

**BASIC INFORMATION**

REDC Region: New York City

Municipality Name: Staten Island

Downtown Name: Port Richmond Avenue

County Name: Richmond County

Application Amount: \$10 million

Applicant Contact:

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**Downtown  
Port Richmond  
Revitalization Initiative**



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## **VISION FOR DOWNTOWN**

The vision is to revitalize the once-thriving commercial corridor of Port Richmond Avenue by building upon the current momentum of public and private investment, including a city-owned waterfront lot, incorporating the current artistic movement on the Island and the vibrant immigrant community on the Avenue.

The Port Richmond Avenue commercial corridor between Richmond Terrace and Forest Avenue was once a thriving shopping district and served as one of the true economic anchors of the North Shore of the borough. However, significant changes to shopping trends including the development of the Staten Island Mall, increased big-box and strip malls in the adjacent neighborhoods, the growth of internet shopping and competition from nearby New Jersey towns have all contributed to a decline in the economic vitality of the area over the past decades.

Today, a large population of first-generation immigrants mainly from Latin America and the Caribbean reside in the neighborhood. This has changed spending patterns, retail demands and created a need for more diverse services. Despite a higher-than-average commercial vacancy (approximately 20%) and low income levels, the combination of a growing immigrant economy and a robust network of community organizations is helping improve the economic future of the area.

There are exciting opportunities driven by local investors, artists, non-profits and business leaders. This application seeks to build on the current momentum on the corridor and leverage the existing political support from local elected officials.

In order to best serve the residents of the Port Richmond area and enhance economic development opportunities, this proposal seeks to develop a **four-prong** community-based planning approach that will create a comprehensive, long-term vision and action plan. This work includes:

### **1. Economic Development**

- a) Helping to retain and grow businesses through workshops, trainings and marketing including leveraging local experts, artists, and professionals and including multi-lingual opportunities
- b) Merchant organizing with the intent of creating a Business Improvement District (BID) within three years of award including interim beautification, activation and programming to enhance the corridor to support and enhance a distinct neighborhood center
- c) Providing technical assistance for COVID-19 relief with a focus on MWBE businesses and immigrant entrepreneurs. This agenda includes virtual and physical incubator and accelerator programs, CARES ACT navigation and grant funding program assistance
- d) Supporting immigrant and MWBE businesses to create quality local jobs through various programs via DRI funding including increased access to capital and a loan fund

## 2. Capital Improvements

- a) Developing a storefront improvement funding program and addressing retail vacancies through effective partnerships with property owners, real estate agents and agencies.
- b) Supporting short-term projects such as the Community Health Centers of Richmond Grove Avenue redevelopment, 21 lots currently planned for mixed use and affordable housing, a New York City owned waterfront lot proposed for public open space, 76 and 97 Port Richmond Avenue and the historic Dutch Reformed Church.
- c) Identify and create EV charging stations and e-bike bays along the corridor to encourage residents from other neighborhoods and beyond to visit and contribute to the neighborhood as their vehicles charge.
- d) Conducting a zoning analysis to guide future development of the corridor based on changing economic and demographic trends and transit-oriented development strategies

## 3. Environmental Justice

- a) Addressing and activating multiple Brownfield sites within the Port Richmond Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) and addressing public infrastructure shortfalls including street flooding and sewer investment
- b) Advancing the Staten Island Skyway Elevated Park proposal put forth by SIEDC to create a park on the abandoned North Shore Railway Right of Way including activating spaces at street-level including a public art program/trail similar to Manhattan's "highline".
- c) Leveraging funds from the USEPA Environmental Justice Small Grants (EJSG) Program to manage a public education effort for emergency preparedness and job readiness.
- d) Establishing a framework of social services partners to work towards developing a robust food security program with the community and addressing fresh food desert concerns.

## 4. Community Investment

- a) Supporting public health initiatives including mental health, substance abuse, general medical and childhood services through an expanded network of local providers through targeted DRI funding and resources
- b) Enhancing local non-profits through supplemental funding to support community engagement programs related to education, immigration, legal, financial and social justice services
- c) Utilize the Federal Opportunity Zone program to enhance robust and diverse development especially at underutilized or vacant sites and leveraging the program to encourage investment and public attention for the area
- d) Implementing pedestrian and transportation improvements including improved sidewalks, lighting and plantings as well as transit improvements related to bicycle access and other micro-mobility solutions

<b>Project Bucket</b>	<b>Estimated Budget</b>
<b>1. Economic Development</b>	
a) Businesses focused workshops, trainings and marketing	\$100,000
b) Merchant organizing including a Business Improvement District (BID)	\$300,000
c) Technical assistance for COVID-19 relief for MWBE & immigrant entrepreneurs	\$500,000
d) Supporting MWBE & immigrant entrepreneurs with access to capital/loan fund	\$1,000,000
<b>2. Capital Improvements</b>	
a) Developing a storefront improvement funding program	\$1,000,000
b) Advancing potential immediate development sites	\$1,000,000
c) Identifying and installing EV chargers along the corridor	\$150,000
d) Conducting a zoning analysis to guide future development	\$150,000
<b>3. Environmental Justice</b>	
a) Addressing and activating multiple Brownfield sites and infrastructure shortfalls	\$1,000,000
b) Advancing the Staten Island Skyway Elevated Park & public art installations	\$500,000
c) Managing public education effort for emergency preparedness with the USEPA	\$100,000
d) Establishing a framework for a robust food security program with the community	\$1,000,000
<b>4. Community Investment</b>	
a) Supporting public health initiatives through a network of local providers	\$100,000
b) Enhancing non-profits to support programs related to education, immigration, etc.	\$100,000
c) Utilize the Federal Opportunity Zone program to enhance investment	\$1,000,000
d) Implementing pedestrian and transportation improvements	\$2,000,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$10,000,000</b>

As the borough continues to grow in population and diversify, Port Richmond at a perfect crossroads for economic and capital development. The community continues to be committed to enhancing opportunities for entrepreneurs from minority, low-income, and immigrant communities as well as women and veterans. All of the ingredients of developing projects, public engagement and community-based organizations are naturally dovetailing to create a vibrant, transformative and thriving neighborhood.

