



## 2019 DRI Application

Applications for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) must be received by the appropriate Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) by **4:00 PM on May 31, 2019** at the email address provided at the end of this application.

In **New York City**, the Borough Presidents' offices will be the official applicants to the REDC and organizations interested in proposing an area for DRI funding should contact the respective Borough President's office as soon as possible. Based on these proposals, each Borough President's office will develop and submit no more than two formal applications for consideration by the New York City REDC. Applications to the offices of the Borough President must be received by email no later than **4:00 PM on May 10, 2019**. The subject heading on the email must be "Downtown Revitalization Round 4."

Applicant responses for each section should be as complete and succinct as possible. Additional information is available in the 2019 DRI Guidebook, available at [www.ny.gov/DRI](http://www.ny.gov/DRI).

Applicants in the **Mid-Hudson region** must limit their application to a total of 15 pages, and no attachments will be accepted. The map of the DRI Area requested in question number 1 must be part of the 15-page limit.

Applicants should make every effort to engage the community in the development of the application. Prior to submission, applicants must have held a minimum of one meeting or event to solicit public input on the community vision and potential projects and should demonstrate that any input received was considered in the final application.

### **BASIC INFORMATION**

- Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Region: Long Island
- Municipality Name: Incorporated Village of Freeport
- Downtown Name: Village of Freeport Nautical Mile
- County Name: Nassau
- Applicant Contact(s) Name and Title: Nora E. Sudars, Grants Administrator
- Applicant Contact(s) Email Address and Secondary Email Address: Nora E. Sudars - [nsudars@freeportny.gov](mailto:nsudars@freeportny.gov), Mayor Robert T. Kennedy – [rkennedy@freeportny.gov](mailto:rkennedy@freeportny.gov)

### **VISION FOR DOWNTOWN**

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

The Freeport Nautical Mile is a picturesque historic maritime main street that runs along Woodcleft Canal. The Nautical Mile was established in 1898 when Woodcleft Canal was dredged. Throughout the century it has been a vital center of commercial and recreational activity. Early in the century, resort hotels flourished



in Freeport, including one on the current site of Randall Park, at the northern end of the street. Visitors arrived via the Long Island Rail Road, then by horse drawn carriage, early automobiles or electric trolley to the waterfront.

As the century progressed, the Nautical Mile's economic generators were commercial fishing, boat building, boat sales and marinas, seafood restaurants and fish markets. With the regional downturn in the early 90's, the Nautical Mile suffered from increased vacancies caused by the departure of some major marinas and the physical deterioration of the area brought about by recurrent flooding.

In 1994, the Village began downtown revitalization efforts that continued until 2009. The Village's planning goals were to rejuvenate the Nautical Mile by increased public access to the waterfront, both to Woodcleft Canal on the east side of the street and to Freeport Bay (Little Swift Creek) to the south; improve public amenities such as waterfront promenades and landscaped open space and encourage new water-dependent or water-related uses for vacant properties. Revitalization projects included raising the grade of the street to prevent flooding, purchase of four (4) underutilized parcels, replacement of deteriorated low bulkheading, aquatic habitat restoration project, removal and relocation to underground conduits all electric, telephone, and cable television utility lines, construction of an eleven (11') foot wide brick promenade with decorative street lighting, planters, trash receptacles and benches, installation of ADA accessibility curbing, and construction of a scenic pier, waterfront esplanade, boardwalk, public building with rest facilities and a marina. Today, it is the center of the Village's fishing, restaurant, marine, entertainment and tourist activities, and has been identified as the largest center of water dependent businesses and facilities on the south shore of Long Island, with over 50 businesses operating.

Freeport's vision is to further invest in protecting its most treasured economic and cultural asset, the Nautical Mile. Most important is to continue improvement and development, while maintaining and enhancing the already established improvements. A vital investment in the downtown is to provide new infrastructure that supports businesses, residents, visitors and tourists. New developments including restaurants, hotels and other venues will increase the need for parking. The parking capacity of the downtown must meet the needs of the additional residents and visitors. The construction of a multilevel parking garage will sustain economic vitality, expand business opportunities, implement resiliency measures addressing flooding, improve traffic safety and circulation and improve the quality of life for the residents in the surrounding residential neighborhood.

## **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.**

Village of Freeport is the second highest populated village in New York State and one of the most diverse communities in Nassau County. Freeport has one of the highest residential population densities on Long Island, at 9,531 people per square mile, more than double the average density of Nassau County. Freeport's

ethnic diversity makes the Village a unique place within Nassau County. While the County's population is predominantly white, Freeport does not contain an ethnic majority population. Instead, the Village's population is comprised of three main ethnic groups: White, Black or African American, and Hispanic or Latino. Individuals of Hispanic and Latino decent make up the largest share of Freeport's population. At 39%, Freeport's Hispanic and Latino population is more than triple that of Nassau County overall. Freeport's non-Hispanic or Latino and Black or African American population is also almost triple that of the County, 30% compared to 11% respectively. Additionally, 30% of the Village's population is foreign born.<sup>1</sup>

Freeport is located along the south shore of Nassau County on Long Island and occupies 4.6 square miles. The Village has a directly elected Mayor and a Board of Trustees. As an incorporated village, Freeport has its own municipal electric and water utilities, police force, emergency management team, and fire department. The Village prides itself on its self-sufficiency, quality of life, and long history of water-oriented activities.

