SUMMARY PAGE

REDC REGION:  New York City
Municipality Name:  Community Board #14
Downtown Name:  Far Rockaway
County Name:  Queens
Applicant Organization:  Rockaway Development & Revitalization Corporation
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VISION STATEMENT FOR DOWNTOWN FAR ROCKAWAY
To transform Downtown Far Rockaway as a place that entices people from near and far to visit, explore and experience...

“The Rockaways, a different kind of New York.”

Through the Downtown Reinvestment Initiative we can achieve our vision by creating a year-round experience that includes our beautiful Rockaway Beach Boardwalk, local restaurants, shops and unique places of interest adding a thriving music, arts and cultural vibe to the Downtown experience
NEEDS JUSTIFICATION

In its heyday, Downtown Far Rockaway was known as “The Village” featuring pristine shops, movie theatres, restaurants, a bank, newspapers and a court house that drew shoppers, visitors from Long Island, Brooklyn, Manhattan and mainland Queens.

The Long Island Railroad came into the heart of Downtown Far Rockaway where the present day Far Rockaway Shopping Center is located.

Following World War II, the community faced a severe economic decline, and middle-class residents migrated to other parts of New York City. In 1950, a fire destroyed train service to and from the peninsula, leaving the area inaccessible to those without cars and further isolating residents with limited incomes who had rely on public transportation. Although rail access was eventually restored and re-integrated into the city subway system, car ownership began to increase, resulting in a rise in highway use — by Far Rockaway residents — to reach alternative commercial destinations.

Physical Characteristics

Downtown Far Rockaway is rich in history and architecture erected at the turn of the 20th century, includes:
In spite of it’s rich history, Far Rockaway fell on hard times through decades of disinvestment. Today, with an influx of public and private capital is opening the door to revitalize Far Rockaway as the commercial and transportation hub of the peninsula. The stage is set to make Far Rockaway a strong neighborhood for beach goers and home to local residents with all the components that make a strong neighborhood.

In 2012, the Rockaways encountered another challenge: climate change. Hurricane Sandy battered the peninsula with 30-foot offshore waves and flood levels of more than six feet inland. Although Far Rockaway was physically less devastated compared to the rest of the peninsula due to its higher elevation, the local economy took a substantial hit. The community suffered blackouts,
reduction in employment opportunities, and lack of access to needed resources, making it impossible for local businesses to reopen for an extensive period.

Post Superstorm Sandy, the City began to make a number of strategic investments in Downtown Far Rockaway leading up to the expansive redevelopment project announced in 2015. These strategic investments included a highly successful storefront initiative; the commissioning of a comprehensive commercial needs assessment and a multi-year commitment to placemaking, street cleanliness, district marketing and the infusion of public space entertainment and art activities.

In late 2015, then NYC Councilman Donovan Richards, Jr. launched an aggressive two-year community engagement process on the future of Downtown Far Rockaway. After clearly many approvals beginning with the local community board and ending with Mayoral approval, the Downtown Far Rockaway Redevelopment Plan rezoning process was completed in late 2017 and construction commenced in 2018.

The importance of the rezoning cannot be over emphasized–it will create opportunities to attract new and diverse businesses into the downtown that consider factors such as area density, income levels, transportation accessibility, streetscapes, safety and cleanliness in the decision-making process. Second, for businesses that have struggled with not having the streetscape amenities, steady/growing consumer base, or option to relocate within the district into modern, new commercial space will now benefit as well. For local residents, area workers and shoppers that expressed not only their dissatisfaction but what they envision for Downtown Far Rockaway in both the Downtown Far Rockaway Commercial District Needs Assessment (DFR CDNA) and Downtown Far Rockaway Redevelopment Plan community engagement workshops.

**Using Community Engagement, Data Collection, Street Observations & Feedback to Determine Needs – Downtown Far Rockaway Commercial District Needs Assessment**

At the request of RDRC, in 2017 the NYC Department of Small Business Services commissioned a comprehensive needs assessment of the Downtown Far Rockaway commercial corridor in order to align its vision as the local development corporation serving Downtown Far Rockaway with the needs of local community stakeholders including business and property owners, residents, shoppers, and area workers.

