2021 DRI Application

Applications for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) must be received by the appropriate Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) by **4:00 PM on September 15, 2021** at the email address provided at the end of this application.

> In **New York City**, the Borough Presidents' offices will be the official applicants to the REDC, and organizations interested in proposing an area for DRI funding should contact the respective Borough President's office as soon possible. Based on these proposals, each Borough President's office will develop and submit no more than two formal applications for consideration by the New York City REDC. Applications to the offices of the Borough President must be received by email no later than **4:00 PM on September 3, 2021**. The subject heading on the email must be "Downtown Revitalization Round 5."

Applicant responses for each section should be as complete and succinct as possible. Additional information is available in the 2021 DRI Guidebook, available at www.ny.gov/DRI.

> Applicants in the **Mid-Hudson region** must limit their application to a total of 15 pages if applying just for a $10 million award, or 20 pages if applying to also be considered for a $20 million award. The map of the DRI Area requested in question number 1 must be part of the 15 or 20 page limit. The requested addendum regarding opportunities for electric vehicle chargers may exceed the page limit. No other attachments will be accepted.

Applicants should make every effort to engage the community in the development of the application. Prior to submission, applicants must have held a minimum of one meeting or event (either virtually or in-person) to solicit public input on the community vision and potential projects and should demonstrate that any input received was considered in the final application.

Communities that wish to be considered for a $20 million award must provide additional documentation as noted below.

BASIC INFORMATION

- REDC Region *Long Island*
- Municipality Name (if joint application, list both municipalities) *Town of Babylon*
- Downtown Name *East Farmingdale*
- County Name *Suffolk County*
- Applicant Contact(s) Name and Title (if joint application, identify primary contact) *Rachel Scelfo, Commissioner, Department of Planning & Development; Marwa Fawaz, Director, Comprehensive Planning & Downtown Revitalization*
- Applicant Contact(s) Email Address and Secondary Email Address *rscelfo@townofbabylon.com; mfawaz@townofbabylon.com*

VISION FOR DOWNTOWN

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

Downtown revitalization within East Farmingdale relies on transportation options such as the potential re-opening of the East Farmingdale Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) station for passenger service and the new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route planned for Route 110, as well as the development of a mix of uses that can support this new transportation network. The Town of Babylon envisions this area to be designed to maximize the benefit of new transportation choices by providing as many people as possible the ability to reach the station while minimizing their need for reliance upon the automobile.

The physical details of the environment immediately around the LIRR and BRT transit stations are critically important. Care was taken that the scale and configuration of a new transit-oriented development (TOD) station area feels appropriate to the evolving identity of the East Farmingdale community, and meets the needs of future residents and transit riders. Riders will step out of transit into a collection of high-quality public spaces that feel comfortable to both pedestrians and cyclists. Cars and "kiss & ride" drop-offs will be accommodated, but automotive facilities won't dominate the scene.

The public spaces of the station area will be clearly shaped by the fronts of buildings with plentiful doors and windows providing "eyes on the street". Shopfronts will provide convenient access to goods and services for transit users and add to the visual interest of the scene. Sidewalks will be wide enough to accommodate outdoor cafe seating and will be protected from the elements by regularly spaced street trees and architectural appurtenances like awnings and colonnades. The public spaces around the LIRR and BRT stations will be so comfortable that they form an amenity for adjacent residential, office and retail uses. These public spaces could even be programmed with additional temporary activities like a farmers' market, an art fair, or outdoor concerts.

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.

The Long Island Railroad (LIRR) played an integral role in the shaping of settlement on Long Island. Connecting New York City with Boston, the LIRR initiated settlement around station areas, creating downtowns. Towns such as Amityville, Babylon, Port Jefferson, Port Washington, and Farmingdale were formed, among others. Common observed urban design strategies found in these walkable, historic LIRR station town centers can be studied and utilized and serve as precedents for successful downtown development in East Farmingdale.

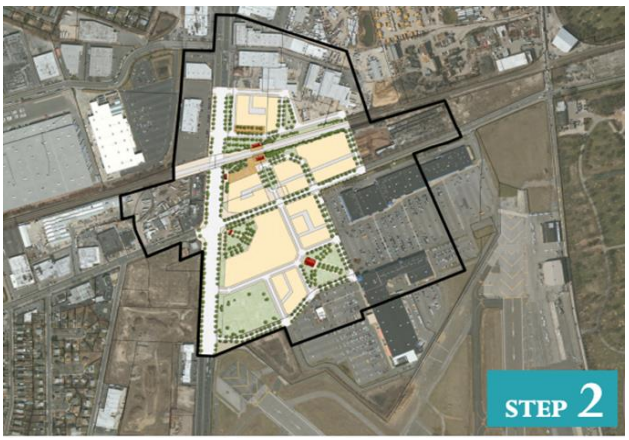
Historically, towns were typically centered on a main street running perpendicularly to the train station. This allowed for two focus points – the train station and a park, town or village hall, congregation, or other feature – to anchor either side of Main Street. Buildings framed the Main Street, with ground floor shops that meet the sidewalk, and housing located nearby. Civic buildings and places of worship were located on highly visible sites in the immediate area. This relationship allowed for everyday uses to be within walking distance of residences and train commuters. A synergy emerged between local businesses and the train

station where each component promoted the other. Today, these town centers remain as desirable places to live, work, shop and visit.

Forest Hills Gardens, another LIRR station town, conceived of a unique development approach. An example of the "Garden City Suburb" movement, Forest Hills Gardens approached town design and planning as a holistic composition of the built environment. Designed in conjunction with the Olmstead Brothers, Forest Hills Gardens embraced the train station as an integral part of the main village plaza. Higher-density settlement is found in the station area, transitioning to single-family residences in the surroundings. A central tower feature and pedestrian bridges serve as landmark character-defining features and frame the station plaza. By establishing an interesting central urban space, tree-lined streets framed by buildings and high-quality architectural detailing, Forest Hills Gardens created a desirable neighborhood.

