

# the history of Sustainable Long Island

***In 1996, a group of environmentalists, civil rights advocates, philanthropists, developers, business people, and civic leaders came together.***

Having reached their tipping point, they were frustrated by the economic, social, and environmental problems faced by those living and working on Long Island. Despite individual efforts to make improvements, things were getting worse rather than better.

As the need to protect Long Island's diverse population, this group of leaders realized they couldn't continue to solve problems individually – they needed a new approach. Together, they had a chance at developing a model that would bring about positive change by working side-by-side.

***Determined to improve the region, they formed Sustainable Long Island.***

Sustainable Long Island realized that there are some basic needs that all Long Islanders from every community have a right to—the right to a healthy environment and thriving economy. All Long Islanders should have access to public transportation; clean land, water and air; a racially diverse population; parks, community centers and other recreational opportunities; a range of housing options; thriving downtowns; trees and grass, safe streets and neighborhoods; access to quality and affordable food and employment opportunities. These elements are what make up sustainability and despite different backgrounds; those who helped build our organization recognized that the sustainable movement was the solution to their respective causes.

***In 1998, the term "sustainability" was not on anyone's radar...***

and Sustainable Long Island's efforts put the issue on the map. The organization educated the public, politicians, and leaders way before 'sustainability' became the buzzword it is today. They pushed to build an agenda that would create positive change in communities. They developed a course of action in which business leaders, clergy, civic associations, community members sit at the table with their respective town government in order to plan for the future.

The formation of Sustainable Long Island set the wheels in motion for a brand new approach to growth on Long Island. Today, we have facilitated downtown revitalization efforts in numerous communities, advised elected officials at all levels, linked tens of millions of dollars in investment with communities in need, and emerged as the regional leader of projects involving brownfield redevelopment and food access.

***More so, Sustainable Long Island has helped make the concept of sustainable development – a model of economic growth that will protect Long Island's diverse people and resources – a regional paradigm.***