**What the Downtown Far Rockaway Redevelopment Commercial District Needs Assessment Reveal?**

**WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY:**
- Larger and more diverse retailers
- Arts, culture & entertainment
- Recreational spaces
- Quality clothing & stores
- Supermarkets & healthy food choices
- Full services/sit down restaurants
- Fitness & health

**WHAT WE HEARD FROM BUSINESS OWNERS**

**The Challenges**
- Lack of parking/transit accessibility
- Crime/safety
- Commercial rent/lease

**The Needs**
- Marketing
- Access to capital
- Space improvements
- Lease support
- New equipment
- Legal support
- Regulatory compliance support
- Training for staff
Many of the physical conditions identified in the CDNA – damaged and non-ADA compliant sidewalks, lack of public space amenities such as street furniture, artwork, and active public spaces are being addressed by the Streetscape Reconstruction Project and several NYC Small Business Services beautification, arts installation and public space activation projects undertaken by RDRC.

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION
Downtown Far Rockaway
Located in the most eastern neighborhood of the Rockaway peninsula (Queens), Downtown Far Rockaway as defined by the Downtown Far Rockaway Redevelopment Project consists of 23 blocks that includes:

- Mott Avenue from Cornaga Avenue to Beach Channel Drive
- Beach 20th Street from Mott Avenue to New Haven Avenue
- Central Avenue from Nameoke Street to Mott Avenue
- Cornaga Avenue from Mott Avenue to Beach 22nd Street
- Beach 19th, 20th, 21st & 22nd Streets between Mott Avenue and Cornaga Avenue
PAST INVESTMENTS, FUTURE POTENTIAL

Downtown Far Rockaway Redevelopment Project - $288 Million

In June 2017, the final approvals were granted for the rezoning and redevelopment of Downtown Far Rockaway. The project will create several thousand units of affordable housing, new commercial and community facility space, pedestrian plazas, and much needed infrastructure improvements over the life of the project after decades of neglect. Concurrently, the DFR Far Rockaway Streetscape Redesign Project, Beach 21st Street Development Project and Rockaway Village Development Projects are in progress.

Highlight: Beach 21st Street Project

The project will activate a previously underused City-owned municipal parking lot to create 224 units of mixed-income 100% affordable housing, serving a wide range of New Yorkers earning extremely low- to moderate-incomes. Ten percent of the units will be set aside for formerly homeless households. The development will include approximately 7,000 square feet of community facility space, which is anticipated to include a daycare center, and approximately 21,000 square feet of retail space adjacent to a planned DOT pedestrian plaza. This transformational project, which broke ground earlier last year, will be delivered by The Community Builders, Inc. (TCB), a leading non-profit developer of affordable and mixed-income housing.
Highlight: Rockaway Village Project Phase III

The not-for-profit developer, Phipps Houses and Marvel Architects for three mixed-use buildings at 20-12 and 21-02 Mott Avenue, and 17-21 Redfern Avenue recently filed permits. The three structures are part of Phase 3 of the Rockaway Village Complex, a five-phase development bringing eight buildings with retail, community facilities, and 1,700 new units to an underutilized area near the Far Rockaway-Mott Avenue subway station, serviced by the A train.

The proposed 98-foot-tall development at 20-12 Mott Avenue will raise ten stories and house 55 residential units. 21-02 Mott Avenue, a 150-foot-tall edifice, will raise 15 stories with 129 residential units and 7,650 square feet of community facility space within. The 123-foot-tall building at 17-21 Redfern Avenue will raise 12 stories, with 354 residential units and 188 enclosed parking spaces. The concrete-based structures will also have a cumulative 112,293 square feet of commercial space between 20-12 Mott Avenue and 17-21 Redfern Avenue. Demolition permits were filed in 2018 for the two sites on Mott Avenue and in 2019 for the lot on Redfern Avenue. There is a 2026 estimated completion date for the entire complex.

