



Downtown Revitalization Initiative

APPLICATION

Applications for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative will be received by the Regional Councils. Applicant responses for each section should be as complete and succinct as possible. Applications should be submitted as Word documents and must be received by the appropriate Regional Council by 4:00 PM on September 3, 2021 at the email address provided at the end of this application. Application guidance is provided in the *Downtown Revitalization Initiative Guidebook* found on the DRI website at www.ny.gov/dri.

BASIC INFORMATION

Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Region: New York City

Municipality Name: Brooklyn

Downtown Name: Broadway Junction

County Name: Kings

Vision for Downtown. Provide a brief statement of the municipality's vision for downtown revitalization.

To tap into the potential of the Broadway Junction hub by bringing meaningful job creation and quality-of-life enhancements to the community that includes a safe and accessible transit hub as well as surrounding public space.

JUSTIFICATION

Provide an overview of the downtown area nominated for the DRI program, highlighting the area's defining characteristics and the reasons for its selection. Explain why the downtown is ready for Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) investment, and how that investment would serve as a catalyst to bring about revitalization.

Broadway Junction is a major transit hub in East New York. With five subway lines, six bus routes, and a regional rail (Long Island Rail Road), it is a quick ride to Downtown Brooklyn, Lower Manhattan, Jamaica, and Long Island. Approximately 100,000 commuters go through Broadway Junction a day with only 10 percent leaving the station. Despite being the third busiest station in Brooklyn and having transit on par with other outer-borough central business districts, the area has not seen the same type of investment and has yet to realize its potential as an economic center and destination for retail and office space as well as for cultural and educational uses.

Past studies by the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce and others have recognized the opportunity at Broadway Junction, but conditions in the area remain largely unchanged. Even before the pandemic struck, residents in surrounding neighborhoods including Brownsville, Cypress Hills, East New York, and Ocean Hill faced higher unemployment rates (8 percent vs. the citywide average of 5.2 percent) and lower incomes (\$32,000 per year vs. citywide average of \$55,000 per year). The pandemic has been hardest on communities of color and what were once unacceptable inequities have now become devastating economic setbacks for many who live there.

As part of the East New York Neighborhood Plan, which rezoned parts of the neighborhood to allow for new affordable housing and mixed-use development, the City is investing more than \$267 million in the neighborhoods around Broadway Junction with new parks, infrastructure, schools, and other community amenities. Additionally, Broadway Junction is next to the East New York Industrial Business Zone (IBZ) to which the City committed \$16 million in City Capital funding in 2016 to grow good jobs.

After the rezoning of East New York in 2016, a follow-up study was conducted on Broadway Junction to identify a range of recommendations for driving economic growth in the area. In August 2018, the Broadway Junction Working Group, made up of community-based organizations, stakeholders, and elected officials, and co-chaired by Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams and Council Member Rafael Espinal, released “Broadway Junction: A Vision For The Future,” a comprehensive vision document with a set of recommendations to guide the future development in and around Broadway Junction.

The promise of Broadway Junction offers a unique opportunity to bring education, workforce training, and quality employment opportunities closer to the above-mentioned neighborhoods. As New York City struggles on the road to recovery, the need for investment in communities such as East New York has never been greater. A Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) investment from New York State would help to realize the vision and recommendations outlined by the Working Group while further leveraging the City’s existing investments. Specifically, a DRI investment will jump start the post-pandemic recovery and revitalization process with physical improvements to Broadway Junction, leading to the long-term creation of a vibrant and desirable downtown that greatly enhances and improves quality of life and livelihood for residents and commuters.

DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION

This section should be filled out with reference to the list of desired attributes for participation in the DRI as set forth in the Downtown Revitalization Initiative Guidebook.

1) *Boundaries of the proposed DRI area.* *Detail the boundaries of the targeted neighborhood, keeping in mind that there is no minimum or maximum size, but that the neighborhood should be concentrated and well-defined. Neighborhoods beyond a traditional downtown or central business district are eligible, if they can meet other criteria making them ripe for investment. Attach a map that clearly delineates the area to be included in the downtown revitalization area.*

For the purposes of the DRI initiative, the boundaries of Broadway Junction are defined as follows:

- North: Bushwick Avenue and Eastern Parkway
- South: Liberty Avenue
- East: Georgia Avenue
- West: Sackman Street

The area within these boundaries will be the target of the DRI investments and constitutes the Broadway Junction transit hub, encompassing three subway stations (Broadway Junction, Atlantic Ave, and Alabama Ave) and one LIRR station (East New York) and their immediate contexts. However, the benefits of the revitalization spurred by this initiative are expected to support growth and activity in Brooklyn more broadly, notably in the

surrounding neighborhoods of Brownsville, Cypress Hills, East New York, and Ocean Hill. The benefits will also support growth and activity in other neighborhoods connected by the five subway lines, six bus routes, and a regional rail station.

