

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE – LIREDC

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

BASIC INFORMATION

Municipality Name: Incorporated Village of Westbury

Downtown Name: Post Avenue Central Downtown District

County: Nassau

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

Westbury is one of the most diverse and well-located communities on Long Island. Last year, Westbury was named one of the top 40 places in NY for new business by NerdWallet; CNN Money.com has twice included the Village on its list of the top places in America for young, single, affluent professionals to live. Westbury's revived downtown, prime location, affordable housing options, walkability and arts/culture activities provide a strong basis for the Village's continued growth. Significantly, The Space at Westbury, the only downtown performing arts theater in central Nassau County, opened in 2013 and has brought new energy and cultural focus to the community, which we hope to harness going forward.

DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION

This section should be filled out with reference to the criteria set forth in the DRI Guidelines.

- 1) Boundaries of the Downtown Neighborhood.** Detail the boundaries of the targeted neighborhood, keeping in mind that there is no minimum or maximum size, but that the neighborhood should be compact and well-defined. Core neighborhoods beyond a traditional downtown or central business district are eligible, if they can meet other criteria making them ripe for investment.

Westbury's Downtown Business District encompasses a diverse mix of retail, dining, art and leisure establishments, extending on Post Avenue between Jericho Turnpike on the north end, and Old Country Road on the south end, and includes several intersecting side streets with commercial activity. Post Avenue is one of the busiest north-south arteries in the area, with traffic in excess of 22,000 cars per day. The Village offers ample on- and off-street parking, including seven easily accessible municipal parking fields. The Village has developed approx. 800 multi-family residential units to date in the catchment area. Residents benefit from close proximity to NYC and many commute to Manhattan for work.

Attach color map clearly identifying areas within the defined downtown.



- 2) Size.** Outline why the downtown, or its catchment area, is of a size sufficient to support a vibrant, year-round downtown, with consideration of whether there is a sizeable existing, or increasing, population within easy reach for whom this would be the primary downtown. Describe how investments in your downtown could positively impact surrounding communities.

During our aggressive Downtown Revitalization efforts, Westbury Village has developed over 800 units of housing over the past 15 years, all within walking distance of the LIRR station, with an average 38-minute commute to NYC. Per S&P's June 2015 ratings report, "Westbury's economy is very strong...the population of 15,323 is considered broad and diverse." The development of The Space in 2010 attracts diverse audiences into Westbury's downtown year-round, and Westbury is fast-becoming one of the most arts-friendly communities on Long Island with the establishment of The Westbury Arts Council in 2014. The Village seeks to increase the vibrancy of the downtown area with increased arts/culture/dining opportunities.

- 3) Past Investments & Future Investment Potential.** Describe how this downtown will be able to capitalize on prior, and catalyze future, private and public investment in the neighborhood and its surrounding areas.

Westbury is well positioned to advance its Smart Growth and transit-oriented development initiatives, given the resources to do so. The Village has increased its cultural resources w/the establishment in 2014 of its local Military History museum, as well as undertaking a Historical Landmark Designation program. The Village participated in the 2014 ParkingPLUS Design Challenge to explore structured parking approaches for its downtown and train station. The Village also participated as a subject community in the 2014 Long Island's Future: Economic Implications of Today's Choices study conducted by HR&A Advisors, Inc. for the LI Index, and in 2015 commissioned Vision LI to assist in developing marketing plans for our revitalized downtown.

Leveraged Resources: Public \$0.00 Private \$0.00
 Prior NYS Funding/REDC Funding: Amount \$1,164,173.00
 Please identify use(s) of prior funding Downtown storefront revitalization/parking lot & st. light improvements/traffic calming projects.

- 4) Job Growth.** Describe how recent or impending job growth within, or in close proximity to, the downtown will attract professionals to an active life in the downtown, support redevelopment, and make growth sustainable in the long-term.

Future job growth in Westbury, including the unincorporated areas, over the next ten years is predicted to be 36.80%, in pace with projected national growth (BestPlaces.net). The Village hopes that with a revitalized downtown, Westbury can become a magnet for service, entertainment, hospitality and retail employers that will help sustain the local economy as it expands.

