September 9, 2021

Mr. Stuart Rabinowitz, Co-Chair
Mr. Kevin Law, Co-Chair
Long Island Regional Economic Development Council
150 Motor Parkway
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Re: Downtown Revitalization Initiative Round 5

Dear Mr. Law and Mr. Rabinowitz,

The Town of Riverhead is pleased to submit our Downtown Revitalization Initiative Round 5 application for consideration by the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council.

In the past, downtown revitalization has slowed, but with water and sewer already in place, and with plans to create a formed based zoning district and infrastructure, Riverhead is poised and ready to move the revitalization of our Downtown forward. With the full support of the Riverhead Town Board, we are ready to enthusiastically move forward with a holistic approach towards revitalization.

Potential projects targeted for DRI investment are organized around a vision of creating a downtown business district with a revitalized Peconic River as its focal point. We are excited to create a recreational, shopping, and tourist destination for the Long Island region, which will include:

- Establishing a Town Square to increase connectivity and open vistas from Main Street to the riverfront. This will expand the pedestrian focus adding to the traditional Main Street to include the Peconic Riverwalk, a unique attribute of our downtown;
- Implement a mixed use Transportation Oriented Development multimodal improvements at the Town’s railroad station to increase capacity, improve traffic flow and determine how to best address parking needs at full buildout;
- Implementing flood management mitigation throughout the Downtown Business District;
- Support continued partnerships with arts, cultural and community organizations for community events at the waterfront to create a strong sense of place, including significant renovations to the Suffolk Theater and Vail Leavitt Music Hall;
- Expand the Long Island Science Center to an improved facility adjacent to Riverhead Town Square;
- Establish new pedestrian pathways and continue unified signage themes in the downtown core from our railroad station to the Peconic River for beautification, branding and to drive foot traffic to our downtown and waterfront; and
- Provide for additional community outreach and engagement activities around health, environmental, cultural and civic projects to address environmental and social justice needs.
We envision that these projects will create a Downtown Riverhead that is an international destination famous for its beauty, quality of life, dynamic attractions, history and sense of place built upon its diverse community that creates a small town feel welcoming to anyone from local resident to visitor.

Many years and millions of public funds for planning and infrastructure have created the momentum now attracting private/public investment to transform Downtown Riverhead, one of Long Island’s most economically distressed areas.

Downtown Riverhead has the potential to become a vibrant recreation and shopping destination that will provide significant economic development benefits to the Long Island region. With the assistance of DRI funding we can work together to create a much needed, truly diverse, affordable and accessible Downtown Riverhead that supports and attracts a diverse range of age groups from millennials to senior citizens. The projects will result in a range of housing choices and commercial investments to create jobs and provide a haven for families and youth entering the market, so that they can truly afford to remain on Long Island.

Historic Downtown Riverhead’s natural and manmade beauty with tremendous architectural resources have garnered a National Historic District designation, a Federal Estuary of Significance designation, and a New York State Wild & Scenic River designation. Town leadership has a long history of encouraging Smart Growth by implementing dense mixed-use zoning to encourage investment into affordable housing; tourism initiatives; transit, bicycle, pedestrian and paddling facilities; public spaces; cultural institutions such as the Suffolk County Culinary Institute and Suffolk Historical Society; institutional partners such as the Suffolk County Court Complex, County Center and Cornell Cooperative Extension, as well as public private partnerships such as the Suffolk Theater, the only remaining active Art Deco Theater in New York State, that anchors Main Street. Unmatched natural beauty is reflected in views of the Peconic River visible from Main Street and across the Town owned historic campus of the East End Arts Council, a regionally significant arts organization for Long Island.

Partnerships with various public investments and incentive mechanisms such as the recently designated federal Opportunity Zone, NYS Empire Zone designation, an active BID, an aggressive local IDA, two Urban Renewal Areas, a parking district, an award winning sewer district, a National Historic District and generous support from federal, state and county funding sources have created a momentum that is undeniable.

Despite these advancements, DRI Round 5 funding is critical to transform Riverhead into the truly livable and lively downtown it can become. Downtown Riverhead is and has been for decades one of the most economically distressed areas on Long Island. With one of the largest senior population in the region and a growing millennial population, a revitalized Downtown Riverhead would provide exciting options for all residents to live, work and play.

We are now poised in a perfect position for DRI Round 5 funding to optimize the community’s long standing involvement in developing revitalization initiatives to create synergy between the various planning initiatives, government grants and private investments. DRI investments would serve as the final revitalization catalyst for new development and investment in Downtown Riverhead, transforming a blighted area with numerous vacant buildings into a vibrant, walkable central business district that will attract residents and tourists alike.

Thank you for your full consideration of our proposal.

Sincerely,

Yvette Aguiar
Supervisor

Tim Hubbard
Councilman

Catherine Kent
Councilwoman

Frank Beyrodt
Councilman

Ken Rothwell
Councilman
TOWN OF RIVERHEAD: DRI ROUND 5

SEPTEMBER 2021

TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECTS TO REIMAGINE TOMORROW'S RIVERHEAD

Supervisor Yvette M. Aguiar

Councilman Tim Hubbard
Councilman Frank Beyrodt

Councilwoman Catherine Kent
Councilman Ken Rothwell
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**Supervisor Yvette M. Aguiar**  
**Councilman Tim Hubbard**  
**Councilwoman Catherine Kent**  
**Councilman Frank Beyrodt**  
**Councilman Ken Rothwell**
BASIC INFORMATION

Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Region: Long Island
Municipality Name: Town of Riverhead
Downtown Name: Downtown Riverhead
County Name: Suffolk County
Applicant Contact(s) Name and Title:
Dawn Thomas, Town of Riverhead Community Development Director
thomas@townofriverheadny.gov
Joseph Maiorana, Assistant Community Development Project Supervisor
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200 Howell Avenue
Riverhead, NY 11901
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VISION FOR DOWNTOWN

Historic Downtown Riverhead has the potential to become a vibrant, compact, walkable, dynamic neighborhood oriented along the Peconic River and would serve as the gateway to the North and South Forks of Long Island. Riverhead is the county seat and is located a short drive from Long Island Wine Country, many agritourism destinations, Tanger Outlet Center, amazing beaches and parks, Long Island’s only aquarium, Splish Spash Water Park, Calverton Enterprise Industrial Park, SUNY Stony Brook Business Incubator, and Brookhaven National Laboratory. Historic Downtown Riverhead’s diverse assets include: regional arts and culture, destination retail, historic architecture, tourism and hotels, Suffolk County Court complex, Suffolk Community College and Suffolk County Center, proximity to Peconic Bay Medical Center/Northwell Health, multimodal transportation and targeted regional job growth.

A diverse community welcoming of all ages, races and demographics creates a strong sense of place poised to become a regional destination. A business district with dense zoning and compact, distinct boundaries combined with state-of-the-art water/sewer/gas infrastructure and new federal Opportunity Zone designation will generate investment into housing, hotels, unique shopping experiences, family friendly attractions and events, office/business and restaurants, while the Peconic River provides unmatched natural beauty for pedestrians and bicyclists as well as boaters and paddlers. Key infrastructure, specifically water and sewer districts, are available, up-to-date and have sufficient capacity to serve full buildout of all revitalization efforts.

With an evolving demographic shift in the regional population, particularly in light of the advent of the COVID pandemic, it is envisioned that Downtown Riverhead has the potential to become a walkable, compact and
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convenient live-work-play experience. If awarded, DRI funding will assure a holistic approach to implementing revitalization plans and focus on the following goals and objectives:

- Establish a unified downtown brand centered on a revitalized Peconic River waterfront and new Town Square;
- Incentivize development and redevelopment of underutilized and blighted properties;
- Address social and environmental justice needs through meaningful engagement with the diverse local community and community based organizations;
- Spur business investment, tourism and economic activity; and
- Create new and expand existing transit, pedestrian connections, as well as, environmental, public space and recreational improvements.

As a result of the tremendous assets and infrastructure, such as water and sewer, already in place, Downtown Riverhead can become a new recreational and cultural hub on Long Island’s East End, providing a central location for workers, families and visitors to live, work and play. Transformative change in the downtown from a place known for blight, crime and disinvestment to a place of economic, cultural and recreational opportunity will be shaped by revitalization plans established by the Town of Riverhead through years of intergovernmental cooperation and intensive community engagement efforts.

Design and planning have a tremendous capacity to help create sustainable, resilient and healthy communities. We are on the precipice of being a place where development will occur in an ad hoc fashion without a long term vision or seizing the opportunity to rethink the built environment with an eye toward resilience and preservation, especially since our buildings are situated along the Peconic River. Key publicly owned parcels together with all necessary infrastructure already in place, present a unique opportunity for immediate and transformative redevelopment projects that would result in a redevelopment timeline of less than two years to completely recreate a thriving downtown for the betterment of the entire region.

The future of Downtown Riverhead will include the Riverhead Town Square, attracting thousands of new visitors to the Long Island region.
Riverhead is the County Seat of Suffolk County. The largest building of the Suffolk County Supreme Court was built in 1867. The Town spent $2.4 million to acquire and construct adjacent court parking over a seven-year period beginning in 1997.

JUSTIFICATION

Downtown Riverhead is comprised of a compact, diverse, mixed use commercial/residential neighborhood that is the gateway to Long Island’s East End tourist region. The downtown contains a concentration of commercial and residential uses, and is in close proximity to other regional employment, tourism and commercial centers. The most unique feature of the downtown – and its most underutilized asset – is the Peconic River, which is part of the Peconic Estuary, a designated Estuary of National Significance by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Although Riverhead is the county seat of Suffolk County, the central business district has suffered from years of decline, disinvestment, crime, and blight, causing a high vacancy rate approaching 50%, which was exacerbated by the COVID 19 pandemic. The downtown does not share in the relative prosperity of other East End communities and, in fact, residents and businesses struggle to make ends meet in a region where the cost of living is among the highest in the country. Downtown Riverhead is a historic, urbanized neighborhood. According to the 2020 US Census, the population as reflected in the Riverhead hamlet CDP is 14,993. This area, which contains both East Main Street and Railroad Avenue Urban Renewal Areas has a poverty rate of 14.7% and a MHI of $52,126 or 58% of Suffolk County, according to the 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates—U.S. Census Bureau. The poverty rate of Riverhead exceeds Suffolk County’s at 14.7%, compared to the County’s 6.8%. 20.7% of the population is over age 65. 18.8% of the population is Black. 27.1% of the population is Hispanic. Additionally, the Hispanic and Latino population has grown exponentially since the 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates because of Riverhead’s agricultural base and affordability, giving this community one of the largest influxes of migrant workers and immigrants in the U.S.
The northern portion of downtown contains a mix of cultural, commercial, office, residential and institutional uses. The northwest portion includes offices, the public library, a historical museum, single family residences, small retail, and institutional uses such as the Suffolk County Court and parking for the railroad and courts. The northeast portion is predominantly developed with residential uses and the downtown area includes restaurants, retail, offices, workforce and affordable apartments, the Suffolk County Community College Culinary Arts Center, as well as attractions such as Riverfront Park, Grangebel Park, Long Island Aquarium, Suffolk Theater and the Vail-Leavitt Music Hall. The surrounding land uses include the Long Island Rail Road, Polish Town Civic Association’s event pavilion, a Railroad Museum, Roanoke Avenue Elementary School, Riverhead Fire Department, the Polish Town business district, including restaurants and single and two-family residences.

The Town of Riverhead has spent years attempting to spark revitalization efforts and has completed many plans that analyze the specific problems and potential of Downtown Riverhead. For a variety of reasons, including the lack of funding and professional assistance required for implementation, the goals of these previous plans have not yet been fully realized. However, these revitalization plans, spanning almost 30 years, combined with DRI funding would provide a solid foundation with which to finally move forward to allow Downtown Riverhead to realize its full potential as a national and international destination. Town of Riverhead revitalization plans include:


The 2016 BOA identified potential brownfield sites in the downtown area, including one strategic site (the Town owned Court Street parking lot) whose redevelopment would be anticipated to have significance and catalyze revitalization in the surrounding areas. The study also identified numerous vacant and/or underutilized sites whose development would provide benefit to the area. Lastly, but perhaps most significantly, the census tract which includes Downtown Riverhead was recently designated as a federal Opportunity Zone, confirming its status as an area ripe for new investment. The Calverton census tract which contains the Town’s Enterprise Park at Calverton (EPCAL) was also designated as an Opportunity Zone. Riverhead was the only Town in Suffolk County to receive two Opportunity Zone designations. Both of these Opportunity Zone designations will serve as significant catalysts to economic redevelopment and promote private investment to the downtown area and the entire Long Island region.

Although Riverhead’s downtown has seen the beginnings of a new vibrancy in recent years with the rehabilitation of its riverfront, new mixed use commercial and affordable/workforce residential developments, construction of a world class aquarium and Hyatt Conference Center and Hotel, the reopening of the Suffolk Theater, a healthy arts
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council, the new Preston House Hotel and restaurant, as well as numerous popular restaurants and businesses, there are still blighted and underutilized properties flanking these improvements along with many other obstacles to overcome to realize full revitalization. In addition to persistent poverty, challenges identified by the Town of Riverhead BOA study include:

- a high rate of commercial vacancies (50%) and abandoned properties;
- need for improved pedestrian environment, including better public access and views to the Peconic River;
- parking issues;
- Peconic River/Estuary water quality;
- need for wayfinding signage at gateways and throughout the downtown area; and
- the need to overcome a negative image with a rebranding effort.

The 1,750 foot boardwalk runs along the rear of many storefronts along East Main Street, left. Some events such as Alive on 25 have been drawing large crowds to Downtown Riverhead during the last few years, above.
Canoeing, kayaking and fishing are among the popular recreational activities along the river.

A significant number of local businesses, particularly restaurants, have become economically unsustainable and have closed. The COVID 19 pandemic has greatly exacerbated this condition. The Riverhead BOA study found that the area has not yet been revitalized in a way that captures a greater share of the visitors that come to the region to create a critical mass of economic activity. For example, the Tanger Outlet Center and the Long Island Aquarium draw upwards of 12.5 million visitors annually, yet only a fraction of those shoppers visit downtown shops and restaurants.

The Downtown Riverhead DRI project envisions the stitching together of four transformational components with related smaller economic redevelopment projects, located within a federal Opportunity Zone, Brownfield Opportunity Area and two separate NY State Urban Renewal Areas to create a cohesive, fully accessible, safe pedestrian/bike/paddle friendly alternative transportation circuit that will readily connect all parts of Downtown Riverhead to each other and the rest of the region while creating new transportation options for residents of this
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low to moderate income area. It is anticipated that upon buildout, a free or minimal cost shuttle would provide a convenient way to transport residents and visitors between downtown destinations.

DRI funding would serve as an immediate catalyst to economic redevelopment as a result of project readiness, previous plans, active and ongoing community engagement / involvement, the project area’s nomination as an Opportunity Zone, as well as the distinct characteristics of Downtown Riverhead. These include the unique geography, specifically its focus around the Peconic River, historic structures and inter-governmental support. Furthermore, the historic central business district is supported by strong and consistent community and municipal efforts to realize revitalization plans. To realize revitalization goals, the Town of Riverhead recognizes that a holistic approach is needed to overcome remaining barriers to transformative change.

Should DRI funding be approved, the following investments have been identified as critical for catalyzing and incentivizing new development. These investments are directly supported by the Brownfield Opportunity Area plans, Riverhead Comprehensive Plan, the Strategic TOD Plan and the recent Town Square design process, and many other revitalization studies. Several municipally-owned properties are optimally located within two downtown urban renewal areas and a federal Opportunity Zones, and are very attractive for significant private investment. These municipally-owned properties are ideal for consideration of major public/private partnership opportunities that would positively transform Downtown Riverhead into a regional work/live/play destination. They are also supported by prior investments by Riverhead Town, Suffolk County, New York State, federal sources and private equity as detailed in this application.

