

# DOWNTOWN JAMAICA

## DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PLAN



Prepared for the New York State  
Downtown Revitalization Initiative  
New York City



March 2017

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This document was developed by the Jamaica Local Planning Committee as part of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative and was supported by the NYS Department of State, Empire State Development, and Homes and Community Renewal. The document was prepared by the following Consulting Team: HR&A Advisors; Beyer Blinder Belle; Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.; Public Works Partners; Parsons Brinkerhoff; and VJ Associates.



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# FOREWORD

FIGURE I-1 NEW YORK STATE DRI LOCATIONS



**“A thriving downtown can provide a tremendous boost to the local economy. The Downtown Revitalization Initiative will transform selected downtown neighborhoods into vibrant places for people to live, work and raise a family, which will also help attract new investments and business for years to come.”**

**— Governor Andrew M. Cuomo**

Recognizing that companies are increasingly seeking to relocate and invest in vibrant, walkable downtowns in an effort to attract and retain a talented workforce, Governor Cuomo launched the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI), a \$100 million effort to improve the vitality of urban centers across New York State.

Ten communities were identified by the Governor’s Regional Economic Development Councils (REDCs) to participate in the DRI because their downtowns were deemed ripe for development into vibrant areas in which to live, work and raise families. Ten million dollars will be invested in each of these communities.

Led by former Secretary of State Cesar Perales and supported by current Secretary of State Rossana Rosado, the DRI is a multi-agency approach to downtown revitalization conducted by staff from the Department of State Office of Planning and Development and the Homes and Community Renewal Office of Community Renewal.

The State facilitated a community planning process to develop the key ingredients needed for successful downtown revitalization:

- a vision for the downtown;
- goals and strategies to accomplish the vision;
- an action plan; and
- a strategic investment plan that identifies specific catalytic projects that align with the unique vision of their downtown area.

The program emphasizes using DRI investments to reinforce and secure additional public and private investment within and near downtown neighborhoods, building upon growth supported by the REDCs. To fully leverage the impact of the DRI, Local Planning Committees identified projects that totaled in excess of the available DRI funds to ensure a continued pipeline of projects ready for funding within the community in the event that alternate funding sources are identified for projects; additional State funds become available; or projects drop from consideration. The most transformative and catalytic projects from those identified for each downtown will receive DRI funding.

With the assistance of the State, leadership from within the communities, and public and private investors, these ten communities will become vibrant communities where people will want to live, work and raise families.





# Executive Summary

**The Jamaica Downtown Revitalization Initiative Strategic Investment Plan is the culmination of an intensive community-based planning process and is driven by the local knowledge and collaboration of Jamaica residents.** New York State’s Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) seeks to “transform communities ripe for development into vibrant neighborhoods where the next generation of New Yorkers will want to live, work, and raise a family.” The program allocates \$10 million to support the implementation of catalytic investment projects in Downtown Jamaica and the development of a longer-term strategy that will attract additional public and private investment to support downtown revitalization. Building from a long history of local planning and crafted with the leadership of a 16-person Local Planning Committee and 20-person Advisory Committee, Jamaica’s Plan advances physical improvements that will set the stage for local industry growth in promising sectors; prepare the local workforce for sustainable careers; create inviting gateways to Downtown; and make investments to draw residents and visitors to Downtown Jamaica.

FIGURE I-2. DOWNTOWN JAMAICA



Source: Adolfo Vazquez

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT & OPPORTUNITY

Jamaica's origins date back centuries to its use as a Native American trade route. Jamaica grew rapidly in the early 20th century as the Long Island Rail Road and the expansion of the subway provided direct access to Manhattan. Between 1920 and 1940 Jamaica Avenue commercial real estate boomed with department stores, the first modern supermarket in Queens, and the Valencia Theater, one of five Loews "wonder theaters" in New York City. Starting in the 1930s, Jamaica and its surrounding communities played a key role in American musical culture, with notable locals including jazz and hip-hop artists Billie Holliday, John Coltrane, Run-D.M.C., and LL Cool J.

Beginning in the late 1960s, major economic and cultural shifts associated with suburbanization and urban disinvestment contributed to a gradual decline in Jamaica's downtown. New shopping centers in growing Nassau County lured major retailers, including Macy's, away from Jamaica; anchor businesses relocated their headquarters; and an overall decline in New York City municipal services during this period of financial strain worsened physical conditions. Crime became a major issue in the Downtown in the 1980s. The State responded with a series of major investments beginning in the late 1980s, including the opening of the York College campus in 1986, the completion of the IND subway (now the E line) on Archer Avenue in 1988, the opening of the U.S. Social Security Administration office on Jamaica Avenue the same year, and in 1997, of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration Northwest Regional Laboratory on the York College campus.

Since 2000, Jamaica has seen renewed attention on its downtown. Over the past 15 years, there has been a substantial drop-off in crime, paired with significant public investment. Major investments include the \$350 million AirTrain terminal that connects Jamaica to JFK Airport; an expansive rezoning in 2007 that promoted density around the AirTrain terminal; and more recently a \$153 million commitment from the City of New York through the Jamaica NOW! Action Plan, a year-long community planning process led by the NYC Economic Development Corporation and the Office of Queens Borough President Melinda Katz that recommended 21 initiatives to support equitable growth in Downtown Jamaica. This activity has drawn over \$1 billion of planned or completed private investment, leading to more than 1,500 new apartments, 2,000 hotel rooms, and 200,000 square feet of commercial space completed and pending.

Over this same period, the community has seen substantial population and job growth, and Jamaica's cultural diversity, where no ethnic or racial group constitutes a majority and dozens of nations are represented among new residents, continues to stand out even among the historically diverse Borough of Queens.

## **A COMMUNITY-INFORMED PROCESS**

Jamaica's Strategic Investment Plan builds on a history of local planning, including recent engagement and priorities established by the Jamaica NOW! Action Plan. Members of the Local Planning Committee (LPC) – composed of residents and civic leaders – served as the leaders of this process and created a unified vision for the role that DRI investment should play in building Jamaica's future. To fuel this vision, the LPC guided a community engagement process, which included five LPC meetings, and one Public Open House.

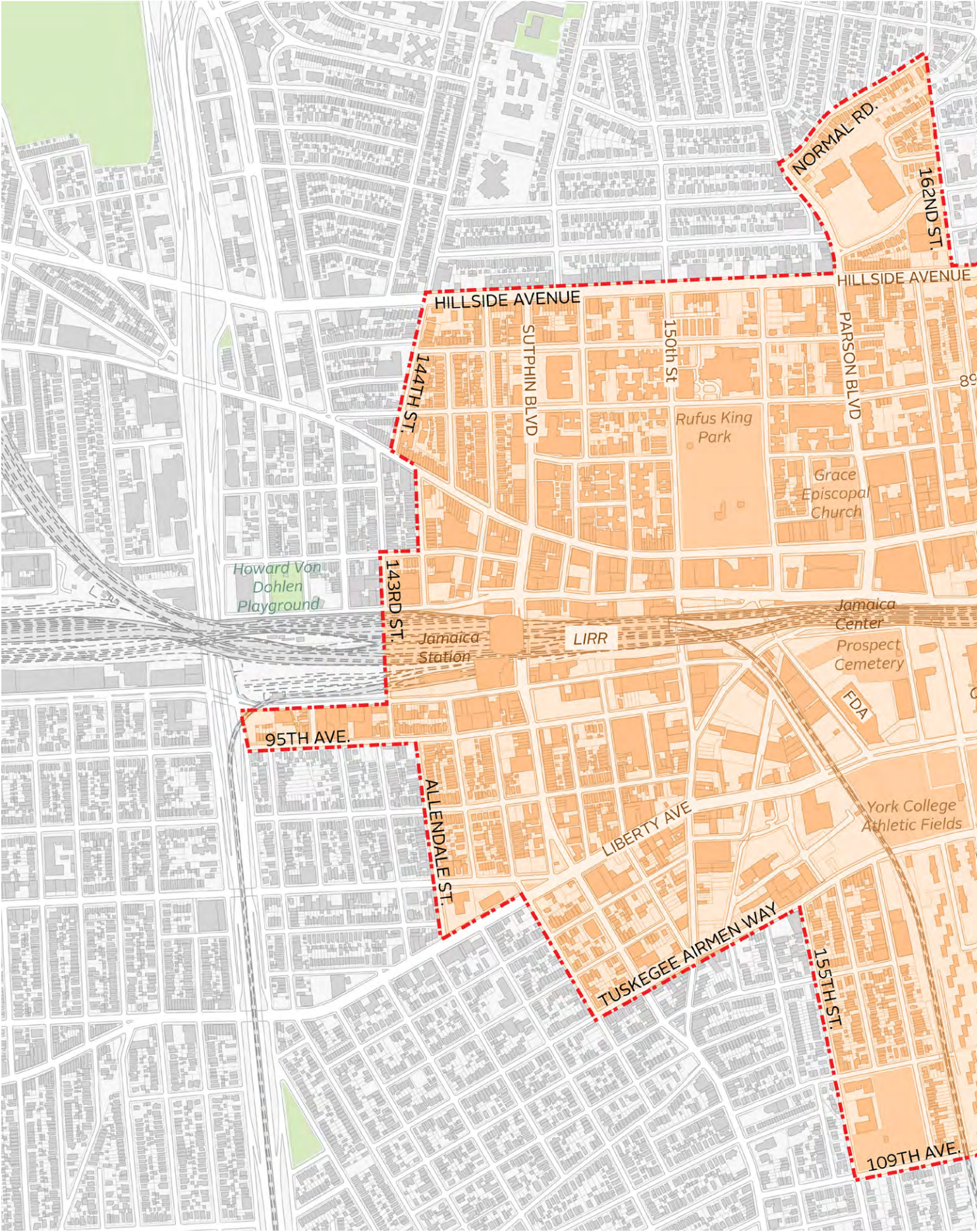
Key takeaways from the discussion included: a need to focus on job growth, job preparation, and job readiness, ensuring Jamaica residents benefit from ongoing growth, and the importance of investing in projects that leverage Jamaica's unique characteristics and assets to attract visitors and employers to help activate the downtown at all hours.

### **COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT**

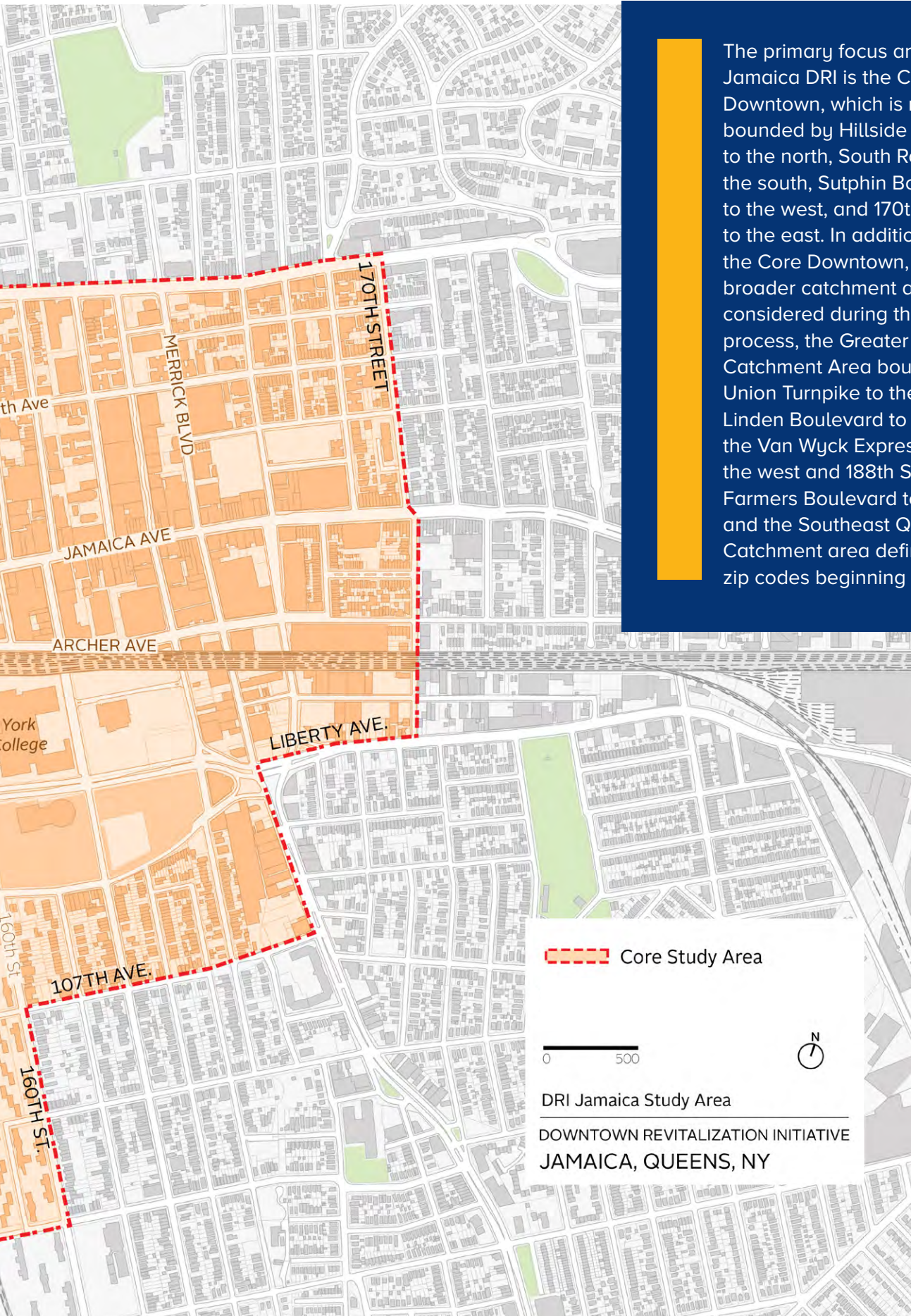
**DRI investment will build upon recent investment to expand economic opportunity for local residents and entrepreneurs; strengthen Downtown Jamaica's cultural and commercial assets; celebrate Jamaica's unique character; and support the development of a vibrant, connected, and inclusive mixed-use downtown core, for the benefit of the local community and the greater Jamaica area.**



FIGURE I-3: STUDY AREA







The primary focus area of Jamaica DRI is the Core Downtown, which is roughly bounded by Hillside Avenue to the north, South Road to the south, Sutphin Boulevard to the west, and 170th Street to the east. In addition to the Core Downtown, two broader catchment areas were considered during the planning process, the Greater Jamaica Catchment Area bounded by Union Turnpike to the north, Linden Boulevard to the south, the Van Wyck Expressway to the west and 188th Street and Farmers Boulevard to the east; and the Southeast Queens Catchment area defined as all zip codes beginning with "114."



FIGURE i-4. JAMAICA DRI PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE



Source: Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.

Investments in Downtown that are consistent with this Vision will catalyze economic growth and increase Downtown's appeal to residents, workers, students, and visitors; increase the time and resources they spend in Downtown; and attract private investment, further strengthening the Downtown experience. To this end and in recognition of Downtown Jamaica's existing assets and challenges, the LPC identified three primary goals for DRI investment:

- 1. Expand career opportunities and strengthen career pathways.** DRI investments should ensure that revitalization benefits those currently living Downtown by giving them the skills they need to succeed in growing industries, and providing avenues for local entrepreneurs to build their businesses, and create jobs.
- 2. Activate Downtown through programming and marketing.** DRI investments should support the development of a vibrant, active Downtown that draws new visitors to the Downtown and appeals to Greater Jamaica residents.
- 3. Connect major centers of activity.** DRI investments should contribute to the creation of a cohesive Downtown that is attractive, well connected and easily traversable by all Downtown users.

These goals are aligned with the goals articulated by the New York City Regional Economic Development Council (NYC REDC) for the continued economic growth of the local and regional economy. Specifically the areas of alignment include goals to improve the quality of

life; create a pro-growth, pro-jobs environment; invest in the future; and foster innovation and inter-regional cooperation. The goals for DRI intentionally build upon the goals that emerged from the Jamaica NOW! process: increase quality jobs and small business support; promote commercial growth and economic development; and improve livability.

Four strategies can help achieve these goals for Downtown's revitalization, and shape recommended investments in Jamaica:

- **Set the stage for local industry growth:** With a dense Downtown core and superior transit accessibility, Jamaica is well positioned to attract businesses in growth industries such as health care, transportation, and the sectors broadly defined as the innovation economy, and to attract local and regional entrepreneurs. Factors that typically attract new businesses include access to a skilled labor force, appropriate workspace, modern infrastructure (including digital infrastructure), and a collaborative industry ecosystem.
- **Prepare the local workforce for sustainable careers:** Investing in the residents of the Downtown is critical to ensuring that today's residents benefit from Jamaica's economic revitalization. Projects that address gaps in existing educational and workforce programming can help increase local employment and wealth creation in the Downtown.
- **Create inviting gateways to downtown:** Jamaica visitors and daily users are today greeted by an unattractive transit hub and crowded streets and sidewalks, and an inconsistent streetscape that makes distances between Downtown nodes seem farther than they are. More inviting gateways could help create a more pleasant experience and draw additional visitors into the Downtown.
- **Draw residents and visitors to the Downtown Core:** Providing compelling reasons for potential visitors to spend time in Downtown – and for daily users and tourists to extend their stay – is required to create an active, all-hours Downtown. Expanding the capacity of cultural institutions, diversifying local dining options, and enhancing the Downtown aesthetic experience would help to boost visitation and economic activity.

## STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PLAN AND PROJECTS

Consistent with these goals, nine transformative projects are recommended for DRI funding that provide a holistic approach to revitalization in Downtown Jamaica. These projects have been prioritized based on their relative impact, cost, feasibility, and public support. The Committee also identified five additional projects that represent priorities for Jamaica but which require additional study or planning to move forward and/or for which other funding sources may be available to support implementation.



FIGURE i-5. OVERALL PROJECT MAP







## PROJECTS

### SET THE STAGE FOR INDUSTRY GROWTH

1. DEVELOP THE GJDC CO-WORKING SPACE
2. DELIVER HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND TO DOWNTOWN JAMAICA

### PREPARE THE LOCAL WORKFORCE FOR SUSTAINABLE CAREERS



3. EXPAND PRIME SKILLS PROGRAM
4. ENHANCE TARGETED CAREER PREP AT EDISON HIGH SCHOOL

### CREATE INVITING GATEWAYS TO DOWNTOWN

5. REVITALIZE THE DOWNTOWN JAMAICA GATEWAY
6. ACTIVATE THE ARCHER ARCHWAYS: CREATE A PUBLIC SPACE AT 159TH STREET
7. ACTIVATE THE ARCHER ARCHWAYS: REOPEN THE UNION HALL ENTRANCE

### DRAW RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO THE DOWNTOWN CORE

8. ESTABLISH THE JAMAICA ARTS CORRIDOR
9. DIVERSIFY DINING OPTIONS DOWNTOWN
10. CREATE A DOWNTOWN ARTS & EVENTS FUND

-  DRI PROJECTS
-  CORRIDOR OF FOCUS

**Table i-1. Priority Projects Recommended for DRI Funding**

#	Project Name	Project Description	DRI Funding Request
<b>SET THE STAGE FOR INDUSTRY GROWTH</b>			
1	<b>Develop the GJDC Co-Working Space</b>	Create a shared workspace for local entrepreneurs and independent professionals at the Moda Building, run by GJDC. The space would host events and business support services, and, in partnership with York College, participate in State economic development initiatives.	\$1,650,000
2	<b>Deliver High-Speed Broadband to Downtown Jamaica</b>	Strengthen Jamaica's broadband infrastructure to support the delivery of high-speed service to existing businesses and the public, attract new businesses in high-growth industries, and create a robust private marketplace for broadband services in Jamaica	\$2,655,000
<b>PREPARE THE LOCAL WORKFORCE FOR SUSTAINABLE CAREERS</b>			
3	<b>Expand Prime Skills Program</b>	Expand Prime Skills – an entrepreneurship training program that helps low-income Jamaica residents launch or grow businesses – by supporting two additional program cohorts, expanding mentorship and support to previous program graduates, and purchasing equipment for program graduates.	\$230,000
4	<b>Enhance Targeted Career Prep at Edison High School</b>	Enhance Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical Education High School's nationally recognized Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs for students and adults in the broader Jamaica community by modernizing equipment and software for programs focused on high-growth industries in Downtown Jamaica and the surrounding area.	\$165,000
<b>CREATE INVITING GATEWAYS TO DOWNTOWN</b>			
5	<b>Revitalize the Downtown Jamaica Gateway</b>	Transform Jamaica Center into an inviting Downtown gateway with a major expansion of pedestrian space and lighting and streetscape improvements.	\$2,500,000
6	<b>Activate the Archer Archways</b> Create a Public Space at 159th Street	Upgrade and activate the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) underpass at 159th Street - the key gateway between York College and Downtown Jamaica. Improvements will include overhead lighting, public art, seating, and event space.	\$1,500,000
7	<b>Activate the Archer Archways</b> Reopen the Union Hall Entrance	Reopen the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) underpass at Union Hall Street to create a direct connection between York College's main Academic Building and the Core Downtown. Improvements will include overhead lighting, public art, and seating.	\$2,000,000
<b>DRAW RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO THE DOWNTOWN CORE</b>			
8	<b>Establish the Jamaica Arts Corridor</b>	Establish a distinctive Jamaica Arts Corridor celebrating local cultural anchors and independent artists. Components will include 1) a Welcome Center at Jamaica Station to introduce visitors to local attractions and events, 2) Marketing Materials to promote Jamaica cultural institutions and heritage, 3) Artistic Lighting Displays along Jamaica Avenue celebrating historical sites, 4) Signature Art Installations at prominent downtown locations, and 5) a Promenade and Arts Space fronting the Milton G. Bassin Performing Arts Center at York College.	\$3,275,000
9	<b>Diversify Dining Options Downtown</b>	Improve dining options and nightlife activity in the Downtown, by creating step-up space for Jamaica-based incubator graduates, providing capital investment funds for a Dedicated Restaurant Space, and establishing a Restaurant Startup Fund.	\$1,450,000
10	<b>Create a Downtown Arts &amp; Events Fund</b>	Establish a multi-year grant fund for art installations and cultural events that draw residents and visitors to Downtown Jamaica, support local cultural organizations, and celebrate local independent artists.	\$600,000
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$16,025,000</b>

**Table i-2. Priority Projects Recommended for Other Funding Sources**

#	Project Name	Project Description
11	<b>Fund Capital Enhancements for JCAL's STEAM Academy</b>	Fund capital enhancements to support the growth of the STEAM Academy (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) at JCAL. The STEAM Academy is designed to teach local youth skills in product design and creative industries, and investment in physical infrastructure will provide a permanent home for the program and equipment to supplement donated materials.
12	<b>York College Campus Expansion</b>	Advance development of key sites on York College's campus by assessing partnerships with health care, cultural, or high-tech partners. Expansion would satisfy York's growing need for classroom and student services space, and provide broader economic or community benefits for Greater Jamaica.
13	<b>Develop a Healthcare Workforce Strategy</b>	Develop a coordinated workforce strategy to identify, expand, and market job training and job placement programs around key growth professions in the health care sector.
14	<b>Develop a Hospitality Workforce Program</b>	Leverage the local hotel development boom to provide job training, job placement, and small business support services to capture economic gains locally.
15	<b>Reclaim the Historic Valencia Theater</b>	Reclaim the historic Valencia Theater as a cultural anchor and events space for Downtown Jamaica.



## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Unlike other DRI communities, Jamaica is not a municipality but a neighborhood of the City of New York and the Borough of Queens. While the City of New York will play a significant role in project implementation, responsibility for project implementation will reside across a variety of local and regional organizations with an interest in improving the Downtown. As one of the most vibrant mixed-use communities outside of Manhattan, Jamaica has a strong network of local economic development and civic organizations that can oversee implementation, although coordination among project leads will be essential. To that end, the Office of Queens Borough President Melinda Katz will serve as an informal organizing entity responsible for monitoring project implementation, facilitating communication among project leads and partners, and serving as a central touchpoint for New York State funding entities.

Timeframes for project implementation are projected to proceed as follows if granted DRI funding:

**Table i-3. Timeline for Implementation**

#	Project	1-3 mos.	3-12 mos.	12+ mos.
1	Develop the GJDC Co-Working Space	Negotiate purchase & complete design	Fit out space	Operate space
2	Deliver High Speed Broadband to Downtown Jamaica	Start study & planning	Complete study & initial interventions	Complete interventions
3	Expand Prime Skills Program	Market program	Launch new cohorts	Seek further funding
4	Enhance Targeted Career Prep at Edison High School	Purchase & install equipment	Utilize equipment in curriculum	
5	Revitalize the Downtown Jamaica Gateway	Plan Phase I	Design Phase II, start Phase I	Complete Phase II, design & complete Phase III
6	Activate the Archer Archways – Create a Public Space at 159th Street	Scope project	Design	Construct & initiate programming
7	Activate the Archer Archways – Reopen the Union Hall Entrance	Scope project	Design	Construct
8	Establish the Jamaica Arts Corridor	Design planning, establish locations & guidelines	Design & installation	Complete installations, construct Promenade
9	Diversify Dining Options Downtown	Design Step-Up Space, Destination Competition, and Fund eligibility	Renovation Step-Up Space & select tenants, begin Fund awards, market Competition	Operate Step-Up Space, select, design & build Destination Restaurant
10	Create a Downtown Arts & Events Fund	Establish eligibility, application process, & marketing for Fund	Solicit applications and select awardees for year one	Solicit applications and select awardees for subsequent years





PART ONE:

# Jamaica Downtown Vision Plan

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## SECTION I:

# Downtown Profile & Assessment

### OVERVIEW

Jamaica is one of four commercial and cultural centers of the Borough of Queens, and one of New York City's most vibrant downtowns outside of Manhattan. Jamaica is a regional transit hub, serving more than 50 subway, bus, and commuter rail lines, and 500,000 commuters each day; a regional employment hub, with major civic and institutional anchors, and over 11,000 jobs; and a local cultural hub, home to the Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning, the King Manor Museum, and other institutions.<sup>1</sup> As such, in addition to its resident population of 176,000, Jamaica serves as an urban center for the 778,000 residents of Southeast Queens and a broader population encompassing neighborhoods across Queens and Brooklyn, and portions of Nassau County.<sup>2</sup>

Jamaica's origins date back centuries to its use as a Native American trade route.<sup>3</sup> The Village of Jamaica was incorporated in 1814 and served as a key trading post throughout the 19th century. Jamaica grew rapidly in the early 20th century with the development of mass transit; the Jamaica Long Island Rail Road Station opened in 1913, an extension of the elevated transit line opened in 1918, and the Hillside Avenue IND subway extension opened in 1937; the three lines established quick access from Jamaica to employment centers in Manhattan.

Between 1920 and 1940 Jamaica Avenue commercial real estate boomed with department stores, the first modern supermarket in Queens, and the Valencia Theater, one of five Loews "wonder theaters" in New York City. Starting in the 1930s, Jamaica and the surrounding communities of St. Albans, Addisleigh Park, Hollis, and South Jamaica played a key role in American musical culture, particularly in the evolution of jazz and hip-hop. Among the artists

FIGURE I-1. JAMAICA HARVEST FESTIVAL



Source: Greater Jamaica Development Corporation

born or residing in the greater Jamaica area are Billie Holiday, Count Basie, Ella Fitzgerald, Lena Horne, John Coltrane, Clarence Williams, Fats Waller, Milt Wilton, Run-D.M.C., Salt-n-Pepa, LL Cool J, and 50 Cent.

Beginning in the late 1960s, major economic and cultural shifts associated with suburbanization and urban disinvestment contributed to a gradual decline in Jamaica's Downtown. New shopping centers in growing Nassau County lured major retailers, including Macy's, away from Jamaica; anchor businesses relocated their headquarters; and an overall decline in New York City municipal services worsened physical conditions. Crime became a major issue in the Downtown Jamaica in the 1980s.

## OPPORTUNITY: A DOWNTOWN JAMAICA RENAISSANCE

Beginning in the late 1980s, the State led a series of major investments to plant the seeds of Downtown Jamaica's renewal. York College of the City University of New York, which opened without a permanent home in 1966, relocated to its Jamaica campus in 1986. A decade after the Jamaica El was demolished, the IND subway (now the E line) opened on Archer Avenue in 1988, providing a modern transit connection and opening up Jamaica's streetscape. The same year, the U.S. Social Security Administration completed its Jamaica Avenue regional office, and in 1997, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration opened its Northeast Regional Laboratory on the campus of York College.

Since 2000, Jamaica has seen a renewed focus on downtown revitalization. Substantial investments around the Long Island Rail Road station area have solidified Jamaica's status as a regional transportation hub, including the \$350 million AirTrain terminal connecting Jamaica to every terminal at JFK Airport, and a new route of the MTA's Select Bus Service launched in 2015 connecting Jamaica to Flushing, Queens. In 2007, the City of New York enacted a 368-block rezoning to allow increased density in the Core Downtown, while preserving the neighborhood's character in farther out areas; this rezoning has since spurred the planned development of more than 1,500 apartments, 2,000 hotel rooms, and hundreds of thousands of square feet of commercial space.<sup>4</sup>

The recent culmination of these efforts was the development by the New York City Economic Development Corporation, the Office of Queens Borough President Melinda Katz, and community leaders of the Jamaica NOW! Action Plan, a blueprint for \$153 million of investment in the local economy, built environment, and quality of life.

Looking ahead, as Jamaica leaders seek to build on these recent investments, opportunities for downtown revitalization and local economic development are characterized by four primary observations, which are explored in greater detail in the following sections:

1. **Development has boomed, but steps must be taken to ensure benefits accrue locally:** Following the 2007 rezoning, there has been significant investment in new commercial and residential development, particularly hotels and rental apartments. However, residents and community leaders have expressed concern that growth could displace Jamaica residents and businesses absent strategic interventions.
2. **Employment is up, but unemployment remains high and barriers limit industry growth:** Total employment in Jamaica has grown significantly over the past 12 years, but local unemployment remains persistently high compared to the rest of New York City. Additionally, while there is a strong network of job placement and workforce development programs located in and around the Downtown, community leaders have expressed concern over a lack of clear career development pathways for residents, especially youth.

- 3. Transportation networks encourage growth, but connectivity within the core is strained:** Jamaica has a wealth of transportation options, including 49 bus routes (many originating and terminating in the Core Downtown), 4 subway lines with 5 stations Downtown, a major LIRR station, and the AirTrain connecting the Core Downtown directly to JFK Airport. Zoning regulations promote density and effective urban design. However, navigating through the Downtown area remains a challenge due to poor wayfinding, crowded streets, and physical barriers, most notably the LIRR embankment on Archer Avenue.
- 4. The core is vibrant during workdays, but lacks activity during evenings and weekends:** With a diverse mix of users, Downtown Jamaica is bustling during the workweek, especially during peak commuting hours. However, after dark and over the weekend, activity declines dramatically. Storefronts close and roll down metal barriers, creating an unattractive and unwelcoming environment. Additionally, although there are numerous cultural institutions, a rich musical history, and an emerging arts scene, limited awareness and coordination of activities limit visitation.

