

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE – LIREDC

Due on Friday, May 20, 2016 to LIREDC@esd.ny.gov

BASIC INFORMATION

Municipality Name: Town of Babylon

Downtown Name: East Farmingdale

County: Suffolk

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

Focused investments in downtown East Farmingdale can create the stable conditions needed for regional job growth by attracting an emerging labor force to nearby high-paying careers in the tech and bio-tech industries. Centered on Route 110, Long Island's most important economic arterial and jobs center, East Farmingdale has the ability to act as the unifying point where the east-west LIRR Main Line and a new, first-on-Long-Island north-south Bus Rapid Transit System meet in a vibrant hub of activity, unlocking the potential of the entire 110 Corridor. A mixed-use TOD centered around the reopened Republic/East Farmingdale Train Station has broad community, agency and stakeholder support, and site planning work is underway by the Town .

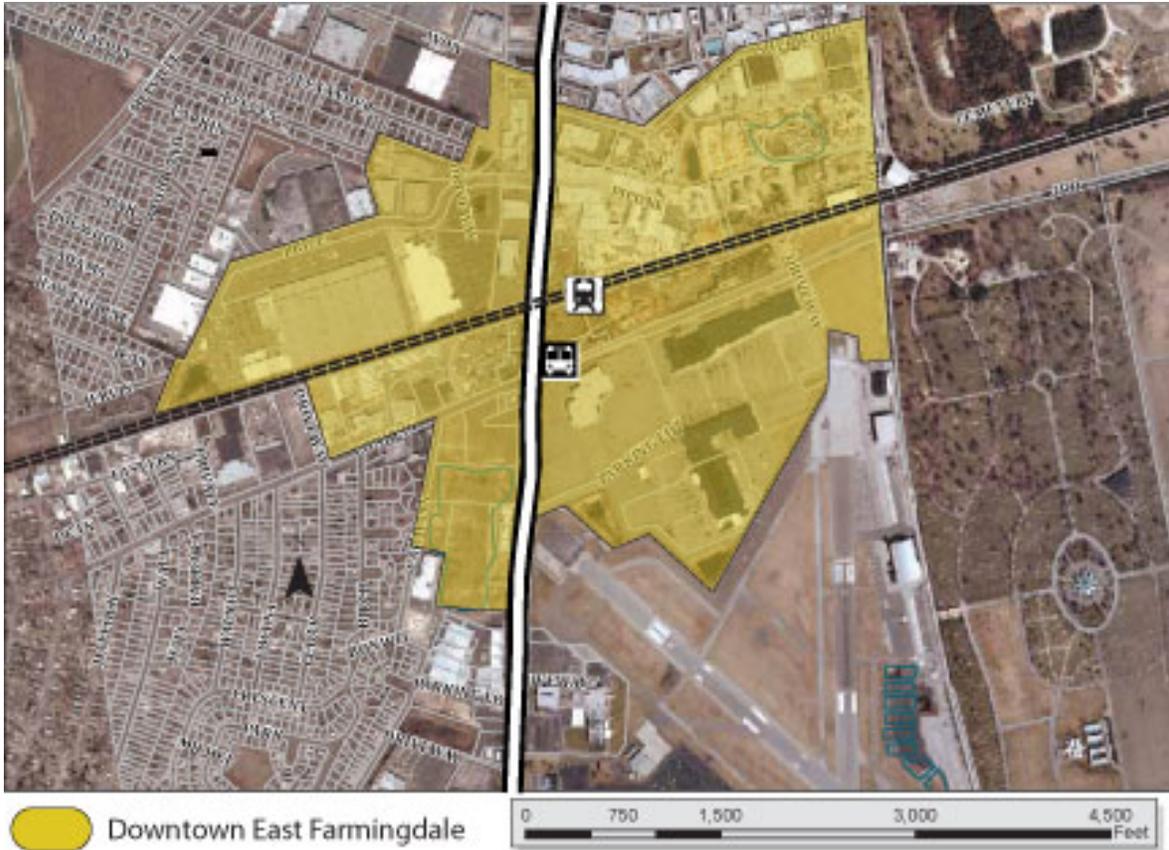
DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION

This section should be filled out with reference to the criteria set forth in the DRI Guidelines.