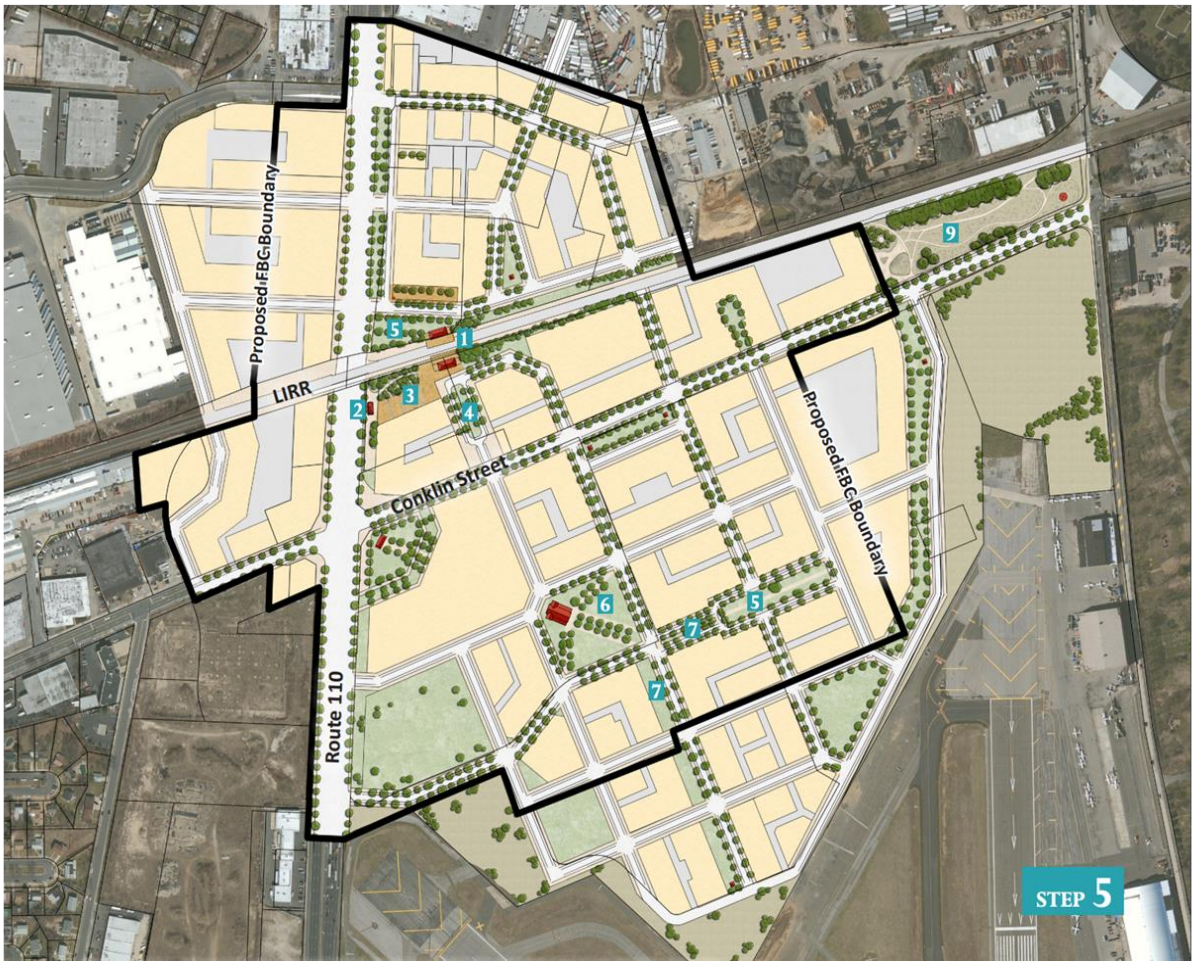
East Farmingdale's history led to a different relationship to its LIRR station. During the World War II effort, East Farmingdale produced many bombers that contributed to victory for the Allies. As a result, the former train station was located near the factories and took on a "back-of house" use and atmosphere. With the potential reopening of the LIRR station and the addition of the BRT stop on Route 110, East Farmingdale has the opportunity to transition its station area to a "front-of-house" feature.

Downtown East Farmingdale's potential for downtown revitalization and TOD immediately surrounding a new LIRR station and planned Route 110 BRT stop is exciting and would serve as a catalyst towards the execution of projects that would spur economic development and downtown revitalization. A relatively small area (that area surrounding the LIRR) can be part of an initial phase of development (as illustrated in Step 1). Taking inspiration from Forrest Hill Gardens, a station plaza is introduced to connect the LIRR station and BRT stop and create a comfortable gathering space. Village-scale buildings with residences and ground floor retail frontages along the station plaza and adjacent station square create an inviting, walkable atmosphere for residents, visitors and commuters. Parking will be located within proximity of the station areas, shops and residences, but separated from streets and public spaces by liner buildings.



An important aspect to the plan is the ability to anticipate the form of future development and street/ trail connections and incorporate different parcels as landowners may choose to develop their land. As time progresses, additional parcels can redevelop according to the vision for the area; as each Step (illustrated in Steps 2 through 4) is implemented the area becomes more complete, adding quality buildings and connected open spaces that line walkable streets. Future development may or may not follow the sequence illustrated; but it is likely to be incremental and achieved over time. The final illustrative plan (Step 5)

envisions a long-term transformation according to the vision expressed through the design charrette.



DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION

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

   The proposed DRI boundary includes approximately 109 acres within the unincorporated hamlet of East Farmingdale within the Town of Babylon in Suffolk County, New York, centered on the intersection of Conklin Street and Broadhollow Road. The DRI boundary currently includes various non-residential uses, including industrial, commercial, and retail/entertainment. Transecting the DRI boundary just north of, and running parallel to, Conklin Street are the LIRR train tracks. South of the Project Site is Republic Airport, a regional airport owned by the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), which provides flight training, private and corporate flights, and charter and regional commuter operations. (Map of Proposed DRI Boundary is included at the end of this application).

2) **Past investment, future investment potential**. Describe how this DRI area will be able to capitalize on prior private and public investment and catalyze future investments in the neighborhood and its surrounding areas. Describe recent planning efforts that support public and private investment in the proposed DRI area.

   Since the beginning of the century, the Town of Babylon has been exploring ways to redevelop and revitalize downtown East Farmingdale. Crucial to that redevelopment is an area of Republic Airport separated by Conklin Street that has been a neglected eye sore for nearly three decades. The Town has engaged staff, outside consultants and various firms to study the area and engage with the local community to create a complex and unique multi-use transit-oriented development on Long Island's largest employment corridor - New York State Route 110.

   Simultaneous to the Town's planning, the State of New York has been engaged in plans to modernize Republic Airport. The Town has been following the land use proposals and participating in the State public comment periods at hearings and at Republic Airport Commission meetings. As the State Land Use Planning efforts continue under the oversight of the FAA, the Town continues to remain engaged to assure airport compatible uses are considered. The revitalization of downtown East Farmingdale, is consistent with and will complement the State's efforts and will contribute to the economic vitality of the State's aviation airport – an important factor in the Town and regions economic success.

   In 2018, the Town also hired consultants to prepare a generic environmental impact statement for the proposed East Farmingdale Form Base Code.

   The Town in partnership with local stakeholders have identified the area around the LIRR (as illustrated in Step 1, above for potential residential uses that could help support the housing needs of SUNY Farmingdale. Additionally, a complex transportation hub would be located adjacent to the site, including the potential reopening the former Republic Train Station on the LIRR and connecting it to a bus rapid transit (BRT) system to carry residents and employees north and south along the Route 110 Corridor.

   These parcels along Conklin Street are the linchpin to the future development of East Farmingdale. Without these pieces in the East Farmingdale puzzle, no future plans for residential development or

downtown mixed-use can take place due to the possible health hazards these parcels would pose to the community. The Town has successfully engaged in transit-oriented development in the past, including Wyandanch Rising and Copiague Revitalization.

The potential reopening of the East Farmingdale LIRR station would be a key component and accompaniment to the Town's initiatives. The other major transportation initiative is the County's recent commitment to fund the preliminary engineering for the Route 110 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) from Huntington to Amityville. The Route 110 BRT is anticipated to be phased and be in operation in the next 4-5 years. The introduction of these two major transportation modes to East Farmingdale would be the catalysts for the creation of a transit-oriented development center.

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

A market analysis was conducted by Larisa Ortiz Associates and Urbanomics in 2011, which included an analysis of demographics, employment trends and demand, housing trends and forecasts, and potential retail environment with the downtown East Farmingdale project area.

The study area is located at the center of one of the best performing economic corridors on Long Island, and at the intersection of the Ronkonkoma Branch of the LIRR and the Route 110 BRT path. The primary trade area for East Farmingdale, commensurate with a "convenience trade" area, measures 2 miles wide along Route 110 where the anticipated BRT line will operate and run north south from Long Island Expressway to Route 26/Sunrise Highway. This convenience trade area, which will also be referred to as the TOD Trade Area, is an anticipated market area that draws customers for goods and services who are commuters on the anticipated BRT and LIRR lines in East Farmingdale. A secondary trade area was then expanded to include a 5-mile radius from Airport Plaza – the existing anchor and regional mall of East Farmingdale.

A look at the overall market composition in 2011 for the primary trade area reveals that 54% of its customer base is composed of workers and 45% is composed of residents, an almost even split. This indicates that to be successful, retailers will need to cater accordingly to both groups. Within the primary trade area, there is currently a total of 93,272 employees. These employees are concentrated at Republic Airport and north of Conklin St on Route 110 where there is a cluster of furniture and home improvement stores. Within 5 miles, however, the customer base is more heavily composed of residents who make up 61% of total population.

In addition, based on the 2011 Market analysis, East Farmingdale could support more than 80,000 square feet (SF) of new retail based on a maximum build out of 3,490 housing units at the TOD, or an additional 7,200 new residents. These retail spaces should be co-located and inter-spread with the planned housing units. The first phase of retail is recommended to measure conservatively, approximately 30,000 SF at the station area, before expanding with full residential build-out. Of the 30,000+ SF of retail in the first phase, East Farmingdale can support between 11,291 SF and 16,936 SF of full-service restaurants if it "captures" between 40-60% of the secondary trade area's demand for this retail category. This is equal to three or four diners, cafés or restaurants, and may even result in a clustering of dining options, or a restaurant row.

The analysis also showed that there may be a potential for more, smaller-sized grocery stores or

equivalents such as farmers markets or convenience grocery stores to occupy the other 50 percent of first phase retail square footage.

4) **Quality of life.** 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.

No downtown is complete without an anchor, and typically that anchor is a transit-oriented development. A TOD is the "creation of a compact, walkable, pedestrian-oriented, and mixed- use community centered around high-quality train/bus system." Several primary elements are typically associated with a TOD, such as complimentary specialized retail uses, supported by active transportation options and ride hailing services. Other TOD design elements within a 10-minute walk of the station include the focus on designing for people and place by integrating a connected network of walkable streets with higher density land uses combined with managed/shared parking strategies. Framing the conversation around the definition of a TOD was essential to clearly establish this area as unique and special (not a typical suburban development approach) or simply a train station surrounded by parking (solely a "drive- to" train station).