The Jamaica DRI Strategic Investment Plan seeks to address the core challenges underlying these observations to promote inclusive and sustainable economic development and improve the physical environment for the benefit of Downtown Jamaica and the broader communities of Southeast Queens.

## STUDY AREA, PAST PLANNING, & RECENT INVESTMENT

### Study Areas

The primary focus area of Jamaica DRI is the Core Downtown, outlined in Figure I-2, which is roughly bounded by Hillside Avenue to the north, South Road to the south, Sutphin Boulevard to the west, and 170th Street to the east. The area includes the most active, transit-connected portion of Jamaica, and includes the boundaries of three retail districts—the Jamaica Center Business Improvement District (BID), the Sutphin Boulevard BID, and the 165th Street Mall Improvement Association—the Jamaica Station and Jamaica Center transit hubs, the entirety of the Jamaica Brownfield Opportunity Area, and major community anchors such as York College, the Queen Central Library, the Listing Court Houses, the Social Security Administration building, and other cultural organizations. The area intentionally includes the campus of York College of the City University of New York, as well as several primary and secondary educational institutions, to reflect a desire on the part of the Local Planning Committee to focus on strengthening youth and workforce initiatives and to address geographical areas that were not a major focus of the Jamaica NOW! Action Plan projects. The Core Downtown Study Area measures approximately 1 square mile.

In addition to this core area, investment decisions will consider the impact on two broader areas whose residents, businesses, and visitors routinely interact with Downtown Jamaica. The first, the Greater Jamaica Catchment Area, illustrated in Figure I-3, includes the broader

Jamaica neighborhood, bounded roughly by Union Turnpike to the north, Linden Boulevard to the south, the Van Wyck Expressway to the west, and 188th Street and Farmers Boulevard to the east. This same area was the proposed focus area of the DRI application submitted by the City of New York on behalf of Jamaica, and represents the primary residential user base of the Core Downtown.

The second, the Southeast Queens Catchment Area, also illustrated in Figure I-3, contains a broader set of communities, including South Jamaica, St. Albans, Ozone Park, and Richmond Hills, and is defined as all zip codes beginning with “114.” Residents of this area have historically considered Jamaica’s Core Downtown as the primary neighborhood center for shopping, entertainment, and cultural activities. This area also contains John F. Kennedy International Airport, a major employment and visitor-generating asset connected directly to Downtown Jamaica.

### Recent Planning Efforts and Investments

Jamaica DRI builds upon significant recent planning efforts that have laid the groundwork for Jamaica’s revitalization and economic development, beginning with a comprehensive rezoning – The Jamaica Plan – enacted in 2007 that rezoned 368 blocks of Jamaica to allow for significant commercial and mixed-use development within the Downtown Core. Since the rezoning, Jamaica has experienced more than \$1 billion in private development, especially around Jamaica Station. Presently, more than 2,500 apartments, 2,000 hotel rooms spread across 14 projects, and 200,000 square feet of commercial space are completed, underway, or planned in Downtown Jamaica.<sup>5</sup>

Building on this momentum, in 2015, the City of New York, led by the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) and Queens Borough President Melinda Katz, conducted a comprehensive vision plan for Jamaica resulting in the Jamaica NOW! Action Plan. Following an extensive community planning process, Jamaica NOW! recommended 21 short-, medium-, and long-term projects to guide catalytic investment in Jamaica (see Table I-1). The projects are organized under three goals:

- **Increase quality jobs and small business support:** The Plan seeks to drive economic growth by “connecting workers to high growth industries and quality employers, enhancing and expanding youth and adult training programs, and supporting existing businesses and budding entrepreneurs.”
- **Promote commercial growth and economic development:** The Plan looks to “leverage existing assets to spur the local economy and build a more dynamic neighborhood identity by revitalizing commercial corridors, bolstering Jamaica’s cultural district, and strengthening York College’s role as a downtown anchor.”
- **Improve Livability:** The Plan provides a path to “improve quality of life for residents and visitors alike through targeted investments in transportation, health and safety, parks and open space, and affordable and mixed income housing.”

Implementation of projects identified through Jamaica NOW! – the responsibility of numerous City agencies – is being guided and monitored by the Jamaica NOW! Leadership Council, a



**Core Study Area**

Source: HRA Advisors

0 200

**DRI Jamaica Study Area**  
**DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE**  
**JAMAICA, QUEENS, NY**

FIGURE I-3. MAP OF JAMAICA DRI STUDY AREA & CATCHMENT AREAS



group of community representatives advised by the Office of the Queens Borough President. The Jamaica DRI planning process leverages the significant community engagement process conducted during Jamaica NOW! and to focuses on geographical and topical areas of priority not already addressed by Jamaica NOW! and related projects.

In addition to The Jamaica Plan and Jamaica NOW! significant recent studies related to Downtown Jamaica revitalization include:

- **Jamaica Brownfield Opportunity (BOA) Area Nomination Study and Implementation Strategy (GJDC), 2010 and 2015:** The BOA process identified goals for development within the core industrial area within Jamaica and identified parcels whose development could advance those goals. The key goals include improving the retail amenities available for Downtown users, especially the opening of a “tablecloth” restaurant; the creation of quality jobs; and the creation of affordable housing. Several parcels were identified, with three of them being identified as immediate priorities.
- **York College Master Plan Amendment (York College), 2011:** An update of the 1996 Amendment, the plan provides strategies to manage York College’s need for additional space to accommodate growing enrollment. It provides short-, medium-, and long-term priorities and presents alternative options for expansion projects depending on the level of funding provided.
- **Jamaica Airport Gateway Study (Regional Plan Association, with GJDC), Forthcoming 2017:** A part of the Regional Plan Association’s Fourth Regional Plan, the Gateway Study will identify ways Downtown Jamaica can leverage its proximity to John F. Kennedy International Airport for community and economic development. The study will provide recommendations related to urban design, land use, and connectivity.
- **Downtown Jamaica Comprehensive Streetscape Plan (NYC Department of Transportation (NYCDOT)), Forthcoming 2017:** Funded in part by Jamaica NOW!, the Streetscape Plan will articulate a comprehensive streetscape framework and vision for a vibrant Downtown. NYCDOT has conducted extensive community outreach as part of the study, and will incorporate the community feedback into its recommendations.
- **Jamaica Transportation Study (NYCDOT), Forthcoming:** Taking place concurrently with the Streetscape Plan, the Transportation Study will evaluate the existing transportation network within Jamaica, and recommend changes for enhanced mobility and connectivity.

**Table I-1. Jamaica NOW Status**

Program	Goal	Status
Launch a program to train and jump-start the next generation of Jamaica entrepreneurs and food businesses.	Increase quality jobs	Queens Library FEASTS program launched
Expand JobNet and existing youth programs to support additional after-school job preparation and placement activities.	Increase quality jobs	In planning
Connect residents to quality job opportunities through New York Alliance for Careers in Healthcare (NYACH).	Increase quality jobs	Ongoing program not Jamaica exclusive
Strengthen Career and Technical Education (CTE) programming at Thomas Edison High School by increasing access to work-based learning for students and improving partnerships with businesses.	Increase quality jobs	In planning
Establish a working group with local workforce providers, employers, and local academic institutions to identify opportunities to provide stronger, industry-linked skills training and workforce development programs that align with the City's Career Pathways framework.	Increase quality jobs	Pre-planning
Fund redesigns of storefronts for local businesses on Sutphin Blvd and release a Business Guide for Hillside Ave and other key corridors.	Promote commercial growth	In implementation
Actively explore unification of downtown Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to strengthen marketing, programs and service delivery	Promote commercial growth	BID unification under discussion
Establish the Jamaica Arts Alliance to better strengthen connections between artists and existing arts and culture institutions	Promote commercial growth	Building Community Capacity founded, discussions ongoing
Fund a \$250,000 study to determine the cost and scope of Jamaica Avenue streetscape improvements.	Promote commercial growth	Study underway
Provide technical assistance to support York College's effort to develop underutilized properties through the START -UP NY Program.	Promote commercial growth	Pre-planning
Encourage absentee property owners to activate vacant and derelict sites in Jamaica's downtown core with new housing and economic activity.	Promote commercial growth	Pre-planning
Develop a mixed-income and mixed-use project at the former NYPD garage on 168th St.	Improve livability	Omni New York selected as site developer
Install WalkNYC directional maps and obtain funding to study and develop a strategic transportation plan with multi-modal transit options in the downtown core.	Improve livability	In implementation
Implement a new Select Bus Service Route from Jamaica to Flushing and study service needs on additional high-demand corridors.	Improve livability	Launched
Expand opportunities for affordable homeownership and create small multifamily affordable rental buildings in Jamaica.	Improve livability	In implementation
Connect homeowners, tenants, and property owners to educational programs, such as foreclosure counseling and financial literacy, through HPD's Public Outreach and Education unit.	Improve livability	In implementation



Program	Goal	Status
Fund and install additional NYPD surveillance cameras to improve safety in high-traffic corridors.	Improve livability	Sites selected and funded
Provide increased resources and assistance to community partners to reduce health risks related to cardiovascular disease.	Improve livability	In planning
Enhance Rufus King Park to accommodate improved usage and programming and identify funding to create and implement community-sourced designs to upgrade Brinkerhoff Mall and other parks.	Improve livability	Phase 1 construction complete
Complete the Station Plaza project to improve safety and traffic circulation on Archer Ave and Sutphin Blvd.	Improve livability	In design and acquisition phase
Construct new water mains and relieve constraints in the existing sewer network to accommodate demand for new development.	Improve livability	In design phase

### Recent Public Investments

Recent planning efforts, along with significant attention by local and regional entities, have resulted in **more than \$600 million in planned and completed investments in public realm improvements and programming, including:**

- **AirTrain Station:** A \$350 million Jamaica terminal completed in 2003 by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, linking the neighborhood to all JFK terminals directly.
- **Children’s Library Discovery Center at Queens Central Library:** A \$45 million expansion of the Queens Central Library building in 2011 designed to create an interactive learning environment for children with a focus on science, technology, engineering, and math.
- **Rufus King Park:** Funded through Jamaica NOW!, a \$2 million project now underway by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to renovate the park’s gazebo and repave pedestrian pathways.
- **Atlantic Avenue Extension:** A planned \$20 million project by NYCDOT that will ease vehicular flow to the Jamaica Station area and create a new Gateway Park to serve as a western entranceway to Downtown Jamaica.
- **Station Plaza:** Funded through Jamaica NOW!, a planned \$50 million project by NYCEDC to improve pedestrian safety and traffic circulation at the intersection of Archer Avenue and Sutphin Boulevard, immediately in front of Jamaica Station

## Regional Significance of Local Revitalization

The New York City Regional Economic Development Council (NYC REDC), which has a mission of accelerating economic growth and job creation in the five boroughs with a focus on economically distressed communities and populations, has long viewed Jamaica as a priority area. In its original 2011 Strategic Plan, the NYC REDC identified Jamaica as one of 15 opportunity zones in the City due to its thriving commercial corridors and superior transportation network, and, as detailed below, has since awarded more than \$2 million to projects in Jamaica through the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) process. By selecting Jamaica as New York City's DRI community, the NYC REDC cited the development spurred by the 2007 rezoning, the Regional Plan Association's ongoing planning efforts, and the City's substantial commitment in the form of Jamaica Now as representing a unique moment to develop a coordinated strategy that would unify recent planning and catalyze revitalization in Downtown Jamaica.

To that end, in addition to local and City priorities, the Jamaica DRI goals and strategies build on and are aligned with the goals articulated by the NYC REDC for broader regional growth, including:

- **Improve quality of life:** The NYC REDC has focused on improving quality of life by funding a variety of neighborhood enhancing projects in Jamaica such as contributing to the development of 101 affordable rental units at the Norman Towers, 65 affordable rental units at the Rufus King Court Apartments, and Sutphin Boulevard façade improvements.
- **Create a pro-growth, pro-jobs environment:** The NYC REDC has fostered the creation of a pro-growth, pro-jobs environment by funding projects in Jamaica such as the energy efficient hydroponic rooftop greenhouse at Gotham Greens that is slated to create 40 permanent jobs.
- **Invest in the future:** The NYC REDC has focused on forward-looking investments that ensure New York City's workforce is well positioned for future industry growth, including by funding the Members Assistant Program of Sheet Metal Workers Local 28, which enrolls Jamaica residents in occupational training classes.
- **Foster innovation and inter-regional cooperation:** The NYC REDC has fostered innovation and inter-regional cooperation by funding a wide array of innovation-oriented developments across the City like Harlem Biospace, Cambridge Biolabs, BioBAT, and New Lab. It actively promotes the START-UP NY campus at York College and seeks opportunities to identify innovation-based businesses to Jamaica.

These four goals are tied together by the NYC REDC's overarching focus on job growth and economic opportunity for New York City residents. The Jamaica DRI's goals and strategies reflect and build on this key area of focus.

FIGURE I-4. THE AIRTRAIN



Source: Greater Jamaica Development Corporation

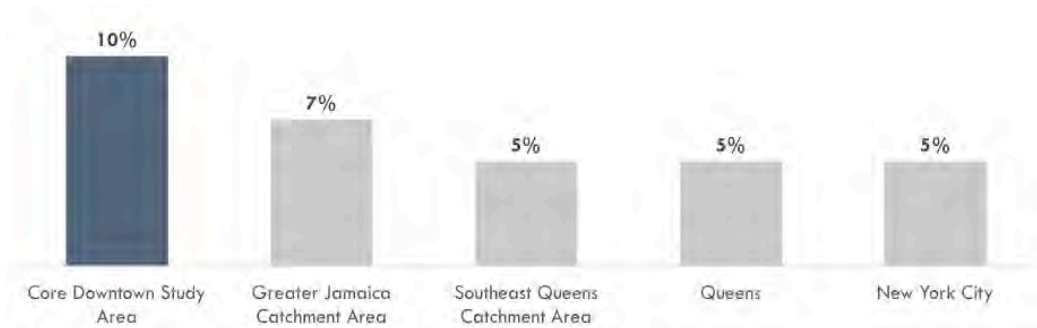
## JAMAICA TODAY

### Jamaica Residents

**Approximately 176,000 people live within the Greater Jamaica Catchment Area, of which approximately 20% – or 37,000 reside within the Core Downtown Study Area.** Both populations have grown substantially since 2000; the Core Downtown population has grown by 10% and the Greater Jamaica population by 7%, compared with 5% in Southeast Queens, Queens overall, and New York City.<sup>6</sup>

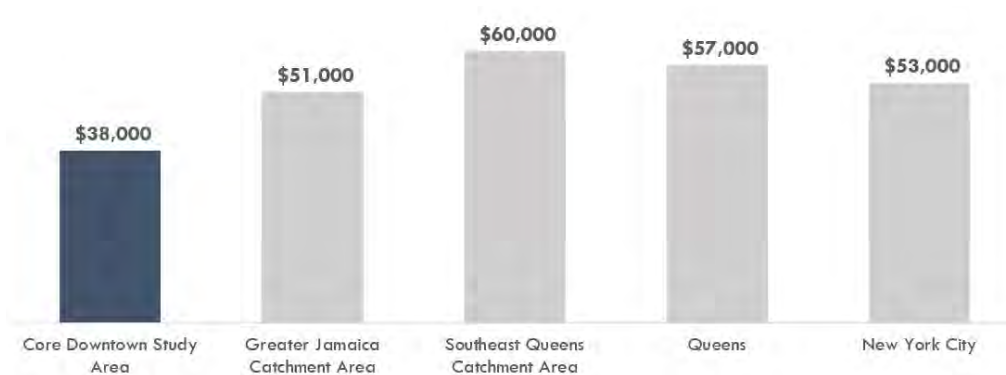
Downtown Jamaica and the broader catchment areas feature a highly diverse population in terms of race, ethnicity, and cultural background, even when compared with the famously multicultural population of Queens as a whole. 32% of Downtown Jamaica residents identify as black, 21% as Asian, 16% as white, and 30% as more than one race or another race, per American Community Survey data; across all races, 41% of Core Downtown residents are of Hispanic origin, substantially higher than the 25% in Greater Jamaica and 22% in Southeast Queens. According to the New York State Office of New Americans, 44% of Greater Jamaica's residents are foreign born. The top five countries of foreign birth are Guyana, Bangladesh, Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago, and the Dominican Republic.

FIGURE I-5. POPULATION GROWTH 2000-2016



Source: ESRI

FIGURE I-6. MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (ROUNDED)



Source: ESRI

Economically, household incomes in the Core Downtown Study Area are significantly lower than in Greater Jamaica, Southeast Queens, or Queens or New York City as a whole. In addition, the Greater Jamaica area, while on par with New York City overall, has modestly lower household incomes than the broader Southeast Queens catchment area.

### A Transportation Hub

**Downtown Jamaica is a multi-modal transportation center, acting as a local transit hub for Southeast Queens residents and a gateway to New York City for regional travelers from Long Island as well as domestic and international travelers from JFK Airport.** Downtown Jamaica has long been defined by its wealth of transportation options, with 49 bus routes and two major bus terminals, four subway lines, eight Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) lines, the AirTrain to JFK Airport, and a network of historically unregulated “commuter vans” that fill in gaps in the transit network. Combined, these transportation assets carry more than 500,000 people in, out, and through Jamaica on an average weekday.<sup>7</sup> This enormous activity has shaped Jamaica’s streetscape, environment, and economy.

However, this activity also poses significant challenges. The LIRR runs on an embankment just south of Archer Avenue that bisects the north and south halves of the neighborhood and makes cross-neighborhood circulation an unappealing option for downtown users.



FIGURE I-7. RUFUS KING PARK



Source: Greater Jamaica Development Corporation

Unattractive or blank embankment walls have limited adjacent development. The significant bus traffic running through Jamaica contributes to making the streets feel over-crowded and unpleasant to navigate. Further, business and community leaders report that, to date, LIRR and AirTrain connections have not significantly expanded the number of visitors to downtown, as commuters and travelers view Jamaica as a place to be passed through, not one to explore. City and local representatives have consistently cited transportation improvements – in terms of physical layout and potential to better leverage traveler volumes – as high priorities for downtown investment.

### The Built Environment

**Downtown Jamaica is a bustling hub of living, working, shopping, and learning**, with the most active uses concentrated along Jamaica and Archer Avenues between Sutphin Boulevard and 168th Street. Retail and office uses are predominantly located along Jamaica and Hillside avenues, Sutphin Boulevard, and at the 165th Street Mall. 11,400 housing units,<sup>8</sup> primarily in buildings containing 20 units or more, are within the Core Downtown; whereas surrounding neighborhoods consist largely of one- and two-family homes, Downtown Jamaica is predominated by six- to eight-story multifamily structures, with a significant concentration around Rufus King Park. Institutional and public facilities are also a dominant use Downtown, with the largest being York College, which is located south of the LIRR tracks.

There is also a significant industrial concentration south of the LIRR tracks, on either side of York College, although this district was not the focus of Jamaica DRI given recent planning work through the Brownfield Opportunity Area program.

Downtown Jamaica boasts a rich set of historically and architecturally significant buildings that contribute to the overall character of the area. Fourteen Downtown buildings are designated as New York City landmarks, most of them in the Core Downtown area. The architecturally significant landmarks date from early 17th- and 18th-century buildings such as the Chapel at Prospect Cemetery (now the Illinois Jacquet Performance Space) and Rufus King Manor, to mid-20th-century buildings such as the Queens Supreme Court and former Valencia Theater, and represent a range of architectural styles that align with the historical development of the area. Some newer developments, such as the Moda Apartments and the proposed mixed-use development adjacent to JCAL, are carefully integrating the new development with the historically significant portions, thus preserving the historic legacy of Downtown Jamaica.

## Activity Hubs

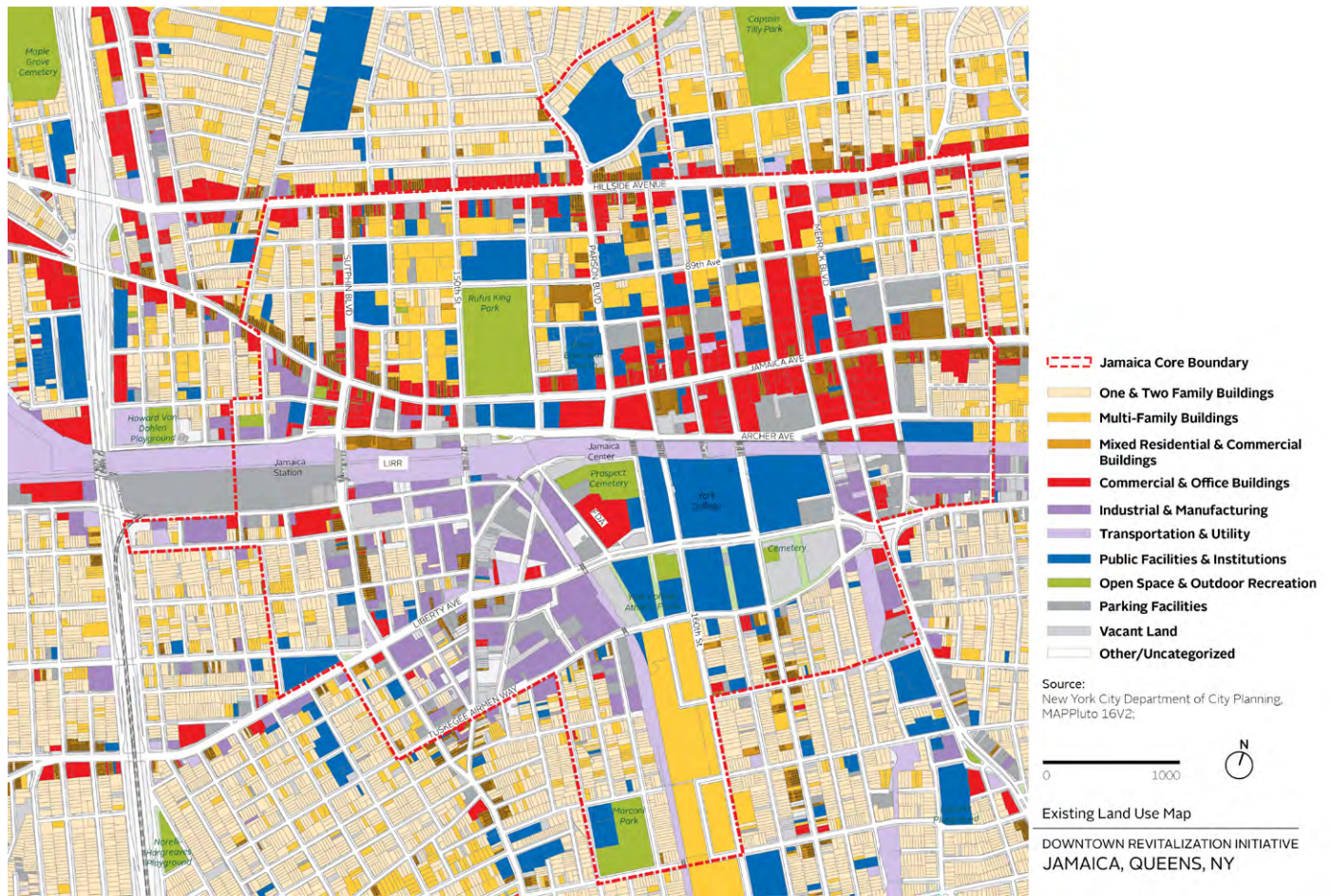
**Activity in Downtown Jamaica is centered around five key hubs, each marked by institutional and cultural anchors as well as planned or future development.** The hubs, illustrated in Figure I-9, are listed below from west to east:

1. **Jamaica Station**, including Sutphin Boulevard near Archer and Jamaica avenues;
2. **Civic Center**, encompassing the Queens Civil Court and State Supreme Court;
3. **Jamaica/Parsons**, extending from the Jamaica Center subway to the Moda Building and including Rufus King Park, the YMCA, a multiplex, and several major employers;
4. **Jamaica/Merrick**, including 165th Street Pedestrian Mall, the Queens Public Library, the Bus Terminal, and several recent developments;
5. **York College**, located south of the LIRR tracks and including the college and Prospect Cemetery.

Jamaica Avenue is the main spine that connects most of these hubs along with the major north-south connectors, Sutphin Boulevard, Parsons Boulevard, and Merrick Boulevard. While each activity hub is vibrant and active on its own, a lack of consistent signage, wayfinding, or programmatic connections limits the degree to which each hub feels part of a single downtown. The LIRR railroad embankment also creates a major barrier in the north-south connectivity of the activity hubs.

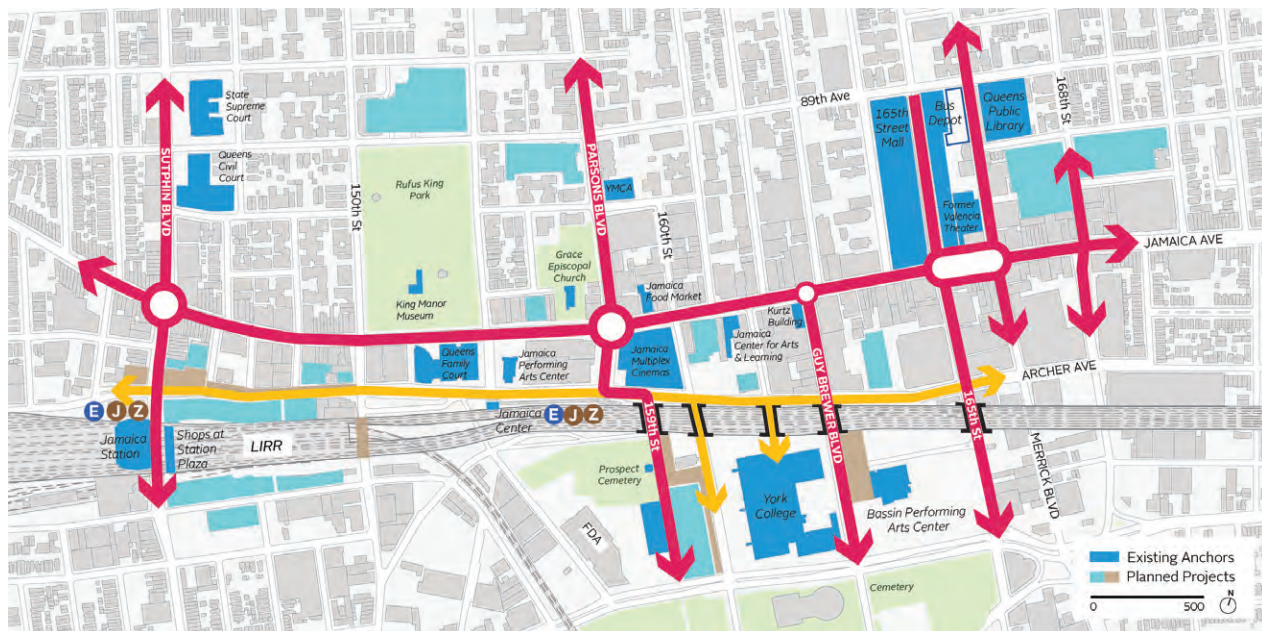


FIGURE I-8. LAND USE



Source: Beyer Blinder Belle

FIGURE I-9. NEIGHBORHOOD CLUSTERS AND BARRIERS



Source: Beyer Blinder Belle

## KEY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Downtown Jamaica's existing economic and physical context – and near-term opportunities for downtown revitalization and economic development – are characterized by the four primary observations outlined in the “Overview” above:

1. Development has boomed, but steps must be taken to ensure benefits accrue locally.
2. Employment is up, but unemployment remains high and barriers limit industry growth.
3. Transportation networks encourage growth, but connectivity within the core is strained.
4. The core is vibrant during workdays, but lacks activity during evenings and weekends.

### 1. Development has boomed, but steps must be taken to ensure benefits accrue locally.

**Jamaica underwent a significant rezoning in 2007.** The 2007 Jamaica Plan rezoned 368 blocks of Jamaica to allow for significant commercial and mixed-use development and expand overall development capacity within the Downtown core and particularly around Jamaica Station, on Archer and Jamaica avenues, and along Sutphin Boulevard. The rezoning also preserved lower-density housing outside of the Downtown core. Within the core, residentially zoned areas allow for buildings that are typically seven to eight stories, while the commercially zoned areas closest to transit hubs have a wide variety of densities, with the densest areas allowing for buildings that could be 20 or more stories tall.

The rezoning had several other goals in addition to increasing density:

1. Created a Special Downtown Jamaica District with extensive urban design guidelines pertaining to glazing, street walls, retail continuity, sidewalk widening, sidewalk cafes, and other streetscaping elements such as street tree plantings. The district generally allows for greater density as its bulk provisions allow taller buildings with higher floor area ratios.
2. Preserved the Jamaica Industrial Business Zone (IBZ) for industrial uses. IBZs, a special designation by the City of New York, seek to protect existing manufacturing uses and encourage industrial growth by providing businesses with specialized assistance and making available tax credits. Non-industrial uses such as hotels and other nightclubs, technically permitted in manufacturing zones, are discouraged within IBZs.

