

# **MID-HUDSON DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE TEMPLATE**

## **BASIC INFORMATION**

**Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Region:** [Click here to enter text.](#)

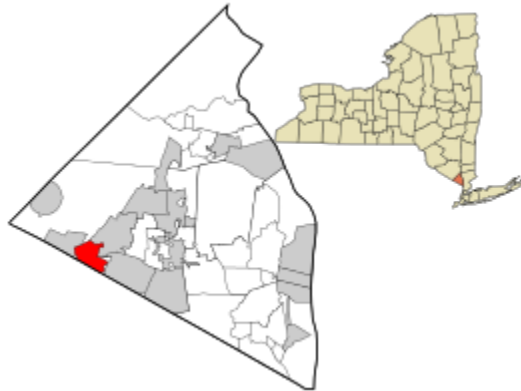
**Municipality Name:** Village of Suffern

**Downtown Name:** Suffern Business District

**County:** Rockland

Downtown Description - Provide an overview of the downtown and summarize the rationale behind nominating this downtown for a Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) award):

### **Village of Suffern, New York**



The Village of Suffern truly appreciates the opportunity to apply for this grant money.

Suffern has a land area of approximately 2.1 square miles and a population of nearly 11,000. Suffern was founded in 1796 by John Suffern and became incorporated as a Village in 1896. The Village of Suffern is located 25 miles north west of New York City and situated in a strategic location whereby it is the gateway to upstate New York for the 20+ million people that reside in the Greater NY Metropolitan Area. Within Suffern's Business District vicinity, you have the intersection of several of New York's major transportation corridors; the New York State Thruway, NY Route 59, US Route 202, US Route 17, Interstate 287 and the NJ Transit Railroad.

The Village of Suffern's Downtown Business District was detrimentally impacted since the 1970's with the opening of regional shopping malls and for the past twenty years with the increase of online web based shopping. Suffern has worked tirelessly over the years with business owners, federal, state and locally elected public officials, civic and business organizations and our residents to revitalize the downtown area. The revitalization efforts to date have been piece meal without one grand initiative being implemented due to financial constraints of pursuing such a multi-million dollar effort. If Suffern is awarded this 10 million dollars in grant money, the impact upon the Village and the entire State of New York will be positively felt not only today but for many future years and generations to come.

It needs be noted that due to Suffern's population, geographic location and current fiscal situation\*, a 10 million dollar influx of grant money could truly revitalize the entire Suffern Business District along with the Hudson Valley and Upstate NY Regions. The implementation of \$10 million in revitalization initiatives would reaffirm Suffern as the Gateway to the State of NY. It should also be noted that if the award is given to a municipality or city that has an annual budget of tens or hundreds of millions of dollars, this award would have significantly less impact overall than if you were to award the money to a community such as the Village of Suffern.

Once again, the Village of Suffern, its residents and entire business community appreciate the opportunity to apply for the Mid-Hudson Downtown Revitalization Initiative and your consideration thereof.

\*In 2014, Suffern was named by the NY State Comptroller as the most fiscally stressed Village in NY State and the County of Rockland was named as the most fiscally stressed County.

## **DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION**

This section should be filled out with reference to the criteria set forth in the DRI Guidelines. **Answers to each question are limited to one page each.**

- 1) Boundaries of the Downtown Neighborhood.** Detail the boundaries of the targeted neighborhood, keeping in mind that there is no minimum or maximum size, but that the neighborhood should be compact and well-defined. Core neighborhoods beyond a traditional downtown or central business district are eligible, if they can meet other criteria making them ripe for investment.

The designated boundaries are as follows:

The geographic area is almost rectangular in shape. (Assuming the rectangle is positioned such that the top is north, the bottom is south, the right side is east and the left side is west). The bottom portion of the rectangle and the westerly portion of the rectangle would be Suffern's border with New Jersey. The top portion would be Suffern's northern border with Hillburn, NY then proceeding westerly along US Route 202 to Memorial Drive then onto Montebello Road to Hemion Road. The easterly border of the rectangle would be Hemion Road proceeding south to Campbell Avenue to Cragmere Road and the NJ border.

This geographic area encompasses the direct downtown business district of Suffern plus a number of municipal recreational facilities (i.e. swimming pool, athletic fields, street hockey rink, lake, ponds, recreation center), a regional medical center, a pharmaceutical manufacturing campus, a worldwide research and development complex (AVON Products), several public and private schools, churches, temples and other houses of worship, a public library, senior housing, low income housing, multi-family housing and residential homes.

The defined designated area encompasses the downtown business district and the surrounding peripheral catchment area is within a reasonable walking or bicycling distance to the business district.

- 2) **Size.** Outline why the downtown, 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.