Mobility Choices and Options

The basic characteristics of walkable and safer streets are presented to establish contrast to both Route 110 and Conklin Street which are the major crossroads and barriers in the study area to mobility choices and options. The basic elements of walkable and safer streets include the following elements: network connectivity for all users, slower speeds, destinations, building proximity to street, people scale streets and intersections, street trees, landscaping and green infrastructure. In this approach, streets become places in and of themselves, and not just conduits for moving a single mode of transport as if nothing else matters. Each of these elements were described and how it relates to walkability and safety.

Connectivity/Congestion – All vehicle trips use 110/Conklin

The concept of network connectivity is very important in the study area. The study area has three major barriers (LIRR, Route 110, Conklin Street) between the residential community to the west and the various retail, commercial and employment centers to the east and north. Conklin Street is the only east-west street south of the railroad corridor and Route 110 is the primary north-south route through the area. This limited network funnels all traffic to Conklin or Route 110 which culminates at their intersection. The intersection of Conklin and Route 110 is a pinch point in the network as it must serve many functions: it has a large size and complex signal operations with partial pedestrian amenities, which is a result of having to serve high traffic volumes due to lack of network connectivity in the area. The pedestrian and bicycle facility gaps are noticeable and form a disconnect to transit service along Route 110. The opportunity exists to reduce the burden on this one intersection by providing additional east- west and north-south street network to better distribute traffic and provide choices and options to mobility in the area. A more robust street grid network allows less circuitous travel which will minimize traffic volumes and delay on any given street, allows for smaller streets and intersections that are more efficient per travel lane and are walkable and safer for all users.

Safety

Streets are the links that connect the community and as such need to be designed for the context and users that they serve. In a traditional downtown where people walk, bike, drive, the use of transit will be interacting, and setting the right motor vehicle speed through design is critical in preventing crashes resulting in severe injury and fatalities. Route 110 is the second most dangerous roadway in the county and Conklin/110 is a challenging intersection for most users to navigate. There are global and national programs to address the crash severity on the nation's streets and it starts with design for people and place.

The probability of a pedestrian surviving a crash at 20MPH is 90%, but falls to only a 10% survival rate at 40MPH. Conklin and Route 110 currently have speed limits of 40MPH and 55MPH, respectively. Nine pedestrian fatalities occurred along Route 110 between 2009 and 2011. At the Conklin/Route 110 intersection, three pedestrian crashes resulted in one fatality and two injuries. At lower travel speeds, drivers have a wider cone of vision that allows the driver to better see and react to pedestrians, bicyclists or parking maneuvers minimizing the probability of a crash. Lower speeds also have notable economic benefits for the businesses and retail establishments along the street; slower vehicle speeds allow motorists to "see" attractions beyond the curb, and pedestrian traffic increases as the environment becomes friendlier to walking.

"Right-size" Parking

Excess parking promotes higher car ownership and increased vehicle trips that result in increased congestion and higher housing costs. The key to TOD parking is to define the right amount of parking through better management of parking versus providing excess supply. This is often achieved through shared parking between the various land uses within the TOD. For instance, residential uses need parking spaces predominantly during the evening and overnight, while commercial uses need parking mostly during business hours and early evening. National shared parking guidelines are available for TOD developments that could be used, but are still proven to be conservatively high based on recent national studies. Parking space ratios typically found in zoning ordinances for isolated land uses are not appropriate in a TOD context. For example, the current parking ratio at Airport Plaza is 7.04 parking spaces/1000 square feet which is high even in a suburban environment. Large parking fields surrounding buildings often create challenges for motorists parking and then walking to access building. Users of transit connecting to the building from public streets or adjacent neighborhoods feel disconnected to retail establishments. Finally, a portion of TOD residents in this context likely will have fewer cars than driving age people in a household; provisions for car and bike share and rental can augment this "car-light" lifestyle desired by a certain segment of the population and made possible by the mix of uses and mode choice options available in a TOD.

Potential Transportation Considerations

In order to enhance connectivity for all modes the following elements should be considered:

- *Provide continuous pedestrian corridors and crossings on major streets (green lines)*
- *Provide continuous bike routes and trails internal to TOD extending to external bike trails and other destinations (yellow lines)*
- *Phase in a robust street grid with various TOD development phases (blue lines)*

- *Evaluate the potential of a north-south street under LIRR connecting residential development to the north and services to the south*
- *Evaluate the potential of an east-west connection opposite Airport Plaza Blvd to serve commercial properties and minimize truck traffic in the residential neighborhood*
- *Create opportunity for an emergency service road/ pedestrian/bicycle trail connection from E. Carmans Road to Route 110 at Airport Plaza Blvd*

In order to develop walkable and safer streets – street typologies for existing streets and new TOD streets should be developed, containing the following elements:

- *Continuous pedestrian sidewalks*
- *High visibility pedestrian crossings, refuge island/median, curb bump outs, and pedestrian signals*
- *Crosswalks across all approaches of an intersection*
- *Reduce pedestrian exposure to vehicles and crossing distances at intersections*
- *Continuous bicycle facilities (protected bike lanes, cycle tracks or trails), sharrows can be considered on some traffic calmed TOD streets*
- *Street lighting for visibility and safety*
- *Narrow travel lanes, 10 foot, to manage travel speeds*
- *Lower posted speed limits in context with surrounding environment*
- *Road diet existing streets where appropriate*
- *Green infrastructure and bioswales*
- *Traffic signals timed primarily for the convenience and safety of people walking and biking*
- *Level-of-service standards are met through congestion pricing measures, or disregarded entirely*
- *Roads designed to limit speed to 30 mph on major streets and 20 mph on lesser streets*
- *Bus stop shelters and amenities*
- *Street trees*
- *People scale wayfinding signs*