Downtown Far Rockaway Streetscapes Improvement Project - $139 Million

Streets in the Downtown Far Rockaway Redevelopment Plan are being overhauled with new pedestrian space, landscaping and green infrastructure, and improvements to stormwater drainage to alleviate chronic flooding. Infrastructure and Streetscapes Improvement Plan, currently underway centers around the local business district and transit hub at Mott and Central avenues, that is set to
bring over 3,000 units of new affordable housing to the community and invest millions into improving Far Rockaway's infrastructure, parks, community facilities, support for small-businesses, sidewalks and pedestrian plazas. Construction is set to align closely with several residential developments that are under construction or are planned for the coming years.

Queens Public Library Far Rockaway Branch - $33 Million
The new Far Rockaway Library will replace the existing library building, while also doubling the area of library space from 9,000 to 18,000 square feet. It is located at the intersection of Mott and Central Avenues in Far Rockaway, among the more dynamic, ethnically diverse communities in the borough of Queens. This new building seeks to increase the services needed by the neighborhood, and it is hoped that along with other revitalization efforts, it will serve as a catalyst for community transformation. The project, currently under construction in New York City, has received the Public Design Commission of the City of New York's recognition for outstanding public projects, the Annual Award for Excellence in Design.

The new building will feature a glass curtain wall, a pyramidal entrance, a central atrium and a blue roof designed to detain water. Once completed, the LEED-certified building will be two stories, have an ADA-compliant entrance and restrooms, a meeting room, and a quiet room. The facility will also feature self-check-in/out equipment, an elevator, additional computer stations for children, and teen and adult spaces.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES
The City has reset the zoning to allow for future development that in the past deterred the redevelopment of Downtown Far Rockaway. The designation of Downtown Far Rockaway as a Special Downtown Far Rockaway District within the rezoning area will allow for:
- The modification of underlying zoning to require active ground floors where commercial uses are permitted;
- To adjust maximum permitted base and building heights to reflect Downtown Far Rockaways existing built scale;
- To adjust accessory off-street parking requirements to reflect the area’s higher auto ownership rates; and
- Establish the Special District as a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Area (MIHA)

Additionally, the designation takes into consideration a number of projected and potential development sites within the rezoning area that could be subject to purchase or acquisition through negotiated acquisition or eminent domain and disposed for development.

**RECENT OR IMPENDING JOB GROWTH**

According to the Downtown Far Rockaway Commercial District Needs Assessment, 57% of all jobs located in Downtown Far Rockaway were in the Education Services, Health Care, and Social Assistance. This number decreases to 33% when adjusted to include local residents employment.

With the development of new housing, larger and modern commercial-retail spaces RDRC predicts that their will be an increase in the number of jobs created in the retail/customer service, hospitality, and construction (temporary unskilled that could lead to additional skills training/permanent jobs) over the life of the Downtown Far Rockaway Redevelopment Project.

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**Construction Training and Placement**

RDRC and Urban Upbound have been selected by The Community Builders and Phipps Houses developers to serve as workforce community partners providing recruitment, jobs skills training, OSHA training, site placement services for the DFR Redevelopment Project. Thus far, a total of 75 local residents have been trained and certified with OSHA 30, OSHA Flagger and OSHA Site Safety Training (SST).

Since 2019, a total of 97 residents (11691, 11692, 11693) have been hired collectively on the Beach 21st Street, Rockaway Village and Arverne East development sites with a commitment to train and hire more local residents as the projects progress.

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**Customer and Retail Training Services**

In anticipation of new businesses relocating or expanding (or existing businesses) into newly developed commercial or retail spaces, RDRC has partnered with the Council for Airport Opportunity to create a robust Customer Service/Retail Training Program certified by the National Retail Federation/Foundation. This initiative has resulted in over 100 local residents seeking entry-level positions (at neighboring JFK Airport and surrounding areas) trained in retail and food services, customer service, sales and ticket agents and desk concierges.
To assist COVID displaced workers and less experienced younger job seekers, RDRC recently was competitively awarded a grant from the NYS Department of Labor to provide job skills training, certified customer service, certified security and surveillance and Class D driver’s education/lessons to a total of 225 low-moderate income residents.

**JFK Redevelopment Project – Customer Service, Food Services, Maintenance, Baggage Handlers**

John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) is one of the busiest airports in the nation and is an indispensable part of global travel and the region’s economy. The airport handles nearly 62 million passengers a year, supports 280,000 jobs, and generates more than $51 billion in sales and $17.1 billion in wages. It is an essential component of the world’s air transportation system and a regional economic driver.

