

MID-HUDSON DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE TEMPLATE

BASIC INFORMATION

Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Region: MidHudson

Municipality Name: Town of Clarkstown

Downtown Name: Nanuet Hamlet Center

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):

Nanuet, located 4 miles west of the TZ Bridge, is an historic hamlet of the Town of Clarkstown with a commercial Main Street. The Nanuet Hamlet Center is home to the Town's only commuter rail station, which is surrounded by several acres of vacant, formerly industrial land along the Pascack Valley New Jersey Transit rail line. Just north of this underutilized land is a newly redeveloped 880,000 sq.ft. "open-air" regional Simon Properties shopping mall, the Shops at Nanuet. Nanuet is also located at the "crossroads" of several major roadways including the Palisades Interstate Parkway, NY State Thruways and Route 9W which makes it a popular destination for commuters to live and shoppers to visit.

With funding from NYSEDA's Cleaner Greener Communities Program, the Town of Clarkstown is currently implementing the Nanuet Hamlet Center Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Project, which will design and implement a detailed plan for how this vacant and underutilized land can be redeveloped into a mixed-use, transit oriented neighborhood. Plans will include: a new multimodal transit station on the existing line; mixed-use retail, office and workforce residential units; multi-use pedestrian paths; walkable, pedestrian-friendly storefront. This new walkable neighborhood will provide new workforce housing on the commuter rail system, encourage public transit use with both the commuters and regional shoppers, create jobs and strengthen the economic base of both the downtown and the Shops at Nanuet.

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 Nanuet Hamlet Center is generally defined as non-residentially zoned areas between the intersection of Route 59 and S. Middletown Road to the north, along Main Street to the intersection of Old Middletown Road and S. Middletown Road at its southern extent. This area includes the Shops at Nanuet Mall at the northern end, the shops and commercial arterial streets connected to Main Street, the commuter rail station and surrounding commercial and industrial areas.

- 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 Nanuet Hamlet Center is approximately 135 acres in size and surrounded by several multifamily housing developments and robust single family home neighborhoods. The creation of a new transit-oriented development (TOD) neighborhood is estimated to create up to 620,000 square feet of new retail commercial, residential and public transit space through new infill development and adaptive reuse. These properties are projected to be very attractive, as studies have shown TOD communities are rated as a highly important factor in selecting company locations, especially for socially and environmentally-conscious businesses. These businesses will wish to locate in the new TOD neighborhood, further supporting and encouraging walkability and use of mass transit.

- 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 Nanuet Hamlet Center has benefitted from a number of public and private investments which have helped make the area an attractive base for future development. The Rockland County Highway Department and Town of Clarkstown completed a 3.1 million dollar Main Street revitalization project in 2007 which improved the downtown streetscape by performing road and infrastructure improvements, as well as improved sidewalk and pedestrian infrastructure. In 2013 Simon Properties completed construction on the Shops at Nanuet. This 880,000 SF “open-air” shopping mall has attracted a number of new jobs to Nanuet and shoppers from throughout the region.

The creation of an attractive, successful walkable community for shopping, dining and entertainment in one of the few transit hubs on the west side of the Hudson River, as proposed by the Nanuet Hamlet Center TOD Project, will make Nanuet a model for smart growth and transit-oriented development. The critical mass of the downtown Nanuet hamlet will be significantly increased, adding local residents and attracting new visitors who will patronize the existing shops and services along Main Street. In addition, there is anticipated to be a spill-over effect of additional visitors from the nearby Shops at Nanuet who will visit and spend money at commercial establishments downtown. This critical mass will strongly encourage walkability and a shift from the suburban automobile-dependent model. The Nanuet TOD Project has also been awarded a \$150,000 Cleaner Greener Communities Grant from NYSERDA to aid in these efforts. The Town is also working with Pattern for Progress, who has identified Nanuet as a study area for their “Urban Action Agenda,” funded through a Ford Foundation grant. Additionally, the Nanuet Hamlet Center is also located 4 miles west of the new “New York Bridge” (Tappan Zee Bridge) construction project, which has brought additional jobs and commercial activity to the area.