In order to manage the demand and supply of parking:

- *Reduced and managed parking inside 10-minute walk circle around town center / train station*
- *Evaluate other TODs for more accurate parking needs and ratios (especially residential within a TOD)*
- *Shared parking – each parking space serve multiple users and destinations*
- *Parking pricing – charge motorists directly and efficiently for using parking facilities*
- *Parking time durations – where desired to have convenient yet high turn-over parking for business access*
- *Financial incentives – provide financial incentives to spur development and entice developers*
- *Unbundle parking – rent or sell parking facilities separately from building space*
- *Maximize use of current parking (i.e. initial station parking can be in Airport Plaza)*
- *Bicycle storage – ride-in bicycle parking areas within station and at various other destinations both short and long-term parking options (residential, commercial, civic and parks)*
- *Ride hailing curb side parking, taxi, drop off parking*

Proposed Open Spaces

A system of connected public spaces are proposed to be woven into the future development framework. Proposed open spaces support public gathering, intermodal transportation connections, environmental sustainability, and define a vibrant public realm. Open spaces will be defined in the FBC according to their defined typologies as integral elements of the regulating plan.

Green infrastructure will be encouraged in the code as part of a healthy public and private realm. Green infrastructure Best Management Practices (BMPs) such as permeable pavement, bioretention, and green roofs which naturally filter and infiltrate runoff as close to where it falls as possible, and often provide multiple benefits including traffic calming and improved aesthetics.

5) **Supportive local 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 or New York State Stretch Code, comprehensive plans, Clean Energy Communities or Climate Smart Communities designation, complete streets plan, transit-oriented development, non-discrimination laws, age-friendly policies, and a downtown management structure. If policies that support livability and quality of life in downtown are not currently in place, describe near-term efforts by the municipality to create and implement such policies.

The Town of Babylon has been a leader in promoting transit-oriented development, walkability, and smart growth. The Town's Department of Planning and Development and its Downtown Revitalization staff have been dedicated to developing and implementing plans for transit-oriented development and downtown improvements, which include the Wyandanch Rising initiative and the recent rezoning of Downtown Copiague. In 2010, the Town adopted a Complete Streets Policy. The Town's Route 110 BRT study analyzed alternative modes of travel in order to reduce congestion, air pollution, and the stress and time in commuting, while improving the quality of life of all people on this roadway. Furthermore, the 2011 East Farmingdale Center, Babylon, NY: A Transit Oriented Redevelopment Plan refines the uses and massing proposed by providing additional detail with respect to the design of the public and private realms. The 2011 plan, proposed a mixed-use development that is centered around a potential future Republic LIRR station and a BRT station on Route 110 corridor.

Consistent with the Suffolk County Master Plan, which specifically calls for the transit-oriented redevelopment of East Farmingdale, the proposed revitalization and redevelopment of East Farmingdale is also consistent with the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council Plan (LIREDC)-2017 Update. The LIREDC plan recommends the promotion of high-tech industries and improving the accessibility of major employment centers to new residential areas. Finally, the Town's 1998 Comprehensive Plan responds to the changing demographics of the region and aims to improve the quality of life of the Town – two of the Plan's main goals.

In addition to the above, the Town of Babylon continues its dedication to improving our downtowns, modernizing local codes, and enhancing quality of life for its residents. More recent local policies which support this include, new local laws which are currently being drafted:

- *Proposed Affordable Housing Zoning Code*
- *Proposed revisions to the Multi-Residence Zoning Code*
- *Climate Smart Communities*

For downtown East Farmingdale, the Town anticipates building upon the 2018 Form-Based Code (FBC), and utilizing same, as a starting point to guide future development in the study area. The code prescribes physical details of future development, including the relationship of buildings to streets, the height and massing of buildings, architectural details, street design details, and specifications for landscape and open spaces. The code is be organized around "transect zones" which describe varying urban contexts that transition from the walkable station area to surrounding residential and commercial areas.

6) **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. Characterize the commitment among local leaders and stakeholders to preparing and implementing a strategic investment plan.

The Town Supervisor, Rich Schaffer, and the Deputy Town Supervisor, Tony Martinez, as well as the rest of the Town Board, and other local and regional leaders have overwhelmingly supported the revitalization of downtown East Farmingdale. Further these local leaders, and their staff are committed to the revitalization of downtown East Farmingdale. In addition to the support by the local officials and regional leaders, on January 30, 2017, a Kick-off & Hands-on Community Design Session was held. The meeting began with an introductory presentation about transit oriented development (TOD) and planning at the site to date, and outlined challenges in the East Farmingdale, Route 110 and Conklin Street intersection. A series of keypad polling questions yielded information about who was in attendance and their interests and priorities. Attendees then worked in small groups around tables to share ideas for the study area. Starting with maps, participants discussed:

- *How a new LIRR and BRT station could impact future development in the area.*
- *How to form a mixed-use corridor along Conklin Street, east of Route 110 and potential design for Conklin Street crossings.*
- *What types of cultural and recreational opportunities should be made available as part of the vision.*
- *How to encourage walkable, transit- and pedestrian friendly growth in the study area.*
- *The types and location of open space and green infrastructure features that could be included.*

Each group was given a map to sketch and brainstorm potential solutions and suggestions. Notes were taken as each group discussed ideas and sketched concepts to communicate and test them. At the end of the working session, each group identified "three big ideas" that emerged through their discussions. Afterward, each group presented their sketches and big ideas to the assembly.