In 2015, the Village of Freeport was singled out as one of the coolest towns in America by The travel website Matador Network. It placed the village in the No. 7 spot on its list of the 20 coolest towns in the United States, which it defines as places that have "their own economic/local heart," "cool natural features" and "a global citizenry". It further stated that some of the things that make a town cool included walkable downtown areas, nearby outdoor recreation and cultural diversity.

The Nautical Mile has an image and character very different from other commercial areas in the Village. It is a unique, marine-oriented commercial waterfront district. It is a true "mixed-use" activity center. The district is the only waterfront along the south shore of Long Island that combines commercial fishing facilities, marine retail, restaurants, office space, housing, conventional retail and recreational uses in a wide ranging mix. Other south shore waterfronts combine some of these elements but none contain the variety of uses that exist along Woodcleft Avenue. These uses together with the boating activities along the canal and bay, create a working waterfront character that is unique along Nassau County's south shore.

Residents recognize the Nautical Mile as the symbolic heart of the community and it is the gathering place for many community events and activities. It offers a sense of maritime history and tradition and is a source of great pride to the Freeport community. It is the center for the Village's fishing, restaurant, marine, entertainment and tourist activities. Although Superstorm Sandy hit The Nautical Mile hard in 2012, most businesses there have rebounded to make the business district better than ever.

The Nautical Mile has been described as one part Fulton Fish Market and one part Margaritaville, finished with a splash of Disney World. It serves as a destination for local residents and a regional tourist destination for visitors for fishing charter boats, waterfront dining, live entertainment, outdoor recreation, retail fish markets and enjoyment of the panoramic views of the waterfront. It clearly provides the greatest potential for tourist access to these amenities, since it is also the most westerly of the maritime centers in the South Shore Estuary Reserve (SSER), approximately 22 miles east of Midtown Manhattan, and 7 miles east of the Nassau and Queens border. It is also one of the South Shore's best family friendly attractions.

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<sup>1</sup> United States Census Bureau's 2016 American Community Survey.



The district is well served by regional highway access. Meadowbrook Parkway is located approximately one and a half miles east of Woodcleft Avenue. Sunrise Highway and the Long Island Railroad are approximately two miles north, and the interchanges at Sunrise Highway and Merrick Road provide convenient access, into Freeport from the east and west. South Ocean Avenue and Guy Lombardo Avenue form the major north-south access routes leading to the Nautical Mile. Atlantic Avenue is an important east-west connector, located approximately one-quarter mile from the north end of the Avenue.

Due to the high profile and existing regional draw, the Nautical Mile is the ideal place for DRI funding. The district possesses all the necessary assets to sustain its self as a regional center and attract additional investment. These include: 1). An already successful business district with a wide variety of business, attractions, parks and unique recreational opportunities. 2). Easily accessible throughout the region with connections to major roadways and public transit. 3) Access to beaches and the waterfront that captures the recreational time and dollars of individuals venturing to Jones Beach and the surrounding waterways. 4) A rich history and commitment to maritime culture that is an invaluable resource for positioning Freeport as a maritime culture hub.

### **DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION**

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

The Nautical Mile lies at the southern edge of the Village of Freeport, paralleling Woodcleft Canal. It is bordered by John J. Randall Park on the north, Woodcleft Canal on the east, South Ocean Avenue on the west and terminates at Little Swift Creek /Freeport Bay. The district is compact; 1 mile long and encompasses six blocks.

The downtown is generally surrounded by residential uses consisting primarily of single-family homes. The exceptions are a four-story Wharfside Condominium complex (152 units) that is located between Miller Avenue and South Ocean Avenue across from Sea Breeze Park, a two-story Ocean Court cooperative complex (20 units) located on Ocean Avenue between Manhattan Avenue and Suffolk Avenue and a two-story Ocean Harbor View cooperative complex (56 units) located on South Ocean Avenue across from John J. Randall Park.

The district also as an elementary school, Leo F Giblyn. The school is located on South Ocean Avenue and has 661 students in grades K-4 with a student-teacher ratio of 14 to 1. The school employees 48 full-time teachers/ professional staff.

The Nautical Mile is home to the Freeport Chamber of Commerce. The organization's main office is located on Woodcleft Ave. The Chamber has 136 members representing the commercial, industrial and residential communities within the Village of Freeport.

Map of downtown area located on page 17.

**2) Past investment, future investment potential. Describe how this DRI area will be able to capitalize on prior private and public investment and catalyze future investments in the neighborhood and its surrounding areas. Describe recent planning efforts that support public and private investment in the proposed DRI area.**

Implementation of the Nautical Mile Revitalization Program began in 1996 with the purchase of a vacant and dilapidated marina building on Woodcleft Avenue. With the financial support of the New York Department of State, the Village was able to renovate the building and establish the Long Island Marine Educational Center (LIMEC) that is presently being managed by Operation SPLASH, a non-profit volunteer organization. Funding from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund and private donations assisted in the renovation of the building and installing the initial exhibits. Permanent exhibits include displays on marine ecology, regional maritime traditions (including commercial fishing, boat building and waterfront recreation), and small vessels of historic or educational interest. This facility is located at the center of the Nautical Mile.

