2022 DRI & NY Forward Project List

The Village of Sleepy Hollow Needs Your Input for the “NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative” (DRI) and “NY Forward” (NYF) 2022 Applications

Governor Hochul has made downtown revitalization a central component of the State's economic development policy. The DRI and NY Forward grant programs will accelerate and expand New York's burgeoning downtown revitalization.

Through the first five rounds of the landmark Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI), 59 communities have received a total of $600 million in awards, creating a renaissance in downtown resurgence that shows no sign of slowing. To accelerate that momentum, Governor Hochul announced two complementary downtown redevelopment programs—Round 6 of the DRI, funded at $100 million; and the first round of NY Forward, a new program that targets downtowns in NY's smaller and rural communities, also funded at $100 million. The overarching goals of the two programs are to revitalize downtowns and reinvigorate local and regional economies by creating a critical mass of vibrant downtown destinations in each region.

Participating communities will be nominated by the state's ten Regional Economic Development Councils (REDCs) based on the downtown's potential for transformation through a list of proposed catalytic projects that advance the community's vision for revitalization. Within the Mid-Hudson region, where the Village of Sleepy Hollow is located, the Mid-Hudson REDC (MHREDC) will nominate one community to receive a $10 million DRI award and up to three communities to share in a $9 million NY Forward award (with $2.25 or $4.5 million per community).

As part of these grant applications, the Village of Sleepy Hollow must provide its suggested list of transformative projects that can break ground within two years. The projects must fall within the boundaries of the Village's “Focus Area,” outlined in yellow on the map below.

Your input is needed to make Sleepy Hollow a winner!

After reviewing the Village’s Focus Area Map and proposed Project List below, please offer your votes and feedback through our 3-question survey (link provided beneath project list, below).

Sleepy Hollow DRI / NY Forward Focus Area Map
Sleepy Hollow DRI / NY Forward Draft Project List

(1) BEEKMAN AVENUE SIDEWALKS AND DECORATIVE LIGHTING: Beekman Avenue is the Village’s central corridor leading from Route 9 (Broadway) to the Hudson River waterfront. The Village recently completed a project to improve all of the streetlights, curbing, sidewalks, street trees and appurtenances along Beekman from Broadway to Cortlandt Street (which runs approximately half the length of Beekman). The Village needs to expand this work further down Beekman Avenue from Cortlandt to Clinton Street in order to enhance necessary linkages to the new large-scale waterfront development and successfully draw the market inwards. In addition, the Village is interested in installing a number of other pedestrian friendly and traffic calming measures, such as raised crosswalks, along this corridor. Valley Street and Cordlandt Street, at the heart of the Village, are active with small, locally-owned businesses that will benefit from these civic infrastructure improvements.

(2) PLACEMAKING: INNER VILLAGE GATHERING SPACES AND PUBLIC ART: Sleepy Hollow has already created a temporary plaza/parklet in the Center of the Focus Area, where Cortlandt meets Beekman, cutting off the left fork of a triangle and traffic island to create a public gathering space, using large planting barriers, picnic tables, and string lights. Due to its success, the Village is now moving to make it permanent with a grant from Assemblyman Abinanti and wishes to undertake more placemaking initiatives within the Focus Area. The community has identified the need for additional outdoor gathering spaces as well as public art installations (similar to its Wishing Wall public art project that was recently completed) within the Inner Village to enhance community character, advance placemaking efforts, and increase the number of residents and visitors, which will in turn increase the number of customers for the local business. Several potential locations have been identified within the Focus Area, including the triangular plaza at Washington, Valley, and Chestnut streets, ideal for a public gathering space; a large building wall, perfect for an outdoor mural that could be seen from the Cuomo Bridge; several street locations appropriate for 3-D art
projections that double as traffic calming measures; and the Village’s parking meter posts, which could be painted by local artists, similar to the initiative in Oak Cliff, TX, and other communities. The Village has already prepared a roster of local artists, many of whom are immigrants, representing the ethnic and cultural diversity Sleepy Hollow is known for.

(3) STREETSCAPE AND INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS: Sleepy Hollow is a walkable village, but challenging pedestrian pathways and an aging downtown make it less likely that residents and visitors will walk or use other modes of active transportation to access services and other local opportunities. The Village is interested in engaging a firm to advance streetscape and intersection improvements (those not mentioned in the proposed projects above), identified in the Village’s new comprehensive plan, in an effort to promote more pedestrian activity and improve urban design in order to increase the walkability of the downtown. Improvements may include sidewalk rehabilitation, furniture, tree planting, landscaping, lighting, and bicycle infrastructure. Increased wayfinding signs help to direct visitors to shops, restaurants, historic sites, and arts and cultural resources would also help enliven the environment and pedestrian experience.