7) **Transformative opportunities and readiness.** Describe opportunities to build on the strengths described above by providing a list of transformative projects that could 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). Projects may be public or private, and could address economic development, transportation, housing, and community development needs. Project descriptions should include demonstration of readiness, proposed cost and funding sources, and identification of the project sponsor. For private for-profit projects, DRI funds may not exceed 40% of the total project cost (with a 10% bonus available for projects that commit to meaningful carbon reduction goals, including full electrification and net-zero building performance). While DRI funding may be used to cover the entire cost of a public or not-for-profit project, leveraging of investment dollars from other

sources (i.e., private, local, federal, or other state sources) is strongly encouraged.

Also identify any other transformative opportunities that may be explored during the planning process, such as reuse of vacant and developable properties and underutilized buildings; projects to address unmet needs in the downtown, including housing, retail, and community services; and activities that will build upon regional strengths and trends.

If a loan or grant fund is proposed, please identify who might be an appropriate entity with capacity to manage the fund. If candidate projects have been identified, please include them to demonstrate potential demand for the fund. Funds are typically capped at $600,000.

Please note that if your community is selected to participate in the DRI program, projects identified in the application, along with any others that may arise during the DRI planning process, will ultimately be vetted by the Local Planning Committee and the State to determine which projects receive DRI grants.

Based on the community input that was gathered and design concepts tested and refined during the 2017 community charrette, a series of "Big Ideas" were formulated. These ideas encompass community priorities and critical site design considerations and define key elements of the future development at the East Farmingdale LIRR station. As design ideas continue to be refined and code concepts drafted, these "big ideas" can be used as a checklist to ensure future improvements are on the right track.

1. Start with the station area, set up the code for phased change over time

New development at the Long Island Railroad station will be different from the auto-oriented commercial and industrial surroundings in the Conklin Street/ Route 110 area. It will be important to create a core area of "walkability" at the station area. Transit users become pedestrians or cyclists on either end of their journey, and successful transit-oriented environments facilitate all modes of mobility. Walkable design includes defining the pedestrian realm through buildings and landscaping, providing connected networks (sidewalks, trails, and streets) that facilitate mobility, providing building elements that offer protection from the elements such as awnings, colonnades or second floor balconies, providing a mix of uses and multiple destinations that can be reach by foot, and providing street design that slows vehicular traffic to facilitate the other modes. Change in the urban form and character of the area around the station will not happen overnight. The zoning standards will be established to direct the redevelopment of parcels immediately adjacent to the station area as a first step; and provide a roadmap for additional parcels to redevelop over time to make the area more complete.

2. Link transit users (BRT, LIRR)

A core component of transit-oriented development is access to transit. In the future, the East Farmingdale study area is planned to be accessible not just by train but also by enhanced bus rapid transit service (BRT) on Route 110. To maximize functionality and facilitate choices in mobility, these systems should be designed to be seamlessly integrated, to allow users to easily transfer from one line to another. A high-quality pedestrian link between each station is essential, with the stations placed in as close proximity to each other as is feasible. Connections to parking and bike/ trail network should also be considered. Previous planning efforts envisioned the BRT would need to deviate from Route 110 to arrive at the LIRR station area; one of the primary refinements of the charrette was to move the LIRR station west, closer to Route 110, to provide this connection without sacrificing travel time of BRT users

3. Village-like character, beautiful architecture, controlled height, better street network

During the charrette week, the design team worked to gather input that described the desired characteristics of future development in the study area, including height, intensity, and architectural features. Several themes emerged; first, community members described the desired form as "village-like", with less intensity and "urban city" characteristics that are found in areas closer to New York City. Local precedents in Farmingdale and Babylon were cited as examples of the character desired of future development. A desire for controlled building heights was also expressed. Many participants voiced support for buildings up to three stories in height; there were also discussions of opportunities for increased height in select areas, for example for landmark buildings, or those immediately around the station area.

Deficiencies in the existing street network were cited as one reason that people do not walk in the area today. Designed primarily for automotive circulation, the existing roads have large block sizes and lack connected sidewalks and other pedestrian features. New streets in the area, designed for movement of all modes can accompany future development and create smaller, walkable blocks.

4. Improve safety / walkability, including Conklin & 110

Having a pedestrian-supportive environment around transit stations increases the usability and viability of each mode. The East Farmingdale study area today has challenges for pedestrian and cyclists. New street designs that accommodate pedestrians with wide sidewalks and shading/protection from the elements will be part of the solution. The redesign of existing streets will also play a role. Conklin Street and Route 110 have been identified as barriers to pedestrians; accident data supports this concern. Design solutions that improve safety and walkability while still allowing vehicular needs to function as well are the goal.

5. New gathering spaces: station square, station plaza, park spaces

The study area today lacks any community gathering spaces; new development at the reopened LIRR station will incorporate new gathering spaces to help to meet this need. A square at the station itself can function as the heart of the new development, and be used for outdoor markets, movies on the green, or other community events. The station square will be defined by building frontages with lively ground floor uses that activate the space. An additional plaza space along the LIRR tracks will link the LIRR and BRT stations together. In addition to the station square and plaza, linear parks and neighborhood greens will add value and character to new development, as well as a resource to the surrounding community.

6. Mix of uses retail, office, housing, cultural facilities

Transit-oriented developments typically contain a mixture of uses including retail, office, and housing opportunities, to create destinations and provide users that support the transit investment. This complete mixture is envisioned for East Farmingdale, including residences, retail areas and some office. There are some use restrictions in direct proximity to the airport that will need to be observed, but these do not impact the station area itself. During community discussions, a need for additional cultural facilities was also voiced. Cultural facilities and gathering places are complementary uses within transit-oriented development and can be encouraged to be part of new development in the area.

8) Administrative Capacity. Describe the local administrative capacity to manage this planning and implementation initiative, including the ability to oversee contracts for awarded municipal projects

using existing staff and resources.

The Town of Babylon's Planning and Development Department is committed to managing development through effective planning and zoning practices designed to enhance the quality of life in residential neighborhoods, create vibrant downtowns and business districts, protect the environment and promote an atmosphere in which industry can thrive. The Department advises the Supervisor, Town Board and various boards and commissions on matters of land use and development and also maintains and updates the Town's Zoning Map, and Subdivision and Site Plan Regulations.

The Department strives to work with communities to achieve and maintain a better quality of life by providing professional guidance and coordination of all land planning and development activities, and by fairly and consistently implementing the Town's regulations and policies.

The Department of Planning and Development, along with its Downtown Revitalization staff focus on the revitalization of aging, under-performing downtowns, and commercial corridors throughout the Town of Babylon to create or recreate vibrant downtowns that feature:

- *A range of housing options*
- *A variety of activities and amenities*
- *Pedestrian friendly sidewalks and streets*
- *Public space to foster a sense of community*
- *Preservation and enhancement green space*
- *Perseveration of the unique character of neighborhoods*

The principles of smart growth and sustainability are the cornerstones of our efforts. As a department, we focus on land use and development in downtown centers, areas that already have adequate infrastructure (including public transit), and areas that are recognizable as downtowns and neighborhood centers.

In addition, the Town's Housing Choice Voucher Program/Section 8 is a federal rental subsidy program funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

This Program assists low income constituents of the Town of Babylon by paying a portion of their rent--allowing them to afford decent and safe housing.

Other townships and jurisdictions also operate the Housing Choice Voucher Program funded through HUD. This allows families the flexibility to relocate in order to meet employment and educational goals of their choice.

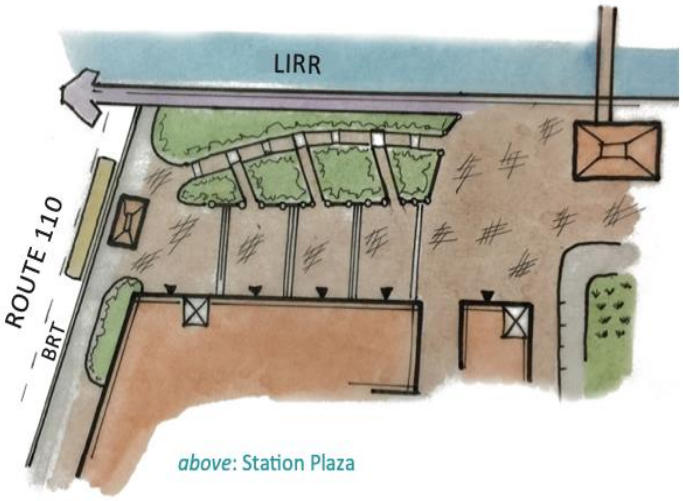
Participation in the program requires applicants to meet eligibility requirements set by federal regulation in order to be placed on the active applicant list. Position on the list is determined by a lottery system. Applicants are then selected in order and become participants of the program as funding becomes available.

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

As explained in this application, downtown East Farmingdale has been the focus of numerous Town and County studies and initiatives. The Town would like to build upon all these efforts and to leverage the investments that have been previously made, and are anticipated to be made with the inclusion of the DRI funding. By leveraging funding, and setting the stage for private investment with the proper zoning, and the potential re-opening of the Republic Train Station, East Farmingdale can soon be a downtown area

that the community has envisioned!

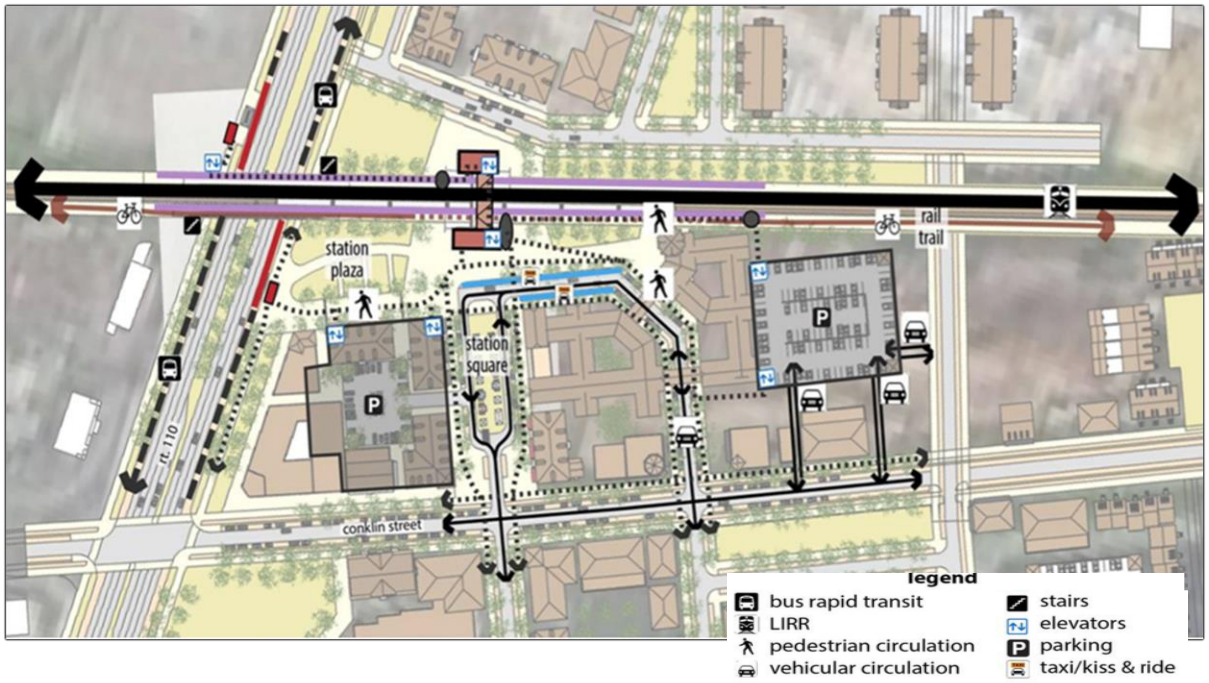
10) **$20 Million Request**. For applicants wishing to be considered for $20 million in DRI funding, provide a clear but concise justification of why your community should be awarded $20 million. Justification should include identification of at least 1-2 large, transformational projects that will have a significant impact on the downtown and could be realized with a larger grant award. Project descriptions should include status of the following: site control, commitments from project partners, other funding sources, and zoning/regulatory requirements. Since a larger award amount will require heightened capacity on the part of your municipality, please identify the individual or entity that will coordinate DRI implementation. Also describe the capacity of any project partners to undertake the additional large-scale projects.



above: Station Plaza

Station Plaza *is a critical link in the first phase of TOD implementation, connecting the future BRT stops with the train station and a potential parking garage as a pleasant, human-scaled pedestrian experience adjacent to neighborhood-scale commercial space. The plaza must be terraced to provide relatively level commercial adjacent plaza spaces for outdoor gathering or dining while also providing an ADA-compliant link from 110 to the train station and beyond. Future study is required to evaluate detailed design, as shade conditions and dimensions between the rail and proposed buildings may affect the quality of this space, especially as a viable pedestrian-centered commercial frontage.*

Compared to the 2011 vision/plan, the train station has been shifted one block west for a simpler connection to the Route 110 BRT. This configuration also focuses the Phase I development increment



on creating the station plaza and nearby station square to quickly create a sense of place. Proposed elevators on the west side of Route 110 and in station structures on both sides of the tracks, combined with siting of the rail platform to span Route 110, will efficiently provide access for all. Pedestrian connections from parking below-grade at the first development block east of Route 110 can conveniently exit directly to the pedestrian station plaza. The proposed parking garage should be sited to provide access directly to the eastern end of the eastbound train platform as well as to station square.

***Transit-oriented development** would serve as a catalyst for the revitalization of downtown East Farmingdale. The Town in partnership with local stakeholders have identified the area surrounding the LIRR (as illustrated in Step 1) for potential residential uses that could help support the housing needs of the SUNY Farmingdale. With a complex transportation hub which would be located adjacent to the site, including the potential reopening the former Republic Train Station on the LIRR and connecting it to a bus rapid transit (BRT) system to carry residents and employees north and south along the Route 110 Corridor, this area in downtown East Farmingdale would present a great partnership between the State and Town to create a much needed housing for SUNY Farmingdale.*

Addendum: Opportunities for Electric Vehicle Charging Stations. DOS is soliciting feedback from communities on whether they may have locations suitable for electric vehicle (EV) fast charging stations in their downtowns, either at municipal or private parking lots. While responses to this question will not be included in the evaluation of applications for a DRI award, applicants are encouraged to consider opportunities for EV charging in their downtowns. Benefits to a host site community include becoming a destination for travelers to the downtown, resulting in additional spending/economic activity for businesses in proximity to the fast charging site. Public EV charging stations also provide charging opportunities for community members without access to home charging.
Applicants should indicate any interest in having charging station(s) installed within their proposed DRI boundary and identify any locations that have the space requirements/ characteristics listed below. If it is a privately owned site, please indicate owner interest in participation.

* **Upper-bound**: 5 parking spaces able to dedicate to fast charging (e.g. become EV-only), with 32’ x 16’ additional space for supporting power somewhere in lot that can be either in parking spots or on grassy areas within the property lines.

* **Lower-bound**: 3 parking spaces able to dedicate to charging, with 22’ x 16’ additional space for supporting power somewhere in lot that can be either in parking spots or on grassy areas within the property lines.

As a member of the Climate Smart Community program, the Town of Babylon has created a Climate Smart Communities Task Force. The task force recommends feasible short term and long term sustainability initiatives to be implemented by the Town. Furthermore, the Town is currently encouraging the installation of charging stations in municipal and privately-owned parking lots throughout the Town and is currently drafting legislation to make the installation of charging stations a requirement at gas stations, upon the development of the same and other large privately-owned lots.

SUBMISSION

Applications from interested communities must be submitted electronically to the relevant Regional Economic Development Council at the email address in the table below. Proposals for areas within New

York City must be sent to the relevant Office of the Borough President, which will select two applications for submission to the NYC Regional Economic Development Council.

- Capital Region NYS-CapitalDist@esd.ny.gov

  Counties: Albany, Columbia, Greene, Saratoga, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Warren, Washington
- Central New York NYS-CentralNY@esd.ny.gov

  Counties: Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga, Oswego
- Finger Lakes NYS-FingerLakes@esd.ny.gov

  Counties: Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates
- Long Island LIREDC@esd.ny.gov

  Counties: Nassau, Suffolk
- Mid-Hudson NYS-MidHudson@esd.ny.gov

  Counties: Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, Westchester
- Mohawk Valley NYS-MohawkVal@esd.ny.gov

  Counties: Fulton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Oneida, Otsego, Schoharie
- North Country NYS-NorthCountry@esd.ny.gov

  Counties: Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence
- Southern Tier NYS-SouthernTier@esd.ny.gov

  Counties: Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins
- Western New York NYS-WNY-REDC@esd.ny.gov

  Counties: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Niagara
- New York City - Submit to the appropriate office below.
  - Bronx: James Rausse at jrausse@bronxbp.nyc.gov
  - Brooklyn: Jeff Lowell at jlowell@brooklynbp.nyc.gov
  - Manhattan: Elka Morety at emorety@manhattanbp.nyc.gov
  - Queens: Shurn Anderson at sanderson@queensbp.org
  - Staten Island: Stephen Caracappa at scaracappa@statenislandusa.com

East Farmingdale: Proposed DRI Boundary