BOUNDARIES OF PROPOSED DRI AREA



2) Description of catchment area. Outline why the proposed DRI area, or its catchment area, is of a size sufficient to support a vibrant, year-round downtown, with consideration of whether there is a sizeable existing or increasing population within easy reach for whom this would be the primary downtown destination.

The catchment area, the one-mile radius around Broadway Junction, which includes portions of the neighborhoods of Brownsville, Cypress Hills, East New York, and Ocean Hill, is of sufficient size to support a vibrant, year-round downtown. With about 127,000 residents, the population here has increased at a faster rate than Brooklyn and New York City, overall. Forty percent of the population is 25 years old or younger. Broadway Junction itself serves more than 100,000 commuters daily yet only 10 percent of those commuters leave the station due, in part, to a lack of amenities in the vicinity. The retail needs of residents are not met and there is significant demand for department stores, grocery stores, and restaurants/eating areas around Broadway Junction.

As of 2015, there were 20,400 jobs within a one-mile radius of Broadway Junction, including the adjacent East New York IBZ, which supported 3,000 jobs with significant room for growth. Data on ENY IBZ from 2019 (the latest available) showed a 40 percent (or 1,250) increase in jobs. Due to the pandemic, overall jobs numbers for the area, although not yet quantified, are likely to be lower now. Additionally, only 10 percent of residents live and work locally. Many blocks in the surrounding area are underserved and have seen a dearth of investment.

There is ample opportunity to create office and retail space, with 20 acres of vacant or underdeveloped property. In the immediate area surrounding Broadway Junction, more than 60 properties (271,000 square feet) are vacant and more than 105 properties (585,000 square feet) are used for parking. As part of the City's economic development strategy, economic growth is being driven by creating City agency anchor tenants in the area.

Committed City investment in transportation, infrastructure, parks, open space, workforce and economic development, and community resources will help to make the area an attractive place to live and work. Investment through the DRI will further enhance the community, which will result in an increase in population and workforce in the coming years.

3) *Past Investment, future investment potential.* Describe how this DRI area will be able to capitalize on prior private and public investment, or catalyze future investments in the neighborhood and its surrounding areas.

The areas around Broadway Junction, Brownsville, Cypress Hills, East New York, and Ocean Hill, are neighborhoods with a rich history as an industrial district and transit hub. In the 1960s and 1970s, the community suffered from population decline, disinvestment, and abandonment. City- and community-led recovery efforts began in the 1980s and continue today, as residents continue to face higher rates of poverty and unemployment and lower levels of education attainment than the borough overall.

In 2014, after a two-year public engagement process, the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP) released the "Sustainable Communities: East New York" report, which presented a vision for a more sustainable and equitable neighborhood. This report identified the area around Broadway Junction as a place with the "potential to support substantial development and become a major outer-borough destination with places to work, shop, socialize, and enjoy."

Building on the recommendations of the "Sustainable Communities: East New York" report, the City Council approved the East New York Neighborhood Plan in 2016, which included a rezoning of the neighborhood to develop more affordable housing and improve community amenities. Additionally, the approval of the East New York Neighborhood Plan included a commitment of more than \$267 million in capital funding from New York City. This includes:

- Atlantic Avenue Great Streets (\$33.5 million)
- Atlantic Avenue Viaduct Rehabilitation (\$77 million)
- Callahan-Kelly Playground (\$18.1 million)
- Community Center on Pennsylvania Avenue (\$10 million)
- 1,000-seat school (\$98 million)

- East New York IBZ investment (more than \$16 million)
- Financing for the preservation of affordable homes
- Satellite Workforce1 Career Center opened in 2016

Although widely recognized as a regional transit hub with the potential to be a thriving, mixed-use and job-intensive regional destination, due to below-grade infrastructure considerations, Broadway Junction was not included in the 2016 East New York rezoning plan. As a result, the above-mentioned study, Broadway Junction: A Vision For The Future, was undertaken and released in 2018 including the following recommendations and more:

- Identify opportunities to attract educational institutions and employers with career pathways in growing industries, such as healthcare and green technology, to expand and anchor new development in the area
- Create opportunities for co-location and expansion of existing organizations and businesses by providing a range of office and retail spaces in new development, including smaller, more-affordable spaces for local businesses
- Expand vocational and apprenticeship programs that help people develop skills that employers are seeking and connect existing community members to training and jobs through ApprenticeNYC and its industry partners

Considering this study and its articulated vision, we believe New York State’s DRI investment will leverage existing public funding by integrating Broadway Junction fully into the revitalization of East New York and spur future private investment.

