatory planning process make a difference in the outcome? Relevant literature cites zoning and regulatory issues, lack of leadership by local officials, and poor outreach efforts as significant barriers (Chatman and DiPetrillo 2010; Farris 2001; Obrinsky and Stein 2007; Parker, et al. 2002; Wheeler 2002). In particular, resident opposition, one of the preeminent obstacles facing higher density, infill development will be examined (Farris 2001). Building on MTI's work, this thesis ultimately further explores the factors that can influence the outcome of higher density project proposals within existing suburban communities during the project approval stage.

      This thesis is divided into seven chapters. Chapter Two presents a background on the impact low density development has on communities, current development trends, and the benefits and drawbacks of building at a higher density. Chapter Three is a literature review of the barriers facing higher density, suburban infill projects. Chapter Four discusses the methodology used to compile two Long Island, New York case studies discussed in Chapter Five. Finally, Chapter Six provides an analysis of the two case studies, tying relevant information gathered back to the literature review and analyzing the evidence that could support general recommendations. Chapter Seven concludes with recommendations, a discussion of the limitations of this thesis, and suggestions for further research.

Chapter 2: Background

Historical Background

By the close of the twentieth century scholars have observed that the United States is currently a nation of two types of metropolitan areas. One is the traditional city, the product of pre-WWII development such as New York or Chicago. The other, is the edgeless, centerless city that has developed since then (Teaford 2006). These new cities are a patchwork of, low-density, auto-dependent settlements without cohesive centers, spread out along the nation's highways in what is negatively referred to as sprawl (Ewing 1997).

This dichotomous development is in many mays fueled by strong consumer preference for suburban living, where land is inexpensive and congestion limited (for the time being) (Ewing 1997). Local planners and politicians have a hand in creating sprawl, by continually allowing new development to proceed piecemeal without the guidance of a cohesive plan. Zoning laws, which were at one time implemented with the intention to separate the most incompatible uses, have since evolved into a very strict set of regulations that segregate every kind of land use. Tax subsidies for single family housing the automobile also influence consumer demand (Ewing 1997).

Impacts of Suburban Sprawl

The impacts of millions of Americans living in these types of post-war suburban communities are many. Low density development is an inefficient use of developable land, and contributes to the loss of open space and farmland

(Smart Growth Vermont n.d.). Municipalities struggle to support their dispersed tax base as roads, sewer systems, libraries, fire and police, and other infrastructure need to be extended and expanded, resulting in inefficient and expensive municipal services (Haughey 2005). Homes, shopping centers, office parks, and civic institutions, are all separate from one another and require the use of cars and roadways to connect between the parts, afflicting communities with heavy traffic congestion. In America's twenty-nine largest metropolitan areas alone, this amount of congestion wastes fuel, time and productivity, and costs an estimated $40 billion per year (Project for Public Spaces 2008).

Besides the inconvenience of traffic congestion, designing our communities on a scale and density more suited to cars than people has many other negative side effects. Nearly 40,000 people in the United States are killed each year in traffic accidents, and significant portions (over 7,000) are pedestrians and bicyclists (Project for Public Spaces 2008). Vehicle emissions constitute 40-60 percent of urban smog, 80 percent of carbon monoxide, and are the leading source of the gases that cause global climate change (Project for Public Spaces 2008).

Mentally, studies show that depression correlates with "the physical isolation of suburbanites, and the immobility enforced on those who cannot drive but have no transportation alternative" (Learner 2010). Physically, the United States is in the midst of an obesity epidemic mainly caused by inactivity. Only three in ten adults meet the U.S. Surgeon General's recommendations for amount of daily physical activity (The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports

2011). The Center for Disease Control estimates that the total annual cost of obesity in the United States due to direct medical expenses and loss of productivity amounts to an estimated $117 billion (Active Living Research 2010). If our communities were at a scale more amenable to other forms of transportation like walking or biking, the number of vehicle miles traveled and traffic congestion would likely decrease, while the amount of daily physical activity would likely increase.

Current Development Trends

At the beginning of the 21st century, scholars have pointed to three major trends occurring in metropolitan America. The first is the reinvestment in downtown areas, as they are once again seen as attractive and desirable places to live. Second, is the continued growth and maturity of America's suburbs as they become increasingly diverse and become cities in their own right. Third, is the renewed interest in transit use and investment (Belzer and Autler 2002). These three development trends underscore the move away from the suburban status quo of low density development toward higher density, mixed use developments. These new development projects can fall under any number of headings from smart growth to new urbanism. Transit-oriented development (TOD) in particular has seen a rise in popularity as a land use planning tool since the 1990's (Jenks 2005).

In some respects, these changes reflect a growing awareness about growth management and neighborhood design in the architecture, planning, and policy communities. However, there is an increasingly diverse housing market that is

slowly moving to meet the pent up consumer demand for higher density living. Studies on consumer demand show that at least one third of home buyers prefer compact, "smart growth" types of developments (Logan, Siejka, and Kannan n.d.).

These changes in market demand are in response to the changing demographics within our growing population (America will add 43 million new residents by the year 2020) (Haughey 2005). Baby boomers are retiring. The traditional two parent household now represents only 25 percent of the population. Single person, childless couples, and empty nester households now represent a large portion of the population (Haughey 2005). The result of the these demographic changes is that the traditional large suburban home with a two-car garage no longer meets the housing needs of the majority of the population (Haughey 2005).

A consumer preference study conducted by the National Association of Realtors and Smart Growth America found six out of ten homebuyers preferred communities that offered a shorter commute, sidewalks, and amenities within walking distance over neighborhoods with larger lots, but longer commutes and limited walking options (Haughey 2005). While studies have indeed shown that when given the choice between low-density suburban living, and high density urban living, Americans overwhelming choose suburban living. However, when given a more complete set of choices, suburbia ranks low in residential preference surveys, well below compact small towns and villages, and rural settings. When asked to choose between compact centers and commercial strips, consumers favor

the former. People in the end, find walkable neighborhoods clustered around a

town center more appealing (Ewing 1997).

Benefits and Drawbacks to Higher Density Suburban Infill Development

        Advocates of higher density, suburban infill projects herald them as the

solution to suburban sprawl. However, increasing the level of density within an

existing community is not a universally accepted principle. Current residents take

issue, because while the region as a whole benefits from increased growth, local

residents have to live with the impacts of a project long after it's complete. Both

the benefits and drawbacks of higher density development are summarized in

Table 1.

Table 1: Benefits & Drawbacks of Higher Density Development		
Category	**Benefits**	**Drawbacks**
Infrastructure (roads, sewer, water and utilities)	Compact development reduces costs for expanding infrastructure further afield. Services are provided more efficiently on a per capita basis	Increases demand on existing infrastructure
Traffic Congestion and Parking	Creates significant enough population base to sustain a mass transit system. Multi-family housing statistically has fewer cars per household	Vehicle usage is dependent more on location rather than housing type. If located far from amenities residents will still have to drive
School Finances	High density housing typically contributes fewer school-aged children than single family housing	If development occurs on a greenfield, there will be an overall increase in the number of school-aged children regardless of density
Property Values	New development brings investment and economic development to existing communities. Some studies have shown that well-maintained and	Existing residents have concerns about changes in their neighborhood that could affect the value of their homes

	attractive developments can actually increase the value of surrounding homes	
Environmental Impacts	Infill development is a more efficient use of land, easing pressure to convert outlying open space to more development	Development on vacant greenfield parcels is a loss of local open space, even if the land is unkempt
Community Character and Aesthetics	Multi-family housing has certain stigmas associated with it, yet evidence shows that this is anecdotal at best. High density development can actually have a positive impact on things like crime prevention by creating a more twenty-four hour community	When people buy a home, they also buy the place. High density development can change the character of an area

Adapted From: University of Massachusetts Amherst 2007

Infrastructure, Traffic and Parking

Higher density building has the potential to provide a sufficient enough population base to sustain a mass transit system, providing more mobility choices and reducing peoples' dependence on automobiles. This in turn reduces vehicle miles traveled, costs associated with auto ownership, and air pollution rates (McConnell and Wiley 2010; Parker et al., 2002). Depending on local circumstances, compact development can reduce municipal infrastructure costs for expanding water, sewage, and roads by up to 25 percent (Parker et al., 2002).
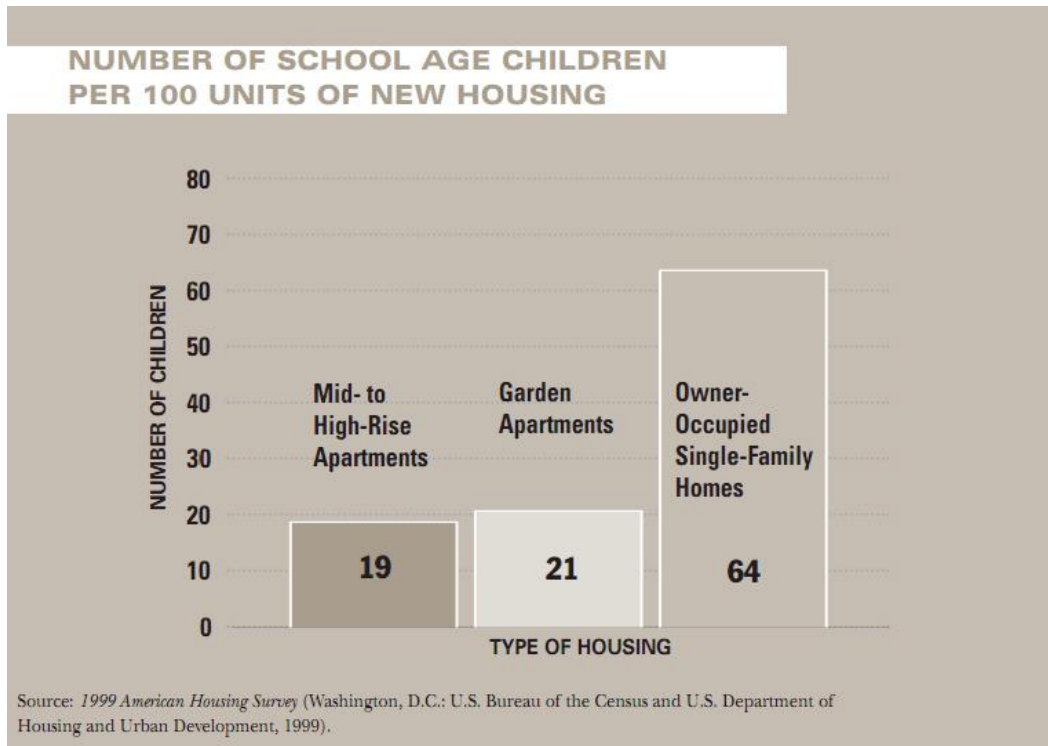
Many local residents believe that an increase in development density correlates to an increase in traffic congestion (Parker et al., 2002). However, if given the choice between building low density single family homes or high density multi-family residences, researchers have found that the latter may create less traffic. These studies have shown that high-density apartments and

condominiums tend to only have one car per household compared to the standard two or more cars for a single family household (Haughey 2005; Idaho Smart Growth ; Obrinsky, 2007). Dwellers of single family homes also generate more trips, compared to apartment dwellers due to their location typically farther from shopping centers, employment areas, and other amenities (Obrinsky, 2007). However, it could be argued that car usage is less determined by property type but by location. An apartment building located far from services would still require the same amount of vehicle trips as a single family home, and due to the greater number of residents living there would contribute more to local congestion (Danielsen, Lang, and Fulton 1999).

Schools

Many residents are concerned that higher density development will overburden the local school system (Chatman and DiPetrillo 2010). However, some studies have shown that those who move into higher density housing complexes compared to low density single family homes, are generally families with fewer if any children; (Chatman and DiPetrillo 2010; Galvin and Gorman 2008; Haughey 2005; Obrinsky and Stein 2007). Figure 1 shows that high density residential units have less than half the number of school-aged children compared to single family homes. That's because these types of homes generally attract child-less couples or those with very young children, single people, and empty-nesters.

Figure 1

NUMBER OF SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN
PER 100 UNITS OF NEW HOUSING

NUMBER OF CHILDREN

Mid- to High-Rise Apartments	Garden Apartments	Owner-Occupied Single-Family Homes
19	21	64

TYPE OF HOUSING

Source: *1999 American Housing Survey* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1999).

Property Values

New development projects bring investment and economic development to existing communities, and are capable of revitalizing depressed neighborhoods (McConnell and Wiley 2010). However, some residents are concerned that high density development will lower the property values in the surrounding area. It is hard to isolate one factor's impact on property values as they can be affected by many other variables such as local schools, location, the condition of the development, and the community itself. Though some studies have shown that higher density developments can actually increase property values (Idaho Smart Growth n.d.; Obrinsky 2007). Some theories offered are that new, well-maintained and attractive developments actually increase surrounding home

values by showing that the area is growing and worthy of new investment .

Increasing suburban density also creates an opportunity for building walkable, mixed-use, vibrant neighborhoods. Instead of just building single family homes, a wider range of housing types at various prices can be constructed, accommodating people at all stages of their lives (Alexander and Tomalty 2002). By offering a diversity of housing options, particularly when mixed use is involved, the area is sometimes seen as a more attractive alternative to communities who only offer single family housing (Haughey 2005).

Community Character

Race and class issues are also significant reasons for residents to oppose denser development. Many people are made uncomfortable by the thought that people of a different lifestyle or culture could be moving into these new denser housing units (Brown and Cropper 2001). Some remember back to the public housing projects of 1970's and the negative images and social problems associated with those high rise apartment blocks (Haughey 2005).

Opponents of multi-family housing often argue that people who own their homes are invested in the community, while people who rent apartments are transient and less desirable neighbors (Obrinsky and Stein 2007). They expect renters to be bad neighbors who bring crime and graffiti to the area, have loud parties, or don't maintain their property (Obrinsky and Stein 2007). For others, preference for single-family housing is really a preference for the middle class, family centered lifestyle of homogenous suburban enclaves, dominated by their own racial/ethnic group (University of Massachusetts Amherst 2007).

Danielson, Lang, and Fulton (1999, 522) state that

> When people buy a house, they also buy a place. Consumers currently associate low density housing with a bundle of desirable community characteristics such as good schools, low crime, and moderate taxes. Conversely, they associate high-density housing with an opposite set of undesirable community characteristics. Such perceptions are very difficult to turn around once they are fixed.

Yet most often, evidence supporting such perceptions are anecdotal. Studies have shown that residents of rental apartments are more likely to socialize with their neighbors, are just as likely to be involved with local community events and activities, and identify closely with the town they live in (Obrinsky and Stein 2007). After all, they could be future homeowners in this community. In another study, residents from mixed land use areas, compared to single land use areas, had a greater sense of community simply because they interacted more with other members of their community (Ewing 1997). Brown and Cropper (2001) also commend denser multi-family housing developments as creating social inclusiveness by mixing owners and renters together in the same neighborhood, particularly when the project incorporates some elements of affordable housing. While some studies have shown that a heterogeneous housing stock that mixes people of different lifestyles, economic statuses and norms can create proximity problems, Brown and Cropper (2001, 405) find that "repeat contact, especially under good conditions, is associated with more favorable attitudes toward racially different people, greater cross-race contact, or neighboring". High density development can also have a positive impact on crime prevention by creating a

more twenty-four hour community and putting more "eyes on the street" as there are more people coming and going in a concentrated area (Haughey 2005).

Environment

Residents often have a real attachment to existing open space and fear the loss of the local open space, even if the open area is unkempt (Idaho Smart Growth n.d.). Yet residents can take heart in studies that have shown infill development is a more efficient use of land, easing pressure to convert farmland and outlying open space to more development (Idaho Smart Growth n.d.). Compact development also uses less water and energy than typical low-density subdivisions, which have higher heating and cooling costs due the size of single family homes, big box stores, and the excess water used on landscaping (Alexander and Tomalty 2002).

Physical Features and Aesthetics

In many suburban communities high density development is perceived as being unattractive and incompatible to the existing low density landscape. Physically, opponents fear incompatible building scales or character, and towering buildings that block sunlight or scenic views (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation 2004); perhaps, a badly designed development was approved in the past without the community's consultation.

Nonetheless, if properly designed and intergraded into the existing fabric of the community, the transition to higher density can seem seamless. Some of the most desirable places to live in America have higher densities such the historic neighborhoods of Beacon Hill in Boston, or Georgetown in Washington D.C. This

is because, despite all of their fears and concerns, resident perceptions often do not correlate to what they say they prefer and what they prefer when such projects are actually completed. Using visual preference surveys, studies have shown that many participants actually preferred images of high density designs despite holding a negative view of high density development (Haughey 2005). If projects provide features such as neighborhood pathways, crosswalks, or the preservation of mature trees, residents have been found to slowly gain project acceptance after the project is complete (Idaho Smart Growth n.d.).

Chapter 3: Barriers to High Density Suburban Infill Development

Rising market demand for more compact living has created the economic conditions necessary to make higher density development economically feasible to build (Parker et al., 2002). There are however, multiple physical, social, economic, and regulatory barriers that can permanently stall a development project before it is complete. Much has already been written about the barriers higher density infill projects face at the outset. These include issues such as high land prices, lack of financing, parcel assemblage, site contamination and clearance, infrastructure upgrades, zoning and subdivision regulations, historic preservations rules, etc. (Farris 2001).

