



Downtown Revitalization Initiative

APPLICATION

Applications for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative will be received by the Regional Councils. Applicant responses for each section should be as complete and succinct as possible. Applications should be submitted as Word documents and must be received by the appropriate Regional Council by 4:00 PM on June 1, 2018 at the email address provided at the end of this application. Application guidance is provided in the *Downtown Revitalization Initiative Guidebook* found on the DRI website at www.ny.gov/dri.

BASIC INFORMATION

Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Region: Long Island

Municipality Name: Village of Great Neck

Downtown Name: Middle Neck Road Corridor

County Name: Nassau County

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

The Village of Great Neck, known as the "Old Village" in reference to its history as Great Neck's earliest settlement is an area that is ripe for revitalization and new development along the Middle Neck Road and East Shore Road corridors. Middle Neck Road has been the epicenter for residents on the peninsula since its settlement in the 1660's housing the first schools, church, synagogue, bank, library and stores. The Great Neck community is ready to re-build and re-establish Middle Neck Road as the key destination for locals and visitors alike. The Village of Great Neck is unique in that we have the original Great Neck "Main Street", Middle Neck Road, in addition to being home to the only waterfront commercial and mixed use district on the peninsula on East Shore Road.

The Village of Great Neck has received extensive input for the vision for the future including community outreach by the Mayor and the Board of Trustees during public listening sessions, the creation of the Great Neck Citizens Advisory Committee, local high school interns that held listening sessions with the youth of the community, as well as hiring consultants to review the Village zoning codes and potential for development. The consensus of all groups is that a focus must be placed on, attracting a wide variety of housing options to appeal to empty nesters and new families alike, beautify the streetscape and create public open space areas, invest in an electric shuttle to connect the Village to parks and the train station on the peninsula, using incentive zoning to attract desired development, build a new Village Hall and community center with programming for the arts and create a façade and signage program to aid business owners in creating a more aesthetically pleasing downtown. The ultimate goal is to attract diverse public and private amenities and activities that can serve as catalysts for increased and sustainable growth for our and all future generations. Investments that re-energize the core attract a diverse population of new residents and visitors of varying ages, incomes, and interests, which strengthens the customer base for local businesses and provides the reliable workforce needed to attract and retain employers and grow the regional economy.

JUSTIFICATION

Provide an overview of the downtown area nominated for the DRI program, highlighting the area's defining characteristics and the reasons for its selection. Explain why the downtown is ready for Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) investment, and how that investment would serve as a catalyst to bring about revitalization.

The Village of Great Neck is the largest of the nine villages located on the Great Neck Peninsula. The Village has two primary commercial corridors, Middle Neck Road and East Shore Road, in addition to a large residential population of nearly 10,000 residents. Middle Neck Road runs the entire length of the Great Neck Peninsula, acting as the primary artery for all visitors to the area.

Middle Neck Road is ready for revitalization; the Village has received a number of large scale investment projects along the corridor, including an apartment building, an assisted living, mixed use development, an arts center, as well as façade and signage renovation applications of existing sites. Developers have shown interest in making substantial investments in the community, the Village has enacted incentive overlay zoning districts to attract development, and there are vacant or underutilized/underperforming properties along the corridor ready to be developed.

An investment of DRI funding into the Village of Great Neck would allow for the advancement of projects to address the communities needs including pedestrian safety improvements, beautification of the downtown area including the median along Middle Neck Road entrances to municipal parking lots and the creation of public open space areas, creation of a façade and signage program for local business owners, the development of an electric shuttle bus route for residents, in addition to programs to be identified by the DRI Local Planning Committee. Implementation of this plan will create a downtown that would attract residents and visitors alike further aiding in the sustainability and prosperity of our local businesses.

DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION

This section should be filled out with reference to the list of desired attributes for participation in the DRI as set forth in the *Downtown Revitalization Initiative Guidebook*.

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

The Village of Great Neck's primary downtown area is along the Middle Neck Road Corridor. This includes residential buildings, the Village Green- a public park owned by the Great Neck Parks District, as well as the primary commercial district. Middle Neck Road runs north-south the length of the Village however the revitalization plan is targeting the area from Clover Drive north to Redbrook Road with an emphasis on

Piccadilly Road north to Steamboat Road. An aerial view of the area including a zoning map is included below.



Middle Neck Road and East Shore Road Corridor Study | Village of Great Neck, New York
Aerial Map of the Middle Neck Road Corridor

Source: Info. GIS Office of Information Technology Services
 © Program Office of Economic Development
 © Village of Great Neck Building Dept. (2017)



Middle Neck Road and East Shore Road Corridor Study | Village of Great Neck, New York
Zoning Map of the Middle Neck Road Corridor

Source: Info. GIS Office of Information Technology Services
 © Program Office of Economic Development
 © Village of Great Neck Building Dept. (2017)

2) Description of catchment area. Outline why the proposed DRI area, or its catchment area, is of a size sufficient to support a vibrant, year-round downtown, with consideration of whether there is a sizeable existing or increasing population within easy reach for whom this would be the primary downtown destination.

The Great Neck Peninsula is home to approximately 40,000 residents living in a 9.6 square mile area, and all can easily access the Village of Great Neck downtown area. In addition to these permanent residents the Great Neck Peninsula is home to the Merchant Marine Academy, located just beyond the Village of Great Neck's western border, which is home to 950 midshipmen during the year in addition to staff and visitors. The population in the Village has grown and is expected to continue to grow with the completion of the Avalon at Great Neck on East Shore Road and proposed residential sites along Middle Neck Road. In addition to residents of the peninsula the Village of Great Neck is easily accessible by the surrounding communities of Manhasset, Little Neck, and Roslyn increasing the catchment population over 100,000 residents. The Village has six municipal lots that provide free parking along Middle Neck Road that further increases the accessibility of visiting the downtown.

The map below has the Village's boundaries outlined and shows the potential catchment area for the DRI.



3) Past Investment, future investment potential. Describe how this DRI area will be able to capitalize on prior private and public investment, or catalyze future investments in the neighborhood and its surrounding areas.

The Village of Great Neck is well positioned to capitalize on recent public and private investments in the area which have included :

Avalon at Great Neck- Avalon Bay Communities, one of the nation’s largest residential developers, invested in developing 192 residential units of which 20% were workforce housing units, located on our Manhasset bay waterfront district on East Shore Road. This project included remediation of the property under the purview of the Department of Environmental Conservation in addition to the construction of the residential property. The building is completed and has seen rental of a substantial number of units in a short period of time. Residential development on East Shore Road is part of the Village Master Plan. The Avalon is the first step in changing the commercial nature of the corridor. The Village plans to further invest in upgrading this corridor by streetscape, landscape and opening up the waterfront esplanade for public use, and creating an electric shuttle bus route that would connect East Shore Road to Middle Neck Road.

Oxford plaza, 720 Middle Neck Road: The Lalezarian Group invested in developing a ground-up rental residential development to the Middle neck Corridor to serve the needs of the local rental community. The Project has helped support the need for additional residential units in the heart of our downtown area. The property owner has submitted a proposal for an expansion of the property.

Versailles, 260 Middle Neck Road: The Lalezarian Group invested in developing a 44 unit ground-up rental residential development to the Middle neck Corridor to serve the needs of the local rental community. The Project has helped support the need for additional residential units in the heart of our downtown area.

Façade and Signage renovations- a number of local businesses have made improvements to the façade and/or signage including, Metro florist at 526 Middle Neck Road, Great Neck Chemist at 665 Middle Neck Road, Mangia Bene at 624 Middle Neck Road

7-Eleven, 788 Middle Neck Road- Great Neck welcomed a 7-Eleven Convenience Store on Middle Neck Road. The Village worked with 7-Eleven corporate offices to create a look of the building that was in line with the feel of the Village, which deviated from traditional façade and signage plans for other locations. The business opened in November of 2014.

Marie Blachere, 550 Middle Neck Road- Marie Blachere is a French bakery that has chosen Great Neck as its first home in the United States. A newly constructed building will house the bakery including roof top dining in the heart of Middle Neck Road. Construction is underway and the anticipated opening is Fall 2018.

Essex Road Footbridge- The Village of Great Neck has committed to erecting a pedestrian footbridge that would connect Wooley’s Lane to Essex Road on the South-East portion of the Village. This footbridge will make the downtown area along Middle Neck Road more easily accessible by foot for residents living South of Wooleys Lane. The Village has hired a project manager and expects to release an RFP for the project in June 2018.

The downtown Great Neck DRI area will be able to capitalize on prior private and public investment, by incentivizing future investors to further invest in our downtown area. A map of the potential and proposed projects is included at the end of the section. The DRI area already has the following projects proposed:

Department of Public Works Site, 765 Middle Neck Road: The current underutilized Department of Public Works site is located in the heart of the DRI corridor. The property will be sold and is intended to be developed as a Mixed-Use project to include Ground Floor retail, shared office space, commercial and residential units with an open air promenade. This Project will be a catalyst for further development in the DRI area. It will help transform our downtown as a must visit destination for locals and visitors alike.

A preliminary concept and vision for this site has been submitted to the Village by an interested developer. The rendering is included below.



Assisted living Project, 705 Middle Neck Road: A proposal has been received for the redevelopment of an empty building on Middle Neck Road into an assisted living community. The Village is in need of housing to support our seniors that keeps them within our community.

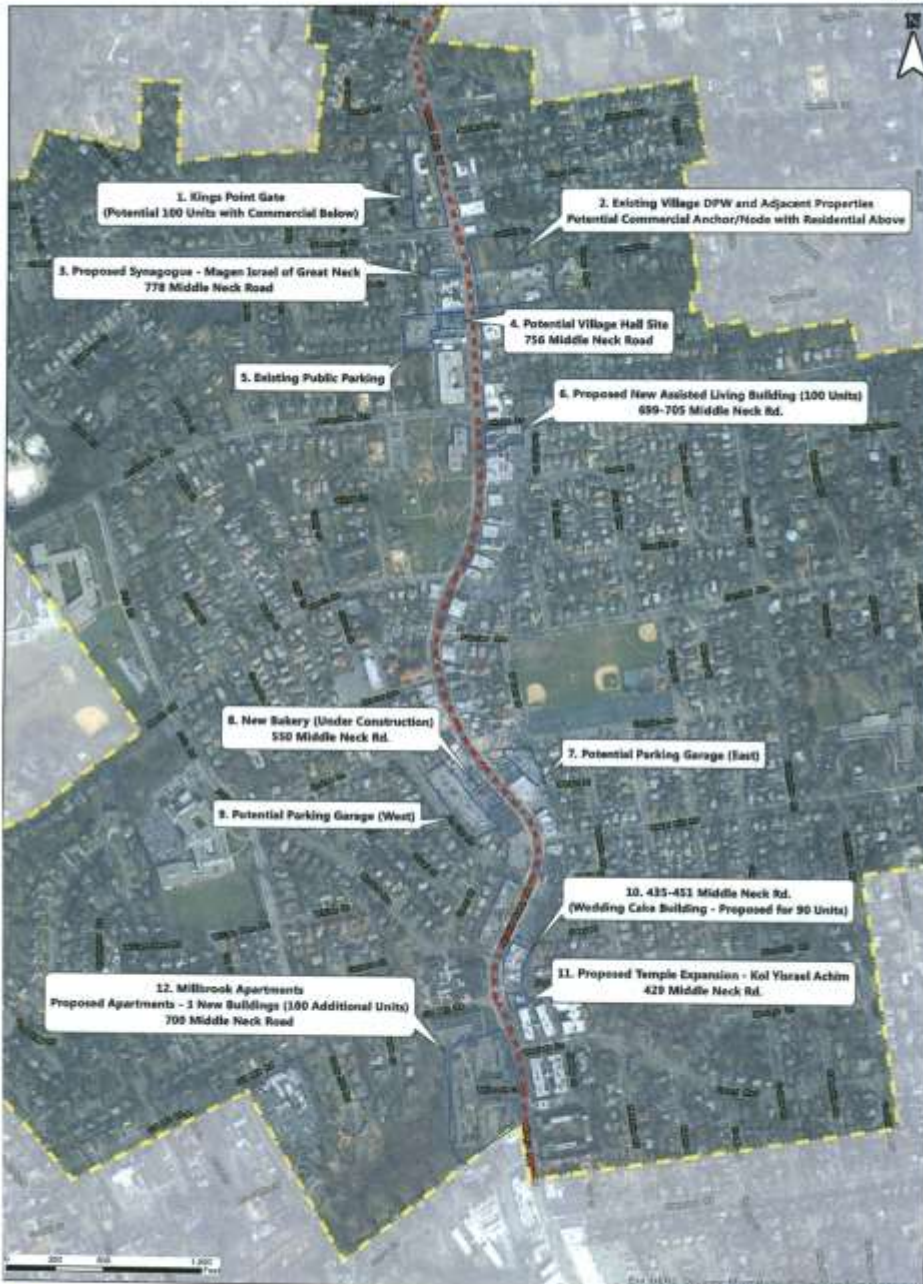
Great Neck Housing Authority, 700 Middle Neck Road: The low-income senior housing building consists of 74 apartments available to applicants who are independently living. A proposal has been made for an expansion all in keeping with the current affordable housing rates.

Middle Neck Glatt, 501 Middle Neck Road: A conceptual plan was presented to the Board of Trustees to renovate the existing store to include a restaurant area with seating for 38 people. In addition to interior renovation the owner will return to the Board with a plan for façade renovation.

Milbrook court, 240-250 Middle Neck Road: A current residential apartment complex located at 240-250 Middle Neck Road that has submitted an application currently under review by the Board of Trustees, to construct one hundred new units together with below-grade parking garages. This will result in a total of 186 residential units, 70 of which are currently rent controlled and will remain as such, at the southern tip of the downtown area.

Village Open Space Project- The Board of Trustees heard a presentation from the Village Superintendent of the Department of Public Works regarding the creation of public open space areas in the corner of two municipal parking lots on Middle Neck Road. The areas would include bike racks, picnic tables and landscaping. In addition to Village owned open spaces the Board of Trustees has made it a priority for new developments to incorporate pocket parks and user-friendly, inviting public spaces in the envisioned projects. Courtyards or Malls during the day become outdoor amphitheaters at night, supporting student and local musicians and performers. With the right public space, the right restaurants, with outdoor dining and music, the day extends into night- the life (earning power) of the Village is extended, past the time most bedroom communities are shut down for the night. This creates an entirely different dynamic in the Village.

Everfresh Supermarket, 533 and 539 Middle Neck Road- A building permit has been issued for a façade upgrade for the existing supermarket building and the creation of a vest pocket park on a parcel of land adjacent to the entrance of the municipal lot in the rear of the supermarket. The vest pocket park will include lighting, picnic tables, and landscaping. Expected completion is August 2018.



Village of Great Neck
 Middle Neck Road

Middle Neck Road Corridor Study
Village of Great Neck
 Currently Proposed and Potential Projects

DATE: 11/03/2017

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

The unemployment rate of Great Neck residents is 3.4% which is far below the national average with a median household income of \$106,639 almost double the national average of \$53,482. Great Neck and the surrounding area is home to residents who not only have the means but the desire to support a resurgence of the local downtown. In addition to current residents the anticipated developments including an assisted living, new office space, and increased mixed use developments will create new jobs and increase the daytime population of the Village In addition to making the area more attractive to visit for current residents.

- 5) Attractiveness of physical environment.** Identify the properties or characteristics that the DRI area possesses that contribute, or could contribute if enhanced, to the attractiveness and livability of the downtown for a diverse population of varying ages, income, gender identity, ability, mobility, and cultural background. Consider, for example, the presence of developable mixed-use spaces, varied housing types at different levels of affordability, walkability and bikeability, healthy and affordable food markets, and public parks and gathering spaces.

One of Great Neck's most attractive attributes is the accessibility of the Middle Neck corridor by pedestrians from all areas of the village as well as use of vehicles that can take advantage of ample free municipal parking. Middle Neck Road is home to a variety of residential properties including the Great Neck Senior Housing Authority which is a HUD funded facility, rent-controlled units at Millbrook Court and Academy Gardens, mixed use buildings with commercial on the ground level and residential above, and apartment units at Oxford Court and The Versailles. The downtown corridor is unique in that the heart of Middle Neck Road includes the Great Neck Parks District Village Green and Rose Garden which houses a gazebo and bandstand for summer concerts, a children's all-inclusive play garden, a walking track, and Veteran's Memorial. Having this large public open space area is an invaluable asset to the downtown.

There are a number of properties ripe for development on Middle Neck Road, including the Village owned property that currently houses the Department of Public Works but is intended to be sold to house a more appropriate use of the property. The Village also has plans to move Village Hall to Middle Neck Road to be centrally located in the heart of the Village.

Middle Neck Road is a cultural melting-pot with a number of ethnic dining establishments including Kosher and non-Kosher restaurants, a Kosher Supermarket and specialty marts. A plethora of religious institutions call Middle Neck Road home including a Catholic Church, An Episcopal Church, and a number of Synagogues. The Merchant Marine Academy is located just over the Village border, the downtown is accessible on foot for the midshipmen and staff alike.

- 6) Quality of Life policies.** Articulate the policies in place that increase the livability and quality of life of the downtown. Examples include the use of local land banks, modern zoning codes, comprehensive plans, complete streets plan, transit-oriented development, non-discrimination laws, age-friendly policies, and a

downtown management structure. If policies achieving this goal are not currently in place, describe the ability of the municipality to create and implement such policies.

The Village has adopted an incentive zoning plan and is in the process, with the assistance of an outside consultant, of identifying potential amendments to the Zoning code which could foster the desired residential and commercial development at viable sites while creating community benefits through the incentive zoning procedure.

The Village Board has waived permit fees associated with repairing or replacing sidewalks in both the residential and commercial areas of the village in an effort to incentive property owners to fix safety hazards. In addition, any sidewalk replacement on Middle Neck Road must be done in brick pavers in an effort to beautify the streetscape.

The Village is working with Nassau County Department of Public Works who will be repaving Middle Neck Road this year to develop a plan for the center medians, moving the street lights off the median to the sidewalk, assessing the feasibility of enlarging the sidewalk and is exploring the possibility of burying the power lines along Middle Neck Road in conjunction with that project.

- 7) Public Support.** Describe the public participation and engagement process conducted to develop the DRI application, and the support of local leaders and stakeholders for pursuing a vision of downtown revitalization. Describe the commitment among local leaders and stakeholders to preparing and implementing a strategic investment plan. Identify an initial local lead for the program that will work with outside experts to convene a DRI Local Planning Committee to oversee the plan.

The Mayor and Village Board began compiling ideas for the future of Middle Neck Road through community outreach when the administration took office in July 2015 through public listening sessions with the mayor at various local business locations along Middle Neck Road. In addition to these sessions large development projects were put on the public agenda for comment at bi-monthly Board of Trustee meetings. The Village has engaged VHB Architects and Engineers for assistance in assessing the zoning codes of the Village and identifying properties for potential development along Middle Neck Road and East Shore Road. A draft recommendation has been submitted to the Board with a final version expected June 2018.

The Mayor established the Great Neck Citizens Advisory committee to engage the community and submit a recommendation plan. The GNCAC is made of a representative cross section of members of the community from differing professional backgrounds including real estate, law, education, and finance. All have deep roots in the community having grown up here themselves or purchased homes and raised their own family here. The GNCAC has fully engaged the community in helping support our vision for revitalization. In addition to reaching out to the local community the GNCAC board has engaged Faith Hope Consolo, Chairman of Douglas Elliman (better known as “the Queen of Retail”) to help revitalize our retail offering.

- 8) Project List to Demonstrate Readiness:** Describe opportunities to build on the strengths described above by providing a list of transformative projects that will be ready for implementation with an infusion of DRI

funds within the first one to two years (depending on the scope and complexity of the project) and which may leverage DRI funding with private investment or other funds. Such projects could address economic development, transportation, housing, and community development needs. While such projects should have demonstrated public support, it is recognized that projects will ultimately be vetted by the Local Planning Committee and the State. Explain how most projects proposed for DRI funding demonstrate their readiness for implementation.

While the Village understands that specific projects funded through DRI will be determined during the local planning process, the Village has identified project concepts that can be implemented within the first one to two years of funding and have a transformative effect on the Village’s downtown. Each of the measures outlined below will contribute to the overall development of the area, an increase in residents and professionals in the area will benefit local businesses and be a catalyst for sustainable growth and development.

Façade and Signage Program- Many of the current storefronts and signs needs to be improved. A grant program may be developed in which the Village can award DRI funding to property owners in the downtown area for the purpose of renovating or rehabbing the façade and signage. The Village would maintain architectural review approval on these projects to ensure the desired aesthetic is achieved. In addition to beautifying the area it will aid the Village in creating a cohesive downtown look. The below images are an example of the goal of this program.



Streetscape and Public Open Spaces- The Village’s vision includes enhancement of the streetscape including center medians along Middle Neck Road, the entrances to municipal parking lots, and the creation of public open space areas in or around Village parking lots that will house benches, tables, and bike racks. Making Middle Neck Road a more walkable area is key to the success of the revitalization plan including determining the feasibility of widening the sidewalks, burying power lines, and moving the street lights off the center median to the sidewalk.

Relocation of Village Hall and Department of Public Works- The Department of Public Works facility is currently located in the heart of Middle Neck Road, it is an inefficient use of this parcel of land and therefore the Village will be selling the property and moving the DPW facility to a village owned parcel on East Shore Road. The sale and ultimate development of this property will be an important part of revitalizing the downtown. Village Hall is currently located in a residential section of the Village. The Village plan calls for

Village Hall to be moved to a more central location on Middle Neck Road as a symbol of the heart of the Village.

Community Center and Arts Program- A community center is envisioned as part of the DRI plan; this could be part of the New Village Hall facility or perhaps a stand-alone building. This new Community Center would serve as an organization point and public space for a Food Co-Op run by the Village or Civic Groups could arrange for meeting space. The Village plan includes an emphasis on attracting an arts program. A program such as the hugely successful “Art With a Heart” program in Baltimore, which serves to help special needs and disadvantaged children earn both self-respect and money by providing arts and crafts projects that would be both sold on premises, as well as marketed for public display at Hospitals, Schools and other public buildings. A Village Arts Center is envisioned that highlights the work of local artists and provides studio space to attract artists; all feeding a developing “arts scene” as another generator of jobs, as the art leads to galleries, cafes with art on display, and restaurants, and another great way to extend street life into evening.

Waterfront Esplanade- The East Shore Road Corridor is unique in that it is direct waterfront on Manhasset Bay, including public land fronting on the Bay, and so has incredible potential for waterfront development including, of course, public space. The possibility for a Water Taxi to Manhattan exists. Several Parcels are currently underdeveloped and the Village owns a large parcel that because of grading could house the new DPW site, below grade, with possibilities for development over it. Suggestions have included mixed-use retail/office, and a possibility of coordinating with the Great Necks Parks Department to build the Peninsula’s much needed Recreation Center.

Electric Bus Service- The most forward thinking aspect of our plan is the implementation of a free electric shuttle service throughout the village. Funded in part through this grant, other public funding and developer contributions, this bus will serve to connect the bedroom community to the commercial corridor in a way the rest of the country will want to emulate. The Shuttle would link to Municipal Parking Lots, so that people could drive and park once, and then get around the Village for any number of stores or activities without having to drive (and park) again; with the mass transit hub of the LIRR station; to parks on the Peninsula operated by the Great Neck Parks District; and to our second area of development, the otherwise isolated East Shore Road Corridor. The Shuttle service will use electric buses to serve as a model in green transportation and will bind the bedroom community to the business corridor, will create local workforce jobs, reduce parking and traffic congestion, and reduce emissions; no bus fumes for pedestrians, no carbon for the atmosphere!

- 9) Administrative Capacity.** Describe the extent of the existing local administrative capacity to manage this initiative, including potential oversight of concurrent contracts once projects are selected for award.

Mayor Pedram Bral and the four elected Trustees are supported by a team of 25 full-time employees including the three full-time members of its management staff and a part-time Building Department Superintendent who will be working on implementation of the DRI projects. The Village of Great Neck maintains a very healthy financial position; The 2018 – 2019 budget is \$9.6 million. In recent years, each annual budget has been passed under the State mandated tax cap. The estimated value of the total tax base for 2019 is \$2.5 billion.

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

The Village of Great Neck celebrates its history and recognizes that revitalization does not mean abandoning that history. As the original center of commerce and life on the peninsula, Middle Neck Road is a prime area for DRI funding. The programs outlined above coupled with the substantial interest from developers and investors who have either made formal application to the Village or made conceptual presentations about future development and strong community support show that the Village of Great Neck is ready for revitalization. The core tenant of the Village’s vision is to create a downtown which will be functional for residents and attractive to visitors. The Village’s vision of mixed use buildings with ample open public spaces and a free shuttle tying the community together, to a revitalized, re-imagined, reinvented Main Street is an opportunity to reinvent a sustainable suburban town; a new kind of suburbia; where the “Main Street” is sustained with all kinds of businesses; not reliant on one industry that might crash, and all kinds of housing options, that suit many different people at different stages of income and life.

DRI funding will be the crucial public investment needed to spur the re-energization and re-invention of the core of the Village which will help attract a diverse population of new residents and visitors of varying ages, incomes, and interests, which strengthens the customer base for local businesses and provides the reliable workforce needed to attract and retain employers and grow the regional economy.