## JUSTIFICATION

Organized investment in the Port Richmond Avenue commercial corridor is a critical and logical next step to insure organic synergy of economic development along the corridor. The eastern section of the North Shore of Staten Island was the 2019 recipient of DRI funding but the western portion of the North Shore has been long underserved and funding is essential to creating a fully integrated economic plan for the entire area.

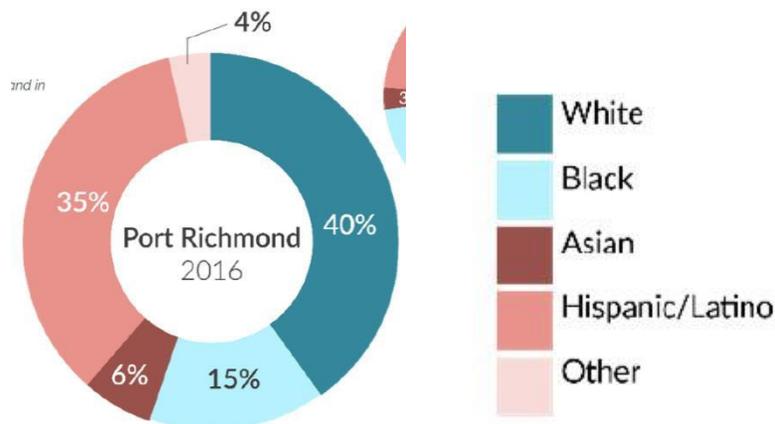
Port Richmond's historic shopping district was one of the first "main streets" in Staten Island and a destination for shoppers from all over the borough for generations. The opening of the Staten Island Mall in 1973 affected Port Richmond Avenue negatively, making small businesses unable to compete and vacancies have been over 20% for years. Celebrating the diversity of the Avenue with its array of authentic restaurants, the area would enjoy a resurgence in popularity as a destination for culture and art and food.

Port Richmond is ready for a revitalization, as it has already been experiencing organic growth of new homeowners who are getting priced out of their home neighborhoods and making new homes in the area, creating a diverse mix of cultures and an exciting vibe that one can feel along the street. In short, Port Richmond's fire is already burning and DRI would be the gasoline needed to bring it to the inferno we know it can be.

### **Port Richmond's Population: Dense & Diverse**

Port Richmond is a highly diverse and dense neighborhood, with an increasing population and immigration profile that distinguishes it from the rest of Staten Island. The population in the neighborhood is 19,147. This is a 13% increase since 2000, which is double the increase seen in the borough and city. In the neighborhood the population density is about 14.6 thousand people per square mile, which is almost 80% more dense than the borough overall (8.1 thousand/sq.mi.).

The neighborhood is more diverse than the borough. Mexican, Trinidadian, Filipino and Pakistani immigrants are the largest foreign-born populations in the neighborhood.

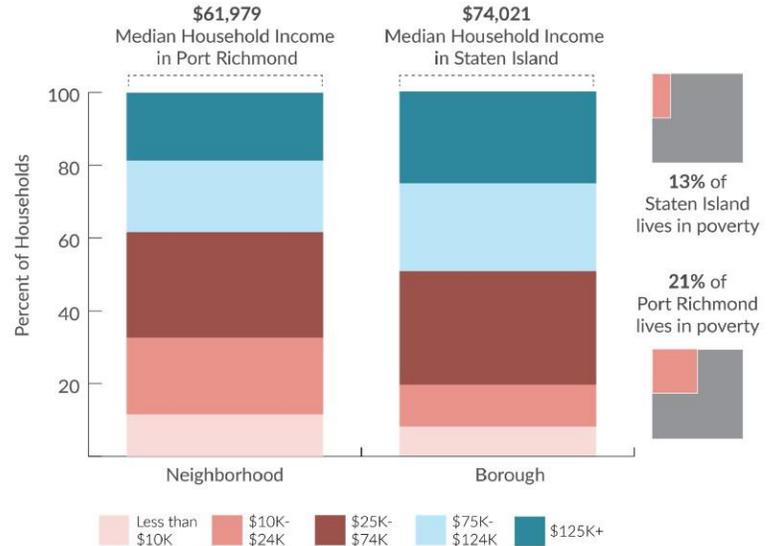


## Port Richmond's Economy: Struggling & Rent Burdened

More Port Richmond residents are impoverished and rent burdened than anywhere on Staten Island. Port Richmond households have lower median home values and incomes (median household income is \$61,979) which is \$13,000 less than the borough average.

The median home value in Port Richmond is \$367,582 which is less than that of Staten Island (\$448,000) and the city (\$505,215). 60% of neighborhood residents are rent burdened which is a higher share than the borough (49%) and the city (51%).

21% of the population live in poverty which is a higher share than that of the borough (13%). 21% of households receive SNAP benefits which is 61% higher than Staten Island as a whole

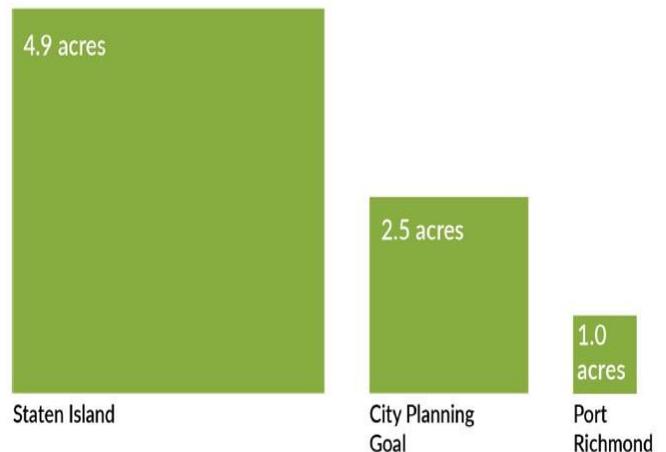


## Port Richmond's Health: Limited Open Space, Old Housing Stock & Poor Health

The residents in the neighborhood experience a severe lack of open space and long commutes. Port Richmond's park acreage does not meet the goals set by City Planning and according to the USEPA, Residents of the neighborhood experience 3 times the amount of traffic in close proximity as the rest of the borough.