4) *Recent or impending job growth.* Describe how recent or impending job growth within or near the DRI area will attract professionals to an active life in the downtown, support redevelopment, and make growth sustainable in the long-term.

Although the pandemic has been a significant setback, the East New York rezoning, which allows for mixed-use medium density development on transit corridors, as well as the investment being made in business attraction for the East New York IBZ, will lead to job growth. Additionally, commercial revitalization projects have been underway as part of a larger business support, retention and attraction strategy led by community groups and the New York City Department of Small Business Services (SBS), which will lead to retail diversity and further job creation. These initiatives include sanitation, beautification, streetscape improvements, and district marketing. Furthermore, the relocation of City agency offices, such as the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA), to East New York as part of an “anchor tenant” strategy is an approach the City has been using to increase the number of job opportunities in the area as well as the number of visitors the community will receive daily.

Professionals will be attracted to the downtown, current residents will be better served, and growth will be sustainable in the long-term through the investment in community resources, including a new school, community center, parks, and more affordable housing. These amenities are key to enhancing and creating a neighborhood where the quality-of-life to residents is emphasized.

5) *Attractiveness of physical environment.* Identify the properties or characteristics that the DRI area possesses that contribute, or could contribute if enhanced, to the attractiveness and livability of the downtown for a diverse population of varying ages, income, gender identity, ability, mobility, and cultural background. Consider, for example, the presence of developable mixed-use spaces, varied housing types at different levels of affordability, walkability and bikeability, healthy and affordable food markets, and public parks and gathering spaces.

The DRI area in Broadway Junction is defined by a few key characteristics:

Exceptional transit connectivity: Broadway Junction has exceptional transit access that makes it competitive with other central business districts in New York City’s outer boroughs. It has five subway lines, six bus routes, and an LIRR stop, making it a 15-minute ride to Downtown Brooklyn, 20 minutes to Lower Manhattan, 35 minutes to Midtown, and 40 minutes to John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) by transit. More than 1.5 million workers live within a 45-minute transit shed, on par with Long Island City. It currently functions as a critical transfer station, with more than 100,000 people using the station every weekday, but is not a destination in its own right — approximately 90 percent of those 100,000 people are transferring within the station and not staying in the area.

Bordered by a diversity of residential neighborhoods, industrial areas, and open space experiencing investment:

Broadway Junction is surrounded by the residential neighborhoods of Brownsville, Cypress Hills, East New York, and Ocean Hill as well as the East New York IBZ. With several parallel City efforts including the East New York Rezoning, the Industrial Business Zone Plan, and the City Office Anchor Strategy, East New York is primed to grow.

The East New York rezoning was approved in 2016 and is projected to create 6,000 new housing units. The City committed \$267 million in City Capital projects and new services to the community and has advanced key projects including a workforce development center, a 275-unit affordable housing development, major improvements to the Atlantic Avenue viaduct, and an \$18 million renovation of the adjacent Callahan-Kelly Playground.

Broadway Junction also sits next door to the East New York IBZ — a 100-acre industrial park with nearly 3,000 employees. In 2016, the City launched the East New York IBZ Plan bolstered by \$16 million in City Capital funding to grow good jobs.

A significant number of underutilized lots: The area contains approximately 20 acres of vacant or underdevelopment property. This includes a significant number of parking lots as well as lots currently encumbered by elevated transit infrastructure which could be dramatically enhanced with investment.

A 2014 Sustainable Communities study by DCP describes the underutilization of the area:

Partly due to the physical barriers and development constraints imposed by this transportation infrastructure, few businesses or other uses are located around the transit stations. This not only represents an underutilization of land in the area, but it also generates little activity at the street level. The Broadway Junction station is used largely as a transfer point between different transit services as

there are few destinations in the area around the station, and the walk to nearby residential areas and commercial corridors is desolate and uninviting.

Numerous past studies have identified the opportunities of this area to become a revitalized downtown for eastern Brooklyn considering the exceptional transit accessibility, surrounding neighborhood context, and availability of potential development sites.