With the building purchase, the Village acquired 200 feet of waterfront property directly across from the building, which was designed as a waterfront park, public esplanade, and docking pier. The design of the waterfront park and esplanade included a 50 ft. pier for docking of display vessels such as visiting schooners, historic boats and other floating exhibits for LIMEC. Funding for the design of the project was provided by the New York Dept. of State and was completed in July of 1999. Partial funding for the construction and replacement of the bulkheading was received under the Environmental Protection Fund by the New York State Dept. of State and the Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act by the New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation. In 2000, The Village received additional funding from Department of State under Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund. As part of the project, a brick cross walk was constructed across Woodcleft Avenue in order to provide direct safe access from LIMEC to the esplanade and the promenade. Construction was completed in August 2001.

In September of 1997, the Village completed construction of a scenic pier at the foot of Woodcleft Avenue overlooking Freeport Bay. Immediately, the Woodcleft Avenue Scenic Pier became a destination point for visitors to Freeport. The pier has a pavilion which provides shade for its visitors along with antique benches and light fixtures. The 40-foot nautical flagpole at the head of the pier is landscaped with flowers and shrubs and brick walkways provide access to the pier. These same brick pavers now continue to the head of the street.

In January 1999, construction of an eleven (11') foot wide brick promenade along the east side (waterside) of Woodcleft Avenue, with decorative street lighting, planters and benches commenced. Partial funding for the project was received under the Environmental Protection Fund from New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and additional funding from the Inter-modal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act. However, the street still had recurrent flooding problems which remained a detriment to tourism, economic development and contributed to the deterioration of the area. In response to such problems, the Village dedicated resources to combine the promenade project with a road improvement project to raise the grade of the roadway of Woodcleft Avenue (4,400. LF).

The road which had elevations of less than 3.5' above mean sea level have been raised to a new minimum elevation of 5.2' above mean sea level. The project also included new a drainage system to minimize upstream impacts, and the installation of tide valves to prevent tidewaters from entering the drainage system. Tidal flooding that had contributed to the decline of the area has been eliminated. As part of this infrastructure improvement project, electric, telephone, cable television utility lines and poles were removed, with new lines relocated to underground conduits. A new high-pressure natural gas main and water main have also been installed. The village-owned utilities paid \$2 million to bury electrical wires and \$650,000 to install new water mains. With the cooperation of business owners, waterfront view corridors have been reestablished along the walkway to enhance pedestrian appreciation of the area. In October 1999, the infrastructure improvement and streetscape project was completed. On May 19, 2000 was the grand opening celebration.

The Village received Inter-modal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act funds to acquire a 5-acre bay front parcel immediately west of the scenic pier. New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation provided funding for the creation of Sea Breeze Park. A pedestrian walkway/bikeway boardwalk was constructed along the water's edge of Little Swift Creek/Freeport Bay. The boardwalk begins just west of the scenic pier and goes west for a distance of approximately 750 feet. Antique lighting, planters and benches were installed along the boardwalk. New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation provided funding to replace the bulkheading and create an aquatic restoration habitat. The project started in the spring of 2005. Reconstruction of a transient marina/pier and construction of a Harbor Master Quarters commenced in 2008. The entire project was completed in 2009. The boardwalk and pier render breathtaking views of Freeport Bay.

In 2005, the Village received funding from an Economic Development Initiative grant from HUD for the purchase and development of a much-needed parking lot on an old boat yard. Additional public parking was required, particularly with the loss of on-street parking spaces, which occurred because of the widening of the sidewalk for the brick promenade. The surface lot is located across from Sea Breeze Park. In 2007, the project was completed.

KeySpan Energy, designating the Nautical Mile as one of its first Long Island "Cinderella Projects," provided \$40,000 in gas-lit sconces to embellish businesses that had improved their facades.

The public investments sparked private investment, new retail opportunities and jobs were created. A complex of gift shops replaced one deteriorated residential property on Woodcleft Avenue; an ice cream parlor replaced a similar use on a nearby lot. A miniature golf course replaced a boat parts junk yard. Substandard structures were demolished and new buildings built. Vacant office space became occupied and new office space was created. Other buildings were renovated and elevated three feet above the flood base elevation. The most recent improvements are a vacant boat showroom that has been converted into a microbrewery; and a blighted building was demolished and a new restaurant is being built. Vacant and abandoned properties are now flourishing businesses. Underutilized vacant properties are now parks and venues for arts, education and entertainment.



The Village of Freeport just completed a \$3 million dollar project that replaced a submarine electrical cable crossing under Freeport Channel that is responsible for carrying 25% of Freeport Electric's utility load and services the Nautical Mile area. The conduit, and the risers connecting electric cables to the overhead transmission lines, were vulnerable to tidal inundation and were susceptible to damage from floating debris and drifting vessels during coastal surges and storms. The project made the infrastructure less susceptible to damage and thereby improved certainty and reliability of electric service for the businesses and residents in the Nautical Mile area. The Governor's Office of Storm Recovery funded the project.