The post-COVID-19 JFK Airport Redevelopment Plan is a $15B modernization project that will create 20,000 jobs. The project will require 30% minority hires and 7% women hires across all construction trades with a higher 40% minority hires among Laborers; best efforts to hire from zip codes around JFK Airport followed by all of Queens. Working with Rep. Meeks and Queens Borough President Richards, and building on the work of the JFK Redevelopment Community Advisory Council appointed in October 2018, the leaders helped secure the community benefits package and a commitment that the Port Authority will require the projects be subject to Project Labor Agreements. RDRC currently serves as a member of the JFK Redevelopment Advisory Board and Co-Chair of the JFK Workforce and Career Development Committee.

**QUALITY OF LIFE**

The [Inclusionary Housing Program (IHP)](https://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/housing/inclusionary-housing.page) is designed to preserve and promote affordable housing within neighborhoods where zoning has been modified to encourage new development. As a key initiative of Mayor de Blasio’s housing plan, *Housing New York*, the Department of City Planning is launching a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing program that will require through zoning actions a share of new housing to be permanently affordable. Developed in close consultation with the Department of Housing Preservation and Development and informed by extensive policy and financial feasibility analysis, this program marks a new approach to ensuring neighborhood economic diversity as we plan for growth. Key policy features are:

- **Affordable housing would be mandatory**, not voluntary. Production of affordable housing becomes a condition of residential development when developers build in an area zoned for Mandatory Inclusionary Housing, whether rezoned as part of a City neighborhood plan or a private rezoning application.
- **Affordable housing would be permanent**, There is no expiration to the affordability requirement of apartments generated through Mandatory Inclusionary Housing, making them a long-term, stable reservoir of affordable housing.

Mandatory Inclusionary Housing will result in more affordable housing for a wider range of New Yorkers, all of it required as a condition to build housing on the land. It is responsive to neighborhood needs, with a set of income mix options that the City Planning Commission and Council can work together to apply within each rezoned area through the land use process.

**How This Translates**

The Beach 21st Development site will include 224 apartments, 130 of which will be offered to those making 60 percent of the area median income. The rest of the apartments will be offered at different levels of affordability.
The Downtown Far Rockaway Redevelopment Project will provide housing opportunities for existing and new residents alike. For the residents earning at or near minimum wages ($15.00 hour or $31,200 annually), they have the opportunity to apply for the new housing being developed under the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Provision.

**Improved Streetscapes Design, Creation of New Public Space Amenities**

Streets throughout the downtown area will be completely rebuilt and in many cases realigned to ease the flow of traffic and enhance pedestrian safety in conjunction with Mayor de Blasio’s Vision Zero goals. About 7,000 feet of new curbs will be installed along with more than 83,000 square feet of new concrete sidewalks. The landscape will be further transformed with new green infrastructure including rain gardens to help with the natural absorption of stormwater and other measures to minimize impacts on nearby wetlands and Jamaica Bay.

In a groundbreaking ceremony hosted by RDRC at the Beach 20th Street Plaza on September 28, 2019 that signified the beginning of the DFR Streetscapes Reconstruction Project, particular attention was paid to the impact of the project will have on improving the quality of life for residents “by making significant investments and upgrades to our infrastructure in Downtown Far Rockaway, including new storm sewers and rain gardens to help alleviate street flooding and protect nearby wetlands. DEP looks forward to partnering with DOT, DDC, EDC and other City agencies as we take on this large scale reconstruction project,” said NYC Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Vincent Sapienza.

**SUPPORTIVE LOCAL POLICIES**

**Downtown Far Rockaway Zoning Amendments**

In order to implement the Downtown Redevelopment Project, a number of zoning amendments had to occur that required Queens Community Board #14, Queens Borough President, City Planning Commission, NYC City Council, and Mayoral approvals. Many of the zoning requirements in place prior to the amendments dated back to the early 1960’s. These antiquated zoning requirements (R5,
R5/C1-2, R5/C2-2, C4-2, C8-1 and M1-1) transformed this once vibrant retail commercial corridor known as the Village of Far Rockaway to one of the most depressed corridors throughout NYC.