Indicators show that residents of Port Richmond are at risk for poor health outcomes associated with a lack of healthy housing and physical activity. 60% of housing units are built pre-1960 and 9% of homes have cockroaches, 9% report rodents, and 10% report mold. This is approximately double the share of the borough in each category.

69% of people are obese or overweight. This is higher than rates of the borough (62%) and the city (58%) and 1/3 of people in the neighborhood report no time for physical activity.



### **Strengths & Opportunities to be Supported by DRI Funding**

There are strong indicators of a positive economic trajectory if smart, well-planned investment is committed through the DRI and stewarded by local stakeholders with experience in advancing long-term planning strategies.

### **A Walkable Shopping Corridor & Local Population**

As strip malls and shopping centers make up the vast majority of the retail footprint, Staten Island is eager to welcome a traditional, walkable “Main Street”. There are approximately 19,000 people that live in Port Richmond, many who shop and/or work at the stores on Port Richmond Avenue between Richmond Terrace and Forest Avenue.

### **Engaged Local Stakeholder Groups**

The Skyway study aims to repurpose the abandoned North Shore Railway Right of Way as a modern elevated urban park with various beautification, art installations, programming and educational opportunities when implemented. Through SIEDC’s work on the project, a number of essential relationships with local stakeholders have been built, including Port Richmond Strong, Northfield Community Local Development Corporation, Community Health Center of Richmond, the Port Richmond Library, the Reformed Church of Staten Island, Person Centered Care Services, Make the Road New York, Meals on Wheels, Project Hospitality, Community Health Action of Staten Island, La Colmena and Port Richmond High School.

### **A Strong Interest in Neighborhood/Merchant Organizing**

High retail vacancy, big box competition, and the effect of COVID-19 on MWBE businesses are just some of the factors that have affected the Port Richmond shopping area. DRI funding is an important part of mapping out the future improvements to the area. Merchant organizing and engagement is a critical part of this process.

Strategies including a storefront improvement plan and business support plan will be a part of this. The corridor needs a uniform marketing plan that would incorporate social media, flyers, neighborhood map and merchant guide. Community beautification can be achieved through DRI funding including cleaning bus stops, planting trees and flowers, improving lighting and public safety and addressing illegal dumping and litter which lead to additional public health issues.

### **SIEDC’s Proven Track Record**

SIEDC is committed to working with the community to advance a variety of goals if awarded DRI funding. SIEDC was the lead collaborator in the 2019 DRI application, which was awarded to the Bay Street Corridor. SIEDC has completed a plethora of successful community projects. The organization received a state Brownfield Opportunity Area designation for the West Shore, has created three of the four Business Improvement Districts in the borough and also managed half dozen other merchant programs. SIEDC has also invested its own time and funds in completing the Staten Island Skyway engineering and feasibility study wherein DRI funding would immediately be put to work.

## **DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION**

### ***1) Boundaries of the Proposed DRI Area***

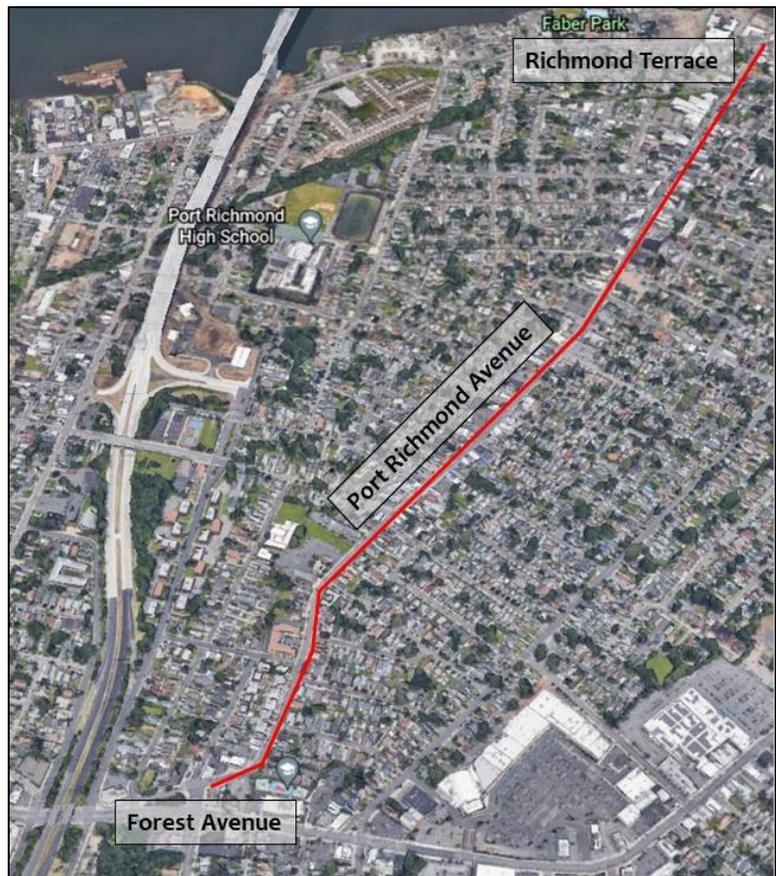
Port Richmond Avenue is a critical yet underserved corridor in the northwestern part of Staten Island. Port Richmond Avenue from Forest Avenue in the south to Richmond Terrace in the north provides a hub of activity for residents but lacks the proper activation and planning efforts to make the corridor competitive compared to other locations in the borough. The boundaries of the proposed Port Richmond DRI area are indicated by the red line in the map below.