The Nautical Mile now is a vibrant, desirable downtown with a strong sense of place. It is the heart of Freeport, and serves as a center for services, employment, and civic interaction. It has "Main Street" businesses, art, education and cultural attractions, a diverse population, a greater local property tax base and amenities to support and enhance the quality of life.

With the addition of infrastructure to support future development, the Nautical Mile is well situated to continue to grow. A critical issue is to make parking options more efficient, attractive, and accessible.

**3) 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 Village of Freeport contains 14,855 jobs. Of these, 2,726 are office jobs and another 2,421 are in retail. The remaining 9,708 jobs are in other sectors of the economy. The Nautical Mile area has 1,165 jobs, including 232 retail and 145 office jobs.<sup>2</sup> Restaurants and entertainment are the largest job generating businesses in the district. Recent job growth is positive. Over the past year, jobs have increased by 0.91%. Freeport has a job growth projection of 26.6% for the next 10 years. In the seven years since Hurricane Sandy, the district has added 6 additional businesses. The Nautical Mile's job market continues to grow as new opportunities and small businesses continue to expand and invest.

According to Discover Long Island, mainly day-trippers fuel tourism on Long Island. It is a \$5.9 billion dollar industry and supports almost 100,000 jobs. The 2017 Economic Impact of Tourism in New York report found, among the 62 counties, Nassau County ranked fourth in traveler spending. In 2017, visitors spent \$2,696,676,000.<sup>3</sup> As a regional tourist destination, the Nautical Mile captures a portion of the tourism dollars. In order to continue job growth, investment in infrastructure that supports visitors and tourism is vital.

**4) 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**

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<sup>2</sup> TAZ Data, New York Metropolitan Transportation Council

<sup>3</sup> Tourism Economics, an Oxford Economics Company. (2017). The Economic Impact of Tourism in New York (New York State, Empire State Development).

**housing types at different levels of affordability, walkability and bikeability, healthy and affordable food markets, and public parks and gathering spaces.**

The Nautical Mile is compact and very walkable, with an eclectic mix of independent businesses lining both sides of the street. The streetscape is very attractive with brick sidewalks, paved crosswalks and an 11-foot brick promenade with antique lights, benches and planters. Visitors and residents can find seafood right off the boat, fine waterside restaurants and clam bars, a farmers market, live entertainment, a microbrewery, ice cream parlor, pizzeria, dinner cruises, water taxi, Long Island Maritime Education Center, 18-hole miniature golf course, charter fishing, boat shows and races, boat sales and specialty shops, fishing tournaments, fun-filled family festivals, waterfront esplanade and two beautiful parks.

In the center of the Nautical Mile is a waterfront esplanade with a covered pavilion, decorative benches, planters, a dolphin water fountain and a New York State Coastal Resources Interpretive Program interpretive sign kiosk. The esplanade was designed primarily as a public promenade and sitting space, giving pedestrians on the avenue an opportunity to view boating activities along the canal. The Long Island Arts Council at Freeport provides a free Sunset Concert Series on Thursday evenings during the months of July and August. A water taxi service is also located on the esplanade. The boat serves as a shuttle service between the communities of Freeport, Point Lookout and the City of Long Beach and operates Wednesday through Sunday from early spring through the late fall.

Located at the entrance of the Nautical Mile is John J. Randall Park. This park acts as an important “gateway” to the downtown and helps to establish a recreational character for the street. The park is 8.2 acres and consists of an adult outdoor swimming pool with an adjacent kiddie pool, as well as a large playground and sports field large enough to accommodate several teams at the same time. The field is equipped with overhead lights to facilitate night games, enabling local softball, baseball, soccer, lacrosse, football and other teams to extend their playing seasons, from early spring through the fall. The park also has a large picnic area with barbecue grills, 2 covered pavilions and restrooms. There is no entry fee for the pools.

A five-acre park known as Sea Breeze Park is located at the foot of The Nautical Mile and offers breathtaking views of Freeport Bay. A pedestrian walkway/bikeway boardwalk with decorative lights and benches runs along the water’s edge. The public park also has boat slips for hire, a public building with rest facilities, volleyball courts and a giant multi-use field. During the Summer months an outdoor volley ball league uses the courts. A 100’ bi-level ship that provides sunset dinner cruises launches from the Park. The Village of Freeport provides movies at the park on Friday nights in July and August. Movie Night includes free movie, popcorn, giveaways and a fun-filled family night. Sea Breeze Park is also a designated stopover in the South Shore Blueway Kayak Trail.

Adjacent to Sea Breeze Park is a scenic pier that overlooks Freeport Bay. The pier was designed to provide sweeping views of the bay area and echo the style and character of many of the older structures along the Nautical Mile. The pier has a pavilion that provides shade and shelter from inclement weather

for its visitors along with antique benches and light fixtures. The 40-foot nautical flagpole at the head of the pier is landscaped with flowers and shrubs and brick walkways provide access to the pier.

A privately owned 18-hole miniature golf course is located on the Nautical Mile. It is a great destination for both tourists and local residents, providing entertainment for the whole family.