- 5) Attractiveness of the Downtown.** Identify the properties or characteristics the downtown possesses that contribute or could contribute, if enhanced, to the attractiveness and livability of the downtown. Consider, for example, the presence of developable mixed-use spaces, housing at

different levels of affordability and type, healthy and affordable food markets, walkability and bikeability, and public parks and gathering spaces.

In the heart of Westbury's downtown is our Piazza, a green used by the Village, Arts Council, Business Improvement District (B.I.D.) and the Latino Advisory Council for cultural events, including the annual BID Street Fair, Hispanic Heritage Celebration & Summer Arts & Concert Series. Activities and a year-round schedule at The Space serve as anchors for downtown Westbury, helping to draw in visitors and create a vibrant, walkable downtown with a diversity of dining and performing arts options. Recent improvements to Post Avenue crosswalks have increased pedestrian safety and walkability, and the Village recently installed a number of bicycle racks and information kiosks to increase accessibility.

- 6) Policies to Enhance Quality of Life.** Articulate the policies in place that increase the livability and quality of life of the downtown. Examples include the use of local land banks, modern zoning codes, complete streets plans, or transit-oriented development. If policies achieving this goal are not currently in place, describe the ability of the municipality to create and implement such policies.

The Village has, for over a decade, employed Smart Growth principles, Transit Oriented Development ideas, Traffic Calming measures and a plethora of other strategies to enhance our downtown redevelopment efforts and to re-imagine our downtown. We've employed the arts as a central theme in our redevelopment efforts. We've modified zoning policies and laws, and employed expedited review processes to make our Village more friendly to those seeking to do business and invest here. We have been open to new ideas and increased density in our downtown in order to pursue the kind of sustainability that we need to achieve our goals as a community.

- 7) Local Support.** Set forth the local and community support that exists for the revitalization of this downtown and the commitment among local leaders and stakeholders to building and implementing a strategic investment plan. Identify an initial local lead for the program that will work with outside experts to convene a local DRI Planning Committee to oversee the plan.

The Village is home to a diverse population, and has a strong mix of small businesses that all have a stake in the ongoing revitalization of our Downtown District. There are many residents and civic groups that are active within the community and participate in shaping the Village's ongoing Revitalization efforts, in addition to an active BID which focuses its efforts on a wide range of projects to help attract new merchants, promote existing merchants and draw customers to Westbury's thriving Downtown. The Village works with the local Historical Society, Arts Council and other community organizations to promote the Smart Growth principles and initiatives it is pursuing. The Village would act as the lead agency for future initiatives.

- 8) Other.** Provide any other information you feel would be relevant to help this committee to make an informed decision to nominate this downtown for a DRI award.

Westbury is committed to the continued revitalization of our Downtown, w/investment in standardized signage for Post Avenue businesses, replacing street lamps w/decorative lamps, undertaking major traffic calming projects to enhance crosswalks, and most recently, included the installation of crossing signs for increased pedestrian safety to support walkability. We've also increased cultural resources. As a result of new restaurants and businesses opening on Post

Avenue, vacancy rates are minimal and employment opportunities have been created for a variety of skill levels and salary levels. Village government is committed to making our community one of the premier downtowns on Long Island, and the DRI grant would help achieve that goal.

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

The Village is currently in planning stages that will require the municipality to address the increased needs for additional parking and possible shuttle bus service in the downtown. Additional parking would support the expansion of our downtown activities, as well as increased use of the rail station. We also will need to enhance our security features and lighting assets. We seek to add aesthetic features (such as benches, murals, public art, landscaping, green space development and street trees) to make the downtown more inviting and attractive.

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

Westbury Village has completed a master plan, but constantly solicits vision concepts, and was one of the communities selected to participate in the LI Index's ParkingPLUS Design Challenge, a long-range, ambitious project with many aspects that are achievable for this community. We recently commissioned Vision LI to assist in identifying downtown issues and marketing ideas that we are seeking to implement. Our Village Planning Board, Historical Landmarks Commission, local Historical Society and other groups all assist in coordinating our zoning laws and initiatives to enhance all of the cultural, quality-of-life and other aspects of the community that comprise our revitalization efforts.