Key economic redevelopment projects/concepts are more fully discussed in Section 7: Transformative Opportunities, and are consistent with REDC goals and objectives. They are, as follows:

a) Establish a “Town Square” to provide a public gathering space, pedestrian connectivity and open vistas from Main Street to the riverfront to reorient the pedestrian focus from the traditional Main Street to the Peconic Riverwalk, a unique attribute. This project will require the demolition of two structures and that are vacant, blighted and/or antiquated and the replacement of the third with a new structure. The Town purchased these structures in May 2021, which are adjacent to the Town owned riverfront parking lot. Replacing these buildings with an architecturally and historically inspired Town Square will finally give the beleaguered Downtown Riverhead the economic development lift it needs to become the safe, family friendly healthy and historically inspired downtown that it can be for the community and the Long Island region, while bringing Downtown Riverhead into a promising future away from the threat of storms, pandemics and other potential plights, and finally connecting Downtown Riverhead to the Peconic River.

b) Create a mixed use Transit Oriented Development at the Town-owned Court Street parking lot adjacent to the Long Island Railroad’s Riverhead station, and implement intermodal transportation and parking development to increase parking capacity, create needed housing opportunities, improve traffic flow and determine how to best address parking needs at full buildout. This Transit Oriented Development (TOD) together with parking improvements and improved connections between the central business district and
the nearby railroad station will revitalize Riverhead’s most blighted area and allow a clear alternative transit connection from ample public parking to downtown. Doing so will ready the area for LIRR’s plan to electrify the rail line to Riverhead, as well as points east.

c) Implement recommendations of the Flood Plain Management Study (FPMS) prepared by the Army Corp of Engineers to mitigate tidal and storm surge flooding that has plagued downtown’s parking areas for years and will increase with sea level rise. This will protect future development by mitigating flooding with the new structures and ensuring that plans are cognizant of changes to natural environment and climate.

d) Upgrade the historic Suffolk Theater to enhance arts and cultural assets in Downtown Riverhead. The historic art deco Suffolk Theater, which will frame the Main Street entrance to the Town Square, is in need of expansion and upgrades to become more competitive with other venues. Specifically, the Suffolk Theater, built in the 1930s, needs a green room to accommodate the needs of performing artists, as well as a larger stage, addition of an orchestra pit and dressing rooms. The lack of these facilities has precluded the theater from hosting ballet, live plays, symphonies and other larger musical acts, which will ensure its long-term viability to enhance visitation to Downtown Riverhead.

e) Expand the Long Island Science Center to an improved facility adjacent to Riverhead Town Square. The Long Island Science Center (LISC), a not for profit, has purchased the building immediately west of the proposed Riverhead Town Square, which will allow the Science Center’s east side to open directly on the Town Square. The expanded facility will include a state-of-art planetarium, thereby creating a new family-friendly tourist attraction anchor to complement the popular Long Island Aquarium, located just east of the Town Square.

f) Refurbish and Restore the historic Vail Leavitt Music Hall, constructed in 1881. This is the only 19th century “upstairs opera house” of its type in the NY Metropolitan area. It was designated as a local landmark in 1979 and registered as a national and state historic place in 1983. It has been underutilized for the past 15 years and can accommodate live theater and performances that will contribute to the cultural resurgence of Eastern Long Island. Historic renovation and adaptive reuse will encourage and expand public access to this national landmark. Expansion of the arts in downtown is strongly supported by numerous previous planning studies over the past 30 years.

g) Establish new pedestrian pathways and continue to implement unified signage themes in the downtown to stitch together all of the Town’s downtown amenities for beautification, storm water management, safety, branding, to drive foot traffic to the waterfront and to direct the public to available parking as well as all means of public transportation.

h) Create a new marketing and branding campaign to promote Downtown Riverhead as a family destination and make the public aware of all of Riverhead’s amenities and attractions. This branding and marketing campaign will allow Riverhead to solidify its identity as the gateway to all of eastern Long Island.
The Annual Community Mosaic Street Painting Festival has become a family-friendly Memorial Day Weekend tradition, joining together artists, musicians and those who appreciate arts. It draws hundreds of people to the grounds of the East End Arts Council and along the Peconic River.
Spring boarding off the 2016 BOA’s study’s Creative Placemaking recommendations, “Reflections: Art in the Park” was designed to help catalyze downtown revitalization by providing a free, public art display that has interactive components/events during the shoulder seasons. The 2021 events drew thousands of visitors on each of the three nights it was held.

The annual Riverhead Country Fair will bring thousands to Downtown Riverhead this Fall celebrating Riverhead’s long agricultural heritage. One of the largest festivals in all of New York State, the event draws thousands of people downtown each year to view the entries to the agricultural and baked goods competitions, shop at the wide variety of vendors and enjoy the family-friendly carnival rides. The roots of the fair go back all the way to the 1840s, when the Riverhead Agricultural Society hosted the annual county fair.

DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION

1) Boundaries of the proposed DRI area.

Historic Downtown Riverhead, oriented along the Peconic River, is bounded by Court Street bridge (to the County Center/Riverhead Library and Suffolk County Historical Society, the Long Island Rail Road Station, Cornell Cooperative Extension, LIRR station, elementary/middle/high school all walkable) and ends where LIRR intersects NYS Route 25 (Riverhead Town Hall, Long Island Aquarium/Hyatt Hotel, Suffolk Theater, Suffolk Community Culinary Institute, East End Arts all located on NYS Route 25). Located 75 miles east of New York City, Downtown Riverhead is part of a federal Opportunity Zone, NYS designated Brownfield Opportunity Area and encompasses a Business Improvement District, two Urban Renewal Areas, a Historic
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District, a parking district, a sewer district, as well as a transportation hub with Suffolk County Bus, a bike share program, Hampton Jitney bus company and Long Island Rail Road. Downtown Riverhead is characterized by urbanized development and high vacancy rates, though recent revitalization investments in several housing and commercial developments are evident of the vast potential for economic redevelopment and revitalization.


Centrally located and commutable to all of Nassau and Suffolk counties, Downtown Riverhead is the Suffolk County Seat, and a business, banking and retail center. Unmatched natural resources create the potential for an international tourist destination (Atlantic Ocean, LI Sound and Peconic Bay beaches all within 15 minutes of Downtown Riverhead). A lively agricultural community in and around Riverhead provides a world class sustainable agritourism industry (wineries, breweries, distilleries, pick your own, farm to table, sport fishing, aquaculture). Long Island’s 60 wine producers attract 1.3 million visitors annually, according to Suffolk County Economic Development and Planning. The Long Island Aquarium, the Hyatt Place Hotel, East End Arts,
Suffolk Theater and large government/institutional employers Peconic Bay Medical Center/Northwell Health and the Suffolk County Court Complex/County Center/Culinary Community College anchor a year round economy. Downtown Riverhead was nominated for designation as a federal Opportunity Zone in 2017, further indicative of the potential for revitalization and private investment in the project area.

Downtown Riverhead not only connects the north and south forks of Long Island, it connects western Long Island to eastern Long Island, as it is in within convenient distance of all of the surrounding region and much of the eastern United States via a coordinated multi-modal transportation network that includes convenient access to: rail, air, sea and highway systems. The nearby and recently reconfigured Riverside traffic circle is a central hub for all major arterial roadways serving the East End. Quite literally, all roads lead to Riverhead.
Due to its geographic and historic centrality, the downtown’s catchment area encompasses the entire East End, with a total resident population of 133,721 (Southampton 58,398, Southold 22,170, East Hampton 22,047 and Riverhead 33,469 (2020 Census)). This does not include the summer and fall tourism population surge, which exponentially increases seasonal residents and visitation. There are 52,126 residents (2015 – 2019 American Communities Survey) and 21,251 housing units (2015 Census estimate) within a five mile radius of the downtown, including the downtown area itself. Downtown Riverhead is 28 miles from Long Island MacArthur Airport and less than 70 miles to both New York City international airports.

Proposed development has the potential to significantly revitalize the central business district. In the Riverhead DC-1 Zoning District, in the downtown core, estimates that buildout in this zone is 1,059,575 sf.

Current planned development in Downtown Riverhead includes:

Montauk Distillery and the North Fork Brewing Company have collaborated in the adaptive reuse of the former Riverhead Fire House on Second Street in the Town’s Historic District one block north of Main Street and in between the proposed TOD and Town Square projects.

- Redevelopment of the former Sears Department Store property into a five-story, 150-unit apartment complex with three retail spaces of 910 sf, 1,000 sf, and 1,532 sf.
- 205 Osborne Avenue – 39 market rate apartments proposed in the TOD overlay zoning district with 4,000 sf. of WorkSmart communal office space.

Projects under construction in Downtown Riverhead:
- 331 East Main Street – 38 market rate, riverfront apartments.
- Howell House, a historic home restoration, anticipated to be developed as a wellness center / spa, which would complement the Preston House Hotel. The home was constructed in 1905 by former town supervisor and banker B. Frank Howell.

The historic Preston House, left, and the Howell House, both constructed in 1905, received meticulous restoration from developer Joe Petrocelli, who previously built the Long Island Aquarium. The Preston House opened as a boutique hotel and restaurant in 2018. The Howell House will open as a wellness center / spa later this year.
Recently completed projects in Downtown Riverhead:

- Riverhead Lofts — 118 workforce and affordable apartments, 5,000 sf retail space, and 6,000 sf restaurant. The project opened in early 2021 and completely rented in 26 days. The riverfront Peconic County Brewery has quickly become a successful downtown destination, providing an affordable, outside dining experience with locally brewed beer in an industrially themed space.
- Preston House, a historic home restoration, which includes a 20 room boutique hotel and 200 seat restaurant in the historic district. The home was built in 1905 by Henry H. Preston, Suffolk County’s first full-time sheriff and a wounded Civil War veteran;
- Summerwind Square: 52 workforce apartments;
- Woolworth building: 18 workforce apartment;
- Peconic Crossing: 45 workforce and affordable apartment units, focused on attracting artists;
- Suffolk County Historical Society: $1 million expansion that included $400,000 from the Gardiner Foundation; $500,000 ESDC The project made the full 133-year old museum handicapped accessible in a new 933 sf wing.

Additionally, the Main Street area is developing into a destination for restaurants and breweries, including Tradewinds Brewing Company, Cucina 25, The Preston House, Diggers, Jerry and the Mermaid, Shadees Jamaican Restaurant, Craft’d, Seaside Grill, Turkaz, Taco Bout It, Tweeds, Che’ Argentinian Steak House, Sweet Tart Yogurt, Ralph’s Italian Ices, Antigua Café, Riverwalk Café, Dark Horse, Star Confectionary and more as well as the Long Island Aquarium, Hyatt Place and Preston House hotels. These restaurants and breweries are developing a symbiotic relationship with local entertainment venues such as the Suffolk Theater. In recent years, the Suffolk Theater has begun to attract prominent nationally renowned recording artists, including: Art Garfunkel, Don McLean, Joan Osborne, Jefferson Starship, Tony Orlando, Rickie Lee Jones, the Lovin’ Spoonful. It reopened August 27, 2021 after its forced pandemic closure to record crowds. The Town is hoping to attract additional specialty retail and restaurants to complement the existing base. Vail-Leavitt Music Hall, Long Island’s oldest theater built in 1881, presents a variety of musical and theatrical performances, but increased regular offerings are necessary to become an impactful attraction for downtown. Continued revitalization north of the Peconic River is critical to support success of these existing business enterprises. Developer Bob Castaldi, who purchased the building in 2005 and meticulously restored the interior and exterior of the theater to its original Art Deco splendor in 2011, announced in May 2019 his intention to build a five-story addition to the building and to expand the theatre and stage area to increase the variety of productions including live theater. The addition would include 28 apartments on four floors and a ground floor of commercial and retail space. Other amenities would include a new “green room,” state of the art dressing rooms for performers and other amenities changes designed to attract an even larger, diverse range of nationally known performers.
Two historic theaters provide a wide array of entertainment to residents and visitors to Downtown Riverhead.

As a result of numerous revitalization plans over the last 25 years, ample sewer capacity, an engaged community and active stakeholder network, this downtown is likely the only remaining location on the East End that can accommodate the density of development and mix of housing options needed to address regional demand by providing housing, jobs and recreation opportunities for all segments of the population.

2) **Past Investment, future investment potential.**

**Past investments in Downtown Riverhead**

The Long Island Aquarium is located on a 3.2 acre riverfront parcel in Downtown Riverhead and attracts more than 350,000 visitors annually.

- Long Island Aquarium Expansion - New mixed use hotel project ($2.4 Million NYS Empire State Development Corporation award for the aquarium and Hyatt Place Hotel);
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- Summerwind Square - 52 unit mixed use next generation housing development to replace three abandoned and vacant parcels/buildings (Suffolk County subsidy of approx. $2M);
- 1 East Main Street – over $1M renovation to formerly vacant building on Peconic Avenue and 10 live/work unit artist units above;
- Approximately 770 municipally owned parking spaces walkable to downtown;
- Coordination with the East End Tourism Alliance between North and South Fork;
- $750,000 Habitat Restoration (fish passage) NYS DEC Peconic Estuary Program;
- $2.2 Million Peconic River Walk improvement;
- Suffolk County Downtown Revitalization Grant for Peconic Avenue Crosswalk ($85,000) to connect Peconic River Walk to Grangebel Park;
- Several New York Main Street Grants totaling 1.15 million (2004-$200,000, 2009-$200,000, 2010-$500,000 and 2012-$250,000).
- Grangebel Park improvements: $1.1M in 2008, $300,000 in 2013 and $135,000 in 2016;
- Suffolk County Downtown Revitalization Grant for Information Kiosks ($85,000);
- Suffolk County Downtown Revitalization Grant for Grangebel Park Comfort Station Upgrade ($30,852);
- Suffolk County Downtown Revitalization Grant for East End Arts Council Site Improvements ($180,000);
- Suffolk County Downtown Revitalization Grant for wayfinding signage ($65,000);
- Suffolk County Downtown Revitalization Grants for LED lighting upgrades ($175,000);
- Suffolk County Downtown Revitalization Grant for Reconfiguration of First Street Parking Lot to add 67 free public parking stalls ($74,925);
- Suffolk County Office of Cultural Affairs Destination Downtown Grant for “Reflections: Art in the Park” ($25,000);
- Huntington Arts Council (NYSCA) “Reflections: Art in the Park” ($3,500);
- Community Development Block Grant—Park and Pedestrian Improvements ($78,000);
- Downtown Historic District designation;
- 2009 Downtown Historic Guidelines/Bulk Study (NYS Department of State Quality Communities grant project);
- Multi-million NYS Parks/Community Preservation Fund acquisitions to create Green space;
- 2008 Town of Riverhead East Main Street Urban Renewal Plan Update and GEIS ($850,000); and
- New York Metropolitan Planning Council Parking Management Workshop and Summary;
- New York State Regional Economic Development Council Strategic Parking Plan 2017 ($11,000);
- Restore New York 2016 ($500,000);
- Federal Opportunity Zone designation;
- Empire State Development Urban & Community Development Program for Strategic Transit Oriented Development ($25,000);
- Suffolk County Historical Society $1 million expansion ($400,000 from the Gardiner Foundation, $500,000 ESDC).
- Empire State Development Regional Council Award – Long Island Science Center relocation and renovation ($750,000)
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- Empire State Development Regional Council Award – Town Square ($800,000)
- Community Development Block Grant—Downtown Security Cameras- ($159,170)

Future investment potential

Potential future “Town Square” could be constructed through public private partnership.

Downtown Riverhead has tremendous economic development/revitalization potential and is immediately ready for the private catalytic investment needed to realize that full potential, if DRI is awarded. There are specific advantages already that Downtown Riverhead has that make it prime for future investment. These include:

- Federal Opportunity Zones – Downtown Riverhead has its own Federal Opportunity Zone designation and will significantly benefit from a second zone located at Calverton Enterprise Park, anticipated to be a major job growth center for the entire Long Island Region. Designation has already generated a substantial increase in private entities considering investment in Downtown Riverhead.
- Downtown Riverhead has two Urban Renewal Areas; the East Main Street Urban Renewal Area and the Railroad Avenue Urban Renewal Area, both of which provide necessary legislative tools to address blighted properties and allow public/private partnership;
- There are now multiple town-owned parcels strategically located in the project area that are ready to be redeveloped through public/private partnership and could include a Town Square with river views, as well as Transit Oriented Development concepts;
- Downtown has active community involvement, including the Downtown Revitalization Committee, the Riverhead Business Improvement District, the Riverhead Chamber of Commerce and the Riverhead Parking District.

These important and substantial past investments and existing development incentives, together with DRI investment will serve as a spring board for future investments in Downtown Riverhead, fulfilling the promises outlined in the plethora of revitalization studies and the many years of planning and community pursuit of downtown revitalization. In addition, the planned developments for Riverside, located in adjacent
Southampton Town, per their Riverside Revitalization Action Plan (RRAP), will support and be supported by the revitalization of Downtown Riverhead.

**3) Recent or impending job growth.**

**Current/recent job growth:** Proximal employment hubs include Calverton Enterprise Industrial Park (EPCAL), a recently designated Opportunity Zone, which will reinvigorate high tech/aerospace industries as it is redeveloped. The arrival of Triple Five Group / Calverton Aviation and Technology (CAT) and the impending sale of 1,600 additional industrially zoned acres just minutes from downtown. The sale of this unique property, one of the largest vacant developable parcels in the northeast, has progressed through completion of due diligence to an executed contract of sale with subdivision now pending as the last hurdle to closing. The purchaser, CAT, is required to construct an additional 1,000,000 sf of industrial space as part of designation as a qualified and eligible sponsor for this urban renewal property with the long term potential of adding double that amount. As a result, according to the 2018 CAT Innovation Hub Economic Benefits Analysis, the full build out of the project is expected to generate between 2,900 - 5,500 jobs with a varying types, salaries and skill levels. Most of the jobs are well paying with solid career paths and upward mobility. These new jobs will be within a 10 minute drive from Downtown Riverhead. In anticipation of this growth, the Town of Riverhead is committed to providing zoning and incentives to provide housing and necessary amenities near this major job center. The Town government will consider all reasonable creative solutions to provide the sufficient housing necessary to keep the next generation living and thriving on Long Island. As stated, Riverhead will work to encourage private developers to create a variety of new mixed income housing options within the downtown central business district including near the Long Island Railroad Station. We are further dedicated to encouraging quality, affordable child care providers to support the Town’s increasing number of working families anticipated to relocate to Downtown Riverhead.
555/ Calverton Aviation Technology is in contract with the Town of Riverhead to acquire 1,600 acres of industrial land, located less than 10 minutes from Downtown Riverhead. It will result in up to 5,500 jobs.

Northwell Health’s Peconic Bay Medical Center (just outside the Downtown area) employs more than 1,700 employees, including 550 physicians, 100 physician assistants and 300 nurses. In July 2016, construction began on its Critical Care Tower, and was completed in January 2020. The centerpiece of the new $60-million Critical Care Tower is a comprehensive cardiac care center with its new cardiac catheterization laboratory. The new facility provides ready access to advanced artery-opening techniques for 250,000 eastern Suffolk residents. Further galvanizing its investment in Downtown Riverhead, in late 2017, PBMC acquired a former bank headquarters to provide nearly 60,000 sf of space in Downtown Riverhead as well as the 14 acre former Bishop McGann-Mercy High School for the growing regional medical center.

The main, 295,000 sf PBMC hospital building is located on Roanoke Avenue, two miles from East Main Street, left. PBMC recently acquired a former bank building on Second Street that will soon provide almost 60,000 sf of space within Downtown Riverhead.