- 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 Nanuet project in general will encourage economic growth in Nanuet, Rockland County and the mid-Hudson region through the construction of approximately 620,000 square feet of new infill development including a new intermodal transit station, parking decks, mixed use commercial and residential buildings and adaptive reuse of existing structures within the project area. This neighborhood redevelopment will include a diverse mix of new retail space, offices, restaurants, local services and workforce housing residences centered around a new train station. The Nanuet Hamlet Center TOD Project will create a significant number of new jobs – an estimated 400 permanent jobs in Nanuet and up to as many as 240 additional jobs in the larger region, and 100 FTE construction jobs per year for the next twenty years.

- 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 Nanuet Hamlet Center is home to the Town's only commuter rail station. Additionally, the Shops at Nanuet, an "open-air" regional shopping mall, recently opened at the northern end of the Hamlet Center. New zoning in the Hamlet Center also offers more adaptable redevelopment opportunities, including the provision of mixed-use development. The Town's TOD planning study for Nanuet currently underway will design and implement a detailed plan for how the vacant and underutilized land in the Hamlet Center can be redeveloped into a mixed-use, transit oriented neighborhood. Plans will include: a new multimodal transit station on the existing line; mixed-use retail, office and workforce residential units/affordable housing; multi-use pedestrian paths; walkable, pedestrian-friendly storefront streets; parks and other greenspace; and integrated parking decks to reduce surface parking.

- 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 Clarkstown recently implemented the "Hamlet Commercial" zone within the Nanuet Hamlet Center. This mixed-use zoning promotes traditional main street building form and permits apartments over businesses. The Transit-oriented Development Plan for Nanuet seeks to convert vacant and formerly industrial land along the railway into a vibrant, mixed-use transit-oriented neighborhood which will link the downtown historic district with a regional open-air shopping center, provide a new multi-modal transit facility and workforce housing.

The Town of Clarkstown is also actively participating in Complete Streets initiatives. Town Planners have attended a number of training sessions on Complete Streets, and the Town is currently in the process of partnering with the County and State through a “Creating Healthy Schools and Communities” grant which will fund Tri-State Transportation Campaign training and a “walking audit” of the Town to enhance and expand Complete Streets design throughout Clarkstown.

- 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 Nanuet TOD Project has the support of a number of community groups and governmental agencies and representatives, both local and regional. As with all its revitalization projects, the Town engages the public and relevant stakeholders in a “visioning” process to plan for the future of the community. For the revitalization of the Hamlet of Nanuet, the Town has held six public workshops over the past year to discuss strengths, opportunities and weaknesses, lay out options and recommendations for future development and seek public input. The Advisory Committee for the Nanuet TOD Project currently includes representatives from the Nanuet Chamber of Commerce, Nanuet Civic Association and Simon Property Group. Additionally, regional governmental representatives on the Committee include members of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and New York State Department of Transportation as well as County Executive, Ed Day and the Rockland County Planning Department. The Clarkstown Town Planner, who has overall responsibility for the Nanuet TOD planning project and is working closely with the planning firm engaged for the project as well as the TOD Advisory Committee, will serve as the local lead for the DRI project. The TOD Advisory Committee will serve as the nucleus for the local DRI Planning Committee, and some additional stakeholders may be added.

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

Some of the best examples of the success and market demand in the region are communities on the NJ Transit lines such as Westwood, Ridgewood, and Morristown as well as towns on the Metro North Line such as Tarrytown, Dobbs Ferry, and Hasting on the Hudson. On Long Island, there is a revival of Transit Oriented Development on the Suffolk County’s Main Line with Transit Oriented Development plans for Wyandanch, Republic and Ronkonkoma. Nationally, Transit Oriented Development is rapidly increasing in popularity throughout many major metropolitan regions due to increased market desires for a walkable lifestyle and access to mass transit. Additionally, future large scale infra-structure projects throughout the region will increase the attractiveness of Nanuet’s proximity to the rail station. The proposed rail-tunnel linking New Jersey and New York City will offer a direct rail link, with no transfers, from Nanuet to New York City. For these reasons, we believe this project will be an attractive investment which will continue to grow.