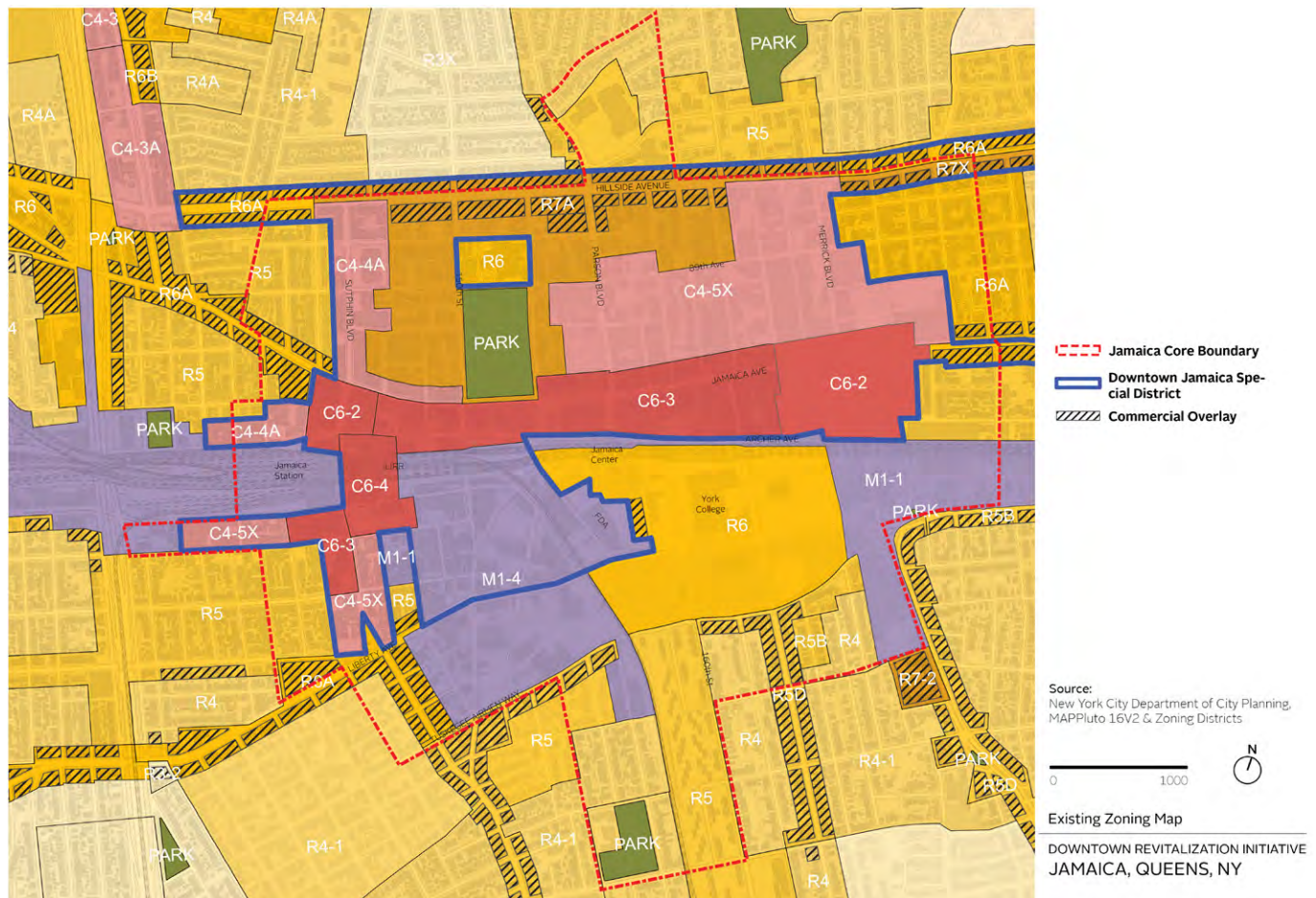


3. Supported the development of affordable housing and open space through zoning bonuses. Two major public priorities during the rezoning were ensuring the continued affordability of the neighborhood as development unfolded and addressing Downtown Jamaica's lack of usable open space, especially in light of increased density. To this end, the rezoning awarded density and height bonuses to projects that provide affordable housing and open space.

Since the rezoning Jamaica has experienced a surge in private development, especially around Jamaica Station. Presently, more than 2,500 apartments, 2,000 hotel rooms spread across 14 projects, and 200,000 square feet of commercial space – collectively representing more than \$1 billion of private investment – are completed, underway, or planned in Downtown Jamaica.<sup>9</sup> Major projects include:

- **Moda Apartments:** A \$194 million development bringing 346 units of mixed-income housing to the corner of Parsons Boulevard and 90th Avenue. The project, which included an adaptive reuse of the Queens Family Court building into community facility and retail space, was completed in 2010.
- **Norman Towers:** A two-building development on 160th and 161st streets completed by The Bluestone Organization in 2014 and containing 101 mixed-income affordable housing units and ground-floor commercial space.
- **160-08 Jamaica Avenue:** A 150,000 square-foot retail development in the heart on the Jamaica Avenue corridor, just east of Parsons Boulevard, that will include a TJ Maxx, H&M, and Burlington Coat Factory. The project, by United American Land, includes a restoration of the historic Jamaica Savings Bank building.
- **Marriott Courtyard & Fairfield Inn:** A \$68 million, dual-brand hotel development on Archer Avenue, one block from Jamaica Station, with 330 rooms. The project broke ground in late 2016.
- **Hilton Garden Inn:** A \$54 million hotel development on Sutphin Boulevard, across from the AirTrain terminal at Jamaica Station. The project will rise to 27 stories and include 225 rooms.
- **The Crossing:** A \$400 million mixed-use development project led by BRP Companies adjacent to Jamaica Station, which will bring 580 units of mixed-income affordable housing, with 50,000 square feet of community facility and retail space, and 300 parking spaces.
- **Former NYPD Garage Site:** A mixed-use development on 168th Street led by Omni New York that will replace a current New York Police Department parking garage with 350 affordable apartments, ground-floor retail, community facility space, and parking. Disposition of the City-owned site was part of the Jamaica NOW! Action Plan.

FIGURE I-10. ZONING DISTRICTS



Source: NYC Department of City Planning; design by Beyer Blinder Belle

- **90-02 168th Street:** A proposed mixed-use development replacing a parking lot on 168th Street with at least 250 mixed-income housing units, including a set-aside for artist housing, and community space. The site is currently owned by GJDC, which is leading a developer selection process.
- **Mary Immaculate Hospital Site:** A planned multi-phased, four-building residential development led by the Chetrit Group on the former hospital site across from Rufus King Park, which could include more than 300 units.

Residential developments have been a mix of affordable and market-rate rentals. Like the existing residential market, which is 86% rental-occupied, all major developments listed above are being developed as rentals. Of the projects listed, Moda Apartments and Norman Towers added 336 affordable units, (out of 437 total) for low-income and middle-income families earning between 40% and 175% of Area Median Income, equivalent to an annual income of approximately \$30,000 to \$160,000 for a family of four.<sup>10</sup> The Crossing and Former NYPD Garage Site will add another 580 and 350 units affordable at a range of income levels respectively.

FIGURE I-11. HILTON GARDEN INN DEVELOPMENT



Source: Greater Jamaica Development Corporation

FIGURE I-12. THE CROSSING AT JAMAICA STATION



Source: Greater Jamaica Development Corporation

The Mary Immaculate Hospital site redevelopment is expected to produce up to 1,000 unsubsidized market-rate units. Although target rents have not yet been established for this development, rents for market-rate units at Moda Apartments are currently listed at \$1,625 for a studio, \$1,925 for a one-bedroom unit, and \$2,550 for a two-bedroom unit. Across all units, rents in multifamily buildings are approximately \$28 per square foot, having recovered to 2007 levels following a decline during the Great Recession.<sup>11</sup>

**Looking ahead to future growth, there is a limited supply of vacant, undeveloped properties in Downtown Jamaica,** and several of those that currently exist are the subject of active planning and development efforts. A key resource for identifying these lots is the Jamaica Brownfield Opportunity Area Implementation Strategy. The report lists nine strategic sites contained in the Station Area BOA near the LIRR station, listed in Figure I-13. Three of these sites, the Hilton Garden Inn, The Crossing at Jamaica Station, and the Marriott Courtyard/Fairfield Inn and Suites, are undergoing active development. Three additional sites have been targeted as intermediate-term opportunities (two to four years until the start of construction), while the balance of sites are likely four or more years away from development.

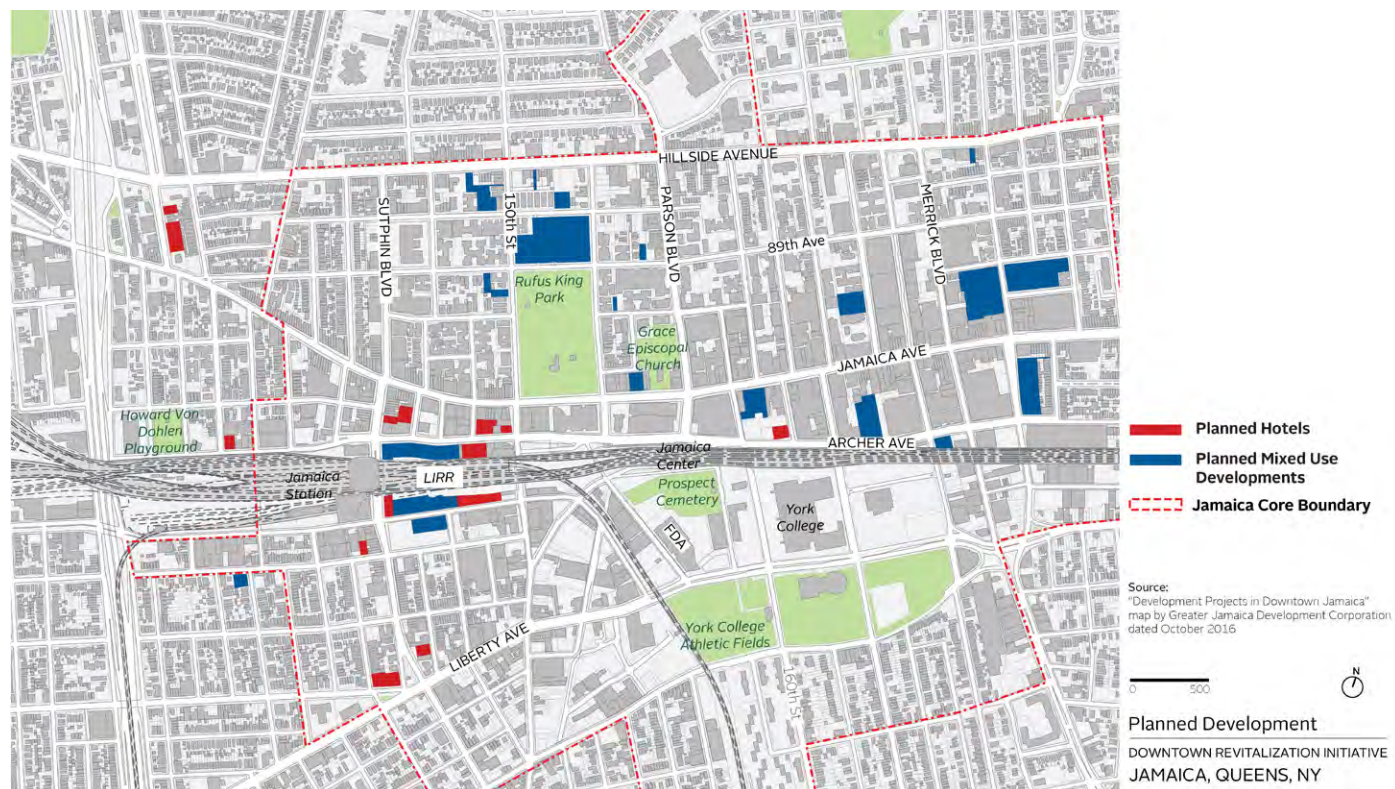


Two additional underutilized properties are the subject of ongoing or recently completed RFP processes:

- The former NYPD Parking Garage on 168th Street will be redeveloped into retail space, a community facility, and 350 units of affordable housing by Omni New York as part of the Jamaica NOW! Action Plan.
- GJDC is currently managing an RFP process for a surface level parking lot at 90-02 168th Street, which will ultimately result in the redevelopment of the space into at least 250 units of mixed-income housing.

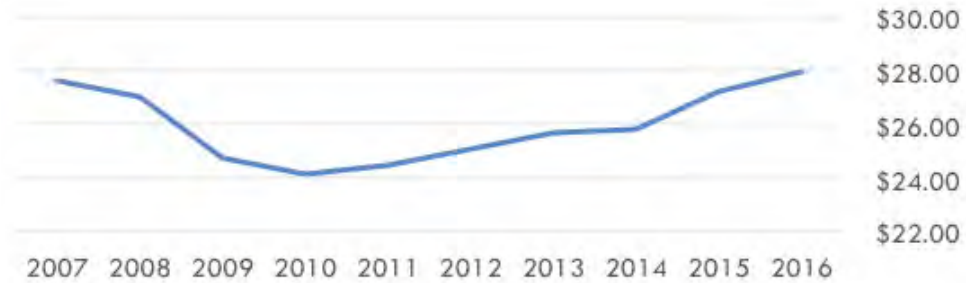
One key site that remains vacant with no immediate plans for redevelopment is “Site 9,” located on the southeastern corner of the York College campus. York has identified several potential uses for this parcel, including an incubator for tech and other startup companies, or the home of an anchor tenant. A key constraint to redevelopment is the need for the site to undergo environmental remediation.

FIGURE I-13. DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN DOWNTOWN JAMAICA



Source: Beyer Blinder Belle

FIGURE I-14. DOWNTOWN CORE MULTIFAMILY ASKING RENTS PER SQUARE FOOT



Source: Costar

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The Parsons/Merrick node of the Downtown also has two underutilized properties that have been part of recent community discussions about activation:

- The Valencia Theater is a key underutilized asset within the Downtown Core. Located at 165-11 Jamaica Avenue between 165th Street and Merrick Boulevard, the Valencia was one of the five Loews Wonder Theaters constructed in the 1920s. The building is owned by and home to the Tabernacle of Prayer church, and is not open to the general public.
- The 165th Street Bus Terminal on Merrick Boulevard, which serves 16 local and express bus routes from the MTA and Nassau County systems, sits on a prominent large site that encompasses more than 100,000 square feet of land area, about half of which is open pavement. The site, which is privately owned, has been identified by community leaders as a future development site, potentially incorporating a renovated bus terminal.

The relatively dearth of vacant and underutilized sites without ongoing redevelopment plans represents both a significant achievement and challenge for Downtown Jamaica. The existing building stock of the area serves the community well, and many vacant sites are being actively developed, indicating public and private sector confidence in Jamaica’s growing prosperity. However, the 2007 rezoning created significant undeployed development potential on well-used existing sites. Therefore, additional development in the area will likely require disruption to existing uses.

**Table I-2. Brownfield Opportunity Area Sites**

Developable Site	Location	Timeframe & Project (if applicable)
1A	93-43 Sutphin Boulevard	Immediate – <b>Hilton Garden Inn</b>
1B	147-07 94 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	Intermediate
2	94-01 Sutphin Boulevard	Long
3	95-02/38 Sutphin Boulevard	Intermediate
6 & 11A	147-22 & 147-30 Archer Avenue	Immediate – <b>The Crossing at Jamaica Station</b>
8	144-06 94 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	Intermediate
11B	148-22 Archer Avenue	Immediate - <b>Marriott Courtyard and Fairfield Inn &amp; Suites</b>
12	148-05/15 Archer Avenue	Long
14	148-23 94 <sup>th</sup> Ave	Long

**As new developments come online and additional development opportunities emerge,** residents and community leaders have raised a key question: How can Jamaica ensure that existing residents and businesses share in the benefits of growth? While the Jamaica DRI did not focus on promoting large-scale development given the significant recent work by Jamaica NOW! and preceding efforts, this study’s goals and strategies seek to address two aspects of this challenge by 1) developing the physical and programmatic infrastructure to drive the growth of well-paying jobs in the Downtown and connect local residents to job opportunities, and 2) leveraging the growth in Downtown population and visitation to support community assets such as the local cultural organizations and to support new amenities benefiting all residents, including restaurant, nightlife, and entertainment destinations.

## **2. Employment is up, but unemployment remains high and barriers limit industry growth.**

**Downtown Jamaica is a major employment sector for a concentrated selection of industries.** The Core Downtown Study Area employs approximately 11,700 people. Existing Downtown jobs are heavily concentrated in a short list of industry sectors, with more than half of all positions falling within retail trade (22%), health care and social assistance (18%), and public administration (10%), as indicated in the chart below. There is also a significant “other”

component, which includes all other sectors not specifically detailed, such as scientific and technical services, finance and insurance, educational services, and real estate.<sup>12</sup>

**The existing employee base for Jamaica businesses tend to commute from outside the Core Downtown Study Area.** The vast majority of Downtown workers – more than 11,300, or 97%, live outside of the Study Area, with only 400 of Downtown’s 8,400 employed residents (4.8%) working Downtown.<sup>13</sup> While it is common for employment centers like Jamaica to draw a significant share of employees from outside the surrounding area, Jamaica’s role as an employment center presents an opportunity to leverage business and industry partnerships to increase employment among local populations. Additionally, Downtown Jamaica has an opportunity to leverage the non-resident worker population to support retail and food & beverage businesses that contribute to a more active, inviting Downtown.

**Local employment growth has outpaced Queens overall over the past 15 years, yet local unemployment remains higher than the citywide average.** Since 2002, total employment in the Core Downtown Study Area has increased 27%, outpacing Greater Jamaica’s 22% job growth and Queens’ 15% job growth over the same period. However, unemployment in Greater Jamaica remains persistently high at 14%, significantly higher than the Queens rate of 9% and the Citywide rate of 6%.<sup>14</sup> Unemployment is particularly concentrated among younger populations, and is likely to contribute to the lower household incomes in the Core Downtown outlined earlier in this chapter.

FIGURE I-15. DOWNTOWN EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR

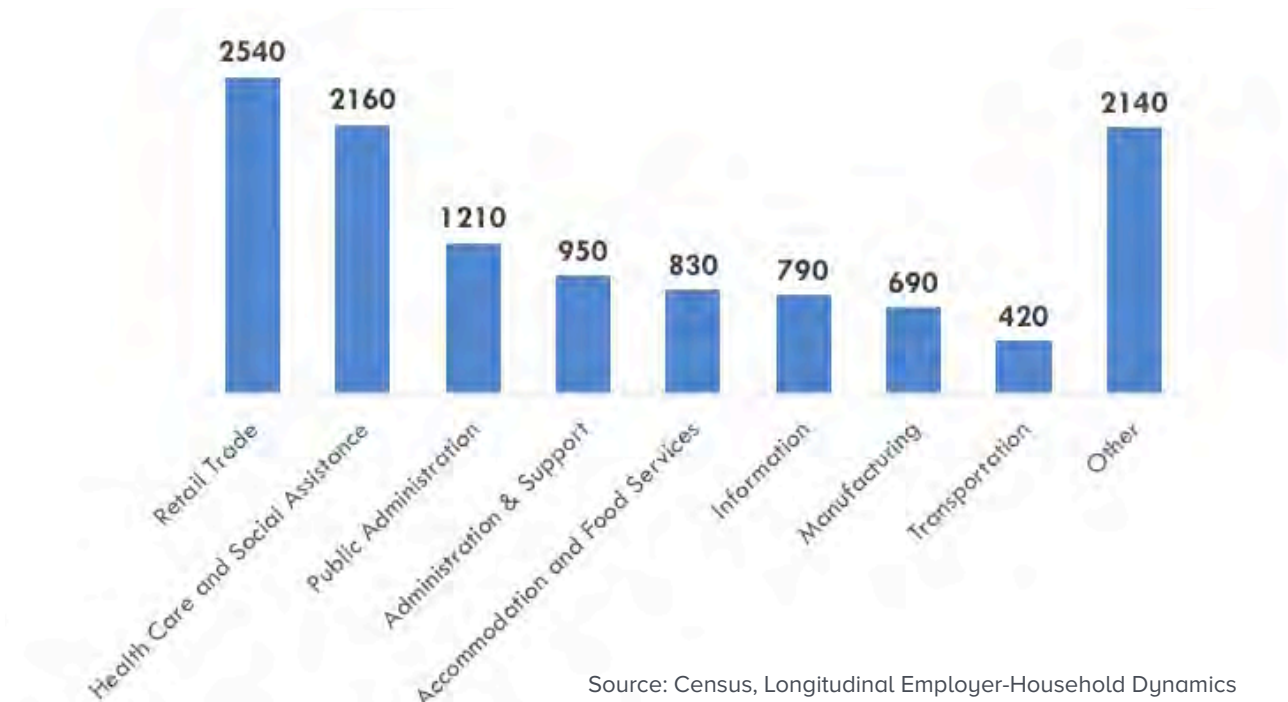
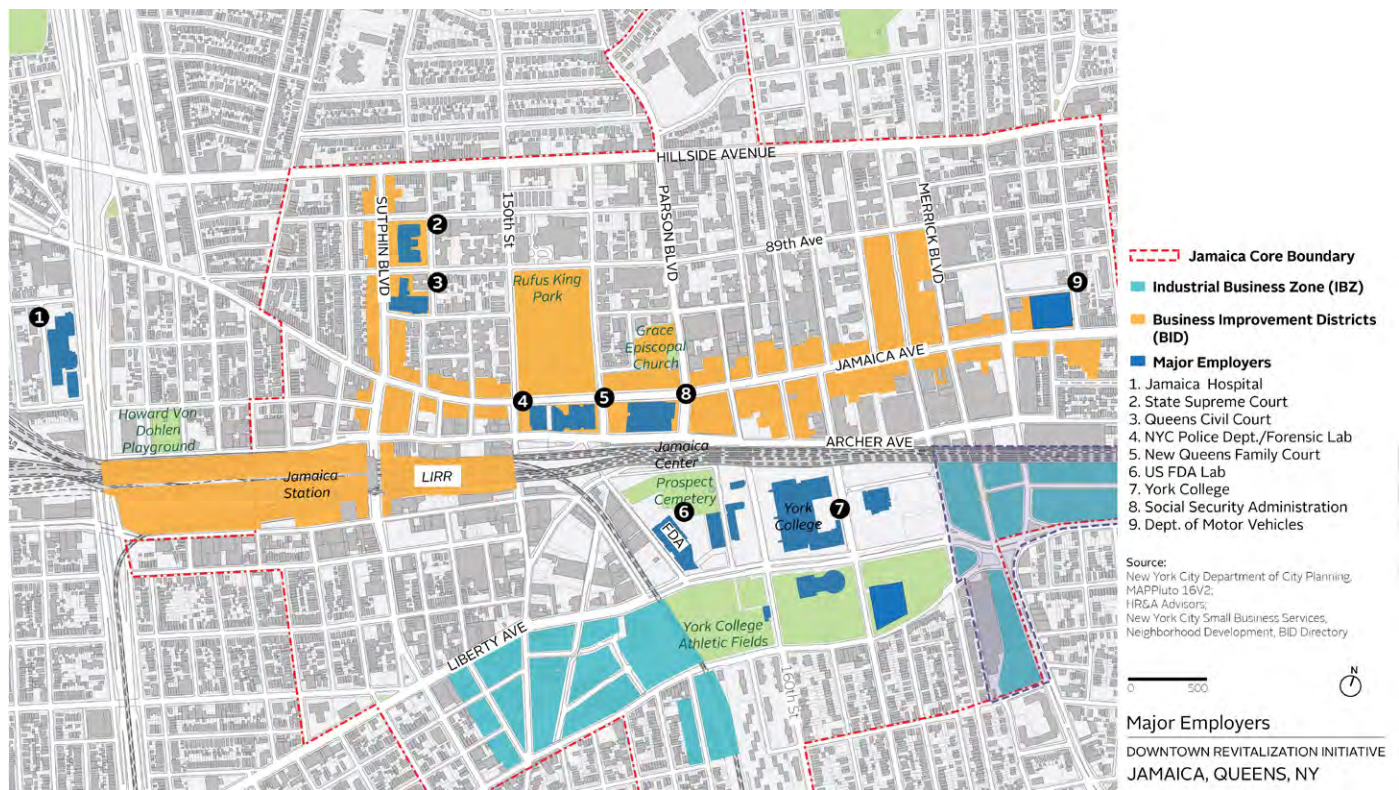




FIGURE I-16. MAJOR DOWNTOWN EMPLOYERS



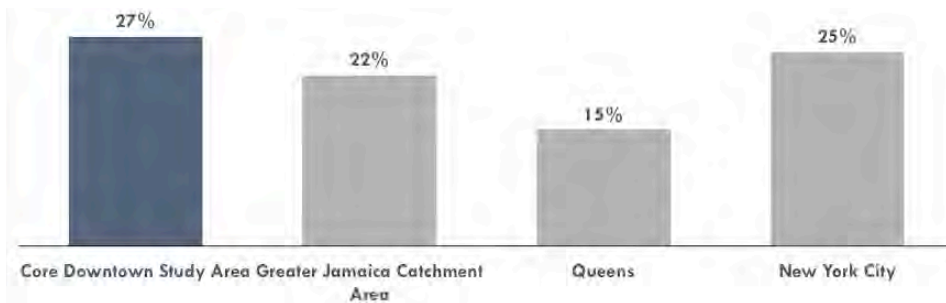
Source: Beyer Blinder Belle, HR&A Advisors

**Most local job growth has occurred in the administrative, health care, and retail sectors,** which (with transportation) represent nearly all new jobs created in Downtown Jamaica between 2002 and 2014 and reflect the importance of major local employers, listed in Figure I-16.

Looking ahead, several sectors are expected to represent growth opportunities for Downtown employment based on recent and expected activity, including:

- **Health & Life Sciences:** Health care-related jobs in the Core Downtown have grown 30% between 2002 and 2014, and Jamaica Hospital, the FDA, and York College (which offers numerous health care-related degree programs and certifications, and recently launched graduate programs in pharmaceutical science and physician assistant certification) provide the foundation for future growth.<sup>15</sup> Statewide, health care jobs are projected to grow by an additional 20% over the next decade, with similar trends expected in New York City, making health care one of the fastest-growing sectors in the economy.<sup>16</sup>
- **Hospitality & Food Services:** Jamaica has seen a boom in hotel development since the completion of the AirTrain and the 2007 rezoning. Several major hotels are in development, including approximately 675 rooms in the blocks surrounding Jamaica Station. In total, over 2,000 new hotel rooms are planned to come online in Downtown Jamaica, which could support between 1,000 and 1,500 new direct jobs in addition to the existing 800+ jobs already in the hospitality industry.<sup>17</sup>

FIGURE I-17. CHANGE IN TOTAL EMPLOYMENT, 2002-2014



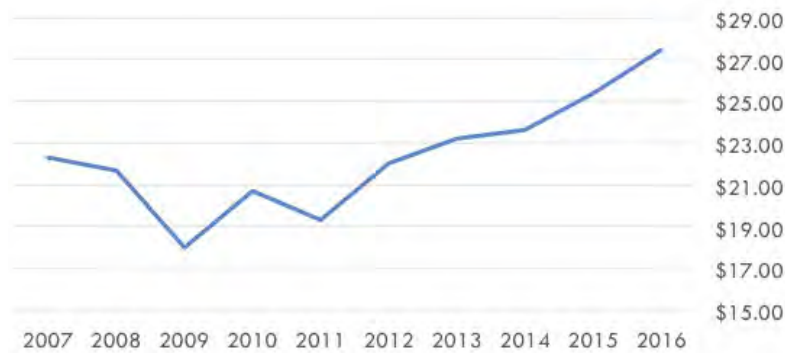
Source: Census, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics

- Technology & Transportation:** York College is a designated START-UP NY location, which entitles businesses in select growth industries that relocate to New York State on York College space to significant tax benefits. Through this program, York has worked to attract advanced manufacturing companies focused on transportation and supply chain logistics and aviation companies, leveraging its proximity to JFK Airport. The Core Downtown has already seen substantial growth in the transportation sector, growing nearly 400% to just over 400 jobs between 2002 and 2014.<sup>18</sup> While Jamaica has not yet seen an influx of technology firms, local leaders have cited an interest among local tech entrepreneurs to locate their businesses downtown.

**As new industries emerge, desirable office space with modern amenities will be essential.**

While there has been significant development of residential, hotel, and retail uses, there has been no commercial office development in Jamaica in recent years. At present, Downtown Jamaica has 2.9 million square feet of office space in 67 buildings.<sup>19</sup> A substantial portion of the inventory is represented by two large government buildings: the FDA Northeast Regional Lab and the U.S. Social Security Administration facility at One Jamaica Plaza. The balance of inventory is Class B space scattered throughout the Downtown. Additionally, there is space on the upper floors of storefronts on Jamaica Avenue and other main corridors that could be used as office space, but that are used as storage space for the retail below or left vacant.

FIGURE I-18. OFFICE BASE RENT PER SQUARE FOOT



Source: Costar

Stakeholder outreach has indicated that many small professional businesses that would like to locate in the Downtown Core have had trouble finding suitable space in the area.

While rents have surpassed pre-Recession levels, they are still low at \$27 per square foot, insufficient to justify the cost of developing new space. Identifying ways to create attractive, appropriately sized and situated office space with modern amenities, including open floor plans and high-speed internet service, will be important to make Jamaica competitive.<sup>20</sup>

**Further, leveraging growth sectors to boost local employment must address a gap in educational attainment and skills training:** 31% of Core Downtown residents lack a high school degree, compared to 22% in Greater Jamaica and 19% in Queens overall; 20% of Core Downtown residents have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 29% for the Greater Jamaica Catchment Area, and 31% for Queens overall.<sup>21</sup>

Jamaica has a robust infrastructure for job training and placement services, but gaps remain to ensure Jamaica residents have access to quality jobs. Jamaica organizations providing workforce development services include:

- **Workforce1 Center:** Serves over 30,000 clients annually from throughout Queens, placing jobseekers primarily into transportation, security, and retail positions.
- **York College:** Has a wide variety of non-degree programs focused on job training, continuing education, and business development. The Continuing and Professional Education Center offers fee-based classes that focus on practical job skills and certifications, in addition to test preparation and personal enrichment courses.
- **Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical Education High School:** A public NYC Department of Education high school, enrolls more than 2,600 students in career-focused programs, including computer forensics, information technology, robotics, web design, and a variety of other fields.

- **Queens Library:** Offers over 40 courses per month, with a focus on certifications for security guards, home health aides, and construction workers. Course offerings differ by branch location.
- **Y Roads Center:** Offers individualized programming, including high school equivalency classes, workforce training and job placement services, to disconnected youth.

While the above programs offer accessible services, most serve the broader population in Queens and are not specifically targeted to Jamaica residents. Establishing locally based programming for Jamaica residents would offer several opportunities to better reach and serve disconnected populations by:

- **Guaranteeing that Jamaica jobs go to Jamaica residents:** The Workforce1 Center may consider proximity when placing job seekers, but it cannot, as a rule, prioritize Jamaica residents for specific positions. A Jamaica training and job placement program could establish relationships with local business owners – including forthcoming projects, such as hotels – to funnel residents to these jobs.
- **Prioritizing proximity:** Nearby locations can help ensure that residents take advantage of available services. For example, a new entrepreneurship program managed by the Queens Economic Development Corporation (QEDC) is specifically targeted to residents of the South Jamaica Houses, a public housing development. To increase attendance, QEDC schedules classes near the participants' homes and in the early evening to avoid forcing participants to be out on the street late at night, which can feel unsafe. While the organizations above have locations in Jamaica, they do not necessarily offer all of their services at their Jamaica branch, diminishing accessibility for local residents.
- **Allowing for on-the-ground outreach:** To reach disconnected populations, service providers recommend reaching out to local organizations and churches, attending local events, and maintaining a physical presence in the neighborhood. A Jamaica-focused program would be well positioned to conduct this type of outreach, but would require sufficient resources to conduct research.



FIGURE I-19. JAMAICA AVENUE



Source: Beyer Blinder Belle

### 3. Transportation access encourages growth, but connectivity within the core is limited.

**Downtown Jamaica is a regional transportation hub**, with 49 bus routes carrying 255,000 people through Jamaica on an average weekday and four subway lines with a combined ridership of 173,000 per weekday. On an average weekday, 98,000 people pass through Jamaica Station each way on the LIRR. LIRR is in the middle of a multi-phased project to upgrade Jamaica Station and change the track formation to increase capacity as part of the East Side Access project; improvements will result in direct service to Grand Central Terminal, an increase in overall capacity, and a more frequent shuttle service between Jamaica and Atlantic Terminal in Downtown Brooklyn. Additionally, the AirTrain carries 14,000 people to and from JFK Airport per day on average.<sup>22</sup>

Because of its status as a transit hub, major jobs centers are easily accessible from Jamaica. By public transportation, Jamaica is approximately 40 minutes from Midtown Manhattan, 50 minutes from Lower Manhattan, 45 minutes from Downtown Brooklyn, 30 minutes from Long Island City, and 25 minutes from JFK Airport.