The corridor is approximately 1.3 miles from north to south (the same distance as the 2019 awardee Bay Street Corridor) and includes a variety of zoning districts including single-family and multi-family homes, mixed commercial and residential buildings, commercial shopping centers and strip malls, industrial sites and public/non-profit uses. From a land use perspective, Port Richmond Avenue is one of the most diverse locations on Staten Island and provides a wealth of development opportunities.

The Port Richmond Avenue corridor provides a strategic opportunity to implement proven strategies for successful economic revitalization, including smart and comprehensive corridor planning, targeted infrastructure investment, a stable governance structure in the form of merchant organizing and a Business Improvement District and leveraging the strengths and existing fabric of the community.

Existing assets, including a dense residential population, significant community-based organizations and proximity to major east/west transit corridors are all important pieces of the development future of the area.

Targeted investment in services, improvements, housing and expanded commercial/retail opportunities are essential to create a desirable and vibrant destination for residents, workers, and visitors alike.



## 2) Past Investment & Future Investment Potential

Residents, community organizations, businesses and elected officials all know that Port Richmond has not experienced the type of investment from the public and private sectors that has occurred in other parts of the North Shore. That disparity is the genesis of this application because SIEDC is concerned that with significant economic development occurring in the Bay Street Corridor section of the North Shore, the tens of thousands of residents of Port Richmond and their neighbors who rely on the corridor for food, clothes and services will continue to be left behind.

Over the past decade there have been important studies conducted in and around the proposed DRI area which, if implemented to the extent hoped, could make significant impacts on the community. These include the North Shore 2030 Plan by the New York City Department of City Planning, the Brownfield Opportunity Area plan managed by the Northfield Community Local Development Corporation and the Skyway Engineering & Feasibility Plan commissioned by the Staten Island Economic Development Corporation (SIEDC).

SIEDC also recently completed a Local Needs Assessment and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the entire borough and several recommendations from that work related to Port Richmond are included in the answer to Question #3. DRI funded to implement various aspects of these visions would be a terrific step forward for realizing and implementing plans which are locally focused and well intentioned.

Currently there are several projects which can be aided and supported by DRI funding to encourage potential future investment. Community Health Centers of Richmond (CHCR) is in the development process for a major public health site along Port Richmond Avenue which would convert a contaminated former Brownfield site and provide community health options to residents.

Numerous private developers are purchasing and renovating smaller residential spaces including ground up construction to promote affordable housing. Most of this work is currently Section 8 based, but with more attention, guidance and available capital, a more diverse array of housing options may become available (including aging-in-place senior) and adaptive re-use of existing dilapidated properties.

Related to this investment (and future expanded investment) is the need for developers to utilize the four Federal Opportunity Zones that are in and around the proposed DRI corridor. Tax incentives are provided to catalyze invest and develop long-term projects in these areas and while the impact of the Opportunity Zone policy on Staten Island has yet to be realized, Port Richmond would be an ideal test case.

SIEDC also recommends that various aspects of the Skyway proposal to create an elevated urban park along the abandoned North Shore Railway Right-of-Way be implemented in the immediate to create more public open space, arts and culture and educational opportunities for the community with limited expense to public and private funders.

3) *Recent or Impending Job Growth including a Diverse Workforce for an Active Downtown*

The Port Richmond Corridor has long suffered from a lack of local employment opportunities for residents. This is caused by a combination of an immigrant population with limited English proficiency, barriers to employment including immigration status and childcare needs, inadequate job training opportunities for residents and poor overall investment in a diversity of industries. The DRI will leverage community partnerships and local leaders to support a variety of job growth/creation objectives including:

- a) Key Industry Support – Richmond Terrace all the Kill Van Kull is one of the last remaining working waterfronts of New York City. However, there is very limited local employment represented in these maritime and industrial industries. The DRI will implement workforce development systems targeting key industry clusters to improve regional economic competitiveness. This includes promoting employment and investment in logistics, manufacturing, clean technology and green energy to promote economic and community health in an environmental justice community and federal Opportunity Zone area.
- b) Vocational Skills Development – Recently, the P-TECH program has been implemented at Port Richmond High School, preparing students for careers in a variety of sectors. For adults older than 25, there are few existing apprenticeship or professional trade programs. Community partners and businesses must develop and retain well-paying jobs and talent in key and emerging industry clusters and actively recruit from the local community and support job training programs.
- c) Job Placement Programs Integration – Across Staten Island there are dozens of employment programs yet they are not integrated within the larger community. The DRI would seek to integrate these various programs with a focus on the Port Richmond neighborhood and empower local community groups to replicate these services.
- d) University Partnerships – Funding would be allocated to internship and apprenticeship programs that connects local businesses with higher education including St. John’s University, College of Staten Island and Wagner College in order to expand the talent pool of those who consider working along the corridor. Established partnerships with the colleges lay a strong groundwork for future collaboration.
- e) Merchant Group for Port Richmond – Thriving businesses mean sustainable neighborhood employment. By creating a merchant organization and eventual Business Improvement District, Port Richmond Avenue will have the internal operational strength and support to support existing businesses and attract new ones thereby increasing the job pool.

f) Staten Island Skyway – The scaled development of the Skyway project which includes Streetscaping and beautification and community programming along the adjacent sidewalk, the underside of the structure and eventually the elevated rail right-of-way will serve as a catalyst for employment for the community through the activation of public open space.