The catchment area defined represents the heart of the Village of Suffern and has been increasing in both residential population and commercial development in recent years. The catchment area includes the three main streets of the business district; Lafayette Avenue, Orange Avenue and Wayne Avenue which represents approximately 70 building for businesses and residents to occupy. The area is surrounded by several condominium and apartment complexes including, the recently built 40 plus unit Cross Street Condominiums and construction has begun on the Orange Avenue Associates Apartment Complex of 92 units. As mentioned above, the catchment area also includes numerous municipal facilities, parks and large corporate businesses (representing over 2,000 employees). Thus, all residents, company employees and visitors have easy access to the direct downtown area for shopping, dining, entertainment, recreation and their pure enjoyment.

- 3) **Past Investments & Future Investment Potential.** Describe how this downtown will be able to capitalize on prior, and catalyze future, private and public investment in the neighborhood and its surrounding areas.

The downtown area has taken advantage of numerous opportunities to improve the physical area and to drive business and individuals to the many shops, restaurants and entertainment venues Suffern has to offer. These improvements though they are much needed and appreciated, have been separated by the time of implementation and have not provided the overall impact of truly transforming the downtown area to the vibrant, economically viable, physically desirable area it can be. Such improvements include receiving grants over the years for; new street lighting, installation of imbedded crosswalks, a building façade improvement program, the development of a small park and new sidewalks and curbs. Additionally, a number of associations and groups have been active in trying to improve the downtown area over the years. These groups include include, the Chamber of Commerce, The Village of Suffern Community Foundation, the Suffern Rotary, the Fire Department, the Farmers Market, American Legion, VFW, Lions Club, Suffern Garden Club, the Police Department, the Suffern Recreation Department, etc.

Suffern has also been working with developers to bring new buildings and housing to the downtown area. Residentially, we have seen the Cross Street Condominiums built and the Orange Avenue Associates Apartment Complex has just broken ground (together this represents approximately 150 new residences for individuals and/or families). Additionally, there has been a new commercial building on Lafayette Avenue just completed.

It should also be noted that Suffern has engaged the services of several consultants over the years to analyze the Downtown Area and put together a plan for revitalization. One of the most comprehensive studies/plans that was performed was by The Saratoga Associates in 2001. A copy of this plan can be supplied and used as a jumping off point with the development consultant that will be hired when Suffern is awarded this opportunity.

- 4) **Job Growth.** Describe how recent or impending job growth within, or in close proximity to, the downtown will attract professionals to an active life in the downtown, support redevelopment, and make growth sustainable in the long-term.

The Village of Suffern has a tremendously desirable proximity to New York City, large US and worldwide corporations, and numerous Colleges and Universities for employment opportunities. All of which make Suffern a most desirable place to live and poised to become a rejuvenated, economically viable destination point for shopping, dining, entertainment and recreation.

The Village of Suffern has several major businesses located directly within the Downtown catchment area. These businesses represent thousands of employees and employment opportunities. The businesses are Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center (Bon Secours), Avon Worldwide Research and Development Facility, the Salvation Army Eastern US Training Center and Novartis Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Facility\*. Suffern also is considered a bedroom community for employment due to its locale of being in such close proximity to New York City (approximately 25 miles) and the many modes of transportation that one has to choose from within the village to get to the city; rail, bus or car. It should also be noted that Suffern which is located in Rockland County borders Westchester County and Bergen County, NJ (NJ's most populous county). Both Westchester and Bergen Counties have numerous employment opportunities with large corporations that have their US and/or World Headquarters located. Examples include: Pfizer Pharmaceutical, BMW, IBM, Nestle, KPMG and Pepsico. It should also be mentioned that Suffern's downtown is a few miles away from the campus of Rockland Community College (SUNY) and Rockland County is home to several other colleges including, Dominican College, Nyack College, St. Thomas Aquinas College and satellite campuses of Long Island University and Iona College. These colleges represent thousands of students and teaching professionals that can potentially help drive the Suffern Downtown economy.

The Village of Suffern government also works directly with county, state and federal agencies/groups (i.e. Rockland Economic Development Corporation) and elected officials to drive and maintain business within the Village.

**The Village of Suffern has also gained the support of numerous elected officials and groups to be the recipient of this 10 million dollar downtown revitalization grant.**

Examples include: State Senator David Carlucci, State Assemblywoman Ellen Jaffee, the County of Rockland, the Town of Ramapo, the Rockland Economic Development Corporation, the Rockland Industrial Development Agency, the Suffern Chamber of Commerce, The Village of Suffern Community Foundation and many neighboring municipalities.

\*Novartis has recently announced it is shutting down it's Suffern facility and it is currently for sale.

- 5) Attractiveness of the Downtown.** Identify the properties or characteristics the downtown possesses that contribute or could contribute, if enhanced, to the attractiveness and livability of the downtown. Consider, for example, the presence of developable mixed-use spaces, housing at different levels of affordability and type, healthy and affordable food markets, walkability and bikeability, and public parks and gathering spaces.

The Village of Suffern's primary Downtown Business District (Lafayette Avenue, Orange Avenue and Wayne Avenue) is comprised of approximately 70 buildings. A number of these buildings are two stories and are over 100 years old. The bottom floor is a commercial business space and apartments are on the second floor. This type of structure creates a downtown environment whereby many individuals and families can call their front yard the village's main business district and is a place where they both live and work.

