

EDITORIALS

\$53M for college a wise investment

Some requests made during Albany's budget process require debate, and some draw opposition. Then there are others that are must-do. The need for \$53 million in state funds for a new academic building at Farmingdale State College falls into this category. The college has grown steadily over the last decade, and enrollment stands at about 10,000, compared with about 6,500 a decade ago. It is a Long Island success story. Now classrooms are filled to capacity.

A 40,000-square-foot building has been proposed to enable the college to enroll up to 1,000 more students and to cluster together departments, including applied psychology, applied economics and geographic information systems, all skills local employers are demanding.

But this isn't important just to the former agricultural school on Route 110. Farmingdale State College's growth is tied to the Island's economic growth. Its success boosts the region's efforts to keep young workers here, to create connections between educational institutions and employers, and to add tax revenue. About 80 percent of Farmingdale's recent graduates live on Long Island and work in the region, the college reports.

And beyond Long Island, colleges across the state should see the demand for Farmingdale's programs, and the growth it hopes to accommodate, as a model worth replicating.

Funds for the new building weren't in Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo's initial budget, so local Assembs. Steve Stern and Kimberly Jean-Pierre and State Sen. John Brooks are leading a push to get the money included.

Albany should approve this investment in Long Island's future.

— *The editorial board*

Tax to support housing could be a model for LI

Another intriguing proposal to address the shameful lack of housing that is affordable for all of Long Island's workforce has arisen on the East End. The concept and the promoter are familiar.

Assemb. Fred Thiele is modeling this new plan on legislation he co-sponsored with Sen. Ken LaValle two decades ago for the wildly successful Community Preservation Fund for things like open-space acquisition. It comes after an innovative plan pitched recently by Southampton Town to reduce housing costs by allowing homeowners to get permits for accessory apartments with rent and income restrictions.

Thiele's legislation, which also is being introduced by LaValle, would authorize the five East End towns to levy a 0.5 percent real estate transfer tax and use the money to build affordable housing including, most important, rentals, and offer no-interest loans to first-time home buyers, among other options. The trades and service staff workers who make the tourist economy function are priced out of the area. Towns would opt in to the program, and need voter approval. The money — an estimated \$20 million per year for Southampton, East Hampton, Southold, Riverhead and Shelter Island — could make a real difference.

Not only the East End has an affordability issue. Long Island's other eight towns should take a hard look at these ideas, too. Long Island's affordability conundrum lingers. It's time to create sensible plans to make Long Island a place where Long Islanders can afford to live.

— *The editorial board*

CORRECTION: The NYU Long Island School of Medicine plans to admit 40 students per class annually starting with the 2023-24 academic year. The number and timing were incorrect in an editorial on Monday.

MATT DAVIES



■ See more Matt Davies cartoons: newsday.com/matt

LETTERS

Where next for the New York Islanders?

Randi F. Marshall's column is well written, but I believe building an arena for the New York Islanders at Belmont Park would be a mistake — or Brooklyn Part II ["Without Belmont, goodbye Isles," *Opinion*, Feb. 22].

Yes, the Nassau Coliseum, as it is, is not an NHL-caliber arena, but as they say in real estate, location, location, location. I am a fan since the days when the Long Island Ducks hockey team played in the original barn, the Long Island Arena in Commack.

What bothers Long Island fans the most is the trek to Brooklyn, not Barclays Center itself. Most Islanders fans are from Nassau and Suffolk counties. We drive to get around. To drive to Belmont via the Cross Island parking lot — uh, Parkway — would be a nightmare on game

days. And taking the train is less comfortable and less convenient than driving. That's the problem with Brooklyn!

Update the Coliseum or follow Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone's plan for an arena in Ronkonkoma. Those are the best options for Islanders fans.

Joe Rossi,
West Babylon

Former Hempstead Supervisor Kate Murray is running for town clerk ["GOP tabs candidates for Hempstead posts," *News*, Feb. 20].

There's lots of irony here. After Murray and town officials denied the Islanders' plan to improve the Coliseum and build around it, the team survived being run out of town to Brooklyn. Now that the team is playing part time at the old arena, there are sell-outs nearly every game.

Glenn Tyranski,
Huntington

Musings on LIRR rider misbehavior

The Feb. 18 news story "Bad behavior and the 'share' option," about the Long Island Rail Road, rang my bell.

Stop focusing on rider behavior. I am offended! I ride the train perhaps once a month from Ronkonkoma to Penn Station. Seats are too small to be comfortable, fares are too high when you compare shared costs in carpooling, and service needs expansion, such as the Mastic train, which needs to run more frequently.

In addition, parking can be difficult. For example, my wife and I tried to park at the Ronkonkoma station around 11 a.m. on Feb. 13, but the garage was full and one lot was closed, so we drove to the city instead.

As for your list of misbehaviors, LIRR conditions bring out the "bad" in riders.