

Trade group: Post-Sandy rebuilding is chance for multifamily units

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The destruction from superstorm Sandy gives [Long Island](#) an opportunity to diversify its housing stock and build more multifamily units, the head of the state's largest building association said Friday.

"Sandy gives us an opportunity in many places to do things we would've never been able to do -- to allow for multifamily housing on a larger scale," said Mitch Pally, chief executive of the Long Island Builders Institute, at the Seventh Annual Sustainability Conference.

Young people between the ages of 23 and 30 have been moving off the Island for years, opting to live in places like New York City and Boston, due largely to a dearth of a multifamily housing here, he said.

"Unfortunately, the only non-single-family homes we can offer them at the moment is Mom's and Dad's basements," Pally said.

Once these young folks leave the Island, Pally said, it's unlikely they will return when they are ready to settle down, have children and buy single-family homes.

Sustainable Long Island, a [Farmingdale](#)-based nonprofit focused on economic development and environmental health, devoted this year's conference to Sandy.

Policymakers as well as business and community leaders came to Carlyle on The Green in [Bethpage](#) to listen and discuss how to rebuild better.

"This post-hurricane Sandy world contains thousands of homeowners who face financial struggle for rebuilding their lives and homes," said [Nassau](#) County Executive Edward Mangano, the keynote speaker. "To this day they are not back in their homes or suitable housing."

Policymakers at the village, town and county levels must work together to build infrastructure such as sewers and come up with solutions to meet the demand for multifamily housing, Pally said. They must think of how to build differently.

"You don't need a lot of land. You can go up," Pally said. "To Long Island, anything over three stories is like a disaster area."

For those who believe higher is not better, Pally pointed to [Long Beach](#), where taller buildings sustained less damage when Sandy came to shore.

Some communities are beginning to see the benefits of having multifamily housing in places such as [Mineola](#), Farmingdale and [Wyandanch](#), Pally said.