

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE – LIREDC

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

BASIC INFORMATION

Municipality Name: Town of Babylon

Downtown Name: Wyandanch Village South

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):

Wyandanch Village is transforming one of the region's most economically distressed areas into a national model for walkable TOD and community based planning. The Core Area consists of five Strategic Development Sites (SDS) that encompass the \$625M TOD. Site A has nearly completed its first phase of development: 2 mixed-use residential buildings, a public plaza and MTA parking garage, and the design of a build-to-suit office building. As Site A completes, it is critical to begin the redevelopment of Sites B, C, F and G in order to complete the revitalization of Wyandanch. These SDS will help create the traditional downtown feel that the Wyandanch community has envisioned for over 15 years.

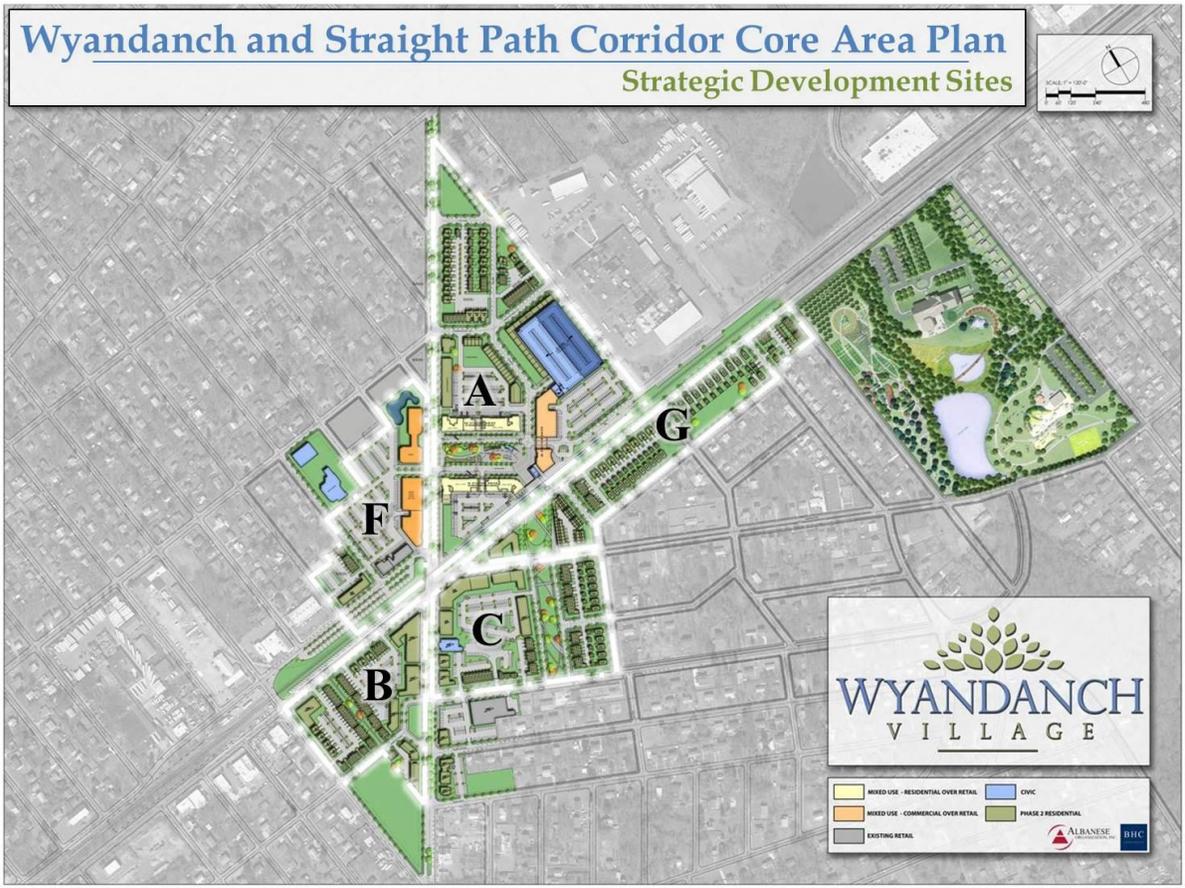
DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION

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.

Historically one of the most economically distressed communities on LI, Wyandanch, a 4.4 square-mile hamlet in the Town of Babylon in Suffolk County, NY, is 35 miles east of Manhattan less than an hour from Penn Station on the LIRR's Main Line. Wyandanch is bounded by Wheatley Heights, Dix Hills, and Melville to the north, the Carlls River to the east, West Babylon on the south, and Republic Airport to the west. The four remaining strategic development sites within the Village consist of approx 28 acres of municipally-owned land bounded by Washington Ave to the north, Elk St and Geiger Park to the east, Irving Ave to the south, and 18th St to the west.

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.

Wyandanch Village will be a walkable downtown, accessible by the LIRR and 2 major bus lines connecting the 91K HHs that live within 5 miles of downtown. Wyandanch's LIRR station is utilized by 1,500 daily commuters from nearby communities such as Wheatley Heights and Dix Hills, bringing much needed commerce to this underserved area. An additional 30,000 commuters pass thru daily. This will be the area's first, traditional village center that will serve Wyandanch and the surrounding suburban communities that lack traditional "Main Streets" or downtowns. The addition of 1,200 residential units and 400,000 SF of office, retail and cultural space will create a 24-hour active destination for nearby residents and commuters.