If a developer is willing and able to tackle these initial obstacles, they then move into the next stage of project development, the municipal project review and approval process. This can be broken down into three phases, a pre-application phase, an application and staff review phase, and a public hearing phase where various commissions and elected officials hear the case and make a final decision (Porter, Phillips, and Grogan Moore 1985). During the pre-application process, the developer secures financing, buys property, and drafts an initial project proposal. Informal discussions with local officials are held, as well as meetings with local neighborhood and civic groups to assess potential opposition/support. Next, during the application phase, the developer submits their development application with the local planning agency. Typically this agency is the local

planning commission, zoning board, or legislature. The developer may also need to apply for a zoning amendment or a variance/special use permit at this stage.

Once the staff reviews the application, public hearings are held to solicit comments from the community. At this point the project is open to public scrutiny, and it enters the political arena. Consequently, "it becomes the object of a different kind of scrutiny, one that is often less rational, more emotional, and less predictable than earlier reviews" (Porter et.al., 1985, 30). Finally, the local legislative body weighs the recommendations of the various commissions, staff and residents, and makes a final decision regarding the site plan. Only once the site plan is approved, can the developer obtain the necessary building permits and break ground on the project.

Even if a city is well organized and can move the project quickly through permitting and review, risk of failure can be daunting (Farris 2001; Parker et al., 2002) The review process typically requires expensive impact studies, lengthy delays, and complete project redesigns are not uncommon. As one San Francisco Bay area report found, approval timelines extending past a year and half are the norm (Wheeler 2002). Anything that adds more time to the development process increases the cost to developers and could ultimately make the project financially unfeasible to complete (Wheeler 2002; Porter et.al, 1985). The following sections discuss the regulatory, political, community, and process barriers that can further derail a project.

Regulatory Barriers

The comprehensive plan is a document created by the community to express the municipality's philosophy and policies regarding future physical development. It's supposed to lead the community into the future by providing guidance on the creation of local regulatory land use tools. However, the usefulness of the plan to the developer is highly variable. Frequently, the plan can be out of date, politically unacceptable, or unrelated what happening in reality in terms of local growth and development (Porter et.al, 1985). Public controversy over a development project can be intensified by misunderstanding or conflicting interests regarding the town comprehensive plan, with many residents still opposing the project even if it does, in fact, comply with the local master plan (Idaho Smart Growth n.d.).

Zoning ordinances are the most significant of local regulatory powers. Each parcel of land has a designated zoning code that spells out the restrictions and what uses are permitted there by right. These limitations include everything from density, building height, maximum floor-to-area-ratios (FAR), to parking allowances. However, local codes, like the comprehensive plan, can be outdated or can run counter to the developer's plans for the site. Indeed, the municipal plan may well conflict with the existing zoning. That is why in the development process "seeking a zoning change is often seen as a matter of course" (Porter et al. 1985, 48). In some communities they even intentionally 'underzone' in order to force developers to apply for a new zoning classification (Porter et al., 1985). This

is done to exert more case by case control over what is built within the community.

When a developer applies for a change of zone, the results can be unpredictable. To amend zoning, the local legislative body holds public hearings, listens to the advice of various planning commissions and staff, and eventually makes their own determination. This lengthy process, coupled with local neighborhood opposition that forms when rezoning to more intensive uses, often gives the community numerous opportunities to extend the permitting process sufficiently that the project is derailed (Wheeler 2002). If a change of zone is not needed, the developer many still have to seek special permissions, or variances, from the local board to relax out-dated, or overly stringent building restrictions.

Determining how the project will impact the environment is a key step towards approval. In New York for example, New York's State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) requires that environmental impact statements be prepared to determine the environmental impacts, as well as the social and economic effects of an act that a public agency has the discretion to approve (such as the town board and a development application). If affordable housing is part of the development, the project is also subject to the federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) due to the affordable housing component's use of federal or state tax credits.

While these are important documents to be taken seriously, the opposition sometimes uses the environmental impact statements (EIS) to stop or slow the development. By opponents suing the developer over the quality and adequacy of

the documents, much time and money is spent in litigation (Wheeler 2002).

However, many in the opposition do not take into account the community-wide

benefits the project might bring, and only consider site-specific impacts (disclosed

in the mandatory EIS). Often, the opposition fails to take into account what could

have been developed on the parcel under a more conventional development

proposal (Parker et.al., 2002).

Political Barriers

During the review process, developers must deal with individual local

power brokers and activist city council members that may have a heavy influence

over the outcome of the project (Farris 2001). Elected officials can be pressured

by residents to prevent the development of these kinds of projects even when they

might be in compliance with the town plan (Obrinsky and Stein 2007; Wheeler

2002). According to one mayor interviewed in a study on TOD developments,

> The problem lies in a lack of interest by many elected officials.
> Most communities are run by people who do it for "fun," but these
> jobs are a major investment in time, requiring office holders to
> address many issues such as property taxes, trash collection, and
> police oversight. Because they have a limited amount of time,
> officials are likely to address issues that are unlikely to generate
> controversy over those that require considerably more effort
> (Chatman and DiPetrillo 2010, 10).

Community Opposition

Community opposition is one of the strongest barriers to higher density

suburban development. Even when local residents strongly support limiting and

mitigating the effects of suburban sprawl, they often refuse proposals for denser

development (McConnell and Wiley 2010). While many homeowners are likely to support smart growth principles in the abstract, they frequently oppose smart growth projects that call for increased density in their neighborhoods (Lewis and Baldassare 2010). That is because these local residents often have an incentive to block new development since they bear the costs associated with increased growth while the region as a whole receives the benefits (McConnell and Wiley 2010).

However, in some cases neighbors can exhibit a 'knee jerk' opposition to higher density development based on fear and bias (Wheeler 2002). Known locally as a "NIMBYs" (Not in My Backyard), "LULUs" (Locally Unwanted Land Uses), "CAVEs" (Citizens Against Virtually Everything), and even "BANANAs" (Build Absolutely Nothing Anywhere Near Anyone), opponents of these types of higher intensity projects often react by calling local officials, speaking out at public hearings, writing letters to local newspapers, organizing community groups, and even picketing the proposed site. This makes achieving higher density development a politically difficult goal, as it is "far easier for public officials to do nothing than to take an active stand…" (Chatman and DiPetrillo 2010, 10).

Knowledge & Communication

Inadequate education and outreach to the public is cited as another obstacle to high density development, with local leadership often not effectively addressing public opposition as it occurs (Chatman and DiPetrillo 2010). This opposition only grows when the community feels that the development process

lacks transparency. "Trust and credibility are highlighted in the persuasion literature as some of the most important foundations of persuasive community engagement" (Machell, Reinhalter, and Chapple 2010, 9). By the time the public hearing rolls around, many residents feel that the development was already agreed to behind closed doors, with a backroom deal between the developer and elected officials (Porter et.al.,1985), and in some cases these concerns are not without basis in prior experience. Much of the conflict over a development project, however, can be avoided if all parties are upfront with the facts and lend themselves to creating open avenues of communication with each other.

Although lack of community outreach by the developer is often cited as exacerbating opposition, public employees and elected officials are not immune to criticism either. Staff in suburban planning departments might only be familiar with suburban style projects and can cause roadblocks in the approval process due to their own lack of knowledge. Lack of interdepartmental cooperation can hinder progress of more complex projects, such as a mixed use development (Urban Land Institute 2000). In some cases, the officials, as well as their constituents, have unrealistic expectations regarding what kind of development can occur on a particular site. The mismatch between community desires and market realities creates conflict and tension as community leaders and the developer each argue for their side (Chatman and DiPetrillo 2010).

The Long Island Context

To examine these barriers further in context, I elected to use two case studies from one of the nation's largest metropolitan regions, Long Island, NY. Famous for suburban developments such as Levittown, Long Island is one of the original suburbs. It's a region that can easily characterize how suburban development has proceeded over the last half century - driven by a combination of low mortgage rates, veteran housing subsidies, economic expansion and "white flight" from cities- as well as what America's other, soon-to-be-aging suburbs will look like in the future. As Lawrence Levy, executive director of Hofstra University's National Center for Suburban Studies said, "Long Island has encountered problems that newer suburbs are going to encounter in the next five or six years…What happens here is going to be the canary in the coal mine" (Byles 2010a).

Currently, Long Island is a growing suburban region, dominated by low density, one to two story land uses. It's a landscape of single family home subdivisions, punctuated by the occasional historic downtown, and run through with large arterial roads and strip development. It's also an area that has extremely racially segregated housing patterns, in fact, the third highest in the country according to the 2000 U.S. Census. That same year, 83.8 percent of white residents on Long Island lived in non-integrated, all white communities regardless of income (ERASE Racism 2005). Long Island has also seen hard economic times recently, a mass exodus of young professionals, and a rising number of suburban poor (Byles 2010a; Byles 2010b). It also suffers from many of the detriments of

suburban sprawl discussed in Chapter Two such as loss of open space, traffic, pollution, and a lack of walkability due to the dominant car culture.

While Long Island still has a growing population, it is already pushing the limit as to how much low density development can be accommodated on the limited land base of an island only 118 miles long and 22 miles wide. One of the solutions to house and better serve the growing New York metropolitan area in a sustainable manner is to start building strategically denser (Suffolk County Planning Commission 2000). This idea has been echoed in numerous professional circles, including the Long Island Progressive Coalition's *Long Island 2020* plan. Their first recommendation to re-envision the island's future is to "reorient growth to centers…redirect development away from agricultural and virgin land to the downtown areas of hamlets and villages, as well as to abandoned industrial areas"(The Long Island Progressive Coalition, n.d).

To date, over 95 smart growth projects have been built, or are in the various stages of being built on Long Island (Byles 2010a). However, the days of Robert Moses are over, and many high density projects are often greeted by Long Island communities with hostility and distrust, and are bogged down by ruthless opposition (Polsky 2010). While the region is primed for higher density infill development and would benefit greatly from the reinvestment and benefits associated smart growth, projects are often impeded by outdated zoning ordinances and high parking requirements. There is also a lot of pushback from existing residents who have a strong desire to preserve and protect the existing character and scale of their suburban environment.

This is not to say that public debate, dialogue, and opposition are bad things. Yet there are a number of land use challenges that need to be addressed at the local level if Long Island is to remain a thriving metro area in the future. The two Long Island-based case studies discussed in the following chapters will highlight the barriers to high density development found in the literature review, examine more specific local barriers, and make recommendations regarding how Long Island communities can work together with their local municipal government and developers on a vision that all (or most) parties can agree to.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Using a case study approach, I examined within the context of higher density, suburban infill development, why some development proposals are approved and others not independent of the efforts made in communicating the benefits to the local community. I chose to use a case study method because case studies are useful in describing complex processes in a comprehensive way (Jacobs and Kapuscik 2000). Particularly when using qualitative data collection methods such as interviews, detailed case studies can supplement more generalized information found in larger studies such as the Mineta Transportation Institute reports. Case studies are also appropriate to use when the analysis is inductive, that is explanations and theories emerge from the documents and findings, rather than deductive which confirms or denies a theory (Jacobs and Kapuscik 2000). From the case study findings I was able to make recommendations and generate hypotheses that can be tested in the context of broader future studies. Ultimately, the in-depth information collected from this thesis will be valuable in generating greater understanding about what factors contribute to the success of high density development within existing suburban communities.

Two case studies located in Long Island, New York were conducted comparing one successfully approved project proposal against one rejected project proposal. By using similar case study projects I could analyze what factors

appeared most influential in determining the final outcome of the projects. Within each case study the following questions were examined:

Central Question: What are the reasons some development proposals are approved and others not, independent of the efforts made in educating the public and communicating the benefits to the local community?[1]

Sub Questions:

1. Identify the stake holders: Who benefits/does not benefit from this project, and how?

2. How do various community stakeholders perceive the project?

3. What degree of influence does each type of community stakeholder have over the outcome of the project?

4. Ultimately, what factors contributed to one case study project failing and the other succeeding?

Case Study Selection

I elected to use two development projects from one the nation's largest metropolitan regions, Long Island, NY. As an older, yet growing suburban region, this area is dominated by low density, single story land uses. It's an area primed for this type of development, and would benefit greatly from the reinvestment and benefits associated higher density, infill development.

The two case study development projects were selected based on the following criteria:

o Located on Long Island

---

[1] *The word community is defined as town officials and residents.*

o Some type of community engagement was used during the planning
    process

o The project must be proposed as a higher density, infill project. This will
    ensure that the development will be or would have been a change to the
    current landscape of the neighborhood.

o The project must be recognizable as some form of smart growth, new
    urbanist, or transit oriented development

o The project was either (a) rejected by the local governing body, or (b)
    successfully approved.

o The project must be visible in the news media

In order to identify the development projects meeting the above criteria, an initial internet search was conducted using Google and querying a combination of the terms "Long Island", "smart growth", "transit-oriented development", "new urbanism", "opposition", "approval", "community", and "development". I came across several potential project sites and conducted a more thorough internet search using the project's name and location. At first I considered using large, well known projects such as the Lighthouse development involving Nassau Coliseum, or the Heartlands development proposed for the now defunct Pilgrim State Psychiatric Center. However, these mega projects tend to happen only once in a lifetime and involve a very complex set of stakeholders. In the end, I chose two development projects located in the Town of Huntington and the Village of Patchogue that reflected more of the day to day planning decisions that communities face.

Tables 2 and 3 below show a side-by-side comparison of the two case study communities and their perspective development projects, which are both located in Suffolk County. While the projects are different in scope and size, they are similar in that they both required new zoning language to increase the density of development. Both also incorporated rental and affordable housing components, are within walking distance to a Long Island Rail Road station, and are touted by officials as being a high density smart growth/transit oriented project. Both Huntington Station and Patchogue are comparable in that they are both less affluent, and already have higher housing density rates compared to the rest of Suffolk County. However, the former is a hamlet within the Town of Huntington, while the latter has a village government that operates independently from the Town of Brookhaven.

Table 2: Side-by-Side Demographic Comparison			
	AvalonBay Huntington Station, NY	**The New Village Patchogue, NY**	**Suffolk County**
Population	29,910	11,919	1.5 million
Housing Density (# of housing units per sq. mile of land)	1,856	2,180	573
Single Family Detached Homes	82.5%	54.2%	80.9%
Median Household Income	$76,935	$60,882	$84,530
Foreign Born Residents	25.7%	12.4%	13.1%

Sources: US Census Bureau 2000; US Census Bureau 2010a; US Census Bureau 2010b

Table 3: Side-by-Side Project Comparison		
	AvalonBay **Huntington Station, NY**	**The New Village** **Patchogue, NY**
Project Parcel Size	26.58 acres	4.82 acres
Prior Zoning	R-7 Single Family Residential	D2 and D3 Commercial and Multifamily Residential
Existing Use	Vacant (Green Field)	Mix of Vacant/Underutilized Parcels
Distance from LIRR Train Station	<0.5 miles	<0.5 miles
Proposed Rezoning Classification	Huntington Station Transit Oriented District	Downtown Redevelopment District Floating Zone
# of Residential Units	490 units	291 units
Percent Rental Units	80%	100%
Affordable Housing	25%	27%
Commercial Space?	No	Yes, 64,100 square feet
Housing Density	18.5 units/acre	60.37 units/acre
Outcome	Not Approved	Approved

Sources: Kamer 2008; VHB Engineering, Surveying and Landscape Architecture, P.C. 2010b

Data Collection

I: Document Review

Using U.S. Census data, I obtained the current demographic and spatial

characteristics of each case study community to provide an overview of the area.

An exhaustive search of print and online news articles (*Newsday, New York*

Times, Long Island Press, Long Island Business News, Village Tattler,

Huntington Patch, Patchogue Patch,), government documents (meeting minutes, planning studies, etc.), as well as social media and networking sites such as Facebook and online blogs was conducted. This uncovered further background information about each case study site, the issues surrounding the project, how the community was engaged, and local opinions regarding the site plan. The Town of Huntington website did not provide the minutes for Town Board meetings online, so arrangements were made directly with town staff to obtain the documents via email. All Patchogue Village Board of Trustee minutes were obtained via the village website.

II: Interviews

To supplement the information found in the document review and uncover all sides of the story, semi-structured interviews were conducted with several stakeholders from each case study community. Reading through board meeting minutes, newspaper interviews, and even Facebook was useful in identifying potential contacts to interview. In total, six interviews were conducted throughout the spring and early summer of 2011 with elected officials and residents from each community, a Patchogue Business Improvement District member, and a director of a local smart growth non-profit who was very familiar with both case study projects. Unfortunately, I was unable to obtain interviews with either developer.

Using a semi-structured interviewing method allowed for a focused, yet conversational communication with the interviewee. Interviews were held over

the phone while I took detailed notes on my computer. Each lasted approximately thirty minutes.