In the center of the district, across from the Esplanade, is the Long Island Marine Educational Center. Operation S.P.L.A.S.H (Stop Polluting, Littering and Save Harbors) is headquartered in the building. It is a non-profit volunteer organization which is committed to improving the quality of life on Long Island Shores. The SPLASH education program teaches thousands of students each year about the importance of the South Shore Bays and the challenges that they face. Students of all ages, from elementary school through college, enjoy the classroom program, the bay tour by boat, the trip down the Nautical Mile, and seeing the saltwater tanks brimming with local marine life.

Freeport's maritime traditions are commemorated in a permanent outdoor exhibit along the Nautical Mile. Long Island Traditions, in collaboration with City Lore and the Village of Freeport, installed *Freeport Waters*, artful signage that highlights the personal stories, histories, and traditions of the Nautical Mile. The exhibit was designed to engage visitors through video links, historic and contemporary images. Each marker includes embedded historic and contemporary photographs, quotes from maritime tradition bearers, and text and web links that include audio/video multimedia productions. There are four installations along the street – Bay Houses, Rum Runner, Boat Building and Freeport Legends. The Bay House installation examines the history of bay houses, their design and construction, and traditional uses of the houses, and their fate after Superstorm Sandy. The Rum Runners marker examines the history of booze smuggling during the Prohibition era of 1918 – 30s. The Boat Builders installation examines the history of boat building in Freeport. Freeport Legends panel features local legend orchestra leader Guy Lombardo, charter boat captain Carmine Marinaccio, bayman Cory Weyant and lifeguard Reggie Jones. The NY State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Park Service and the NY Council for the Humanities provided funding for the project.

A local non-profit in partnership with Sustainable Island operate a Farmer's Market on the Nautical Mile weekdays during the months of July and August. Besides providing a marketplace for our residents and visitors to shop for a variety of fresh produce, it is place where youth obtain summer employment selling produce for local farmers and learn the basics of business, customer service, nutrition and local agriculture. It fosters social gathering and community building, and promotes healthy food choices.

A local Catholic Church, Our Holy Redeemer, offers a waterfront Mass on the Nautical Mile at 10:00 am on Sunday mornings during the months of July and August. The very well attended Mass is held on a covered waterfront site.

The Nautical Mile has a wide-range of boating facilities and a resident fishing fleet. From early April until mid-November, Charter boats and open water-fishing boats leave regularly on daily fishing excursions, allowing visitors and residents to enjoy leisure time on the water.

Since 1992, Long Island Traditions has sponsored Bay House Tours in Freeport. Bay houses are small historic shacks that stand on the marshlands that were originally built in the 1700 and 1800s by fishermen, baymen, and duck hunters for shelter while they harvested clams, salt hay or went duck hunting. During the summer months, the excursions depart from the Nautical Mile Esplanade.

During the summer and fall months, when migration patterns bring whales to the New York coast, the Nautical Mile offers Whale Watching cruises. During the winter, it is time to view Long Island harbor seals. Fifty percent of all seal watching cruise proceeds are donated to the Riverhead Foundation for Marine Research and Preservation for the rehabilitation of local seals and other marine wildlife.

The Nautical Mile is also a part of the New York State Coastal Heritage and Blueway Trail. The Trail is a network of recognized coastal destinations and connectors where residents and visitors can enjoy and experience the heritage, natural beauty, and recreation resources of the Long Island South Shore Estuary Reserve.

The Village of Freeport initiated a “Welcome Back to The Nautical Mile” campaign. The Village in conjunction with the Nautical Mile Merchants Association and Chamber of Commerce hold six (6) annual events. These events provide the Village a chance to highlight all that the Nautical Mile and the surrounding area has to offer. During the month of June thousands of people flock to the one-day Nautical Mile and Blues Festival. The festival is a family event and is a mile-long celebration of Freeport’s maritime history with seafood, music, boat rides, nautical displays, vendors, face-painting and carnival rides. The Blues Festival brings musicians to Sea Breeze Park where folks can catch local artists performing different styles of music. In July, The Village hosts a fireworks show at Seabreeze Park.

During a weekend in August, the Village invites the United States Naval Academy’s Sailing Training Squadron. Six (6) 44 ft. single mast-sloops crewed by 57 underclassmen and their supervising officers sail from Annapolis, Maryland and dock for the weekend on Woodcleft Canal. The vessels are available for viewing by the public during their stay. Events are planned all weekend with many of the businesses on the Nautical Mile sponsoring the activities. Events range from a welcome reception and barbecue which is open to the public, to tours of the sail boats.

In a joint effort, the Village of Freeport, the Freeport Chamber of Commerce and the Freeport Fire Department host the Family Fall Festival and Fire Expo in October. The festival is kicked-off with an opening parade from Sea Breeze Park up the Nautical Mile. Participants in the parade consist of costumed children and pets, the Freeport Police Department, a marching pipe band, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Freeport Electric, the Salvation Army, Red Cross, SPLASH, Freeport Fire Department and the Freeport High School marching band and color guard. Children are offered sweet treats from the open trunks of cars decorated for Halloween. “It’s called trunk or treat,” The Village provides the treats and

give out prizes for the scariest looking cars. Special events include a Chowder Contest with locals and restaurants, stilt walker, pony rides, juggler, magician, live music and restaurant specials. The Freeport Fire Department's Annual Fire Expo is held across from the Esplanade and features exhibits and games to teach children and families about fire safety. Smoke detectors and reflectors are distributed for free.