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 East Farmingdale downtown extends between 1/4 and 1/2-mile in each direction from the Route 110 and Conklin Street intersection. It is bounded by New Highway on the east, Cedar Avenue on the west, the entrance to the Airport Plaza shopping center on the south, and Sherwood Avenue on the north.

Attach color map clearly identifying areas within the defined downtown.



- 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. Describe how investments in your downtown could positively impact surrounding communities.

Although East Farmingdale has a small residential population of just under 6,400, the catchment area is significantly larger due to its central location along a corridor of communities and jobs. The roads passing directly through downtown East Farmingdale, Route 110 and Route 24 (Conklin Street), carry an average of 85,000 motor vehicles daily. Over 30,000 riders pass the site daily on the LIRR, which connects East Farmingdale to other major developments, including the Ronkonkoma Hub and Wyandanch Rising. While much of this traffic currently moves through the area, it may be assumed that the advent of the TOD, the BRT and LIRR improvements to downtown East Farmingdale will make it as much a destination as a transportation hub.

- 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.

East Farmingdale is poised to benefit from the type of investments that have yielded enormous returns for places like University Circle in Cleveland, where a \$200 million BRT helped generate over

\$5.8 billion in private investment. The opportunities available to East Farmingdale are unmatched on Long Island - a university, an airport, three train lines, major retail, and Class A office space are all assets around which to grow. Previous investments by the Town, FTA, and DOT in site and BRT planning, have laid the groundwork for reinvestment. The MTA/LIRR has recognized East Farmingdale's potential, and has included \$5 million in its 2015-2019 Capital Budget for Republic Station, in addition to its Double and Third Track investments.

Leveraged Resources: Public \$5,600,000.00 Private \$0.00

Prior NYS Funding/REDC Funding: Amount \$700,000.00

Please identify use(s) of prior funding BRT planning; development due diligence; urban renewal planning; site design and form-based code

- 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.

With over 150,000 jobs, the Route 110 Corridor is the undisputed economic engine of Long Island. Many of these jobs are found in the major corporate headquarters of Canon, Nikon, Bank of America and Adecco, offering promising career opportunities for the regional workforce. However, these employers are at risk of losing the region's talented potential new employees to areas with more progressive land use patterns and robust transit substructures, as this demographic group increasingly embraces mass transit and alternative modes of transportation over navigating long commutes by car. Investments in downtown East Farmingdale will create the conditions for the more desirable live-work patterns.

- 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.

A revitalized downtown East Farmingdale will be centered on the crossroads of new transit, commerce and modern housing, updating the definition and role of the traditional Main Street. The new downtown transportation hub and mixed-use development will capture the energy of a main street as a place for people to gather, engage and share in civic identity. The former industrial land uses will become planted public spaces, stores with higher order goods, affordable and attractive housing and a world class transportation hub. The TOD surrounding East Farmingdale will develop with the BRT and LIRR stations, creating parallel reflections of positive new growth and meaning whose importance can be easily interpreted by everyone.

- 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 Town of Babylon is a leader in promoting transit-oriented development, walkability, and smart growth. In 2004, The Town created the Office of Downtown Revitalization, comprising full-time staff dedicated exclusively to developing and implementing plans for transit-oriented development and

downtown improvements, which include the Wyandanch Rising initiative and the recent rezoning of Downtown Copiague. In 2010, the Town adopted a Complete Streets Policy. The Town's Route 110 BRT study analyzed alternative modes of travel in order to reduce congestion, air pollution, and the stress and time in commuting, while improving the quality of life of all people on this roadway. The Town is rezoning East Farmingdale to support downtown growth.

- 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 East Farmingdale Downtown Center plan is firmly rooted in a community-based vision that dates to 2002, when civic leaders in the area called for the reopening of the Republic Train Station and the development of a mixed-use traditional downtown area surrounding this transit stop. In 2008, the Town's Office of Downtown Revitalization (ODR) led an extensive community visioning effort that included several community meetings, walking tours, best practice workshops, and a community design event, where residents illustrated their concepts for a more vibrant and attractive East Farmingdale. The community has continued to meet to regularly to affirm this vision. The ODR will work with outside experts to engage a Planning Committee.

- 8) Other.** Provide any other information you feel would be relevant to help this committee to make an informed decision to nominate this downtown for a DRI award.