(4) INNER VILLAGE PIPE RELINING: The Village has numerous water and sewer projects that are necessary to adequately support growth in the Focus Area. Several are underway but the Inner Village Pipe Relining still remains an open and necessary item. The Village must deal with the increasing frequency of water main lines breaking due to aged pipes and the tendency of a weakened line system to not only lose water through seepage, but to burst when valves are closed to repair breaks. Sediment on the pipe reduces pressure and potentially could affect water quality. Availability of clean water is a major determinant of community health and a priority for the enhancement of residential and business quality. The Village has begun work on pipe relining outside of the Focus Area (the work has to start at the highest elevations of the Village). Without additional capital, it will be nearly a decade before the Village can afford to complete all necessary relining.

(5) IMPROVED ACCESS TO BROADBAND: An improved broadband network is a critical infrastructure need in the Inner Village, especially the Cortlandt/Beekman/Valley triangle. This is necessary for both residents and businesses alike and important for attracting further investment in the downtown and sparking digital recreation in public spaces. Sleepy Hollow is interested in providing advanced, high-speed, state-of-the-art Internet access.

(6) SMALL BUSINESS REVOLVING LOAN FUND: The Village currently provides training for small business owners to teach the techniques needed to expand their business, as well as training for would-be entrepreneurs to guide the business startup process, especially regarding finances. The DRI/NYF funds would be used to establish a revolving loan fund to provide micro-loans to small businesses that will allow them to establish or expand their workforce (such as equipment upgrades, etc.). The Village would make receipt of the funds contingent upon the small business owner taking the Village’s existing entrepreneur training programs, in order to ensure the most economical, responsible, and successful use of the funds.

(7-11) STRATEGIC REDEVELOPMENT PARCELS: In the selected Focus Area there are several Village-owned and privately-owned parcels poised for improvements:

- (7) UAW Building: The Sleepy Hollow LDC-owned, former United Auto Workers building at 193 Beekman Avenue is the Village’s ideal location for a workforce housing project, but needs improvements to attract a potential developer. Northwell Health (Phelps Hospital) and Open Door Medical Centers—two major local employers—have indicated a need for workforce housing for
their employees; the Village has held direct meetings on the subject with the President and CEO of Phelps Hospital, who indicated the entity's support of this initiative in a letter of support. The Village and LDC would use DRI/NYF funding for strategic public investment that will spur interest in the site, including: demolition of the adjacent viaduct, construction of a portion of roadway to establish the connection to Beekman Ave., and demolition of the existing UAW building to prepare the site. Some funding for this work will be obtained from the Mt. Pleasant IDA, but additional resources are needed. These improvements could attract a transformative $40 million private investment to create much-needed housing.

- (8) Cortlandt Street Fire Station Adaptive Reuse: The Village completed a real estate study that revealed the potential for redeveloping a fire station site on Cortlandt Street within the Focus Area. The LDC is also a ready and willing partner in this endeavor. An ideal project would maintain the building's current architecture, such as a local microbrewery. The Village would invest DRI/NYF funds to prepare the building for conversion into a commercial property with work such as building stabilization, roof repairs, and upgraded systems (electrical, plumbing, etc.).

- (9) River Street DPW Redevelopment: With the relocation of the Village's DPW from River Street—a project currently under way—a new waterfront parcel will soon be available for redevelopment with Hudson River views within a walkable/TOD distance of Tarrytown’s Metro North train station (an express stop to Manhattan). Given the site’s previous use as a DPW, with gas tanks and other potential contamination risks, the Village and LDC would use DRI/NYF funding for work such as environmental testing, remediation, and other site preparation that would attract private redevelopment of this key site.

- (10) Valley and Cortlandt Mixed-Use Building: A privately-owned parking lot between lower Valley and Cortlandt Streets—primarily used only in the evening— is a significantly underutilized site in the heart of the inner Village. The owner (a well known local affordable housing developer) is working closely with the Village to consider options for redevelopment. Redevelopment of the site, as currently envisioned, would include first-floor retail, second-floor office, mixed-income housing above, powered by rooftop solar. The property owner/developer is also on the Village’s DRI/NYF local planning committee (as tentatively established to prepare for this application) and is fully committed to this project.

- (11) Central Beekman Vacant Lots: The Village also has three vacant lots in the middle of the commercial corridor on Beekman Avenue, which the property owner is interested in redeveloping either as retail with residential above (an option that would maintain the streetfront), or turning the site into an outdoor eating area / open air market. The property owner also controls the adjacent building, which could provide kitchen space. Redevelopment of the three parcels would eliminate an eyesore at the heart of the Village's commercial corridor, provide much-needed housing, and provide opportunity for additional commerce. The Village would also consider creating an alley behind these lots to provide off-street parking and a place for garbage pickup, which would maintain the storefront on Beekman, but needs a better sense of whether this is the most effective and transformative option. The DRI/NYF planning process would provide a better sense of what is possible and catalytic on this site.

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