In 2018, Mayor DeBlasio approved the Downtown Far Rockaway Redevelopment Plan that included an expansive re-zoning to accommodate the need for higher density mixed-use housing, commercial and community spaces that included R5, R5C2-4, R6/C2-4, R7-1/C2-4 and existing C1-2 and C2-2 commercial overlays within the rezoning area were removed or replaced with C2-4 commercial overlays.

PUBLIC SUPPORT
The Downtown Far Rockaway Redevelopment Plan included the creation of the DFR Working Group to work with City agencies and elected officials to provide feedback on the Plan’s design and features. The Working Group included the following social service organizations, faith-based institutions, merchants associations, civic associations and health care institutions: Bayswater Civic Association; Challenge Preparatory Charter School; Church of the Nazarene Far Rockaway Rockaway; Deerfield Civic Association; Jewish Coordinating Council of the Rockaway Peninsula; Joseph P. Addabbo Family Health Center; New Horizons Counseling Centers; New York Police Department - 101st Precinct Community Council; Peninsula Preparatory Academy Charter School; Queens Defenders; Queens Library/Far Rockaway Branch; Queens Library/Far Rockaway Teen Library; Redfern Tenant’s Association; Rockaway Development & Revitalization Corporation; Rockaway East
Merchants Association; Rock Safe Streets; St. John’s Episcopal Hospital; St. Mary’s Star of The Sea, RC; and Urban Upbound.

The Downtown Far Rockaway Working Group will continue to participate as active stakeholders in the formation of the Downtown Far Rockaway Revitalization Local Planning Committee.

TRANSFORMATIVE OPPORTUNITIES & READINESS

The proposed projects are in alignment with the goals of the DRI and represent a preliminary list of projects that will be reviewed and re-evaluated should the application advance to the next round.

**Renaissance Center Office Building**

The *RDRC Renaissance Center* capital construction project involves the renovation of a five story, 10,000 square foot masonry structure. The Renaissance Center is located in the heart of Downtown Far Rockaway adjacent to the Mott Avenue Train Station. RDRC as the project sponsor has already begun renovations to the building and secured over $1.25M in investments for the completed renovations. RDRC has an additional commitment of $650,000 and will finance the remainder of the project utilizing a portion of the DRI funds and private financing for the projected $2M needed to complete.
**Project Renovation Description**

The Project will require a complete gut renovation to include the following core and shell building elements and interior construction:

- Construction of new elevator shaft and installation of new multipurpose passenger/freight elevator
- Upgrade/modification/creation of exit stairs and exit shaft core walls
- Creation of new main floor lobby and elevator lobbies
- Installation of HVAC, fire protection, mechanical, plumbing and electrical systems
- Complete rebuilding of any damaged floors
- New floors throughout with some moderate joist replacement anticipated
- Reconstruction of existing roof structure as required and application of new roofing
- Reconstruction of interior perimeter walls
- Interior construction and finishes
- General interior and exterior lighting
- Upgrade of existing house sewer connection
- Installation of building communications systems

**Rockaways Music, Arts & Cultural Center**

Currently, Downtown Far Rockaway can only offer seasonal outdoor music, arts and cultural events and activities because it lacks a facility to host events year-round. While the DFR Streetscapes Redesign Project does create additional outdoor space and the DFR does include indoor community facility space, there are no provisions for the inclusion of music, arts and culture in either plan.

RDRC is proposing to develop either a single location for concerts and entertainment events, and ongoing arts and cultural programs or to develop multiple locations taking advantage of the designated community facility spaces located at both the Beach 21st Street and Rockaway Village development sites, and the RDRC Renaissance Center Office Building.

RDRC has examined a number of publications and impact studies focused on the impact of arts & cultural in urban renewal and has determined that it is one of the most critical elements missing in the DFR Redevelopment Project.