Additional jobs are located at Brookhaven National Lab, the Stony Brook University Business Incubator at Calverton (https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/1-calverton/), Gabreski Airport Business Park (a 440,000 sf business and technology center 15 minutes away), Southampton Hospital, Suffolk County Center municipal complex,
Suffolk Community College, the New York State Court complex, Southampton, Riverhead, Shoreham-Wading River and Hampton Bays School Districts, municipal facilities operated by Town of Southampton and Town of Riverhead, and the SUNY Stony Brook campus in Southampton offering programs in fine arts, marine research, health care and more. Located less than two miles from retail, hospitality, agritourism and small business opportunities abound with demographics showing the region as a destination for tourism and retail. Retail destinations proximal to downtown support thousands of jobs but their presence is a double edged sword. Tanger Outlets, located minutes from downtown, attracts more than 12 million visitors a year. The Route 58 commercial corridor, also minutes north of downtown, drives substantial regional traffic to its many “big box” stores. However, this commercial corridor has negatively impacted the downtown by drawing visitation away. The downtown’s challenge is now to reinvent itself as a recreational and cultural hub for culturally and economically diverse residents, shoppers, families and visitors who will want to enjoy the waterfront, attend events, and patronize smaller stores and restaurants. Downtown Riverhead and the surrounding community provides a wide range of affordable, healthy and culturally diverse dining options. Private homes along the riverfront area also have the potential opportunity to establish a bed and breakfast industry in the downtown business district.

4) Quality of Life.

The downtown is oriented around one of the most bucolic and environmentally sensitive national estuaries. The Peconic River provides four miles of waterfront and nearly 1,000 acres of preserved property and is part of the Suffolk County Blueway Trail.

Riverhead’s Grangebel Park, located in the downtown core, has received over $1,000,000 in federal funding for the replacement of bulkheading, installation of lighting and pedestrian walkways, landscaping and other amenities to improve safety, utilization of the park and opportunities for public to access the waterfront both on their own as as part of community events. The park also contains a fish ladder to promote habitat connectivity, which invites visitation by local enviromental groups and education programs.

While Grangebel Park is a significant amenity for the downtown, the Peconic River continues to be vastly underutilized due to nearby blighted neighborhood conditions and lack of access. Downtown Riverhead also features a linear park and boardwalk along the Peconic River that includes picnic tables and benches. The availability of public parks and riverfront access must be enhanced by creating better accessibility to the nearby multimodal transportation network that includes motorists, bus and train users, pedestrians, bicyclists and paddlers. The physical beauty of downtown, notably the Peconic River, Suffolk County’s longest river, is further enhanced by the accessibility of ethnic, cultural, religious, healthcare amenities, diverse housing stock, a wide range of employment opportunities within the immediate proximity.
Grangebel Park, along the Peconic River, was built in the late 1800s by Suffolk County Judge Timothy Griffing. It is now attracts large crowds during special events, such as the "Reflections: Art in the Park" and is used by residents daily for recreational activities, such as walking and fishing. Historic photos are circa 1907.
Between Downtown Riverhead, Polish Town and the Route 58 Business Corridor there are a host of affordable, healthy, (including craft beverages, locally farmed produce and wines) and culturally diverse (Polish, Argentinian, Jamaican, Turkish, Greek, Caribbean, Italian, Mexican, Chinese, traditional Southern soul food) dining options.

Several recent large scale projects have already made substantial investment in Downtown Riverhead and are providing affordable housing options near job centers. These projects all offer bucolic views of the Peconic River and encourage a healthy work, live and play lifestyle in Downtown Riverhead. The five-story Riverview Lofts was recently completed on the south side of East Main Street and rented all 116 of its new apartments in 26 days. The rear 6,000 sf riverfront restaurant space has been leased by the Peconic County Brewing Company and features an outdoor lounge and dining area overlooking the Peconic River. Peconic Crossing features 45 affordable apartments with a preference for artists and opened in 2018. In addition, the 52-unit Summerwind Square opened on Peconic Avenue in 2013 and Woolworth Revitalization, which opened in 2015, provided 19 workforce rentals. G2D, LLC is currently constructing a 38 unit market rate apartment building featuring views of the Peconic River.
The 116-unit Riverhead Lofts opened in late 2020 and is fully rented. Main Street view, left. View overlooking the riverfront from the new Peconic County Brewing Company, right.

These recent major mixed, income downtown apartment projects are vital component of Riverhead’s commitment to keep the next generation working, living and playing on Long Island. This is critical in light of the recent news coverage regarding the 2019 Rauch Foundation NextLI survey that indicates that 67% of Long Islanders between the ages 18 – 34 plan to leave in the next five years, while only 40% plan to retire here. The survey further found that a variety of housing stock, including mixed use zoning, multifamily housing and micro-apartments are key to retaining a younger workforce on Long Island. In addition, to these existing mixed use housing projects that include a significant number of new affordable downtown apartments, the Town of Riverhead has adopted a strategic plan for Transportation Oriented Development on town-owned property, adjacent to the Long Island Railroad Station. The August 2021 Riverhead Affordable Housing Demand Analysis Summary conducted by AKRF found that “a substantial amount of affordable housing and is anticipated to continue to have adequate levels to support the existing and future populations, future needs of lower-income populations… While there are currently approximately 2,334 known or designated affordable rental units in the Town (2,538 including the proposed affordable units), approximately 100% of all 3,133 rental units in the Town are considered ‘affordable’… Most of the Town’s rental housing is considered affordable to the average household on Long Island… Based on this analysis, the total existing and proposed affordable housing meets the forecasted 10% demand in both 2030 and 2040. Almost all market listings are considered to be ‘affordable,’ based on the threshold of 130% area median income for the Nassau- Suffolk primary statistical area.”

The Riverhead Town Board has now rezoned this area to adapt to the needs of millennials and others requiring income appropriate housing opportunities. Town government is also cognizant of the need to foster the provision of affordable, quality daycare.
The concept of a large Town Square would complement the existing walkways and greenspaces in the central business district and connect it to the Peconic River waterfront.

5) Supportive local policies.
Suffolk County is one of New York’s most important agricultural regions. Well-drained, glacial soils, a maritime climate with abundant sunshine and proximity to markets throughout the metropolitan region make Long Island an ideal location for over 100 different crops. Suffolk County is ranked first statewide in the wholesale value of crops thanks to thriving greenhouse, nursery, sod, potato, vegetable and wine industries, according

Agritourism is a significant draw from as far away as New York City and beyond
to Cornell Cooperative Extension. Suffolk County is also ranked first in sales of aquaculture, poultry and egg products. The Town has preserved nearly 2,000 acres of farmland with the purchase of development rights. The diversity of crops available within several miles of Downtown Riverhead offers residents and visitors a wide range of products and agri-tourism activities to enjoy. The widespread available of fresh poultry, eggs, dairy, meats, vegetables and fruit contribute to the vision to create a family friendly tourist destination.

Downtown revitalization plans and policies in Riverhead

The downtown area contains two designated Urban Renewal Areas (East Main Street and Railroad Street areas), a New York State Empire Zone, a federal Opportunity Zone and is one of Long Island’s few “Low-Income Communities/Areas of Persistent Poverty”. Downtown has been the subject of numerous revitalization studies undertaken by the Town of Riverhead. The Town of Riverhead Industrial Development Agency targets the area for tax incentives to attract private investment. The common denominator of all these designations and studies is a low-income area plagued with deterioration and blight, and needing the investment of private dollars in addition to the constant injection of public dollars. It is the intent of the urban renewal plans to promote a mix of uses that foster a balance between residential, commercial, cultural, and tourist accommodations; reduce vacancy and blight; provide connectivity; and incorporate the natural amenities of the area, including the waterfront.
Existing Zoning provides a basis for proposed form based zoning to expedite redevelopment. 

The East Main Street Urban Renewal Area has been extensively studied over the last 25 years and is a key part of revitalization efforts.  
Map of newly adopted Transit Oriented Development Overlay Zoning District – The TOD Plan and zoning are found at: https://www.townofriverheadny.gov/docview.aspx?docid=52275

Way Finding Signs and Creative Placemaking locations throughout Downtown Riverhead have been proposed to make it easier to navigate downtown attractions and improve the overall visitor experience. Link to full size map: https://www.townofriverheadny.gov/docview.aspx?docid=49470
Riverhead’s downtown contains a Business Improvement District, Parking District, and Sewer District. In addition, a community garden, surrounded by a family play area and children’s playground on West Main Street promotes awareness of affordable, healthy eating and can be replicated elsewhere in the downtown.

Riverhead Town has implemented Smart Water Growth, high density zoning portions of downtown and provides parking district, sewer and gas service. These efforts have resulted in 85 new workforce rentals in the past 5 years. Approximately 200 additional units are in various stages of approval. Town leadership encourages public/private partnerships through collaboration with Suffolk County, New York State and the federal government to fund millions of dollars in support of planning, workforce housing/supportive infrastructure, historic restoration, tourism, recreation, public spaces, pedestrian, bicycle and waterfront access along with free and low cost public entertainment. Recent large scale development projects, such as Summerwind, Peconic Crossing and the Riverhead Lofts, have implemented measures to significantly increase energy efficiency.

The Riverhead Comprehensive Plan (2003) articulates a vision for building on Downtown Riverhead’s historic character and waterfront location. The many policies contained in this plan that promote quality of life including the following:

- **Policy 6.6A: Promote specialty food markets and restaurants.**
  Specifically, pursue an indoor public market or specialty supermarket on the north side of Main Street. Pursue specialty or ethnic food markets. Encourage outdoor dining.

- **Policy 6.6B: Promote stores and restaurants oriented to children and families.**

- **Policy 6.6C: Promote antique stores and other specialty retail shops.**

- **Policy 6.6D: Promote music stores and develop music programs for both adults and children**

- **Policy 6.6E: Preserve eclectic specialty stores and convenience shopping.**

- **Policy 6.6F: Support the development and growth of downtown attractions and foster development of the arts.**

- **Policy 6.6G: Encourage coordinated marketing and programming for downtown destinations, in order to promote longer visits.**

- **Policy 6.7D: Preserve and enhance pedestrian and view corridors between Main Street and the Peconic River.** Some parts of the waterfront are difficult to see from West Main Street, because trees, undergrowth, and buildings block the views. As properties are procured for park expansion, the Town should redesign the enlarged park to create and preserve view corridors and pedestrian connections from Main Street. In the center of downtown, alleyways and streets provide views of the water and access to the parking lots behind Main Street, but some do not lead all the way down to the waterfront. Landscaping, walkways, and lighting should be redesigned so that there are safe, direct,
and visible connections between the waterfront and Main Street. River "identifiers" or beacons (i.e., banners, public artwork) could be placed along the waterfront to call attention to the water's edge.

- **Policy 6.7E**: Limit polluted runoff from draining into the Peconic River.
- **Policy 6.8A**: Encourage ground-floor retail along Main Street, with apartments and offices on the upper floors.
- **Policy 6.9A**: Work with the Business Improvement District to make housing available to visual and performance artists in the downtown area, and provide incentives for landlords to lease space to artists.
- **Policy 6.10A**: Identify historically significant sites and buildings, and implement historic preservation regulations as part of the zoning code update.
- **Policy 6.12B**: Build pedestrian walkways between Main Street and the waterfront.

The 2016 Town of Riverhead Peconic River/Route 25 Corridor Brownfield Opportunity Area Step II Nomination Study recognized that potential flooding would be exacerbated by climate change and suggested the use of Leadership and Energy Design (LEED) practices be implemented in the design of new, green, construction projects. Since then, Riverhead has been designated a NYS Climate Smart Community and plans to utilize NYS Stretch Energy Code in future downtown construction projects.

- **Vacant and abandoned property remediation initiatives**

In 2016, Riverhead Town received a $100,000 grant funding through the NYS Attorney General to support targeted efforts to prevent and remediate vacant and abandoned properties. Due to the concentration of blight and vacancy, the majority of these investments are being directed to the downtown area in the form of code enforcement actions, property investigation, and community outreach.

- **Active and engaged Industrial Development Agency** ([https://riverheadida.org/index.php](https://riverheadida.org/index.php))

Established in 1980 as a public benefit corporation, the Riverhead Industrial Development Agency’s mission is to attract new businesses to Riverhead and to help existing Riverhead businesses expand their operations and remain in Riverhead. In doing so, the IDA seeks to advance the job opportunities, health, general prosperity and economic welfare of the people of the Town of Riverhead and to improve their quality of life. The IDA serves businesses by providing financial assistance and incentives. It acts as the conduit through which transactions take place and as an aggressive pathfinder through the government/financial maze. It has the authority to issue tax exempt or taxable Industrial Development Bonds, offer real property tax abatements, sales and compensating use tax exemptions, and mortgage recording tax exemptions. In addition, it assists business owners and developers in locating suitable sites for development. Its five-member board is comprised of Riverhead business and community leaders.
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- Anti-bias Task Force

Riverhead is proud of its culturally, ethnically and economically diverse population. To that end, the Riverhead Anti-Bias Task Force was created in the early 1990s and remains an active force to promote and encourage diversity and tolerance for all. The Anti-Bias Task Force assists the Town in identifying issues related to prejudice or bias, provide recommendations to the Town Board to combat bias and improve social conditions, provide proactive means to eradicate oppression and support an anti-bias curriculum for the establishment of social justice. ([http://riverhead.municipalcms.com/docview.aspx?docid=42862](http://riverhead.municipalcms.com/docview.aspx?docid=42862))

6) Public Support.

Members of the public continue to provide valuable input.

Meeting public needs = building vibrancy. Ongoing community involvement and public support has been the hallmark of Riverhead’s downtown revitalization efforts. From the Town’s first Revitalization Strategy for Downtown Riverhead in 2000 through its Town Square Design Process in 2021 – conducted virtually - Riverhead’s stakeholders continue to be actively involved in developing and implementing its revitalization strategies and efforts, participating in these plans and studies as well as being directly involved in committees specifically designed to further these revitalization efforts and build public consensus from the ground up.
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Each of the planning documents that have been completed involved downtown stakeholders including business owners, property owners and residents. Of note, the Peconic River/Route 25 Corridor Step II Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study (2016) included an extensive public participation including community surveys, as shown here:

812 responses received in the 2016 BOA Community Survey Expressed What They Want to see Downtown.

Some ideas for changes the public would like to see as as part of downtown revitalization as identified in the 2016 BOA Community Survey.
The BOA process specifically sought public input on how to revitalize the Railroad Avenue Urban Renewal Area in its “Dare to Dream” meeting activity. That activity resulted in several project concepts including what is now the Town’s TOD project. The summary of the BOA Step II Nomination Study set forth that concept as follows: “The third concept for redevelopment was the train station block, with the main focus being a coordinated mixed use concept involving a parking garage connected to a combined commercial and residential four story building. All participating community members were in favor of the proposed concept, stating that they would like to keep parking free of charge. Another idea for this area was a piazza like structure, with retail businesses and cafes, and something that would encourage the homeless to become more involved within the community.”

This type of public participation has been a consistent and perpetual effort among Town of Riverhead economic development initiatives. Similarly, Riverhead held four Zoom meetings to proactively solicit the input of residents and stakeholders during the development of the DRI application beginning in April 2021 in anticipation of Round 5 applications being requested that spring. When the application opening was extended to July, the Town continued to solicit public input on the development of key projects to be included in the DRI application (as shown in the project timeline below).
Riverhead also has multiple, long standing, active public groups engaged in all aspects of downtown revitalization:

- The 2018 Riverhead Town Board created a Downtown Revitalization Committee for the purpose of examining and exchanging ideas and recommending solutions, including but not limited to, possible economic and land use restructuring and recruitment of new business or design improvements, capitalizing on existing assets, and solutions to existing issues/problems, to be used as a framework for the development of a comprehensive and long term revitalization strategy for the downtown Area. [https://www.townofriverheadny.gov/pView.aspx?id=55426&catid=119](https://www.townofriverheadny.gov/pView.aspx?id=55426&catid=119). Members of this committee include representatives from: the Chamber of Commerce [www.riverheadchamber.com/](http://www.riverheadchamber.com/). Its purpose includes advancement of downtown; East End Arts (not for profit committed to community enrichment through the arts and education); BIDMA; as well as individuals with experience/expertise in Marketing/Graphics; Recreation/Open Space; Construction/Construction Industry; Banking/Finance; Engineering/Planning; Senior and Youth Community needs, downtown business owners and a Creative Placemaking professional. The Committee has a regular meeting schedule and has provided ongoing feedback during the preparation of this application.

- In 2019 the Town of Riverhead began the process for the creation of a “Pattern Book” for downtown design that will guide developers and ensure that new construction and renovation will be in keeping with Riverhead’s historic district. This process was entirely public and featured group meetings with facilitators, polling and surveys. The Pattern Book was finalized and adopted by the Town Board in 2020. The public process involved multiple community meetings as well as town-wide surveys designed to elicit the maximum public input possible.

**HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO IMPLEMENT TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE SAFETY OF E MAIN STREET’S PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS?**

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Over 75% of respondents rated this issue as “Important” or “Very important”.

Sample of survey results from the Pattern Book public engagement process
• The Riverhead Town Square design process was uniquely public in that was done almost entirely during the height of the 2020 COVID pandemic and, as such, was completely virtual. There were five interactive online virtual meetings open to all residents and interested parties, as well as stakeholder meetings, resulting in broad public support of the proposed, final design. The general public sessions had a dual purpose of soliciting input into the DRI application process. A designated website was created, housing interactive maps, message boards, public surveys and calendar notifications. The website archives copies of all Zoom meetings, press releases, sequential Town Square conceptual project renderings and activation concepts. By allowing the public to view a history of the design process they have been assured that their input has been valued and incorporated into the plans as they evolve. The interactive website was the launch point for multiple public virtual meetings, which included general public sessions, as well as breakout rooms to encourage active public participation in the development of the design schemes. Fifteen individual business and community leader stakeholder meetings were held prior to the public sessions to enable the Town’s consultant to understand the unique opportunities and develop an appreciation of what the neighboring property owners have planned for their revitalization initiatives and to incorporate their ideas into the plans as community members.