In December the Village of Freeport starts off the holiday season when the Chamber of Commerce hosts the annual Nautical Mile Holiday Boat Parade of Lights and Decorating Contest. More than a dozen boats, led by the Freeport Fire Department's Rescue Fireboat, compete to light up Freeport's Nautical Mile and spread holiday cheer in an hour-long procession down Woodcleft Canal, past Sea Breeze Park to Randal Bay and back. Restaurants along the parade route offer spectacular views that are perfect for watching the sparkling boats go by. The event concludes with the village's Christmas tree lighting at the Esplanade.

In 2017, the Nautical Mile Merchants Association started an annual Nautical Mile Irish Day to celebrate St. Patrick's Day and the beginning of spring. Businesses give back to the community by donating a portion of the proceeds to nonprofit organizations. Causes supported have been the Cerebral Palsy Association of Nassau County, Island Harvest Food Bank and the Brian Moore Memorial Fund. The one-day event attracts roughly 500 people. Visitors and residents walk the Mile for a great cause with food and drink specials, gift card giveaways and live music.

While initially developed on the water as a hub for fishing and maritime activities, today Freeport is home to more than 43,000 people who enjoy that same waterfront setting for commercial or recreational boating and other activities, such as dining, walking in the park, or observing nature, all of which make the Village a highly desirable place to live and work. The diversity of housing choices in Freeport allows many different types of households and demographic groups to settle in the Village. Apartments and multifamily buildings offer housing opportunity for younger households, low-income households, or seniors who wish to downsize to a smaller dwelling. Single-family opportunities are available for those who wish to have larger homes or yards, while those who prize a waterfront lifestyle can live in homes along the water. The mixture of housing typologies offers a variety of options to meet residents' needs at all stages of life, including single living, family development, and aging in Freeport

- 5) 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 that support livability and quality of life in downtown are not currently in place, describe near-term efforts by the municipality to create and implement such policies.**

The Village of Freeport has been committed to the revitalization of the community and improve the livability and quality of life of our residents since the 1990's. In 1994, the Village of Freeport commissioned the Woodcleft Avenue Development Study. The purpose of the study was to identify objectives to transform Woodcleft Avenue and maintain the quality of life for local residents, while enhancing the maritime character of the waterfront business district. The study defined a clear vision

and policy direction for the future of the Village. The Nautical Mile revitalization efforts grow out of both prior and ongoing efforts to improve the quality of life for all Freeport residents and to create a safe and pleasant place in which to live. The late 1990's started a ten-year effort to rebuild the community "from the ground up" which led to electric and water utility expansion and modernization, parks and recreation improvements, road elevations and reconstructions, parking improvements and the revitalization of the Nautical Mile. This commitment has been coupled with an ongoing downtown revitalization effort that has leveraged federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding with state and foundation grants and private investment to substantially improve commercial buildings.

The Village of Freeport is committed to environmental excellence and to the continued improvement of water quality in the bays. Sea Breeze Park is home to the Freeport pumpout boat. The vessel is designed specifically to pump, hold and transport waste. Boaters do not need to interrupt their day's activities to pump; the pumpout boat is dispatched to recreational boaters at no charge. The boat is also able to accommodate larger vessels that are unable to utilize pumpout stations due to water depth or dock size limitations. The boat is operated seven days a week during the boating season. Financial assistance for the purchase of the boat was provided under The Clean Vessel Assistance Program by the NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation. The program improves the Village's quality of life by keeping the tributaries and boat basin waters clean and unpolluted by boat discharge.

The Village has a Quality of Life Division whose primary focus is to tackle a variety of problems that affect the health, life and safety of the residents. From illegal dumping to property maintenance issues, staff members are assigned the responsibility to improve the overall quality of life for the residents. Each day, code enforcement officers patrol the streets to create a cleaner, safer and more enjoyable living environment.

The Village of Freeport has implemented strategies and actions that cut energy use and reduce emissions. Freeport received \$335,027. in funding for a solar project from a New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) grant. The Village installed a 50-kilowatt SunPower Photovoltaic system at the Freeport Fire Department Headquarters.

The Village of Freeport is leading the way in encouraging the use of energy efficient and clean running electric vehicles. The Village received funding for one EVSE under the Charge NY Municipal Electric Vehicle Charging Station Funding Opportunity. The charging station was installed at the Long Island Train Station in the first row of spaces adjacent to Henry St. just south of the main entrance to the parking lot and closest main platform, ticket booths and waiting area. The primary users of this lot are daily commuters to Manhattan with vehicles remaining in the lot for 10-12 hours. Freeport owns and operates the commuter parking lot. The Village issues 750 residential commuter parking permits each year.

**6) 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. Characterize the commitment among local leaders and stakeholders to preparing and implementing a strategic investment plan.**

The Woodcleft Avenue Steering Committee, made up of Village officials, representatives of local business and property owners, was formed to help define the priorities and guide the work of the consultant team during the development of the Nautical Mile Study. Other community-based groups, such as the Nautical Mile Merchants Association and the Comprehensive Plan Task Force, also provided input. Three public workshops were held. The first outlined study priorities and reviewed the sources of information that would be available for the consultants. A second meeting focused on alternative concepts prepared for major development sites. The third meeting reviewed preliminary recommendations for Woodcleft Avenue. The completed Plan provided a clear vision for the downtown area and realistic strategies for achieving that vision.