#### **Though getting in and out of Jamaica is easy, getting around Jamaica is a challenge.**

Jamaica Avenue is the beating heart of Downtown Jamaica, the spine connecting disparate clusters of activity across the Downtown Core. Multiple bus lines run through its dedicated bus only lane, while trucks regularly stop to unload goods. This activity presents challenges from a neighborhood circulation perspective. The streets are crowded with retail stalls and pedestrian traffic, making it a relatively unpleasant experience to walk, drive, or ride from one end of the avenue to the other.

FIGURE I-20. ARCHER AVENUE



Source: Beyer Blinder Belle

Parallel to Jamaica Avenue is Archer Avenue, where two of Jamaica's main subway stations – Jamaica Center - Parsons/Archer and Sutphin Boulevard-JFK Airport – and a major bus terminal are located. Archer Avenue is defined by heavy bus traffic, and because sidewalks are narrow, pedestrians must navigate through crowded sidewalks as they navigate from transit to the Downtown or York, or vice versa. Bus waiting areas lack amenities and architectural features at Jamaica Center subway and Archer Avenue bus terminal are dated and in poor condition.

The LIRR embankment running parallel to Archer Avenue presents another challenge by bisecting the neighborhood. York College, an anchor institution, is physically isolated from the rest of the neighborhood, and the archways connecting York to the nearest subway and retail corridor are physically deteriorating. While recent investments to the pedestrian plaza around the 159th Street archway have improved the pedestrian experience, poor lighting and physical decay make for poor gateways to the college. A second pedestrian archway at Union Hall Street leading directly into the York College campus remains closed due to security concerns. Along the LIRR embankment, inconsistent painting and physical wear also provide an unsightly blank wall within the heart of Downtown.

**To help address local issues with traffic circulation and pedestrian experience, the NYC Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) is undertaking two planning efforts:** The Downtown Jamaica Comprehensive Streetscape Plan and the Jamaica Transportation Study. The former study aims to identify discrete investments that will improve pedestrian safety and traffic flow throughout Downtown Jamaica.<sup>23</sup> As part of that effort, DOT is studying existing conditions, identifying high-priority areas for investment, and creating design concepts for those priority areas. DOT has conducted extensive public outreach to help identify priorities and get feedback for initial design concepts. NYCDOT expects to release findings and recommendations in the summer of 2017, but initial findings and recommendations have been instrumental in determining potential DRI interventions.

#### **4. The Core is vibrant during workdays, but lacks activity during evenings and weekends.**

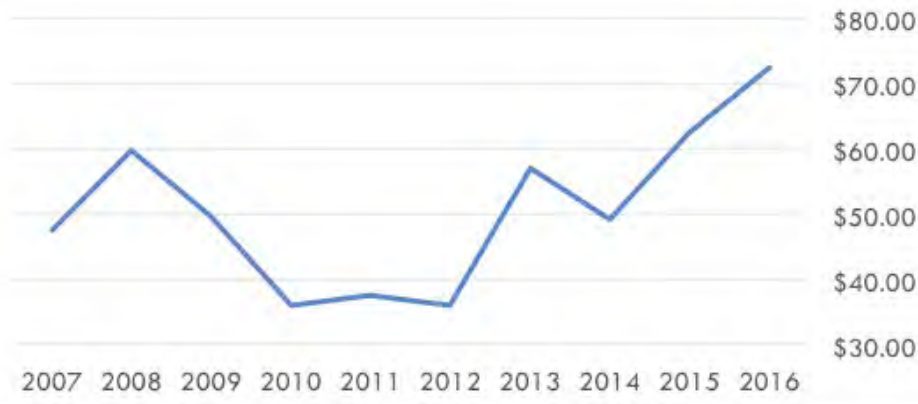
**Jamaica's Core Downtown Study Area is home to some of the most highly trafficked, high-rent retail corridors in Queens.** Downtown Jamaica is a vibrant retail corridor home to more than 600 businesses representing a variety of shopping options including convenience, furniture, gifts, hobby, jewelry, clothing, and food businesses.<sup>24</sup> Key retail nodes within the Downtown Jamaica include Jamaica Avenue, an expansive retail strip spanning from 139th Street to 170th street and beyond, Hillside Avenue along the same span, the 165th Street Mall, and Sutphin Boulevard between Jamaica and Hillside avenues. All four retail corridors are predominated by smaller-scale discount retailers but also include several national and regional brands such as Old Navy and Modell's, and by fast food and quick-service restaurants, except for an Applebee's location on Jamaica Avenue. All corridors but Hillside Avenue are represented by business improvement districts (BIDs) – the Jamaica Center BID, the Sutphin Boulevard BID, and the 165th Street Mall Improvement Association – which provide supplementary sanitation, marketing, recruitment, and other business support services to enhance commercial activity.

There are active developments that will expand the retail selection in both shopping and dining. The forthcoming 150,000-square-foot retail development at the former Jamaica Savings Bank building on Jamaica Avenue is under construction and will include a TJ Maxx, H&M, and Burlington Coat Factory. Additionally, the Hilton Garden Inn development near the AirTrain will include a rooftop bar and full service restaurant. This new development is in part spurred by positive trends in the retail real estate market. The vacancy rate, after a recent peak of 7%, has declined to 3.8%. Rents average \$72.28 per square foot, up over 100% from 2012 and are among the highest rates in Queens.<sup>25</sup>

**While the retail nodes in Downtown Jamaica are heavily used during daytime workdays, nighttime off-peak conditions are not conducive to an active area.** As merchants roll down their gates, there is limited activity to draw residents or visitors Downtown, creating a sense of desolation and lack of safety.

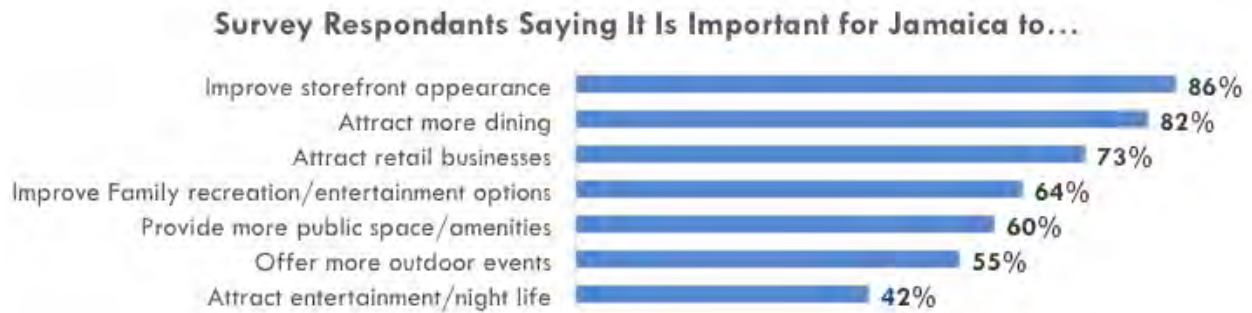


FIGURE I-21. DOWNTOWN CORE RETAIL VACANCY RATE



Source: Costar

FIGURE I-22 JAMAICA USER SURVEY RESPONSES



Source: JGSC Group Survey

In a 2013 survey of existing and potential Downtown visitors by the JGSC Group on behalf of the Greater Jamaica Development Corporation (GJDC), 86% of respondents sought an improvement in storefront appearance, 82% wanted more dining options, and 73% wanted more retail businesses. Additionally, 71% of respondents felt that the lack of retail options was a reason not to visit Downtown, while 70% said the lack of diversity in existing dining options was a reason not to visit Downtown. Moreover, the survey found that local merchants were only capturing 20% of the potential market to shop or dine in the area, indicating that there is latent demand for Downtown activity.<sup>26</sup>

**While Downtown Jamaica is home to significant local attractions, residents cited a lack of recreational and entertainment options.** In the same JGSC survey, 64% of respondents sought more family entertainment and 60% cited a need for more public space. The existing network of arts and cultural destinations in Downtown Jamaica is extensive. Some prominent organizations and destinations include:



- **Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning (JCAL):** A multi-disciplinary arts center serving more than 35,000 people with a wide array of education, performing arts, and visual arts programs annually.
- **Jamaica Performing Arts Center (JPAC):** A 400-seat performing space in the landmark 1858 First Reformed Dutch Church.
- **King Manor Museum:** A landmark historic house museum located in Rufus King Park, celebrating the life of U.S. statesman, abolitionist, and signer of the U.S. Constitution Rufus King.
- **The Black Spectrum Theater:** A 325-seat theater presenting theatrical productions, films, and videos of significance to the African-American community, with an annual audience of 20,000.
- **The Afrikan Poetry Theater:** A community-based space presenting music performances, lectures, and writing workshops in addition to programs for children and their families.
- **The Milton G. Bassin Center for Performing Arts:** Home to two theaters seating 1,372 and 152 on the campus of York College.

While these cultural organizations offer a range of programming, most have limited marketing or promotion budgets, and these organizations do not generally coordinate marketing or programming, either with one another or with other Downtown organizations such as the Business Improvement Districts. These venues and institutions regularly provide programming during the weekday, and on special occasions.

On top of being programmatically disconnected, the cultural institutions are physically distant. Residents and visitors wishing to take in the cultural attractions of the Downtown must travel significant distances with little to indicate the presence or location of these significant cultural assets. Walk-in visitation to these institutions is thus limited, adding to the sense that Downtown Jamaica is less than the sum of its parts.

There is limited usable open space in Downtown Jamaica, but the existing open space has seen recent investment. The most significant open space is Rufus King Park, which at 11.5 acres is by far Downtown Jamaica's largest public space. As part of the Jamaica NOW! Action Plan, Rufus King Park is seeing substantial investment to ensure its continued vitality. Improved pathways and a renovated gazebo have already been installed. Additionally, sprinklers for improved lawn care are due for completion in early 2017, while changes to the South Lawn and park fence are currently in the design phase. Local leaders and the public expressed a desire for more public spaces downtown, including park and plaza spaces that could accommodate outdoor activities and performances.

FIGURE I-23. RUFUS KING PARK



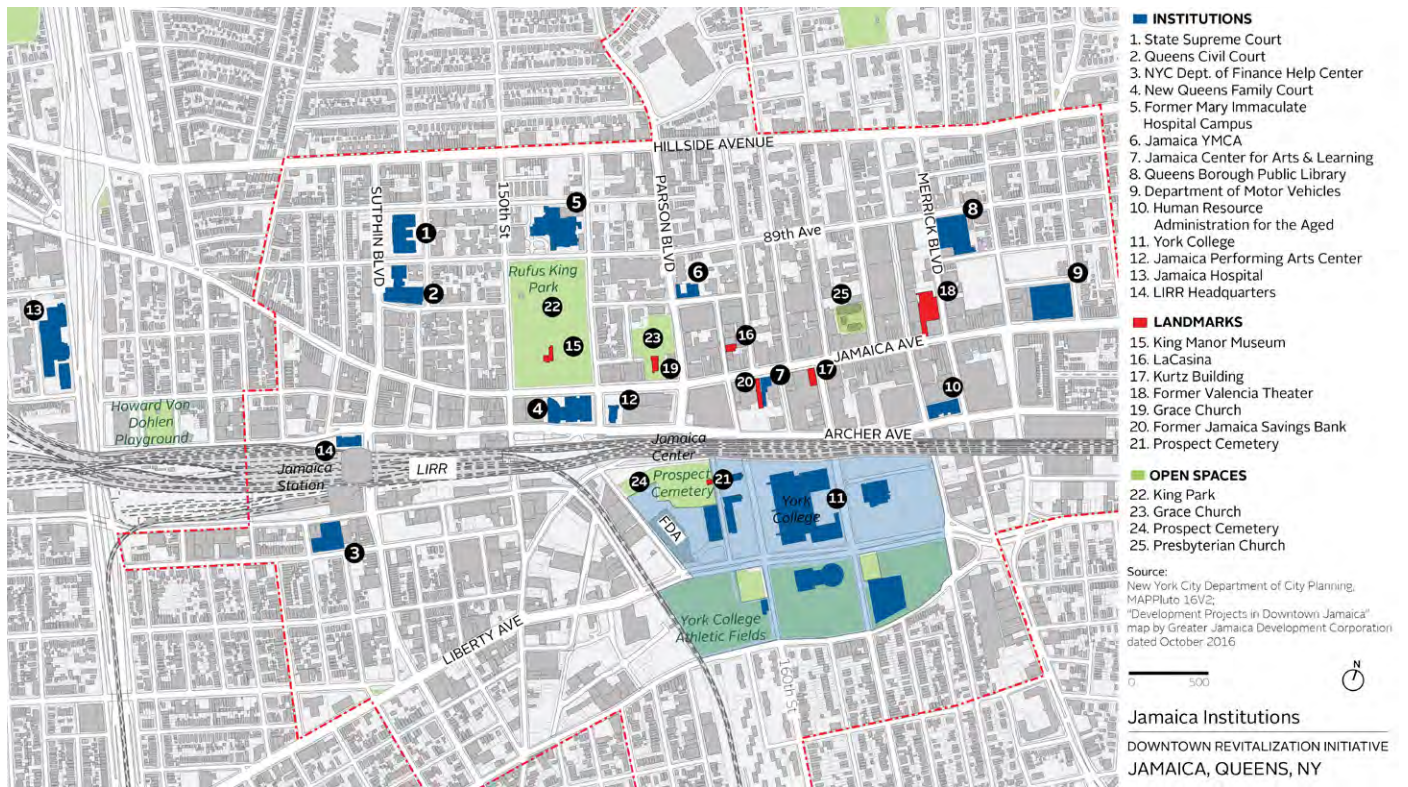
Source: Greater Jamaica Development Corporation

**The presence of significant higher educational institutions bolsters Jamaica's daytime workweek vibrancy, but does little to draw in users during off-peak hours.** Downtown Jamaica is proximate to three postsecondary educational institutions whose students, faculty, and staff interact with the Downtown:

- **York College:** A four-year senior college, York College is located within the Core Downtown Study Area, just southeast of the Jamaica Canter transit hub. More than 8,000 students attend York College, which consists of three degree-granting schools: The School of Arts and Sciences, the School of Business and Information Systems, and the School of Health Sciences and Professional Programs. In addition, York offers continuing education, workforce development, and small business advising programs to more than 3,000 non-matriculated students annually.
- **St. John's University:** A private research university located north of Union Turnpike in the Hillcrest section of Queens, St. John's has five undergraduate and six graduate schools, with a total student population of more than 21,000, most whom study at its Queens campus.



FIGURE I-24. MAP OF JAMAICA INSTITUTIONS, LANDMARKS, AND OPEN SPACES



Source: Beyer Blinder Belle, HR&A Advisors

- **CUNY Queens College:** A four-year senior college located in Flushing, Queens, with approximately 18,500 undergraduate and graduate students. Serving a broad geography of New York City, Queens College enrolls students from throughout the Southeast Queens Catchment Area.

York College is the only one of the three listed that is located within the Core Downtown Study Area. York is a 100% commuter campus with no dormitories, limiting the student and faculty population in the area to when there are classes ongoing at the college.

FIGURE I-25. YORK COLLEGE ACADEMIC CORE BUILDING



Source: HR&A Advisors

## LOCAL ORGANIZATIONAL AND MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

As a neighborhood within the City of New York, Jamaica is served by a wide variety of municipal agencies and elected representatives. Key entities that have supported recent downtown revitalization and economic development in Downtown Jamaica, and that have the capacity to support implementation of DRI priority projects, include:

- **Office of the Queens Borough President Melinda Katz**, who advocates for the 2.3 million residents of Queens. The Borough President's Office has led several recent community planning and investment projects in Jamaica, primarily through the Office of the Deputy Borough President, Melva Miller.
- **New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC)** is a quasi-governmental not-for-profit that oversees and coordinates economic development initiatives on behalf of the City of New York. NYCEDC co-led the Jamaica NOW! planning process with the Queens Borough President's Office.
- **NYC Department of Transportation (DOT)** is responsible for the transportation network of New York City and is active in Jamaica with two current streetscape and transportation studies.



- **NYC Department of Parks & Recreation (Parks)** is responsible for the maintenance and programming of public parks across New York City, and in managing improvements at Rufus King Park.
- **NYC Department of City Planning (DCP)** oversees zoning and land use, and was responsible for developing The Jamaica Plan rezoning, enacted in 2007.

In addition, Downtown Jamaica has an expansive network of public, institutional, and community-based entities supporting downtown revitalization and economic development that provide additional capacity to guide and implement priority projects. Key entities include:

- **Greater Jamaica Development Corporation (GJDC)** is a community-based organization that plans, promotes, coordinates, and advances responsible development to revitalize Jamaica and strengthen the region. It has a staff of more than 20 people, led by president Hope Knight.
- **The Jamaica NOW! Leadership Council** oversees the implementation of the Jamaica NOW! Action Plan. The committee is composed of stakeholders across Jamaica, and is co-chaired by Ian Harris and Pierina Ana Sanchez.
- The Core Jamaica Study Area is served by three Business Improvement Districts (BIDs): the **Jamaica Center BID**, the **Sutphin Boulevard BID**, and the **165th Street Mall Association**. The three BIDs, funded by a special real estate tax assessment on properties located within BID boundaries, provide marketing and business development services for their respective corridors. The three BIDs have begun exploring consolidation to reduce redundancy and enhance their ability to provide services and marketing to their merchants.
- **York College:** One of 11 senior colleges of the City University of New York, York is located within the Core Downtown Study Area, just southeast of the Jamaica Center transit hub. More than 8,000 students attend York, which consists of three degree-granting schools: The School of Arts and Sciences, the School of Business and Information Systems, and the School of Health Sciences and Professional Programs. In addition, York offers continuing education, workforce development, and small business advising programs to more than 3,000 non-matriculated students annually.

## SECTION II:

# Community Vision, Goals and Strategies

### VISION FOR DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

The Jamaica DRI Local Planning Committee (LPC) developed the following vision to guide investment in Downtown Jamaica and support local revitalization and economic development:

**Build upon recent investment to expand economic opportunity for local residents and entrepreneurs; strengthen Downtown Jamaica's cultural and commercial assets; celebrate Jamaica's unique character; and support the development of a vibrant, connected, and inclusive mixed-use downtown core, for the benefit of the local community and the greater Jamaica area.**

This vision draws on the framework created by the Jamaica NOW! Action Plan, and reflects gaps in investment committed to date, as discussed in the prior section.

Investments in Downtown that are consistent with this vision will catalyze economic growth and should increase Downtown's appeal to its four key user groups: **residents, workers, students, and visitors**. Investments in the Downtown that appeal to these groups will increase activity and fuel economic development, leading to a sustainable, prosperous downtown.

## GOALS FOR DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION & REGIONAL CONTEXT

Informed by the challenges and opportunities identified in Section I of this document, as well as potential interventions that could address these challenges and that would complement rather than replicate recent and ongoing planning efforts, the LPC identified **three primary goals** for downtown revitalization:

1. **Expand career opportunities and strengthen career pathways.** DRI investments should ensure that revitalization benefits those currently living Downtown by giving them the skills they need to succeed in growing industries, and providing avenues for local entrepreneurs to build their businesses, and create jobs.
2. **Activate Downtown through programming and marketing.** DRI investments should support the development of a vibrant, active Downtown that draws new visitors to the downtown and appeals to Greater Jamaica residents.
3. **Connect major centers of activity.** DRI investments should contribute to the creation of a cohesive downtown that is attractive, well connected and easily traversable by all Downtown users.

As discussed in Section I, these Jamaica DRI goals are drawn from and build upon the goals articulated in the Jamaica NOW! Action Plan, which was the product of more than one year of community outreach and planning, and which proposed to

1. Increase quality jobs and small business support,
2. Promote commercial growth and economic development, and;
3. Improve livability.

In addition, the Jamaica DRI goals build on and are aligned with central priorities of the NYC REDC, specifically to:

1. Improve quality of life,
2. Create a pro-growth, pro-jobs environment,
3. Invest in the future, and;
4. Foster innovation and inter-regional cooperation.

## STRATEGIES FOR DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

Building upon the three strategic goals and in recognition of local priorities and organizational capacity, the LPC also identified four implementation strategies that characterize the types of actions that can be undertaken with DRI investment to advance the community's vision for downtown revitalization. These strategies, by which Priority Projects are organized, are meant to guide not just DRI investment but also future actions that Jamaica, City, and State leadership can take to advance the goals of Downtown Jamaica. The four strategies are:

1. **Set the stage for local industry growth:** With a dense Downtown core and superior transit accessibility, Jamaica is well positioned to attract businesses in growth industries such as health care, transportation, and the sectors broadly defined as the innovation economy, and to attract local and regional entrepreneurs. Factors that typically attract new businesses include access to a skilled labor force, appropriate workspace, modern infrastructure (including digital infrastructure), and a collaborative industry ecosystem.
2. **Prepare the local workforce for sustainable careers:** Investing in the residents of the Downtown is a critical component in making sure the existing population benefits from Jamaica's economic revitalization. Projects that address gaps in the existing educational and workforce programming can help increase local employment and wealth creation in the Downtown.
3. **Create inviting gateways to Downtown:** Jamaica visitors and daily users are today greeted by unattractive transit hubs and crowded streets and sidewalks, and an inconsistent streetscape that makes distances between Downtown nodes seem more distant than they are. More inviting gateways could help create a more pleasant experience and draw additional visitors into the Downtown.
4. **Draw residents and visitors to the Downtown core:** Providing compelling reasons for potential visitors to spend time in Downtown – and for daily users and tourists to extend their stay – is required to create an active, all-hours Downtown. Expanding the capacity of cultural institutions, diversifying local dining options, and enhancing the Downtown aesthetic experience would help to boost visitation and economic activity.





## SECTION III:

# Action Plan

### MAKING STRATEGIES ACTIONABLE: PRIORITY PROJECT OVERVIEW

A series of transformative projects are recommended for DRI funding that are consistent with the Goals and Strategies identified in Section II and provide a holistic and coordinated approach for Downtown Revitalization in Jamaica. These projects have been identified on the basis of:

- A legacy of previous planning efforts that serve as a record of community aspirations and a roadmap for project evaluation;
- Consultation with Jamaica community members and key stakeholders;
- Alignment with downtown revitalization goals from the City of New York, the New York City REDC, and the State; and
- Significant analysis undertaken by the Consulting Team to coordinate alignment among key stakeholders, evaluate existing conditions and prioritize needs, and assess potential projects for catalytic potential on an individual and collective basis for alignment with DRI prioritization criteria.

Recommendations for DRI funding include the following priority projects that align with Jamaica's revitalization goals and strategies. The projects outlined in the following table have been developed to enhance coordination of timing, costs, potential funding sources, and expected project benefits. Additional projects also have been identified that are recommended for advancement with the support of other funding sources.

**Table I-3. Priority Projects Recommended for DRI Funding**

#	Project Name	Project Description
<b>SET THE STAGE FOR INDUSTRY GROWTH</b>		
1	<b>Develop the GJDC Co-Working Space</b>	Create a shared workspace for local entrepreneurs and independent professionals at the Moda Building, run by GJDC. The space would host events and business support services, and, in partnership with York College, participate in State economic development initiatives.
2	<b>Deliver High-Speed Broadband to Downtown Jamaica</b>	Strengthen Jamaica's broadband infrastructure to support the delivery of high-speed service to existing businesses and the public, attract new businesses in high-growth industries, and create a robust private marketplace for broadband services in Jamaica
<b>PREPARE THE LOCAL WORKFORCE FOR SUSTAINABLE CAREERS</b>		
3	<b>Expand Prime Skills Program</b>	Expand Prime Skills – an entrepreneurship training program that helps low-income Jamaica residents launch or grow businesses – by supporting two additional program cohorts, expanding mentorship and support to previous program graduates, and purchasing equipment for program graduates.
4	<b>Enhance Targeted Career Prep at Edison High School</b>	Enhance Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical Education High School's nationally recognized Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs for students and adults in the broader Jamaica community by modernizing equipment and software for programs focused on high-growth industries in Downtown Jamaica and the surrounding area.
<b>CREATE INVITING GATEWAYS TO DOWNTOWN</b>		
5	<b>Revitalize the Downtown Jamaica Gateway</b>	Transform Jamaica Center into an inviting Downtown gateway with a major expansion of pedestrian space and lighting and streetscape improvements.
6	<b>Activate the Archer Archways</b> Create a Public Space at 159th Street	Upgrade and activate the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) underpass at 159th Street - the key gateway between York College and Downtown Jamaica. Improvements will include overhead lighting, public art, seating, and event space.
7	<b>Activate the Archer Archways</b> Reopen the Union Hall Entrance	Reopen the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) underpass at Union Hall Street to create a direct connection between York College's main Academic Building and the Core Downtown. Improvements will include overhead lighting, public art, and seating.
<b>DRAW RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO THE DOWNTOWN CORE</b>		
8	<b>Establish the Jamaica Arts Corridor</b>	Establish a distinctive Jamaica Arts Corridor celebrating local cultural anchors and independent artists. Components will include 1) a Welcome Center at Jamaica Station to introduce visitors to local attractions and events, 2) Marketing Materials to promote Jamaica cultural institutions and heritage, 3) Artistic Lighting Displays along Jamaica Avenue celebrating historical sites, 4) Signature Art Installations at prominent downtown locations, and 5) a Promenade and Arts Space fronting the Milton G. Bassin Performing Arts Center at York College.
9	<b>Diversify Dining Options Downtown</b>	Improve dining options and nightlife activity in the Downtown, by creating step-up space for Jamaica-based incubator graduates, providing capital investment funds for a Dedicated Restaurant Space, and establishing a Restaurant Startup Fund.
10	<b>Create a Downtown Arts &amp; Events Fund</b>	Establish a multi-year grant fund for art installations and cultural events that draw residents and visitors to Downtown Jamaica, support local cultural organizations, and celebrate local independent artists.
<b>TOTAL RECOMMENDED FOR DRI FUNDING</b>		

DRI Funding Request	Responsible Parties	Timeframe for Implementation	DRI Funding
\$1,650,000	Greater Jamaica Development Corporation (GJDC)	Late 2017 - Early 2018	Y
\$2,655,000	CityBridge, Tech:NYC	2019	Y
\$230,000	Queens Economic Development Corporation	2018	Y
\$165,000	New York City Department of Education - Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical Education High School	Ongoing	Y
\$2,500,000	New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT)	2020-2021	Y
\$1,500,000	York College	2018	Y
\$2,000,000	York College	2018	Y
\$3,275,000	GJDC, York College	2019	Y
\$1,450,000	GJDC	Ongoing	Y
\$600,000	Queens Council on the Arts	2019	Y
\$16,025,000			



**Table I-4. Priority Projects Recommended for Other Funding Sources**

#	Project Name	Project Description
<b>SET THE STAGE FOR INDUSTRY GROWTH</b>		
11	<b>Fund Capital Enhancements for JCAL's STEAM Academy</b>	Fund capital enhancements to support the growth of the STEAM Academy (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) at JCAL. The STEAM Academy is designed to teach local youth skills in product design and creative industries, and investment in physical infrastructure will provide a permanent home for the program and equipment to supplement donated materials.
12	<b>Support York College Expansion</b>	Advance development of key sites on York College's campus by assessing partnerships with health care, cultural, or high-tech partners. Expansion would satisfy York's growing need for classroom and student services space, and provide broader economic or community benefits for Greater Jamaica.
13	<b>Develop a Healthcare Workforce Strategy</b>	Develop a coordinated workforce strategy to identify, expand, and market job training and job placement programs around key growth professions in the health care sector.
14	<b>Develop a Hospitality Workforce Program</b>	Leverage the local hotel development boom to provide job training, job placement, and small business support services to capture economic gains locally.
15	<b>Reclaim the Historic Valencia Theater</b>	Reclaim the historic Valencia Theater as a cultural anchor and events space for Downtown Jamaica.

DRI Funding Request	Responsible Parties	DRI Funding
N/A	Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning	N
N/A	York College	N
N/A	York College	N
N/A	Greater Jamaica Development Corporation	N
N/A	A party has not been identified to take responsibility for this project.	N



## SECTION IV:

# Management Structure

Unique among DRI communities, Jamaica, Queens, is a neighborhood within a major city. While the City of New York will support project execution and will serve as the responsible entity for one project, the responsibility for implementing the majority of DRI projects will reside with a variety of local nonprofit and private entities that have an interest in the long-term development of Jamaica, Queens, and experience administering investments in Downtown Jamaica or similar communities. In addition, public agencies including the New York City Departments of Transportation and Education, the City University of New York, and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, will lead three Priority Projects and support one additional project. All organizations identified to receive funding have sufficient staff, operating funding, and expertise to manage the projects assigned to them.

To ensure effective coordination among DRI project leads, the **Office of Queens Borough President Melinda Katz** – led by Deputy Borough President Melva Miller – will serve as an informal organizing entity responsible for monitoring project implementation, facilitating communication among project leads and partners, and serving as a central touchpoint for New York State funding entities. The Borough President’s Office has been involved in several recent community planning processes in Jamaica, including the Jamaica NOW! Action Plan, and played an active role in the Jamaica DRI Local Planning Committee, of which Borough President Katz served as Co-Chair. Using the Jamaica NOW! Leadership Council as a precedent, the Borough President will also convene quarterly meetings of a reformed Local Planning Committee to help monitor implementation.



Moreover, a defining goal for the Jamaica DRI is to leverage investments to forge deeper partnerships among local organizations serving similar populations, to build capacity among these organizations, and to connect these organizations to regional groups with overlapping missions. As such, the project lead roles for projects recommended for DRI funding were assigned to organizations with the greatest existing capacity to manage them, with the expectation that, in several instances, the leads would partner with one or more organizations for project planning and execution so that partner organizations build their capacity to manage similar projects in the future.

The responsible entities for the implementation of all DRI-funded projects, including project leads and co-leads, are as follows:

### **Non-Profit Organizations**

- **Greater Jamaica Development Corporation (GJDC)** plans, promotes, coordinates, and advances responsible development to revitalize Jamaica and strengthen the region. It has a staff of more than 20 people, led by president Hope Knight. It will be the project lead for **Develop the GJDC Co-Working Space** and **Diversify Dining Options Downtown**, and co-lead for **Establish the Jamaica Arts Corridor**. GJDC will partner with several community organizations to build organization capacity through recommended DRI projects:
  - For Develop the GJDC Co-working Space, GJDC will partner with York College to extend the college's existing State-organized business attraction program to Downtown Jamaica.
  - For Diversify Dining Options Downtown, GJDC will partner with the Queens Library FEASTS program to identify food entrepreneurs to tenant the Step-Up Space at Jamaica Market and with property owners and the Jamaica BIDs to tenant sit-down restaurant spaces.
  - For Establish the Jamaica Arts Corridor, GJDC will work closely with the Sutphin Boulevard BID on the Welcome Center, with the Jamaica Now Leadership Council to produce Marketing Materials, and with the owners of historically significant properties, including King Manor Museum, the Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning (JCAL), and First Presbyterian Church in Jamaica, on Artistic Lighting Displays.
- **Queens Economic Development Corporation (QEDC)** provides business services, assists local entrepreneurs, and promotes tourism across Queens. It has a staff of 10 people, led by executive director Seth Bornstein. It recently started the Prime Skills program in Jamaica, and will serve as the project lead for Expand Prime Skills Program.
- **Queens Council on the Arts (QCA)** fosters and develops the arts in Queens. It provides artists with grants and career development resources, and promotes Queens artists. It has a staff of eight, and is led by executive director Hoong Yee Lee Krakauer. It will be

the project lead for Create a Jamaica Arts & Events Fund, coordinating with local cultural organizations and its broad network of local and regional artists to supplement staff capacity.