Community participation was robust, even with COVID concerns, thanks to a series of online meetings that offered general sessions and breakout rooms.
The interactive website https://www.engagetheteam.com/riverheadtownsquare provided stakeholders and residents a range of opportunities to provide input, including meetings, an idea wall and virtual maps and plans that allowed for commentary.

- In May 2021, the Town of Riverhead issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for its Transportation Oriented Development Project near the Riverhead Railroad Station consistent with its recently adopted...
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strategic TOD Plan and attendant zoning. Six responses were received from very qualified developers who expressed serious interest in partnering with the Town to transform the blighted and unsafe area near Riverhead’s LIRR station into a vibrant, walkable, safe TOD area that will complement a revitalized downtown by providing a variety of traditional and alternative transportation options and pedestrian connections, stitching Riverhead’s downtown together while increasing public parking. The Town Board, which has been completely unified in the adoption of the TOD Strategic Plan and resulting new overlay zoning district, appointed a public committee of community, arts and business leaders to review the responses to the Town’s RFQ for a Master Developer for the area.

- The Town of Riverhead Business Improvement District (created in 1967) as a special taxing district to foster the Town’s long standing support for its downtown. The BID is guided by the Riverhead Business Improvement District Management Association (BIDMA) that provides advice to the Town Board in its ongoing revitalization efforts [http://riverheadbid.com]. BIDMA is actively involved in all aspects of bettering the downtown and is comprised of Town Board appointees which must include business owners, property owners and residents. In addition to the many revitalization efforts the BIDMA supports, has leveraged the recommendations of the Creative Placemaking supplement to the 2016 BOA Study creating the Alive on 25 event which is held on Main Street four times each summer and draws up to 7000 visitors to the downtown. Again leveraging the recommendation of the Creative Placemaking Supplement, the BIDMA created a free public art installation that doubles as a nighttime event in Grangebel Park called “Reflextions: Art in the Park”, which uses multiple types of illumination (fire, LED lights, black light and neon) to enhance the art displays and draw a large number of visitors to the business district. BIDMA has also been actively involved in efforts to minimize blight and signs of vacancy in the downtown. In addition, a spin-off Downtown Beautification Committee was created by the BIDMA which committee plans and coordinates property clean ups, places and maintains flowers downtown. BIDMA’s fundraising efforts provide critical “match” funding for several important downtown grant opportunities (Suffolk County Downtown Revitalization grants, PSEG Downtown Revitalization grants, etc.).
An active Veteran’s Advisory Committee recently installed banners honoring our Town’s military, past and present, along Main Street, as part of its Hometown Heroes Initiative.

The Town of Riverhead Veteran’s Advisory Committee installed 65 banners honoring residents who served in branches of the American military. Pictured above are Congressional Medal of Honor recipient Garfield M. Langhorn, who sacrificed his life to save others in Vietnam and Dashan J. Briggs, who was killed during Operation Inherent Resolve in Iraq.

Riverhead Townscape is another not for profit organization established by involved citizens to beautify our downtown with gorgeous spring and summer flower baskets on lamp posts (http://riverheadtownscape.com/site).

Downtown Riverhead also has an active Parking District Committee comprised of property and business owners within the Parking District. The Parking District is another special taxing district with boundaries similar to the BID and is actively engaging in working to find parking solutions and foster acquisition and maintenance of parking in the district. The Parking District Committee also pledges matching funds for grant opportunities including a recent CFA strategic planning grant received for downtown in 2017 and several Suffolk County Downtown Revitalization grants.
7) Transformative opportunities.

Downtown Riverhead offers transformational project opportunities to fundamentally change the regional economy. Link to full size map: https://www.townofriverheadny.gov/docview.asp?docid=49952

The proposed DRI investments, outlined below, are shovel ready and can commence within 18 months. Prior investments by the Town of Riverhead, New York State, Suffolk County, federal agencies and private equity have positioned the downtown to immediately pursue the transformative projects that are needed to catalyze revitalization. Required zoning is in place, generic SEQRA environmental impact statements are completed and all necessary infrastructure is ready to accommodate DRI funding enabling it to have an immediate impact. Each of the below transformative projects has been identified in the Town’s many revitalization plans, all of which were created with the extensive community involvement of business leaders, residents and other key stakeholders.
East Main Street is among the areas of Downtown Riverhead that is enduring significant blight and a vacancy rate approaching 50%. Some of these properties, however, present a unique opportunity to create public green spaces, including a Town Square with access to the Peconic River.

The Railroad Avenue section of Downtown Riverhead is a prime area for redevelopment with its proximity to the Suffolk County Court complex and within walking distance of all Main Street attractions. It has been plagued by vacancies and underutilized uses for many years.

DRI would serve as a catalyst to economic redevelopment as a result of project readiness, previous plans, active and ongoing community engagement / involvement, the project area’s nomination as an Opportunity Zone, as well as the distinct characteristics of Downtown Riverhead. These include the unique geography, specifically its focus around the Peconic River, historic structures and inter-governmental support. Furthermore, the historic central business district is supported by strong and consistent community and municipal efforts to realize revitalization plans. To realize revitalization goals, the Town of Riverhead recognizes that a holistic approach is needed to overcome remaining barriers to transformative change.
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Should DRI funding be approved, the following investments have been identified as critical for catalyzing and incentivizing development. These investments are directly supported by the Brownfield Opportunity Area plans, Riverhead Comprehensive Plan, and other revitalization studies. They are also supported by prior investments by Riverhead Town, Suffolk County, New York State, federal sources and private equity as detailed in this application.

a) Establish a Town Square

The Town Square will provide a centrally located public gathering space, pedestrian connectivity and open vistas from Main Street to the riverfront to reorient the pedestrian focus from the traditional Main Street to the Peconic Riverwalk, a unique attribute. The Town of Riverhead has completed the first phase of the Town Square project.
by acquiring three properties, two of which are expected to be demolished (both long vacant and blighted) in the October 2021, to wit: 117, 121 and 127 East Main Street. The Town closed on the purchase of these properties on May 18, 2021 using, in part, $800,000 in funding provided by New York State Empire State Development. These strategically located properties connect Main Street to the Peconic River and are flanked by Town owned property on the east and south side and located directly across from the historic Suffolk Theater. Using this assemblage of parcels, the Town will leverage existing adjacent Town owned open space and a Town owned public parking lot to create a new, open air, public gathering space that will frame the marquis of the Suffolk Theater’s. The Long Island Science Center’s planned expansion and planetarium flanking the Town Square on the west side will have a synergistic affect strengthen the economic development potential of each other. The Town would utilize up to $4.5M of DRI funding for site improvements and amenities. The removal of these long vacant and blighted buildings will allow, through public private partnership, the construction of a new pedestrian plaza connecting Main Street to the Peconic River front which would provide outdoor performance areas, event space, kiosk-like micro restaurant and retail spaces, outdoor dining, educational recreational opportunities for children and families. Environmentally sensitive construction methods and other environmentally friendly designs will be employed to reduce the flow of pollution into the river. The project will provide the physical and visual connections from the river to East Main Street needed to encourage foot traffic. The Army Corps of Engineers is currently in the process of completing a Flood Plain Management Study (FPMS) for this area to determine the most suitable method of flood control given the current plans for the construction of the Town Square. The FPMS will be completed by the end of this year, which will allow the recommended flood mitigation measures to be implemented in a timely manner to protect the downtown area for the next 100 years of possible flood inundation and expected sea level rise due to climate change.

A ferry/water taxi terminal could be added to the Peconic River front area to allow small ferries and or water taxis to connect Downtown Riverhead to Greenport and Sag Harbor as well as to shuttle visitors across the Peconic River to the future Town of Southampton Maritime Trail Park. This would also serve as a central launch point for the Suffolk County Blue Ways (paddle/kayak/SUP) trail. Complete roadway, pedestrian, bicycle, rail, ferry/water taxi, bus and motor vehicle connections to improve safety, expand and improve multimodal access to Downtown Riverhead, reduce traffic, facilitate mobility and create new environmentally friendly, outdoor public spaces and recreational improvements and amenities.

It is anticipated that the project will yield the following important results:

- Spurring private business investment, visitation and economic activity
- Protecting existing assets and proposed improvements from anticipated sea level rise and increased seasonal storms due to climate change.
- Remediation of tidal and storm-water runoff flooding that is plaguing downtown, polluting the Peconic River Estuary, impeding access to recreational areas and prohibiting effective redevelopment and creating environmental injustice.


https://www.suffolkcountyny.gov/Departments/Economic-Development-and-Planning/Blueway-Trail
Creating new jobs and economic equity in an underserved area of persistent poverty will create opportunities for all residents and visitors regardless of race, gender, income level or any other individual characteristics by providing low or no cost programs/activities and education.

The Long Island Science Center has purchased the building adjacent to the Town Square and will soon relocate into this space to create an 8,000 – 10,000 sf interactive museum with a state-of-the-art planetarium and become a central focus for this Town Square, forming a more synergistic relationship with East End Arts Council and the Long Island Aquarium so that visitors would have multiple family friendly attractions within walking distance from one another creating the foot traffic between them which would help support the revitalization an re-occupancy of the downtown’s long vacant buildings.

The Town Square project presents an opportunity to create varied, active and sustainable spaces for the betterment of the region

In order to create the much needed Town Square for Downtown Riverhead, the Town of Riverhead would work with a master developer. All of the key properties are now owned by the Town of Riverhead. The sustainable green development will be blended with the Riverwalk and the adjacent town-owned land into a vibrant public/private partnership hosting all of the community needs identified in the most recent 2016 Brownfields Opportunity Area Step II study and the recent public Town Square Design process. With a natural playground and art center to further attract families and provide for the community, this Town Square for Riverhead would result in substantial transformative effects on the central business district that would meet and exceed the most requested elements for Downtown Riverhead, as identified in previous studies.
The Town’s recently adopted Pattern Book will communicate downtown’s historical authenticity and establish a strong sense of place. Improvement of the rear facades of those buildings with southern exposure to the river and the creation of pedestrian pathways along those renovated facades connecting the Town Square, Long Island Science Center, East End Arts and the Long Island Aquarium could further increase foot traffic to businesses in the downtown and significantly improve the regional economy. The concept of a town square, scenic vistas and increased public riverfront access has been proposed in every planning study beginning with the 1993 East Main Street Urban Renewal Plan. The Town Square project is supported by a unified Town Board and has broad, public support.
b) Implement a mixed use Transportation Oriented Development (TOD) and parking improvements to increase capacity, create a hub for alternative transportation options, improve traffic flow and determine how to best address parking needs at full buildout.

Piggybacking on the recommendations contained in the 2016 Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) study, in 2018, the Town of Riverhead received a $25,000 grant from NYS Empire State Development to create a strategic plan for a TOD in the vicinity of the Town’s railroad station. The BOA recommended that the Town leverage its existing parking lot containing 237 spaces to create a mixed used development with expanded parking. This area is located in a state Urban Renewal Area (URA) and a Brownfield Opportunity Area. The subject area was designated as a URA because of the persistent blight, poverty and underutilization in the area (a map of the TOD area and anticipated development planned). The Strategic TOD Plan, adopted in October of 2020 by a unified Town Board, has two goals. The first goal is to create a new overlay zoning district that permits an increase in development density for developers that provide a community benefit. This goal was realized in January of 2021 after public hearings and unanimous Town Board support. The second goal is to partner with a private developer to create a public parking garage with a mixed-use building wrapped with office and small retail on a two acre parcel of Town-owned property adjacent to the Suffolk County Court complex that is currently used as a surface parking lot. The RFQ for this component of the project was published on March 25, 2021 and the Town received six high quality proposals that are now being vetted by the Town’s Transit Oriented Development RFQ Review Committee. That committee has completed an initial review of all six responses, and is in the process of selecting three finalists before making a recommendation to the Riverhead Town Board. Selection of a private development partner should be completed in the Fall 2021. The TOD project will bring foot traffic into the area,
create needed mixed income residential apartments, substantially increase the existing public parking (currently 237 stalls) and reconfigure the Suffolk County bus stop, add bike share and rentable, motorized scooters as well as shuttle services and Hampton Jitney stops. This new TOD will enhance decarbonization, while also providing easy access to downtown attractions and events to those previously unable to do so. The TOD would serve to revitalize the area which would encourage LIRR users to visit or commute through this station, particularly if the LIRR proceeds with electrification of the Ronkonkoma rail line to Riverhead as outlined in the North Atlantic Rail Initiative. Further, based upon the recommendations of the Town’s Strategic Parking Plan January 2020 (https://www.townofriverheadny.gov/files/documents/2020StrategicParkingPlan1505111002071720AM.pdf), conducted by Sam Schwartz Transportation Consultants, the development of the TOD to establish, safe, convenient pedestrian connections to public transportation, use of shuttle services from remote parking facilities, such as the railroad station will “optimize the parking footprint by dispersing demand... and help to create a walkable/bike-able ‘park once’ downtown.”

The Riverhead Railroad Station is centrally located to form the hub of a downtown intermodal transportation system. Architecturally, the building has remained consistent since it first opened in 1870.

The Suffolk County Court complex, far right, is within walking distance of the Riverhead Railroad Station, far left.
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Mixed Use Concept Plan included as a "Strategic Site" in 2016 Brownfield Opportunity Area Study (BOA).

The center of Downtown Riverhead within a five minute walk of the Long Island Railroad Station and Suffolk County Bus.
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Concepts for improving traffic flow, transportation options and services, as well as the need for additional parking have been analyzed in every planning study since at least the 1993 East Main Street Urban Renewal Plan. The design of these solutions will include Complete Streets planning concepts in order to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and users of public transportation, including the Long Island Rail Road and Suffolk County buses. The Town would utilize up to $4.5M of DRI funding to offset the cost of the construction of the public parking garage, thereby making the project more attractive to a private developer.

c) Implement recommendations of the Flood Plain Management Study (FPMS) prepared by the Army Corp of Engineers to identify problems and opportunities to mitigate tidal and storm surge flooding that has plagued downtown’s parking areas for years and will increase with sea level rise.

This project will protect future development by recommending structural flood barriers and ensuring that all new developments are cognizant of changes to natural environment and climate and are designed accordingly. In early 2020 the Army Corps of Engineers and the Town of Riverhead agreed to partner in a Flood Plain Management Study in an effort to find a solution to the tidal and storm water flooding that has complicated redevelopment of the downtown. This study, which considered hydrology, hydraulics, weather, existing data and future sea level rise, together with the potential for positive economic outcomes, will be completed in late 2021. The data collected includes but is not limited to: Geographic Information System (GIS) base layers (roads, buildings, parcels, etc.); aerial photography, topographic data (Data Elevation Model (DEM) and contours); soils data, previous flood
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studies; bridge data and surveys; development plans; rainfall data; zoning or land use data; geological data; historical and/or observed flow data, existing hydrologic and hydraulic models; and existing storm water system mapping or storm water pond plans. The anticipated sources of this data include federal partners such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency; U.S. Geological Survey; Natural Resource Conservation Service; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and local partners such as the Town of Riverhead, Suffolk County, and NY Department of Environmental Conservation. Preliminary results were released in July 2021 and indicate several flood control and mitigation measures that can be incorporated into the Town Square project and all new downtown construction to insure that is protected against even a 100 year or 500 year event.

https://riverheadny.municipalone.com/files/documents/DowntownStudies-ArmyCorpspreliminaryfindings714211505110253083121AM.pdf. Based upon preliminary data, these measures could include raising the grade, building a sea wall, increasing existing bulkhead height along with other natural barriers which will protect residents, property and businesses as well as the new construction for the next century. The FPMS will allow the redevelopment of this Brownfield and URA into a public space for residents and visitors alike and provide no cost recreational opportunities and waterfront access to this area of persistent poverty that is the workforce for the Eastern Long Island, including the Hamptons. This project is essential to the redevelopment and revitalization of the entirely Downtown Riverhead, including the Town Square. The Town of Riverhead is suggesting that up to $4.875M be dedicated to this project.
The Army Corps of Engineers began to study conditions along the downtown waterfront in 2020 and issued a preliminary report in July 2021 to implement several attainable solutions to ensure sustainable growth. The final report will be issued by the end of the year.

d) Upgrade the historic Suffolk Theater’s facilities to enhance arts and cultural assets in Downtown Riverhead.

The historic art deco Suffolk Theater, which will frame the Main Street entrance to the Town Square, is in need of expansion and upgrades to become more competitive with other venues. Specifically, the Suffolk Theater, built, in the 1930s and restored to its original glory approximately 15 years ago, needs to add space to construct a green
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room to accommodate the needs of performing artists, as well as a larger stage, the addition of an orchestra pit and larger, more appropriate dressing rooms for performers. The lack of these facilities has precluded the theater from hosting ballet, live plays, symphonies and other larger musical acts. Although there are approximately 40,000 visitors to the theater annually, the lack of these facilities limits the types of performances and performers that can be featured. For example, the current stage is only 32 x 10 is inadequate to accommodate an orchestra pit and the stage is not deep enough to allow plays to be performed since there are no “wings” within which to accommodate sets, a green room, props, no costume or set storage or fly rigs for lights or performers. Additionally, certain performers, particularly nationally renowned stars, require specific green room and dressing room amenities. These performers are reluctant or have outright refused to even negotiate dates at the Suffolk Theater due to the lack of modern amenities. Other area venues, including the Patchogue Theater, Westhampton Performing Arts Center, Huntington Paramount Theatre and the Bay Street Theater in Sag Harbor are able to draw these renowned acts. And all of these venues are competing for the same performers. If the Suffolk Theater could expand its stage to 55 x 32 feet using up to $2M of DRI funding to create the amenity spaces required, it could operate 6 days per week with a broad array of talent, including long running plays, symphonies and operas. This would allow for the theater to compete regionally and to provide expanded art and cultural opportunities for Long Island residents. The expansion of the stage and amenity areas will allow for maximum flexibility of use and provide a stable income stream, insuring that the theater is a viable economic engine for Downtown Riverhead for years to come.

e) Expand the Long Island Science Center to an improved facility adjacent to Riverhead Town Square.

The Long Island Science Center (LISC), a not for profit educational museum that has been a downtown attraction since its founding in 1995. Using ESD 2019 CFA funding, LISC has purchased the long vacant and blighted building...
immediately west of the proposed Riverhead Town Square, which will allow the Science Center’s east side to open directly onto the Town Square in a significantly larger space. The expanded facility will include larger exhibit spaces, makerspace, classrooms, a recording studio and the Long Island Hall of Technology and Invention, a unique rooftop deck observation area that will double as event space overlooking the Town Square and Peconic River. Bio-gardens and exhibits on solar energy and photovoltaics will be a highlight of the large rooftop deck. A crowning component to the Science Center and Town Square is an indoor, state-of-the-art planetarium. The destination will create a “bookend” of major, family friendly, tourist attractions surrounding the Town Square but funding is needed to expedite the phasing of this project. As such, the Town of Riverhead suggests that a DRI investment of up to $2M would be necessary. The synergistic relationship between the Long Island Aquarium and LISC has the potential to keep families and other visitors in the Long Island region for extended stays.

f) Refurbish and restore the historic Vail Leavitt Music Hall, constructed in 1881.

This is the only 19th century “upstairs” and “miniature” opera house of its type in the NY Metropolitan area. It was designated as a local landmark in 1979 and registered as a national and state historic place in 1983. The ground floor of the building housed commercial business storefronts, while the upstairs contained the opera house. The music hall began its operations with candle lighting and eventually gas fixtures were placed all along the horseshoe balcony, and gaslight continued at the music hall until the advent of electricity to the area in July 1888. In 1914, the Music Hall was used by Thomas Edison as a demonstration site for kinetophone, an early attempt at the synchronization of sound and film, later Will Rogers performed there. As more modern theaters were built in the area, the Music Hall was converted for use over the years as a restaurant, a roller skating rink and even a betting parlor. However, the balcony and stage proscenium remained intact throughout the conversions. The Council for the Vail-Leavitt Music Hall acquired the property in 1982 through a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Council is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 charitable
corporation which now oversees and operates the venue. The music hall held its grand re-opening on June 28, 2003. It continues to host numerous cultural, civic and charitable events throughout the year for the local community. However, although the theatre has an incredibly rich history and is an important part of the fabric of Downtown Riverhead, it has been underutilized for the past 15 years. Additionally, the COVID 19 pandemic severely affected the theater’s bottom line and prohibited expenditures on important maintenance and updates to keep it current. The theater can accommodate live theater and performances that will contribute to the cultural resurgence of Eastern Long Island. However, it is need of an elevator, new roofing, accessible bathrooms and seating, updated lighting and sound equipment, and an updated lobby and offices. It’s “black box” area is planned to be redeveloped with food and beverage service that can be used as a day time “coffee house” with poetry readings and other small performances that can double as a bar area for evening performances. Flexible seating on the floor of the proscenium will allow for a wider variety of events and performances. Expansion of the arts in downtown is strongly supported by numerous previous planning studies over the past 30 years. The Town is suggesting up to $2M for this project.

g) Establish new pedestrian/bicycle pathways, improved crosswalks, and lighting and unified signage themes and connect to alternative transportation circuit/TOD.

These new alternative transportation connections will complete a safe, friendly and useable circuit from the TOD to the downtown core, along the Peconic River for beautification and branding. This project will drive foot traffic to the waterfront and direct the public to available parking, bus and rail connections, as well as alternative
transportation trail connections. This will include a prominent network of pedestrian and bicycle pathways and connections to the Suffolk County Blue Way Trail and the planned Southampton Maritime Trail along the south side of Riverhead’s Main Street to activate the waterfront and along the north side of Main Street to provide clear, safe and attractive access to public parking. Complete Streets principles will be utilized to create walkable/bikeable linkages to multimodal transportation (municipal rail, trolley and bus service). All pathways will be designed for full accessibility. Streetscaping should include expansion of the existing lighting / signage strategy, as well as traffic calming patterns for beautification and pedestrian safety. These pedestrian pathways, crosswalks, speed tables and enhanced wayfinding signage will create cohesive connections between new parking structures planned as part of the Town’s TOD located on Railroad Street on the north side of Downtown Riverhead and the Long Island Aquarium on the east side [https://www.longislandaquarium.com/](https://www.longislandaquarium.com/), the new Town Square in the center of downtown and the proposed Wiener Museum of the Decorative Arts [https://www.wmoda.com/](https://www.wmoda.com/) on the west side. This complete walkable/bikable circuit will allow the public to park once and experience all of Riverhead’s assets on foot or by bicycle and will require up to $2M in funding from DRI. In addition, it will allow for connections via bike lane to the Rails to Trails program ([https://www.newsday.com/long-island/suffolk/suffolk-hiking-biking-trail-1.20151563](https://www.newsday.com/long-island/suffolk/suffolk-hiking-biking-trail-1.20151563)) and to the recently completed Veterans Memorial Recreational Trail, an extremely popular nine mile Town owned public access bike and walking trail that was constructed around the former Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant in Calverton [https://www.traillink.com/trail/epcal-alternative-transportation-path/](https://www.traillink.com/trail/epcal-alternative-transportation-path/) as well as the Suffolk County Blue Way water trails.
Complete Streets concepts are imperative to be sure users can cross the street to patronize businesses and travel to work. In addition, there are numerous pedestrian access points to Main Street from the public lots, primarily south, but also north. These connections should be sites for creative improvement, known as paseos, a Spanish term for a pedestrian promenade.

A link to a larger version of this map is located at https://www.townofriverheadny.gov/docview.aspx?docid=52276
h) **Create a new marketing, creative placemaking and branding campaign** to promote Downtown Riverhead as a family friendly destination and make the public aware of all of Riverhead’s amenities and attractions. This branding and marketing campaign will allow Riverhead to solidify its identity as the gateway to all of eastern Long Island and to dispel no longer accurate perceptions of the Town as a blighted and unsafe area. While such descriptions have not been accurate in many years, they persist in the minds of potential new visitors and have held back economic rebirth. Events such as Alive on 25, Reflections and the Country Fair as well as the strong efforts of the BIDMA and Chamber of Commerce have been effective in changing the minds of those who visit, but Riverhead needs to draw from the entire Long Island region to better communicate its strong attributes to the larger regional audience. The results of a comprehensive and effective marketing and branding campaign will create new economic and employment opportunities for all skill levels and job types in this ethnically and culturally diverse population. The new branding and marketing strategy can promote and expand the Town’s partnerships with arts, cultural and community organizations for community events at the waterfront and elsewhere in downtown. This will help to build a stronger sense of place. Partnerships with the East End Arts Council, Business Improvement District Management Association, Suffolk Theater, and Vail Leavitt Music Hall will be leveraged and a unified marketing and branding program can be developed to assist these entities as well.

Wayfinding signage designs and first phase of installations were funded in part by a $65,000 Suffolk County Downtown Revitalization Grant.
Existing events such as the summer Alive on 25 Street Festival (which drew 7,000 visitors four times for the previous three summers) offering live performances and other family oriented activities, cardboard boat and crew races at the waterfront, the annual Snapper Derby that has been held on the riverfront for more than 20 years, public art installations, such as the annual Community Mosaic Street Painting Festival and the new “Reflections: Art in the Park” will serve as models for future Creative Placemaking and partnerships. Future Creative Placemaking could include events and attractions such as WaterFire Art Installation (https://waterfire.org) and/or Luma Projection Arts Festival (https://lumafestival.com). As released in the June 2017 Americans for the Arts National Study, nonprofit arts and cultural activities are a significant economic driver in communities – a growth industry that supports jobs, generates government revenue, and is a cornerstone of tourism. http://artsconsulting.com/arts-insights/the-economic-impact-of-americas-nonprofit-arts-and-culture-industry/

Historic Suffolk Theater as it appeared during its 1934 Grand Opening Ceremony and today with historically accurate interior renovations.

Civic pride is a significant part of the Riverhead business community with business leaders and residents actively taking part in revitalization efforts. Several times a year, the Business Improvement District coordinates a cleanup and beatification of the Riverhead Railroad Station, which includes flowers and plantings every spring. We recommend $125,000 for this project.
8) Administrative Capacity.
The Riverhead Community Development Department will be the primary responsible agency for Town of Riverhead. Community Development is responsible for nearly all grants awarded to the Town of Riverhead. It currently administers over $16.5 million in open grants with an additional $35 million in grant applications pending currently throughout the year. Grants are sourced from federal, state, county, nonprofit and private funders. Community Development Department staff is highly trained in technicalities of the funding sources such as DOT, HUD, labor laws, payroll documentation, permitting, bidding, subrecipient reporting, MWBE and other requirements.

Community Development Director Dawn Thomas will provide supervisory oversight of the DRI initiative on behalf of the Town of Riverhead. Ms. Thomas is an attorney with more than 30 years of municipal experience focusing on land use, comprehensive planning, transactional real estate matters, inter-municipal agreements, grant writing and administration, and code enforcement. Having served as Town Attorney for 11 years she was directly involved with the implementation of the Town’s 2003 Comprehensive Plan and redevelopment of EPCAL. She has extensive familiarity with all aspects of government including zoning, planning and inter-municipal matters that will be necessary to ensure success of this program. She also served as a member of the Riverhead Industrial Development Agency from 2012-2016.

Assistant Community Development Project Supervisor Joseph Maiorana will work with Ms. Thomas in handling Riverhead’s day-to-day administration of the DRI Initiative. He has worked for the Town of Riverhead Community Development Department since October 1994. Among the many grants that he has obtained and
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administered are the $200,000 New York Main Street project that was awarded in 2004, the $200,000 Main Street project that was awarded in 2009, the $500,000 Main Street project that was awarded in 2010, and the $250,000 Main Street Grant in 2012, which was just recently completed.

Grants Technician Frank Messina is responsible for the department’s accounting and reimbursement functions, records maintenance and updating as well as grant writing and related grant administration. He has worked in the Community Development Department since 2009.

The Riverhead Town Attorney’s Office is well versed in contract negotiation and administration with over 100 years of combined experience between its four attorneys. In addition, the Town Board has retained National Development Council (NDC) to consult on the Town Square and TOD projects. NDC has broad experience in assisting municipalities in public, private partnership transactions and all areas of municipal finance.

The Town’s Engineering Department includes two in-house licensed, professional engineers, as well as a GIS specialist. In addition, the Town Board intends on hiring an experienced planning and engineering consultant to facilitate and expedite all projects in an urban renewal area.

The Town of Riverhead Planning Department includes three professional planners and utilizes consultants on an as needed basis.

Furthermore, the Riverhead Town Board has made the completion of Downtown Riverhead’s renaissance and revitalization a top priority. In fact, the Town Board unanimously established a Downtown Revitalization Committee in 2018, made up of a diverse cross-section of the local community, to further advise and provide a public voice to all downtown revitalization efforts. All five Town Board members fully support the application and efforts proposed therein to fully realize Downtown Riverhead’s full economic development potential.
There is no other place more ready to immediately undertake decisive action to create an active, desirable downtown with a strong sense of place than historic Downtown Riverhead. Downtown Riverhead’s extensive preparation for revitalization includes many years of planning and revitalization studies, creation of necessary sewer and water infrastructure, deep community involvement, as well as promotion of arts and cultural development. Riverhead has set the table to foster the success for transformative projects that can very quickly provide enormous, positive change and economic development for the entire Long Island region. DRI funding would be the final catalyst to ignite a comprehensive downtown revitalization that will provide economic opportunities, such as quality jobs, as well as affordable places to live, work and recreate, to allow the current population and the next generation to thrive on Long Island. The resulting recreational and shopping opportunities oriented along the Peconic River will facilitate and enhance this economic revitalization for the benefit of the entire region. The opportunity provided through the DRI would significantly catalyze and synthesize all of these accomplishments to enable downtown to take the next necessary steps to realize its potential as a regional tourist and shopping destination, as well as an amazing place to live, work and play for the Long Island region’s diverse population. With infrastructure in place and historic attractions, such as the 1893 Vail Leavitt Music Hall and the Suffolk Theater, Downtown Riverhead has a perfect combination of modern amenities and old-fashioned charm. Riverhead is ready to take the next, necessary steps.
In addition to public support garnered through many years of participation in the revitalization planning process, this application has strong and diverse support, as indicated in the attached letters of support from: Congressman Lee Zeldin, NYS Senator Anthony Palumbo, NYS Assemblywoman Jodi Giglio, Suffolk County Executive Steven Bellone, Suffolk County Legislator Al Krupski, Suffolk County Economic Development and Planning Commissioner Natalie Wright, MTA Long Island Rail Road, Peconic Bay Medical Center Northwell Health, the Town of Riverhead Downtown Revitalization Committee, Long Island Science Center, Long Island Builders Institute, Vision Long Island, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Discover Long Island, East End Tourism Alliance, Riverhead Business Improvement District Management Association, Riverhead Chamber of Commerce, Long Island Farm Bureau, the East End Arts Council, the Long Island Aquarium, the Hyatt Place Hotel, The Riverhead Free Library, the Preston House & Hotel, the Suffolk Performing Arts Alliance, Inc., and the Butterfly Effect Project.

10) $20 Million Request

The Town of Riverhead is on the precipice of transforming into a major, regional destination that would significantly benefit the Long Island economy. With the ability to attract millions of new visitors annually, welcome hundreds of new residents, and provide new housing and employment opportunities to residents, the proposed projects in Riverhead’s 2021 DRI application have the ability to unleash Riverhead’s full catalytic potential as an economic development generator. The Town believes that the first four projects listed above in Section 7 are transformational economic development projects and will have significant positive impacts on the downtown and the region. Specifically, the Town Square, the Riverhead TOD, Flood Mitigation Implementation
and the Suffolk Theater each have the ability to for substantial transformative change. With each one now ready to move forward almost immediately, the cumulative economic development to the Long Island region is unprecedented. These projects are truly shovel ready. Beginning with the strategic planning and capital project funding received from ESD in 2017, 2018 and 2019, the Town has advanced the strategic plans by creating designs, adopting necessary new zoning, garnering public input and consensus, generating an RFQ, vetting responses, and has received inquiries from developers to act as Master Developer for the Town Square. The Town has retained National Development Council (NDC) to guide it through the public/private partnership components of the Town Square and TOD projects. The Riverhead Community Development Department together with the administrative partners identified in Section 8 above will coordinate DRI implementation. The owners of the Suffolk Theater have already demonstrated meticulous attention to detail in the multi-million historic restoration of the Art Deco theater. Suffolk Theater owners Bob and Dian Castaldi carefully restored each historic element and were awarded a 2014 NYS Historic Preservation Award for their efforts. They have created 501(c)3, Suffolk Performing Arts Alliance Inc., to guide the theater’s planned expansion and long-term viability.

In addition, utilizing $750,000 ESD funding in part, the Long Island Science Center (LISC) has acquired the long vacant building adjacent to the Town Square development area and is ready to expand its building and offerings to make STEAM education a prominent feature in downtown. LISC’s new space will become a new downtown anchor, featuring a state of the art planetarium. The new planetarium will create a synergistic, family friendly relationship with the Long Island Aquarium, just a few steps to the east and the Suffolk County Historical Society Museum, a five minute walk to the west and located within the TOD. These attractions will create family friendly book ends to either side of the Town Square and the downtown area as a whole.

The creation of a themed children’s play area and activated public spaces within the Town Square will attract the development of new daycare centers within downtown. The creation of a TOD and alternative forms of transit, a new, safe parking area, with clear, walkable pathways will stitch these downtown attractions together in a safe, easily navigated circuit. With a $20M infusion of DRI funding, the long blighted Downtown Riverhead business district can be transformed almost overnight. The construction jobs and economic benefit is outlined in the Benefit Cost Analysis prepared by Dr. Martin R. Cantor, CPA in 2021. https://riverheadny.municipalone.com/files/documents/DowntownStudies-Benefit-CostAnalysisforUSDOT2021RaiseGrant1505110134083121AM.pdf

According to the Benefit Cost Analysis, the development of the Town Square and the TOD will result in a $96.7 million in private investment generating $116.4 million of economic activity during the construction phase alone, a 30 year total of $48.6 million in new tax revenues, a 30 year economic impact of $650.8 million, and a 30 year Net Present Value positive cash flow of $132 million. Furthermore, construction of Transit Oriented Development at the Riverhead Long Island Railroad Station and Town Square will create over 500 construction jobs and in excess of an additional 500 secondary jobs with a combined $46.6 million of primary and secondary economic activity, while also generating $4.4 million of sales tax revenues. Finally, the projects will generate a permanent stream of annual local sales tax revenues of $704,158 and a projected $48.6 million of annual property taxes over
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30 years, the bulk of which will be received by the Riverhead school district, a district in a community of persistent poverty. The Transit Oriented Development and Town Square has a 30-year Net Present Value positive cash flow of $132 million.

A market study recently completed by Streetsense in connection with the Town Square design process establishes that the Town’s projects are appropriate and will be successful in today’s retail, food and beverage, hospitality and residential real estate markets. https://riverheadny.municipalone.com/files/documents/DowntownStudies-RiverheadFinalPresentation1505105917083121AM.pdf The study provides insight to potential developers as to what mix of uses and sizes of spaces will be most successful. This market study was funded through ESD. In addition, the Town has, as part of the 2019 ESD funding for this project, commissioned a market study to best identify the uses that will be successful in downtown.

The Town has site control over the Town Square and TOD redevelopment areas and has vetted 6 proposals for a Master Developer for the TOD project and will select three finalists within a month. These projects are poised to immediately move forward and are truly shovel ready. Developers have also expressed interest in working with the Town to develop the Town Square in advance of the completion of the design process.

The Town is ready for DRI investment. In addition to having invested in significant planning and revitalization studies which serve as the baseline for its ongoing revitalization efforts, the Town of Riverhead has adopted Urban Renewal plans (East Main Street and Railroad Avenue Corridors) and has been selected as a federal Opportunity Zone. Most importantly, Riverhead has done all of the baseline planning, design, environmental, benefit cost analysis and market studies to show that these transformative projects will work. Infrastructure necessary for these projects is already in place as downtown is fully served by both the Riverhead Sewer District and Riverhead Water District. These public utilities assure that even the largest, necessary economic development projects are primed for success. In addition, the Town had creatively used available funding opportunities to improve the overall attractiveness throughout downtown by resurfacing public walkways with decorative stamped concrete, installing unified new, decorative and efficient LED lighting along its streets and creating public art displays. The enormous co-benefits that will be created through DRI investment are supported by the findings in both the BCA and the market study. The Town, thanks to the investments already made by New...
York State ESD and the County of Suffolk is ready to take immediate action to fully revitalize its downtown.

Riverhead Water District provides 2.4 billion gallons of water annually to residents and business assuring safe potable supply. Although the Town was not selected for DRI funding in the three earlier rounds of funding where it was considered a finalist, it has consistently, expeditiously and successfully continued to work hard to advance the projects identified to the point of shovel readiness. Wisely using ESD past funding and working together as a unified Town Board, Riverhead has moved the proverbial ball down the field and is approaching the goal line. The Town Board has such confidence in these projects that, during a global pandemic, it bonded $5.5 million in 2020 to ensure the acquisition of the three parcels that will become the Town Square, commenced work with the Army Corp of Engineers on a flood mitigation study (matched with ESD funds), completed its strategic plan for the TOD (paid for using ESD funds), finalized the design of the Town Square and market study (paid for using ESD funding), and issued and RFQ for a Master Developer for the TOD (paid for using ESD funding). Literally, the only thing now necessary is adequate funding to insure that this regional economic opportunity succeeds. So much progress has been made and momentum is key now since the Town already has three private developers moving forward toward Master Developer for the TOD and has had inquiries from a number private developers for the Town Square.

The Town has established by its actions that it is deeply committed to reaching its goals by continuing to invest in these projects and that it is immediately ready, without delay, to effectively and responsibly make wise use of a $20M DRI award to bring these projects to fruition, if fortunate enough to receive it, for the benefit of Riverhead, the Long Island region and the State of New York.
After 30 years of planning efforts and recent aggressive local government action, Downtown Riverhead is on the precipice of realizing its full economic development potential and assuming a position among the most dynamic, diverse regional destination in the entire State of New York. The results of New York’s past investments in Downtown Riverhead are evident in platform of readiness that has been created and is now outlined in this application. From this application, is abundantly clear that if Downtown Riverhead is selected as the 2021 Round 5 DRI recipient, there will be immense benefits to the residents of Riverhead, the Long Island region and the state. Long Islanders have long talked about what Riverhead “can be”. Riverhead is fully ready to implement the plans outlined in this application that were developed through many years of meaningful public participation. It’s time for everyone to stop talking about what Downtown Riverhead “can be”, and finally proudly say:

this is downtown RIVERHEAD
TOWN OF RIVERHEAD

Resolution 2021-552

AUTHORIZES FUNDING APPLICATION TO NEW YORK STATE FOR DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE ROUND 5

Councilwoman Kent offered the following resolution, which was seconded by Councilman Beyrodt Jr.

WHEREAS, The Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) will invest up to $20 million in each of 10 communities ripe for development to transform them into vibrant communities where tomorrow’s workforce will want to live, work and raise families; and

WHEREAS, the DRI program emphasizes using investments to reinforce and secure additional public and private investments proximal to, and within, downtown neighborhoods, and in doing so will build upon growth spurred by the Governor’s Regional Economic Development Councils (REDCs); and

WHEREAS, each Region will compete for economic aid through competitive awards to projects that support identified key regional issues and opportunities, support a regional economic vision, and address key issues and outline major elements of the strategic plans; and

WHEREAS, vibrant Historic Downtown Riverhead is a walkable dynamic neighborhood along the Peconic River located 10 minutes from Calverton Enterprise Industrial Park and has a multitude of diverse assets including Regional Arts & Culture Attractions; Destination Retail, Tourism and Hotels; Suffolk County Courts, College and County Center; proximity to Peconic Bay Medical Center; Multi-modal Transportation and targeted regional job growth, all criteria for the DRI selection; and

WHEREAS, Riverhead’s efforts toward revitalization have created a distinctive, diverse community with a strong sense of place poised to become an international destination where dense zoning, sewer and gas availability has generated over $100 million in public and private investment into housing, hotels, and restaurants and where the Peconic River provides unmatched natural beauty for pedestrian, bicycle and paddler access; and

WHEREAS the Town Square and Transit Oriented Development projects, together with the Long Island Science Center and Suffolk Theatre expansions are projects that will provide meaningful revitalization to the downtown but require the support of New York State to make them the best they can be, and

WHEREAS, designation of Downtown Riverhead as the selected downtown under the DRI will implement Long Island Economic Development Regional Council goals identified in the strategic plan to develop the sustainable economies based in high tech, agriculture and tourism to create jobs, enhance tax base, and incentivize private investment in the region; and
WHEREAS, the Town of Riverhead Board along with additional public and private partners including Suffolk County, the Town of Riverhead Business Improvement District, the Town of Riverhead Chamber of Commerce, East End Tourism Alliance, amongst others seeks to submit a funding application for the $10M Downtown Revitalization Initiative; and

WHEREAS, there is no required Town “match” for this funding opportunity,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Riverhead Board authorizes the submission of the attached DRI funding application for $20 million to New York State on or before September 15, 2021; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Clerk forward copies of this resolution to the Community Development Agency; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all Town Hall Departments may review and obtain a copy of this resolution from the electronic storage device and, if needed, a certified copy of same may be obtained from the Office of the Town Clerk.

THE VOTE

RESULT: ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Catherine Kent, Councilwoman
SECONDER: Frank Beyrodt Jr., Councilman
AYES: Aguiar, Hubbard, Kent, Beyrodt Jr., Rothwell
Congressman Lee M. Zeldin
First Congressional District of New York
August 20, 2021

Stuart Rabinowitz, Co-Chair
Kevin Law, Co-Chair
Long Island Regional Economic Development Council
150 Motor Parkway
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Re: 2021 NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Dear Mr. Law and Mr. Rabinowitz:

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposal from the Town of Riverhead for New York State DRI funding to transform Downtown Riverhead by progressing several key economic development projects, including the creation of Riverhead Town Square, implementing an intermodal transportation hub, upgrades to the Suffolk Theater and expansion of the Long Island Science Center. I encourage the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council to recommend Riverhead for the 2021 DRI grant that will allow these important projects to move forward.

I believe that Downtown Riverhead is now at the cusp of transformative change and that an infusion of New York State grant funds to create a public square to provide scenic riverfront vistas and a public gathering space will incentivize redevelopment to Downtown Riverhead, transforming this community into a desirable, affordable, vibrant neighborhood where tomorrow’s workforce will want to live, work and raise their families.

I wholeheartedly endorse the application for DRI funding being submitted by the Town of Riverhead. Thank you in advance for your due and timely consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Lee Zeldin
Member of Congress
August 23, 2021

Mr. Stuart Rabinowitz, Co-Chair
Mr. Kevin Law, Co-Chair
Long Island Regional Economic Development Council
150 Motor Parkway
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Re: 2021 NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Dear Mr. Law and Mr. Rabinowitz,

After years of symbolizing economic blight, Downtown Riverhead is showing significant signs of recovery. However, there is still much work to be done. It is for this reason that I am strongly supporting the proposal from the Town of Riverhead for New York State DRI to transform Downtown Riverhead by progressing several key economic development projects, including the creation of Riverhead Town Square, implementing an intermodal transportation hub, upgrades to the Suffolk Theater and expansion of the Long Island Science Center. Therefore, I encourage the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council to recommend Riverhead for the 2021 DRI grant that will allow these important projects to move forward in an expeditious manner.

I believe that Downtown Riverhead is now at the cusp of transformative change and that an infusion of New York State grant funds to transform this community into a desirable, affordable, vibrant neighborhood where tomorrow’s workforce will want to live, work and raise their families.

The proposed projects will result in increased pedestrian traffic and will be a driving force to further revitalization in Downtown Riverhead. I am impressed by the level of creativity and professionalism apparent in the proposal from the Town of Riverhead and believe that it will be a tremendous asset to our demographically diverse community.

The rebirth of several storefronts within the central business district will result in increased pedestrian traffic and will be a driving force to further revitalization. I am impressed by the level of creativity and professionalism apparent in the proposal from the Town of Riverhead and believe that it will be a tremendous asset to our demographically diverse region.

In recognition of the vast economic potential of the project area, I wholeheartedly endorse the application for DRI funding being submitted by the Town of Riverhead. Thank you in advance for your due consideration. I stand ready to assist the Town of Riverhead in any way I can to ensure the success of this important project and applaud their efforts to revitalize Downtown Riverhead for the benefit of the Long Island region.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Anthony Palumbo
NYS Senator
August 20, 2021

Stuart Rabinowitz, Co-Chair
Kevin Law, Co-Chair
Long Island Regional Economic Development Council
150 Motor Parkway
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Re: 2021 NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Dear Mr. Law and Mr. Rabinowitz,

After years of symbolizing economic blight, Downtown Riverhead is ready for an economic revitalization rebirth. However, there is still much work to be done. It is for this reason that I am strongly supporting the proposal from the Town of Riverhead for New York State grant funding to advance several key economic development projects, including the creation of Riverhead Town Square, implementing an intermodal transportation hub, upgrades to the Suffolk Theater and expansion of the Long Island Science Center. Therefore, I encourage the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council to recommend Riverhead for the 2021 DRI grant that will allow these important projects to move forward in an expeditious manner.

I believe that Downtown Riverhead is now at the cusp of transformative change that will make Riverhead a regional destination and a revitalized community that is a desirable, affordable, vibrant neighborhood where tomorrow’s workforce will want to live, work and raise their families.

The project’s outlined in Riverhead’s DRI application will result in increased pedestrian traffic and will be a driving force to further revitalization in Downtown Riverhead. I am impressed by the level of creativity and professionalism apparent in the proposal from the Town of Riverhead and believe that it will be a tremendous asset to our demographically diverse community.

In recognition of the vast economic potential of the project area, I wholeheartedly endorse the applications for funding being submitted by the Town of Riverhead in the 2021 New York State DRI Application. Thank you in advance for your due consideration. I stand ready to assist the Town of Riverhead in any way I can to ensure the success of these important projects and applaud their efforts to revitalize Downtown Riverhead for the benefit of the Long Island region.

Sincerely,

Jodi Giglio
NYS Assemblywoman
September 13, 2021

Kevin Law, Co-Chair
Stuart Rabinowitz, Co-Chair
Long Island Regional Economic Development Council
150 Motor Parkway
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Dear Mr. Law and Mr. Rabinowitz:

I write to express my support for the Town of Riverhead’s application for Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) Round V funding through New York State.

The Town of Riverhead is eager to advance several key economic development projects, including the creation of Riverhead Town Square, implementing an intermodal transportation hub, completing upgrades to the Suffolk Theater, and the expansion of the Long Island Science Center. A DRI award would also support the goals of Connect Long Island, Suffolk’s Regional Transportation and Development Plan, to support investment in historic downtowns and areas near train stations and transit hubs.

I believe that downtown Riverhead is at the cusp of transformative change, and an infusion of New York State grant funding will incentivize further redevelopment in downtown Riverhead. A DRI award will help transform downtown Riverhead into a desirable, affordable, vibrant area for its residents. Suffolk County stands ready to assist the Town of Riverhead in any way we can to ensure the success of this important project, and we applaud their efforts to revitalize downtown Riverhead for the benefit of the Long Island region.

I urge you to support the Town of Riverhead’s application that would move forward critical projects to transform downtown Riverhead.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

STEVEN BELLONE
Suffolk County Executive
August 20, 2021

Mr. Stuart Rabinowitz, Co-Chair
Mr. Kevin Law, Co-Chair
Long Island Regional Economic Development Council
150 Motor Parkway
Hauppauge, N Y 1 1 7 8 8

Re: 2021 NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Dear Mr. Law and Mr. Rabinowitz:

I write in strong support for the Town of Riverhead’s application for New York State grant funding to advance several key economic development projects, including the creation of Riverhead Town Square, implementing an intermodal transportation hub, upgrades to the Suffolk Theater and expansion of the Long Island Science Center. For these reasons, I encourage the LIREDCC to recommend Riverhead for the 2021 DRI grant, which will allow these important projects to move forward in an expeditious manner.

After years of economic blight, more recently great strides have been made in revitalizing Riverhead’s Downtown, but more work needs to be done for Riverhead to reach its full potential. It is for this reason, and as a member of the Suffolk County Legislature, I am supporting the proposal from the Town for funding through DRI grant.

I believe Downtown Riverhead is in the cusp of a transformative change, and an infusion of NYS grant funding will transform the area into a desirable, affordable, vibrant neighborhood, where tomorrow’s workforce will want to live, work, and raise their families.

I am impressed by the creativity and professionalism apparent in the proposal submitted by Riverhead, and believe it will be a tremendous asset to our diverse community. In recognition of the vast economic potential of the project area, I fully endorse their application for funding.
Thank you for your consideration. I am ready to assist the Town of Riverhead in any way to ensure the success of these development projects and applaud their efforts to revitalize downtown area for the benefit of the entire region.

Sincerely,

Albert J. Krupski, Jr.
Suffolk County Legislator
September 1, 2021

Stuart Rabinowitz, Co-Chair
Kevin Law, Co-Chair
Long Island Regional Economic Development Council
150 Motor Parkway
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Re: 2021 NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative Funding

Dear Mr. Law and Mr. Rabinowitz,

After years of symbolizing economic blight, Downtown Riverhead is showing significant signs of recovery. However, there is still much work to be done. It is for this reason that I am strongly supporting the proposal from the Town of Riverhead to advance several key economic development projects, including the creation of Riverhead Town Square, implementing an intermodal transportation hub, upgrades to the Suffolk Theater and expansion of the Long Island Science Center. Therefore, I encourage the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council to recommend Riverhead for the 2021 Downtown Revitalization Funding (DRI) grant that will allow these important projects to move forward in an expeditious manner.

I believe that Downtown Riverhead is now at the cusp of transformative change and that an infusion of New York State grant funds to create a public square to provide scenic riverfront vistas and a public gathering space will catalyze and incentivize redevelopment to Downtown Riverhead, transforming this community into a desirable, affordable, vibrant neighborhood where tomorrow’s workforce will want to live, work and raise their families.

The rebirth of the central business district will result in increased pedestrian traffic and will be a driving force to further revitalization. I am impressed by the level of creativity and professionalism apparent in the proposal from the Town of Riverhead and believe that it will be a tremendous asset to our demographically diverse region.

In recognition of the vast economic potential of the project area, I wholeheartedly endorse the application for DRI funding being submitted by the Town of Riverhead’s application. Thank you in advance for your due consideration. Suffolk County stands ready to assist the Town of Riverhead in any way I can to ensure the success of this important project and applaud their efforts to revitalize Downtown Riverhead for the benefit of the Long Island region.

Sincerely,

Natalie Wright
Commissioner
September 9, 2021

Stuart Rabinowitz, Co-Chair
Kevin Law, Co-Chair
Long Island Regional Economic Development Council
150 Motor Parkway
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Re: Downtown Revitalization Initiative 2021

Dear Mr. Law and Mr. Rabinowitz:

After years of symbolizing economic blight, Downtown Riverhead is showing signs of recovery. However, there is still much work to be done, particularly around the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) Riverhead Station. It is for this reason that the LIRR supports the Town of Riverhead’s application for New York State Downtown Revitalization Initiative funding.

Previous revitalization efforts have been significantly hampered by zoning and infrastructure deficiencies that limited the ability of land to be used to its highest and best use. Despite these challenges, Downtown Riverhead is now ready for substantive change. The time is right for an infusion of DRI funds that will catalyze and incentivize redevelopment into the Downtown Riverhead, transforming this community into a desirable, affordable, vibrant neighborhood where tomorrow’s workforce will want to live, work and raise their families.

Particularly intriguing to the LIRR is planned implementation of intermodal transportation and parking improvements to increase capacity, improve traffic flow and determine how to best address parking needs at full buildout. This may include additional parking or improved connections between the central business district and the nearby LIRR station. We believe that shuttle services from the railroad station parking lot to the central downtown business district and nearby Calverton Enterprise Park should be considered. The design of these solutions will include Complete Streets planning concepts in order to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and users of public transportation, including the LIRR and Suffolk County buses. Complete Streets concepts are imperative to be sure users can cross the street to patronize businesses and travel to work.

The agencies of the MTA

MTA New York City Transit
MTA Long Island Rail Road

MTA Metro-North Railroad
MTA Bridges and Tunnels

MTA Capital Construction
MTA Bus Company
In recognition of the vast economic potential of the project area, we support the nomination of the application being submitted by the Town of Riverhead. Thank you in advance for your due consideration of this application and applaud their efforts to revitalize Downtown Riverhead for the benefit of the Long Island region.

Sincerely,

Hector Garcia
Sr. Director- External Affairs
MTA Long Island Rail Road
Mr. Stuart Rabinowitz, Co-Chair  
Mr. Kevin Law, Co-Chair  
Long Island Regional Economic Development Council  
150 Motor Parkway  
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Re: 2021 NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Dear Mr. Law and Mr. Rabinowitz,

On behalf of the executive leadership of Peconic Bay Medical Center Foundation, I am pleased to express our strong support of the application being submitted by the Town of Riverhead to receive Downtown Revitalization Initiative funding to advance several key economic development projects, including the creation of Riverhead Town Square, implementing an intermodal transportation hub, upgrades to the Suffolk Theater and expansion of the Long Island Science Center.

By many measures, Riverhead is one of the most economically distressed communities on Long Island, having suffered from years of decline and disinvestment. Past revitalization efforts have been significantly hampered by zoning and infrastructure deficiencies that limited the ability of land to be used to its highest and best use.

Despite these challenges, Downtown Riverhead is now at the cusp of transformative change. An infusion of New York State grant funds to create a public square to provide scenic riverfront vistas, a public gathering space, develop an intermodal transportation network, foster the growing arts community and incentive redevelopment to Downtown Riverhead, will transform this community into a desirable, affordable, vibrant neighborhood where tomorrow’s workforce will want to live, work and raise their families. And it is for these reasons that PBMC has continued to further its presence and commitment to Riverhead. Specifically, the hospital started an expansion in July 2016 of its Critical Care Tower, completed in December 2020. Furthermore, in October 2017, PBMC opened its new cardiac cauterization laboratory. This new facility provides ready access to advanced artery-opening techniques for 25,000 eastern Long Island residents who previously would have had to travel long distances for the life-saving procedures. In addition, and further galvanizing its investment in Downtown Riverhead, in late 2017, PBMC acquired the former Suffolk County National Bank headquarters that now provides 60,000 square feet of space in downtown Riverhead for the growing regional medical center.
Located at the gateway to Long Island’s East End, Downtown Riverhead has been the subject of intensive, community-centered planning processes that have cleared away regulatory barriers to the creation of a vibrant, mixed-use, master planned, formed-base revitalization district. Now is the time to assist Riverhead with an infusion of federal funds that will catalyze and incentivize redevelopment in Downtown Riverhead, transforming this community into a desirable, affordable, vibrant neighborhood where tomorrow’s workforce will want to live, work and raise their families.

In recognition of the vast economic potential of the project area, we wholeheartedly endorse the DRI application being submitted by the Town of Riverhead. Thank you in advance for your due consideration. PBMC stands ready to assist the Town of Riverhead in any way we can to ensure the success of these important projects and applaud their efforts to revitalize Downtown Riverhead for the benefit of the Long Island region.

Sincerely,

Andrew J. Mitchell
September 9, 2021

Stuart Rabinowitz, Co-chair
Kevin Law, Co-chair
Long Island Regional Economic Development Council
150 Motor Parkway
Happauge, NY 11788

Re: 2021 NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Dear Messrs. Rabinowitz and Law:

Please accept this letter of support for the Town of Riverhead’s application for funding New York State Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI).

The Town of Riverhead’s Downtown Revitalization Committee is a group of twelve individual town residents who volunteer their time and effort to review the Town’s existing policies, regulations and procedures in support of the Town’s downtown revitalization efforts. The Committee is three years old and is comprised of downtown business owners, real estate professionals, active and retired bankers, lawyers, accountants, marketers, town planners and architects.
We began our efforts with a discussion of potential visions for the downtown area, an assessment of the blight that it continues to suffer from and a consideration of the mix of zoning designations that encompass the greater downtown area. This was followed by a review of the many studies and plans that were initiated since as early as 1993. These include:

1) Town of Riverhead East Main Street Urban Renewal Area Plan (1993);
2) The Analysis of the Opportunity for the Revitalization of the Main Street Corridor (1993);
3) The Vision Plan for Downtown Riverhead (1995);
4) Town of Riverhead Urban Renewal Plan Railroad Street Corridor (1997);
5) The Revitalization Strategy for Downtown Riverhead (2000);
6) Town of Riverhead Comprehensive Plan (2003);
7) Town of Riverhead East Main Street Urban Renewal Area Plan (2008 update);
8) Town of Riverhead DC-1 Zoning Bulk Study (2009)
9) Peconic River/Route 25 Corridor Step II Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study (BOA) (2016) and

These studies have been reviewed and taken into consideration by the Committee in order to understand the issues and concerns to be addressed by revitalization efforts for downtown Riverhead. The “Peconic River/Route 25 Corridor Step II Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study (BOA)” (2016) is the most recent and most extensive study with substantial information and data for our evaluation.

We find that many of the studies attempted to provide a conception of the future through some form of visioning, with a consistent theme of maintaining the character of the historic district. However there has not yet been a real concerted effort toward consensus building in the larger community regarding an overall vision or thematic program that reflects who and what Riverhead is and what it might become. Our committee considers this missing element critical to downtown revitalization as we seek to provide recommendations for architecture and design, blight mitigation (vacant buildings and lots) and problem solving (vagrancy, safety).

We feel that the time is ripe for the communities of Riverhead to coalesce around a central concept to guide our future. Of all the possibilities, we find that integrating wellness, sustainability, health and human potential as the centralized theme for our downtown business district the most interesting and promising way forward. This concept has merits on many levels, as it is an all-encompassing umbrella for future development and growth. We consider this prospect also in light of the fact that downtown Riverhead has not been traditionally recognized as a tourist destination in and of itself, even though it is strategically poised between the North and South Forks. With the pressures related to the big box retail development on Route 58 including the Tanger Outlets, it is imperative for our community to revitalize Main Street for the true purpose of providing a place where our communities
can congregate, have shared experiences and showcase the virtues of healthy and intentioned living (e.g. farm to table restaurants and related hand crafted merchandise, athletic performance, yoga/meditation, academic tutoring/college counseling, the arts, music, and similar businesses and services) that are intended to help people of all ages be their best selves. This can set Riverhead apart as a downtown worth visiting, exciting to live in and presenting a value proposition to investors that provides a positive forecast on the future because the larger community believes in and supports the outcome.

Design has a tremendous capacity to help create sustainable, resilient and healthy communities. We are on the precipice of being a place where development will occur in an ad hoc fashion without a long term vision or seizing the opportunity to rethink the built environment with an eye toward resilience and preservation, especially since our buildings are literally situated along the Peconic River. The design of buildings and how we use them have significant effects on people’s health and wellness, from natural light and air quality to how active our lifestyles are. Recognizing this, we think we can layer our thematic objective to include providing for advancement in building innovation and technologies which create ‘healthy buildings’ that are beautifully designed in proper scale and proportion to their contextual surroundings.

Our efforts in this regard have recently culminated in the adoption by our Town Board of a “Downtown Riverhead Pattern Book” (Urban Design Associates, January 12, 2021). The Pattern Book is intended to provide direction for policies and projects within our Main Street (DC-1) Zoning Use District. The process to create this direction involved listening to residents and stakeholders to develop an ideal vision for downtown Riverhead which preserves the unique character of Riverhead while also accommodating redevelopment projects of varying scale. This vision of the community and the standards for new development are clearly articulated and can be objectively understood, which will make the development process move much quicker and provide certainty to investment. We are working together with other Town committees to propose code amendments that will structure incentives to help us create the Downtown we seek. DRI funding will go a long way to help Riverhead in this effort.

Rethinking the built environment and finding ways to better integrate our buildings with the natural world is the single smartest way to address today’s most urgent challenges. We are committed to doing this and rebranding/marketing our downtown to embrace these concepts, aggregate the kinds of uses that emulate wellness and health as an economic engine (which is over a $3 trillion industry) and attract millennials, families and seniors back to our downtown as a safe and attractive place to be. By putting this program together, with concrete recommendations for legislative and administrative actions to implement, we think Riverhead can serve as a model for other communities who experience the same types of disinvestment and uncertainty. We sincerely hope that NYS DRI Funding will support our community and help us achieve this important goal.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this application.
Sincerely,

On behalf of the Town of Riverhead Downtown Revitalization Committee,

Janice Scherer

[Signature]

Co-chair

James Farley

[Signature]

Co-chair
September 2, 2021

Stuart Rabinowitz, Co-Chair
Kevin Law, Co-Chair
Long Island Regional Economic Development Council
150 Motor Parkway
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Re: 2021 NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Dear Mr. Law and Mr. Rabinowitz:

The Long Island Science Center has been part of Downtown Riverhead for many years. Several years ago, our board decided that the blight and crime that plagued our area was a detriment to the growth of our organization. Visitors and employees experienced issues with vagrancy and illegal activity. The board decided to move out of Riverhead with the intent of finding a larger space in a more safe and desirable location. After seeing several strategic improvements in the area, we decided to return to a temporary demo space in Riverhead in the fall of 2018.

We believe that Riverhead is now positioned to move forward with a transformative, revitalization plan that will include a Town Square in the heart of Downtown Riverhead. We have also identified a building centrally located in a portion of Main Street, currently plagued by blight. DRI funding will allow the Town of Riverhead to advance several key economic development projects, including the creation of Riverhead Town Square, implementing an intermodal transportation hub, upgrades to the Suffolk Theater and expansion of the Long Island Science Center. Therefore, we encourage the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council to recommend Riverhead for the 2021 DRI grant that will allow these important projects to move forward in an expeditious manner.

Our organization is committed to providing quality Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programs at low or no cost to the Long Island community. Our goal is to ignite the wonder and joy of discovery and encourage a lifelong interest in the sciences. Not enough children pursue STEM: By high school, only 36% of boys and 11% of girls are interested in STEM. This is a problem for education and the future Long Island workforce. We need STEM education to develop the next generation of innovators and to train our future workforce. We are working to address this issue with innovative programs, including 3D printing classes, a homeless shelter outreach program, a girls STEM club and a Spanish Language STEM club. We are designing programs to meet the needs of this community and the East End of Long Island, where access to quality STEM programs is limited.

In recognition of the vast economic potential of the project area, we wholeheartedly endorse the application for DRI funding being submitted by the Town of Riverhead. Thank you in advance for your due consideration.

Sincerely,

Callin Kaller
Executive Director
Long Island Science Center

The Place for Learning
40 Peconic Avenue, Suite 30 ~ Riverhead, NY 11901
(631) 208-8000
www.sciencecenterli.org
August 23, 2021

Mr. Stuart Rabinowitz, Co-Chair
Mr. Kevin Law, Co-Chair
Long Island Regional Economic Development Council
150 Motor Parkway
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Re: 2021 NYS Downtown Revitalizing Funding:

Dear Mr. Law and Mr. Rabinowitz,

On behalf of the Long Island Builders Institute, I am writing to encourage the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council to select Riverhead as the 2021 recipient of New York State Downtown Revitalization Initiative funding to advance several key economic development projects, including the creation of Riverhead Town Square, implementing an intermodal transportation hub, upgrades to the Suffolk Theater and expansion of the Long Island Science Center.

LIBI firmly believes that Downtown Riverhead is now at the cusp of transformative change. While there are a number of developments with private funds being implemented, additional public funds are essential. Such an infusion of New York State grant funds to create a public square to provide scenic riverfront vistas and a public gathering space, develop an intermodal transportation network, foster the growing arts community and incentive redevelopment to Downtown Riverhead, will transform this community into a desirable, affordable, vibrant neighborhood where tomorrow’s workforce will want to live, work and raise their families.

We are impressed by the level of creativity and professionalism apparent in the proposal from the Town of Riverhead and believe that it will be a tremendous asset to our demographically diverse community. The rebirth of several storefronts within the central business district will result in increased pedestrian traffic and will be a driving force to further revitalization. I am impressed by the level of creativity and professionalism apparent in the proposal from the Town of Riverhead and believe that it will be a tremendous asset to our demographically diverse region.

In recognition of the vast economic potential of the project area, we wholeheartedly endorse the DRI application being submitted by the Town of Riverhead. Thank you in advance for your due consideration. LIBI stands ready to assist the Town of Riverhead in any way we can to ensure the success of these important projects and applaud their efforts to revitalize Downtown Riverhead for the benefit of the Long Island region.

Sincerely,

Mitchell H. Pally
Chief Executive Officer
August 23, 2021

Stuart Rabinowitz, Co-Chair, Kevin Law, Co-Chair
Long Island Regional Economic Development Council
150 Motor Parkway
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Dear Mr. Rabinowitz and Mr. Law

Vision Long Island supports the Town of Riverhead’s application for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative. They have supported numerous mixed use, multi family and transit oriented development projects in their downtown over the past ten years and have received seven Smart Growth Awards from our organization. Receiving the DRI award would help them to take the work that has been done over the past ten years and build upon it to further the vitality of downtown Riverhead.

Riverhead has been working hard over the past ten years to capitalize on its local assets. The job center at the courthouse complex, the location as a Gateway to the East End and the riverfront itself can all contribute to the success of downtown when well connected and integrated with other uses.

Riverhead has the potential to be a highlight of the east end of Long Island. Vision Long Island would be happy to seem them as recipients of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative award.

Respectfully,

Eric Alexander, Director

Vision Long Island advances more livable, economically sustainable, and environmentally responsible growth on Long Island through Smart Growth. Smart Growth focuses on infill, re-development, and open space preservation. It supports mixed-use, mixed-income communities that are convenient, attractive, pedestrian-friendly, and that make affordable housing and public transportation desirable and realistic.

Over the past 20 years Vision has counseled downtown Villages and Towns, and has been a resource for the County, State, and Federal governments, as well as the business and civic community on downtown revitalization planning and infrastructure.

Vision has made over 2400 presentations, performed over 25 community visionings and advanced over 100 public and private planning projects towards implementing the goals of Smart Growth. Over 13,000 units of transit oriented development have been approved in our local municipalities with the support of Vision Long Island.
September 13, 2021

Stuart Rabinowitz, Co-Chair
Kevin Law, Co-Chair
Long Island Regional Economic Development Council
150 Motor Parkway
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Re: Downtown Revitalization Initiative 2021

Dear Mr. Law and Mr. Rabinowitz,

After years of symbolizing economic blight, downtown Riverhead is showing signs of recovery. However, there is still much work to be done, particularly around the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) Riverhead station. It is for this reason that Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County (CCE-Suffolk) supports the Town of Riverhead application for New York State Downtown Revitalization Initiative funding.

CCE-Suffolk is a not-for-profit organization that has served the needs of residents and businesses since 1917. Our main headquarters is located in Riverhead, adjacent to the LIRR station property. Many of our programs focus on community development. Programming throughout our specialized areas of Marine, Agriculture, 4-H/Youth Development and Community Education all have the goal of the betterment of our communities, whether through our shellfish restoration projects or our local food initiative to bolster the personal health of our residents.

We look forward to working alongside the Town of Riverhead and tailoring our services to the needs of the community. To that end, we support the nomination of the application being submitted by the Town of Riverhead. We appreciate your consideration of this application and applaud the efforts to revitalize downtown Riverhead for the benefit of the Long Island region.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Vanessa Pino Lockel
Executive Director
Stuart Rabinowitz, Co-Chair  
Kevin Law, Co-Chair  
Long Island Regional Economic Development Council  
150 Motor Parkway  
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Re: Downtown Revitalization Initiative 2021

Dear Mr. Law and Mr. Rabinowitz,

Discover Long Island submits this letter of support for the Town of Riverhead’s application for Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) funding.

Despite numerous attractions and activities available, Riverhead has suffered from years of decline and disinvestment. While Riverhead’s Downtown Business District continues to experience growth from visitors and residents alike, the proposed project will provide the necessary spark to significantly further our mutual economic redevelopment goals. The revitalization of Riverhead has the potential to further tap into the region’s $6.3 billion tourism industry and provide countless job and revenue generating benefits for residents.

Riverhead is now at the cusp of transformative change and revitalization. Located at the gateway to Long Island’s East End, this downtown has the potential to capture the millions of visitors that desire access to the famed North and South Forks, while easing congestion on those local communities. Riverhead has conducted intensive, community-centered planning processes that have cleared away regulatory barriers to the creation of a vibrant, mixed-use, master planned, form-based revitalization district. The time is right for an infusion of DRI funds that will catalyze and incentivize redevelopment to Riverhead, transforming this community into a desirable, affordable, and spirited neighborhood where tomorrow’s workforce will want to live, work, and raise their families.

For these reasons, we enthusiastically endorse this project for funding under the Downtown Revitalization Initiative program.

Thank you,

Kristen Reynolds  
President & CEO  
Discover Long Island
August 31, 2021

Stuart Rabinowitz, Co-Chair  
Kevin Law, Co-Chair  
Long Island Regional Economic Development Council  
150 Motor Parkway  
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Re: Downtown Revitalization Initiative Round 2021

Dear Mr. Law and Mr. Rabinowitz,

As the Executive Director of the East End Tourism Alliance, I am writing to urge your approval for the application being submitted by the Town of Riverhead in order to receive Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) funding to reinvigorate the Downtown Riverhead. By many measures, this downtown business district, is one of the single most economically distressed community on all of Long Island, having suffered from years of decline and disinvestment.

Many previous revitalization efforts have been significantly hampered by zoning and infrastructure deficiencies that limited the ability of land to be used to its highest and best use. Despite these challenges, Riverhead is now at the cusp of transformative change. Located at the gateway to Long Island’s East End, the downtown has conducted intensive, community-centered planning processes that has cleared away regulatory barriers to the creation of a vibrant, mixed-use, master planned, form-based revitalization district. The time is right for an infusion of DRI funds that will catalyze and incentivize redevelopment in to the Downtown Riverhead, transforming this community into a desirable, affordable, vibrant neighborhood where tomorrow’s workforce will want to live, work and raise their families.

It is important that this proposal is consistent with the goals of numerous local revitalization plans, including: the Town of Riverhead Comprehensive Plan (November 2003), the Vision Plan for Downtown Riverhead (June 1995), the Town of Riverhead East Main Street Urban Renewal Plan (October 1993), the Analysis of the Opportunity for the Revitalization of the Main Street Corridor (April 1993) and the Revitalization Strategy for Downtown Riverhead (2003).

In recognition of the vast economic potential of the project area, I wholeheartedly endorse the nomination of the joint application being submitted by Riverhead. Thank you in advance for your due consideration of this application. I stand ready to assist the Town of Riverhead in any way I can to ensure the success of this important project and applaud their efforts to revitalize the downtown business district for benefit of Long Island residents.

Sincerely,

Bryan DeLuca  
Executive Director
August 23, 2021

Mr. Stuart Rabinowitz, Co-Chair
Mr. Kevin Law, Co-Chair
Long Island Regional Economic Development Council
150 Motor Parkway
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Re: 2021 NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Dear Mr. Law and Mr. Rabinowitz:

On behalf of the Business Improvement District, I am writing to express our strong support of the proposal from the Town of Riverhead for New York State grant funding to advance several key economic development projects, including the creation of Riverhead Town Square, implementing an intermodal transportation hub, upgrades to the Suffolk Theater and expansion of the Long Island Science Center. Therefore, we encourage the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council to recommend Riverhead for the 2021 DRI grant that will allow these important projects to move forward in an expeditious manner.

The Business Improvement District believes that Downtown Riverhead is ready for an economic revitalization rebirth. It is for this reason that we are supporting the proposal from the Town of Riverhead for DRI grant. The Business Improvement District encourages the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council to recommend Riverhead as this year’s recipient of DRI funding. An infusion of New York State grant funds to revitalize Downtown Riverhead will transform this community into a desirable, affordable, vibrant neighborhood where tomorrow’s workforce will want to live, work and raise their families.

We are impressed by the level of creativity and professionalism apparent in the proposal from the Town of Riverhead and believe that it will be a tremendous asset to our demographically diverse community. In recognition of the vast economic potential of the project area, the Business Improvement District wholeheartedly endorses the application for funding. Thank you in advance for your due consideration. We stand ready to assist the Town of Riverhead in any way we can to ensure the success of these economic development projects and applaud their efforts to revitalize Downtown Riverhead for the benefit of the Long Island region.

Sincerely,

Steven Shauger, President

Riverhead Business Improvement District
200 Howell Avenue
Riverhead, NY 11901
August 23, 2021

Mr. Stuart Rabinowitz, Co-Chair
Mr. Kevin Law, Co-Chair
Long Island Regional Economic Development Council
150 Motor Parkway
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Re: 2021 NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Dear Mr. Law and Mr. Rabinowitz:

On behalf of the Riverhead Chamber of Commerce, I am writing to express our strong support of the proposal from the Town of Riverhead for New York State grant funding to advance several key economic development projects, including the creation of Riverhead Town Square, implementing an intermodal transportation hub, upgrades to the Suffolk Theater and expansion of the Long Island Science Center. Therefore, we encourage the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council to recommend Riverhead for the 2021 DRI grant that will allow these important projects to move forward in an expeditious manner.

The Riverhead Chamber of Commerce believes that Downtown Riverhead is ready for an economic revitalization rebirth. It is for this reason that we are supporting the proposal from the Town of Riverhead for DRI grant. The Chamber of Commerce encourages the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council to recommend Riverhead as this year’s recipient of DRI funding. An infusion of New York State grant funds to revitalize Downtown Riverhead will transform this community into a desirable, affordable, vibrant neighborhood where tomorrow’s workforce will want to live, work and raise their families.

We are impressed by the level of creativity and professionalism apparent in the proposal from the Town of Riverhead and believe that it will be a tremendous asset to our demographically diverse community. In recognition of the vast economic potential of the project area, the Chamber of Commerce wholeheartedly endorses the application for funding. Thank you in advance for your due consideration. We stand ready to assist the Town of Riverhead in any way I can to ensure the success of these economic development projects and applaud their efforts to revitalize Downtown Riverhead for the benefit of the Long Island region.

Sincerely,

Robert Kern, President

Robert Kern, President
September 7th, 2019

Stuart Rabinowitz, Co-Chair  
Kevin Law, Co-Chair  
Long Island Regional Economic Development Council  
150 Motor Parkway  
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Re: Downtown Revitalization Initiative 2021

Dear Mr. Law and Mr. Rabinowitz,

The Long Island Farm Bureau enthusiastically supports the application being submitted by the Town of Riverhead and strongly encourages you and the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council to nominate Downtown Riverhead to receive Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) funding. Downtown Riverhead is one of the single most economically distressed communities on all of Long Island, having suffered from years of decline and disinvestment.

While the downtown business district continues to experience growth from tourists and residents alike, the proposed project will provide the necessary spark to significantly further our mutual economic redevelopment goals, specifically increasing the number of quality jobs available to local residents. It is our strong belief that this project will result in significant revitalization. A stronger Downtown economy will benefit our members and provide more potential markets for locally grown produce.

Previous revitalization efforts have been significantly hampered by zoning and infrastructure deficiencies that limited the ability of land to be used to its highest and best use. Despite these obstacles, Riverhead is now at the cusp of transformative change and revitalization. Located at the gateway to Long Island’s East End, the downtown has conducted an intensive, community-centered planning process that has cleared away regulatory barriers to the creation of a vibrant, mixed-use, master planned, form-based revitalization district. The time is right for an infusion of DRI funds that will catalyze and incentivize redevelopment into the downtown Riverhead, transforming this community into a desirable, affordable, vibrant neighborhood where tomorrow’s workforce will want to live, work, and raise their families.

In closing, the Long Island Farm Bureau strongly believes that this project will have a positive impact on the local economy while providing a major public benefit and we encourage positive action on this application.

Sincerely,

Robert Carpenter  
Administrative Director
August 30, 2021

Mr. Stuart Rabinowitz, Co-Chair
Mr. Kevin Law, Co-Chair
Long Island Regional Economic Development Council
150 Motor Parkway
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Re: 2021 NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Dear Mr. Law and Mr. Rabinowitz:

On behalf of the staff and Board of Directors of the East End Arts Council, I am pleased to express our strong support of the application being submitted by the Town of Riverhead to receive Downtown Revitalization Initiative funding to advance several key economic development projects, including the creation of Riverhead Town Square, implementing an intermodal transportation hub, upgrades to the Suffolk Theater and expansion of the Long Island Science Center.

East End Arts Council believes that Downtown Riverhead is ready for an economic revitalization rebirth. The projects proposed in the application, in particular the Town Square, upgrades to the Suffolk Theater, the expansion of the Science Center and improvements to Vail Leavitt Music Hall, will draw increased educational, cultural, recreational and intellectual resources. These are all things that the East End Arts Council supports for our growing and diverse community. It is for this reason that we are strongly supporting the proposal from the Town of Riverhead for DRI grant. In recognition of the vast economic development and cultural benefits of the projects, the East End Arts Council fully endorses the application for funding. Thank you in advance for your due consideration. We stand ready to assist the Town of Riverhead in any way we can to ensure the success of these economic development projects and applaud their efforts to revitalize Downtown Riverhead for the benefit of the Long Island region.

Sincerely,

Diane Burke
Executive Director
August 31, 2021

Stuart Rabinowitz, Co-Chair
Kevin Law, Co-Chair
Long Island Regional Economic Development Council
150 Motor Parkway
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Re: Downtown Revitalization Initiative Round 2021

Dear Mr. Law and Mr. Rabinowitz,

As the Executive Director of the East End Tourism Alliance, I am writing to urge your approval for the application being submitted by the Town of Riverhead in order to receive Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) funding to reinvigorate the Downtown Riverhead. By many measures, this downtown business district, is one of the single most economically distressed community on all of Long Island, having suffered from years of decline and disinvestment.

Many previous revitalization efforts have been significantly hampered by zoning and infrastructure deficiencies that limited the ability of land to be used to its highest and best use. Despite these challenges, Riverhead is now at the cusp of transformative change. Located at the gateway to Long Island’s East End, the downtown has conducted intensive, community-centered planning processes that has cleared away regulatory barriers to the creation of a vibrant, mixed-use, master planned, form-based revitalization district. The time is right for an infusion of DRI funds that will catalyze and incentivize redevelopment in to the Downtown Riverhead, transforming this community into a desirable, affordable, vibrant neighborhood where tomorrow’s workforce will want to live, work and raise their families.

It is important that this proposal is consistent with the goals of numerous local revitalization plans, including: the Town of Riverhead Comprehensive Plan (November 2003), the Vision Plan for Downtown Riverhead (June 1995), the Town of Riverhead East Main Street Urban Renewal Plan (October 1993), the Analysis of the Opportunity for the Revitalization of the Main Street Corridor (April 1993) and the Revitalization Strategy for Downtown Riverhead (2003).

In recognition of the vast economic potential of the project area, I wholeheartedly endorse the nomination of the joint application being submitted by Riverhead. Thank you in advance for your due consideration of this application. I stand ready to assist the Town of Riverhead in any way I can to ensure the success of this important project and applaud their efforts to revitalize the downtown business district for benefit of Long Island residents.

Sincerely,

Bryan DeLuca
Executive Director
August 23, 2021

Mr. Stuart Rabinowitz, Co-Chair
Mr. Kevin Law, Co-Chair
Long Island Regional Economic Development Council
150 Motor Parkway
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Re: 2021 NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Dear Mr. Law and Mr. Rabinowitz:

On behalf of the Hyatt Place East End, I am writing to express our strong support of the proposal from the Town of Riverhead for New York State grant funding to advance several key economic development projects, including the creation of Riverhead Town Square, implementing an intermodal transportation hub, upgrades to the Suffolk Theater and expansion of the Long Island Science Center. Therefore, we encourage the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council to recommend Riverhead for the 2021 DRI grant that will allow these important projects to move forward in an expeditious manner.

The Hyatt Place East End believes that Downtown Riverhead is ready for an economic revitalization rebirth. It is for this reason that we are supporting the proposal from the Town of Riverhead for DRI grant. The Hyatt Place East End encourages the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council to recommend Riverhead as this year’s recipient of DRI funding. An infusion of New York State grant funds to revitalize Downtown Riverhead will transform this community into a desirable, affordable, vibrant neighborhood where tomorrow’s workforce will want to live, work and raise their families. These transformations would make a tremendous positive impact on businesses such as ours.

We are impressed by the level of creativity and professionalism apparent in the proposal from the Town of Riverhead and believe that it will be a tremendous asset to our demographically diverse community. In recognition of the vast economic potential of the project area, the Hyatt Place East End wholeheartedly endorses the application for funding. Thank you in advance for your due consideration. We stand ready to assist the Town of Riverhead in any way we can to ensure the success of these economic development projects and applaud their efforts to revitalize Downtown Riverhead for the benefit of the Long Island region.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Steven Shauger, Director of Operations
August 23, 2021

Mr. Stuart Rabinowitz, Co-Chair
Mr. Kevin Law, Co-Chair
Long Island Regional Economic Development Council
150 Motor Parkway
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Re: 2021 NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Dear Mr. Law and Mr. Rabinowitz:

On behalf of the Riverhead Free Library, I am writing to express our wholehearted support of the proposal from the Town of Riverhead for New York State grant funding to advance several key economic development projects. Therefore, we encourage the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council to recommend Riverhead for the 2021 DRI grant that will allow these important projects to move forward in an expeditious manner.

The Riverhead Free Library believes that Downtown Riverhead is ready for an economic revitalization rebirth. The projects proposed in the application, in particular the Town Square, upgrades to the Suffolk Theater, the expansion of the Science Center and improvements to Vail Leavitt Music Hall, will draw increased educational, cultural, recreational and intellectual resources. These are all things that the Library supports for our growing and diverse community. It is for this reason that we strongly support the proposal from the Town of Riverhead for DRI grant. In recognition of the vast economic development and cultural benefits of the projects, the Riverhead Free Library fully endorses the application for funding. Thank you in advance for your due consideration. We stand ready to assist the Town of Riverhead in any way we can to ensure the success of these economic development projects and applaud their efforts to revitalize Downtown Riverhead for the benefit of the Long Island region.

Sincerely,

Kerrie McMullen-Smith
Library Director
August 23, 2021

Mr. Stuart Rabinowitz, Co-Chair  
Mr. Kevin Law, Co-Chair  
Long Island Regional Economic Development Council  
150 Motor Parkway  
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Re: 2021 NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Dear Mr. Law and Mr. Rabinowitz:

On behalf of the Preston House & Hotel, I am writing to express our strong support of the proposal from the Town of Riverhead for New York State grant funding to advance several key economic development projects, including the creation of Riverhead Town Square, implementing an intermodal transportation hub, upgrades to the Suffolk Theater and expansion of the Long Island Science Center. Therefore, we encourage the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council to recommend Riverhead for the 2021 DRI grant that will allow these important projects to move forward in an expeditious manner.

The Preston House & Hotel believes that Downtown Riverhead is ready for an economic revitalization rebirth. It is for this reason that we are supporting the proposal from the Town of Riverhead for DRI grant. The Preston House & Hotel encourages the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council to recommend Riverhead as this year’s recipient of DRI funding. An infusion of New York State grant funds to revitalize Downtown Riverhead will transform this community into a desirable, affordable, vibrant neighborhood where tomorrow’s workforce will want to live, work and raise their families. These transformations would make a tremendous positive impact on businesses such as ours.

We are impressed by the level of creativity and professionalism apparent in the proposal from the Town of Riverhead and believe that it will be a tremendous asset to our demographically diverse community. In recognition of the vast economic potential of the project area, the Preston House & Hotel wholeheartedly endorses the application for funding. Thank you in advance for your due consideration. We stand ready to assist the Town of Riverhead in any way we can to ensure the success of these economic development projects and applaud their efforts to revitalize Downtown Riverhead for the benefit of the Long Island region.

Sincerely,

Steven Shauger, Director of Operations
September 4th 2021

Mr. Stuart Rabinowitz, Co-Chair
Mr. Kevin Law, Co-Chair
Long Island Regional Economic Development Council
150 Motor Parkway
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Re: 2021 NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Dear Mr. Law and Mr. Rabinowitz,

Riverhead is a unique town pairing history with progress. Committed to redevelopment, the Suffolk Theater has succeeded in drawing tourists on route to the north and south fork, along with locals, and more distant patrons seeking quality entertainment. Acting as a cornerstone, the theatre created the incentive for other businesses to venture into the downtown area. This momentum resulted in additional restaurant, occupied storefronts, increase in hotel occupancy plus creating over 100 full and part-time employment at the Suffolk Theater.

Downtown Riverhead has entered a pivotal stage in tapping into its full potential. There remains work to be done in order for the district to reach the objective of being an affordable, vibrant, neighborhood where tomorrow’s workforce will want to live, work and raise families. The infusion of funds from the New York State grant are timely and help provide the means to establish these goals.

I am struck by the level of creativity and foresight apparent in Riverhead’s proposal and believe that it will be a tremendous asset to our demographically diverse community. The creation of a Town Square, implementing an intermodal transportation hub, expansion of the Long Island Science Center and upgrade to the Suffolk Theatre will spur the social and economic growth that the town urgently needs. In turn, these improvements will stimulate other revitalization projects, making the possibilities endless. It is for these reasons that I strongly endorse the Town of Riverhead’s proposal for New York State DRI to renew the Downtown area by means of solid economic development projects.

Riverhead is at the cusp of transformative change and its prospects are exciting. I am appreciative of your efforts and thank you in advance for your due consideration. In addition, I stand ready to do my part to help insure the success of a commendable project.

Sincerely,

Robert Castaldi
Suffolk Performing Arts Society Inc.
Sep 6, 2021

Stuart Rabinowitz, Co-Chair Kwevin Law, Co-Chair
Long Island Regional Economic Development Council
150 Motor Parkway
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Dear Mr Law and Mr. Rabinowitz,

I am writing to encourage you and the Long Island Regional Economics Development Council to nominate Downtown Riverhead to receive Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) funding.

The Butterfly Effect Project is a nonprofit organization that empowers young girls by giving them the tools to assist in achieving emotionally stable and self confident futures, which will bring forth a generation of women who are strong, independent and knowledgeable. Our mission is to ensure that every girl in the program has a fair chance to broaden their horizons, while eliminating obstacles such as mobility, cultural differences and finances.

By many measures, Riverhead is one of the most economically distressed communities on Long Island, having suffered from years of decline and disinvestment. Past revitalization efforts have been significantly hampered by zoning and infrastructure deficiencies that limited the ability of land to be used to its highest and best use.

Despite these challenges, Riverhead is now on the cusp of transformative change. Located at the gateway to Long Island’s East End, Downtown Riverhead has been the subject of intensive community centered planning that has cleared away regulatory barriers to the creation of a vibrant, mixed-use master planned, formed-based revitalization district. The time is right for
an infusion of DRI funds that will catalyze and incentivise redevelopment into the downtown Riverhead, transforming this community into a desorab;le, affordable, vibrant neighborhood where tomorrow’s workforce will want to live, work and raise their children.

Downtown Riverhead is extremely well positioned to make the best use of DRI funding on an aggressive timeline. I am extremely hopeful that you will consider Riverhead’s proposal.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Tijuana Fulford
Executive Director