View from abandoned rail onto Port Richmond Avenue

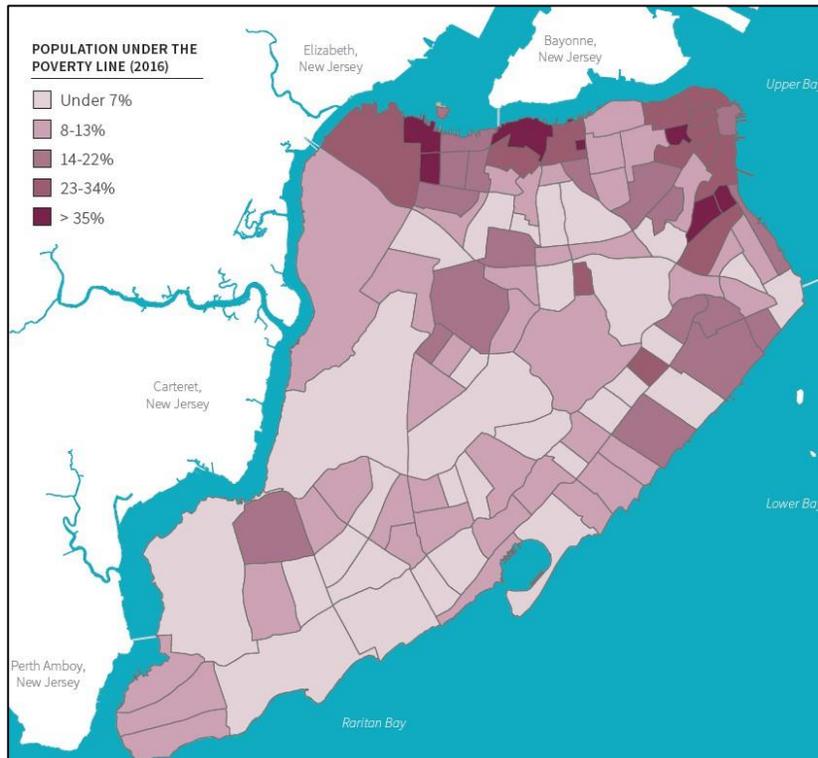
#### 4) *Quality of Life*

Residential fabric is dominated by one- and two-family homes. The typology of these units largely reflects the North Shore and Staten Island’s zoning, which favors low- to medium-density residential development. Staten Island has the highest homeownership rate in the city, about 70% island-wide. However, in the subject area, 49% of residents own their homes and the median age of the housing stock is 66 years. The percentage of vacant housing units (12%) is nearly double that of Staten Island (7%) and a quarter of residents live under the poverty line compared to 12% for the borough as a whole.

DRI would enhance the quality of life for residents by encouraging development of these vacant residential, commercial and mixed use spaces. EV charging stations and e-bike bays will also encourage both visitorship and patronage in the area.

Port Richmond is one of the most diverse areas of the borough in terms of cultural and ethnic diversity. This area is predominantly Hispanic (37%) and Black (28%), but also has a large share of White residents as well (25%). A quarter of all residents are foreign-born, on par with the North Shore (26%) and slightly below New York City (37%). 72% of foreign-born residents are from Central or South America, nearly a quarter are from Asian countries.

Educational attainment has remained below that of the North Shore, with approximately 20% of the population earning a bachelor’s degree or higher compared to the North Shore (30%) and New York City (37%). The relative lack of education has limited opportunities for Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) residents seeking quality jobs in many of the city’s dominant employment sectors. Consequently, residents are in particular need of career, vocational, and technical education initiatives tailored to jobs that are accessible within the commercial and industrial centers of Port Richmond and Mariners Harbor.



The New York State funded Port Richmond Brownfield Opportunity Area study completed by the Northfield Community Local Development Corporation called for a “Mixed- Use Corridor” along Port Richmond Avenue. The plan would capitalize on existing building stock and zoning as well as address community needs. The study has identified three sites that have the potential to “connect commercial activity, create mixed office, retail, and affordable housing.”

97 Port Richmond Avenue – The study calls for redeveloping this property to maximize the creation of affordable residential units, restore its storefront retail space, and respect the historic height and character that define the commercial corridor’s walkable scale. An adaptive reuse plan would rehabilitate the structure in its existing footprint, retaining its three-story, 35-foot height. The scenario allows for three residential units on the upper stories plus a ground-floor commercial space.



- a) 76 Port Richmond Avenue - Due to its location between the commercial heart of Port Richmond Avenue and the Kill Van Kull, this property holds promise to create a new node reconnecting the community to the water. The site offers an opportunity to design a mixed-use development that would combine mixed-income housing, creative retail spaces, and public amenities. A proposal includes a mixed-use building with a total of 112 residential units. The vision also calls for public outdoor space which could be created along the edge of the property and combined with the activation of the Staten Island Skyway proposal.



- b) Richmond Terrace/Port Richmond Avenue Site - This site offers an opportunity to repurpose a large waterfront parcel to better serve community needs and create a placemaking residential development that can anchor neighborhood growth. A plan for moderate density was selected, resulting in three U-shaped buildings of up to five stories each, with a total of 350 residential units. The project would include ground-floor retail space and a large waterfront open space accessible to the public.