- **Tech:NYC** is a member-based partnership of technology firms that advocates for policies and programs that support the growth of the tech sector, tech talent, and tech access in New York City. With a staff of six, it will serve as the project co-lead for Deliver High-Speed Broadband to Downtown Jamaica, securing a technical consultant to assist with project scoping and execution.

### Public

- **City University of New York – York College** is a four-year senior college located in the heart of Jamaica. As the owner of the land underneath the LIRR archways at 159th Street and Union Hall Street, as well as the Milton G. Bassin Performing Arts Center, York College will be the project lead for the two **Activate the Archer Archways** projects and project co-lead for **Establish the Jamaica Arts Corridor**.
- **The New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT)** is responsible for the transportation network of New York City and is currently conducting two streetscape and transportation studies in Downtown Jamaica. It will serve as project lead for **Revitalize the Downtown Jamaica Gateway**.
- **New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) – Thomas A. Edison Career & Technical Education High School** is a nationally recognized public secondary school specializing in career and technology education. It will serve as the project lead for **Enhance Targeted Career Prep at Edison High School**.

### Private

- **CityBridge** is a consortium of technology and design firms including Intersection, Qualcomm, and CIVIQ Streetscapes, that is responsible for LinkNYC, a network of public wi-fi kiosks replacing phone booths across New York City. It will serve as the project co-lead **Deliver High-Speed Broadband to Downtown Jamaica**.

**Table I-5. Project Implementation**

Project Name	Responsible Entity	Project Partners
<b>Develop the GJDC Co-Working Space</b>	Greater Jamaica Development Corporation (GJDC)	York College
<b>Deliver High Speed Broadband to Downtown Jamaica</b>	CityBridge, Tech:NYC	ZenFi, GJDC, Jamaica Center BID, Sutphin Boulevard BID, 165 <sup>th</sup> Street Mall Association
<b>Expand Prime Skills Program</b>	Queens Economic Development Corporation	
<b>Enhance Targeted Career Prep at Edison High School</b>	New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) – Thomas A. Edison Career & Technical Education High School	
<b>Revitalize the Downtown Jamaica Gateway</b>	New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT)	
<b>Activate the Archer Archways:</b> Create a Public Space at 159 <sup>th</sup> Street	York College	Long Island Rail Road
<b>Activate the Archer Archways:</b> Reopen the Union Hall Street Entrance	York College	Long Island Rail Road
<b>Establish the Jamaica Arts Corridor</b>	GJDC, York College	Sutphin Boulevard BID, Jamaica Now Leadership Council, King Manor Museum, Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning, First Presbyterian Church in Jamaica
<b>Create a Downtown Arts &amp; Events Fund</b>	Queens Council on the Arts	Local arts and culture organizations and artists
<b>Diversify Downtown Dining Options</b>	GJDC	Queens Library, GJDC, Jamaica Center BID, Sutphin Boulevard BID, 165 <sup>th</sup> Street Mall Association, local property owners

## SECTION V: Public Involvement

FIGURE I-26. PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE



Source: Fitzgerald and Halliday, Inc.

Proactive community engagement was a core principle of the DRI planning process and has been essential in producing a Strategic Investment Plan that reflects the community's needs and vision. With DRI closely following the Jamaica NOW! planning process, concerns about planning fatigue among stakeholders and the public led the DRI team to craft a community engagement plan that sought targeted public input; maintained an open, transparent, and participatory process; and relied extensively on elected and community representatives to solicit input throughout the planning process.

The following provides an overview of the groups involved in this process as well as the various efforts and events that were implemented to engage those groups.



## STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

The Jamaica DRI planning process was a collaborative effort among many stakeholders with an interest in the success of Downtown Jamaica. Key groups involved in the decision-making process included:

- **Local Planning Committee (LPC):** was responsible for providing insight and expertise on local conditions and issues; collaborating with the Consulting Team to identify and develop priority projects; and finally recommending specific priority projects for DRI investment. In addition, the LPC assisted the Project Team's public and stakeholder outreach efforts by (1) identifying information resources and potential lines of communication; and (2) helping to raise awareness about community outreach efforts. The LPC, co-chaired by Queens Borough President Melina Katz and Con Edison Director of Public Relations Carol Conslato, was primarily composed of representatives from community organizations, cultural institutions, and business groups. In addition to providing feedback on goals and projects, LPC members were responsible for making final recommendations.
- **The Advisory Committee:** Because of the large number of stakeholders in Jamaica, unique to New York City, an Advisory Committee was convened to ensure that each community connected to Downtown Jamaica had a clear voice during the planning process. The Advisory Committee assisted the LPC by serving as a primary touchpoint for specific Downtown user groups and helped shape Jamaica DRI priorities and project. The Advisory Committee consisted of City of New York agency representatives, business district representatives, other civic partners who are involved with planning efforts in Downtown Jamaica, and local elected officials representing Jamaica.
- **The general public** provided a critical source of input for this effort through a variety of outreach efforts, including LPC meetings and a Public Open House, as well as online and paper comments. A full list of public events is below. Among the general public, an effort was made to include Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations, by disseminating public meeting flyers in Spanish as well as English, and providing Spanish language assistance at all public meetings and workshops.

FIGURE I-27. PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE



Source: Fitzgerald and Halliday, Inc.

Outreach efforts were coordinated with local organizations' efforts and existing events. The DRI website – <https://www.ny.gov/downtown-revitalization-initiative/new-york-city-jamaica> - served as the primary source of information for project news and announcements. This included a project fact sheet, FAQs as well as meeting materials, such as flyers, agendas, presentations, and summaries. All technical information and concepts were presented in terms that were clear and understandable with numerous visualizations to illustrate complex topics. Members of the public also submitted comments via the website and signed up for the project mailing list to stay up to date on the study's progress.

Committee members also assisted in the distribution of meeting notices and project information through e-mail blasts, newsletters, websites, and social media managed by their organizations or organizations with which they have close relationships. In addition, all outreach events were hosted at locations operated by organizations represented on the LPC and that were well situated to be reasonable convenient for the majority of attendees.

## OUTREACH EVENTS

Outreach events for the Jamaica DRI effort were organized into five main categories: LPC Meetings, Small Group/Focus Group Meetings, One-on-One Interviews, Public Open Houses, and Online Surveys.

**LPC Meetings:** A total of five LPC Meetings were held. All meetings were held at the Milton G. Bassin Performing Arts Center at York College during work hours, typically for two to three hours. These meetings typically included a presentation from the Consulting Team, followed by facilitated discussion. Members of the Steering Committee and Advisory Committee were encouraged to attend all meetings and participate in discussion topics. Members of the public were also invited to these meetings and had an opportunity to comment. The dates and meeting topics are described below:

- **Public Open House:** This event was held on Wednesday, January 25, from 12:00 PM – 8:00 PM at the Queens Central Library on Merrick Boulevard in Downtown Jamaica. The purpose was to both educate the public about this project and engage the community in the development of the DRI Strategic Investment Plan. More than 125 people participated in the event, which provided an opportunity for the public to engage in one-on-one discussion with members of the project team, review information about potential priority projects, and provide their input on a draft DRI vision, goals, and potential priority projects.
- **Small Group/Focus Group Meetings:** A variety of small group meetings and interviews were held throughout the DRI process to receive guidance on the key physical, programmatic, and economic areas that could be improved through concentrated investment, and to workshop potential interventions. These small group meetings varied in format, group size, and frequency. At the beginning of the process, meetings were organized around specific topic areas, such as arts and culture, small business and economic development, workforce development, and youth and community development, and participating organizations had similar missions. As the project progressed, small group meetings were organized to advance and refine potential priority projects, including to identify potential project leads and partners to implement projects.
- **One-on-One Interviews:** The Consulting team conducted a wide variety of in-depth one-on-one interviews with key Jamaica stakeholders throughout the planning process in order to better understand both the existing conditions, and to identify potential projects. Early in the planning process discussions focused on determining Jamaica's key assets and challenges. Key areas of discussion included existing physical conditions, projects impacting Downtown Jamaica currently being implemented, the economy of Downtown Jamaica, the workforce development landscape of Greater Jamaica, and the network of arts and cultural institutions serving Downtown Jamaica. As the plan developed, these interviews turned to building out specific projects for consideration, identifying management structures, and forging implementation partnerships.

**Table I-6. Outreach Meetings**

Meeting Date	Primary Meeting Topics
<b>LPC Meeting #1</b> Wednesday, November 9, 2016	Overview of the DRI process; project overview, including context and goals, work plan, and community engagement process; Downtown Jamaica's issues and opportunities.
<b>LPC Meeting #2</b> Tuesday, December 6, 2016	Stakeholder outreach update; existing conditions in Downtown Jamaica; draft vision statement, goals, and objectives; project selection process.
<b>LPC Meeting #3</b> Friday, January 13, 2017	Potential priority project identification and refinement process; potential priority project profiles.
<b>Public Open House</b> Wednesday, January 25, 2017	Educate the public about Jamaica DRI; solicit input on preliminary priority projects; engage the community in the development of the DRI Plan.
<b>LPC Meeting #4</b> Wednesday, February 15, 2017	Public Open House recap; updated potential priority project profiles and selection process.
<b>LPC Meeting #5</b> Wednesday, February 22, 2017	Presentation of final Strategic Investment Plan and priority projects.

Public and stakeholder support for various projects is indicated in individual project profiles. Attendees' comments were primarily focused on support for new affordable housing, job opportunities, youth and family engagement, improved public spaces, as well as more and better retail options.

Strong communication and collaboration among all concerned entities was critical in providing the public with the most current information. This process was well coordinated to incorporate comments and feedback received from stakeholders and the public.





# Citations

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- 5 Greater Jamaica Development Corporation. “October 2016 Development Map” 2016.; CoStar, Inc. n.d. 2016
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- 10 New York City Housing Development Corporation. “NYC HDC September 15 Memorandum on Multi-Family Mortgage Revenue Bonds” 2016.
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PART TWO:

# JAMAICA STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PLAN





## PART TWO

# Statement of Community Vision

### VISION FOR DOWNTOWN JAMAICA REVITALIZATION

**The Jamaica DRI Local Planning Committee developed the following vision to guide investment in Downtown Jamaica and support local revitalization and economic development:**

DRI investment will:

- Build upon recent investment to expand economic opportunity for local residents and entrepreneurs;
- Strengthen Downtown Jamaica's cultural and commercial assets;
- Celebrate Jamaica's unique character; and
- Support the development of a vibrant, connected, and inclusive mixed-use downtown core, for the benefit of the local community and the greater Jamaica area.



## SECTION I:

# Profiles of Priority Projects Proposed for DRI Funding

The New York State Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) seeks to “transform communities ripe for development into vibrant neighborhoods where the next generation of New Yorkers will want to live, work, and raise a family.” For each potential project, the Local Planning Committee (LPC) considered the following selection criteria when determining relative priority for DRI funding request proposals:

Impact	Cost	Feasibility	Public Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment with DRI Goals, and Existing Plans</li> <li>• Community Benefits</li> <li>• Economic and Fiscal Impact</li> <li>• Employment and Job Growth</li> <li>• Workforce Development Potential</li> <li>• Transformative Potential</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estimated Project Cost</li> <li>• Ability to Leverage Public and/or Private Funds</li> <li>• Ability to Leverage other Funding Sources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market Demand</li> <li>• Site Control and Regulatory Challenges</li> <li>• Readiness and Timeline</li> <li>• Capacity of Responsible Parties to Implement and Maintain Investment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Planning Committee meetings</li> <li>• Public Open House</li> <li>• Stakeholder Focus Group</li> <li>• Written Comments</li> </ul>



## **METHODOLOGY FOR APPLICATION OF SELECTION CRITERIA**

The process by which the LPC selected Priority Projects to include in the Strategic Investment Plan and to prioritize for DRI funding involved four key steps, which were supported by the Consultant Team. The steps, detailed below, were: 1) Project Assembly; 2) Project Refinement and Consolidation; 3) Project Analysis and Evaluation; and 4) Project Recommendations.

### **1. PROJECT ASSEMBLY**

The Consultant Team identified more than 50 projects referenced in past plans, discussions with Local Planning Committee and Advisory Committee members, and public meetings. Significant past plans (summarized in Part I of this Plan) include:

- The Jamaica Plan – 2007
- Jamaica Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study - 2010
- Jamaica Brownfield Opportunity Area Implementation Strategy - 2015
- York College Master Plan Amendment - 2011
- Jamaica NOW! Action Plan - 2015
- Jamaica Airport Gateway Study – Forthcoming 2017
- Downtown Jamaica Comprehensive Streetscape Plan - Forthcoming 2017

### **2. PROJECT REFINEMENT AND CONSOLIDATION**

The Consultant Team consolidated the initial list of projects to 16 potential projects for review, based on conversations with stakeholders and a review of project similarities. First, the Consultant Team eliminated projects that were already completed or substantially underway; then, the team consolidated projects with significant similarity and overlap. Projects that did not explicitly lie within the DRI boundary or significantly impact the experience of the downtown were discussed as important context and prioritized for continued planning and discussion, though were not included in the final projects list for consideration through the DRI program.

The LPC sought to identify a range of projects that reflected near-term and long-term goals for downtown revitalization and that served to benefit the diverse set of user groups in Downtown Jamaica, including residents of the Greater Jamaica and Southeast Queens communities, downtown workers, students, and current and potential visitors. Of particular importance, the LPC prioritized projects that would, in addition to contributing to downtown revitalization, provide direct economic benefits to Jamaica residents in the form of job creation, career development, business or entrepreneurship support, and other forms of youth and community development.

### 3. PROJECT ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

The Local Planning Committee reviewed and evaluated the list of potential projects based on the criteria detailed above. The Consultant Team then performed a detailed evaluation of potential priority projects across the criteria based on conversations with local stakeholders, review of past project proposals and studies, and independent analysis and expertise. In addition, the Consultant Team organized, and LPC members participated in, a Public Open House on January 25, 2017, at which more than 150 members of the public reviewed and commented on the draft DRI vision and goals statements, as well as descriptions of the 16 potential projects, and were given an opportunity to vote on preferred projects and to submit written comments. Public input, in combination with LPC and other stakeholder feedback, played a central role in refining project descriptions and developing a final recommendations list.

### 4. PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the evaluation process outlined above, the LPC identified projects that were priorities for DRI funding in that they supported core downtown revitalization goals, had the capacity to drive transformational impacts, were feasible within the near term, and had substantial support from key stakeholders and the public. The LPC selected projects that addressed both near-term economic development opportunities such as job training and entrepreneurship development for existing residents of the Core Downtown Study Area and the Southeast Queens Catchment Area, and longer-term industry growth, visitor attraction, and downtown activation, noting that both types of projects are essential to the revitalization of Downtown Jamaica and should be part of any future funding package. The LPC recommended projects to ensure that as Jamaica grows, the benefits accrue to the existing Jamaica community, as well as new any members.

The LPC recommended awarding funding to 10 projects through DRI, as detailed in the project map below and project summary table.

The LPC also identified projects that were not recommended for DRI funding but that reflected the priorities of the LPC and the broader community and would support Downtown revitalization goals, and therefore should be priorities for securing alternative sources of funding. In general, these projects aligned with the LPC's vision for Downtown Jamaica but were not ready for near-term implementation due to the need for additional project planning, the need for capacity building on the part of the responsible entity, or both. These projects are summarized in the following section.

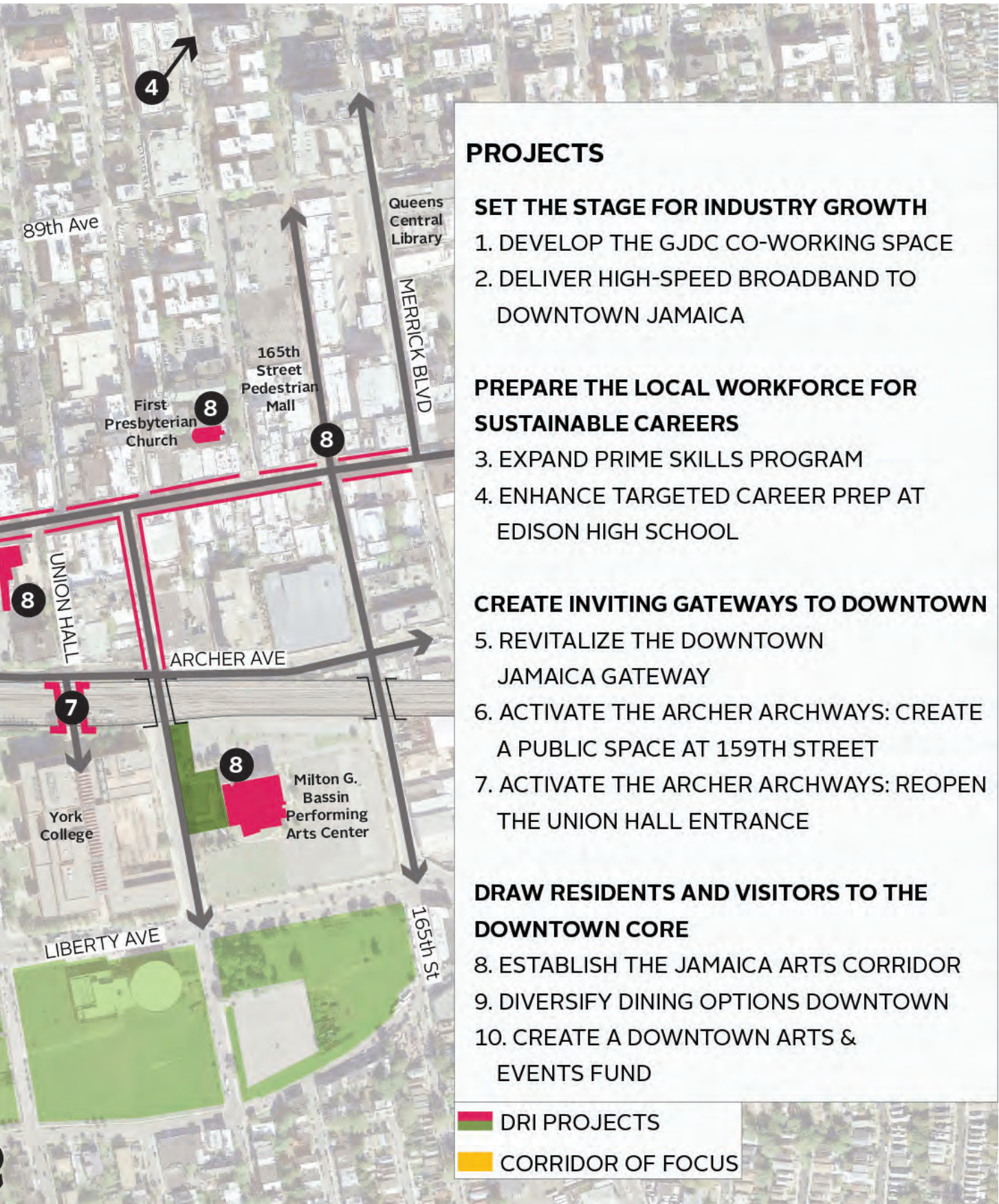


FIGURE 1 – PROPOSED PROJECTS



Source: Beyer Blinder Belle





## PROJECTS RECOMMENDED FOR DRI FUNDING

#	Project Name	Project Description
SET THE STAGE FOR INDUSTRY GROWTH		
1	Develop the GJDC Co-Working Space	Create a shared workspace for local entrepreneurs and independent professionals at the Moda Building, run by GJDC. The space would host events and business support services, and, in partnership with York College, participate in State economic development initiatives.
2	Deliver High-Speed Broadband to Downtown Jamaica	Strengthen Jamaica's broadband infrastructure to support the delivery of high-speed service to existing businesses and the public, attract new businesses in high-growth industries, and create a robust private marketplace for broadband services in Jamaica
PREPARE THE LOCAL WORKFORCE FOR SUSTAINABLE CAREERS		
3	Expand Prime Skills Program	Expand Prime Skills – an entrepreneurship training program that helps low-income Jamaica residents launch or grow businesses – by supporting two additional program cohorts, expanding mentorship and support to previous program graduates, and purchasing equipment for program graduates.
4	Enhance Targeted Career Prep at Edison High School	Enhance Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical Education High School's nationally recognized Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs for students and adults in the broader Jamaica community by modernizing equipment and software for programs focused on high-growth industries in Downtown Jamaica and the surrounding area.
CREATE INVITING GATEWAYS TO DOWNTOWN		
5	Revitalize the Downtown Jamaica Gateway	Transform Jamaica Center into an inviting Downtown gateway with a major expansion of pedestrian space and lighting and streetscape improvements.
6	Activate the Archer Archways - Create a Public Space at 159th Street	Upgrade and activate the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) underpass at 159th Street - the key gateway between York College and Downtown Jamaica. Improvements will include overhead lighting, public art, seating, and event space.
7	Activate the Archer Archways - Reopen the Union Hall Entrance	Reopen the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) underpass at Union Hall Street to create a direct connection between York College's main Academic Building and the Core Downtown. Improvements will include overhead lighting, public art, and seating.
DRAW RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO THE DOWNTOWN CORE		
8	Establish the Jamaica Arts Corridor	Establish a distinctive Jamaica Arts Corridor celebrating local cultural anchors and independent artists. Components will include 1) a Welcome Center at Jamaica Station to introduce visitors to local attractions and events, 2) Marketing Materials to promote Jamaica cultural institutions and heritage, 3) Artistic Lighting Displays along Jamaica Avenue celebrating historical sites, 4) Signature Art Installations at prominent downtown locations, and 5) a Promenade and Arts Space fronting the Milton G. Bassin Performing Arts Center at York College.
9	Diversify Dining Options Downtown	Improve dining options and nightlife activity in the Downtown, by creating step-up space for Jamaica-based incubator graduates, providing capital investment funds for a Dedicated Restaurant Space, and establishing a Restaurant Startup Fund.
10	Create a Downtown Arts & Events Fund	Establish a multi-year grant fund for art installations and cultural events that draw residents and visitors to Downtown Jamaica, support local cultural organizations, and celebrate local independent artists.



PART TWO SECTION I: PROFILES OF PRIORITY PROJECTS PROPOSED FOR DRI FUNDING

DRI Funding Request	Responsible Party
\$1,650,000	Greater Jamaica Development Corporation (GJDC)
\$2,655,000	CityBridge, Tech:NYC
\$230,000	Queens Economic Development Corporation
\$165,000	New York City Department of Education - Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical Education High School
\$2,500,000	New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT)
\$1,500,000	York College
\$2,000,000	York College
\$3,275,000	GJDC, York College
\$1,450,000	GJDC
\$600,000	Queens Council on the Arts
TOTAL: \$16,025,000	



## PRIORITY PROJECT PROFILE

# Develop the GJDC Co-Working Space



Source: Greater Jamaica Development Corporation

### SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Create a shared workspace for local entrepreneurs and professionals run by the Greater Jamaica Development Corporation (GJDC). The space would host events and business support services, and, in partnership with York College, participate in state economic development initiatives.

### RECOMMENDATION FOR DRI FUNDING

**\$1,650,000** requested through DRI funding

### LOCATION

Moda Building, 89-14 Parsons Boulevard  
(at 89th Avenue)

## Responsible Parties

The **Greater Jamaica Development Corporation (GJDC)** would be responsible for developing and operating the space.

## Capacity of Responsible Party

**GJDC** is a community-based nonprofit organization that plans, promotes, coordinates, and advances responsible development to revitalize Jamaica and strengthen the region. With a staff of more than 20, it led Jamaica's Brownfield Opportunity Area application, manages several revolving loan funds for small and mid-sized businesses in Southeast Queens, and operates office and retail space in Downtown Jamaica.

## Project Partners

**York College**, as a strategic partner and overseer of the local START-UP NY campus, would help recruit companies to the space. York currently operates a START-UP NY office and industrial space in nearby Richmond Hills, Queens.

GJDC has plans to partner with other local business and workforce organizations to provide services to tenant companies and to program the co-working space.

## Strategies

This project aligns with the following DRI strategies:

- Set the stage for industry growth
- Prepare the local workforce for sustainable careers

This project aligns with the following REDC strategies:

- Create a pro-growth, pro-jobs environment
- Foster innovation and inter-regional cooperation

This project was identified as a priority in the DRI Application submitted on behalf of Jamaica, Queens, in 2016.

## Project Description

**Project Type:** Development or redevelopment of real property

**Description:** Greater Jamaica Development Corporation (GJDC) will develop and manage a co-working space of more than 10,000 square feet for startups, professionals, independent contractors, entrepreneurs, freelancers, and others seeking full-time or part-time affordable, flexible work space with shared equipment, low operating costs, and a collegial work environment. Once project funding is secured, GJDC will partner with York College to designate its space as eligible for State economic development incentives to attract tech startups. In this way, the space will support York's growing focus on technology.

GJDC has identified space on the fourth floor of the historic former Queens Family Court building – now part of the mixed-use Moda building at Parsons Boulevard and 89th Avenue – that could accommodate up to 90 users with a combination of communal and private work spaces; a 1,000-square-foot modular training space accommodating 50 to 75 people at a time; state-of-the-art equipment and technology, including video and teleconferencing and remote access to a shared network; and a reception area, conference room, eat-in pantry, and storage rooms. The space today is unfinished, requiring a full build-out, including lighting, plumbing, HVAC, floors, ceilings, and interior walls.

Co-working spaces are an emerging market in New York City real estate, driven by the growth of the freelance economy. In addition to meeting demand among Jamaica residents and professionals, the space will help attract young professionals and startup businesses to Jamaica, and help foster a local entrepreneurship community. To that end, GJDC will host programs such as:

- **Comprehensive Business Training:** monthly on-site seminars and classes hosted on general business topics including finance, law, organizational strategy, marketing, and insurance.
- **Networking and Mentoring:** access to a network of partner organizations and resources to address members' unique

needs for buyers, suppliers, and potential sources of capital, as well as monthly networking events.

The GJDC Co-Working Space is located along Parsons Boulevard, a major north/south connector that leads to the Jamaica Center transit hub and then to the York College campus through the LIRR underpasses on Archer Avenue. In this way, the space will serve as the northern anchor of a continuous innovation corridor running through the center of Downtown Jamaica. It is anticipated that investments in downtown broadband access will benefit the Co-Working Space and that Prime Skills graduates will have access to programming and services offered at the space.

## Estimated Project Costs

**Total Project Cost:** \$4,250,000 including:

- \$2,600,000 for purchase of the space as a commercial condominium unit
- \$1,650,000 in hard costs for space build-out and furnishings, as follows:
  - \$1,300,000 in hard costs for electrical, plumbing, flooring, and other fit-out costs
  - \$350,000 for furnishings, a security system, and other startup costs

## Funding Sources

**DRI:** \$1,650,000 is recommended for funding through DRI for build-out of the space.

**Private Funding:** The requested DRI funds will supplement \$2,600,000 from GJDC and its funding network, which will fund the purchase of the space from the Dermot Company. GJDC will also subsidize operating costs in startup years until breakeven, anticipated in year three.

## Site Ownership and Legal Jurisdiction

The Dermot Company owns the Moda Building, and GJDC is in negotiations to buy the subject space. Absent a purchase, GJDC will execute a



lease and is in advanced discussions with The Dermot Company on lease terms. There are no known legal issues.

### Regulatory Requirements

The existing space is zoned to allow for development of co-working space. Once GJDC gains control of the space, to participate in state economic development incentives, York College will need to amend its campus plan, a process that involves approval by the City University of New York. York College recently executed a campus plan amendment and does not foresee any complications to doing so again.

### Public Support

During stakeholder outreach, multiple parties expressed interest in the creation of affordable, modern office space for small businesses and professionals. Additionally, the project received moderate support during the Jamaica Public Open House voting exercise and strong support in a survey of Local Planning Committee members.

### Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

**Short term:** During the build-out period, expenditures for the build-out will create construction jobs and associated revenues for local businesses.

**Medium Term:** The co-working space will support local business growth with affordable workspace and reduced operating costs. It is anticipated that the Co-Working Space will also serve as a convening spot for local entrepreneurs and startup companies, and will draw professionals to Downtown Jamaica.

**Long Term:** Affordable space and business programming will attract new businesses and entrepreneurs, creating job opportunities and strengthening the local business and entrepreneurship ecosystems.

### Beneficiaries

Small businesses, entrepreneurs, and local professionals residing in and drawn to Jamaica would benefit from the creation of the GJDC Co-Working Space.

### Cost-Benefit Analysis

As described above, the development of a co-working space in Downtown Jamaica will allow small businesses, entrepreneurs, and local professionals the opportunity to locate and expand their businesses in the downtown, generating additional business activity and supporting downtown activation. Once completed, the space would accommodate up to 90 users at a time, providing a substantial increase to the amount of affordable, accessible workspace for target businesses and fostering increased job development in downtown. It is anticipated that the co-working space will serve as a focal point for Jamaica's entrepreneurial community and will serve as a convening space for workforce and business support programs and organizations.

### Jobs Created

The space will have the capacity to support 90 jobs, including positions that are new to Jamaica.

### Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness

#### Immediate Next Steps (3-6 months):

Negotiate and execute purchase of space, complete design.

**Mid-Term Steps (6-12 months):** Construct and fit out space. Amend the York College campus plan to include the coworking space. Target opening is late 2017 or early 2018.

### Project Metrics

- Occupancy – percent of space being rented in the co-working space
- Job creation – number of jobs created by businesses renting space, or that have grown after starting in the co-working space
- Programming – hours of workforce development and entrepreneur training hosted in the co-working space
- Capital – total private funds raised by businesses renting space, or that have grown after starting in the co-working space.



## PRIORITY PROJECT PROFILE

# Deliver High-Speed Broadband to Downtown Jamaica



Source: CityBridge

### SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Strengthen Jamaica's broadband infrastructure to support the delivery of high-speed service to existing businesses and the public, attract new businesses in high-growth industries, and create a robust private marketplace for broadband services in Jamaica. Project components will include: 1) a new Continuous Conduit connecting Jamaica to the wider broadband network, and 2) facilitation of a local Broadband Marketplace to attract private vendors to serve Jamaica.

### RECOMMENDATION FOR DRI FUNDING

**\$2,655,000** requested for DRI funding

### LOCATION

Core Downtown Jamaica Study Area, particularly along Jamaica Avenue between the Van Wyck Expressway and Merrick Boulevard

## Responsible Parties

**CityBridge**, a consortium of private technology and design firms, will manage the Continuous Conduit component. **Tech:NYC**, a nonprofit technology industry advocacy organization, will oversee implementation of the Broadband Marketplace.

## Capacity of Responsible Parties

CityBridge, whose members include Intersection, Qualcomm, and CIVIQ Streetscapes, with a combined staff of more than 300, is responsible for installing and maintaining LinkNYC, a network of thousands of public wi-fi kiosks replacing phone booths across New York City. Tech:NYC has a staff of four and would employ a technical consultant to supplement in-house capacity.

## Project Partners

To implement Continuous Conduit, CityBridge will partner with **ZenFi**, a private fiber provider, which would install a new fiber connection to Jamaica, and various City agencies whose approval is required to install fiber beneath public rights of way. Tech:NYC will retain a technical consultant to conduct a broadband market assessment; partner with the **Greater Jamaica Development Corporation (GJDC)**, **Jamaica Center BID**, **Sutphin Boulevard BID**, **165th Street Mall Association**, and various property owners to coordinate broadband installations; and conduct outreach to broadband providers.

## Strategies

This project aligns with the following DRI strategies:

- Set the stage for industry growth

This project aligns with the following REDC strategies:

- Create a pro-growth, pro-jobs environment
- Invest in the future

## Project Description

**Project Type:** Broadband or other communications connectivity

**Description:** A lack of accessible high-speed broadband service in Downtown Jamaica has inhibited business operations and will inhibit growth and attraction of tech-enabled companies in the future. This project would expand broadband access by first improving the core broadband infrastructure serving Jamaica to allow greater access for potential providers and then by pooling resources to attract market interest in Jamaica and support targeted investments to improve access.

**Continuous Conduit:** One barrier to expanding broadband access in Jamaica is the presence of gaps in the conduit pathway leading from northern and western Queens to Jamaica. These gaps, or “blockages,” make it prohibitively expensive for landline fiber service providers with existing service outside of Jamaica to run new lines to Jamaica. This project component would address two blockages in the conduit pathway between Jamaica and Queens Boulevard: a 1,200-foot blockage on Jamaica Avenue and a 740-foot missing conduit on 139th Street, including a portion crossing the Van Wyck Expressway. CityBridge, through its fiber provider ZenFi, would manage design and construction of the new conduit, which after completion would be made available for use by numerous other providers. CityBridge, through ZenFi, would also run a fiber connection to Jamaica to serve the existing and an expanded network of LinkNYC kiosks.

This component would have two primary impacts: (1) Expand the LinkNYC network in Jamaica by installing 55 additional LinkNYC kiosks (which serve as wi-fi hotspots as well as access points for digital services such as phone calls and cell phone charging), including along Jamaica Avenue, Hillside Avenue, and near the South Jamaica Houses. The Link network is currently limited because CityBridge must lease fiber access from a secondary vendor along Jamaica Avenue and the capacity is insufficient to support more than 18 kiosks. The expansion made possible by physical upgrades would increase the capacity of

the Jamaica Link network (i.e. the number of people who can access Link at one time) by 13,000. (2) Once the Continuous Conduit is installed, any private provider with existing fiber service north of Jamaica will be able to provide access to Jamaica at a significantly reduced cost, because providers would only need to provide fiber cabling and supporting electronics within Jamaica and would not be required to invest in civil infrastructure.

**Broadband Marketplace:** To attract additional broadband providers to Jamaica and develop a more robust local marketplace, Tech:NYC will manage a competition or other solicitation offering up to \$2 million in capital support to one or more providers that commit to expanding local broadband pathways and offering high-speed broadband access to local properties and businesses at affordable rates. Funds would be used to subsidize the costs of building local broadband infrastructure, including potentially: (1) extending pathways along Jamaica Avenue and lateral connections to individual properties, and/or (2) creating a “community broadband” system. The competitive bid may result in one or more contracts between local customers (i.e. businesses and property owners) and specific private vendors. Tech:NYC envisions convening a panel of advisors including industry experts, local leaders, and policymakers to provide recommendations on awardees of the solicitation.

Prior to the solicitation, Tech:NYC will partner with one or more technical consultants to conduct a broad assessment of local market supply and demand. The market assessment will identify the types of wired and wireless services currently available through the area’s utility and private service providers, including their operating speeds and bandwidth capacities, and what level of service is being demanded within the study area. The assessment will also gauge what level of service is required by Downtown Jamaica businesses and other entities, in terms of speed, bandwidth, access, and reliability.

Supplementing physical improvement projects, Tech:NYC will work with GJDC and the Jamaica BIDs to inform local property and business



owners of broadband options. It is anticipated that, to the extent necessary to attract vendors, GJDC and the BIDs will organize local businesses and other entities to create group purchase agreements and property access agreements that may reduce the cost of service and attract a broader set of providers, seeking to identify groups of customers in geographic proximity to which providers may be able to provide cost-effective service.

### Estimated Project Costs

**Total Cost:** At least \$6,780,000, including:

- \$4,125,000 for the installation of up to 55 LinkNYC kiosks on Jamaica Avenue, Hillside Avenue, and Sutphin Boulevard.
- \$455,000 for the Continuous Conduit component between Jamaica and Queens Boulevard, including construction and engineering.
- \$200,000 for a broadband market assessment and preparation of a competitive solicitation to support the Broadband Marketplace component.
- At least \$2,000,000 for one or more installation projects that result from the Broadband Marketplace, which may include any of the following:
  - \$1,000,000 to \$2,000,000 per mile of trenching to support expanded landline fiber connections or to feed into one or more fixed wireless hubs, depending on the size and type of pathway.
  - \$150,000 per fixed wireless hub to support expansion of wi-fi based broadband connectivity.

### Funding Sources

**DRI Funding:** \$2,655,000, including \$455,000 for the Continuous Conduit component, \$200,000 for the market assessment, and \$2,000,000 for the subsidy package associated with the Broadband Marketplace component.

**Potential Non-DRI Sources:** The Continuous Conduit investment will leverage a \$4,125,000 investment by CityBridge to expand its LinkNYC network in Jamaica and potentially incentivize

additional providers to run fiber to Jamaica. The Broadband Marketplace component will leverage funds from service providers, local businesses, and property owners to generate the largest possible service package for the available subsidy amount.

### Site Ownership and Legal Jurisdiction

Development of the Continuous Conduit and LinkNYC kiosks will require coordination with NYCDOT, the New York City Department of Information Technology & Telecommunications (DOITT), and potentially other City agencies, ownership of new conduit would be transferred to an external party in a manner that makes it available to other providers. Landline connections to individual properties will require right of way and access agreements with public and private entities.

### Regulatory Requirements

Any installations must comply with the National Electrical Code and various telecommunication standards such as EIA/TIA and BICSI.

### Public Support

During stakeholder outreach, numerous parties commented on the lack of affordable, high-speed broadband for business users. This project received moderate support during the Public Open House voting exercise, and strong support from Local Planning Committee members in a February survey.

### Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

Expanding high-speed broadband service in Downtown Jamaica is a prerequisite to attracting high-growth industry sectors, including tech, design, and other innovation economy firms, and therefore long-term job growth. Businesses will have improved access to wired and wireless broadband services from multiple vendors, which will also provide increased service and cost options for the consumer. In addition, an expanded LinkNYC

network will provide high-speed access to street-level businesses and increase the Link network capacity such that 13,000 more people could potentially be on the network at one time.

### Beneficiaries

Retail, professional, and other businesses desiring reliable and cost-competitive broadband access. LinkNYC expansion will also benefit residents, visitors, and workers, who can access free high-speed wi-fi within an expanded service area.

### Cost-Benefit Analysis

This project is structured to attract significant private investment through targeted public support of broadband infrastructure. By repairing a missing link in the Queens broadband network and making available subsidy for further targeted investments, the two project components leverage up to \$2,655,000 in DRI funds to attract at least \$4,125,000 in private capital (in the form of LinkNYC network expansion) and most likely a significantly higher amount in private contributions to other system improvements. In addition, new infrastructure will be maintained by service providers, meaning ongoing costs will not be borne by the public. Supporting industry growth and increased local employment would also generate City and State tax revenues.

### Jobs Created

In addition to construction and technical jobs that will be created through the work required for each project, this project will support the long-term attraction of skilled jobs in the area by providing basic services for tech-enabled businesses.

### Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness

**Immediate Next Steps (next 3 months):** Pursue planning and permitting for the Continuous Conduit; engage a technical consultant

to support the market assessment and begin work.

**Mid-term steps (3-12 months):** Complete construction of the Continuous Conduit, and begin expansion of the LinkNYC network; complete market assessment and release solicitation for the Broadband Marketplace.

**Longer-term steps (12+ months):** Complete LinkNYC expansion; select awardees of the Broadband Marketplace and plan, permit, and complete targeted installations.

### Project Metrics

- Wi-fi logins - number of logins to LinkNYC kiosks in expanded areas
- Businesses connected – number of businesses with access to high-speed broadband service and purchasing high-speed broadband service
- Private funds leveraged – total private funding for broadband leveraged by DRI investment

FIGURE 2 – MAP OF EXISTING BROADBAND NETWORK AND BLOCKAGES



Sources: HR&A, CityBridge

FIGURE 3 - FIXED WIRELESS INSTALLATION



Source: Parsons Brinckerhoff

## PRIORITY PROJECT PROFILE

# Expand Prime Skills Program



Source: Queens Economic Development Corporation

### SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Expand Prime Skills – an entrepreneurship training program that helps low-income Jamaica residents launch or grow businesses – by supporting two additional program cohorts, expanding mentorship and support to previous program graduates, and purchasing equipment for program graduates.

### RECOMMENDATION FOR DRI FUNDING

**\$230,000** requested for DRI funding

### LOCATION

South Jamaica neighborhood, including the South Jamaica and Baisley Park Houses

## Responsible Parties

**Queens Economic Development Corporation** (QEDC) will continue to administer the program and monitor program success.

## Capacity of Responsible Party

**QEDC** currently manages program administration, including curriculum development, marketing, and staff hiring. The QEDC Deputy Director, with the Business Services Director, oversees operations.

## Project Partners

Through its informal relationships with other local service providers, QEDC introduces program participants to resources targeted to new entrepreneurs, including Kivazip's zero percent loans and the Neighborhood Entrepreneur Law Projects' free legal clinics.

## Strategies

This project aligns with the following DRI strategies:

- Set the stage for industry growth
- Prepare the local workforce for sustainable careers

This project aligns with the following REDC strategy:

- Create a pro-growth, pro-jobs environment

## Project Description

**Project Type:** Business recruitment or retention / workforce development

**Description:** Prime Skills, a new program of Queens Economic Development Corporation (QEDC), provides low-income clients with the basic knowledge they need to start a small business. The proposed program expansion will assist those seeking to participate in Downtown Jamaica's emerging industries – including retail, hospitality, health care and transportation – to develop businesses that contribute to these sectors. The businesses

typically require minimal capital to start.

Each cohort, consisting of about 15 participants, attends 12 classroom-based sessions and receives ongoing mentorship, counseling, and access to legal aid during and after the program. The curriculum is built around four core topics: business foundations, which includes a review of business structures and the importance of business plans; financial literacy, which covers budgeting, and accounting rules and regulations; marketing, which introduces participants to specific techniques; and technology, including its relevance to both business operations and customer development. Prime Skills will continue to deploy this curriculum with future cohorts, while integrating information regarding industry-recognized certifications.

Although available to all South Jamaica residents, outreach is targeted to residents of the South Jamaica and Baisley Park New York City Housing Authority communities. To minimize participation barriers, the program offers child care, meals, convenient after-work scheduling, and a proximate location. Participants work to receive their business certificates within eight months of the last class. Following this milestone, Prime Skills works with graduates to finalize permits and open a business by year two.

Funds would support expansion of the program in three ways:

- Addition of two new cohorts to the existing South Jamaica program, focused on Downtown Jamaica growth sectors.
- Continued mentorship for previous participants working toward licensing requirements.
- Purchase of professional equipment to help program graduates, based on individual need, launch their businesses. Examples may include technological hardware or software, medical equipment, and uniforms or other required apparel.

## Estimated Project Costs

**Total Cost:** \$230,000, including the following line items:

- Instruction: \$60,000
- Program Marketing: \$5,000
- Materials: \$2,500
- Equipment: \$150,000, including up to \$10,000 worth of equipment per program graduate
- Program Administration: \$12,500

## Funding Sources

**DRI Funding:** \$230,000

**Potential Non-DRI Sources:** QEDC has previously been supported by New York City Council discretionary grants, which funded operating expenses, including staffing, marketing, and materials. A core goal of the expanded program is to test and track the efficacy of past and current cohorts to establish a narrative for broadened fundraising efforts.

## Site Ownership and Legal Jurisdiction

QEDC offers classroom sessions at the Thomas White Center, and has approval to use this space for instruction.

## Regulatory Requirements

Not applicable.

## Public Support

During stakeholder outreach, multiple stakeholders expressed support for entrepreneur training programs like Prime Skills. Moreover, stakeholders expressed support for projects reaching disconnected populations, as Prime Skills does. The project received high support during the Public Open House voting exercise.



### Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

**Short-term:** Position NYCHA residents to start their own businesses and increase earnings; to date, Prime Skills has graduated 15 clients, with an equal number currently participating in the program. Provide program participants with the support to successfully establish their own business in growth sectors, endowing a sense of empowerment and confidence.

**Medium and long-term:** Ripple effects for the larger community in the form of job growth and a stronger cohort of small business owners living and working locally. Precedent for small business ownership – and awareness of related opportunities – within the community.

### Beneficiaries

Prime Skills directly benefits program participants. In addition, a new class of small business owners living in South Jamaica would strengthen community empowerment. As graduates' businesses mature, consumers will have access to greater variety of goods and services, and other business owners in emerging industries will be bolstered by an increase in complementary goods and services, as well as new B2B offerings.

### Cost-Benefit Analysis

This project would result in a positive net return for program participants that successfully launch a business. Estimated program administration and capital support costs are approximately \$7,670 per participant (administrative costs of approximately \$2,670 and capital support of approximately \$5,000). Program participants invest between one and two years to attend classes, register their business, and obtain licenses. Following the establishment of a business, program participants will earn a range of annual income depending on industry area, but are likely to average in excess of \$30,000 based on common business types, providing a substantial net return. Within a year or two of business establishment, graduates might also hire one or more additional employee, adding to the project return.

### Jobs Created

With 15 participants in each cohort, this program will result in approximately 30 new Jamaica-based businesses over the next two years. While program graduates are unlikely to hire additional employees in the near-term, these businesses have the potential to contribute jobs to the local economy in long term.

### Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness

**Immediate Next Steps (next 3 months):** Attract students for two new cohorts within South Jamaica community; instructor would continue to provide mentorship to previous participants.

**Mid-term steps (3-12 months):** Launch two new cohorts; establish capital grant program for participants, including eligibility criteria and application process; continue to administer programming and provide mentorship to previous participants.

**Longer-term steps (12+ months):** Seek further funding to finance the operating costs for additional cohorts. QEDC will use information collected from previous cohorts to demonstrate its track record, as well as the program's potential impact on both participants and the broader community, enabling QEDC to be more competitive in its funding requests; implement application process to administer startup capital funding to successful program participants.

### Project Metrics

- Applications - Number of applications for program participation.
- Attendance - Attendance rate for classes.
- Graduate rate – Percent of participants successfully completing the program.
- Businesses launched - Number of participants to create a business plan within eight months, to receive business certificates within 12 months, to launch a business within 18 months of completion and 3 years of completion.



## PRIORITY PROJECT PROFILE

# Enhance Targeted Career Prep at Edison High School



Source: Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical High School

### SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Enhance Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical Education High School's nationally recognized Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs for students and adults in the broader Jamaica community by modernizing equipment and software for programs focused on high-growth industries in Downtown Jamaica and the surrounding area.

### RECOMMENDATION FOR DRI FUNDING

**\$165,000** requested for DRI funding

### LOCATION

Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical High School, 165-65 84th Avenue

## Responsible Parties

**Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical Education High School (Edison)** will oversee this investment and continue to manage and monitor related CTE programming.

## Capacity of Responsible Party

Edison High School is a New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) public secondary school serving more than 2,000 students in grades 9 to 12, as well as adults from the Greater Jamaica community. Edison is a nationally recognized CTE provider that currently offers college preparatory and CTE programs in eight industry areas, including several that align with Downtown Jamaica's target growth industries, such as information technology, visual arts, and medical assistance. Staff and administration are already in place to deliver related programs and services, and to employ new equipment and software.

## Project Partners

Edison High School partners with numerous organizations to deliver and market its CTE programs, including the Child Care Center of New York, Jamaica Hospital, Greater New York Automotive Dealership Association, Solar One, Lincoln Tech Institute, Queensborough Community College, LaGuardia College, Vaughn College, St. John's University, York College, and Plaza College.

## Strategies

This project aligns with the following DRI strategies:

- Set the stage for industry growth
- Prepare the local workforce for sustainable careers

This project aligns with the following REDC goal:

- Invest in the future

This project builds on the following Jamaica NOW! Action Plan initiative:

- Strengthen Career and Technical Education programming at Thomas

Edison High School by increasing access to work-based learning for students and improving partnerships with businesses

## Project Description

**Project Type:** Business recruitment or retention / workforce development

**Description:** Edison High School's CTE programming provides students with the technical knowledge required to begin careers in a variety of trending industries, including technology, health care, and the creative industries. The school has a 93% graduation rate and is one of few schools in New York City to offer both college-preparatory and CTE training. Upon completion of CTE programs, students receive industry certifications through recognized testing partners; as such, graduates can either directly join the workforce in skilled positions or enroll in undergraduate study to advance their education. Moreover, Edison's CTE programs also serve the broader community, as select courses are open to non-students, making it a supplemental workforce development center for the Jamaica community.

Edison's CTE programs are critical to creating a job-ready workforce in Downtown Jamaica, and in particular to addressing one of the Downtown's core challenges: a high youth unemployment rate. Funds for new equipment and software would enable Edison to keep its programming at the leading edge among CTE programs and to ensure graduates are job-ready for positions in growth industries. Over the long term, developing a skilled local workforce in growth industries positions Jamaica as a more desirable location for increased business investment, thereby supporting business attraction efforts, including in the city's fast-growing tech, design, and health care sectors.

Edison has identified several areas where existing programs could be enhanced by the purchase of up-to-date equipment and/or software. Proposed enhancements for programs are:

- **Web & Mobile App Design:** Purchase of testing equipment and software subscriptions to expand student opportunities to provide services to local businesses.
- **Commercial Art:** Purchase of camera equipment, a video drone, and software licenses to allow students to provide photography and video services to local events.
- **Graphic Design & Printing:** Purchase of materials to support design projects, including stock photo software license, Adobe Creative Cloud Site License, and an interactive display board.
- **Robotics:** Purchase of robotic equipment to improve student competitiveness for internship placement and college partnerships.
- **Computer Networking:** Purchase networking and routing equipment to allow students to provide technology support to local small businesses and entrepreneurs.
- **Computer Forensics:** Purchase of networking equipment to increase collaboration with local law enforcement agencies.
- **Medical Assisting:** Purchase of medical equipment to improve competitiveness of students for internship placement.
- **Computer-Aided Design:** Purchase of a 3D printer and software licenses to increase partnership opportunities with local businesses.
- **Electrical Installation:** Purchase of solar panels and solar energy-related equipment to prepare students for green building opportunities.
- **Automotive Technology:** Purchase of new mounted engines, lifts, and tools for an engine performance lab and creation of New York City's first high school diesel program.
- **Automotive Collision Repair:** Capital improvements to storage and repair space, to provide students opportunities to earn certifications in vehicle painting with water-based paints.



### Estimated Project Costs

**Total Cost:** \$165,500

This total includes a package of equipment and/or software that includes one or more items supporting each program area. Budgets for each program area are listed below:

- Web & Mobile App Design: \$13,500
- Commercial Art: \$48,500
- Graphic Design & Printing: \$8,500
- Robotics: \$6,500
- Computer Networking: \$11,500
- Computer Forensics: \$7,500
- Medical Assisting: \$5,500
- Computer Aided Design: \$7,500
- Electrical Installation: \$18,500
- Automotive Technology: \$19,500
- Automotive Collision Repair: \$18,500

### Funding Sources

**DRI:** \$165,000 for purchase of equipment and licensing of software.

**Non-DRI Sources:** Edison High School is a recent recipient of NYCDOE funding support for summer internship programs serving youth and adults in the Jamaica area. DRI funds would leverage this allocation by providing space and equipment to support school year and summer programs, including workforce and internship programs for adults in the Jamaica community. Edison High School has received funding from the New York City Council and grants from various organizations that are aligned to the needs of their CTE programs. Edison has also received donations in the form of equipment, supplies and funds.

### Site Ownership and Legal Jurisdiction

The Edison High School building is owned by the City of New York. There are no known legal issues with purchasing equipment or software.

### Regulatory Requirements

Procurement of equipment and software must follow NYCDOE regulations.

### Public Support

Projects related to workforce development received high public support, and comments from the Public Open House supported a focus on youth services and job training. This project was identified after the Jamaica Public Open House and therefore was not eligible for public voting. The City of New York has invested significant resources into Edison High School's CTE programs, indicating their support for continued program enhancements.

### Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

**Short-Term:** Enhance quality of career and technical education available to Edison High School students and members of the broader Jamaica community.

**Medium-Term:** Expand internship and job placement opportunities available to students. Improve quality of the workforce for current and potential Jamaica businesses.

**Long-Term:** Attract new businesses to Downtown Jamaica. Create a pipeline of CTE graduates who start new businesses in Downtown Jamaica.

### Beneficiaries

Edison High School students, including youth and adults, would benefit from the enhanced training resulting from the purchase and licensing of modern equipment and software. Additional beneficiaries may include other Downtown jobseekers and business owners as new businesses locate in Downtown Jamaica and Edison graduates start businesses in their respective industries within the Downtown.

### Cost-Benefit Analysis

As described above, the purchase of equipment and software will allow Edison High School to enhance its CTE programming, thus improving the quality of education offered to its students and, over the medium and long terms, create a job-ready, skilled local workforce in industries with growth potential and high capacity for living-wage jobs. Edison's programs result in discrete credentials,

including industry certifications and Advanced Placement credits, that prepare students and others enrolled for employment and/or college enrollment. Investments in equipment and software will improve the competitiveness of students for internships, jobs, and college programs, which in turn will provide benefits to the Downtown by building local assets, creating a skilled local workforce that can attract future growth-industry businesses, and potentially promoting entrepreneurship among graduates in Downtown Jamaica.

### Jobs Created

While this project would not directly create jobs, it has the potential to increase employment among local youth and other underemployed populations, and, in the long term, attract new businesses to Downtown Jamaica that would generate new jobs.

### Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness

**Immediate Next Steps (3 Months):** Purchase and install all equipment and software.

**Mid-Term Steps (3-12 Months):** Integrate enhancements into the CTE curriculum.

### Project Metrics

- Number of internships – number of internships received by students in relevant CTE programs
- Graduate wages – average wage of Edison High School CTE program graduates
- College placement – number of CTE students enrolling in 2- and 4-year degree programs



## PRIORITY PROJECT PROFILE

# Revitalize the Downtown Jamaica Gateway



Source: Beyer Blinder Belle

### SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Transform Jamaica Center into an inviting Downtown gateway with a major expansion of pedestrian space and lighting and streetscape improvements.

### RECOMMENDATION FOR DRI FUNDING

**\$2,500,000** requested for DRI funding

### LOCATION

Parsons Boulevard between Jamaica and Archer avenues, adjacent to the Jamaica Center-Parsons/Archer subway station

## Responsible Parties

**New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT)** is the lead agency for the expanded pedestrian space and enhanced lighting components.

## Capacity of Responsible Party

NYCDOT is responsible for the transportation network of New York City. It has extensive experience overseeing streetscape improvements and other capital projects.

## Project Partners

**Greater Jamaica Development Corporation (GJDC)**, in partnership with the **Jamaica Center BID**, will maintain and manage operations and programming for public space along Parsons Boulevard between Jamaica and Archer avenues, expanding its current role.

## Strategies

This project aligns with the following DRI strategies:

- Create inviting gateways to Downtown
- Draw residents and visitors to the Downtown core

This project aligns with the following REDC strategy:

- Improve quality of life

This project builds on the following Jamaica NOW! Action Plan initiatives:

- Fund a \$250,000 study to determine the cost and scope of Jamaica Avenue streetscape improvements
- Install WalkNYC directional maps and obtain funding to study and develop a strategic transportation plan with multi-modal transit options in the downtown core

## Project Description

**Project Type:** Streetscape improvements

**Description:** The intersection of Parsons Boulevard and Archer Avenue – home to the

Jamaica Center-Parsons/Archer transit hub – is one of Jamaica’s major crossroads and a primary gateway into the downtown. The area is also centrally located among Jamaica’s various activity centers, including York College, the Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning (JCAL), the Farmers Market, Rufus King Park, Queens Central Library, and some of the downtown’s largest employers, including the U.S. Social Security Administration and the Food and Drug Administration Northeast Regional Lab.

While the Jamaica Center area enjoys significant foot traffic and street activity, it is challenged by a lack of a cohesive public realm and hospitable streetscapes, physical deterioration of prominent features and signage, unsafe crossings and narrow sidewalks, a lack of retail frontage, and reports of loitering and street harassment. These challenges – many linked to physical conditions – detract from Downtown’s overall appeal and impact daily quality of life.

The Downtown Jamaica Gateway project would address this by enhancing pedestrian space on Parsons Boulevard between Jamaica and Archer avenues through a phased approach, consistent with NYCDOT’s standard process for street enhancements.

**Phase I** (summer 2017) would expand public programming along this block (currently in use as a seasonal farmers market) through a partnership with GJDC and the Jamaica Center BID. Anticipated activities include youth activities, health screenings, and other outdoor events. No DRI funds would be applied to this effort, but simultaneously with this effort, NYCDOT will begin planning and preliminary design work to initiate the capital project associated with Phase III summarized below.

**Phase II** (anticipated for summer 2018) would start the standard NYCDOT pedestrian space expansion process by expanding the pedestrian sidewalk space along this block through nonpermanent painting, street markings, planters, bollards, and other interim improvements. The expanded space would include street furniture and provide a venue for enhanced public programming, including cultural activities, and would be complemented

by re-stripped pedestrian crosswalks to facilitate a safer, more hospitable pedestrian experience. No DRI funds would be applied to this effort, but Phase II is a necessary step prior to implementation of Phase III.

**Phase III** (anticipated to begin in 2019 or 2020) would comprise a full street reconstruction converting the nonpermanent expanded sidewalk space from Phase II into a permanent pedestrian space and redesigning lighting and other streetscape elements. The full build-out may include concession space to generate revenues for operations and maintenance.

## Estimated Project Costs

**Total Cost:** More than \$4,300,000 including::

- A yet to be estimated amount for the Phase II interim pedestrian space
- \$4,300,000 for the Phase III street reconstruction capital project that will result in a permanent expanded pedestrian space

## Funding Sources

**DRI:** \$2,500,000 toward the Phase III street reconstruction, including planning and design costs expected to begin the near term. This funding is necessary to unlock funds to start Phases I and II.

**Potential Non-DRI Sources:** Council Member I. Daneek Miller has allocated \$200,000 toward pedestrian improvements on Parsons Boulevard. NYCDOT will fund the non-permanent pedestrian space expansion and will secure remaining funds for Phase III during upcoming capital budget cycles. Concessions are planned for Parsons Boulevard to fund ongoing operations and maintenance.

## Site Ownership and Legal Jurisdiction

NYCDOT has jurisdiction over all City-owned streets and sidewalks.



### Regulatory Requirements

This project would be subject to regulatory review from numerous City agencies, including NYCDOT.

### Public Support

This project has significant public support. During stakeholder outreach, multiple parties commented on the need to improve the Jamaica Center experience for all users. Additionally, the Jamaica Center-Parsons project, a previous iteration of this project, received moderate support during the voting exercise of the Public Open House. Local Planning Committee members expressed strong support for the project during a February survey.

### Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

**Short-term:** Increases the amount of outdoor, accessible programming available in Downtown Jamaica and begins to establish Parsons Boulevard as a “town square.”

**Medium to long-term:** Contributes to creating a cohesive identity for Downtown Jamaica. Improves the pedestrian experience from Jamaica Center north to Jamaica Avenue. Improves safety and connectivity for downtown residents, visitors, workers, and students by expanding pedestrian space.

### Beneficiaries

The strategic improvements of this project provide a transformed Downtown Jamaica Gateway that is welcoming to the entire community. The user groups that will directly benefit from this project are students, faculty, staff, commuters, youth, families, Downtown Jamaica residents, visitors, small business owners, employees, and tourists.

### Cost-Benefit Analysis

As described above, this project would provide numerous benefits to the Downtown Jamaica community and visitors by providing safe and accessible open spaces that are active and inviting all year round. Most importantly, this project fulfills the revitalization goal of enhancing connectivity amongst major centers of activity and between the northern and southern parts of Downtown Jamaica that are currently divided. Over the long term, creating a more inviting gateway to Downtown Jamaica will serve to improve perceptions of vibrancy and safety, attracting more people downtown, ultimately supporting population and job growth.

### Jobs Created

Not applicable

### Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness

**Immediate Next Steps (next 3 months):** Planning for Phase I summer programming on Parsons Boulevard, preliminary scoping for expanded pedestrian space.

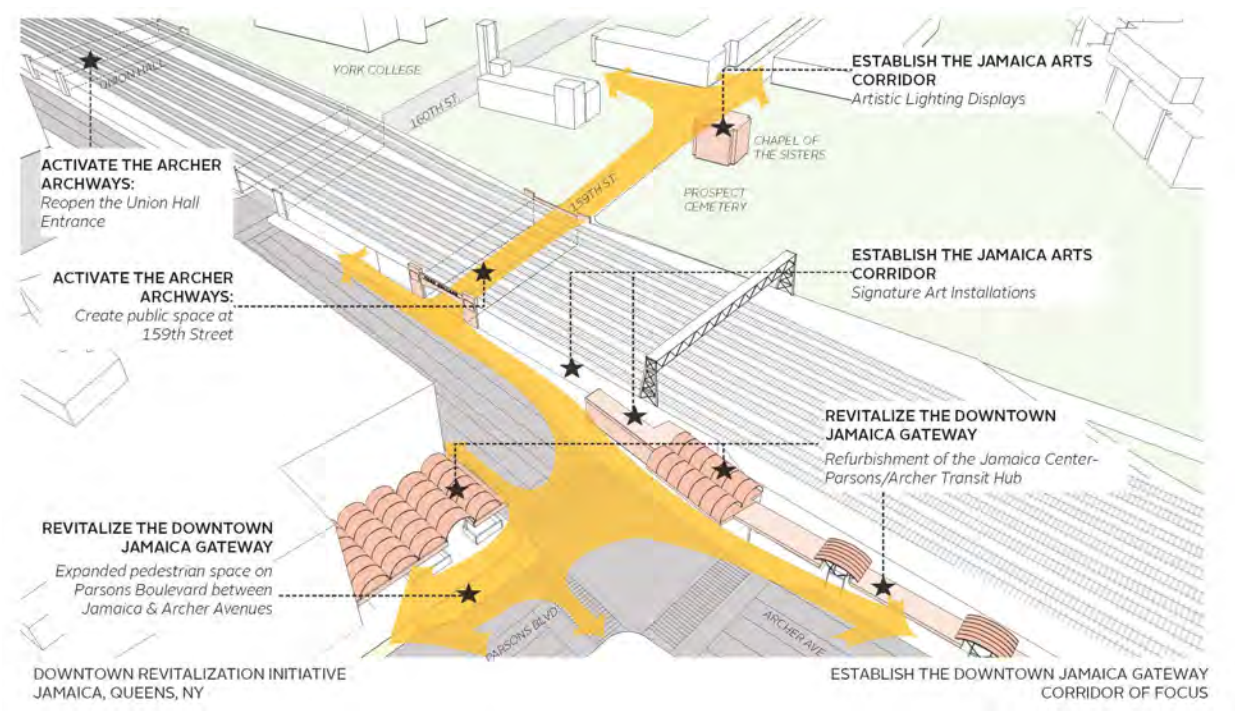
**Mid-term steps (3-12 months):** Design and contractor selection for Phase II.

**Longer-term steps (12+ months):** Implementation of Phase II, design and contractor selection for Phase III, with expected completion of Phase III by 2021.

### Project Metrics

- Use –pedestrians counts of Parsons Boulevard users during various times of days, including event days
- Safety – number of traffic incidents in the vicinity of Jamaica Center
- Programming – number of events hosted along

FIGURE 4 - JAMAICA DOWNTOWN GATEWAY DESIGN CONCEPT



Source: Beyer Blinder Belle

The Jamaica Downtown Gateway project ties together a series of physical improvements that increase the appeal of one of Downtown Jamaica’s primary entry points and connect the downtown with key institutions and employers, including York College.

## PRIORITY PROJECT PROFILE

# Activate the Archer Archways - Create a Public Space at 159th Street



Source: Beyer Blinder Belle

### SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Upgrade and activate the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) underpass at 159th Street - the key gateway between York College and Downtown Jamaica. Improvements will include overhead lighting, public art, seating, and event space.

### RECOMMENDATION FOR DRI FUNDING

**\$1,500,000** requested for DRI funding

### LOCATION

Underpass at 159th Street and Archer Avenue

## Responsible Parties

**City University of New York – York College** will lead project planning and implementation.

## Capacity of Responsible Party

York College is one of 11 senior colleges of CUNY, with an enrollment of more than 8,000 students. The Office of the Vice President of Administrative Affairs and Finance manages all real estate planning and development services for York's 50-acre campus.

## Project Partners

**LIRR**, an agency of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, as owner of the rail structure along Archer Avenue, will approve any physical installations that affect the structure, and provide guidance on any design and/or procurement requirements. Discussions will result in a memorandum of understanding.

## Strategies

This project aligns with the following DRI strategies:

- Create inviting gateways to Downtown
- Draw residents and visitors to the Downtown core

This project aligns with the following REDC strategy:

- Improve quality of life

This project is an extension of the enhanced underpass strategy proposed in the Brownfield Opportunity Area Implementation Strategy (2015). It also advances goals identified in the York College Master Plan (2011).

## Project Description

**Project Type:** Streetscape enhancement

**Description:** Downtown Jamaica is bisected by an elevated Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) track, which serves as a physical barrier between the north and south sides of the neighborhood, including between the core commercial district along Jamaica Avenue and the York College

campus and points south. Five viaducts, or archways, create pedestrian and vehicular connections underneath the track structure; these viaducts are presently under-lit, un-programmed, and in varying states of physical disrepair.

Near-term improvements are feasible at two pedestrian underpasses, including the 159th Street Archway, which is under the jurisdiction of York College and where improvements would not impact traffic flow. (The other is at the Union Hall Street entrance, and proposed separately for DRI funding.) The 159th Street archway is currently a primary pedestrian gateway for York College students, staff, and faculty, connecting a pedestrian plaza on the York College campus to the nearest subway station at Jamaica Center; York College provides security at a booth located just inside of the campus.

The 159th Street archway project would enhance pedestrian conditions by activating the space through:

- Enhanced overhead lighting;
- Attractive paneling on abutment walls, potentially with public art;
- A new entrance gate and gate controls;
- Upgrades to electrical and drainage systems; and
- Programming amenities such as temporary and permanent seating and tables.

In addition to better connecting York College to Jamaica Center and the Jamaica Gateway, the 159th Street archway would serve as a key public space. Space for public art would serve as a means for artists to display their creations, while seating and/or other amenities would provide Jamaica residents additional sheltered public space to congregate. Moreover, the space would be designed to allow for food or other vendors to set up temporary stalls for commercial use, providing another opportunity for space activation and enhanced vibrancy in the area between York College and Jamaica Center.

## Estimated Project Costs

**Total Cost:** \$1,500,000, including:

- \$1,250,000 for design and functional upgrades
- \$250,000 for programming-related elements

## Funding Sources

**DRI:** \$1,500,000 for the lighting installations, paneling, public art, and programming equipment.

**Non-DRI Sources:** Future concessions may help fund ongoing operations and maintenance.

## Site Ownership and Legal Jurisdiction

**York College** is the owner of the land beneath the archway. **LIRR** is the owner of the LIRR superstructure and has stated a willingness to consider nonintrusive archway improvements.

## Regulatory Requirements

Project scope and concept design will be subject to review by LIRR, which would result in a memorandum of understanding. LIRR will review the impact of the project to their operational and maintenance requirements, and propose revisions where needed. York College will review the project to make sure it aligns with the institution's safety standards and guidelines.

## Public Support

During outreach, multiple stakeholders, including York College students and staff, expressed strong support for this project. It received high support during the voting exercise of the Public Open House.

## Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

**Short-term:** Mitigates barriers that physically divide Jamaica. Provides space for public programming and gatherings with seating. Enhances pedestrian safety and connectivity with



illuminated areas. Creates a welcoming experience for York College students and visitors.

**Medium-term:** Provides additional outdoor learning space for students. Increases attractiveness and connectivity between Core Downtown and York College.

**Long-term:** Provides safe, accessible, and welcoming connections between Core Downtown and future development south of Liberty Avenue.

### Beneficiaries

This project provides a multi-purpose year-round open space that supports all age groups. The user groups that will directly benefit from this project are students, faculty, staff, commuters, youth, families, Downtown Jamaica residents, visitors, and small business owners.

### Cost-Benefit Analysis

As described above, the 159th Street Archer Archway project would provide numerous benefits to the Downtown Jamaica community, its visitors, and York College, which is one of the major institutions in the area, by providing safe and accessible open spaces that are active all year round. Most importantly, this project fulfills the revitalization goal of enhancing connectivity amongst major centers of activity and between the northern and southern parts of Downtown Jamaica that are currently divided by the railroad corridor. Over the long term, improved connectivity between York College and the downtown will strengthen relationships between on-campus academic and professional training services and business activity, including in high-growth sectors of interest to York students and faculty, ultimately supporting job growth.

### Jobs Created

Not applicable

### Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness

**Immediate Next Steps (next 3 months):** Project scoping and regulatory approvals.

**Mid-term steps (3-12 months):** Design and contractor selection; design.

**Longer-term steps (12+ months):** Construction and initiation of programming.

### Project Metrics

- Use – number of people traversing the archway and using the archways for seating and other amenities, as measured by periodic pedestrian counts
- Programming – number of events hosted under the archways and total attendance





## PRIORITY PROJECT PROFILE

# Activate the Archer Archways - Reopen the Union Hall Entrance



Source: Beyer Blinder Belle

### SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Reopen the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) underpass at Union Hall Street to create a direct connection between York College's Academic Core Building and Downtown Jamaica. Improvements will include overhead lighting, public art, and seating.

### RECOMMENDATION FOR DRI FUNDING

**\$2,000,000** requested for DRI funding

### LOCATION

Underpass at Archer Avenue and Union Hall Street

## Responsible Parties

**City University of New York – York College** will lead project planning and implementation.

## Capacity of Responsible Party

York College is one of 11 senior colleges of CUNY, with an enrollment of more than 8,000 students. The Office of the Vice President of Administrative Affairs and Finance manages all real estate planning and development services for York's 50-acre campus.

## Project Partners

**LIRR**, an agency of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, as owner of the rail structure, will approve any physical installations that affect the structure, and provide guidance on any design and/or procurement requirements. Discussions will result in a memorandum of understanding.

## Strategies

This project aligns with the following DRI strategies:

- Create inviting gateways to Downtown
- Draw residents and visitors to the Downtown core

This project aligns with the following REDC strategy:

- Improve quality of life

This project is an extension of the enhanced underpass strategy proposed in the Brownfield Opportunity Area Implementation Strategy (2015). It also aligns with goals identified in the York College Master Plan (2011).

## Project Description

**Project Type:** Streetscape improvements

**Description:** Downtown Jamaica is bisected by an elevated Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) track, which serves as a physical barrier between the north and south sides of the neighborhood, including between the core commercial district along Jamaica Avenue and the York College

campus and points south. Five viaducts, or archways, create pedestrian and vehicular connections underneath the track structure; these viaducts are presently under-lit, unprogrammed, and in varying states of physical disrepair.

Near-term improvements are feasible at two pedestrian-only viaducts, including at Union Hall Street, which is under the jurisdiction of York College and where improvements would not impact traffic flow. (The other is located at 159th Street, and is proposed separately for DRI funding.) An initial assessment by LIRR concluded that the archway is not in need of significant structural repair and there are no capital upgrades planned for the viaducts in the near term. The Union Hall Street archway has been closed for several years to control access to the campus and ensure on-campus security.

The reopening of the Union Hall Archway is a key component of York College's strategy to connect more closely with the rest of the Core Downtown Jamaica community. The Union Hall Archway leads directly into the Academic Core Building, which is the heart of the York College campus. Nearly all academic and administrative functions take place within the Academic Core, and connecting it directly to the emerging business district on the north side of the LIRR track would enhance the College's role as a community and educational anchor.

The Union Hall Archer Archway project will include the following improvements:

- Enhanced overhead lighting;
- Attractive paneling on abutment walls, potentially with public art;
- A new entrance gate and gate controls; and
- Upgrades to electrical and drainage systems.

## Estimated Project Costs

**Total Cost:** \$2,000,000, including:

- \$1,950,000 for design and functional upgrades
- \$50,000 for planters and temporary seating

## Funding Sources

**DRI:** \$2,000,000 for the lighting installations, paneling, public art, and programming equipment.

**Non-DRI Sources:** York College would fund ongoing operations and maintenance.

## Site Ownership and Legal Jurisdiction

**York College** is the owner of the land beneath the Union Hall Street archway. **LIRR** is the owner of the LIRR superstructure and has stated a willingness to consider nonintrusive archway improvements.

## Regulatory Requirements

Project scope and concept design will be subject to review by LIRR, which would result in a memorandum of understanding. LIRR will review the impact of the project to its operational and maintenance requirements, and propose revisions where needed. York College will review the project to make sure it aligns with the institution's safety standards and guidelines.

## Public Support

During outreach, multiple stakeholders, particularly users of York College, expressed strong support for this project. It received high support during the voting exercise of the Public Open House.

## Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

**Short-term:** Mitigates barriers that physically divide Jamaica. Enhances pedestrian safety and connectivity with illuminated areas. Creates a welcoming experience for York College students and visitors.

**Medium-term:** Increases attractiveness and connectivity between Core Downtown and York College.

**Long-term:** Provides safe, accessible, and welcoming connections between Core Downtown and future development south of Liberty Avenue.

### Beneficiaries

This project provides enhanced connectivity that benefits a wide variety of users. The user groups that will directly benefit from this project are students, faculty, staff, commuters, youth, families, Downtown Jamaica residents, and visitors.

### Cost-Benefit Analysis

As described above, the Union Hall Street archway project would provide numerous benefits to the Downtown Jamaica community, its visitors, and York College, which is one of the major institutions in the area, by enhancing connectivity between the north and south sides of the LIRR tracks. This project fulfills the revitalization goal of enhancing connectivity amongst major centers of activity and between the northern and southern parts of Downtown Jamaica that are currently divided by the railroad corridor. Over the long term, improved connectivity between York College and the downtown will strengthen relationships between on-campus academic and professional training services and business activity, including in high-growth sectors of interest to York students and faculty, ultimately supporting job growth.

### Jobs Created

Not applicable

### Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness

#### Immediate Next Steps (next 3 months):

Project scoping and regulatory approvals.

**Mid-term steps (3-12 months):** Design and contractor selection; design.

**Longer-term steps (12+ months):** Construction and initiation of programming.

### Project Metrics

- Use – number of people traversing the archways and using the archways for seating and other amenities, as measured by periodic pedestrian counts





## PRIORITY PROJECT PROFILE

# Establish the Jamaica Arts Corridor



Source: Beyer Blinder Belle

### SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Establish a distinctive Jamaica Arts Corridor celebrating local cultural anchors and independent artists. Components will include 1) a Welcome Center at Jamaica Station to introduce visitors to local attractions and events, 2) Marketing Materials to promote Jamaica cultural institutions and heritage, 3) Artistic Lighting Displays along Jamaica Avenue celebrating historical sites, 4) Signature Art Installations at prominent downtown locations, and 5) a Promenade and Arts Space fronting the Milton G. Bassin Performing Arts Center at York College.

### RECOMMENDATION FOR DRI FUNDING

**\$3,275,000** requested for DRI funding

### LOCATION

Core Downtown Study Area, with a focus on Jamaica Avenue between Sutphin Boulevard and Merrick Boulevard, and the Bassin Center frontage on Guy R. Brewer Boulevard

## Responsible Parties

The **Greater Jamaica Development Corporation (GJDC)** will serve as project lead for all project components except for the Bassin Promenade, which **York College** will lead.

## Capacity of Responsible Party

**GJDC** is a community-based nonprofit organization that plans, promotes, coordinates, and advances responsible development to revitalize Jamaica and strengthen the region. With a staff of more than 20, it led Jamaica's Brownfield Opportunity Area application, manages several revolving loan funds for small and mid-sized businesses in Southeast Queens, and operates office and retail space in Downtown Jamaica. **York College** is one of 11 senior colleges of the City University of New York with an enrollment of more than 8,000 students. The Office of the Vice President of Administrative Affairs and Finance manages all real estate planning and development services for York's 50-acre campus.

## Project Partners

GJDC will coordinate each of its project components with a co-lead, as follows: **Sutphin Boulevard Business Improvement District** will partner to manage development and maintenance of the Welcome Center; the **Jamaica Now Leadership Council (JNLC)** will manage the development of marketing collateral; the Artistic Lighting Displays will be the responsibility of the owners and operators of the selected buildings: **King Manor Museum, First Presbyterian Church in Jamaica**, and the **Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning (JCAL)**; and Signature Art Installations will be coordinated with local and citywide cultural organizations and relevant City agencies.

## Strategies

This project aligns with the following DRI strategies:

- Draw residents and visitors to the Downtown core
- Create inviting gateways to Downtown

This project aligns with the following REDC goal:

- Improve the quality of life

This project builds on the following Jamaica NOW! Action Plan initiative:

- Establish the Jamaica Arts Alliance to better strengthen connections between artists and existing arts and culture institutions

This project also aligns with goals identified in the York College Master Plan (2011).

## Project Description

**Project Type:** Streetscape improvements, branding and marketing of the downtown, arts or cultural programming and improvements to existing facilities

**Description:** Jamaica has a rich cultural history and a concentration of cultural anchors, including the Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning (JCAL), the Jamaica Performing Arts Center (JPAC), King Manor Museum, Afrikan Poetry Theater, Black Spectrum Theater, and the Milton G. Bassin Performing Arts Center at York College, among others. Yet the absence of a coordinated marketing effort or cohesive physical connections among destinations limits awareness and visitation.

This project employs five strategies to heighten the visibility of local arts, engage the public, and create a cultural experience in Jamaica that is greater than the sum of its parts. These strategies are considered a first step in a broader marketing and branding effort that is underway by local partners. Key components include:

**A Jamaica Welcome Center** to guide local, regional, and out-of-town visitors -- including guests of new downtown hotels -- to local activities and key spots of interest along the corridor, lengthening their stay and increasing local spending. The center -- which would take the form of a large digital screen and information station -- would be located at Jamaica Station, either at the AirTrain Terminal or within the LIRR station. The center would serve as a starting point for the Arts Corridor

and a marketing platform for local institutions and businesses. Content for the digital display and info station would be managed by GJDC jointly with the Sutphin Boulevard BID, and would be coordinated with other local visitation stakeholders, including the Station-area hotels.

**Marketing Materials** to attract and extend the stay of visitors to Downtown Jamaica. Materials will conform to the design guidance that emerges from the marketing and branding strategic study that JNLC currently has underway and may include:

- A cultural heritage map guiding visitors to historic destinations.
- Other print marketing materials to promote local attractions and activities within Downtown Jamaica.
- A digital landing site or other tool to promote local attractions and activities within Downtown Jamaica, particularly to guests of new downtown hotels.

**Artistic Lighting Displays** to highlight key cultural and architecturally significant buildings in Downtown Jamaica, such as JPAC, JCAL, King Manor, Grace Episcopal Church, First Presbyterian Church in Jamaica, and the Prospect Cemetery Chapel, all along Jamaica Avenue and adjacent streets. Funding will support installation of LED lighting, including equipment and electrical connections, for at least two buildings, depending on installation costs and the availability of private or public property for staging. GJDC will coordinate design and procurement services to ensure a consistent display across sites and provide technical support to the property owners.

**Signature Art Installations** at strategic locations to celebrate Jamaica's unique history and character, strengthen district identity, and promote local talent. Installations will be commissioned through a competitive process administered by GJDC in partnership with local cultural organizations and the NYC DOT Art Program (for sites under DOT jurisdiction), for a series of prominent downtown locations, which may include:

- Parsons Boulevard between Jamaica and Archer Avenues
- 165th Street Mall
- Long Island Rail Road 159th Street and

Union Hall Archways

- Bassin Promenade and Arts Space (see below)

One potential installation proposed by area artists and businesses leaders that may be considered is a Walk of Fame or an alternative series of prominent markers that pay tribute to notable individuals from Jamaica's past, particularly pioneers in jazz, hip-hop and other art forms.

**Bassin Promenade and Arts Space**, a physical reconstruction of the entranceway to the Bassin Center that would open up the performance space to the street and create a wide gateway promenade and plaza with a sculpture garden or other rotating art exhibit. In this way, Bassin, the largest performance space in Downtown Jamaica, would serve as a physical anchor of the broader Jamaica Arts Corridor.

The Arts Corridor would directly benefit from and complement other proposed projects. Streetscape enhancements and wayfinding investments could be tailored to create a cohesive feel to Downtown Jamaica. This project also would complement existing efforts to build capacity among local cultural organizations, such as Jamaica Is... Building Community Capacity, by developing a physical framework for an arts district.

### Estimated Project Costs

**Total Cost:** \$3,275,000, including:

- \$200,000 for the Jamaica Welcome Center, consisting of:
  - \$150,000 for a digital screen
  - \$50,000 for accompanying displays
- \$150,000 for the design and production of print and digital Marketing Materials
- \$375,000 for Artistic Lighting Displays, including five installations estimated to cost \$75,000 on average per installation
- \$600,000 for at least two Signature Art Installations
- \$1,950,000 for the design and construction of the Bassin Promenade & Arts Space consisting of:
  - \$780,000 for an expanded entrance promenade between the Guy R.

Brewer Boulevard LIRR underpass and the Bassin Center entrance

- \$855,000 for a public plaza in front of the Bassin Center entrance, fronting Guy R. Brewer Boulevard
- \$250,000 for relocation of a perimeter fence and security gate to accommodate the plaza
- \$65,000 for façade lighting enhancements

### Funding Sources

**DRI:** \$3,275,000 for the Jamaica Welcome Center, Marketing Materials, Artistic Lighting Displays, Signature Art Installations, and Bassin Promenade & Arts Space.

**Non-DRI Sources:** The Jamaica Welcome Center may be positioned to sell advertising space, a potential source of ongoing operational revenue.

### Site Ownership and Legal Jurisdiction

**Welcome Center:** The AirTrain Terminal is owned by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey; Jamaica Station is owned by LIRR. These entities have not yet approved the Welcome Center installation but both have supported Jamaica marketing efforts to date, including community arts programming at the AirTrain Terminal.

Marketing Materials: N/A

**Artistic Lighting Displays:** The potential installation sites for strategic lighting are owned by the City of New York and the First Presbyterian Church in Jamaica.

**Signature Art Installations:** Specific locations for art displays are yet to be determined, but will prioritize sites with minimal site control challenges, including private property.

**Bassin Promenade:** The affected area is owned by York College.

### Regulatory Requirements

Use of a digital display within Port Authority or

LIRR property may require approval of a vendor agreement consistent with the agencies' broader advertising and media contracts. Lighting displays at historical properties may require consultation with or approval by the Landmarks Preservation Commission. For art installations on City-owned properties, where there is no capital work planned within a NYCDOT right of way, all art will be temporary and go through one of the program tracks under the DOT Art program. If there is a capital project underway, a Percent for Art component can be explored for permanent art. This can take the form of the design of an element within the capital project or a standalone art element. Bassin Center upgrades will require review by the City University of New York.

### Public Support

The components of this project have public support. Multiple stakeholders indicated the importance of creating a cohesive cultural identity and were supportive of concepts contained within this project. Additionally, the Jamaica Cultural District, a previous iteration of this project that contained all elements of this project except the Welcome Center received high support during the Jamaica Public Open House voting exercise. The Downtown Marketing and Branding project, which contained the Welcome Center and Marketing Materials, received moderate support.

### Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

**Short Term:** Improve the perception of Downtown safety at night through strategic lighting and physical cohesion. Increase Downtown visitation, creating a more all-hours and vibrant downtown.

**Long Term:** Establish Downtown Jamaica as a destination with a cohesive cultural identity.

### Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries from the Jamaica Arts Corridor include downtown visitors, who would benefit from an enhanced experience and easy to find activities at the Welcome Center; nighttime Downtown users who would benefit from an enhanced perception of safety due to

lighting; students who would benefit from an enhanced artistic cluster at York College; and small businesses that will benefit from a larger potential pool of visitors to the downtown at all hours.

**Cost-Benefit Analysis**

Establishing a Jamaica Arts Corridor would provide numerous benefits to the Downtown, creating a framework for cultural experiences that would enhance the public realm; through cohesive marketing and messaging as an arts corridor, elevate Downtown Jamaica’s profile among potential visitors and provide an easy way for them to find activities in the area; drive increased visitation among residents, employees, students and tourists; and generate new economic activity for cultural institutions and local businesses. Negative perceptions of safety are a key deterrent to all-hours downtown visitation, and strategic lighting on key buildings and signature installations will serve to mitigate those concerns and bring perception in alignment with the lower-crime reality. Over the longer term, the framework created by the Arts Corridor, along with other recommended projects, could lead to the creation of a full arts district, thereby further increasing visitation and cultural capacity in Downtown Jamaica.

**Jobs Created**

Not applicable

**Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness**

**Immediate Next Steps (next 3 months):** Engage in design planning for the Welcome Center, Marketing Materials, Lighting Displays, and Bassin Promenade. Identify locations and establish guidelines for commissioning Signature Art Works.

**Mid-Term Steps (3-12 months):** Design and install the Welcome Center digital screen,

Marketing Materials, and at least two Artistic Lighting Displays; commission Art Installations; complete design work on the Bassin Promenade.

**Long-Term Steps: (12+ months):** Complete Art Installations; construct improvements to the Bassin Promenade.

**Project Metrics**

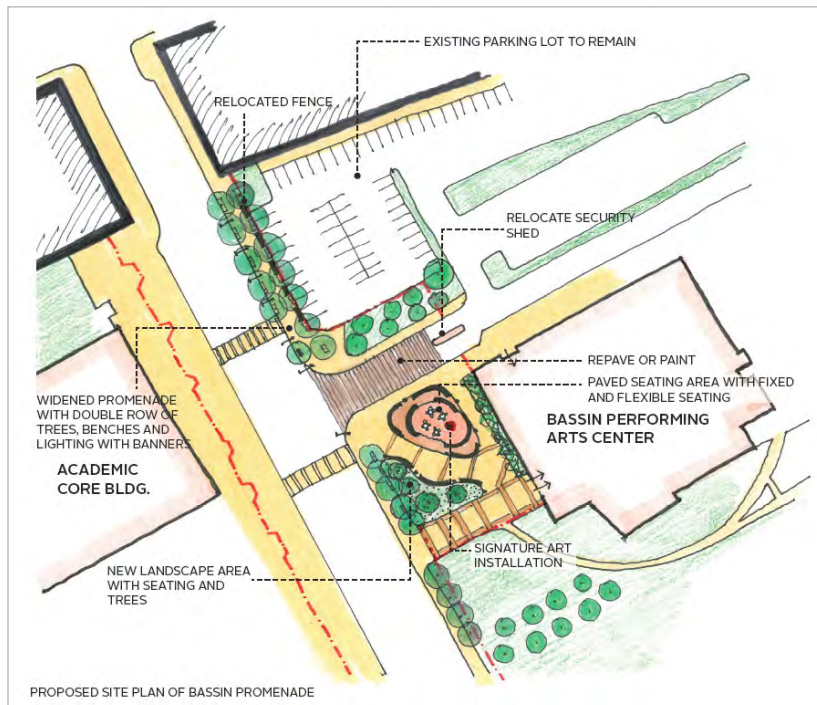
- Art pieces installed – number of Signature Art Installations put in place
- Welcome Center usage – number of visitors to Downtown Jamaica utilizing Welcome Center
- Program attendance – total attendees to destinations along Jamaica Avenue and Bassin Center



FIGURE 5 – CONCEPT OF KEY JAMAICA ARTS CORRIDOR



FIGURE 6 – CONCEPT OF THE BASSIN



Source: Beyer Blinder Belle





## PRIORITY PROJECT PROFILE

# Diversify Dining Options Downtown



Source: Greater Jamaica Development Corporation

### SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Diversify dining options and nightlife activity in Downtown Jamaica by (1) dedicating a Step-Up Space at Jamaica Market for graduates of local food business incubators, (2) providing capital improvements funds for a dedicated Destination Restaurant Space in Downtown Jamaica, and (3) establishing a Restaurant Startup Fund to support storefront improvements and equipment purchases for new restaurants opening in Downtown Jamaica.

### RECOMMENDATION FOR DRI FUNDING

**\$1,450,000** requested for DRI funding.

### LOCATION

The Core Downtown Study Area, with one specific restaurant location at Jamaica Market (located on Jamaica Avenue between Parsons Boulevard and 160th Street)

## Responsible Parties

**Greater Jamaica Development Corporation (GJDC)** will be responsible for all project components.

## Capacity of Responsible Party

**GJDC** is a community-based nonprofit organization that plans, promotes, coordinates, and advances responsible development to revitalize Jamaica and strengthen the region. With a staff of more than 20, it led Jamaica's Brownfield Opportunity Area application, manages several revolving loan funds for small and mid-sized businesses in Southeast Queens, and operates office and retail space in Downtown Jamaica.

## Project Partners

**Queens Library (QL)** operates the most prominent food incubator in Jamaica, the Jamaica FEASTS (Food Entrepreneurship and Services Training Space) program, and will serve as a key partner in supplying tenants to the Step-up Space. **NYCEDC** is a financial sponsor of the FEASTS program. **Sutphin Boulevard BID** and the **Jamaica Center BID** will assist GJDC in marketing the Destination Restaurant Space to property owners and potential restaurateurs.

## Strategies

This project aligns with the following DRI strategies:

- Set the stage for industry growth
- Prepare the local workforce for sustainable careers
- Draw residents and visitors to the Downtown core

This project aligns with the following REDC goals:

- Improve quality of life
- Create a pro-growth, pro-jobs environment

This project builds on the following initiative from the Jamaica NOW! Action Plan:

- Launch a program to train and jumpstart the next generation of Jamaica entrepreneurs and food businesses

## Project Description

**Project Type:** Development or redevelopment of real property, workforce development

**Description:** While there are numerous fast food and limited-service restaurants in Downtown Jamaica, there are few full-service, sit-down restaurants. Community members have consistently expressed a desire for more dining options downtown, and interviews with stakeholders suggest that the lack of dining options is a hindrance to attracting and retaining resident and worker populations downtown after work hours or on weekends. While the Jamaica dining market matures, one strategy to increase the number of successful food businesses is to defray high industry startup costs by providing fully outfitted dedicated restaurant space and funding for fit-out and equipment.

This project has three interrelated components that together address the need for a more diverse set of dining options downtown and create a ladder for food business growth, supporting entrepreneurs just getting started, existing local businesses seeking to expand, and established businesses seeking entry into the Downtown Jamaica market.

### Step-Up Space at Jamaica Market

This project would complement existing food business incubator programs in Queens by addressing the need for affordable restaurant and retail space for program graduates through the creation of dedicated Step-up Space at the Jamaica Market on Jamaica Avenue. GJDC will retrofit up to four stalls at the Market (as spaces become vacant) and lease the stalls at an affordable rent to graduates of Queens incubators who live in the Greater Jamaica and Southeast Queens catchment areas, giving program graduates an opportunity to refine their offerings, establish a customer base, and generate revenue to fund a future expansion offsite. The existing space requires upgrades to the kitchen, tiling, plumbing, counters, and exhaust system. One anticipated partner is the Queens Library Jamaica FEASTS program, which will train aspiring food entrepreneurs on business fundamentals, including financial planning, marketing, and food industry best practices.

While the program will provide participants with prep commercial kitchen space to test recipes and menus, and the ability to sell goods at the Queens Central Library café on Merrick Boulevard, participants have expressed concern over their ability to find affordable step-up space once they graduate. The creation of the Jamaica Market Step-up Space in a prominent, desirable location would allow graduates of FEASTS and similar programs to begin their food businesses in the heart of Downtown Jamaica, an option that would not likely otherwise be available to them.

### Destination Restaurant Space

Over the next five years, more than 1,500 residential units and 2,000 hotel rooms are scheduled to come online in the Downtown Jamaica area. While this influx of residents and overnight guests is expected to support the opening of new sit-down restaurants over time, high startup costs and the risks of operating in an unproven market make it likely that openings will lag demand, delaying the benefits to Jamaica and slowing downtown activation overall. To incentivize a first-mover, this project will make available a grant of up to \$450,000 to a developer or property owner to make at least 3,000 square feet of storefront space available for a non-chain sit-down restaurant with lunch, dinner, and after-dinner operating hours. GJDC would run a competition or RFP process to determine toward which location funds should be allocated. The winner of this process would have to commit at least \$150,000 of their own funds to support build out or renovation of the space, and present a viable business plan. Upon opening, this space would provide a gathering spot and event venue for residents, workers, and visitors, and help attract future entrepreneurs by establishing a market for sit-down dining in Downtown Jamaica.

### Restaurant Startup Fund

Finally, a Restaurant Startup Fund would support existing restaurant operators seeking to open a new or expanded dining establishment in Downtown Jamaica by providing funds to acquire or fit out a ground-floor space for restaurant use, procure design and/or contracting services, and/or support

other startup costs, such as equipment. Project funds would be used to, first, conduct outreach to restaurants and property owners to gauge interest and assess capacity to support opening and expansion. This outreach may be structured as an application process or competition to spark interest; applicants would likely be required to provide business plans and evidence of external financial support. Next, most of the fund would be used to support two or more restaurant operators with the build-out of a new restaurant space. The operators would be required to submit design/build plans, and funds would be disbursed to support fit-out per operator specifications.

The creation of new food businesses downtown will create jobs and investments in the Downtown. Additionally, the introduction of innovative new food businesses will draw users to the Downtown, increasing vibrancy. The increased activity from the increase in time spend in the Downtown by its user base is one step in making a market for a larger food business cluster within Downtown.

### Estimated Project Costs

**Total Cost:** \$1,600,000, including:

- \$400,000 for the renovation of up to four stalls at Jamaica Market.
- \$600,000 for the fit-out of a 3,000-square-foot restaurant space at the designated destination restaurant space.
- \$600,000 for a revolving restaurant startup fund.

### Funding Sources

**DRI:** \$1,450,000, including:

- \$400,000 for the renovation of up to four stalls at Jamaica Market.
- \$450,000 for the fit-out of a 3,000-square-foot restaurant space at the designated space.
- \$600,000 for a revolving restaurant startup fund.

**Other Sources:** It is anticipated that program graduates occupying Jamaica Market space will be required to fund the purchase of

nonstandard kitchen equipment at their own expense. The winning developer or property owner will contribute a minimum of \$150,000 toward the fit-out of the Destination Restaurant Space, to which the restaurant tenant will likely contribute additional funds. The revolving loan fund will require a funding match by any awardee.

### Site Ownership and Legal Jurisdiction

GJDC, along with NYCEDC, owns the property in which Jamaica Market is located. There are no known legal issues with making vendor space available to graduates of FEASTS or other incubator programs.

### Regulatory Requirements

The operation of the food stalls and restaurants must comply with all New York City Department of Health regulations. Any construction or renovation will require the New York City Department of Buildings to issue necessary permits.

### Public Support

This project has strong public support. Multiple stakeholders indicated a need for greater diversity to dining options in the downtown. Additionally, the Restaurant Startup Fund, which was included in a previous project iteration, received high support during the Jamaica Public Open House voting exercise. The project also received moderately high support from the Jamaica Local Planning Committee in a February survey.

### Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

**Short-Term:** Provides construction jobs and an opportunity for food industry entrepreneurs to expand their operations at minimal risk.

**Medium-Term:** Creates jobs in newly opened restaurants, adds to downtown vibrancy into the evening critical for a lively thriving downtown.. Provides activities for commuters and tourists, extending their stay and impact.

**Long-Term:** Supports a pipeline of future restaurateurs to open larger locations in Downtown Jamaica.

### Beneficiaries

Aspiring food entrepreneurs would directly benefit from the creation of dedicated affordable space in Jamaica Market. Downtown users, including residents, workers, and visitors, would benefit from the expanded food options resulting from more entrepreneurs setting up in Downtown Jamaica. Small businesses would benefit from expanded user base. Jobseekers would benefit from the expanded food cluster.

### Cost-Benefit Analysis

As described above, new dedicated restaurant space and a startup support fund will lead to the establishment of at least five food businesses in Downtown Jamaica, generating additional Downtown activity. Investments in retrofitted stall spaces would support 12 permanent jobs and enhance downtown dining options, while the destination restaurant would employ an estimated 7 or more full-time-equivalent positions. The availability of affordable space for food entrepreneurs and established entrepreneurs will create a food business ladder, starting at the Queens Library café and ending with full-service restaurant or catering space downtown.

### Jobs Created

20+ jobs. Continued occupancy of 4 stalls at Jamaica Market will directly support approximately 12 jobs. A new Destination Restaurant Space is anticipated to create at least 7 jobs. Restaurants supported by the loan fund would support additional jobs. In addition, in the long term, it is anticipated that some Step-up Space tenants will graduate to larger restaurant spaces with higher job counts.

Source: Greater Jamaica Development Corporation

## Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness

**Immediate Steps (next 3 months):** Design work and development of Step-up Space tenant selection criteria; initial design of Destination Restaurant Space competition, restaurant fund eligibility and application guidelines.

**Mid-Term Steps (3-12 months):** Renovations to Jamaica Market stalls, selection of food incubator program graduates to lease stalls, opening of stalls; marketing of Destination Restaurant Space competition and restaurant startup fund; selection of awardees for both processes.

**Long-Term Steps (12+ months):** Continued operation of step-up space for food incubator program graduates; design and build-out of first restaurant space funded through the startup fund, and continued marketing and application screening; design work and tenant selection for destination restaurant.

## Project Metrics

- Revenue generated – total revenue generated by food incubator program graduates at Jamaica Market
- Other space opened – number of other spaces and gross area occupied by food incubator program graduates who started at Jamaica Market
- Jamaica Market visitors – change in the number of visitors to Jamaica Market following renovation compared to visitation prior to renovation
- Applications – number of applications to the Restaurant Startup Fund and destination Restaurant Space competition



## PRIORITY PROJECT PROFILE

# Create a Downtown Arts & Events Fund



Source: Greater Jamaica Development Corporation

### SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Establish a multi-year grant fund for art installations and cultural events that draw residents and visitors to Downtown Jamaica, support local cultural organizations, and celebrate local independent artists.

### RECOMMENDATION FOR DRI FUNDING

\$600,000 requested through DRI Funding

### LOCATION

Core Downtown Study Area

## Responsible Parties

**The Queens Council on the Arts (QCA)** will administer the fund and be responsible for preparing and submitting the fund's administrative plan.

## Capacity of Responsible Party

QCA is a grant-making organization with a long record of successfully awarding grants across artistic disciplines through panel-based processes. Founded in 1966 and based in the Kaufman Arts District in Astoria, QCA administers a variety of grant programs, provides professional development resources to artists through workshops and grant-writing courses and serves as a clearinghouse for artistic opportunities across Queens. QCA has an annual budget of nearly \$1 million.

## Project Partners

QCA will recruit a panel of local artists and community stakeholders to define eligibility and application criteria and to select awardees. It is expected that Jamaica DRI Local Planning Committee members involved in the local cultural community will serve on the panel.

## Strategies

This project aligns with the following DRI strategies:

- Draw residents and visitors to the Downtown Core

This project aligns with the following REDC goals:

- Improve quality of life

This project would build on the following Jamaica NOW! Action Plan initiative:

- Establish the Jamaica Arts Alliance to better strengthen connections between artists and existing arts and culture institutions

## Project Description

**Project Type:** Art or cultural programming

**Description:** Jamaica has a variety of cultural institutions that produce events and programming that serve the local community and enrich the downtown experience. Additionally, there is an established visual and performing arts community, including independent artists and others affiliated with local organizations. Most local organizations and artists rely on fundraising from individual donors and foundations, membership fees, and ticket sales to support programming.

Establishing an Arts & Events Fund would enhance these efforts by providing resources in the form of micro-grants to help activate the downtown and establish a vibrant physical environment. Eligible projects and programs would serve a dual purpose of attracting local, regional, and citywide visitors to downtown, and supporting coordination and capacity building among local artists and cultural groups. The increased visitation resulting from selected projects and programs would translate into a more vibrant, all-hours downtown. Moreover, the selection as program administrator of QCA, which has a borough-wide footprint but historically had a limited presence in Jamaica, is designed to expose Jamaica artists and institutions to the variety of services QCA offers throughout Queens.

At the launch of the program, QCA will convene a panel of local artists, notable cultural figures across various artistic disciplines (e.g. sculpture, dance, theater, etc.), and community stakeholders that will likely include members of the Jamaica DRI Local Planning Committee. The panel will help QCA determine eligibility criteria, assist QCA with marketing the fund, and ultimately screen and evaluate applications. Funds will be awarded and dispersed to eligible projects as determined by QCA and the panel, but funds are expected to be roughly split between art installations and cultural programming. It is anticipated that the fund will be structured so that funds are available over at least two program years and that multiple submissions will receive funding per application year. Existing programs with prior funding commitments will not be eligible

for programming through this fund, except that enhancements to existing programming (e.g. longer duration, greater participation) may be considered.

Examples of eligible projects or programs may include:

- Temporary public artwork in specific locations, such as a proposed "Faces of Jamaica, Queens" flyposting exhibit on Jamaica Avenue between Parsons Boulevard and Merrick Boulevard.
- A new or enhanced major community event or festival, such as the Jamaica Arts and Music Festival, held along Jamaica Avenue between 170th Avenue and 153rd Street.
- Other coordinated programming by local cultural institutions aimed at visitors and residents (e.g. Doors Open Jamaica and No Longer Empty).

The funds from this project will enhance the Downtown Jamaica Gateway project through the creation of art that can be installed in defined locations, and the Jamaica Arts Corridor project, which seeks to create a series of physical anchors and signature visual elements that serve to promote Downtown Jamaica as a cultural destination.

## Estimated Project Costs

**Total Project Cost:** \$600,000, to be disbursed over a multi-year period. Up to 10% of project funds may be applied to fund administration and/or technical support to awardees, administered by QCA. No less than \$540,000 will be provided directly to awardees.

## Funding Sources

**DRI:** \$600,000 toward the creation of a dedicated fund for artists and programming in Downtown Jamaica.

**Non-DRI Funding:** Where possible, funds will be used to supplement existing funding or leverage new funding from ticket sales, foundations, corporate sponsors, and elected representatives.

### Site Ownership and Legal Jurisdiction

Not applicable

### Regulatory Requirements

Not applicable

### Public Support

There is significant public support for the project. Multiple stakeholders within the Jamaica cultural community, including leaders of the Jamaica Is... Building Community Capacity collaborative, have indicated support for the creation of a Jamaica Arts & Events Fund. Additionally, the Jamaica Arts & Events Fund received moderate support during the Jamaica Public Open House voting exercise. The project received strong support in a February survey of Local Planning Committee members.

### Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

**Short-Term:** Increase availability of public art and cultural programming in Downtown Jamaica. Broaden the capacity of local artists and cultural organizations. Connect Jamaica cultural community to the broader Queens cultural community.

**Medium-Term:** Establish a cohesive identity for cultural institutions in Downtown Jamaica through increased collaboration. Improve aesthetics of the downtown through installation of temporary and permanent art. Increase Downtown visitation among Greater Jamaica residents, employees, students, and visitors, boosting economic activity occurring at all hours in Downtown.

### Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries of an Arts & Events Fund include local artists and cultural organizations, which would benefit from the ability to expand their projects and programs; visitors and residents of the Downtown, who will have access to additional activities and public art; and small business owners, who will benefit from a larger

potential pool of visitors to the Downtown.

### Cost-Benefit Analysis

A Downtown Arts & Events Fund would provide numerous benefits to the downtown, creating a richer mix of public arts and cultural programming that would enhance the downtown's visual appeal, strengthen Jamaica's identity as an arts corridor, and drive increased visitation among residents, employees, students, and tourists, in turn generating new economic activity. Recent examples of major cultural activities, including street festivals on Jamaica Avenue and musical performances at the Milton G. Bassin Performing Arts Center, have demonstrated that high-quality programming can attract significant audiences from the Greater Jamaica area and beyond, including out of state. This fund would enhance these offerings and create a more consistent, higher-quality suite of public art and calendar of events. Over the longer term, financial support to local artists and institutions will enhance their portfolios and organizational capacity, thereby increasing their ability to attract other sources of funding, including foundation and potentially corporate support.

### Jobs Created

N/A

### Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness

**Immediate Next Steps (next 3 months):** Establish eligibility criteria, application process, and marketing plan for Arts & Events Fund. Submit administrative plan to the State.

**Mid-Term Steps (3-12 months):** Solicit and review applications for year one, and issue awards for projects and programs.

**Long-Term Steps (12+ months):** Solicit and review applications and issue awards for projects and programs for subsequent years. Attract other funding sources to supplement DRI seed funding.

### Project Metrics

- Projects funded – number of projects funded by the Arts & Events Fund
- Program visitation – number of people attending programs funded
- Other funding leveraged – total amount of private, public, and foundational funding support for projects awarded grants through the Arts & Events Fund



SECTION II:

## **Profiles of Priority Projects Proposed for Other Funding**



## PRIORITY PROJECTS RECOMMENDED FOR OTHER FUNDING

#	Project Name	Project Description	Responsible Parties
11	Fund Capital Enhancements for JCAL's STEAM Academy	Fund capital enhancements to support the growth of the STEAM Academy (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) at JCAL. The STEAM Academy is designed to teach local youth skills in product design and creative industries, and investment in physical infrastructure will provide a permanent home for the program and equipment to supplement donated materials.	Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning (JCAL)
12	York College Campus Expansion	Advance development of key sites on York College's campus by assessing partnerships with health care, cultural, or high-tech partners. Expansion would satisfy York's growing need for classroom and student services space, and provide broader economic or community benefits for Greater Jamaica.	York College
13	Develop a Healthcare Workforce Strategy	Develop a coordinated workforce strategy to identify, expand, and market job training and job placement programs around key growth professions in the health care sector.	York College
14	Develop a Hospitality Workforce Program	Leverage the local hotel development boom to provide job training, job placement, and small business support services to capture economic gains locally.	GJDC
15	Reclaim the Historic Valencia Theater	Reclaim the historic Valencia Theater as a cultural anchor and events space for Downtown Jamaica.	GJDC

## PRIORITY PROJECT PROFILE

# Fund Capital Enhancements for JCAL's STEAM Academy



Source: Greater Jamaica Development Corporation

### SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Fund capital enhancements to support the growth of the STEAM Academy (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) at Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning (JCAL). The STEAM Academy is designed to teach local youth skills in new technologies and creative industries, and investment in physical infrastructure will provide a permanent home for the program and equipment to supplement donated materials.

### LOCATION

Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning (JCAL), 161-4 Jamaica Ave

## Responsible Parties

The **Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning (JCAL)** will provide program space and develop the arts curriculum for the STEAM Academy, and partner with an experienced provider of STEM education to manage this program and develop technology and career education programming.

## Capacity of Responsible Party

**JCAL** currently operates weekend and summer arts programming for both youth and adults. Classes include the visual arts, dance, drama, music, and movement, and range from ceramics and cartooning to Hip Hop and Capoeira. One entity that has expressed interest in serving as a programming partner is the NY Hall of Science (NYSCI). NYSCI is an experienced provider of both STEM education and teacher training. Youth day camps offer classes on topics ranging from animation and robotics to the science of sports. Educators can learn more about NYSCI's "Design-Make-Play" pedagogical approach to STEM subjects through a range of classes, such as Exploring Earth Materials and Experimenting with Matter, or through customized, private group sessions.

## Project Partners

JCAL has previously partnered with the Jamaica YMCA to offer programming.

## Project Description

The STEAM Academy will offer subsidized afterschool programming on topics within science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) to support career pathways among local youth in the creative industries. The Academy, a small weekend and summer arts program currently operated by JCAL, will expand to serve two cohorts of 40 youth each, 5 days a week for 36 weeks during the school year. The program, including curriculum development, will be managed in partnership with an established educational entity with experience in STEM education.

## Phase I: Classroom Upgrade & Equipment Purchase

The STEAM Academy will first launch within existing JCAL space. Capital funding would allow for minor renovations and support purchase of production equipment (e.g. 3D printer, recording space) to develop a tech- and production-enabled education space in JCAL's current classroom.

## Phase II: Academy Headquarters & Program Expansion

In 2018, JCAL will gain access to an extra floor of its landmarked Jamaica Avenue building when the current occupant, Y Roads, relocates. At that time, funds will be used to design and build a permanent space for the Academy within a portion of this space. New equipment, funded by DRI investment, will allow JCAL to expand its course offerings and expose Jamaica's youth to a wider array of topics in technology and the arts, and foster industry partnerships that connect youth to local entrepreneurs and tech and creative businesses.

When not in use by the STEAM Academy the space could be used by local artists, artisans, and entrepreneurs. In addition to the partner operator, JCAL is exploring partnerships with other local youth and educational organizations, including YMCA and Queens Library, to support marketing and programming for the STEAM Academy.

## Estimated Project Costs

**Total Cost:** Phase I of the STEAM Academy build-out is estimated to cost \$115,000, as itemized below:

- Fully enclosed and soundproof vocal recording space: \$50,000
- 2D & 3D Animation Studio: \$38,000
- 3D Printers - \$10,000
- Digital Cameras/Camcorders/Go-Pro - \$8,000
- Virtual Reality & Graphic Cards - \$8,000
- Animation Set Table/Screen - \$6,000
- Software - \$5,000
- Tables/Chairs - \$3,000
- Wiring/Cabling/Electrical and Labor - \$25,000

An initial cost estimate for Phase II, including renovation of one floor of space, and design

and equipment costs, is \$350,000. This does not include operating costs.

## Funding Sources

JCAL has acquired computers, drawing tables, keyboards, and projectors for use in its animation studio, through donations and partnerships. JCAL is seeking donor and foundation support to cover unfunded programming costs, including marketing, staffing, and operations.

## PRIORITY PROJECT PROFILE

# Support York College Expansion



Source: York College

### SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Advance redevelopment of key parcels on York College's campus by preparing a solicitation for private or nonprofit development partners. Expansion would support York College's expansion plans and provide broader economic and community benefits for Greater Jamaica.

### LOCATION

York College campus. Potential development sites include the Classroom Building lot, and Site 9

## Responsible Parties

**City University of New York – York College** would lead project planning and implementation.

## Capacity of Responsible Party

York College is one of 11 senior colleges of CUNY, with an enrollment of more than 8,000 students. The Office of the Vice President of Administrative Affairs and Finance manages all real estate planning and development services for York's 50-acre campus.

## Project Partners

Private development partners would be solicited and become partners through the RFEI process.

## Project Description

A key finding of York College's 2011 Master Plan update was the need for additional academic and student services space to accommodate projected growth and alleviate constraints in existing space. Since, York has developed concepts for an Academic Village and Conference Center that would include space for the college, community, and potential private partners. York has also begun to explore other potential campus reuse opportunities, including integration into a mixed-use cultural district anchored in part by the Bassin Center.

Given the high cost of new development, York has expressed interest in partnering with a private or nonprofit entity to leverage external funds while achieving campus goals. In support of that goal, York College would undertake a study – in concert with a consultant or public partner – to assess the market for private partners, potentially within the health care, technology, or hospitality industries. This assessment would include targeted outreach to industry experts, policymakers, and industry groups.

Based on findings, York would then pursue a Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) process to identify a potential private partner

and development plan. York would retain a consultant or public partner to support the drafting and management of an RFEI, including evaluation of partners, and potentially environmental review. Contingent on a positive response to the RFEI, York College would select a preferred development partner and, through negotiations, develop a ground lease and developer agreement to advance its plans in the near term.

## Estimated Project Costs

**Total Cost:** \$300,000 for a study to scope market opportunities and assistance in drafting an RFEI.

## Funding Sources

Potential contributions from CUNY, and private developers.



## PRIORITY PROJECT PROFILE

# Develop a Healthcare Workforce Strategy



Source: Wikipedia

### SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Develop a coordinated workforce strategy to identify, expand, and market high-priority job training and placement programs around the health care sector.

### LOCATION

Greater Jamaica Catchment Area

### Responsible Parties

**City University of New York – York College** would lead project planning and implementation.

### Capacity of Responsible Party

York College is one of 11 senior colleges of CUNY, with an enrollment of more than 8,000 students. It has extensive experience in healthcare training programs. The Office of Economic and Workforce Development manages business development and continuing and professional education services.

### Project Partners

**New York Alliance for Careers in Health Care** would assist in determining target occupations. **Queens Workforce1** would assist with job placement.

### Project Description

Today, 23% of Jamaica residents work in the health care sector, and health care represents the city's largest growth sector over the next 10 years. Local organizations, including York College and Queens Workforce1, offer health care certification trainings, undergraduate and graduate study, training and placement for home- and facility-based health care aides, and other programs.

A coordinated health care workforce strategy would identify one or more existing programs and partner with key providers to expand and market programming by providing funds for training and outreach staff; targeted advertising; pre-training screening; classroom space; discounted course fees; and other resources, such as work equipment and materials.

Potential target occupations, which would be vetted with industry experts such as the New York Alliance for Careers in Health Care (NYACH), include pharmacy technicians, lab technicians, medical assistants, and home health aides.

### Estimated Project Costs

**Total Cost:** \$1,000,000 for program design and initial implementation

### Funding Sources

Potential funding sources may include foundations, industry partners, and training vouchers through NYC Dept. of Small Business Services & Human Resources Administration

PRIORITY PROJECT PROFILE

# Develop a Hospitality Workforce Program



Source: United Construction and Development Group Corp.

## SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Develop one or more targeted programs to provide job training, job placement, and startup support around the hospitality sector.

## LOCATION

Core Downtown Study Area

## Responsible Parties

**Greater Jamaica Development Corporation (GJDC)** would oversee the program in partnership with workforce consultants.

## Capacity of Responsible Party

**GJDC** is a community-based nonprofit organization that plans, promotes, coordinates, and advances responsible development to revitalize Jamaica and strengthen the region. With a staff of more than 20, it led Jamaica's Brownfield Opportunity Area application, manages several revolving loan funds for small and mid-sized businesses in Southeast Queens, and operates office and retail space in Downtown Jamaica.

## Project Partners

**Kingsborough Community College** has a successful hospitality training program and was identified as a potential project partner.

## Project Description

At least 15 hotels with more than 2,000 rooms are underway or planned in Jamaica, with several major brands (e.g. Hilton Garden Inn, Marriott Courtyard) slated to open in the next three years. In total, these hotels would create an estimated 1,000 or more jobs, including hundreds of entry-level positions. In addition, the hotels would significantly generate demand for business-to-business (B2B) services like catering, cleaning, and laundry.

Two potential programs could help ensure that the benefits of this boom positively impact local job-seekers and entrepreneurs:

- A **job skills and placement program** to introduce local job-seekers to the soft and hard skills required in the hotel industry, with a curriculum designed with specific industry partners. Graduates of the program could then be eligible for specific entry-level positions at hotels once they open. One potential add-on to this program would be services to support graduates as they balance career and life priorities, including child care.

- A **small business support program** targeted to existing businesses in hospitality-associated industries, to provide local businesses with the mentorship, access to funding, and training to scale up and meet the needs of new hotels. The program could also provide direct links to the procurement divisions at major hotels and their brands.

## Estimated Project Costs

**Total Cost:** \$1,000 per student for job skills programs, or an estimated \$20,000 per 20-student cohort, not including space; estimated \$200,000 for small business support services over 3 years, depending on program design.

## Funding Sources

Hotel partners and local foundations could provide funding for this program.

PRIORITY PROJECT PROFILE

# Reclaim the Historic Valencia Theater



Source: Jamaica311.com

## SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Reclaim the historic Valencia Theater as a cultural anchor and events space for Downtown Jamaica.

## LOCATION

90-07 Merrick Boulevard between 90th Ave and Jamaica Ave



### Responsible Parties

A party has not been identified to take responsibility for this project.

### Capacity of Responsible Party

N/A

### Project Partners

**Tabernacle of Prayer** is the current owner of the Valencia Theater. It would be a key partner in any redevelopment or reclamation project. Reactivation of the space would also ultimately require collaboration with a private events promoter.

### Project Description

The historic Valencia Theater, located on Jamaica Avenue at 165th Street, was one of five “Wonder Theaters” developed and operated by Loew’s Theaters at the height of the Jazz Age in the early 20th century. The Valencia features an intricately designed terracotta façade and ornamental columns as well as colorful balconies inspired by Spanish and Mexican architecture. It was a premiere venue for generations of Jamaica residents and visitors.

In 1977, the building was donated to the Tabernacle of Prayer, which restored the theater. A 2015 estimate sized the current congregation at approximately 300 members, down from 7,000 members at the time of transaction. In recent years, there has been limited outside use of the theater as an event venue.

Reuse of the Valencia into a cultural anchor and events space would entail:

- Preliminary outreach to church leaders and negotiation of a use and revenue sharing agreement for the Church.
- Renovation of the Valencia, replacing key building infrastructure and investing in audio/visual elements to enable modern programming.
- Repositioning and marketing the Valencia as a concert and event space.

### Estimated Project Costs

**Total Cost:** \$10,000,000+ for renovation based on renovation costs for other restored Loews Wonder Theaters

### Funding Sources

Potential funding sources may include Historic Preservation Tax Credits, New Market Tax Credits, and private investment capital.

SECTION III:

**Summary Table**

## PRIORITY PROJECTS RECOMMENDED FOR DRI FUNDING

Project Title	Responsible Parties	Estimated Cost	
Develop the GJDC Co-Working Space	Greater Jamaica Development Corporation (GJDC)	\$4,250,000	
Deliver High-Speed Broadband to Downtown Jamaica	CityBridge, Tech:NYC	\$6,780,000	
Expand Prime Skills Program	Queens Economic Development Corporation	\$230,000	
Enhance Targeted Career Prep at Edison High School	New York City Department of Education - Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical Education High School	\$165,000	
Revitalize the Downtown Jamaica Gateway	New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT)	\$4,300,000	
Activate the Archer Archways - Create a Public Space at 159th Street	York College	\$1,500,000	

Funding Sources	Proposed Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	Jobs Created
<p>DRI: \$1,650,000 for build-out of the space.</p> <p>Private Funding: \$2,600,000 from GJDC and its funding network will fund the purchase of the space from the Dermot Company.</p>	Immediately	Late 2017 - Early 2018	The space will have the capacity to support 90 jobs, including positions that are new to Jamaica.
<p>DRI: \$2,655,000, including \$455,000 for the Continuous Conduit component, \$200,000 for the market assessment, and \$2,000,000 for the subsidy package associated with the Broadband Marketplace component.</p> <p>Non-DRI Sources: \$4,125,000 from CityBridge to expand its local LinkNYC network. The Broadband Marketplace component will leverage funds from private utilities, private service providers, local businesses, and property owners to generate the largest-possible service package for the available subsidy amount.</p>	Immediately	2019	This project will support the long-term attraction of skilled jobs in the area by providing basic services for tech-enabled businesses.
<p>DRI: \$230,000 for two additional cohorts and capital support to program graduates.</p> <p>Non-DRI Sources: QEDC has previously been supported by New York City Council discretionary grants, which funded operating expenses, including staffing, marketing, and materials.</p>	Immediately	2018	Up to 30 new Jamaica-based businesses over the next two years. These businesses have the potential to contribute jobs to the local economy in long term.
<p>DRI: \$165,000 for purchase of equipment and licensing of software.</p> <p>Non-DRI Sources: NYCDOE funding support for summer internship programs serving youth and adults in the Jamaica area.</p>	Immediately	Ongoing	This project will support long-term business attraction by developing a skilled local workforce.
<p>DRI: \$2,500,000 for permanent pedestrian space expansion.</p> <p>Non-DRI Sources: \$200,000 from Councilmember I. Daneek Miller. NYCDOT has received funding for temporary pedestrian space, and will seek to fill any gap for permanent space in future capital budget cycles.</p>	Immediately	2020-2021	N/A
<p>DRI: \$1,500,000 for design and installation of decorative lighting, wall displays, seating, and public art.</p> <p>Non-DRI Sources: Concessions may support future operations and maintenance.</p>	Immediately	2018	N/A

## PRIORITY PROJECTS RECOMMENDED FOR DRI FUNDING

Project Title	Responsible Parties	Estimated Cost	
Activate the Archer Archways - Reopen the Union Hall Entrance	York College	\$2,000,000	
Establish the Jamaica Arts Corridor	GJDC, York College	\$3,275,000	
Diversify Dining Options Downtown	GJDC	\$1,600,000	
Create a Downtown Arts & Events Fund	Queens Council on the Arts	\$600,000	



	Funding Sources	Proposed Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	Jobs Created
	DRI: \$2,000,000 for design and installation of decorative lighting and wall displays.	Immediately	2018	N/A
	<p>DRI: \$3,275,000 for the Jamaica Welcome Center, Marketing Materials, Artistic Lighting Displays, Signature Art Installations, and Bassin Promenade &amp; Arts Space.</p> <p>Non-DRI Sources: The Jamaica Welcome Center may be positioned to sell advertising space, a potential source of ongoing operational revenue.</p>	Immediately	2019	N/A
	<p>DRI: \$1,450,000 for build out of Step-Up Space at Jamaica Market, incentives for Destination Restaurant Space, and seeding a Restaurant Startup Fund.</p> <p>Non-DRI Sources: The winner of the Destination Restaurant Space will contribute at least \$150,000 towards build out of the space.</p>	Immediately	Ongoing	20+ direct restaurant and food service jobs.
	<p>DRI: \$600,000 to seed the Jamaica Arts &amp; Events Fund.</p> <p>Non-DRI Sources: Where possible, funds will be used to supplement existing funding or leverage new funding from ticket sales, foundations, corporate sponsors, and elected representatives.</p>	Immediately	2019	N/A

## PRIORITY PROJECTS RECOMMENDED FOR OTHER FUNDING

Project Title	Responsible Parties	Estimated Cost	
<b>Fund Capital Enhancements for JCAL's STEAM Academy</b>	Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning (JCAL)	\$465,000	
<b>Support York College Expansion</b>	York College	\$300,000	
<b>Develop a Healthcare Workforce Strategy</b>	York College	\$1,000,000	
<b>Develop a Hospitality Workforce Program</b>	Greater Jamaica Development Corporation (GJDC)	\$200,000	
<b>Reclaim the Historic Valencia Theater</b>	A party has not been identified to take responsibility for this project.	\$10,000,000+	

	Funding Sources	Proposed Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	Jobs Created
	JCAL has acquired computers, drawing tables, keyboards, and projectors for use in its animation studio, through donations and partnerships. JCAL is seeking donor and foundation support to cover unfunded programming costs, including marketing, staffing, and operations.	Immediately	2019	This project will support long-term business attraction by developing a skilled local workforce.
	Potential contributions from CUNY and private developers.	Immediately	2018	This project will attract a commercial or hospitality anchor with high employment potential.
	Potential funding sources may include foundations, industry partners, and training vouchers through NYC Dept. of Small Business Services & Human Resources Administration.	Immediately	Ongoing	This project will support long-term business attraction by developing a skilled local workforce.
	Hotel partners and local foundations could provide funding for this program.	Immediately	Ongoing	This project will support long-term business attraction by developing a skilled local workforce.
	Potential funding sources may include Historic Preservation Tax Credits, New Market Tax Credits, and private investment capital.	Immediately	N/A	N/A