6) *Quality of Life policies.* *Articulate the policies in place that increase the livability and quality of life of the downtown. Examples include the use of local land banks, modern zoning codes, comprehensive plans, complete streets plan, transit-oriented development, non-discrimination laws, age-friendly policies, and a downtown management structure. If policies achieving this goal are not currently in place, describe the ability of the municipality to create and implement such policies.*

The Broadway Junction Working Group and NYCEDC have outlined more than 25 recommendations that would provide these quality-of-life measures as part of a comprehensive plan for the area. From the above-mentioned report, “Broadway Junction: A Vision For The Future,” here are some highlights:

- Leverage new development to create new and improved transit connections, including alternatives to the existing LIRR underpass and an additional entrance to Broadway Junction station
- Reconfigure streets to improve safety and circulation between the four transit stations to make Broadway Junction feel like a true transit hub
- Build cultural facilities for the community, with performing arts space and arts education
- Make Callahan-Kelly Playground a true destination for the community with new investment and programming, such as farmers’ markets and performances
- Explore parking demand management strategies to improve street parking and consolidate existing surface parking lots (including MTA employee, bus, and private lots) to free up space for more active street-level uses
- Create an active pedestrian connection from Broadway Junction station to the East New York LIRR station
- Provide access to healthy, affordable food options and a supermarket

Additionally, the City is exploring a wide range of tools, including investments in City-owned properties, potential changes to zoning, opportunities for City tenancy to anchor new development, tax incentives, and grants and other programs targeted at workforce development, business support, and capital construction.

7) *Public Support.* *Describe the public participation and engagement process conducted to develop the DRI application, and the support of local leaders and stakeholders for pursuing a vision of downtown revitalization. Describe the commitment among local leaders and stakeholders to preparing and implementing a strategic investment plan. Identify an initial local lead for the program that will work with outside experts to convene a DRI Local Planning Committee to oversee the plan.*

In November 2017, NYCEDC, Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams, and Council Member Rafael L. Espinal convened the Broadway Junction Working Group and the start of an interagency planning study with DCP, DOT, NYC Parks, and other City agencies. The two concurrent efforts ran in tandem to develop community-

driven guidelines and recommendations for shaping future development around Broadway Junction. The working group membership included the following stakeholders.

- Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce
- Brownsville Community Development Corporation
- Brooklyn Community Board 4
- Brooklyn Community Board 5
- Brooklyn Community Board 16
- East Brooklyn Business Improvement District
- East New York Restoration Local Development Corporation
- The Homeowners Association Incorporated
- Local Development Corporation of East New York
- Ocean Hill-Brownsville Coalition of Young Professionals
- Urban Strategies Incorporated

The DRI Local Planning Committee would incorporate these groups and additional stakeholders to advance the working groups vision.

8) *Project List to Demonstrate Readiness:* Describe opportunities to build on the strengths described above by providing a list of transformative projects that will be ready for implementation with an infusion of DRI funds within the first one to two years (depending on the scope and complexity of the project) and which may leverage DRI funding with private investment or other funds. Such projects could address economic development, transportation, housing, and community development needs. While such projects should have demonstrated public support, it is recognized that projects will ultimately be vetted by the Local Planning Committee and the State. Explain how most projects proposed for DRI funding demonstrate their readiness for implementation.

NYCEDC has worked with a team of urban design and transportation engineering consultants to understand the long-term development potential of the area and identify first-mover projects with the potential to guide future growth and incentivize private investment. The study has clearly identified the potential for more than eight million square feet of mixed-use development over approximately 30 years. It has also pointed to the area immediately around the Broadway Junction station and under the adjacent elevated infrastructure as the ideal location to focus early-phase investment, due to its importance for daily transit use, the identified need for full accessibility improvements in the station, its adjacency to Callahan-Kelly Playground and upcoming investments, its location nearby but not immediately bordering major arterial thoroughfares, and its adjacency to some of the most desirable sites for future private investment.

In line with these recommendations, the DRI funds will be used for a set of strategic public realm improvements on City-controlled property in the core of the area around the Broadway Junction station entrance. Currently there is only one entrance to this exceptionally busy station and limited amenities to draw riders out of the station into the neighborhood.

