

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE – LIREDC

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

BASIC INFORMATION

Municipality Name: Village of Great Neck Plaza

Downtown Name: Plaza TOD Initiatives for Economic Development

County: Nassau

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

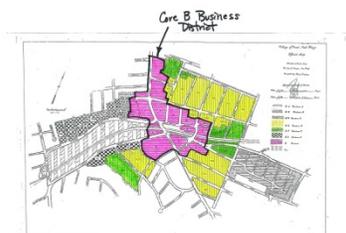
The Village of Great Neck Plaza, with a third of a sq. mile geographically and nearly 7,000 inhabitants, has studied and implemented Transit-Oriented Development initiatives as a means to strengthen the downtown and implement sustainable economic development. There's a need for more affordable (workforce) housing as the LI Region is lacking housing and the demand over the next several years is anticipated due to East Side Access and other programs of the MTA. Great Neck Plaza has an active train station and the entire village is within 0.5 mile walking to the train. We're looking for new ideas and strategies to make the Plaza a more vibrant, livable walkable community today, and beyond, and so we are applying for this DRI to help us.

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.

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.

The B Business District is the core downtown area that we're focusing on in this DRI. It encompasses our downtown "Main Street" with 260 retail stores and service entities. The changing dynamics of downtown retailing and increasing usage of the Internet/ online shopping, we believe this initiative can catalyze future, private and public investments in the downtown and surrounding predominately multiple-family apartment dwelling zones (RT & RD Distircts).The Plaza is a year-round downtown that swells to 35,000 persons daily with LIRR users, office building tenants, and shoppers and visitors to downtown stores. Our downtown has adequate infrastructure to support new development and has existing developable properties for affordable housing.

- 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.

We adopted TOD Zoning in the B Business District in 2011. The first approved TOD project is under construction at 5-9 Grace Avenue which will contain 4,000 sq. ft. retail on the 1st fl. and 30 apartments above incl. 3 affordable units. We have had a BID since 1989 and partner with them to develop programs and events to involve the community. We are a NYS Climate Smart Community with an adopted Climate Action Plan and an AARP Livable Community. We have applied Smart Growth principles to traffic improvements and invest in green projects, public art, and many arts and cultural activities. We desire addt'l. TOD projects and nighttime activities to appeal to Millenials and keeping young professionals from leaving LI.

Leveraged Resources: Public Private \$80,000,000
Prior NYS Funding/REDC Funding: Amount \$1,500,000
Please identify use(s) of prior funding EFC and NYSDOT grants for parking lot rehabilitation and traffic calming initiatives since 2012.

- 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.

A recent addition to our downtown, attracting professionals and an active life, is LaunchPad. The Village supports it for the high-tech incubator jobs that it creates. LaunchPad, a co-working space with more than 30 offices that aims to provide services for early-stage companies, opened in March 2016 at its new 3 Grace Ave. location with 10,000 sq. ft. It offers young entrepreneurs 24/7 access to their offices, Wi-Fi and other professional support services. They want to help entrepreneurs and start-ups build a viable product, launch fast and prepare for growth. The company was designated by New York State as an "Innovation Hot Spot," which gives income tax breaks & other benefits for five years to a resident or affiliated firm with them.

- 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.

We want to retain and build upon the attractiveness of the Plaza's downtown. We have mixed-use, mixed income projects and want more developable spaces and housing at different levels of affordability for people of all ages. We want our commercial district to thrive and offer healthy and affordable food markets and other desired stores. We want to encourage more multi-modal transit, including for pedestrians and bicyclists. More connections are needed to the downtown and surrounding open space networks and access points. We also want to encourage more cultural and entertainment amenities and free, fast Wi-Fi access in the downtown. We have provided free public Wi-Fi access in Village Hall and want more retail businesses to do the same.

- 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.

We are constantly looking for ways to implement strategies and policies to increase the livability and quality of life. Local village government is responsive to its constituents and our residents want to be involved in downtown plans. We have a CAC for Livable Communities and are working on an Action Plan. In 2016 we adopted a Climate Action Plan and are working on initiatives to reduce GHGs and lower our carbon footprint. We have adopted TOD zoning to encourage mixed-use and mixed-income developments in the downtown. We recently modified our parking regulations to implement new technologies to be more parking-friendly. We adopted a Complete Streets Ordinance and doing a Green Innovation Grant Project for a parking lot reconstruction.

- 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 Village has the support of its elected officials on this downtown initiative and many other community stakeholders that are committed to seeing Great Neck Plaza thrive and remain a vibrant community into the future. Implementing a strategic economic plan through grassroots community involvement is essential to its success. The local lead for the program will be Mayor Jean Celender, an seasoned experienced mayor and urban planner who has developed numerous programs, plans and helps craft policies for her Board's consideration. With the assistance of outside experts, she will oversee the plan and convene a local DRI Planning Committee as she has successfully done in preparing a Climate Action Plan & AARP Livable Communities Action Plan.

- 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.

The Village of Great Neck Plaza is proposing this DRI award to be granted to this village to assist in providing additional TOD and affordable housing units in the Village to join our past successful projects, such as Grace Plaza at 5-9 Grace Avenue, the Maestro at 255 Great Neck Rd. and others in the downtown. There are opportunities to maintain the character of the community, encourage Smart Growth, support local businesses and provide for modest growth. We are fortunate to have a developed infrastructure in the downtown that can support additional projects without significant effects.

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

Current infrastructure challenges are the ability to budget and spend for needed repairs and maintenance on our roadways and other public facilities, and doing so within the mandated state tax cap. We have been able to have budgets stay under the tax cap, but the current percent increases aren't sustainable below 2%. Municipalities with downtowns face daunting challenges that other municipalities without these complexities don't encounter. For example, the existence of a train station, which is a multi-modal hub, encourages residents from surrounding areas to flock to/from the downtown daily and often these commuters don't care about the effects on the quality of life of our residents in the downtown or support the local merchants.

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

The Village of Great Neck Plaza does not have a downtown master plan, but has developed over the past fifteen years a comprehensive program for improving its roadways and transportation infrastructure to make our facilities safer, more pedestrian-friendly and walkable, and better able to accommodate people of all ages and abilities. We have adopted a Complete Streets Policy, Smart Growth programs and initiatives, TOD zoning, a Climate Action Plan and are in the process of developing with the AARP a Livable Communities Action Plan. We have many planned programs, vision and will work to commit the necessary resources to ensure a successful revitalization initiative through this DRI award, should we be fortunate to be awarded it. Thank you!