Downtown improvements and developments during the past twenty years have entailed the participation and cooperation of all stakeholders within the area, including property owners, merchants, developers, neighborhood organizations and state agencies. All groups shared the common goal of revitalizing the commercial district. The downtown's strong public/private partnership is essential for long-term success.

Most recommendations in the Nautical Mile Study have been implemented however not all the parking and reduction of traffic recommendations have been fulfilled. Many business owners and residents in the area voice concerns over the lack of parking. The Study recommended that for the longer term, a larger parking structure be constructed in the center of Woodcleft Ave. to support future growth.

The Mayor and the Board of Trustees are committed to continue the momentum of past success. The Village foresees that the local DRI committee will include representatives from the following interest groups and organizations:

- Long Island Regional Economic Development Council;
- Village of Freeport government officials;
- Local residents;
- Local Business Owners;
- Property owners, local developers, and realtors;
- The Chamber of Commerce and the Nautical Mile Merchants Associations

**7) Transformative opportunities. Describe opportunities to build on the strengths described above by providing a list of transformative projects that could 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). Identify potential development opportunities, such as municipally-owned property that may be appropriate for redevelopment. Projects may be public or private, and could address economic development, transportation, housing, and community development needs. It should be recognized that if a DRI award is made to the downtown, the projects identified here, along with any others that**

**may arise during the DRI planning process, will ultimately be vetted by the Local Planning Committee and the State to determine which projects receive DRI grants.**

The Nautical Mile still has potential development opportunities. There is presently a vacant 1.5-acre waterfront lot, located on southernmost tip. The lot consists of four adjoining parcels and sits on Woodcleft Canal with proximity to Sea Breeze Park. Some developers have expressed an interest in redeveloping the site as a hotel. On the inland side of the street, there is a vacant 4,000 SF former boat showroom available for lease. The underused space has the potential to be transformed into an economically productive property.

The Village is presently focusing on projects to support the already completed improvements and streetscape enhancements. The Village's priority project is to improve parking on the Nautical Mile. Prior to the Village's revitalization efforts, there was not a parking problem, mainly due to it not being a destination. The Village's revitalization efforts have been so successful that it now has become a "hotspot," and has increased numbers of people living and visiting the downtown area. As a thriving and active downtown, the Village needs to incorporate additional parking. Additional off-street parking is necessary to support the existing business district and ensure further sustainable growth. As the district grows, so do the number of employees, visitors and residents.

Many business owners and residents in the area cite parking concerns as an issue negatively affecting commerce and neighborhoods. Most employees, visitors and residents of the Nautical Mile arrive and leave by car, putting stress on the Village parking network. Parking in the area is often completely saturated causing cars to cruise for parking which causes traffic congestion. Rather than cruise for on street or surface lot parking, some individuals choose instead to park on streets in an undesignated parking spot, to double park or to park on the sidewalk. Parking also overflows into the already overcrowded residential streets, which negatively affects the quality of life for the residents of the area by late night traffic, littering, noise, and disturbing the peace.

Free-flowing traffic increases access and productivity of the downtown, which increases economic health and stabilizes property taxes. It also improves the quality of life for residents and better response time for police, firefighters and first responders. The Nautical Mile cannot flourish and grow without attracting shoppers, diners, visitors, tourists, workers, and residents. In order to keep the momentum and progress, the Village needs to create adequate parking in the most user-friendly parking system.

Since the Nautical Mile is compact, the area's footprint for additional parking is limited, and the only option is to grow upward. The Village intends to construct a new parking garage on an existing surface parking lot located at the center of the Downtown Business District. A new, centralized parking structure will help to reduce traffic, create a customer friendly parking system, encourage visitors and shoppers to become pedestrians by providing great walkability to all the attractions and free up other parking sites for more productive, revenue-generating, vibrancy-inducing uses. The garage will also have the additional environmental benefit of a smaller paved area and reduce stormwater runoff into the surrounding waterways.

**8) Administrative Capacity. Describe the existing local administrative capacity to manage this planning and implementation initiative, including the ability to oversee contracts for awarded municipal projects using existing staff and resources.**

The Mayor and the Board of Trustees fully support the continued revitalization efforts of The Nautical Mile. The Village of Freeport has already invested significant time, energy, and capital funds into projects that support the revitalization of the waterfront downtown.

The Village of Freeport has successfully managed numerous state and federal grants. These grants include NYS Environmental Protection Act, NYS Waterfront Revitalization Program, South Shore Estuary Reserve Assistance Grant, NYS Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) Program, NYS DEC Non-Agriculture Nonpoint Source, NYS Urban and Community Forestry Grant, Inter-modal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act Grant (ISTEA), Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP), NYS DOT Multi-Modal 2, 3 and 4, NYS DOT High Priority Project Program, NYS Environmental Facilities Corp. Financial Assistance To Business (Fab) Water Program and The Clean Vessel Assistance Program (CVAP), New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) Project Implementation Grant, NYSERDA Solar PV Program, Empire State Strategic Investment Program, NYS State and Municipal Facilities Program (SAM), NYS Public Library Construction Grant Program, Governor's Office of Storm Recovery, "Zombie" and Vacant Properties Remediation and Prevention Initiative, FEMA Hazard Mitigation Program, FEMA Pre-Disaster Program, FEMA Flood Mitigation Program, Community Development Block Grant and HUD Economic Development Incentive.

The Village of Freeport would task the following to manage these projects:

**Municipal Contact** -Nora E. Sudars, Grants Administrator. Ms. Sudars currently works for the Village of Freeport Public Works Department as the Grants Administrator. She has held this position since 1998. Prior to working for this department, she served as Village Clerk for the Village in addition to Freeport Community Development Agency Coordinator. She is also the contract administrator for all public works projects. Ms. Sudars will work with the Consultant Team; have contract administration and reporting responsibilities for this project.

**Fiscal Contact** -, Ismaela Hernandez, Treasurer. Ms. Hernandez was appointed by the Village Board of Trustees on April 5, 2010. As Village Treasurer, Ms. Hernandez oversees a \$72,750,000. annual municipal budget. In addition to the budget for the Village, she also oversees the Water and Electric utilities budgets.

**Engineer/Project Manager** -Robert Fisenne, P.E., Supt. of Public Works and Village Engineer. After graduating from Rochester Institute of Technology in 1990, Mr. Fisenne worked for consulting engineer firms in the private sector. In March of 1995, Mr. Fisenne received his professional engineer's license. The Village of Freeport has employed him since 1996. Mr. Fisenne will handle the construction management of the project.

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

We invite the members of the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council to walk the Nautical Mile in Freeport and experience this unique waterfront downtown. There are activities for the young

and old. Walk along the waterfront boardwalk, located in the 5-acre waterfront park at the end of Woodcleft Avenue, and enjoy the spectacular views and wildlife, or bring a volleyball and use the courts set up on the west side of the park. There is plenty of room for a picnic, or sit back and enjoy the cool sea breeze, star gaze, or enjoy movie night on the lawn. Take the pedicab back down the Mile and pick up fresh fish from one of the local fish markets or fresh produce from the Farmer's Market. Catch a fish while enjoying the bay in a charter or open-water fishing boat. Enjoy a dinner cruise or water taxi sunset wine-tasting boat ride around the local bays; you might even see whales or seal life on the ride. Stroll along the Mile and learn about the maritime history from the historic markers along the street, visit the Maritime Education Center, and grab an ice cream cone on your way to the 18-hole miniature golf course, after visiting the eclectic shops. End the evening listening to one of the concerts on the esplanade and having a nightcap at a waterfront restaurant or bar completes a walk on the Mile. You will discover that Freeport's waterfront downtown is a magical and perfect place to visit and live.



## **SUBMISSION**

Applications from interested communities must be submitted electronically to the relevant Regional Economic Development Council at the email address in the table below. Proposals for areas within New York City must be sent to the relevant Office of the Borough President, which will select two applications for submission to the NYC Regional Economic Development Council.

- Capital Region [NYS-CapitalDist@esd.ny.gov](mailto:NYS-CapitalDist@esd.ny.gov)  
Counties: Albany, Columbia, Greene, Saratoga, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Warren, Washington
- Central New York [NYS-CentralNY@esd.ny.gov](mailto:NYS-CentralNY@esd.ny.gov)  
Counties: Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga, Oswego
- Finger Lakes [NYS-FingerLakes@esd.ny.gov](mailto:NYS-FingerLakes@esd.ny.gov)  
Counties: Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates
- Long Island [LIREDC@esd.ny.gov](mailto:LIREDC@esd.ny.gov)  
Counties: Nassau, Suffolk
- Mid-Hudson [NYS-MidHudson@esd.ny.gov](mailto:NYS-MidHudson@esd.ny.gov)  
Counties: Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, Westchester
- Mohawk Valley [NYS-MohawkVal@esd.ny.gov](mailto:NYS-MohawkVal@esd.ny.gov)  
Counties: Fulton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Oneida, Otsego, Schoharie
- North Country [NYS-NorthCountry@esd.ny.gov](mailto:NYS-NorthCountry@esd.ny.gov)  
Counties: Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence
- Southern Tier [NYS-SouthernTier@esd.ny.gov](mailto:NYS-SouthernTier@esd.ny.gov)  
Counties: Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins
- Western New York [NYS-WNY-REDC@esd.ny.gov](mailto:NYS-WNY-REDC@esd.ny.gov)  
Counties: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Niagara
- New York City - Submit to the appropriate office below.
  - Bronx: James Rausse at [JRausse@bronxbrp.nyc.gov](mailto:JRausse@bronxbrp.nyc.gov)
  - Brooklyn: Josh Levin at [JoshuaLevin@brooklynbrp.nyc.gov](mailto:JoshuaLevin@brooklynbrp.nyc.gov)
  - Manhattan: Elka Morety at [EMorety@manhattanbrp.nyc.gov](mailto:EMorety@manhattanbrp.nyc.gov)
  - Queens: Shurn Anderson at [SAnderson@queensbrp.org](mailto:SAnderson@queensbrp.org)
  - Staten Island: Lashay S. Young at [LYoung@statenilandusa.com](mailto:LYoung@statenilandusa.com)