In order to both improve the current condition of the transit hub and lay the groundwork for future private development in adjacent underutilized parcels, the City can implement a set of interventions to improve the surrounding conditions:

- Safety improvements at key intersections, including bulbouts, improvements to existing pedestrian crosswalks, and a new midblock crosswalk to connect to upcoming park improvements
- Pedestrianize Truxton Street, adjacent to the current station entrance, and formalize an adjacent unmapped parcel that can be used for future development or open space
- Sidewalk improvements and new lighting to make clean and safe pedestrian connections to all three existing subway stations in the area, particularly underneath the elevated infrastructure
- Open space improvements outside of the station to add trees and vegetation and expand seating options, covered waiting areas, and locations for food carts, kiosks, and small-scale retail
- The creation of a Public Art Fund to support select sites around the transit stations for public art installations and murals

This set of improvements could be implemented within one to two years for the allocated budget. These improvements would help jumpstart larger, longer-term investments and ongoing City efforts to revitalize the area (which could include potential future land use approval actions, RFPs of City-controlled sites, and/or attraction and relocation of anchor institutions to support growth of strategic sectors, for example). Figures 1 and 2 below help show the planning analysis the City is advancing and the central importance of the Broadway Junction station entrance area for any future growth of the area.

Figure 1: Key Urban Design Components

KEY URBAN DESIGN COMPONENTS

- Nodes
- Corridors /frontage opportunities



Fulton St



Van Sinderen St



Herkimer St

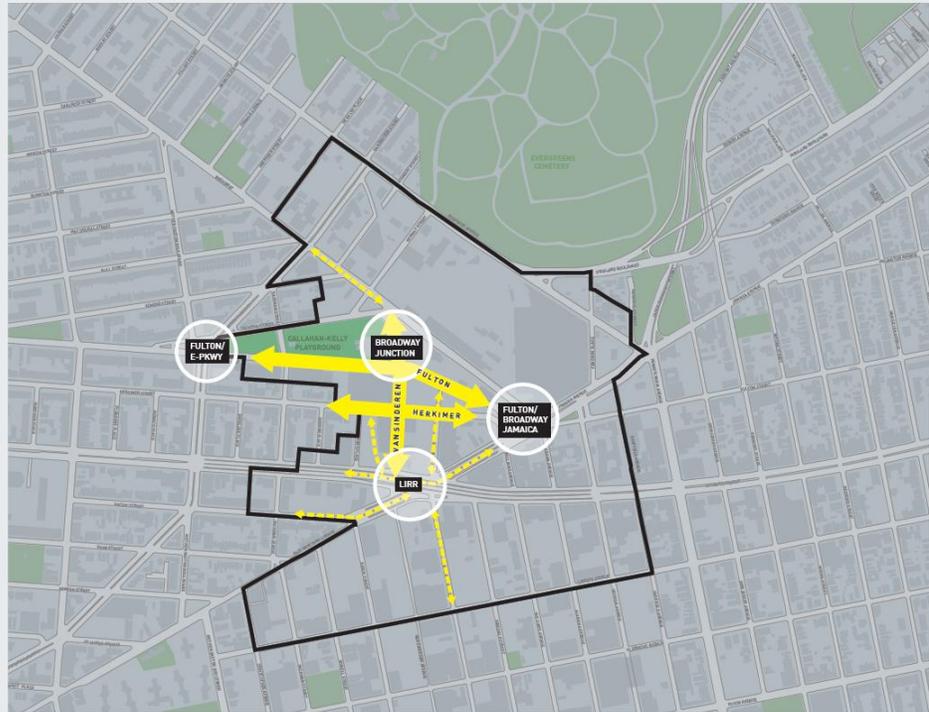


Figure 2: Potential Open Space Opportunities

NEW OPEN SPACE OPPORTUNITIES



9) Administrative Capacity. Describe the extent of the existing local administrative capacity to manage this initiative, including potential oversight of concurrent contracts once projects are selected for award.

Local Development Corporation of East New York (LDCENY), in partnership with the Office of the Brooklyn Borough President and relevant agencies to the implementation of components of the identified projects (DOT, DCP, and NYC Parks, for example), have the administrative capacity to manage this initiative.

10) Other. Provide any other information that informs the nomination of this downtown for a DRI award.

Click here to enter text.

*Don't forget to attach a map that clearly delineates the proposed DRI Area. (See item 1.)

EMAIL SUBMISSION ADDRESSES

Please submit your application as a Word Document to the Regional Council for your region.

Capital Region	NYS-CapitalDist@esd.ny.gov
Central New York	NYS-CentralNY@esd.ny.gov
Finger Lakes	NYS-FingerLakes@esd.ny.gov
Long Island	LIREDC@esd.ny.gov
Mid-Hudson	NYS-MidHudson@esd.ny.gov
Mohawk Valley	NYS-MohawkVal@esd.ny.gov
New York City	NYC-DRI@esd.ny.gov
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