A DRI award for East Farmingdale is the difference between creating of one of the most significant new downtowns on Long Island and maintaining the status quo, in which development near the LIRR is not achieving the highest and best use. The investment in a TOD at this unique location can make this otherwise non-descript area flourish, developing a cohesive sense of community to finally bring some "there, there". With strong architectural style, like Wyandanch Rising, this TOD could be an indicator of change, which in turn would encourage additional outside investment and interest in this area. There is no other location on Long Island with the potential for such positive change for so many people than downtown East Farmingdale.

- 9) Identify.** Current infrastructure challenges or other impediments facing downtown development initiatives.

Route 110's future as an economic mega-hub is by no means a certainty; already the once-innovative spatial arrangements that led Joel Garreau to include Route 110's Melville in his original list of Edge Cities are showing their obsolescence. Automobile-based development standards have created commutes that push the limits of driver tolerance. At the same time, Route 110 regularly tops the list of most dangerous roads in the region for pedestrians and motorists. Creating a rapid transit system that can carry passengers to all parts of this corridor will be paramount to the future success of the region. East Farmingdale stands out as the nexus of the rapid transit/downtown system, with intermodal possibilities connecting to the LIRR.

- 10) Describe.** How an existing downtown master plan (if it exists) could coordinate and optimize available resources through a revitalization initiative.

As in Wyandanch, the existence of a master plan and form-based zoning (currently being developed for East Farmingdale) will signal commitment and provide certainty from the Town of Babylon to potential developers. Given the multiple stakeholders and landowners in the area, master planning will allow the Town to identify development opportunities that uplift the area as a whole, contributing to the cohesive community planning associated with successful TODs. In turn, the new downtown master plan for East Farmingdale will assist all stakeholders in better understanding the viability of potential proposals to implement revitalization initiatives, providing greater security in new investments and more efficient use of all available resources.

Town of Babylon

200 E. Sunrise Highway
Lindenhurst, New York 11757
(631) 957-3072



RICH SCHAFFER
SUPERVISOR

May 21, 2016

Long Island Regional Economic Development Council
150 Motor Parkway
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Co-Chairs Rabinowitz and Law:

I am happy to support this application for East Farmingdale under Governor Cuomo's Downtown Revitalization Initiative.

As you may be aware, the Town of Babylon has led an extensive community visioning process for East Farmingdale, dating back to original calls by community leaders and civic groups to reopen the shuttered Republic Train Station and develop a new downtown center at that location. Since that time, the residents of East Farmingdale have participated in walking tours, best practice workshops, community design charrettes, and public input meetings to help guide the vision for the future of East Farmingdale and rapid transit improvements for Route 110.

Downtown East Farmingdale will offer attractive housing, retail and entertainment opportunities, not only for the young workers that Long Island has struggled to retain in recent years, but also for these workers' parents, who equally value the proximity to amenities and convenience of a downtown lifestyle. Furthermore, Downtown East Farmingdale will create the necessary conditions for a strong intermodal hub between the Long Island Rail Road, existing Suffolk County Transit bus service, and planned north-south rapid transit that will transform mobility on the 110 Corridor, our region's most important economic arterial.

Once again, I am pleased to offer this application for consideration by the Regional Council. Our staff here at the Town is dedicated to fulfilling the promise of East Farmingdale, and is actively working to assemble a team to develop a master site design and form-based code for this area. Investments by New York State under the Downtown Revitalization Initiative will help us implement a unique and transformative vision.

Sincerely,

Rich Schaffer
Supervisor
Town of Babylon



May 17, 2016

Long Island Regional Economic Development Council
150 Motor Parkway
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Co-Chairs Rabinowitz and Law:

It gives me great pleasure to express my support for the Town of Babylon's nomination of East Farmingdale for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative.

This area has been the focus of intensive, community-based planning efforts over multiple years, and has been supported in past CFA rounds to move these ideas from the conceptual phase to an implementable form-based code. The Town has hired consultants to begin the collection of environmental data in this area, and will soon go into contract for site design and preparation of this new zoning code. These are the first steps in realizing the opportunities East Farmingdale presents as a game changer in 21st Century transit-oriented design and development.

This project will serve as a model for transit-oriented development, leveraging enhanced commuter railroad service and new bus rapid transit service, paired with a mix of new land uses, to create a central hub of economic and community activity. Once completed, this project has the potential to significantly reduce traffic congestion both locally and regionally, through the creation of faster, more efficient transportation options.

The revitalization of East Farmingdale, focusing on the area surrounding Route 110 and Conklin Street, will tie together the planned east-west rail capacity enhancements to the Long Island Rail Road with the north-south improvements in the form of a new bus rapid transit system, furthering the efforts of the County Executive Bellone's *Connect Long Island* plan. The East Farmingdale revitalization will benefit from improvements underway along the LIRR's Main Line, including a full second track between Farmingdale and Ronkonkoma and the LIRR Expansion Project, which will provide a third track between Floral Park and Hicksville. This will be enhanced by the future bus rapid transit system along Route 110, coupled with first class residential, retail and commercial uses, which will make East Farmingdale an attractive alternative for employers and potential new residents.

Once again, I wholeheartedly and strongly support the application of the Town of Babylon for this grant program. Please contact my office if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Elisa C. Picca".

Elisa C. Picca
Executive Vice President



KIMBERLY JEAN-PIERRE
Assemblywoman 11th District
Suffolk County

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

COMMITTEES
Banks
Economic Development, Job Creation,
Commerce and Industry
Local Governments
Mental Health and
Developmental Disabilities
Transportation
Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian
Legislative Caucus

May 13, 2016

Long Island Regional Economic Development Council
150 Motor Parkway
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Co-Chairs Rabinowitz and Law:

It gives me great pleasure to express my support for the Town of Babylon's nomination of East Farmingdale for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative.

This area has been the focus of intensive, community-based planning efforts over multiple years, and has been supported in past CFA rounds to move these ideas from the conceptual phase to an implementable form-based code. The Town has hired consultants to begin the collection of environmental data in this area, and will soon go into contract for site design and preparation of this new zoning code. These are the first steps in realizing the opportunities East Farmingdale presents as a game changer in 21st Century transit-oriented design and development.

This project will serve as a model for transit-oriented development, combining new rail and bus rapid transit with a mix of new land uses to create a central hub of economic and community activity. Once completed, this project has the potential to significantly reduce traffic congestion both locally and regionally, through the creation of faster, more efficient transportation options.

The revitalization of East Farmingdale, focusing on the area surrounding Route 110 and Conklin Street, will tie together the planned east-west rail capacity enhancements to the Long Island Rail Road with the north-south improvements to the transit system, to further the efforts of the County Executive Bellone's *Connect Long Island* plan. The second and third track rail enhancements and the bus rapid transit system along Route 110, coupled with first class residential, retail and commercial uses, will make East Farmingdale an attractive alternative for employers and potential new residents.

Once again, I wholeheartedly and strongly support the application of the Town of Babylon for this grant program. Please contact my office if you have any questions or concerns.

Warmest Regards,

Kimberly Jean-Pierre
Assemblywoman
11th District

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE



DuWayne Gregory, Presiding Officer

May 18, 2016

Long Island Regional Economic Development Council
Attn: Co-Chairs Rabinowitz and Law
150 Motor Parkway
Hauppauge, New York 11788

Dear Mr. Rabinowitz and Mr. Law:

I am writing in support of the Town of Babylon's nomination of East Farmingdale for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative.

The Town of Babylon has demonstrated a proven ability to envision, plan and execute downtown revitalization initiatives. The East Farmingdale area has been the focus of intensive, community-based planning efforts over multiple years, and has been supported in past CFA rounds to move these ideas from the conceptual phase to an implementable form-based code. The Town has hired consultants to begin the collection of environmental data in this area, and will soon go into contract for site design and preparation of this new zoning code. These are the first steps in realizing the opportunities East Farmingdale presents as for transit-oriented design and development.

This project will serve as a model for transit-oriented development, combining new rail and bus rapid transit with a mix of new land uses to create a central hub of economic and community activity. Once completed, this project has the potential to significantly reduce local and regional traffic congestion through the creation of faster, more efficient transportation options.

The revitalization of East Farmingdale, with a focus on the area surrounding Route 110 and Conklin Street, will tie together the planned east-west rail capacity enhancements to the Long Island Rail Road with north-south improvements to the transit system. Furthermore, the rail enhancements and the bus rapid transit system along Route 110, coupled with first class residential, retail and commercial uses, will make East Farmingdale an attractive alternative for employers and potential new residents.

Once again, I fully support the Town of Babylon's application for this grant program. Please do not hesitate to contact my office if you have any questions or concerns.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DuWayne Gregory". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

DuWayne Gregory
Presiding Officer
Suffolk County Legislature

DG:cm