According to the Americans for Arts Organization publication entitled, “Cultural District: The Arts As Strategy for Revitalizing Our Cities,” “A cultural district is a well-recognized, labeled, mixed-use area of a city in which a high concentration of cultural facilities serves as the anchor of attraction. Cultural districts can be found in communities as small as Riverhead, New York, (population 8,814) to New York City (7.3 million). Cultural districts boost urban revitalization in many ways: beautify and animate cities, provide employment, attract residents and tourists to the city, complement adjacent businesses, enhance property values, expand the tax base, attract well-educated employees, and contribute to creative, innovative environment. The impact of cultural districts is measurable. The arts attract residents and tourists who also support adjacent businesses such as restaurants, lodging, retail and parking. The presence of the arts enhances property values, the profitability of surrounding businesses and the tax base of the region. The arts attract a well-educated work force - a key incentive for new and relocating businesses. Finally, the arts contribute to the creativity and innovation of a community.”

**Rockaways Music, Arts and Cultural Center Feasibility Study**

Funded by the REDC, RDRC has engaged the consulting firm of Dadras Architects to conduct a feasibility study of three (3) proposed sites for the development of the Rockaways Music, Arts & Cultural Center (RMACC). RDRC and Dadras will work with local developers (The Community Builders and Phipps Houses) to consider utilizing all or a portion of the available community facility
space to locate the RMACC, or create a RMACC campus, including available space at the Renaissance Center. Dadras Associates scope of work includes:

- Review of site plans, surveys and available documentation for each proposed site
- Analysis of current existing conditions of building/site for structural integrity, degree of renovation/rehabilitation required, and suitability for proposed new facility
- Schematic designs of each proposed site to determine the suitability of proposed site/existing building(s) for the proposed new RMACC facility use
- Schematic 3-D renderings of each proposed site, describing the schematic design diagrams, and generating a visual image for each site
- Preliminary budget cost estimates for each site, showing approximate construction costs to assist in the evaluation process

Jamaica Performing Arts Center host multiple events attracting tens of thousands supporters annually and the Jamaica Center for the Arts & Learning engages the community with intergenerational programs.

According to a study prepared by the American Planning Association and RMC Research Corporation for the Rockefeller Foundation, The Role of Arts and Culture in Planning Practice, “arts and culture provide a medium to preserve, celebrate, challenge, and invent community identity; engage participation in civic life; inform, educate and learn from different audiences; and communicate across demographic and socioeconomic lines.”

The study is a result of the findings of the above-referenced Downtown Far Rockaway Commercial District Needs Assessment that identified the lack of arts, culture and recreational spaces
as deterrent to spending additional time in Downtown Far Rockaway. The Downtown Far Rockaway Working Group as a deterrent to creating a thriving downtown community also highlighted this.

DFR Storefront Improvement Program: funded by NYC Small Business Services, Neighborhood 360 Grant, and a community art-commissioning project focused on placing temporary artwork designed by a local artist on solid roll down gates located in Downtown Far Rockaway. Our Queens Local Artists: Stanislava Ivanova, Bandi Jones, Brendan McInerney, and Shenna Vaughn.

The goals of the RMACC are more than just bringing events into the district, its about providing the community with opportunities that can result in jobs, careers, entrepreneurial and business opportunities beyond the arts – architect and graphic design, crafts, film, digital media and video, humanities and historic preservation, literature, and folklife and other creative activities.

**DFR Storefront Improvement Program**

Launched in 2016, The Downtown Far Rockaway Storefront Improvement Program was an initiative of the New York City Business Assistance Corporation (NYBAC) and the New York City Department of Small Business Services (SBS) with the support of the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City. Administered by RDRC, the grant provided a 75% match of funds (up to $10,000 per storefront) to help local business and property owners complete storefront renovation projects. The goal of the program was to enhance commercial corridors through targeted improvements to small businesses in Downtown Far Rockaway.