Following standard research guidelines, I contacted the Tufts IRB office to confirm that this thesis is IRB exempt. Since the interview questions asked are general in nature and were with adults over the age of eighteen, the IRB office did not consider this thesis to be human research and exempted it from the IRB review process. Regardless of the exemption I obtained informed consent from each of my contacts via email, and kept their names strictly anonymous to protect their identity and allow them to speak more freely during the interview.

Data Analysis

After each document reading and interview I summarized the major themes and concepts I came across in a brief memo as recommended by Corbin and Strauss (2008), and Huberman and Miles (1994). This helped me refer back to what I've read, and assisted me in making broader conclusions and connections. Since the process of data reduction can be overwhelming, I created the conceptual charts shown in Figures 2 and 3 in order to keep better track of the data I've collected, record key concepts and relationships, and better explain my findings in a systematic and organized way (Corbin and Strauss 2008). These charts and the ideas they helped me form, evolved over time and were refined as the data collection process was carried out.

Figure 2: Relationships among Stakeholders

Community Actor	Relationship to Local Officials	Relationship to Developers	Relationship to Town Residents	Relationship to Outside Stakeholders
Local Officials				
Developers				
Town Residents				
Outside Stakeholders				

Figure 3: Stakeholder Relationship to the Project

Community Actor	Relationship with project	Benefits experienced from project approval	Harm experienced from project approval	Level of support for project	Outcome
Local Officials					
Developers					
Town Residents					
Outside Stakeholders					

When analyzing my raw data, I used a qualitative research technique
called thematic analysis. This involves systematically observing written or spoken
communication to learn about the experiences, motives, and interests of different
stakeholders, and to uncover identifiable themes and patterns. From my interview
notes and written documents I was able to list common ideas through direct
quotation and paraphrasing, which were then grouped into themes following the
charts above.

I also used a manifest content analysis technique to count, for example,
how many times a particular harm such as increased traffic was cited. I also
conduct a "vote count" to try and uncover how many people testified as

supporting or not supporting the project, and what stakeholder group they belonged to. By counting how many times a particular word, phrase, or idea manifests itself in the data, I was better able to objectively judge its level of importance (Gaber and Gaber 2007).

Chapter 5: Case Studies

Case Study #1
 AvalonBay: Huntington Station, New York

Town of Huntington Background

  The Town of Huntington is approximately 83 square miles in size, and is located on the north shore of Long Island in western Suffolk County. The town was first purchased from the Matinecock Indian tribe in 1653 and soon became an established farming and fishing community. After the post-World War II population boom, the landscape changed from rural community to suburban enclave. Between 1950 and 1980 alone, Huntington's population quadrupled from 47,506 to 201,512 (Town of Huntington 2008). Over the past several decades, Huntington has developed even further to become what is today a largely built-out, suburban residential community consisting primarily of single family homes.

  Huntington has also undergone significant demographic changes over the last fifty years. It has, and continues to become more ethnically diverse, with the Hispanic population contributing most to this rising level of diversity (Town of Huntington 2008). In 1960 the average household size was 3.59 people, in 2000 it was just 2.91, reflecting the national trend away from "traditional" households to one comprising of singles, empty-nesters, and single-parents (Town of Huntington 2008). Also reflecting national trends, Huntington's population is aging with those over 65 years of age increasing 25 percent between 1990 and

2000 (Town of Huntington 2008). At the same time, the number of young people between the ages of 25 and 34 has been declining (Town of Huntington 2008).

Planning Goals

To understand Huntington better, it is important to examine the town's comprehensive plan. The *Horizon 2020 Update* was approved in 2008, and is the latest revision to the 1993 comprehensive plan. These documents provide guidelines for future land use planning decisions in the Town of Huntington. In accordance with New York State law, once adopted, all town land use regulations must be in accordance to the comprehensive plan. Some key relative objectives highlighted in the 2020 update include:

- Protect Huntington's small-town suburban character;

- Provide quality housing to meet the needs of a diverse population;

- Reduce traffic congestion;

- Raise the bar on development quality;

- Promote a more diverse housing stock, affordable to all income groups that is compatible with community character;

- Promote land use patterns that reduce automobile usage (e.g., compact, walkable mixed-use nodes rather than linear "strip" commercial development along highway corridors).

As the 2020 update notes, Huntington over the last several decades has "moved from an era of rapid growth with ample reserves of undeveloped land to become a mature, largely built out suburban community for which preservation and enhancement of existing character will replace growth as the primary

planning goal" (Town of Huntington 2008, iii). However, the plan also states that while the predominance of single family homes is highly valued by the community and is central to its identity, there is a need for a diverse, affordable housing stock that serves the needs of a changing population. Depending on how it is interpreted, these objectives seem to conflict with the desire to protect Huntington's small-town suburban character, which is also stated in the comprehensive plan.

As with the rest of Long Island, traffic is a contentious issue in Huntington. The 2020 plan acknowledges that "extensive road widening or construction of new roads is no longer a feasible or cost effective option to reduce traffic congestion in Huntington (8-10)". In particular, it is noted that "the LIRR station provides a significant opportunity to promote transit-oriented development as a revitalization strategy" (Town of Huntington 2008, 10-10).

Affordability is also a problem stressed in the comprehensive plan. While Huntington continues to have the highest median household income in all of Suffolk County, moderate and middle-income workers are being priced out of both the rental and housing markets, particularly young professional, a demographic the Town is eager to retain. This shortage of affordable housing, coupled with the high cost of living, creates an environment where lower income workers are forced to occupy substandard or illegal homes, bringing blight to the area. The Town's economic development is also hurt because "companies simply will not choose to locate in a community if their employees cannot afford to live there" (Town of Huntington 2008, 9-3). To remedy the lack of a diverse and

affordable housing stock, the comprehensive plan recommends building mixed use and higher density developments in areas across the town that would benefit from redevelopment efforts.

Huntington Station

Table 4: Huntington Station Density Characteristics	
Population	29,910
Land Area	5.43 square miles
Housing Density	1,846 units per sq. mile of land

Source: US Census Bureau 2000

Table 5: Demographic Characteristics			
	Huntington Station	**Town of Huntington**	**Suffolk County**
Average Household size	3.25	3.06	3.09
HS Graduate or Higher	82.3%	93%	89.3%
Foreign Born	25.7%	12.9%	13.1%
Median Household Income	$76,935	$102,706	$84,530
Single Family Detached Homes	82.5%	86.8%	80.9%

Source: US Census Bureau 2010a

Huntington Station is a hamlet within the Town of Huntington (see Tables 4 and 5 for demographic details). It is also a census-designated place, a designation for concentrated settlements that physically resemble incorporated entities but lacking municipal self-governance. It's a diverse community, intersected by Route 110 (New York Avenue) and the Long Island Rail Road

(LIRR) Port Jefferson Branch, and situated with its own rail station. This area around the rail station used to be a thriving, mixed use neighborhood. However, it was severely undermined by the poorly planned, urban renewal projects of the 1960's.

The original urban renewal plan was to tear down all the businesses and build new stores along New York Avenue, the heart of this historic neighborhood, from the rail road tracks to Nassau Avenue several blocks north. The overall cost at the time to demolish and rebuild the neighborhood was $29 million. However, before they could rebuild, the project ran out of money. The result of course was "the strip of New York Avenue we know today—empty lots and parking fields. The 1958 urban renewal plan unequivocally altered the landscape and character of Huntington Station from a lively downtown to a vast asphalt dead zone" (Mulderrig 2010a).

Over half a century after urban renewal left its mark on the community, the revitalization of Huntington Station is still a contentious topic. The comprehensive plan hopes to establish a new mixed-use, walkable commercial center to serve the neighborhood and restore its original vitality. However, the community has deteriorated further in recent years with frequent shootings, stabbings, and gang related violence. This violence culminated in July, 2010 when a teen was shot on the local intermediate school grounds. The School Board quickly voted to close the Jack Abrams School that had been serving the public for decades. Some felt, according to an August 1, 2010 *Newsday* editorial that the board's decision "raises larger concerns about whether the Town of Huntington is

doing all it can to rebuild this long-troubled community, and whether Suffolk County is providing sufficient police protection".

Site Description

The 26.58 acre property in question is located on East 5th Street in Huntington Station. It is in close proximity to the Huntington Station LIRR station, established transportation corridors (Route 110, Park Avenue), and already has infrastructure in place (sewer, municipal water, road access). In relation to surrounding parcels of land, the property is bordered by the LIRR rail road tracks to the north with various commercial and industrial uses located beyond. Warehouse and office space is located to the east followed by Park Avenue and additional commercial and industrial use. Town owned recreational property (Manor Field Park) is to the west, and East 5th Street and other multifamily housing developments runs along the parcel's southern border.

At one point, the property was used as agricultural land, but starting in the 1970's, the land was allowed to re-vegetate and currently sits vacant, consisting mostly of wooded areas. In 1989 the Town approved a zoning change from I-1 light industrial to R-7 residential for the purpose of developing a 109 attached residential cluster subdivision called "Timber Ridge Town Homes". The R-7 zoning designation allows single family homes at 5.8 units per acre or a maximum of 154 units. In 2000, the site plan was modified and approved by the Town Board to build 109 detached single family homes. The owner of the land, the Bonavita family, has the right to develop this subdivision plan at any time.

Several years ago, as the real estate market started to turn down, the
Bonavita family considered selling to a developer that would build a denser multi-
family project (Mulderrig 2010a). AvalonBay Communities Inc. was approached
by one of the Town's elected officials to take on the development of the Bonavita
parcel.[2,3] AvalonBay is a real estate investment trust firm that develops, owns, and
operates multi-family housing developments throughout the U.S. They
specifically specialize in "high barrier-to-entry" markets and, from their local
Melville office, have already developed seven AvalonBay communities on Long
Island.

Project Description

Table 6: Project Specifications	
	AvalonBay **Huntington Station, NY**
Project Parcel Size	26.58 acres
Prior Zoning	R-7 Single Family Residential
Existing Use	Vacant (green field)
Distance from LIRR Train Station	<0.5 miles
Proposed Rezoning Classification	Huntington Station Transit Oriented District
# of Residential Units	490 one-, two-, and three-bedroom units
Building Type	2-3 story multi-family
Percent Rental Units	80%
Affordable Housing	25%
Commercial Space	None

[2] Huntington Resident. Interview by Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. April 28, 2011.
[3] Huntington Elected Official. Interview by Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. May 11, 2011.

Housing Density	18.5 units/acre
# of Parking Spaces	1,104
Outcome	Not approved

Source: VHB Engineering, Surveying and Landscape Architecture, P.C. 2010b

Table 7: Development Timeline

Date	Event
October 2008	AvalonBay pitches development to Town officials
July 6, 2009	School Board enters into agreement with AvalonBay to accept $1.5million in community benefits if the development is approved
January 2010	Draft Environmental Impact Statement submitted
February 3, 2010	Town Planning Board finds site appropriate for TOD zoning change
March 9, 2010	Town Board holds first public hearing on TOD zoning and development application
April 9, 2010	AvalonBay submits report responding to comments made at March public hearing
May 17, 2010	Town Board votes to extend decision deadline to September
May 20, 2010	AvalonBay reduces number of residential units from 530 to 490
June 15, 2010	Town Board was going to vote on application but after public outcry, they decided to wait to make their decision. Anti-AvalonBay opponents held rally in front of town hall
June 28, 2010	YIMBY (Yes In My Back Yard) rally outside of Town Hall
July 6, 2010	Town Board removes vote from agenda last minute amidst public outcry
July 19, 2010	School Board votes to close down Jack Abrams School in Huntington Station
August 10, 2010	AvalonBay holds public information session at their Melville Offices

| August 11, 2010	Coalition to Support AvalonBay holds first meeting
August 17, 2010	Opponents of project hold meeting at Town library
August 26, 2010	Public information session held by AvalonBay at local church
September 7, 2010	Both opponent and supporter protestors show up at Town Board meeting each rallying for their cause
September 13, 2010	Final public information session held at another local AvalonBay development in Melville
September 21, 2010	In a 3-2 vote, the Town Board votes no against the zoning and development application

On September 21, 2010, the Huntington Town Board voted on one application that contained two action items: one, the creation a new Huntington Station Transit Oriented District (HSTOD) zoning and two, the approval of AvalonBay Communities site plan for the Bonavita parcel that changed the existing zoning classification from R-7 residential to HSTOD. (Refer to Table 6 for a summary of the project, and Table 7 for a description of the events leading up to the Huntington Town Board vote)

The HSTOD zoning code was to apply to all properties within a half mile of the Huntington Station LIRR station (see Figure 4). The HSTOD zoning could only apply to properties in that radius that were larger than ten acres, had a minimum lot frontage of forty feet, and a minimum lot width of 100 feet. The code required that the new development contain 25 percent market restricted housing. The code also lowered the minimum parking requirements from the standard of 2.7 spaces per unit in existing multi-family zoning districts to only 1.7 per spaces for one bedroom units, and 2.0 spaces for two-three bedroom units. As

stated in the Suffolk County Planning Commission minutes when they reviewed

the zoning and site plan application the HSTOD zoning code was specifically

tailored to fit the AvalonBay site (Suffolk County Planning Commission 2010).

Figure 4: Half Mile Zoning Radius
(AvalonBay Development Featured in Yellow)
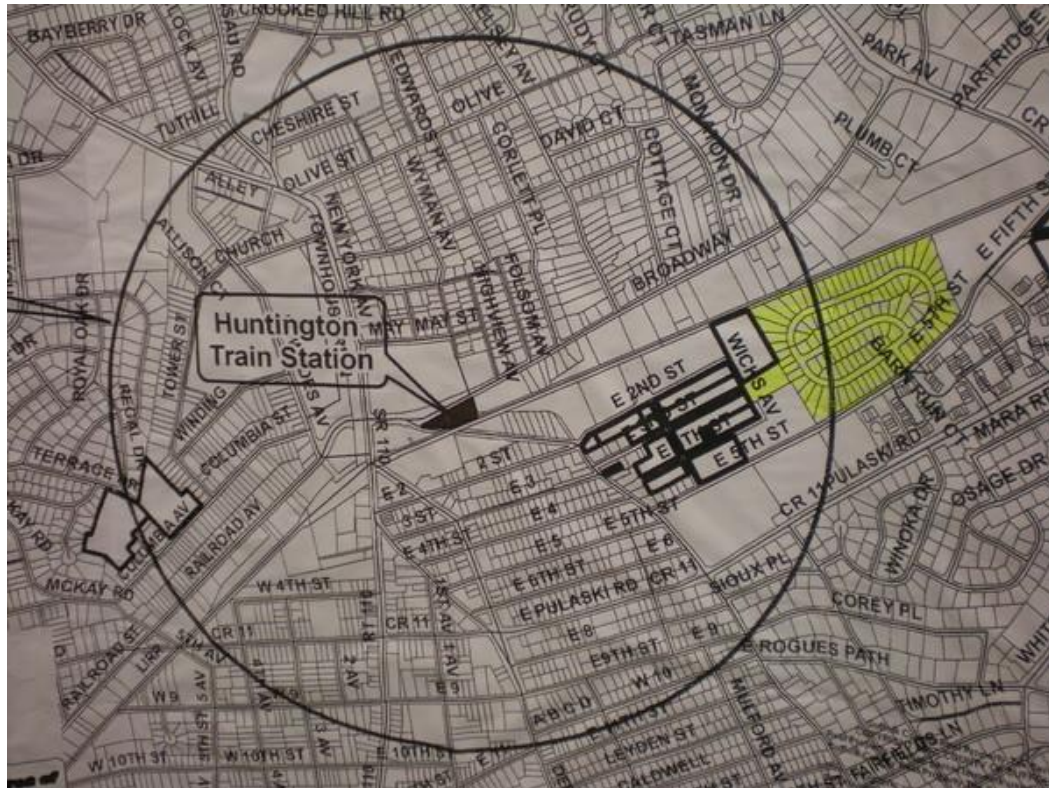
Source: Hogan 2010b

The AvalonBay site plan itself consisted of 490 one-, two-, and three-

bedroom units, at a density of 18.5 units per acre. There were twenty-five two-

and three-story buildings on the site, with the three story buildings being located

at the rear of the development bordering the rail road tracks. The site has one

vehicle entrance accessed via East Fifth Street. See Figure 5 for a rendering of the

AvalonBay Huntington Station development.

Eighty percent of the units were rental, with the remaining being for sale. 25 percent of all the housing units were income restricted to varying degrees. Income restricted was defined as

Figure 5: Rendering of AvalonBay Development

Source: Fischler 2010

persons earning 50 percent, 80 percent, and 110 percent of median income respectively according to definitions set by HUD for Long Island. Estimated monthly rent for an income restricted one-bedroom unit would have ranged from $1,018 to $1,961. The estimated sales price for income-restricted two-bedroom ranged from $183,250 to $275,000.

The development proposal also included a community benefits package consisting of:

- $1.5 million payment to the Huntington Union Free School District;

- $500,000 contribution toward the construction of a community center, or other public use structure in Huntington Station;

- A pedestrian path from the LIRR station to the development;

- A traffic signal at the intersection of Park Avenue and East Fifth Street;

- $250,000 upgrade for the Huntington Sewer District pump station;

- Construction of a bus stop at the development if requested by Huntington Area Rapid Transit (HART) to facilitate bus service for AvalonBay residents;

- $75,000 to the Friends of Huntington Train Station to make improvements at the LIRR station;

- $75,000 to Huntington Country Farms, a neighboring multi-family residential complex to make property improvements;

- $75,000 to various local community organizations.

Project Stakeholders

After analyzing what was discussed in official town documents, newspapers, and Town Board meetings, those in the Huntington community and Long Island region supported this project for several primary reasons: the provision of affordable and multi-family housing, revitalization of Huntington Station, economic development, and the support of TOD and smart growth principles. Generally supporters of the project belonged to two key stakeholder groups: Huntington residents who did not live in Huntington Station, and local and regional organizations and professionals involved with housing, environment, and/or social issues (see Table 8).

Most opponents on the other hand, saw the AvalonBay development as detrimental to Huntington Station in very black and white terms. Density, the impact on the school district and local traffic conditions, and the type of housing offered were frequently cited as major concerns. Those against the development were almost exclusively Huntington Station residents, abutters (those who lived

within several blocks of the development), and Huntington residents. Affiliated

organizations/professionals made up a very small percentage of this group (see

Table 8). As one elected official interviewed stated, "the cupcake moms were

out", referring to the "PTA mom" type, or as others would say, the grassroots

nature of the opposition.[4] Overall, the people speaking out against the

development were much more present and vocal at town meetings and in the news

media than those supporting the project.

Table 8: AvalonBay Vote Count Analysis		
	# of AvalonBay Supporters	# of AvalonBay Opponents
Abutter	5	18
Huntington Station Resident	8	29
Huntington Resident	28	32
Huntington Organization	14	2
Non-Huntington Based Organization	22	3
Town Board Member	2	3
Unknown	22	44
TOTAL	**101**	**131**

Project Benefits

The economic impact of this project was the most common point raised in

support of this development. Huntington Station is one of the least affluent areas

of Huntington, and supporters saw this development as an opportunity to bring

capital and private investment into a struggling community, particularly when the

---

[4] Huntington Elected Official. Interview by Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. May 11, 2011.

economy in general was not robust. "Revitalization", "redevelopment", and "investment" in Huntington Station were some frequent words mentioned. Supporters hoped that others would see the new development as an indicator that Huntington Station is a "good" place to live, thus bringing future investors and businesses, as well as sense of pride to the community.

According to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) written by the well-known firm, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB), for AvalonBay, this type of high density, residential project brings many types of benefits to Huntington. Economically, AvalonBay's investment of roughly $125 million in this project would generate an economic spinoff of $373 million within the community and region. Hundreds of local construction jobs would be created, as well as many more in associated economic sectors. The residential development itself would add new households to the community with a collective purchasing power of $28 million annually based on the average consumer expenditure. New residents would create more foot traffic to the local businesses and spend their income within the neighborhood. These new households would contribute $1.22 million in annual sales tax (VHB Engineering, Surveying and Landscape Architecture, P.C. 2010b).

Toward the town finances, supporters mentioned the fact that AvalonBay was offering a "generous" community benefits package with $1.5 million going to the local school district, along with road improvements, a walking path, and other donations mentioned above. These groups also stressed that this development would be "tax positive", meaning it would bring in more property taxes than the

Town would need to spend on the new development in infrastructure and other

publically funded services.

Socially, those speaking out in favor of the development felt that

AvalonBay not only provided a diversity of housing types in a town that consists

of predominantly single family homes, but that it also included a high number of

affordable units. Supporter often used personal stories to make their point such as

former Huntington resident Maritza Silva-Farrell of the Long Island Progressive

Coalition explaining in one local newspaper interview how she and her family had

to leave Huntington and move to Brooklyn because they could not find affordable

housing in the area (Village Tattler 2010). While affordable housing in general

was desired, a strong majority spoke specifically of providing more affordable

homes for young professionals, empty-nesters and the elderly who have a hard

time affording, or continuing to afford a home in Huntington.

The developers themselves were also highly regarded by some supporters

that found that AvalonBay consistently builds high quality, attractive

developments. Joanne Courtien of the Huntington YMCA stated at the March,

2010 public hearing that the developers,

> Have a willingness to listen to communities and address their
> needs, and most importantly, they become a part of the
> community. They don't just build a building and go. They continue
> to be a part of the local fabric and support local institutions and
> organizations such as YMCA (Huntington Town Board 2010a, 91).

Many also commented that they liked the fact AvalonBay was committed to using

environmentally sensitive building designs by installing storm water retention

ponds, preserving trees, and using energy efficient building materials and appliances. Compared to what could have been developed under the original site plan that called for 109 single family homes, AvalonBay's proposal would result in fewer school children, and, at least for some, an improved usage of this land.

Those that were pro-AvalonBay, also felt that "this kind of development is the future of Long Island" (Fischler 2010). Due to its location near the LIRR station, this site plan utilized transit oriented development and smart growth principles that recommend creating density in nodes around transit stations. Supporters touted the project as being walkable to the station, which would reduce reliance on automobiles as a means of travel and encourage the use of mass-transit. As AvalonBay Development Director, Christopher Capece, stated in a newspaper interview, "no place else in all of Long Island is there 30 acres within walking distance of a train station, it doesn't exist", commenting at the same time that this station also has the third highest ridership on Long Island (Hogan 2010a).

Proposal Impacts

According to the DEIS, which analyzed impacts of the development on traffic and infrastructure, school enrollment, and environmental impact, the development would result in minimal disturbance to the site and the community. In regards to traffic, which was the number one complaint made by opponents according to the content analysis, VHB found that "no significant adverse traffic impacts are expected to result from the proposed action", i.e. the development (VHB Engineering, Surveying and Landscape Architecture, P.C. 2010a, xxi).

However, the report did acknowledge that there are existing traffic issues, but that the project should not exacerbate these conditions. For the currently un-signalized intersection of Park Avenue and East Fifth Street the developer would install a traffic signal to remedy the existing condition and avoid contributing further to the poor level of service in the future (VHB Engineering, Surveying and Landscape Architecture, P.C. 2010a).

In terms of school children, another main concern of opposing residents, AvalonBay's data indicated their development will add 84 – 95 children to the district. This was compared to the 120 – 135 children the 109 single family homes already approved for the site would have added (VHB Engineering, Surveying and Landscape Architecture, P.C. 2010a). Many opponents, however, did not believe these studies were sufficiently accurate. Several residents complained that the DEIS report should have used 2010 dwelling unit to children rates from comparable developments in Huntington Station, not the rates from other AvalonBay developments. As one resident calculated using comparable Huntington Station rates, AvalonBay would have added "between 170 and 230 kids – a number consistent with the nearby Highview development. With the increase in taxes not enough to cover the costs of a Highview development-like increase in school children" (Village Tattler 2010). This concern coupled with the recent closing of the Jack Abrams School made people fear that the development would overburden the already troubled school system.

Despite what the DEIS reported, opponents also still had numerous concerns regarding the project's impacts on the sewer system, local hospital,

emergency services, run off from the development, and the construction management plan (the site is a brownfield, and contains heavy metals and arsenic). Concerns not addressed within the DEIS, but voiced at public meetings, included: parking at the local train station, overcrowding on the local train line caused by the new residents, loss of open space, air pollution, and the lowering of nearby home values.

As discussed in the literature review, higher density site plans and/or zoning proposals create a major source of tension with the community. According to an interview with a Huntington resident opposing the project, local residents had bought into the dream of owning a home in a low-density, residential suburban community. They saw AvalonBay as threatening to destroy their community's quality of life. This development, which they felt was inappropriately dense compared to the surrounding area, would irrevocably change the character of Huntington, causing it to "become more like Queens". This was not in line with their view of "traditional neighborhood values".[5]

Many opponents also pointed to the fact the Huntington Station is already denser than the rest of the town, and that the hamlet would suffer even more from overcrowding if this project was approved. Huntington Station also has a high portion of rental units. Residents feared that unsold units would convert to rentals, and that if no one rents/buys the units at the current 'luxury' prices, the price would have to be lowered. Statements following in this line of thinking were made about how multi-family housing attracts low-income earners, and that the

[5] Huntington Resident. Interview by Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. April 28, 2011.

crime, gangs, violence in the area would increase as a result. Complaints that renters supposedly have no investment in their community and thus were undesirable were also made.

Many residents, along with the Suffolk County Planning Commission, noted that 82 percent of non-senior subsidized affordable housing is located in Huntington Station. When so much affordable housing is located in one area, it was questioned whether there was an equitable distribution of affordable units across town. The affordable housing component of the development was also criticized as being too expensive to be considered "affordable". While others were claiming fictitiously that this was a Section 8 development, meaning that residents of the development would be given free housing vouchers by the local public housing agency. Even if they opponents knew the affordable housing component facts, some criticized at Town Board meetings the provision of affordable units in general, saying that they did not support government entitlements or "handouts".

Finally, many opponents took issue with the HSTOD zoning proposal that was linked to this development project. They feared that the zoning would allow for other sites to be developed at higher density within the HSTOD area, or that the TOD zoning would be created for the other LIRR stations in the area. Theoretically, the HSTOD zoning code would approve any ten acre or greater development assembled within a half mile of the Huntington Station train station. The likelihood of this happening, however, is close to nil since the Bonavita parcel is the only remaining ten acre plus parcel of undeveloped land left within the zoning radius.

The very idea of AvalonBay applying for the HSTOD zoning was questioned since many opposing felt that the Bonavita property, which has a partial boundary within the zone, is too far from the station. It should be noted that the area surrounding the development itself, is not very walkable as currently configured, with local shops and services sufficiently far that most residents would likely drive rather than walk. Many opposing felt that no one would realistically walk to the local train station in an area that's perceived as unsafe. Moreover, people who are unaccustomed to walking to a destination are unlikely to change habits in the pervasive car culture that dominates Long Island.

Outreach Strategy

AvalonBay's first order of business was to immediately reach out to the local school board, as they believed it was critical to have the school board's support before moving ahead with the project.[6] In July 2009 the School Board approved in a 6-1 vote to enter into agreement with AvalonBay that they provide $1.5 million mitigation payment to the district if the development was approved. However, the School Board's support for the development was later withdrawn in the months preceding the Town Board vote.

Developer Matt Whalen testified at the March 2010 public hearing that AvalonBay had held over 65 public meetings involving all stakeholders over the past several years regarding this project. These meetings involved presenting the development using two-dimensional site renderings, and fielding questions from attendees. To address many of the concerns from Huntington residents,

---

[6] Huntington Elected Official. Interview with Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. May 11, 2011.

AvalonBay hired a community outreach specialist, Judith White the founder of CJ2 Communications Strategies. YIMBY Long Island (Yes In My Backyard), an organization based in Nassau County, also volunteered to go door to door petitioning for the development. Informational forums were also held independently by the Huntington Township Housing Coalition.

As one resident against the project conceded, the amount of outreach conducted by AvalonBay was more than what is considered typical for development projects in the area.[78] However, they felt that the Town and AvalonBay "hid information about the rezoning", and made it difficult for residents to obtain information about the development. For example, the uploaded DEIS was scanned and therefore not searchable by key word, and at public meetings renderings were shown, but hard facts about the development's impacts were not specifically revealed.

Outcome

Ultimately, in order for the Town Board to approve the HSTOD zoning and the AvalonBay project, a supermajority of four out of five votes was needed since the Town did not meet the SCPC's conditions recommended for this project. At the September 21, 2010 Town Board vote, the project only received two affirmative votes, one by Town Supervisor Frank Petrone and the other by long-time board member, Glenda Jackson. The other three board members rejected the developer's application for the project and the zoning change for reasons such as community opposition, the level of density, and the number of existing problems

[7] Huntington Resident. Interview by Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. April 28, 2011.
[8] Huntington Elected Official. Interview with Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. May 11, 2011.

within the community. A person familiar with the Board members also believed that since "certain people" were up for reelection, they didn't want to be tied to a project that the community resented. [9]

According to Richard Koubek, president of the Huntington Township Housing Coalition, Councilor Mark Cuthbertson made clear that his opposition was based on the Huntington School Board's decision to withdraw its support for the Transit Oriented District (Koubek 2010). Cuthbertson himself was quoted in *Newsday* as saying that public protest "played a role" in his decision (Whittle 2010). Councilor Susan Berland supposedly would have supported AvalonBay if it were "less dense", (Koubek 2010), and encouraged Avalon Bay to submit a scaled-back project. A development with less than 400 units could find support, she said. "It's not that the community is opposed to Avalon. I believe that the community is opposed to Avalon at 490 units" (Whittle 2010). Councilman Mayoka was against the development from the start, because he apparently felt that any developer would have to get solid support from residents before he would sign off on any development. "The focus should be on what the community wants and right now it's focusing on crime, gangs and illegal housing" (Morris 2010). Mayoka even went as far as proposing a one year moratorium on the vote for HSTOD zoning while Town focuses on addressing the problems of Huntington Station, and investigates the impacts AvalonBay would have on the community (Mulderrig 2010b). However, Mayoka's comments came under fire by another

---

[9] Huntington Elected Official. Interview with Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. May 11, 2011.

elected official interviewed who felt that Mayoka was "always against

everything" as the lone Republican on the Board.[10]

Public opposition clearly played a role in the Board members' decisions to

vote against the AvalonBay project. One Sustainable Long Island Facebook post

shows how passionate each side became as they pleaded for support from their

constituents two weeks prior to the Town Board vote,

> The opposition is working at a frenzied pace to kill the
> development. They are claiming that 1900 petition signatures have
> been collected, and over 700 letters will be sent opposing
> AvalonBay. Playing on community fear and anger, they are
> rallying Huntington Station residents to "Say No to Avalon Bay,"
> with a good source telling us that their e-mails to Town Board
> members are outnumbering pro-Avalon Bay e-mails by 9 to 1!
> (Sustainable Long Island 2010).

Yet what turned some Huntington residents against the project in such an ardent

manner? An in depth analysis regarding this outcome will be discussed in Chapter

Six.

---

[10] *Ibid*.

Case Study #2
The New Village: Patchogue, New York

The Village of Patchogue Background

The Village of Patchogue is approximately 2.3 square miles in size, and is located within the Town of Brookhaven. It lies along the south shore of Long Island in the center of Suffolk County, approximately 55 miles east of New York City. With historical records dating back to 1664, Patchogue was one of the first European settlements on Long Island. Settlers came to the area for its power generating streams and deep port harbor. In the 1750's numerous mills were constructed, and by the mid-1800's Patchogue was known as a thriving seaport. In 1869, the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) was extended and a station built in the heart of village, bringing thousands of visitors from New York City during the summer months. However, the tourism industry gradually declined with the advent of the automobile in the 1920's, and by the 1950's the once thriving mills closed their doors (Suffolk County Department of Planning 2002).

Nowadays, Patchogue is known for maritime activities, a ferry service to the Fire Island National Seashore, and its small village downtown. The Patchogue central business district (CBD) was one of "the first major commercial centers in Suffolk County and remained a shopping destination for many years" (Suffolk County Department of Planning 2002, 7). The CBD area encompasses storefronts along Montauk Highway (Main Street), and is centered at the intersection of North Ocean Avenue (Route 83) in an area known as the Four Corners. It is the fifth largest downtown business district in Suffolk County, only the downtown

areas in Huntington, Southampton, Babylon, and Bay Shore have more stores (Suffolk County Department of Planning 2002).

However, like many communities, the advent of the shopping mall and strip development has left the Village's downtown heavily vacant. In 2001, 18.2 percent of the 181 storefronts in the CBD were vacant. The area immediately surrounding the Four Corners area (north of Main Street and West of North Ocean Ave) has the highest vacancy rate in CBD at 42 percent (Suffolk County Department of Planning 2002). This could have been caused by the vacancy of the Sweezy's department store in 2000, as it was a long time anchor store to the area, as well as the overall economic slump occurring in the region at the time. Moving Brookhaven Town Hall to Farmingville in 2004 did not help the area either.

In response to the consistent struggle of the businesses in the Patchogue downtown, Patchogue established a Business Improvement District (BID). A BID is a self-taxing entity run cooperatively by the merchants within the BID area to improve the vitality of the commercial district. In 1998, the BID boundary was extended to include all properties in the village with the exception of single family homes and undeveloped land.

According to many residents, since 2004 Mayor Paul Pontieri and the Village Board have done a remarkable job rebuilding the downtown area (Sorrentino 2010). The Mayor was even voted the 6th most Influential Leader who Changed Long Island in 2008 by the L.I. Business Network. Under the Mayor and the Village Board's focused direction, key parcels in the downtown area were redeveloped. The Patchogue Theatre was rebuilt, Copper Beach Village, a

workforce housing development near the rail road station was completed, and Artspace housing, 43 affordable rental units for members of the artist community is the midst of being rented. The municipal sewer system was also expanded this past year to "enable more businesses to locate within the village and beyond, and allow current businesses to expand… a move seen as key to that area's revitalization" (Nolan 2010).

Yet despite these successes, at least one resident complained in a *Newsday* Op-Ed letter to the Mayor and Village Board that Patchogue needs to remedy their parking situation, secure additional funding for more parking, and reconfigure the current municipal lots scattered throughout the downtown. They also criticized that the downtown area still lacks a hotel, with out-of-town visitors and businessmen staying near the Long Island Expressway and local McArthur airport instead of bringing their business to Main Street. Finally, she felt that the Village needs to continue their business development efforts and market the community to potential investors and visitors (Guyer 2011).

Demographics

Table 9: Patchogue Density Characteristics	
Population	11,919
Land Area	2.25 square miles
Housing Density	2,180.2 units per square mile

Source: US Census Bureau 2000

Table 10: Demographic Characteristics			
	Village of Patchogue	**Town of Brookhaven**	**Suffolk County**
Average Household size	2.5	3.06	3.09
HS Graduate or Higher	88.9%	89.9%	89.3%
Foreign Born	12.4%	10.2%	13.1%
Median Household Income	$60,882	$81,879	$84,530
Single Family Detached Homes	54.2%	78.4%	80.9%

Source: US Census Bureau 2010b

The Village of Patchogue is the most densely populated community in the

Town of Brookhaven (see Tables 9 and 10). In 2000, the Village had a population

density of 5,182 persons/square mile, nearly triple the density of the Town of

Brookhaven, and significantly more dense than other neighboring communities

(Suffolk County Department of Planning 2002). Density is so high primarily

because close to 50 percent of the housing units in Patchogue are rentals (US

Census Bureau 2010b).

As a largely built out suburban community, Patchogue continues to

experience a slow rate of growth in new residential development. Additionally,

the average household size has decreased from 2.9 persons per household in 1970

(Suffolk County Department of Planning 2002), to just 2.5 persons as recorded in

the 2005- 2009 American Community Survey (US Census Bureau 2010b). This

average household size has consistently remained lower than average for the

Town of Brookhaven and Suffolk County due to the high number of apartments and smaller historic homes (Suffolk County Department of Planning 2002).

Demographically, in 2000 Patchogue has a lower median household income and higher percentage (10.7 percent) of people with incomes below the poverty level compared to town and county statistics. It's also a younger population, with a smaller percentage of people over the age of 65 than the rest of Suffolk County. Furthermore, contrary to the national trend of a rising number of senior citizens, the population over the age of 65 has declined by 19% between 1990 and 2000. The population has also become more ethnically diverse, with large increases in the Hispanic population as seen in most other areas on Long Island (Suffolk County Department of Planning 2002).

Planning Goals

Since the Village has no official comprehensive plan, a review of a 2002 *Village of Patchogue Downtown Business District Study* was undertaken in order to provide a background about the Village and the area surrounding the case study project site. The 2002 study was prepared by the Suffolk County Department of Planning at the request of the Village. The purpose was to prepare a plan that would improve the flagging downtown business district and create a vibrant downtown for residents, business owners, and visitors to enjoy.

The study recommended several strategies that are relevant to the New Village case study project. In general, the Village should encourage retail and destination uses within the downtown core. Infill development was also stressed to ensure a continuous pedestrian experience along Main Street. The report

specifically pointed out the vacant Sweezy's building as a prime target for redevelopment. A village park was recommended since the downtown lacks green space. Additionally, the zoning code at the time needed to be modified to encourage mixed used development, emphasizing first floor retail and higher density residential units.

Site Description

Figure 6: The New Village Site Location

The 4.82 acre case study site is a conglomeration of several acquired parcels located at a key intersection known as the Four Corners in the Village of Patchogue. The site is located on the north side of West Main Street, the east and west sides of Havens Avenue, the north and south sides of Lake Street, and the west side of

Source: Tritec Real Estate Company n.d.

North Ocean Avenue (see Figure 6). It's less than a half mile from the Patchogue Long Island Rail Road station.

In 2008, Village Trustee Crean discussed at a village board meeting that this case study site "has been the downtown anchor and economic generator for

our Village for about 125 years and with the vacancy of Sweezy's Department store, it has created a void in our downtown…" (Patchogue Board of Trustees 2008c, 2). Besides the large, one acre Sweezy's site being vacant for the past decade, the surrounding parcels are also underdeveloped despite having tremendous potential. According to an interview with a Patchogue elected official, the Board of Trustees had been actively looking to "woo a developer" to come to this area for some time.[11]

Due to the long standing frustration of having a key corner in downtown Patchogue sit vacant for so long, the Village began condemnation and eminent domain proceedings against Joel Furman, the owner of the Sweezy's property during the summer of 2007 (Moore 2007). One elected official interviewed speculated that while several developers had approached Furman regarding developing the site, he always found some reason to reject their offers. The property had been in his family since the 1800's and it was thought, for obvious reasons, that he was emotionally attached to it. According to this official, the condemnation proceedings ultimately spurred the sale of the site to Tritec Real Estate Company for over $4 million in December of 2007 before the proceedings were complete.[12]

Once Tritec acquired the Sweezy's parcel, the developer "began talks with village officials about how to turn the corner of Main Street and North Ocean Avenue from a blighted area into a bustling commercial center" (Whittle 2011). Several other properties surrounding the Sweezy's site, some entirely vacant and

---

[11] Patchogue Elected Official, #1. Interview by Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. May 18, 2011.
[12] *Ibid.*

some with existing structures, were acquired to create a larger project. The developer also agreed to move and rehabilitate a historic library to be used as gallery space, as well as a swap land with the Village on a parcel just north west of the development, which would provide additional public parking. Overall, over $10 million was spent in land acquisition alone (Village of Patchogue 2008b).

Tritec is a family owned and operated real estate company established in 1986. Their headquarters are in East Setauket, a hamlet within the Town of Brookhaven. The Downtown Patchogue Redevelopers LIC was formed as a subsidiary of Tritec Corp to develop the New Village site, and includes other organizations such the Long Island Partnership, the Community Development Corporation of Long Island, and Ehrenkrantz, Eckstut & Kuhn Architects.

Project Description

Table 11: Project Specifications	
	The New Village **Patchogue, NY**
Project Parcel Size	4.82 acres
Prior Zoning	D2 and D3 Commercial and Multifamily Residential
Existing Use	Mix of Vacant/Underutilized Parcels
Distance from LIRR Train Station	<0.5 miles
Proposed Rezoning Classification	Downtown Redevelopment District Floating Zone
# of Residential Units	291 units
Building Type	Six mixed-use buildings, 3-5 stories
Percent Rental Units	100%
Affordable Housing	27%

Commercial Space	Yes, 62,100 square feet
Housing Density	60.37 units/acre
# of Parking Spaces	496
Outcome	Approved

Source: Kamer 2008

Table 12: Development Timeline

Date	Event
September 2000	Sweezy's department store closes, leaving a vacant building on the prominent corner of Main Street, Patchogue known as the Four Corners
2006	Hotel proposed for Sweezy's site, but plans fall through
2007	The village begins condemnation and eminent domain proceedings against the owner of Sweezy's Joel Furman
December 2007	Sweezy's building sold to Tritec for $4.2 million before condemnation proceedings are complete
January 2008	Tritec presents initial site plan to the Patchogue's key village boards
February 12, 2008	Tritec presents development to members of the Patchogue BID and Chamber of Commerce
February 28, 2008	Tritec unveils plans for the redevelopment of the Four Corners area at a public meeting
March 20, 2008	Village Board of Trustees holds public hearing on adopting the floating zoning classification know as Downtown Redevelopment District
April 21, 2008	The Board of Trustees adopts Downtown Redevelopment District zoning classification
May 2008	Tritec enters into contract to buy surrounding properties

September 19, 2008	Tritec officially submits an application for the change of zone and mixed use site plan dubbed the "New Village"
December 8, 2008	Tritec hold public information session
January 8, 2009	The Planning Board hold public hearing
January 20, 2009	The Board of Trustees holds special public hearing regarding the DEIS, change of zone, and site plan
March 11, 2009	Final EIS filed with the Village
April 13, 2009	SEQRA process concluded, Board approves preliminary development concept plan
May 6, 2009	The Suffolk County Planning Commission approves the SEQRA findings statement without comment
May 11, 2009	The Board unanimously approves change the zone to Downtown Redevelopment District zoning
2009	Tritec wins Smart Growth Award from Vision Long Island
April 6, 2010	The Board holds a parking forum to form long term solutions to the parking problem downtown
April 17, 2010	Tritec receives the Commercial Developer of the Year award and Top Mixed Use Project award for their work on the New Village project from Long Island Business News
July 16, 2010	Tritec unveils its nearly finished renovation of 31West, the first phase of the New Village project
November 8, 2010	Tritec submits revised site plan removing the hotel, and adding 51 residential units, 7,689 sq. ft. of retail, and a subsurface parking garage
November 22, 2010	The Board holds a public hearing regarding the amended site plan
January 5, 2011	Patchogue First holds a community meeting to look at

	the newly modified site plans
February 17, 2011	A special joint Village Board and Planning Board meeting is held to discuss revised New Village project
March 4, 2011	Young Adult Alliance of Action Long Island holds public information session at 31West in support of the final site plan
March 10, 2011	The Board of Trustees approves the site plan in a 4-3 vote
April 11, 2011	The Board of Trustees approves a moratorium on new residential buildings over three stories tall
April 20, 2011	The Zoning Board grants Tritec the variance needed for shorter parking spaces. This was the last approval needed before applying for building permits

In January 2008, Tritec revealed their preliminary site plans for a mixed used, multi-modal development dubbed the "New Village" to relevant village officials, staff, and key members of the business community. During the initial phase of the development, a hotel was proposed for the site along with condominiums as part of the residential component. Many in the community, including the Village Board, were thrilled at the prospect of having this million dollar project come to downtown Patchogue, particularly the hotel. (See Table 11 for a summary of project specifications and Table 12 for a detailed timeline of the project.)

To accommodate this vision, the Board created the Downtown Redevelopment District (DRD) floating zoning classification, which was

approved April 2008.[13] A floating zone is the same as a conventional zone in that it regulates land use requirements and restrictions as typically prescribed by other conventional zoning codes. However, the DRD floating zone is not designated on any zoning maps. Once a development application is submitted and approved for this designation, the zoning is affixed to that particular parcel and the zoning map amended.

The Patchogue DRD zoning classification can only be applied to a specific area of the downtown. All parcels greater than 1.75 acres west of North Ocean Ave, north of West Main Street, east of West Avenue and south of Lake Street are eligible to apply. Land can be assembled to suit the minimum acreage requirement, but must be under one developer. The ordinance adopted authorizes a broad array of uses including a hotel, residential units, office space, and retail on the first floor. The structure can be anywhere from 60 to 130 feet in height. A minimum of 25 percent workforce housing is required with preference going to Patchogue residents. Procedurally, the developer must go through a two-step review process. First the Board of Trustees must approve the zoning change and preliminary site plan, than the final detailed site plan with a program of uses is submitted for approval.

Tritec's application for change of zone from D2 and D3 to Downtown Redevelopment District and the preliminary site plan was officially filed with the Village in September of 2008. A hotel was originally planned for the prominent corner of the site, but that eventually fell through due to the poor economy and the

---

[13] Patchogue Elected Official #2. Interview by Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. May 18, 2011

developer being unable to obtain hotel financing. The final site plan was amended

in November of 2010 to reflect the conversion of the hotel to additional

apartments much to the consternation of many supporters. The final site plan

offered 291 apartment units, 46,100 square feet of retail/restaurant space, 18,000

square feet of office space, an underground parking garage, and a village green

open to the public. This will be built as six buildings, the tallest being five stories.

Figure 7: The New Village Development
(West Main Street Looking East)

Source: Tritec Real Estate Company n.d.

The project is expected to be built in three phases. Phase one, which was already approved in a separate application, involved 31 West Main Street, a 100 years old retail and office building that was entirely renovated. Phase two is the Four

Corners development, which includes retail space and 51 units of market rate

apartments on the site of the former Sweezy's building. Phase three includes 240

units of market rate and workforce rental apartments, retail space, a Village

Green, and a restaurant row along Havens Avenue (see Figure 7 for an artist's

rendering of the project).

Affordable housing was an important component of the project, and the

site plan includes 48 units designated for residents making 80 percent of the

area's median income, and 19 units assigned to residents making 85 percent of

median income. Apartment rentals range from below market rate studios priced at $1,200 per month to $2,600 a month for three bedroom market rate units.

Much of what was able to happen on the New Village site, including the restoration of several buildings (31West Main and the historic Carnegie Library) and offering affordable housing, was made possible by the availability of county and state funding. County officials stressed that their contribution of $3.75 million to the New Village project will allow approximately 27 percent of the rental units to be offered at workforce housing rates. It will also "show investors that the county is firmly behind the Four Corners redevelopment and hopefully convince them that Patchogue is a good place to invest their money" (Nolan 2009). The public funding was used by Tritec to subsidize land acquisition, affordable housing and the new town square (Winzelberg 2009).

Project Stakeholders

After analyzing what was discussed in official town documents, local newspapers, and Board of Trustees meeting minutes, many in the Patchogue community and Long Island region supported this project for several primary reasons: the provision of affordable and multi-family housing, revitalization of downtown Patchogue, and economic development. Supporters of the New Village project came from a variety of groups as seen in Figure 20. Patchogue residents and business owners made up the majority of the supporters, with regional organizations involved with smart growth or affordable housing activities such as Sustainable Long Island followed in a close third.

Opponents of the New Village project weren't as black or white in their

opinion as AvalonBay stakeholders were. While many liked the idea of seeing

this part of Patchogue redeveloped, they did take issue with specific details of the

project, though not necessarily the entire project itself. Parking, rental housing,

higher density development, and the removal of the hotel component were among

the most common complaints. Patchogue residents made up the largest segment of

opponents, followed by local business owners (see Table 13).

Table 13: New Village Vote Count Analysis		
	# of New Village Supporters	# of New Village Opponents
Abutter	1	1
Patchogue Resident	7	6
Town of Brookhaven Resident	1	0
Patchogue Business Owner	6	3
Patchogue Organization	1	0
Non-Patchogue Based Organization/Business	5	0
Village Board Member	4	3
Unknown	1	0
TOTAL	**26**	**13**

The lack of people speaking out for or against the project at Village Board

meetings and local newspapers could indicate the low level of controversy the

proposal created compared to the amount of heat AvalonBay generated. From

what the limited number of testimonies can tell us, it would seem that the majority

of people support the New Village project. As one elected official stated in an

interview, there wasn't really any negative input from the community, because

people really wanted to see that corner developed.[14] On the other hand, another

elected official who voted against the project felt that those who supported the

project weren't educated and given enough detail, they were just shown "pretty

pictures".[15] The most telling comment was from on BID member interviewed who

felt that at any New Village meeting the room was divided into third. Some

downright opposed or support the project, while the remaining did not have much

opinion, but who were happy something was being done to develop the long

vacant corner.[16]

Project Benefits

The New Village project has been hailed as a major component in the

effort to revitalize the Patchogue village center. The most profound and

numerously discussed benefit from the development was the revitalization it

would bring to Patchogue. Having downtown rentals will bring new businesses

and restaurants to the village, ushering in the revival of the area (Whittle 2011).

The project wouldn't just impact the village, Suffolk County Executive Steve

Levy stated in a newspaper interview, "we are building an economic experiment

of downtown revitalization that can be a model throughout the county…This will

redefine our county and instill hope and vitality into our downtowns. People will

see this revitalization and it will be infectious. This is a boom for the village of

Patchogue, the town of Brookhaven and all of Suffolk County" (Nolan, 2009).

---

[14] Patchogue Elected Official #1. Interview by Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. May 18, 2011
[15] Patchogue Elected Official #2. Interview by Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. May 18, 2011
[16] Patchogue BID Member. Interview by Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. June 15, 2011

Levy's accolades were affirmed by a village-financed economic analysis of the project by economist Pearl Kamer. She predicted that at full capacity the development will house roughly 500 people, about 42 percent will be young people between the ages of 25 and 44. This population at the peak of their working years would have a discretionary purchasing power of $4.2 million, much of which will be injected right into downtown Patchogue. The development itself also would create much needed jobs during the construction phase. Since the development is mixed use and has retail, office, and restaurant components, hundreds of permanent jobs would be created as part of the development project itself (Kamer 2008).

The development also benefits the village, town, and county government. As much of the site is currently vacant or in disrepair, the property is not generating property and sales tax to its fullest potential. Once developed, the property is expected to generate $934,356 in real property taxes, two-thirds of which will go to the local school district, creating a large tax surplus for the district. It is also predicted that the New Village project could generate over $1 million in sales taxes, half of which would go to the county (Kamer 2008).

Another common statement made by supporters was that the New Village would provide more affordable housing, especially for young professionals in the area. The fact that these were rental units was also valued, especially since multi-family housing has been proven to generate fewer school children. Kamer (2008) predicted less than thirty school age children will eventually reside in this development.

Surprisingly, even though the New Village project recently won a Smart Growth Award from Vision Long Island in 2009, the discussions about the project touched upon smart growth and TOD concepts relatively infrequently. What was mentioned more frequently was the attractive designs employed by the architects, and the use of beautifully polished sketches, artwork, and 3-D pictures, which really helped to visualize the final result according to one resident at a Village Board meeting (Patchogue Board of Trustees 2011a).

Project Impacts

As Trustee Crean said at a March 2011 Village Board meeting, parking is "one of the most single action issues about this application" (Patchogue Board of Trustees 2011c). A content analysis of public meeting minutes and news accounts confirmed this, with parking being the overriding concern of the community, particularly local business owners. This parking controversy arose despite the fact that according to the EIS, parking and traffic would be mitigated and would not have an adverse impact on the area. One elected official who voted against the project went as far as saying that the development will bankrupt the village since they are now looking into building additional parking garages.[17] The official felt that the equation used to formulate the amount of parking was based on the project being a TOD and more appropriate for denser urban areas. However, in his experience, due to poor local transit service people will still have to use personal vehicles despite their proximity to the LIRR. Thomas Keegan, owner of a nearby restaurant, also criticized the DRD zoning that allowed for such a large

---

[17] Patchogue Elected Official #2. Interview by Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. May 18, 2011

project to be built in the first place, stating that parking in the village is already an issue (Geismar 2011).

The type of housing offered was the second most contentious issues about the project. While it is true that Long Island does indeed need more affordable and diverse housing stock, nearly 50 percent of Patchogue's existing housing stock is rental units. This is a much higher portion than what the Town of Brookhaven (18%) or Suffolk County (17%) is estimated to have (ACS 2005-2009). For this very reason people like Deputy Mayor McGiff voted against the project. According to one news account he was quoted as saying, "the idea that the young people of Long Island need affordable housing, that's true. My retort to that is the people of Patchogue have shouldered that burden for much too long" (Whittle 2011). A resident's testimony in a January 2011 Village Board meeting echoed something similar when referring to the recently built high density residences, "we have not even seen the Village absorb the high density housing that we already have right now. We have high density housing projects that we don't even know yet what it is doing to the Village" (Patchogue Board of Trustees 2011a, 9).

The existing housing conditions also created fear amongst residents that rental buildings wouldn't be well maintained, or that some of the unoccupied units would convert to Section 8 housing. Patchogue is an older, blue collar community, with an aging housing stock with many Section 8 residences and low quality rentals. One official interviewed felt that the Board was turning their back on the deteriorating condition of the existing housing stock and that they should

fix what they have first before adding more rentals. He stated that, "saying there is a lack of rental units in Patchogue is a lie, there's a lack of *nice* rental units".[18] Renters were also generally undesired by critics since they were perceived as not being invested in the community (Geismar 2011). Others thought that Tritec would not manage the property well, or would "flip it" to disreputable mangers, causing the site to blight the area once again.

The rental housing component particularly caused complaints after the hotel was removed from the program of uses, and an additional 90 rental units took its place.[19] After this happened people began to question whether the project was in the best public interest anymore. Deputy Mayor McGiff stated in the local newspaper that after the hotel was removed, "the body of this project may be the same but the soul has changed" (Geismar 2011). This shift from what many perceived as an economic development project to one that is more residential, caused the project to lose some supporters. Opponents felt that there should have been more retail/office space or additional anchor stores rather than apartments. Other residents thought that the Board should just wait another couple of years to find the right businesses or another hotel (DiNicola 2011).

Finally, the density of the project was also questioned. Patchogue is a small village, with most buildings in the downtown not topping three stories. Having five story buildings lining Main Street caused some to worry that the towering buildings would block out the sun or shade surrounding businesses. One business owner noted in a May 1, 2010 *Newsday* interview "Patchogue was never

---

[18] Patchogue Elected Official #2. Interview by Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. May 18, 2011
[19] Patchogue BID Member. Interview by Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. June 15, 2011

used to this kind of density", referring to the recent higher density developments built downtown. However, he countered this statement how this has helped local business as "there has never been this many feet on the street".

Outreach Strategy

In 2008, Tritec began their formal outreach process by meeting with the relevant local boards, Chamber of Commerce, and BID members to pitch their original site plan. According to a member of the Patchogue BID, there were also community meetings held on many occasions at the local Elk Club, Patchogue Theater (where a third of the 1200 seats were filled on both occasions), as well as other community gathering places.[20] The Young Adult Alliance from Action Long Island also independently held a couple of public information meetings in support of the project due to the provision of affordable rental units for young professionals. Tritec also created a website where users could read about the project, view a 3D simulated fly through of the development, and read the updates posted about the project in the blog section. According to one elected official, the amount of public outreach conducted was more than most projects done in the area due to the significance of the Four Corners site.[21]

Outcome

On March 10, 2011 the Village Board of Trustees held a special meeting to vote on Tritec's New Village site plan. In a 4-3 vote, the motion passed pending a decision by the Zoning Board of Appeals regarding a parking variance needed for the shorter parking spots proposed. Deputy Mayor Stephan McGiff,

[20] Patchogue BID Member. Interview by Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. June 15, 2011
[21] Patchogue Elected Official, #1. Interview by Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. May 18, 2011.

and Trustees Gerard Crean and William Hilton voted against the project, whereas trustees Jack Krieger, Lori Devlin, and Joseph Keyes voted in favor. Mayor Paul Pontieri was the tiebreaker vote. Finally, on April 20, 2011 the Zoning Board of Appeals granted the parking variance, and Tritec could begin applying for building permits.

After reading through news accounts and speaking with several Patchogue elected officials, a BID member, and a director of a local smart growth non-profit, it became clear that while most stakeholders supported the project there were some concerns from the business community, and at least a few residents questioned the level of density and the addition of more apartments instead of a hotel. However, most were pleased that some use was being made of the site. Trustee Crean, a Board member who voted against the New Village project, felt that "at the end of the day while we still may not all agree on what they are proposing, I think we will all agree that we followed the process and the public has had every opportunity to have their voice heard" (Patchogue Board of Trustees 2011b). An analysis of the outcome of this project will be discussed further in Chapter Six.

Chapter 6: Analysis

Overview

On the surface, an argument could be made that the two case studies used in this thesis revolved around issues like the level of density, the type of housing, or suburban residents' fear of change. However looking deeper, there are underlying issues within both communities that lent themselves toward residents either supporting or opposing the New Village and AvalonBay projects. The findings from both case studies suggested that while both projects did comparable levels of community outreach, other important factors such as historic and contemporary events, social media, municipal procedure, government structure and leadership, and the design of the project appeared to impact success and failure.

Historic & Contemporary Events

The level of anger from some AvalonBay opponents could arise from many sources; however, it is likely that Huntington Station's deep-rooted troubles contributed greatly. For decades the Town, including those currently in office, have been promising revitalization, but little progress has been made. Instead, the Huntington Station neighborhood has been on a steady decline with a rash of criminal activity, decreased police presence, and the recent demise of a local school. Huntington Station also currently has the highest concentration of public housing in Huntington, and a lack of housing code enforcement that contributes to illegal development activity and blights the area.

Many of these issues can be linked back to historical events within the area, particularly the urban renewal projects of the 1960's. These 'renewal' projects left the Huntington Station community with unwanted land use changes that destroyed the community's commercial heart, and broken promises of revitalization. Moreover, it created a poor relationship between the local government and longtime residents. As Rosey Mulderrig, founder of the *Huntington Village Tattler,* stated "given the track record of government intervention in the area, it is no wonder residents are wary of any move by the Town Fathers to change the rules in that part of town, let alone clear the way for a development of the scale proposed by Avalon" (Mulderrig 2010a).

According to one expert on Long Island's smart growth development climate, the local community is crying out for the government to manage the area better, when all the Town has done is propose more residential housing. He stated in an interview that the ground is not exactly "fertile for more multifamily housing" because, people in the area feel that "they have it bad enough already".[22] As a result of all of these historic and current problems in Huntington Station, residents are understandably angry and frustrated. These negative emotions have created a climate of heightened emotion over a development that might not have made as much of a stir elsewhere.

Patchogue on the other hand, didn't have the recent problems and political fights that Huntington did.[23] Patchogue, like Huntington Station, is a blue collar

---

[22] Director of a Smart Growth Non-profit. Interview with Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. April 28, 2011.
[23] Huntington Elected Official. Interview with Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. May 11, 2011.

community. Twenty years ago it was struggling with its own problems

particularly, high vacancy rates in the downtown area. Yet many residents feel

that the current Mayor and Village Board have done a remarkable job rebuilding

the downtown area (Letter to the Editor 2011; Sorrentino 2010). Under their

focused direction, key parcels downtown were redeveloped and have been

depicted as quite successful. While initially high density projects such as the

Cooper Beach condominiums were controversial, once residents saw the project's

success, they were more likely to support future high density endeavors.[24] A

member of the Patchogue BID described Patchogue as being "on an upward spiral

since the 1990's." "The whole aura around Patchogue was positive, and people

were more willing to listen than in Huntington since things were already

happening that were largely positive." He described the Tritec project as "another

project in a long string of redevelopment projects that brought more foot traffic

and retail to the area." [25]

Stakeholders

Prior to the September Huntington Board vote there was much arguing

back on forth on the merits of the AvalonBay project within the community and

region. Even though the AvalonBay developers had tried to reach out to all key

stakeholders, the public participation process still went awry (Yan 2010). Much of

this could be traced to the type of stakeholders supporting or opposing each

project.

---

[24] Patchogue Elected Official #1. Interview with Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. May 18, 2011.
[25] Patchogue BID Member. Interview with Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. June 14, 2012.

As discussed earlier in Chapter Five, Huntington and Patchogue had a very different set of stakeholders advocating for each development. In the case of AvalonBay, it was evident at the time of the Town Board vote that there were more Huntington Station residents speaking out against rather than for the AvalonBay development. Those in favor were primarily people belonging to local and regional affiliated organizations such as the Long Island Progressive Coalition or the Huntington Township Housing Coalition.

Patchogue on the other hand, had minimal outside influence.[26] The vote count discussed in Chapter Five showed that no one stakeholder group dominated the New Village discussion. However, the 39 people documented speaking about the development in news articles and village board meetings does not create a large enough sample size to ensure an accurate analysis of the situation. In-depth interviews with elected Patchogue officials, a Patchogue BID member, and the director of a local smart growth non-profit however, further indicated that a diverse array of local and regional stakeholder groups supported the Tritec project.

The key difference when comparing New Village supporters to AvalonBay supporters is that the former were locals agreeing to the burdens and benefits of the Tritec project compared to outsiders pushing for the more regionalized benefits of affordable housing and transit oriented development in Huntington Station. This is what created a perception among AvalonBay opponents that outsiders were coming in telling residents "what's best for them".

---

[26] Director of a Smart Growth Non-profit. Interview with Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. April 28, 2011.

As one interviewee stated, "it was the power of neighbor to neighbor saying no, instead of outsider to the community saying yes." This created a "war" of opposing sides, and he's "never seen an outsider to the community win that war".[27]

Social Media

Social media played a major role in the grassroots protests that evolved over the summer of 2010 in Huntington. Email and social media was used to organize meetings and protests regarding the project, with several AvalonBay rallies being held outside of Town Hall during Board meeting nights. In April 2010, one local resident created a Facebook page, "Say No to AvalonBay" which currently has 475 members. To counter AvalonBay opponents, the Long Island Progressive Coalition (LIPC) used its Facebook page YIMBY (Yes In My Backyard) to rally supporters. However, a LIPC community organizer staff member was quoted in a local newspaper saying that they closed the site due to adversaries swamping the YIMBY page with comments and using it to "find out about events supporting the proposal and going there to disrupt them"(Yan and Morris 2010).

According to at least two Huntington elected officials social media had a significant influence over the outcome of the project (Eltman 2010).[28] "With social media you can instantly publish and reach 8,000 people," said Vivienne Wong of Huntington, one of the Facebook page creators. "We got the information

---

[27] Director of a Smart Growth Non-profit. Interview with Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. April 28, 2011.
[28] Huntington Elected Official. Interview with Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. May 11, 2011.

to the people. We were able to have rebuttals…" (Yan and Morris 2010). Social

media also allowed everyday people to participate in the public debate and allow

them to quickly organize, according to one Huntington mom (Eltman 2010).

While the increased public participation was certainly laudatory, social

media and the internet also contributed to false information about the project

being spread around the community. For example, many residents still claimed

that Section 8 housing was part of the proposal. According to AvalonBay

developer Matt Whalen,

> The dangerous thing that we saw about social media in our case
> was that it really just allowed for a wide distribution of any kind of
> information that's not factually checked. The people in these social
> mediums can basically say whatever they want making it hard to
> shoot down rumors and false information (Eltman 2010).

Whalen also told the Town Board that the application process had dragged

on for too long, allowing time to "let people spread misinformation and distort the

facts" (Winslow 2010). The developers were further disadvantaged by local

newspapers that tended to write more opinion based news, which at times did not

reflect favorably on the proposed development. In the end, people melded the

AvalonBay proposal with the problems on the streets, and facts became muffled

and comingled.[29]

Compared to the level of conflict and protest happening in Huntington,

Tritec's Patchogue project had a relatively quiet experience. The only Facebook

page related to the New Village project was the one created by Tritec itself

---

[29] Huntington Elected Official. Interview with Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. May 11, 2011.

allowing people to post comments and get a quick response from the Tritec site administrator. In the local online newspaper, the *Patchogue Patch*, the authors covering the New Village development were generally unbiased in their views, primarily only presenting the facts and summarizing village board meeting minutes.

Proper Procedure & Documentation

How developers and municipalities go about the process of proposing and approving a development project and attendant zoning change is important. The biggest misstep made during the AvalonBay application process was the fact the TOD zoning creation and the site plan was submitted under one application. According to an interview with one Huntington elected official, the town government believed that they had a large backing for the project from the public, and that the zoning change and development application could easily pass simultaneously.[30] However, this is not common municipal practice as Commissioner Horton from the SCPC stated during his review of the application. Horton, found it "awkward that we are being asked as the Suffolk County Planning Commission to review the adoption of the zoning code in the context of an application for that zoning code. I don't think it's fair to the applicant, and I don't think it is wise municipal zoning practice" (Suffolk County Planning Commission 2010). A local director of smart growth non-profit thought maybe Huntington residents could have accepted AvalonBay, but weaving the larger

---

[30] Huntington Elected Official. Interview with Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. May 11, 2011.

rezoning into the AvalonBay proposal was the project's death knell. Now the residents "had two ways to kill something; two targets instead of one" to attack.[31]

For the Town of Huntington to try and rezone such a large land area, an independent EIS also should have been conducted, but that process seemed to have been skipped. It appeared that the Town didn't want to do outreach regarding the TOD zoning, and just wanted to get the project done faster.[32] To avoid allegations of spot zoning, the TOD zoning was specifically created for the AvalonBay project, and simply applied to all parcels in a half-mile radius around the Huntington Station LIRR station (the Bonavita parcel is the only parcel that would qualify for this zoning designation). When there are several other rail stations in Huntington, why wasn't the TOD zoning applied more broadly as the SCPC suggested? This would have required consulting with more residents regarding the zoning change, and the Town would have struggled to gain such wide acceptance. So instead, the Town created just the Huntington Station TOD. After all, Huntington Station being the less affluent and struggling area of the town, it would have been expected to accept high density TOD projects without question.

When examining how Patchogue handled their procedure you come across some similarities, but also some major differences. Like the HSTOD, the Downtown Redevelopment District (DRD) zoning designation was specifically created for the Tritec project. Yet hearings were conducted and the zoning

---

[31] Director of a Smart Growth Non-profit. Interview with Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. April 28, 2011.
[32] Director of a Smart Growth Non-profit. Interview with Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. April 28, 2011.

adopted six months in advance of Tritec submitting their site plan application.

Once Tritec submitted their application, the Village Board approved $20,000 in

public money to spend on an impact study of the New Village project. According

to Patchogue Mayor Pontieri,

> The reason that we did it is because most developers would do it
> on their own and they will hand us their report. Because of the
> amount of development, I wanted us to be able to hand them our
> report and for us to develop those numbers. And as for Kamer [the
> economist who wrote the study] to understand we are paying her,
> not Tritec…(Patchogue Board of Trustees 2008a).

Local Political Climate

According to Tritec cofounder Robert Coughlan, when developing on

Long Island there are many competing opinions and priorities making it hard for

everyone to agree. Unlike in other areas of the country where Tritec has

developed properties, "Long Island is much less centralized and has more

overlapping layers of government and competing business groups to cover" (Yan

2010). In this aspect, Patchogue is a more tractable community than Huntington.

Patchogue's village style of government consists of a village Board of Trustees

that has a presiding mayor who serves as the chief executive of the community

and who possesses tie-breaking abilities in all business before the Board.

Patchogue's smaller geography makes it easier for elected officials to tune into

the community, diffuse potential problems, and allow for a more human scale

connection to their constituents. When decisions are made on a more personal

scale, officials are less able to manipulate outcomes in their favor, and outsiders

have less of an influence. This in turn, builds the level of trust the community has in their elected officials.[33]

In particular, the people of Patchogue trust their mayor and feel confident that he's doing what's best for the community.[34] The Mayor has a proven track record of successful high density developments to add to his credit. He ranked among the ten most influential people on Long Island in 2008 by *Long Island Business News* who stated, "Truly a people's mayor, Paul Pontieri has been the driving force behind an ongoing downtown revitalization that has become the model for other distressed business areas on the Island". The Mayor himself noted that there is "no resistance to increased density for new development projects… We have a great Village Board that endorses these visions, and the Village has a strong community outreach effort so people know what is happening" (Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center 2010).

Huntington on the other hand, is a township consisting of several hamlets representing a very diverse cross-section of society cobbled together under one town board and an elected town supervisor who presides over the board, but does not possess veto or tie-breaking powers. Such a large, fragmented population creates competing opinions among residents and officials regarding what should be the community's priorities, which eventually polarized AvalonBay supporters and opponents.

---

[33] Director of a Smart Growth Non-profit. Interview with Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. April 28, 2011.

[34] Director of a Smart Growth Non-profit. Interview with Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. April 28, 2011.

AvalonBay's opponents were very vociferous in their views, which according to Christopher Capece, requires supporters "coming to Town Board meetings with the same passion [as adversaries]" (Genn 2010). However, as one Huntington Station resident pointed out in a *Village Tattler* interview, "those in favor of AvalonBay had been more polite and quieter" (Village Tattler 2010). In the end, "The dialogue about an important planning project descended into "I'm smart; you're dumb" and "I'm a YIMBY; you're a NIMBY" (Alexander 2010). Several panelists at a smart growth conference discussing the AvalonBay snafu even agreed that "the discussion over the project devolved into thinly veiled arguments over race and class" (Kurtzberg 2010).

There was also a perception among opponents that the AvalonBay developers had a powerful influence on elected leaders via cronyism and bribery. As one Patchogue interviewee stated when asked about AvalonBay, it "kinda seemed people were disenfranchised. Things were happening in their village and space, and they needed to have more of a say in what's happening."[35] However, it seemed to be the case that residents had a lot to say after the proposal and TOD zoning was already under consideration by the town board, that people weren't engaged to initially, and political leaders were acting independently. The result, in the case of AvalonBay, was public accusations of a lack of political transparency, backdoor deals, and an overall lack of trust in their elected officials.

In this atmosphere of mistrust and anger, strong leadership was needed in the Huntington community. Yet, individual board members seemed politically

---

[35] Patchogue BID Member. Interview with Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. June 14, 2012.

weak and easily cowed by vocal critics. Several of the board members were also

up for re-election in their districts, making supporting the project potentially

politically untenable. AvalonBay developer Ken Christensen felt angry and

disappointed that local leaders failed to explain and clarify the issues the

community had regarding the proposal. "For no elected official to stand up and

say, 'No, it's not all going to be Section 8 Housing' is a lack of leadership", he

said (Kurtzberg 2010). One Huntington resident stated at the September 7, 2010

Town Board meeting, "it's a classic example of a misguided minority trying to

influence the elected officials into believing that their shortsighted platform

represents the wishes of the community at large"(Huntington Town Board 2010b,

59).

Project Design and Program of Uses

When building at a higher density, developers should strive to have their

site integrate into the existing fabric of the surrounding neighborhood, while at

the same time incorporate designs that reduce the perceived level of density. As

Patchogue Mayor Pontieri stated when referring to multiple new high density

residential projects built in the area, "I'm a believer that density is a product of

design. If you design it properly, density will follow" (Byles 2010a).

Suburban communities interested in pursuing high density development

different from the conventional suburban style, need to have a commitment to

placemaking. The Patchogue business district is building itself up as a "place" or

an area that attracts people to stay, shop, or work (Chatman and DiPetrillo 2010).

Patchogue's commitment to placemaking is evident by the redevelopment of

vacant and underutilized parcels in the downtown core, and by the creation of anchor sites that give some structure to Main Street. Overall, the New Village project blends into a series of prior projects that encompasses a larger plan and vision for downtown Patchogue.[36] Physically, the site plan utilizes the existing grid-like street network to seamlessly integrate into the surrounding environs. By incorporating retail, office, and high density residential uses into the New Village development, the economic impact from the project is expected to be largely positive for the downtown commercial district.

At the moment, Huntington Station's village core could only be considered a transit "node", or an area used as a waypoint on a journey that has no particular draw (Chatman and DiPetrillo 2010). While AvalonBay was billing itself as a TOD, a true TOD has a mix of residential and commercial land uses in close proximity to a transit station. However, AvalonBay had neither the mix of land uses nor the integration into the surrounding heart of the Huntington Station community. "Avalon was simply an isolated, gated community, minus the gate (Stanley 2010). What they were building was essentially a denser version of existing auto-oriented suburban subdivisions.

One interviewee thought that instead of the Town making significant enough efforts to revitalize Huntington Station, residents have only seen "more multifamily housing shoehorned in". He thought that commercial or "village

---

style" development would have been more accepted by the residents.[37] However, some thought that the project would not have supported a retail component. A Huntington elected official stated in an interview, "retail wouldn't have worked. This was used as an excuse. No developer would have even tried. People in the area wanted to put commercial in to clean up the area, but commercial doesn't get built without people in the area first."[38]

The Suffolk County Planning Commission's review of the AvalonBay and HSTOD application took note of these issues. From the minutes of this meeting, some members expressed concern that a project of this density did not have a downtown that would provide personal services within walking distance. They also wondered why there was no mention of mixed use or retail in the zoning district itself. While for this specific AvalonBay project retail might not have been appropriate, mixed use development should have been discussed as part of the broader TOD zoning classification.

AvalonBay Update

As Eric Alexander director of the smart growth advocacy non-profit Vision Long Island said, Avalon Bay was "one of the most rancorous public policy debates I have ever witnessed…this will be a case study for years to come of a local-development decision gone awry"(Koubek 2010). Yet not all was lost for AvalonBay. In March 2011, AvalonBay, resubmitted a development plan for

---

[37] Director of a Smart Growth Non-profit. Interview with Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. April 28, 2011.
[38] Huntington Elected Official. Interview with Jeanette Rebecchi. Phone Interview. May 11, 2011.

379 units, of which 80 percent were rental units. This application included a request to rezone the property from R-7 single-family residential to an existing multifamily housing zoning classification, R3M garden apartment special district, that allows 14.5 units per acre. AvalonBay officials say the revised plans are nearly identical in density to its other two developments in Huntington. The lower density project was feasible only after AvalonBay renegotiated a lower price with the Bonavita family, the owners of the parcel, and removed some community benefits such as the $1.5 million one-time-payment to the Town.

Recently, in June 2011, the Huntington Town Board approved this scaled down version of the project in a 4-1 vote. Town Board member Mark Mayoka was the sole board member to vote against the project a second time. The only words offered by the Board over what changed their mind, was from board member Mark Cuthbertson who originally voted against the project. He said he was "glad a new proposal has been submitted that complies with current zoning codes" (Morris 2011).

However, little has changed in terms of resident opposition as the Greater Huntington Civic Group is preparing a lawsuit against the Town of Huntington's decision to rezone the 26 acre parcel to allow multifamily housing. President of the organization, Steve Spruces commented that "we feel that the Town Board did not act in good faith, did not follow proper protocol and there is zero public benefit to the current AvalonBay project in Huntington Station"(Gross 2011). It remains to be seen whether this lawsuit will further stall the AvalonBay project.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

With a growing population sprawling ever outward from our country's metropolitan areas, the solution in many urban planning circles is to start building upward, particularly in our nation's suburbs. Thoughtful higher density building that utilizes mixed-use development and public transit is one way to revitalize and beautify suburban areas that have for too long relied on "strip" style development and single family home subdivisions. However, while suburban smart growth projects are gaining in popularity, these types of higher density infill projects face significant barriers during the municipal review and permitting phase.

The literature discussed in Chapter 3 commonly cites zoning and regulatory issues, lack of leadership by local officials, poor outreach and communication amongst stakeholders, and community opposition as significant barriers to higher density infill development. What was ultimately found during the case study analysis of two Long Island, New York developments was that while both projects did comparable levels of community outreach, other important factors appeared to impact success or failure. Besides the usual barriers mentioned above, what was found was that historic and contemporary events, social media, municipal procedure, government structure and leadership, and the design of the project all appeared to play a role in the level of resident acceptance and the ultimate decision by the local board.

In the case of Huntington Station, you have a community that's been on the decline for many years with a history of unfilled promises of revitalization.

When the developers and the Town Board tried to pair the creation of a broader TOD rezoning with the approval of a much denser multi-family housing development, local residents went up in arms. They used social media and the internet to reach out to their constituents. While this lead to an increase in community participation and debate at public meetings, it also spread misinformation and inflamed the conflict. What resulted in the months leading up to the Board's decision was a deeply divided community with those in closer proximity to the development typically being against the project. Three out of five members were ultimately pressured to vote against the project and the new Huntington Station TOD zoning. Much disagreement could have perhaps been prevented if local leaders followed better municipal procedure by not linking AvalonBay to the larger TOD zoning and having the Board commission their own impact study.

In comparison, Patchogue was in the middle of revitalizing their downtown. Under the direction of a politically strong Mayor and Village Board, several other high density projects had recently been successfully completed. The Tritec project itself occupies a prominent corner of Main Street which had been sitting vacant for over ten years. To many residents and local businesses a mixed-use development on the scale of the New Village looked promising. While the removal of the hotel component and the lower parking requirements did cause some concern amongst community members, it appeared that the majority of local residents and business owners supported this project. Additionally, because the Board approved the new higher density rezoning designation months ahead of

time and paid outside consultants to examine the impacts of the project, the

approval of the New Village project seemed politically viable.

Debate and opposition are always a part of a democratic development

process. Typically, community outreach by the developer and the municipality

will address most concerns by local residents. Yet in the case of AvalonBay, no

matter how well-crafted the outreach effort was, no matter how many times a

developer met with the public, community outreach seemed to have little to no

effect on AvalonBay opponents. However, there are a number of different

elements that can come together to make a successful high density suburban

development project. These include proactive leadership, community ownership,

preemptive planning, and in this case, careful control of media distortion. The

following are a set of recommendations for developers and local officials looking

to implement higher density suburban land use projects in their communities.

Recommendations for Local Officials

Many development projects face opposition, and all have their fair share

of critics, yet "the difference between success and failure is largely a result of the

actions that take place in anticipation of and during opposition" (Chatman and

DiPetrillo 2010, 12). In the traditional public process, by the time officials hold

public hearings, the development plan has nearly been finalized. The concerns of

local residents usually have "not found its way into the development program, and

citizens could only evaluate the plan after it was refined enough for the

developers to formally apply for a zone change or for other development

approvals" (Porter et al., 1985, 49). This is damaging to developers who are

outsiders coming into a community proposing significant changes to the landscape and character of the area, since they are banking on community support well into the final stages of their development project. While this may not always be a gamble since some communities have more affinity for vertical growth than others. Yet in areas where vertical growth is less popular, it is important for local leaders do outreach ahead of time and manage the approval process properly.

In order to avoid protests at every project proposal, residents must first be supportive of the regulations that allow an increase in the intensity of development. A relevant expression in this case, is "listen before leading". By holding community visioning and planning meetings residents themselves are stepping forward and charting their own course, leaving them more likely to feel in control of the future of their community. By addressing the possibility of high density rezoning, well before controversial proposals come to the table, residents are more likely to be supportive of new development (Smart Growth Vermont n.d.). This community engagement naturally segues into the local government formally adopting well-vetted land use plans and zoning changes. These documents lay the foundation for future growth, and "allow important community issues to be addressed in a more orderly and comprehensive way than reacting to development proposals. In this way, any subsequent projects that are consistent with an adopted plan could be more efficiently permitted" (Parker et al., 2002, 143).

During the actual development process, fostering community ownership of the project and publically financing impact studies, particularly for zoning

changes, will support the final judgment on politically divided issues. Local

officials, as in the case of Patchogue, can further resident acceptance by hiring an

outside consultant to render an opinion independent of the developer and the

elected board. By hiring an outside consultant and actually adhering to their

recommendations, elected officials can make informed and accurate decisions for

their community, and gain political coverage for less popular developments. This

is especially helpful in cases when it is difficult to judge whether negative

resident opinions represent a vocal minority or the majority opinion.

Recommendations for Developers

Developers need to pick their project sites carefully by assessing the local

development climate. Before embarking on a development project, developers

should evaluate the current and historic background of the local community. In

the case of AvalonBay, local decisions were affected by a divided community

with its past and present problems, and weak political players. Patchogue on the

other hand, had a pattern of strong leadership and successful development projects

which paved the way for success. Additionally, whether or not the community has

clear land use goals as part of a resident-approved comprehensive plan is also an

important determination of whether developers should invest their time and

money in a project that may not comport with actual community aspirations.

Even if comprehensive plans are up to date, developers themselves should

also spend a little time assessing community needs and concerns before

promoting a particular project. According to AvalonBay developer Christopher

Capece, by soliciting feedback during the "quiet" months preceding a proposal

announcement, developers can marshal political and community support and assuage any longstanding concerns, "so that everybody has some type of ownership of the project" (Yan 2010). Time well spent researching the community may save enormous sums of money down the road. Agenda items could include:

- Conduct a series of focus groups to identify residents' core concerns;

- Meet with community groups early in the project and throughout its planning phase to understand neighbors' concerns and engage them in project planning;

- Keep in touch: create a newsletter and/or website that has been developed to update residents as the project progresses (Urban Land Institute 2000)

Finally, developers cannot ignore technological advances in communication, and the organizing power of the internet. Things such as Facebook, email distribution lists, blogging, are becoming more ubiquitous. The events that happened in Huntington were such a wake-up call to the local development industry, that in November 2010, Long Island's four big industry trade groups sponsored a symposium titled "Social Media and Real Estate Development" at Hofstra University. They found that "much like politicians in a campaign, developers must manage social media distortion quickly" (Yan and Morris 2010). With centralized sites such as Facebook, information (true or false) can be distributed rapidly and meetings announced. The online community also provides a support group for those who might not ordinarily participate in town politics, showing them how, when, and where they can voice their opinions.

To solely rely on in-person communication is to lose control of the community outreach process. It is necessary for developers to spearhead the information distribution as well as provide time, or in this case virtual space, for the community to comment and ask questions. Creating and monitoring a project website with a community forum, will engage residents in an open, honest, and fair discussion, without letting overly vocal opinions dominate the debate.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

Because this thesis only examined two development projects in one region, it is far from representative of what is happening in all suburban communities across the country. To examine the barriers facing higher density suburban development projects further, it is recommended that a survey be conducted sampling a wide swath of suburban municipalities and developers regarding what barriers they believe are in place against these types of projects. Conducting additional in-depth case studies in varying metropolitan regions will also provide a more in-depth analysis. Overall, this thesis is a beginning not an end to better understanding how to build denser in established suburban communities, something that will need to happen as our population grows and demographics change.

Bibliography

Active Living Research. "Fast Facts." Active Living Research, accessed August 1, 2010, http://www.activelivingresearch.org/resourcesearch/resourcesforpolicymakers/fastfacts.

Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center. 2010. "Gateway to Fire Island, Patchogue Redevelops through TOD." *Transit Oriented Development Newsletter* 1 (1). http://policy.rutgers.edu/vtc/tod/metronytod/vol1-No1/MetroTODVol1-Num1.pdf.

Alexander, Don and Ray Tomalty. 2002. "Smart Growth and Sustainable Development: Challenges, Solutions and Policy Directions." *Local Environment* 7 (4): 397.

Alexander, Eric. 2010. "OPINION: Yes, Long Island can Get Development done." *Newsday*, September 30, 2010. http://www.newsday.com/opinion/oped/opinion-yes-long-island-can-get-development-done-1.2327437.

Belzer, Dena and Gerald Autler. 2002. *Transit Oriented Development: Moving from Rhetoric to Reality* : The Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy.http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Files/rc/reports/2002/06cities_dena%20belzer%20and%20gerald%20autler/belzertod.pdf.

Brown, Barbara and Vivian Cropper. 2001. "New Urban and Standard Suburban Subdivisions: Evaluating Psychological and Social Goals." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 67 (4): 402.

Byles, Jeff. 2010a. "Rebooting the Burbs." *The Architect's Newspaper*, March 17, 2010. http://archpaper.com/news/articles.asp?id=4354.

Byles, Jeff. 2010b. "Up from Nowhere." *The Architect's Newspaper*, March 17, 2010. http://archpaper.com/news/articles.asp?id=4343.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. 2004. *Residential Intensification Case Studies: Built Projects*. Canada: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/odpub/pdf/63440.pdf?fr=1296068105000.

Chatman, Daniel and Stephanie DiPetrillo. 2010. *Eliminating Barriers to Transit-Oriented Development*: New Jersey Department of Transportation Bureau of Research and U. S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration. http://policy.rutgers.edu/vtc/tod/documents/FHWA-NJ-2010-002%20Eliminating%20Barriers%20to%20Transit-Oriented%20Development.pdf.

Corbin, Juliet and Anselm Strauss. 2008. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. 3rd ed. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.