As noted earlier, two significant multi-unit residential structures (approximately 150 units in total) have/are being built within the downtown area. Having this many new units being built with a small community like Suffern will help drive the demand and need for a more vibrant downtown and increase the economic growth of the area.

Suffern is known for having many restaurants to dine at. Ranging from pizza parlors to fine dining, American cuisine to multi-cultural ethnic food choices, there is a restaurant for everyone's taste and desire.

It needs to be pointed out that in the main business district is the Suffern Movie Theatre. The theatre is one of the only remaining one screen movie theatres still operating in the state. This historical 1920's style landmark movie theatre has been beautifully restored, has a pipe organ played during weekend showings and is a must see for anyone visiting the Village of Suffern. It is truly a memorable and rewarding experience to watch a movie within this theatre then to enjoy a meal at one of the many restaurants located within the Downtown district.

Suffern is truly the gateway to the Hudson Valley and upstate New York. Within Suffern's Business District vicinity, you have the intersection of several of New York's major transportation corridors; the New York State Thruway, NY Route 59, US Route 202, US Route 17, Interstate 287 and the NJ Transit Railroad. These thoroughfares make Suffern a natural stopping point for those traveling into and beyond the region and gives Suffern residents easy accessibility for employment and business opportunities in other areas within the greater NY Metropolitan area.

The Suffern downtown catchment area encompasses the direct downtown business district plus a number of municipal recreational facilities (i.e. swimming pool, athletic fields, street hockey rink, lake, ponds, recreation center), a regional medical center, a pharmaceutical manufacturing campus, a worldwide research and development complex, several public and private schools, churches, temples and other houses of worship, a public library, senior housing, low income housing, multi-family housing and residential homes. Thus, the downtown business district and the surrounding peripheral catchment area is within a reasonable walking or bicycling distance to all residents, local employees and visitors for shopping, dining, entertainment, recreation and their pure enjoyment.

- 6) Policies to Enhance Quality of Life.** 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, complete streets plans, or transit-oriented development. If policies achieving this goal are not currently in place, describe the ability of the municipality to create and implement such policies.

The Village of Suffern encourages smart commercial development, business operation and residential living within the Downtown catchment area. This is achieved through the rigorous maintenance of current building and zoning codes and the enforcement thereof through the Village Board, Suffern Code Enforcer, the Village Attorney and business owner and citizen input.

The Village of Suffern works and coordinates with local, state and federal officials and organizations to drive business into the area and to keep current businesses in place. This effort in many situations is a well-coordinated, collaborative and strategically planned. For example. We will have our State Senator, State Assemblywoman, county and state economic development groups and village residents working together for one common cause.

Over the years, Suffern has engaged the services of several consultants to analyze the Downtown Area and put together a plan for revitalization. One of the most comprehensive studies/plans that was performed was by The Saratoga Associates in 2001. A copy of this plan can be supplied and used as a jumping off point with the development consultant that will be hired when Suffern is awarded this opportunity.

- 7) Local Support.** Set forth the local and community support that exists for the revitalization of this downtown and the commitment among local leaders and stakeholders to building and implementing a strategic investment plan. Identify an initial local lead for the program that will work with outside experts to convene a local DRI Planning Committee to oversee the plan

The Suffern Village Board, the Suffern business community and Suffern residents are in full support of the Village receiving this 10 million dollar grant.

The Village has gained the additional support of numerous elected officials and groups. Examples include: State Senator David Carlucci, State Assemblywoman Ellen Jaffee, the County of Rockland, the Town of Ramapo, the Rockland Economic Development Corporation, the Rockland Industrial Development Agency, the Suffern Chamber of Commerce, The Village of Suffern Community Foundation and many neighboring municipalities.

Upon being awarded the grant, the Village of Suffern's Mayor will appoint an individual to head a Downtown Revitalization Team made up of Suffern residents and business owners. The team leader (Chairperson) will be the initial point-of-contact for the implementation and oversight of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative and report directly to the Mayor and Board of Trustees.

**8) Other.** Provide any other information that informed the nomination of this downtown for a DRI award.

The Village of Suffern truly appreciates the opportunity to apply for this grant money.

Once again, If Suffern is awarded this 10 million dollars in grant money, the impact upon the Village and the entire State of New York will be positively felt not only today but for many future years and generations to come.

Due to Suffern's population, geographic location and current fiscal situation\*, a 10 million dollar influx of grant money could truly revitalize the entire Suffern Business District along with the Hudson Valley and Upstate NY Regions. The implementation of \$10 million in revitalization initiatives would reaffirm Suffern as the Gateway to the State of NY. It should also be noted that if the award is given to a municipality or city that has an annual budget of tens or hundreds of millions of dollars, this award would have significantly less impact overall than if you were to award the money to a community such as the Village of Suffern.

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