The program resulted in 18 businesses receiving matching grants with one property owner, Kaufman Organization investing over $300,000 in building renovation match funds to improve nine (9) storefronts.
RDRC is seeking to use DRI Round V funds to implement a Downtown Far Rockaway Storefront Improvement Program Round II. The goals of the program are to:

- Revitalize building façades using best practices in storefront design
- Improve commercial corridors and promote the character and stability of Downtown Far Rockaway
- Allow longstanding businesses to stay competitive and keep pace with neighborhood change
- Create a stronger, safer neighborhood that attracts local residents and shoppers

The DFR Storefront Improvement Program Round II will assist 50 local businesses with grants of up to $10,000 for ground level storefronts. Eligible uses will include:

- New signage and awning
- Masonry work and brick pointing
- Cornice repair
- Installation of open-grill security gates
- Storefront framing and glass repair/replacement
- Exterior lighting installation
- Exterior painting;
- Door repair/replacement;
- Improvements to increase accessibility and compliance with building codes

The project timeline is one (1) year. The projected budget is $550,000 and calculated as follows: $500,000 for storefront renovations ($10,000 x 50) + $40,000 for architect fees + $10,000 for permitting and filing fees.

**Downtown Far Rockaway District FREE Wi-Fi Project**

The Downtown Far Rockaway Public Wi-Fi Project launched in 2016 in response to the devastating impact of Superstorm Sandy on the Rockaways’ inability to communicate with concerned family members, emergency services and disaster relief organizations. In the most critical period immediately after Superstorm Sandy, the Rockaways was isolated from the rest of New York City with no way of communication – Internet, cell phone or landline. The Public Wi-Fi Project will enabled anyone entering the District with an Internet-capable cell phone or tablet free access to the Internet without the use of satellites or cell towers by installing a series of wireless routers and rooftop antennas at local businesses and organizations. The Project also successfully trained seven community residents to build, install and maintain the Wi-Fi network. Unfortunately, with the increased zoning that has allowed for the development of taller buildings, the Downtown Wireless Mesh system that relied to 1-2 story buildings with clear sight lines to communicate is inoperable.

The New Downtown Wi-Fi Project would enable anyone entering the District with an Internet-capable cell phone or tablet free access to the Internet without the use of satellites or cell towers by installing a series of wireless routers and rooftop antennas on the highest buildings in Downtown Far Rockaway: St. John’s Episcopal Hospital; Beach 21st Street; Rockaway Village and Church of the Nazarene Senior Housing Building located on Central and Nameoke Avenues.

Benefits of the Wi-Fi Project include: keeping people informed of news, travel and weather; upcoming events and activities; merchant sales and restaurant specials; local training and job opportunities; and points of interest. Second, with more people entering the district and staying longer to enjoy our public plazas and spaces, we want to keep them connected and informed with employers, friends, families, etc.
**The project timeline is less than one year. We are partnering with Community Tech NY, a not-for-profit technology firm to develop a cost estimate that will include antennas, wiring, routers and installation.**

**Improved Transportation Access - LIRR Far Rockaway Station Upgrades**

The existing facility is poorly maintained and isolated and disconnected from Downtown Far Rockaway. Taking design points from the LIRR Expansion Project that will add a third track along on of its existing commuter lines, including renovations to eight stations, RDRC is proposing to use a portion of the DRI grant to make the upgrades. RDRC has begun the discussion with MTA/LIRR and will also leverage the support of its locally elected officials to develop a cost estimate (up to $4M) and project timeline prior to determination of award by REDC.

- Remodeled station house with enclosed seating area, food kiosk/news stand
- Retail shops or booths
- Extending station platform area canopy
- Upgraded PA system
- Wayfinding signage at station and along Nameoke Place to Central Avenue and Redfern Avenue
- Canopied Far Rockaway Trolley Stop

**Downtown Far Rockaway Concessions**

The DFR Streetscapes Redesign Project will create wider, more pedestrian friendly sidewalks and public spaces that will be ideal for newsstands/food kiosks along Mott Avenue and Beach 20th Streets. RDRC is proposing to build/erect two (2) stands within the Beach 21st Public Plaza Space and at the Central-Mott Avenue Plaza space across from the Queens Public Library.
RDRC will work with the City Councilwoman Selvena Powers-Brooks and Queens Borough President Donovan Richards, Jr. to expedite the City's approval process that will include both the NYC Department of Transportation and City Parks Department for the placement of the newsstands/kiosks. RDRC will allocate a portion of the DRI ($1M) for the purchase/build/install of the kiosk. RDRC will work with the NYC Department of Consumer Affairs to identify concessionaire(s) to operate the newsstands/kiosks.

ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY

Established as a 501(c)(3) corporation in 1978, Rockaway Development & Revitalization Corporation (RDRC) is headquartered on the eastern section of the Rockaway peninsula known as Far Rockaway. However, the majority of programs and services RDRC has traditionally offered extend to all thirteen (13) neighborhoods that comprise the Rockaway peninsula. RDRC is committed to developing stronger, more resilient Rockaways that is rooted in our mission statement, “to promote the revitalization of the Rockaways economic base and neighborhoods, and to secure an improved quality of life for its residents.”

An eleven member Board of Directors that includes community and business leaders, and local residents governs RDRC. RDRC employees fifteen (15) full-time staff persons with three (3) operating divisions: Education and Employment & Career Development Services for Youth; Workforce & Career Development Services for Adults and Neighborhood Preservation Services. During the summer months, RDRC staff increases to 25+ persons to manage its largest program, the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) that provides paid summer employment to over 1,700 youth annually.

RDRC has managed over $50,000,000 in expense-related funding awarded by Federal, State, local, corporate and philanthropic support that includes: Housing & Urban Development; US Department of Treasury; NYS Office of Temporary Disabilities Administration; Governor’s Office of Storm Recovery; NYS Department of Labor; Dormitory Authority of the State of New York; NYS Office of Homes & Community Renewal; NYS Office of the Attorney General; SONYMA; NYC Department of Transportation; NYC Department of Youth & Community Development; NYC Department of Small Business Services; NYC Department of Housing, Preservation & Development; NYC City Council; New York Community Trust; Robinhood Foundation; Chase Foundation; Bank of America Foundation; City Parks Foundation; National Grid and PSEG Long Island

Commercial Revitalization & Real Estate Development Highlights

- Successfully organized a group of local merchants into the Rockaway East Merchants Association (REMA) to address many of the safety, sanitation and parking concerns that have impeded the economic growth of downtown Far Rockaway. Second, to participate in the planned commercial revitalization activities that will impact the entire downtown shopping district.
- Implemented a business attraction campaign to attract new businesses into our downtown district. RDRC has developed a business attraction tool kit that includes pertinent market retail data, attends business trade shows.
- Successfully managed The Downtown Far Rockaway Storefront Improvement Program Round to assist local businesses improve their storefronts as a strategy to attract more consumers into the district as well as attract new businesses into the district. The grant provided a 75% match up to $10,000 per storefront to help local businesses and property owners complete their storefront renovation projects.
- Activated the Beach 20th Street Pedestrian Plaza to provide the community with seasonal events and activities coordinated by RDRC – concerts, merchant fairs, food court, games, exercise and a holiday tree lighting ceremony.
- Launched a Storefront Mural Art Project utilizing local artists to beautify solid roll-down gates with themed temporary artwork.
• Implemented a seven-day per week street cleaning program to keep sidewalks clean, empty trash baskets, replace liners and seasonal snow removal services.

Community Collaborations, Partnerships & Affiliations

• The Far Rockaway/Arverne Nonprofit Coalition is comprised of 14+ nonprofits and community-based organizations committed to the development of youth in the Rockaways, particularly the Far Rockaway/Arverne neighborhoods since its formation in 2010.

• Downtown Far Rockaway Revitalization Working Group - to develop a set of goals and recommendations to support the revitalization of downtown Far Rockaway. Working Groups efforts translated into the basic framework for a $91M capital investment to improve infrastructure, mixed-use housing development, transportation upgrades/redesign, new streetscapes increased access to community services.

• Community Partners - St. John’s Episcopal Hospital; The Joseph P. Addabbo Family Health Center; Peninsula Preparatory Academy Charter School; Peninsula Center for Extended Care and Rehabilitation; Bishop Charles Waldo MacLean Episcopal Nursing Home; New York Career Training School; Rockaway Youth Task Force; Ready Rockaway; Central Avenue Assisted Living Center; New Horizons Counseling Services; Jewish Coordinating Council of the Rockaway Peninsula; Dress for Success; and Visiting Nurses Services of New York City.

• Arts & Culture Institution Partners - Queens Council on the Arts, Black Spectrum Theatre, Rockaway Artists Alliance, Flushing Town Hall and Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning.

Sources: