

VILLAGE OF VALLEY STREAM ROUND V DRI APPLICATION



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INCORPORATED VILLAGE OF VALLEY STREAM 123 S. Central Ave Valley Stream, NY 11580

BASIC INFORMATION

- REDC Region: Long Island
- Municipality Name: Village of Valley Stream
- Downtown Name: Valley Stream
- County Name: Nassau County
- Applicant Contact(s): David Sabatino, Deputy Village Treasurer for Development; Vincent Grasso, Trustee; Edwin Fare, Mayor.
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VISION FOR DOWNTOWN

The Incorporated Village of Valley Stream’s (“we”, “us”, “the Village” or “Valley Stream”) vision is for our downtown to be a gateway to Long Island. We believe Valley Stream is uniquely positioned to support people’s evolving preferences for housing, working, and playing, especially post-pandemic. We envision a downtown with diverse housing options which help expand our tax base and support businesses. Our downtown will be planned for flexibility in how people work, providing opportunities for people who choose to work-from-home (or their third place), balanced with businesses looking for local office space with connectivity to New York City and the rest of the world. Our downtown will be where people can gather in public or private outdoor spaces to socialize and enjoy the company of their family, friends, and neighbors. We aim to make our downtown the focal point of our Village and a place outsiders hear about and make it a priority to visit.

JUSTIFICATION

Our downtown works on a grid system created by land owner E.B. Litchfield, and architect William Olmstead around 1870. The spine of that grid is Rockaway Ave. This area is mostly comprised of a mix of one and two-story commercial buildings and side streets with small office buildings, and single and multi-family homes. The Village is one of the most culturally and economically diverse communities on Long Island, and Rockaway Ave reflects this diversity. It is home to dozens of independent businesses ranging from convenience stores, and salons to multi-ethnic restaurants. Turnover of local businesses, especially new business, is frequent and some buildings are in disrepair. There seems to be stability among staple businesses in the downtown, but challenges to improving those businesses and attracting new businesses that are different from what is already offered. The buildings along Rockaway Ave are of a variety of architectural styles, many with historical character.



Typical building layout along Rockaway Ave



In addition to the “mom and pop” stores on Rockaway Ave, there are several office buildings throughout the downtown. These offices are home to a diverse array of employers, including logistics firms attracted to Valley Stream’s proximity to John F. Kennedy International Airport (“JFK Airport”), for which New York State is spearheading a comprehensive modernization and transformation (the “JFK Redevelopment Project”).

Housing is also an important part of the downtown which expands our tax base and supports local businesses. Monica Village is an affordable senior housing development that anchors the western portion of the downtown. A 1-acre parcel owned by Valley Stream, adjacent to Monica Village, is the subject of an RFP released this year which seeks additional senior housing. Recently completed apartment developments anchor the southern and eastern portions of the downtown, but have failed to come to fruition on Rockaway Ave itself. Approved plans and an upcoming public hearing for additional downtown development in the east/west corridor connecting to the train station, indicate a high demand for housing in the downtown. These new developments augment older apartment design that form part of the downtown landscape. Further description of recently completed, and newly approved applications for housing is detailed under the section on past investments.

The downtown is supported by excellent public transportation, with three branches of the LIRR stopping at the Valley Stream train station. Few communities on Long Island are located as conveniently to Penn Station, Atlantic Terminal and JFK Airport (and, upon completion of East Side Access, Grand Central Terminal). Additionally, three NICE Bus routes service the downtown.

Running parallel (north/south) to the downtown is an outstanding corridor of parks, approximately a quarter of a mile west of Rockaway Ave and adjacent to the Valley Stream LIRR station. Residents and visitors to the downtown have outstanding access to public space and services. It is a goal of the Village to continue to enhance connectivity between this corridor of parks and the downtown.

While downtown Valley Stream is not without its challenges, our community has many great characteristics. Including all of the above, specifically accessibility to jobs and transportation, were among the factors which contributed to Valley Stream being named Money Magazine’s 2018 Best Place to Live in New York State.¹

Downtown Valley Stream is in the process of transforming from simply an employment and transportation hub, into a place where more people also want to live. Many of the elements that would make a downtown successful are already in place. However, there is a need to better connect all these components and incentivize improvements to fully achieve our vision for a thriving downtown. We need more foot traffic to survive and more incentive for new and current business owners to invest here. The Village alone has not been able to fully implement our broader vision for the downtown area. Developers and entrepreneurs looking to invest in Valley Stream have also indicated one of the biggest challenges in our downtown is assembling parcels. The DRI investment will leverage ongoing and past investments made by the Village to improve downtown, and will support new strategies and projects identified herein.

Specifically, the DRI will enhance Village funding to support walkability and pedestrian safety improvements, commissioning public art and placemaking enhancements, implementing a business assistance fund, and creating public spaces, among other proposals. These initiatives are described in more detail below in our response to transformational opportunities and readiness.

¹ <https://www.newsday.com/long-island/nassau/valley-stream-best-place-live-new-york-1.16435198>

With a well-defined and attractive downtown area, a history of past investments and a keen interest by the development community for transformational projects, significant job growth potential, and a ready, willing and supportive municipal leadership and constituency, downtown Valley Stream is the best location for the Round V DRI award.

DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION

Boundaries of the proposed DRI area

Merrick Road is the northern boundary of the downtown. South Corona Ave, the Village Green, and the area around the Valley Stream train station are the western boundary. The downtown extends south across Sunrise Highway to Roosevelt Ave and Fourth St. The eastern boundary of the downtown north of Sunrise Highway follows the West Hempstead branch of the LIRR until E. Valley Stream Blvd where it turns back to S. Grove St and north to Merrick Rd.



Aerial with Downtown boundary highlighted. Approximately 98 acres in size

Past investment, future investment potential

Downtown Valley Stream was listed as a downtown of opportunity for transit-oriented development (“TOD”) in the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council 2011 report *A New Vision for Long Island’s Economy: The Strategic Economic Development Plan for Nassau and Suffolk Counties*. The report noted Valley Stream “has a station about a mile from the Queens border and a multicultural downtown ripe for renewal.”²

² Long Island Regional Economic Development Council, “A New Vision for Long Island’s Economy: The Strategic Economic Development Plan for Nassau and Suffolk Counties” 2011. Page 32

The Village would like to see transformational change around the Valley Stream train station and has been guided by a study, “Cultivating Opportunities for Sustainable Development: Nassau County Infill Feasibility Study (the “Infill Study”), completed in 2014 by Nassau County and Parsons Brinckerhoff (now WSP), which analyzed options for preserving commuter parking while allowing for more productive use of the land around the train station.

In an initiative to build on the recommendations of the Infill Study, the Village worked with planning firms to more specifically identify downtown zoning, funding, marketing, and development opportunities. The Village acted on those recommendations in 2016 by adopting building façade and streetscape design guidelines, which, among other things, seek to promote outdoor seating and encourage business owners to renovate storefronts in line with the historical character of downtown buildings.

The Village started working with Vision Long Island (“VLI”) in late 2019 to conduct interviews and Q&A with the development community. The Village is also working with VLI to create a set of revitalization strategies with community input. Although this work was significantly slowed due to the pandemic, community outreach recently began. If Valley Stream were a recipient of the DRI award, that funding would capitalize on these past investments and help realize a better downtown.



Hawthorne Apartments – completed 90-unit apartment building

Some examples of the investment in downtown housing begins with the Hawthorne Apartments. This fully occupied 90-unit luxury apartment building lies two blocks east of Rockaway Ave. It was completed in 2014 on a former industrial site. It was the first development of apartments in the downtown in more than 30 years.

Sun Valley, a mixed-use building on the corner of Rockaway Ave and Sunrise Highway is a fully occupied 72-unit, market-rate building with a Blink Fitness gym located on the ground floor. It was completed in 2016 as part of the successful Village-led redevelopment of a long-blighted commercial parcel. This project was aided by a State grant from Empire State Development Corporation.

In 2018 the Village Board approved plans for The Parkside, a 12-unit townhouse development. Also that year the Board of Zoning Appeals approved plans for The Vantage, a 17-unit apartment building. Both buildings are now under construction and within easy walking distance of the train station and downtown.



Photo rendering of one building of The Parkside – approved 12 unit townhouse project



Photo rendering of The Vantage – approved 17-unit apartment building



Photo rendering of 54 W. Jamaica Ave - approved 47-unit apartment building

The most recently approved application for development was for the corridor between the train station and downtown. The 47-unit market rate building will also benefit the downtown with improvements to the streetscape via a community benefit agreement. Following the lead of other downtowns like Farmingdale and Rockville Centre who have developed housing between their train stations and business districts, the Village sees tremendous interest and opportunity in the Jamaica Ave and Hawthorne Ave corridor to promote revitalization and connectivity through the downtown.

The Village adopted a Complete Streets policy in 2013 and believes that stronger and safer connections to parks and recreation, schools, the train station, businesses and public services will create a sense of place that attracts a healthy mix of new housing and economic development. The Village intends to layer funding and in-kind work from community benefit agreements with developers to improve pedestrian and bicyclist conditions within the downtown.

In 2011 the Village made a significant public investment when it purchased 195 Rockaway Ave, a then-vacant downtown building that served as a municipal building from 1936 to 1955. After years as other private uses, the Village redeveloped the building into a new Village courthouse and offices for code enforcement, public safety and auxiliary police. The new courthouse opened in 2018. By making this investment, the Village aimed to beautify the long-vacant downtown landmark and increase foot traffic to support downtown businesses. Since the redevelopment has come fully online, the Village has received positive feedback from surrounding businesses.



Municipal Building, 1930s



Municipal Building, 2018 after purchase and restoration

The Village continues to build on past investments and policies. A public hearing is set for this month to consider a development application for a 35-unit mixed-use apartment building adjacent to the train station within the Jamaica/Hawthorne Ave corridor.



Photo rendering of 137-145 S. Franklin Ave – proposed 35-unit mixed-use building adjacent to train station

In addition to private economic development opportunities, the Village also actively seeks public funding to enhance connectivity to the train station and downtown. The Village submitted a Transportation Alternative Plan grant to NYSDOT this month for an expansion of off-road multi-use paths. This anticipated expansion will connect a recently completed state-funded multi-use path in the hamlet of South Valley Stream to our train station and downtown.

Recent or impending job growth



Alba Wheels Up International office building northwest corner of E. Lincoln Ave and Rockaway Ave

Downtown Valley Stream's proximity to the airport (6 miles) by car and mass transportation makes it a magnet for logistics companies looking to locate close to JFK Airport. Travelers from the Valley Stream train station can reach Jamaica Station and transfer to the AirTrain to JFK airport in approximately 10 minutes. Alba Wheels Up International, a 65 year-old logistics company, moved their headquarters to Valley Stream in 2016 after purchasing, expanding, and remodeling a building in downtown. The location

provides access to mass transportation and close proximity to restaurants and retail businesses that employees frequent on a daily basis. In fact, a new restaurant is opening directly across the street from their headquarters.

International Shoppes, a duty free retailer, chose to remain in Valley Stream and has made an estimated \$17 million investment to renovate its building, purchase adjacent properties, and build an additional office-building. International Shoppes preserved 110 jobs and added another 40 in 2015.³ As the JFK Redevelopment Project progresses, the Village expects significant further growth in Valley Stream's trade, logistics, and import/export sectors.

Regus, the world's largest provider of flexible workspace, renovated over 16,000 square feet of office space at 70 E. Sunrise Highway in 2014. One of the real estate representatives of Regus said, "South Western Nassau County was the first submarket we targeted for Regus' expansion and 70 E. Sunrise was the only property able to provide the first class office environment that the Regus brand is known for."⁴ Post-pandemic the need for flexible work space will continue to grow. The Village believes it can continue to capture a significant share of office use given our proximity to the assets of New York City and Long Island.

Employees located in these and several other large office buildings in the downtown frequent the conveniently located shops and restaurants. They are also current and potential future residents of the downtown. The Village of Valley Stream believes that more of these employees would choose to live here if more attractive housing options were available.

Quality of life

The diversity of culture represented by the businesses in downtown Valley Stream is one characteristic that enhances the livability of our business district. There is a vast array of cuisines one could enjoy on Rockaway Ave. In addition, a new independent coffeehouse opened during the pandemic. Two longstanding bars adjacent to the train station are known locally for frequent live music. Other businesses located downtown serve day-to-day needs, such as a full service grocery store, a variety and hardware store, salons, convenience stores and medical offices.

The walkability of our downtown, proximity to a major train station, convenient bus stops, centrally located parking, and the beauty of our nearby parks, attracts visitors from near and far to arrive by foot, bike, train, bus, or car. Bicycle racks at the train station and throughout the downtown, installed in 2016, encourages cyclists to discover the business district and explore a network of paths and recreational opportunities.

Located in the center of Valley Stream, just north of the downtown, 36 acre Hendrickson Park features a pool complex, playground, basketball, soccer, and tennis courts, mini-golf, handball, and 1.5-mile path and fitness circuit surrounding a beautiful pond and stream. Hendrickson Park connects to Valley Stream State Park, which features picnic-areas, wooded trails, and playgrounds. To the south, adjacent to the train station and downtown, the Village Green contains a band shell for summer

³ Newsday. "International Shoppes to Stay in Valley Stream", July 29, 2014. <https://www.newsday.com/long-island/towns/international-shoppes-to-stay-in-valley-stream-1.8918268>

⁴ Real Estate Weekly. "Regus adds 16,500 s/f space", September 17, 2014. <https://rew-online.com/regus-adds-16500-sf-space/>

concerts, open space for holiday events, a dog park, Village Hall, and our library. The Village is the process of planning a community theater in Village Hall that would complement the other features of this park and form part of a “village campus.” Edward Cahill Memorial Park, just south of the train station, features a pond, stream, and shaded green space. It is the subject of the Village’s current grant application to the Transportation Alternative Program offered by New York State Department of Transportation. This grant application is looking to complete a missing link between a recently completed multi-use trail in the hamlet of South Valley Stream and the train station/downtown. This path will provide many residents who live to the south and west a safe, attractive and efficient path to the train station and downtown. Valley Stream’s parks greatly contribute to the livability of the downtown and the community as a whole.



Aerial of Edward Cahill Memorial Park (Mill Pond Park) and surroundings. Green circles are densely populated neighborhoods in the Village of Valley Stream and South Valley Stream. Green rectangle is recently completed multi-use path. Yellow dashed lines indicate general connections planned for new multi-use path to train station and downtown. Blue dashed lines indicate Jamaica Ave/Hawthorne Ave corridor through Downtown Valley Stream.

The Village uses the phrase “greening the gray” to explain the opportunity and commitment to pull the beauty of the surrounding parks out into the community. Valley Stream is a multiple recipient of the Arbor Day Foundation’s Tree City USA designation and acts to preserve and plant trees through the Village. In 2020, Mayor Edwin Fare created the Beautification Committee made of up of community volunteers to help identify beautification projects and work with Village staff to implement them. So far a native plant garden has been completed, a community orchard is being planned, and public art projects are underway. The painted manhole cover program has created an opportunity for local artists to paint on top of manhole covers on the sidewalks of the downtown. The Beautification Committee launched this program to create opportunities for public art to entice people to visit the downtown.

Several opportunities exist to enhance the attractiveness and livability of the downtown. If awarded, the Village is interested in using a portion of the DRI investment toward the creation of a Business Assistance and Public Art Fund which would incentivize business owners to improve interior and

exterior design elements that would significantly enhance the attractiveness of the downtown. This fund would also support public art projects to create more of an attractive and engaging place people (and new businesses) want to be.

The opportunity to enhance housing availability within the downtown is also key. The Village promotes “full lifecycle housing” to provide residents with the ability to move between different housing types as their lifestyle, preferences, and finances permit. If awarded, the Village would utilize a portion of the DRI investment to catalyze development of mixed-use buildings that provide a range of housing options within the downtown. These opportunities and more are discussed further in depth under transformational opportunities and readiness.



Mixed-use development opportunity on southeast corner of E. Hawthorne and Rockaway Ave. Adjacent to municipal parking.



Mixed-use development opportunity on northwest corner of Jamaica Ave and Rockaway Ave. Opportunity to assemble multiple properties for sale.

Supportive local policies

In 2005, the Board of Trustees adopted the “CA” zoning tool, a floating zone permitted for use in commercial districts. The CA use allows for an application to be made to the Board of Trustees for the construction of multiple family dwellings outside of what the base zoning does or does not already permit. The Village’s use of CA zoning has led to the revitalization of parcels that have been underused, abandoned, or blighted. As discussed earlier, there are number of development projects that utilized this zoning to the benefit of the downtown and community. The Village seeks to build upon these successes and accelerate the growth of our downtown.

In 2013, the Village amended its zoning code to include a definition of a mixed-use building, reflecting the Village’s commitment to downtown revitalization. Subsequent amendments permitted hotels and restaurants/taverns in specific districts. The Village carefully drafted these changes to signal its commitment to the development of underutilized properties in commercial and industrial districts in and around the downtown. They include specific provisions designed to encourage full-service hotel development, and ease the path to opening restaurants.

That same year the Board of Trustees also adopted a complete streets policy. This policy seeks to include complete streets principles into the Village road program by identifying key roads and intersections for improvements. However, at a cost of \$1 million per mile for conventional road reconstruction, finding sufficient funding to maintain Village roads while also implementing traffic calming measures or pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, is a challenge. Our community is also interested in exploring “green streets” measures as both a means to improve stormwater management and beautify the downtown. As described in more detail later in the application, the Village seeks to use a portion of the DRI award toward these ideas.

Downtown Valley Stream is home to many architecturally significant buildings constructed between the 1920s and 1940s. Unfortunately, many of these buildings have been renovated over the years in ways that have obscured their original features. In 2016, the Village adopted building façade and streetscape design guidelines to encourage the renovation of business storefronts in line with their original historical character and improve lighting and business signage.

In 2019, Mayor Fare created the Community and Economic Development team. This team works with the community, property owners, and developers to bring jobs, tax revenue, grants, and revitalization to Valley Stream. Although significantly delayed by the pandemic, their work has resulted in a number of community benefit agreements which will layer private funds with public funds to achieve improvements to infrastructure, services, and facilities.

Public support

Members of the 2019 DRI Task Force and additional residents were asked to convene via zoom for this round of the DRI grant. Members provided community input with respect to the application and downtown development ideas. The task force consists of residents, business owners, and public officials. Due to the pandemic this year's public participation was not as in depth as past efforts, but still represented the strong desire for downtown revitalization and to be the recipient of the DRI award. Past DRI efforts, highlighted in our round four application, had extensive community outreach, speakers, and activities.

There is a deep commitment among local leaders and stakeholders to prepare and implement a strategic investment plan. Community members who really understand the power of investment to transform and revitalize our downtown, are committed to being involved and supportive in this process. Business owners who struggle balancing the costs of running their business with the desire to invest in improving their business are deeply committed to this process. Leaders of local religious institutions who dedicate most of their lives in our community are committed to this process because they see tremendous improvement it can bring. Local officials, who bear the brunt of the small but vocal opposition to change, and who are tasked with fulfilling the desires of our community and protecting the community's financial interest, are more ready than ever to be a part of this process.

Decades of learning, struggling, implementing, making mistakes, and achieving small wins are what has prepared Valley Stream to support, be involved, and be successful through this opportunity. Letters of support are attached at the end of this application.

Transformative opportunities and readiness

1. Business Assistance and Public Art Fund - \$600,000 – DRI Funds

This fund would incentivize renovations of the interior and/or exterior of businesses and supplement investment of new businesses into the downtown. This fund would also provide opportunities for public art installations – murals, sculpture, landscaping, interactive, etc. Creating a sense of place is incredibly important to the success of our downtown. The Valley Stream Chamber of Commerce with the Village of Valley Stream would be an appropriate entity with capacity to manage the fund.

Downtown Valley Stream is crisscrossed by three elevated LIRR lines. While these trestles are responsible for Valley Stream's exceptional rail service, they create substantial "dead" space and dark passage around the downtown. The Village would like to enhance this space through a variety of measures. For example, commissioning local artists to improve these features and turn them into a point of pride for our community.

2. Complete/Green Street – Jamaica Ave & Hawthorne Ave - \$1 million – DRI, Private, Village Funds

The Jamaica Ave and Hawthorne Ave east/west corridor is integral to the success of downtown Valley Stream. Currently the environment of this corridor is less than desirable. This corridor runs from the train station through the downtown to S. Cottage St. Complete and green streets improvements would provide pedestrian and bicyclist infrastructure, beautification, and stormwater management improvements. These improvements would enhance connectivity by providing an attractive east-west corridor, anchored by residential development on the east, access to transit, green space, recently approved residential developments on the west end, with the Rockaway Ave business district at its center.

The Village views this as an investment in the safety of all road users, a significant improvement in walkability and bikeability between the downtown, train station and surrounding areas, and an expansion (“greening the gray”) of the Village’s already impressive green space. The utilization of green street measures also recognizes a shift in thinking and planning towards how investments in our road infrastructure can also provide mitigation for an increase in significant rain events/flooding.

The Village recently secured private funds from a community benefit agreement that will enhance part of the streetscape within this corridor.

3. Downtown Parking Improvements - \$2 million – DRI & Village Funds

There a number of public parking fields in the downtown. Currently these surface parking lots provide a satisfactory amount of flexible parking for downtown visitors, employees, and residents. In anticipation of the growth our downtown and adaption of our parking needs the Village proposes to purchase 27 W. Hawthorne Ave and complete the rectangle shape of parking field five. This parcel currently interrupts the shape and efficient provision of parking. The purchase of this property would not only add surface parking spaces in the short term, but provide a location for the Village to work with the development community to construct an appropriately designed parking structure to accommodate future downtown needs.

4. Downtown Public Space - \$150,000 – DRI & Private Funds

Community input gathered as a part of this process has indicated our downtown is lacking in gathering places. Instead of removing additional private property from the downtown for this purpose, the Village proposes to utilize street space to create downtown public spaces. The first location is the east side of Rockaway Ave on E. Lincoln Ave. The public space at this location would be approximately 30’ wide (width of street) by 100’ feet long and does not interrupt access to private property. Utilizing planters, paint, and pedestrian infrastructure such as well-designed seating and lighting, the Village can create a public space where patrons of the new restaurant and employees of local offices can enjoy. Residents and visitors to the downtown can also take advantage of future programming of the space whether for holiday events, music, or other outdoor activities. Funds would only be used for purchase of infrastructure



Looking east down E. Lincoln Ave at Rockaway Ave.

The second location is along the east side Rockaway near the corner with E. Fairview Ave. The wider sidewalk and no parking regulations at this location make it ideal for a parklet. A number of designs could be built/installed that reach from the sidewalk into the street space without interfering with the flow of traffic or stormwater.



Example of parklet in Dallas. Source: Paper City Magazine

The third potential location is the east side of Rockaway Ave on E. Hawthorne Ave. The public space at this location would be similar in size and design to the first location. This location is unique because there has been interest from property owners and developers to redevelop properties on the northeast and southeast corners of this intersection.

5. “The International Downtown” Branding - \$750,000 DRI Funds

The Village seeks DRI Funds to produce print and digital materials for a branding/marketing campaign for our “International Downtown”. Similar to Freeport’s “Nautical Mile” and Farmingdale’s “Culinary Quarter”, downtown Valley Stream is proud of its international flair and seeks to market that. The Village would utilize these materials in outreach to visitors, investors, entrepreneurs, etc. focused on publicizing the current businesses within the downtown, as well as attracting new businesses that seek a downtown location in a diverse community. A successful branding/marketing package would assist in pushing back against a negative perception that has developed over time regarding the condition of downtown Valley Stream.

6. Private Acquisition for Mixed-Use Development – \$2 million – DRI & Private Funds

Several development opportunities within the downtown require assembling parcels in order to achieve the necessary density to establish a successful project for the developer and community. Developers and property owners with interest in the downtown have indicated that assembling parcels has been one of the biggest challenges to successfully delivering a project along Rockaway Ave. Currently there are numerous properties for sale in the downtown that may need additional parcels to become truly transformational. Examples of such are located at the intersection of Rockaway Ave with Jamaica Ave and Hawthorne Ave. Further exploration of the many downtown development opportunities is warranted during the planning process. The proposed cost is an estimate of the amount of support that could be provided for two development projects that qualify.

7. Daycare and Play - \$500,000 – DRI & other State funding

Downtown Valley Stream lost a children’s play center due to the pandemic. This business was a staple of our downtown for decades. The Village believes attracting new daycare and play opportunities to the downtown and/or supporting current daycare programs is important to the health of our downtown and community. The Village would welcome exploring this opportunity during the planning process facilitated by the DRI award. The proposed cost is an estimate of the amount of support that would be needed.

8. Gateway Improvements - \$3 million – DRI and other State funding

The intersection of Rockaway Ave and Sunrise Highway is a critical gateway to the downtown. Currently on the north side of this intersection less than desirable uses are present. A car wash, auto body shop, a driveway to a LIRR facility, and the LIRR trestle create a disconnect between the north and south sides of the downtown. While some design elements can improve the LIRR trestle, further exploration of the opportunity to establish more conducive uses at this location should take place during the planning process. NYSDOT and the LIRR could be partners in improving this gateway. The proposed cost is an estimate of the amount of support that would be needed to bring to implement improvements.

9. Smart Downtown Features – DRI, Private & Village funding

This opportunity may not be feasible given the other projects suggested for DRI funding, but is worth exploring during the planning process facilitated by the DRI award. A “smart” downtown will improve the quality of life and make the downtown a more desirable place for residents, visitors, and businesses by utilizing network-based technology. This proposal invests in testing newly developed technologies geared towards cities, in a suburban environment such as downtown Valley Stream. The Village believes Valley Stream can be a successful test case for these technologies in improving the downtown experience and example for other suburban downtowns to emulate. One of the smart downtown features that can be explored are interactive kiosks like LinkNYC or IKE Smart City. These kiosks provide valuable information, tools and media to users. This type of smart feature can be utilized in a number of ways for local business, government, safety, etc.

Another smart downtown feature to explore is Pebble. Developed by Sidewalk Labs, Pebble is a less intrusive parking management tool that is applied to the pavement. It provides the user parking space availability in real time via an app. Valley Stream would be able to track usage of parking spaces over time and better determine where and when parking is truly needed. This technology and the platform of information it can provide can help suburban communities move past the challenges of parking requirements and develop innovative parking management tools that work for our downtown.

While this opportunity may not ultimately be selected as something worth exploring during the planning process, we have included it to indicate that downtown planning should not only consider the current and proven methods of revitalization, but should also be evaluating the future of our downtowns. The Village is also evaluating how best to attract technology based companies. One way of doing that is literally applying the technology of the future. There is no proposed cost of this proposal since the cost depends on further exploration of viability and scale of implementation.

Administrative Capacity

The Village of Valley Stream maintains the administrative capacity to manage this initiative. Our Village administration includes a clerk’s department, building department, treasurer’s office and support staff to the Mayor and Board of Trustees. The Village’s legal representation is sufficient to assist in managing this initiative. In addition, we maintain an in-house expertise in urban planning and engineering, with credentialed experts on staff and in consultation. We have bolstered this expertise through our establishment of the Community and Economic Development team described earlier in this application. The Village routinely makes investments in fire prevention and response, as well as public safety, and has the capacity to provide the necessary public services to handle housing and job growth within the downtown. Valley Stream is the third largest Village by population in New York and operates with a \$43 million budget.

Other

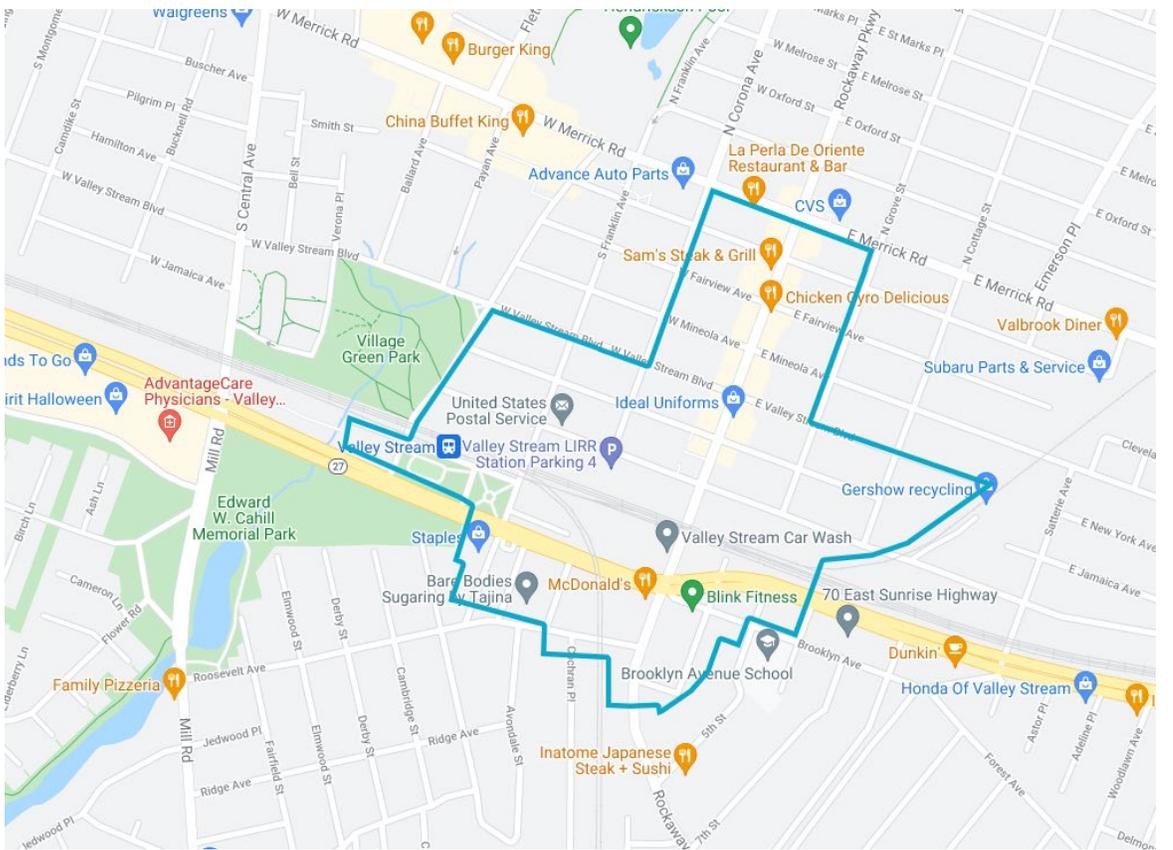
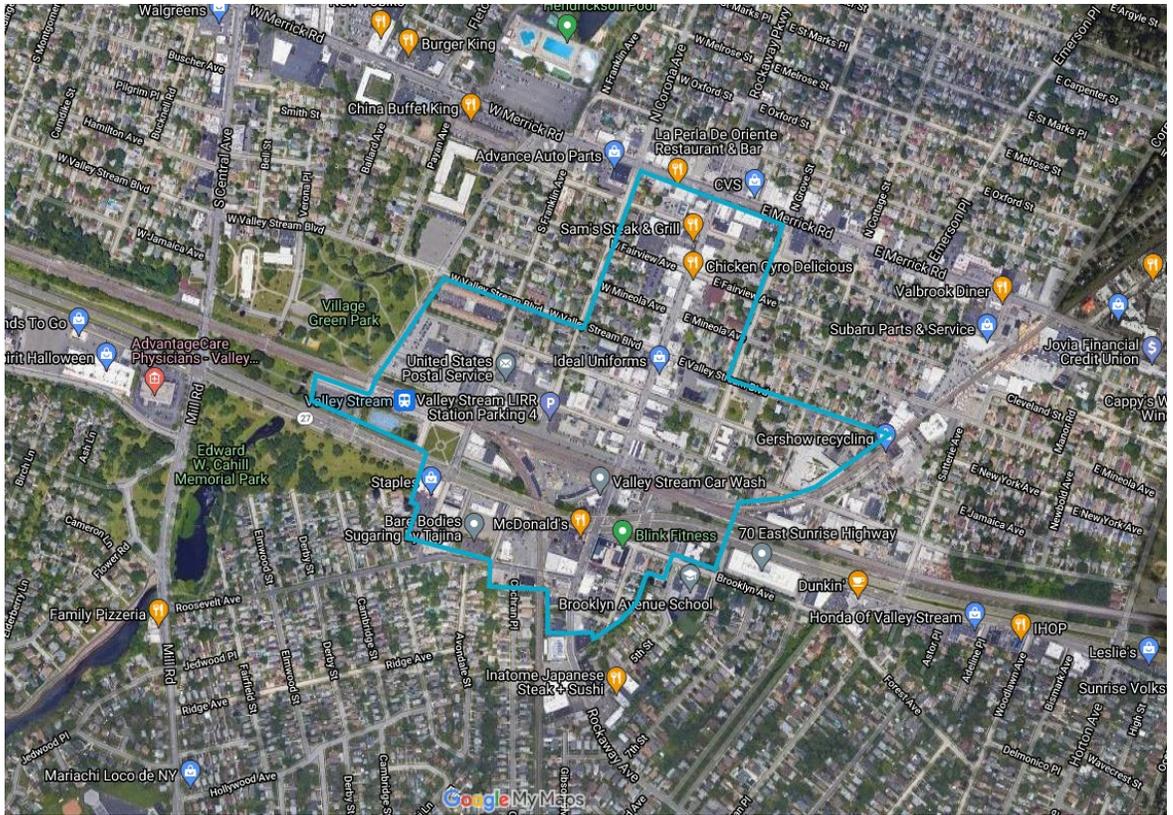
Downtown Valley Stream caught the attention of professors and students from Columbia University and City College, both of which have focused on downtown Valley Stream for studio classes in design and architecture. The Columbia University design studio brought a group of international students to Valley Stream in 2011. The group of students conducted research and proposed design projects which focused on redefining sustainability and livability in Valley Stream's suburban context. City College professor June Williamson, co-author of *Retrofitting Suburbia*, included Valley Stream as a project location in her 2015 architecture studio. The group of students made development and architecture proposals around the Valley Stream train station. The aim of their work was to design a parking structure at the train station which incorporated additional uses such as housing, retail, recreation, and transportation.

From students and professors, to professionals in the field of urban planning, Valley Stream hosted a walking tour in 2015 through our downtown. Urban planners from Long Island toured TOD success stories and discussed downtown revitalization in Valley Stream. Similarly, in 2017, the American Planning Association's annual conference took place in New York City and Valley Stream was included as a location for a mobile workshop which toured post WWII suburban communities. 50 urban planners from around the country and world toured downtown Valley Stream and learned about the Village's revitalization efforts and challenges.

Valley Stream completed construction and is operating a new transfer station. This \$6 million facility has helped reduce odor, noise and costs of disposing municipal solid waste. Valley Stream's sanitation capabilities are prepared for any new job and housing growth in Valley Stream.

Addendum: Opportunities for Electric Vehicle Charging Stations.

The Village is interested in having charging stations installed within the DRI boundary, and has public parking fields in which it the upper or lower-bound could work. Parking field 19 located east of Rockaway Ave just north of the LIRR trestle, parking field 29 located west of Rockaway Ave just north of the LIRR trestle, and parking areas south of the Valley Stream LIRR station would be ideal for the upper-bound characteristics. Parking field 4 located east of Rockaway between E. Lincoln Ave and E. Fairview Ave would be able to support the lower-bound characteristics.







NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY

ASSEMBLY MEMBER MICHAELLE SOLAGES

22nd District

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September 9, 2021

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

Dear Co-Chairs Law and Rabinowitz:

I am writing to express my support for the Village of Valley Stream's application for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). Their detailed plan will incentivize economic activity and growth for the community while providing for more modern green and pedestrian-based spaces.

With the redevelopments of Belmont Park and the JFK Airport nearby, the Village of Valley Stream is uniquely positioned to attract diverse and young working-class families. Moreover, a multi-million dollar investment into a walkable and engaging downtown will enable local mom-and-pop-based stores to keep and maintain their small businesses.

As we build back better and stronger, Long Island must prioritize its diverse and growing communities that are seeking support. That is why I strongly urge the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council to nominate the Village of Valley Stream for the New York State Downtown Revitalization Initiative.

Sincerely,

Hon. Michaele C. Solages
New York State Assemblywoman, 22nd AD

CHAIR
Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic & Asian Legislative Caucus

COMMITTEES
Health • Libraries and Education Technology • Racing and Wagering • Social Services



Valley Stream Chamber of Commerce
P.O. Box 1016
Valley Stream, New York 11582-1016
(516) 825-1741

August 11, 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

I am the current President of the Valley Stream Chamber of Commerce and I am writing in support of the application of the Incorporated Village of Valley Stream for the grant from the State of New York.

Valley Stream is a unique, vibrant and wonderful community but our downtown business district is in serious need of improvement. We have a unique challenge in that our downtown business district is much larger and longer than many other surrounding communities and we experience high vacancy rates and a desperate need for aesthetic and other improvements to have our downtown area match the vibrancy of the rest of our community and attract new businesses to the area.

In addition, the hardships in our downtown have been compounded by the pandemic. Several businesses have closed, and the Village is working tirelessly to encourage and attract new businesses to open and fill the additional vacancies.

It would be greatly appreciated if Valley Stream was awarded this grant as I know that the Village Government and the Downtown Revitalization Task Force will make substantial and strategic improvements with the grant to help our downtown business district stand out and become a destination.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Dominick Minerva
President*

NASSAU COUNTY LEGISLATURE
1550 FRANKLIN AVENUE, MINEOLA, NY 11501

C. William Gaylor III
Nassau County Legislator
6th Legislative District
516-571-6206
cwgaylor@nassaucountyny.gov



Committees:

Chair, Towns, Villages & Cities
Vice Chair, Public Works
Vice Chair, Veterans & Senior Affairs
Member, Health & Social Services

September 14th, 2021

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

Re: Valley Stream Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI)

Dear Messrs. Law and Rabinowitz:

As you are aware, economic indicators are on the rise in Nassau County. After a decline in the private sector for more than a decade, new businesses are opening in Nassau County, which is a cause for celebration. A growing Nassau County economy is the direct result of small businesses opening up and working within their respective communities offering a better quality of life for residents and other businesses alike. New business means new jobs, which in turn fosters a strong growing economy.

A critical component of our economic success depends on the revitalization of the Incorporated Village of Valley Stream's downtown district. A downtown that makes residents proud to live, shop, work, play and stay in Valley Stream, which serves as the gateway from the west to much of Long Island, is an absolute requirement for future economic growth.

Accordingly, I wholeheartedly support the application of the Valley Stream DRI and its effort to transform its downtown neighborhoods into a vibrant community.

In these economic times, the success of every business is an integral part of our overall recovery, and the revitalization of our downtowns, especially the Valley Stream downtown, would complement the shopping, recreational and housing opportunities available in the local community. As such, I urge the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council to approve the application of support the opening of this business.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "C. William Gaylor, III".

C. William Gaylor, III

CHAIRMAN
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

COMMITTEES:
CODES
CIVIL SERVICE AND PENSIONS
HEALTH
INVESTIGATIONS AND GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS
TRANSPORTATION

THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY



SENATOR TODD KAMINSKY
9th SENATE DISTRICT

ALBANY OFFICE
ROOM 307
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247
TEL: (518) 455-3401
FAX: (518) 426-6914

DISTRICT OFFICE
55 FRONT STREET, ROOM 1
ROCKVILLE CENTRE, NEW YORK 11570
TEL: (516) 766-8383
FAX: (516) 766-8011

WEBSITE
KAMINSKY.NYSENATE.GOV

E-MAIL
KAMINSKY@NYSENATE.GOV

August 16, 2021

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

Dear Messrs. Law and Rabinowitz:

I am writing to express my strong support for the Village of Valley Stream's application for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative ("DRI") for funding through the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council. This funding would support the village's ongoing revitalization and development of Downtown Valley Stream.

The Village of Valley Stream is the third largest village in the state, with three separate Long Island Rail Road stations -- Westwood, Gibson, and Valley Stream. The current application would enable the village to update planning guidelines and zoning codes to increase the amount of retail and arts space, as well as improve walkability, bikeability and public transit accessibility. The village would like to commission local artists to decorate "dead" space and dark passages throughout the downtown and continue installing bold and colorful wayfinding signage pointing visitors toward parking, municipal building, transit and parks. The village will also use the grant to implement the Complete Streets and Green Streets initiative within the downtown area. Additionally, the village is looking to install connected kiosks that display information about downtown businesses, weather, train and bus schedules, events, marketing and more. These improvements would attract new interest to the area while bolstering the Valley Stream business community.



The Village of Valley Stream has a targeted vision for their downtown area. With this grant, I have no doubt that the Village of Valley Stream will continue to act on its passion for revitalization and create an exemplary downtown area. I thank you in advance for your assistance with this matter and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "T. Kaminsky".

Todd Kaminsky
Senator, 9th District

STK/fl

*Baha'i Center of Nassau County
11 West Jamaica Avenue
Valley Stream, NY 11580*

August 12, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

As active participants in community life in the Village of Valley Stream, the individuals connected with the Baha'i Center of Nassau County are familiar with the fine qualities evident there. For example, such activities as the annual Valley Stream Community Fest, the celebrations of Martin Luther King's Birthday and Thanksgiving offered by the Religious Council, and various events designed to meet the variety of interests of the residents are enjoyed tremendously by our group. Additionally, the focus offered by community organizations on service to the community has always been of great interest to us. Particularly appreciated is the spirit of community, the spirit of appreciation of diversity, that we experience in so many of our interactions with the people, organizations, businesses, and public officials in the Village.

As a gateway village to Long Island, Valley Stream occupies an important location. At one time with a thriving, well-preserved downtown area, now the Village is much in need of revitalization. Unfortunately, this has been the case for many years. However, the residents of Valley Stream still love their community and want to bring about improvement. Of course, it is difficult to do that amidst detrimental changes caused by the deterioration of the physical environment, and so, help is needed.

It is, therefore, for all the above considerations that we are writing to add our voices to those that are requesting naming Valley Stream as a recipient of the New York State Downtown Revitalization Initiative award as it is certainly a most deserving community and one in need of assistance.

Sincerely,

Marie McNair, Administrator

Regional Baha'i Council of the Northeastern States

631-258-3571

NDI EQUITIES LLC
47-20 BELL BLVD Bayside NY 11361
T. 646.529.8229

August 16, 2021

RE: Valley Stream Downtown Revitalization

To whom it may concern:

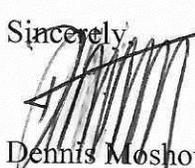
As predominantly active Queens, NY Real Estate Developer/Owner-Investor, Valley Stream caught our eye a few years back. We saw a well-groomed, lively neighborhood with unbelievable potential. After making a significant investment in the downtown district of Valley Stream (on Rockaway Avenue between Merrick and Sunrise Highway), approximately 35,000 sqft. Of retail and apartments, we began to realize that the Downtown district needs some work to bring it to par with neighboring towns.

An improved downtown area in Valley Stream would provide significant benefits to myself as a landlord, our commitment to the neighborhood, our retail tenants and residential tenants. Our Tenants are choosing Valley Stream because of the school district, the 35 minute commute to Manhattan, and the programs and activities the community creates for its residents, etc. But it does lack an updated downtown area. Residents leave Valley Stream to drive up to Lynbrook and Rockville Center, which is just a few miles away to fill that void. An updated downtown district would increase walking traffic on Rockaway Avenue, which would then assist current retail tenants and attract new prospective retail tenants. This would help fill the many empty store fronts on the Ave. which are a huge eye sore. Landlords like myself would reap the substantial benefit of this movement through successful tenancy and less of a turn-around on occupancy. Success in the downtown district will also attract developers who seek to create condominiums and apartment complexes, bringing more jobs and attractive properties to the area. For developers to come, they need to see that their tenants have places to go eat, shop and get day to day chores complete.

We are currently in the process of completing 5 additional Luxury apartments on Rockaway Avenue. Support from this initiative will benefit our project. The cost of creating such a luxury product will need to be justified in the price, and without the extra amenity of a successful downtown district, we will not be able to obtain the rent necessary to justify the cost of this project. We support the effort of the program and those seeking its success in the Valley Stream Area.

When we initially invested in the area, one thing I said was "with a small change, this area will see a BIG difference...", this program will bring that to life.

Sincerely,



Dennis Moshopoulos

Managing Member



BETHLEHEM

ASSEMBLY OF GOD

• the journey begins here •

September 10, 2021

Dear Village of Valley Stream and the Downtown Revitalization Task Force,

My name is Reverend Steven Milazzo from Bethlehem Assembly of God. Our church is located on Fairview Avenue which is on the cross street of Rockaway Avenue. I have been pastoring in the same church for over 35 years and it is clear to me that Rockaway Avenue and the downtown area of Valley Stream is critical to the future of Valley Stream. Valley Stream is the gateway in and out of Long Island. Therefore, its revitalization is imperative. I am also convinced that improving the downtown area would be extremely beneficial to our school, staff, students, parents and our congregation that ministers to over 2,000 people in the area. Revitalizing the downtown area with exceptional stores, restaurants and other businesses, as well as residential communities, will increase revenue and attract people to come and enjoy our beautiful community.

I am deeply committed to seeing our community become a great place live, worship, and enjoy. It is my hope that Valley Stream will receive the funding necessary to make this possible.

Sincerely,

Pastor Steve Milazzo
Lead Pastor

188 Rockaway Avenue, Valley Stream, NY 11580
PHONE 516.561.6150 · FAX 516.823.9450
info@bethlehemag.org · www.bethlehemag.org