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 Town acquired the land, invested in infrastructure, and approved the planning needed to spur the redevelopment of the Core Area. Public & private investments will create over 1,200 affordable

and market rate residential units and over 400K SF of office and retail space. In Site A, 177 units of affordable and market rate residential, 35K SF of retail, a 920-space MTA/LIRR public parking garage, and a public plaza have been completed. The private sector will invest over \$500M in developing the entire Core Area while the public sector's contributions to key infrastructure have been and continue to be critical.

Leveraged Resources: Public \$135,000,000.00 Private
\$500,000,000.00

Prior NYS Funding/REDC Funding: Amount \$35,000,000.00

Please identify use(s) of prior funding Env remed.; infrastructure; MTA/LIRR public parking garage, public park and affordable housing.

- 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.

Building C (20 Station Dr) will be a commercial office building at the head of the public plaza in Site A, completing the first phase of development. This Class A office building will provide a build-to-suit opportunity for at least 110K SF and generate as many as 1,000 office employees that could commute via public transit. 20 Station Dr received Startup NY designation through SCCC, incentivizing companies that align with the SCCC's Campus Plan to locate in this new downtown. It is anticipated that future job growth opportunities would include a job-placement program between the Community Resource Center and StartUp NY-approved companies in 20 Station Dr and over 250K SF of comm space for job-generating uses in the 4 remaining SDS.

- 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.

Site A includes a beautifully designed public plaza surrounded by two world-class mixed-use buildings creating the start of a walkable downtown. Connected to the public plaza will be a link to the future South Lawn and Promenade via an elevated pedestrian bridge over the LIRR tracks. From there, hiking and biking trails will link a new municipally-owned botanical garden at Geiger Park (currently under const) to NYS Park HQ at Belmont Lake State Park, connecting to existing greenways to Babylon Village and the South Shore resulting in a new regional trail network. The four remaining SBS are ready for development, and may include mixed-uses, public spaces, and a range of housing options in the Core Area.

- 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.

Community revitalization efforts extend well beyond the physical structure of the project to enhance human capital and promote orderly development, including: 1) Starting in 2009 Wyandanch Community Resource Center began offering high school-equivalency programs, job

training and placement services, credit and housing counseling, and small business development counseling; 2) Housing Trust funds for down payment assistance to enable renters to purchase homes; 3) Community-based intervention and policing strategy which has reduced crime by 50% since groundbreaking of Site A; 4) Adoption of an award-winning Form-Based Code, the first in NYS; 5) The Wyandanch Community Implementation Committee; and 6) The Suffolk County Landbank Corporation.

- 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.

Federal, state and local elected officials as well as numerous public and private organizations have contributed to overall success of Wyandanch Village including, but not limited to: the Town of Babylon, Suffolk County, New York State, the LIREDC, ESD, NYS DOS, Sustainable Long Island, LIPA, Tri-State Transportation Campaign, LIRR/MTA, US Green Building Council, BofA, Citibank, Small Business Development Center, LIHP, CDC of LI, Long Island Music Hall of Fame, the Albanese Organization, the Wyandanch Community Implementation Committee, NY Community Bank, US DOT, HUD, NYS DOT, and Wyandanch Weed & Seed. The local lead will be Suffolk County/Town of Babylon.

- 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.

Through strategic land acquisition, strong local leadership, and community engagement, Wyandanch Village will be the first new downtown in Suffolk resulting from a robust community-based planning process, starting with the work completed thus far in Site A of this multi-phase project. In underserved and socio-economically challenged communities like Wyandanch, follow-through on community planning initiatives is critical. Wyandanch has been designated by LIREDC as the region's only "Opportunity Area" and its success will serve as a critical model for redevelopment in other diverse, distressed communities in our region. As we work towards creating an innovation economy, we must make sure all communities, such as Wyandanch, have access to it.

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

Twenty percent of Wyandanch families received public assistance in 2013, 17.9% of individuals are below poverty level, and 25% of household heads have less than a high school degree; the median income for Wyandanch is approx 61% lower than that of the rest of the County and 71% of households pay over 35% of income in gross rent. Investments in infrastructure and Site A have spurred the revitalization of the entire community. Unlocking the potential of the remaining sites will give way to a wide range of significant opportunities to further solidify economic development opportunities within Wyandanch. Keeping development costs down will create greater affordability in housing and provide greater retail variety & cultural opportunities.

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

The Wyandanch Vision Plan, completed in 2004 served as the guiding document that first established this massive planning effort. The later adoption of the FBC in 2014, based upon the Final Wyandanch Downtown Revitalization Plan in 2009 and BOA, further exemplified the significant efforts of the Town and Wyandanch Rising to revitalize this community. The four remaining SDS, as defined in the Wyandanch & Straight Path Corridor Area Plan in 2012, are now ready for development; development that maximizes housing & job opportunities while maintaining affordability by leveraging investments from NYS, the Town and County, and the federal gov't that have developed and contributed to the success of Site A.