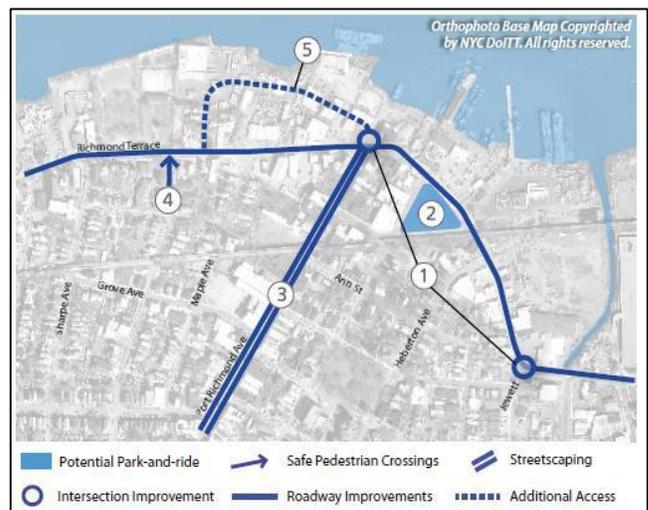
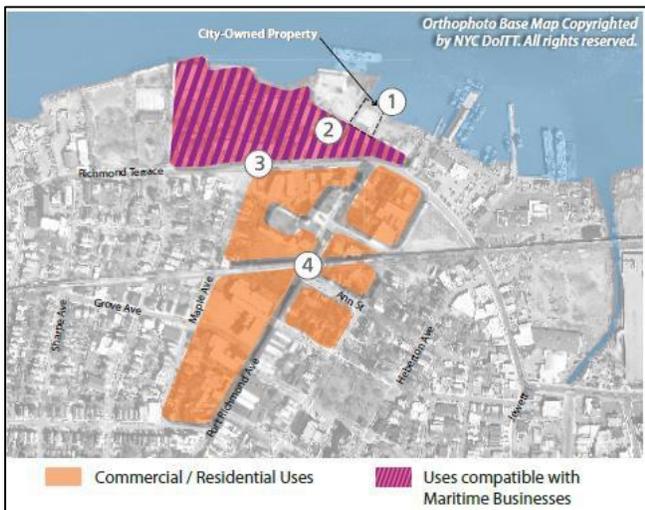
These projects have been sufficiently studied are ready for DRI investment.

### 5) *Supportive Local Policies*

In addition to the Brownfield Opportunity Area study, the North Shore 2030 Plan published by the New York City Department of City planning is also a strong tool for guiding future development through supportive local policies. Many of the recommendations in that report mirror those of the BOA and of this application. Pertinent recommendations in the 2030 study that link with this proposal include:

- Create Quality Jobs
  - Promote job development through recruitment of new businesses in industrial areas and on adjacent sites as well as reduce commercial storefront vacancies
  - Encourage remediation and redevelopment of brownfield site with mixed commercial and light industrial uses in conjunction with transit supportive uses
- Support and Create Neighborhood Centers
  - Program City-owned waterfront sites in the short term with cultural and community events
  - Explore feasibility of and interest in a waterfront commercial destination and mixed residential and commercial buildings along Richmond Terrace at Port Richmond Avenue
- Improve Connections and Mobility
  - Improve intersections where Port Richmond Avenue meets Richmond Terrace to accommodate traffic and increase pedestrian safety
  - Improve lighting, sidewalks, and signage and explore on-street parking options to support the Port Richmond Avenue retail corridor

Additionally, local elected officials have been exceptionally supportive of the potential redevelopment of Port Richmond to encourage the opportunity to recapture the downtown feel that the neighborhood once provided for the North Shore.



### 6) Public Support

As a community-driven business development organization, SIEDC strives to promote economic equity and access to the entire borough but especially those in demographic groups which are typically underserved. Over the course of its nearly 30-year history, SIEDC has been able to develop a unique skill set combining both small business development with neighborhood and community master planning. SIEDC is the borough's leader in small business advocacy and offers a wide variety of educational programs to its members and supporters. SIEDC has also proven itself to be a successful fundraising group with a membership of nearly 250 local and regional business members.

Over the past five years, SIEDC has committed resources and funds to improving the Port Richmond corridor and developing strategic public support. SIEDC has worked with a local community group Port Richmond Strong to provide litter removal, historic banners, free family events and improving the quality of life of residents.

SIEDC has also included the critical work of the Northfield Community Local Development Corporation and the NYC Department of City Planning in this application. Those organizations completed a New York State designated Brownfield Opportunity Area and many of those recommendations will be incorporated into the final DRI plan. SIEDC will work with Northfield to support the creation of new retail services and jobs, strengthening the working waterfront, and providing needed amenities including open space and waterfront access.

SIEDC has also garnered support from city and state groups for the proposed elevated park called the "Staten Island Skyway." Lacking severe lack of open space, long commutes and poor walkability, the half-mile of elevated portion of a long-abandoned rail line which bisects the community is a critical piece of adaptive reuse infrastructure. SIEDC has received vocal support for this project from Snug Harbor Cultural Center, New Yorkers 4 Parks, Meals on Wheels, Friends of the High Line and the Fort Greene Conservancy.

SIEDC has also recently engaged community and elected officials to support and advance an application to the US Environmental Protection Agency. SIEDC has formally partnered with the College of Staten Island's Department of Economic Development, Continuing Studies and Government Relations and Department of Workforce Development and Innovation to pursue environmental justice funding for a public education program with a focus on local employment in low income areas in the realm of clean energy.

Please see **Appendix A**, page 20, for letters in support specifically from local community leaders and elected officials.

## 7) Transformative Opportunities & Readiness

Key transformative strategies recommended in five major studies (North Shore 2030, Port Richmond Brownfield Opportunity Area, Local Needs Assessment and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, the Staten Island Skyway) include:

- a) Developing Vibrant Downtowns through Local Initiatives - Programming including making neighborhoods more walkable and supporting homegrown businesses and new amenities. This work can enhance the development of various mixed-use buildings, vacant lots and historic buildings for new cultural, residential, and business uses and reduce vacancies.
- b) Promoting Transit Oriented Development – The corridor is in close proximity to numerous east/west transit lines and is bisected by the abandoned railway right-of-way which can be converted into a pedestrian-centric park. The permanent addition of E-bikes to the area is also on the Department of Transportation’s agenda and will provide an additional “last mile” solution for commuters and visitors. Additionally, with the recent launch of the St. George Fast Ferry to the West Side of Manhattan, City agencies should evaluate ferry stops at Port Richmond Avenue for future expansion opportunities. These solutions will contribute to meaningful carbon reductions for the Island.
- c) Brownfield Remediation – DRI funding can be leveraged to update and implement recommendations from the previously completed BOA study including additional planning, stakeholder engagement and coordination for brownfields, vacant parcels and industrial sites is crucial to activating under used assets.
- d) Affordable Housing Integration – Affordable housing is critical to the future development of the neighborhood and must be integrated with employment, transit, and amenities. The DRI would evaluate and recommend aspects of technical support programming, incentives and funding. 21 tax lots are currently slated for Section 8 and affordable senior housing including ground-up construction, adaptive reuse and infill construction.
- e) Public Open Space –Port Richmond suffers from a lack of public open space which in turn results in public health issues. The Staten Island Skyway would address this issue as well as the potential development of the end of Port Richmond Avenue at the Kill Van Kull as a transformative anchor site for a public market, maker space, or street-end park.
- f) Community Health – The overwhelmingly low income and minority community is in need of expanded health options. Additional space, programs and resources (including mobile) would be of incredible benefit. The DRI would also seek to address the food desert issue confronting the neighborhood by prioritizing investment in fresh food retailers, community gardens and food pantry support.
- g) COVID-19 Relief – Funding would support technical assistance with a focus on WMBE businesses, immigrant entrepreneurs through existing programs including WE SI: Women Entrepreneurs of Staten Island, the Young Professionals Leadership Development Initiative, the Veteran and Immigrant-Owned Business Incubator Program and SI Works. Assistance would better leverage opportunities including CARES ACT Relief, the New York City LMI

Storefront Loans and the development of a community “Entrepreneurship Lab” to serve as a startup incubator for residents seeking career changes due to Covid-19.

### 8) Administrative Capacity

SIEDC is the leading business development and advocacy group in the borough. Since 1993, SIEDC has been working with businesses large and small to develop an effective plan for the future of Staten Island's economy. SIEDC has over 225 member businesses, many of which are the leading development, utility and construction firms in the borough who provide critical assistance with projects like those proposed in this grant.

SIEDC has a team of urban planners with significant experience in community outreach and development, grant writing and grant management and neighborhood development. SIEDC also maintains a full marketing department and can provide all financial oversight required to manage and oversee projects. SIEDC is partnering with Borough President James Oddo and his economic development team to ensure the long-term sustainability of the DRI work and that it is consistent with local planning goals, regulatory requirements and is financially feasible.

Specific to this proposal. SIEDC has a strong resume of related accomplishments and existing work in the Port Richmond neighborhood. These include:

- Serving as the lead author of the 2019 Downtown Revitalization Initiative application that was selected as the winner of that round for the Bay Street Corridor
- Having completed a New York State funded Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) study for the West Shore
- Serving as the Industrial Business Zone (IBZ) provider for Staten Island for over 15 years and working with various industrial and manufacturing businesses to secure over \$30 million in loans and financing
- Conducting the Staten Island Skyway Engineering & Feasibility study for the creation of an elevated park similar to the High Line in Manhattan to repurpose the abandoned railway that bisects Port Richmond Avenue
- Creating three of the four Business Improvement Districts in Staten Island as well as managing half-a-dozen other merchant organizations including in low-income and industrial areas
- Managing the SI Works employment program which is focused on connecting low-income local residents (especially minorities and women) with local jobs

In terms of New York State economic development funding, SIEDC originally proposed the repurposing of the parking lots at the ferry terminal which led to the development of the Empire Outlets. SIEDC worked closely with Lighthouse Point to apply through the Consolidated Funding Application to secure significant tax benefits in 2016. The organization has also secured New York State Regional Council funding for a variety of its own projects including the West Shore Light Rail, West Shore stormwater engineering study, Bloomfield Avenue bioswale construction and an economic analysis of suburban business incubators.

## Appendix A, Letters in Support

OFFICE OF THE BOROUGH PRESIDENT  
10 RICHMOND TERRACE  
STATEN ISLAND, NY 10301

JAMES S. ODDO  
BOROUGH PRESIDENT  
718.816.2200  
WWW.STATENISLANDUSA.COM

September 3, 2021

Empire State Development  
633 Third Avenue, 36th Floor  
New York, NY 10017

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my strong support of the Port Richmond application for Round V of the New York EDC Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). As both the Borough President and a life-long Staten Islander, I can confidently say that this investment will accelerate the natural progression of revitalization already taking place in this historic community. In short, funding this project is a critical next step in ensuring the synergy of economic development, which began with the 2019 DRI Round IV award for Staten Island's Bay Street Corridor.

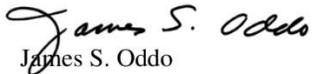
While there has already been private investment and development in this area, these will languish without collaborative public funding from an organization such as the EDC. As well, it demonstrates to current and potential private partners that Port Richmond and its residents are worthy of continued investment and revitalization.

Port Richmond is already experiencing a resurgence, and public investment at this stage of revitalization can help shape the community in a way that aligns with New York State's economic development goals. For example, since Staten Island is New York City's most automobile-dependent borough, the Port Richmond DRI project might strategically place electric vehicle charging stations in conjunction with an "e-bike" program. These stations would not only expand access to alternative transportation, but lure residents from other parts of the borough and beyond.

Empire State Development (ESD) investment would help revitalize public spaces and lure others to Port Richmond as a destination, rather than merely a pass-through. One such public space might be the abandoned elevated railway, which could be transformed into Staten Island's own "high-line."

Our office looks forward to continuing our work with Empire State Development in order to eliminate the disparities in these communities, and to achieve prosperity and equality for their residents.

Sincerely,



James S. Oddo  
President, Borough of Staten Island





CHARLES D. FALL  
Assemblyman 61<sup>st</sup> District  
Richmond County

THE ASSEMBLY  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

CHAIR

Subcommittee on  
Consumer Fraud Protection

COMMITTEES

Aging  
Cities  
Consumer Affairs and Protection  
Corporations, Authorities and Commissions  
Governmental Employees  
Tourism, Parks, Arts and Sports Development

September 1st, 2021

Félix Matos Rodríguez,  
New York City Regional Economic Development Council Co-Chair  
633 Third Avenue - 36th Floor  
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. Rodríguez:

I am voicing my strong support regarding the Staten Island Economic Development Corporation application for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). SIEDC is seeking funds to increase the economic fabric of the Port Richmond area of the North Shore of Staten Island.

This vital project will provide the necessary investment to continue the transformation of an area already being developed for livability and sustainability. With continued vacant storefronts, constant flooding due to lack of proper drainage, and crime impacting Port Richmond, the residents have shown to be resilient and active. They have one of the largest civic associations in the borough, Port Richmond Strong, who continue to support efforts in and around the neighborhood.

This project will improve the community for all residents. I urge you to consider SIEDC's grant proposal with full consideration. Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Assembly Member Charles D. Fall  
New York State Assembly, District 61



*Dedicated to the revitalization and healthy development of our family-oriented community through Quality of Life issues.*

**128 Port Richmond Avenue - Suite 2G Staten Island, NY 10302**  
**PortRichmondSTRONG.com**  
**PortRichmondStrong@gmail.com**  
**Facebook: Port Richmond Strong**

August 31, 2021

Empire State Development  
633 Third Avenue, 36th Floor  
New York, NY 10017

To Whom It May Concern,

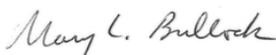
We hope this letter finds you well. We are writing on behalf of the Port Richmond Strong Civic Association, in support of the SIEDC's funding application for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative and we are honored to do so. As officers of the organization we are convinced that this project, which the SIEDC is working towards completing, will be a lifechanging accomplishment for the Port Richmond community and its members. Port Richmond Strong serves as a community leader and stakeholder in the community.

Port Richmond Strong was developed as an advocate for the Port Richmond community with goals of preserving community history, assisting small businesses, advocating for safe living, and improving overall quality of life for the community's residents and visitors. We are a collective group that works as volunteers to unite our community and bring positive change to our residents. The organization is interested in business efforts in Port Richmond with the intention of helping the community grow and prosper. Some of our many initiatives include neighborhood watch, clean streets, removing graffiti and promoting the community for its shopping corridor, parks, history and events. Port Richmond Strong has been recognized for their efforts with the NYPD, DSNY and DOB and we hope to continue and further develop our partnerships with city agencies.

With these efforts and more, Port Richmond Strong looks to raise additional awareness for the Port Richmond community. The DRI project will transform the district, benefitting Staten Island as a whole, as well as New York City. Funding for the DRI project will impact the Port Richmond area substantially. It will allow the neighborhood to improve on transportation, business development, public spaces and more. This initiative will also influence and attract additional investors to the area bringing in an influx of employment opportunities for residents, increasing job growth. Port Richmond is in dire need of improvement and will require the funding to do so.

Port Richmond Strong accepts any opportunity to work with city officials and agencies to move this project along. Our mission is to transform the area positively and provide businesses and residents the opportunity to flourish and prosper. We hope we are given the chance to take this opportunity and make an impact.

Sincerely,

  
Mary Bullock- Founder/President

  
Mario Buonviaggio-vice President

August 25, 2021

Empire State Development  
633 Third Avenue - 36th Floor  
New York, NY 10017

To Whom It May Concern:

I hope this letter finds you well. I am delighted to write in support of the SIEDC's funding application for the Port Richmond Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). This vital project will increase the economic fabric of the community and make the necessary investment to transform an area on the cusp of something great.

I am a Port Richmond business owner and a Port Richmond Strong board member. Throughout my work in the neighborhood, I have realized that the community needs capital improvements and quality of life. That is why I have my company has spent resources investing in Port Richmond. Hiring people from Port Richmond, conducting business in Port Richmond and helping Port Richmond grow is a great way to assist the area. However, we need help.

Vacant storefronts, constant flooding due to lack of proper stormwater, dilapidated buildings and crime affect Port Richmond. Meeting after meeting, our neighbors pour out their hearts of the lack of attention and neglect of capital improvements.

Funding the neighborhood for Port Richmond is very important and like rising tides raise all boats, this support would truly uplift so many businesses, families, individuals and Staten Island as a whole.

Sincerely,



Dimitry Simanovsky  
Grinberg Management & Development LLC  
Port Richmond Strong Board Member

*The Reformed Church on Staten Island  
54 Port Richmond Avenue  
Staten Island, NY 10302*

August 25, 2021

Empire State Development  
633 Third Avenue - 36th Floor  
New York, NY 10017

To Whom It May Concern:

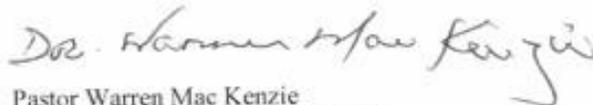
I am writing to express my support for the Staten Island Economic Development Corporation's Downtown Revitalization Initiative for Port Richmond via the Regional Economic Development (REDC) application.

As the oldest church in the borough, the Reformed Church of Staten Island has been serving the area of Port Richmond since 1656. Our congregation is a rich mix of various cultures, ethnicities, and community people. The church itself has become a meeting place for a wide variety of events and meetings throughout the years. Presiding over the church has been an absolute pleasure and has given me the opportunity to meet the great people of Port Richmond. It has also given me the opportunity to see the help that the neighborhood needs.

Vacant storefronts, constant flooding due to lack of proper stormwater, dilapidated buildings and crime affect Port Richmond. The area is in great need of capital improvements and an investment.

Funding the neighborhood for Port Richmond is very important and like rising tides raise all boats; this support would truly uplift so many businesses, families, individuals and Staten Island as a whole.

Sincerely,



Pastor Warren Mac Kenzie  
Reformed Church of Staten Island