Danielsen, Karen, Robert Lang, and William Fulton. 1999. "Retracting Suburbia: Smart Growth and the Future of Housing." *Housing Policy Debate* 10 (3).

DiNicola, Marion. 2011. "Young Adult Alliance Supports Four Corners Proposal." *Patchogue Patch*, March 10. http://patchogue.patch.com/articles/young-adult-alliance-presented-new-village-proposal.

Eltman, Frank. 2010. "Developers using Social Media to Fight Opponents." *Long Island Press*, November 27. http://www.longislandpress.com/2010/11/27/developers-using-social-media-to-fight-opponents/.

ERASE Racism. 2005. *Long Island Fair Housing: A State of Inequity* . Syosset, NY: ERASE Racism. http://www.eraseracismny.org/html/library/housing/resources/published_reports/Long_Island_Fair_Housing_A_State_of_Inequity.pdf.

Ewing, Reid. 1997. "Is Los Angeles-Style Sprawl Desirable?" *Journal of the American Planning Association* 63 (1): 107.

Farris, J. Terrence. 2001. "The Barriers to using Urban Infill Development to Achieve Smart Growth." *Housing Policy Debate* 12 (1): 1.

Fischler, Marcelle. 2010. "A Rift Over Transit-Housing Plan." *New York Times*, September 17. http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/19/realestate/19lizo.html?_r=2&ref=realestate.

Gaber, John and Sharon Gaber. 2007. *Qualitative Analysis for Planning and Policy: Beyond the Numbers*. Chicago: Planners Press, American Planning Association.

Galvin, Robert and Heidi Gorman. 2008. *What about our Schools?*: Urbanomics & Edison Exchange. http://policy.rutgers.edu/vtc/tod/newsletter/vol4-num2/What_About_Our_Schools.pdf.

Geismar, Erin. 2011. "Final Push for Downtown Patchogue Project." *Newsday*, January 6, 2011. http://www.newsday.com/long-island/towns/long-island-now-1.1732330/final-push-for-downtown-patchogue-project-1.2591636.

Genn, Adina. 2010. "AvalonBay Remains Committed to Long Island." *Huntington Patch*, September 22. http://huntington.patch.com/articles/avalon-bay-still-committed-to-long-island.

Gross, Arlene. 2011. "Civic Leader Says Group Suing Town Over AvalonBay." *Times Beacon Media*, July 7, 2011. http://www.northshoreoflongisland.com/Articles-i-2011-07-07-88872.112114-sub-Civic-leader-says-group-suing-town-over-AvalonBay.html.

Guyer, Kelleen. 2011. "Op-Ed: Letter to Mayor and Trustees on New Village Project." *Patchogue Patch*. http://patchogue.patch.com/articles/op-ed-letter-to-mayor-and-trustees-on-new-village-project.

Haughey, Richard. 2005. *High Density Development: Myth and Fact*. Washington, D.C.: ULI–the Urban Land Institute.

http://www.uli.org/sitecore/content/ULI2Home/ResearchAndPublications/Reports/Affordable%20Housing/Content/~/media/Documents/ResearchAndPublications/Reports/Affordable%20Housing/HigherDensity_MythFact.ashx.

Hogan, Matthew. 2010a. "AvalonBay Continues Push into Huntington Station." *Huntington Patch*, August 12. http://huntington.patch.com/articles/avalonbay-continues-push-into-huntington-station#c.

Hogan, Matthew. 2010b. "Many Still Say No to AvalonBay Huntington Station." Huntington Patch, August 18. http://huntington.patch.com/articles/huntington-residents-say-no-to-avalonbay

Huberman, Michael and Matthew Miles. 2004. *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*. Sage Publications.

Huntington Town Board. 2010a. *Official Town Board Minutes.* Public Hearing. March 9, 2010 Town Board Meeting sess., .

Huntington Town Board. 2010b. *Official Town Board Minutes.* September 7, 2010 sess., .

Idaho Smart Growth. *The Consequences of Residential Infill Development on Existing Neighborhoods in the Treasure Valley*. Boise, ID: Idaho Smart Growth & ULI Idaho. http://www.idahosmartgrowth.org/images/uploads/files/uliisg_infill_report.pdf.

Jacobs, F. and J. Kapuscik. 2000. *Evaluating Family Preservation Services: A Guide for State Administrators.* Medford, MA: Tufts University.

Jenks, Christopher. 2005. "Transit-Oriented Development: Developing a Strategy to Measure Success." *Research Results Digest* (294).

Kamer, Pearl. 2008. *The Economic Impact of the Proposed Tritec Mixed-use Development in Downtown Patchogue* : Freudenthal & Elkowitz Consulting Group, INC. http://www.patchoguevillage.org/DEIS/Appendices/Appendix%20K.pdf.

Koubek, Richard. 2010. *Letter to Huntington Housing Coalition Members*. http://huntingtonhousingcoalition.org/uploaddir/Letter%20from%20Dick%20Koubek.pdf.

Kurtzberg, Brad. 2010. "Community Searches for Common Ground After AvalonBay" *Huntington Patch*, November 29. http://huntington.patch.com/articles/community-searches-for-common-ground-after-avalon-bay-2.

Learner, Jonathan. 2010. "How Urban Planning can Improve Public Health." *Miller-McCune*, April 28. http://www.miller-mccune.com/health/how-urban-planning-can-improve-public-health-11408/.

Letter to the Editor. "More Rentals Good for Patchogue." 2011. *Newsday*, March 4. http://www.newsday.com/opinion/more-rentals-good-for-patchogue-1.2732844.

Lewis, Paul and Mark Baldassare. 2010. "The Complexity of Public Attitudes Toward Compact Development." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 76 (2): 219.

Logan, Gregg, Stephanie Siejka, and Shyam Kannan. *The Market for Smart Growth*: Robert Charles Lesser and Company, LLC. http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/pdf/logan.pdf.

Machell, Erin, Troy Reinhalter, and Karen Chapple. 2010. *Building Support for Transit-Oriented Development: Do Community-Engagement Toolkits Work?*. Berkeley, California: University of California Transportation Center. http://www.uctc.net/research/papers/UCTC-FR-2010-16.pdf.

McConnell, Virginia and Keith Wiley. 2010. *Infill Development: Perspectives and Evidence from Economics and Planning*. Washington, D.C.: Resources for the Future. http://www.rff.org/rff/documents/RFF-DP-10-13.pdf.

Moore, Elizabeth. "Tritec buying Patchogue site". *Newsday*. August 27, 2007. http://www.newsday.com/business/technology/tritec-buying-patchogue-site-1.519359

Morris, Deborah. 2011. "AvalonBay Revises Huntington Station Proposal." *Newsday*, March 8, 2011. http://www.licanys.org/news.php?article=263.

Morris, Deborah. 2010. "Board Members: Avalon Bay Project Needs to be Less Dense." *Newsday*, September 22. http://www.newsday.com/long-island/suffolk/board-members-avalon-bay-project-needs-to-be-less-dense-1.2308989.

Mulderrig, Rosey. 2010a. "AvalonBay + Huntington Station = HuntingtonBayStation?." *Village Tatler*, May 28, 2010. http://villagetattler.com/2010/05/28/avalonbay-huntington-station-huntingtonbaystation/.

Mulderrig, Rosey. 2010b. "Town Board Rebuffs Mayoka's Call for Moratorium, Will Move Forward with Avalon Vote in Two Weeks." *Long Island Progress Coalition*, September 7. http://lipc.org/news/2010/09/07/town-board-rebuffs-mayoka%E2%80%99s-call-for-moratorium-will-move-forward-with-avalon-vote-in-two-weeks/.

Nolan, Mark. 2009. "A "Village within the Village": County Promises $3.75 Million to Four Corners Redevelopment." *The Long Island Advance*, January 29, 2009. http://www.longislandadvance.net/uploaded/adv%201-29-09.pdf.

Nolan, Mark. 2010. "Patchogue's Economic Linchpin: Renovated Wastewater Treatment Plant seen as Key to Future Growth." *The Long Island Advance*, February 11, 2010. http://www.longislandadvance.net/uploaded/adv%202-11-10.pdf.

Obrinsky, Mark and Debra Stein. 2007. *Overcoming Opposition to Multifamily Rental Housing*. Washington, D.C.: The National Multi Housing Council. http://www.nmhc.org/Content/ServeFile.cfm?FileID=5717.

Parker, Terry, Mike McKeever, GB Arrington, and Janet Smith-Heimer. 2002. *Statewide Transit-Oriented Development Study: Factors for Success in California*: California Department of Transportation. http://transitorienteddevelopment.dot.ca.gov/PDFs/Statewide%20TOD%20Study%20Final%20Report%20Sept.%2002.pdf.

Patchogue Board of Trustees. 2008a. *Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes.* January 14, 2008 sess., . http://www.patchoguevillage.org/minutes/pdf/2008%20Minutes/1.14.08MINUTES.pdf.

Patchogue Board of Trustees. 2008b. *Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes.* September 8, 2008 sess., . http://www.patchoguevillage.org/minutes/pdf/2008%20Minutes/2008%20Board%20Meeting%2009%2008%202008.pdf.

Patchogue Board of Trustees. 2008c. *Patchogue Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes.* April 21, 2008 sess., . http://www.patchoguevillage.org/minutes/pdf/2008%20Minutes/4.21.08%20SPEC%20MTG.pdf.

Patchogue Board of Trustees. 2011a. *Patchogue Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes.* January 10, 2011 sess., . http://www.patchoguevillage.org/minutes/2011/Board%20Meeting%20January%2010%202011.pdf.

Patchogue Board of Trustees. 2011b. *Patchogue Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes.* January 24, 2011 sess., . http://www.patchoguevillage.org/minutes/2011/BOARD_MEETING%20January%2024%202011.pdf.

Patchogue Board of Trustees. 2011c. *Patchogue Board of Trustees, Tritec Special Meeting Minutes.* March 10, 2011 sess., . http://www.patchoguevillage.org/minutes/2011/2011%20SPECIAL%20BOARD%20MEETING%20Trictec%203%2010%202011.pdf.

Polsky, Carol. "Planning advocates can't sway opposition to Avalon Bay". *Newsday.* September 21, 2010. http://www.newsday.com/long-island/suffolk/planning-advocates-can-t-sway-opposition-to-avalon-bay-1.2307867

Porter, Douglas, Patrick Phillips, and Colleen Grogan Moore. 1985. *Working with the Community: A Developers Guide*. Community Builders Handbook Supplement Series. Vol. ULI Catalog Number W-14. Washington, D.C.: ULI- Urban Land Institue.

Project for Public Spaces. 2008. *Streets as Places: Using Streets to Rebuild Communities*. New York, NY: Project for Public Spaces. http://www.pps.org/pdf/bookstore/Using_Streets_to_Rebuild_Communities.pdf.

Schreiber, Kenneth, Gary Binger, and Dennis Church. 2004. *Higher-Density Plans: Tools for Community Engagement*. San Jose, CA: Mineta Transportation Institute. http://transweb.sjsu.edu/mtiportal/research/publications/documents/03-02/mti_03-02.pdf.

Schreiber, Kenneth, Gary Binger, and Dennis Church . 2003. *Making Growth Work for California's Communities*. San Jose, CA: Mineta Transportation Institute. http://transweb.sjsu.edu/mtiportal/research/publications/documents/02-01.pdf.

Smart Growth Vermont. *Community Rules: A New England Guide to Smart Growth Strategies*. Burlington, VT: Smart Growth Vermont. http://www.smartgrowthvermont.org/help/publications/communityrules/.

Sorrentino, Michael. 2010. "Jim Morgo, Revitalized: Brookhaven Economic Development Coordinator on Patchogue's Renaissance." *Patchogue Patch*, June 29. http://patchogue.patch.com/articles/video-jim-morgo-revitalized#c.

Stanley, Matt. 2010. "Avalon Bay a Bad Fit for Huntington." *Newsday*, October 5, 2010. http://www.newsday.com/opinion/letters/letters-nassau-gop-avalon-bay-red-light-cameras-1.2338436.

Suffolk County Department of Planning. 2002. *Village of Patchogue Downtown Business District Study*. Hauppauge, New York: Suffolk County Department of Planning. http://www.co.suffolk.ny.us/upload/planning/pdfs/PatchogueCBDReport_nomaps_noapp.pdf.

Suffolk County Planning Commission. 2000. *Smart Communties through Smart Growth: Applying Smart Growth Principles to Suffolk County Towns and Villages*. Hauppauge, NY: Suffolk County Planning Commission.

Suffolk County Planning Commission. 2010. *Suffolk County Planning Commission Meeting Minutes*. March 3, 2010 sess., . http://www.suffolkcountyny.gov/upload/planning/pdfs2/scplanning_com/2010_pdf/scpc030310.pdf.

Sustainable Long Island. "Dear Supervisor Petrone and Members of the Huntington Town Board." Facebook, accessed September 7, 2010, http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=149077385124900.

Teaford, Jon. 2006. *The Metropolitan Revolution: The Rise of Post-Urban America*. New York: Columbia University Press.

The Long Island Progressive Coalition. *Long Island 2020: A Greenprint for a Sustainable Long Island*. Massapequa, NY: The Long Island Progressive Coalition. lipc.org/publications/Long%20Island%202020.pdf.

The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. "Physical Activity Facts." , accessed May 20, 2011, http://www.fitness.gov/resources_factsheet.htm.

Town of Huntington. 2008. *Horizons 2020: Comprehensive Plan Update and Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement*. Huntington, NY: Town of Huntington. http://town.huntington.ny.us/permit_pics/872.pdf.

Tritec Real Estate Company. Accessed September 12, 2011, www.newvillagepatchogue.com.

University of Massachusetts Amherst. 2007. *Density through Design Research Report: Factors Driving Community Opposition to Residential Density*: University of Massachusetts Amherst. http://www.sudbury.ma.us/departments/PCD/doc3824/DensitybyDesign-CommunityOppositionReport.pdf.

Urban Land Institute. 2000. *Summary Report: National Forum on Encouraging Market-Rate Infill Housing Development*. Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute. http://www.uli.org/ResearchAndPublications/Reports/~/media/Documents/Research AndPublications/Reports/Affordable%20Housing/MarketRateInfill.ashx.

US Census Bureau. 2010a. *2005-2009 American Community Survey Huntington Station CDP, New York Fact Sheet* American FactFinder.

US Census Bureau. 2010b. *2005-2009 American Community Survey Patchogue Village, New York Fact Sheet* American FactFinder.

US Census Bureau. 2000. *GCT-PH1. Population, Housing Units, Area, and Density: 2000* American FactFinder.

U.S. Census Bureau & the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. 1999. *1999 American Housing Survey*. Washington D.C.

VHB Engineering, Surveying and Landscape Architecture, P.C. 2010a. *Re: Avalon at Huntington Station Responses to Questions Raised at Public Hearing*. Hauppauge, NY: VHB. http://town.huntington.ny.us/permit_pics/1063.pdf.

VHB Engineering, Surveying and Landscape Architecture, P.C. 2010b. *Voluntary Draft Environmental Impact Statement*. Hauppauge, NY: VHB Engineering, Surveying and Landscape Architecture, P.C. http://town.huntington.ny.us/permit_pics/987.pdf.

Village Tattler. 2010. "Let's all be Huntingtonians - Town Hall Debate Over Avalon Bay, Downzoning Vote Postponed." *Village Tatler*, July 7. http://villagetattler.com/2010/07/07/lets-all-be-huntingtonians-town-hall-meeting-debate-over-avalon-bay-downzoning-vote-postponed/.

Wheeler, Stephen. 2002. *Smart Infill: Creating More Livable Communities in the Bay Area*: Green Belt Alliance. http://www.greenbelt.org/downloads/resources/report_smartinfill.pdf.

Whittle, Patrick. 2010. "Huntington Town Board Likely to Reject Avalon Bay Plan." *Newsday*, September 15. http://www.newsday.com/long-island/suffolk/huntington-town-board-likely-to-reject-avalon-bay-plan-1.2293431?p=.

Whittle, Patrick. 2011. "Patchogue Trustees OK Downtown Development." *Newsday*, March 10, 2011. http://www.newsday.com/long-island/suffolk/patchogue-trustees-ok-downtown-development-1.2749865.

Winslow, Olivia. 2010. "Avalon Bay Developer Seeks Help from LI Planning Council." *Newsday*, September 14, 2010. http://www.newsday.com/long-island/suffolk/avalon-bay-developer-seeks-help-from-li-planning-council-1.2289784.

Winzelberg, David. 2009. "Mixed-use Project Gets Green Light in Patchogue." *Long Island Business Network*. http://libn.com/blog/2009/05/15/mixed-use-project-gets-green-light-in-patchogue.

Yan, Ellen. 2010. "Developers' Panel Ponders Huntington Station Rejection." *Newsday*, September 22, 2010. http://www.newsday.com/business/developers-panel-ponders-huntington-station-rejection-1.2309854.

Yan, Ellen and Deborah Morris. 2010. "AvalonBay Opponents Won by using Social Media." *Newsday*, September 29, 2010. http://www.newsday.com/long-island/suffolk/avalonbay-opponents-won-by-using-social-media-1.2324607.