

Merrick Station • Town of Hempstead

Unincorporated. Babylon Branch.

The hamlet of Merrick has one LIRR station, located within the central business district. In 2006, Merrick averaged 3,381 westbound morning commuters, more than both its proximate Babylon branch station counterparts Bellmore (2,800) and Baldwin (2,744). Located adjacent to Sunrise Highway, the station is situated within the surrounding street grid, yet the station area is in dire need of pedestrian safety improvements along the intersection of the highway and Merrick and Hewlett Avenues, the two streets that frame and run perpendicular to the station platform. In addition to complete streets and pedestrian safety improvements, the community is amenable to new mixed-use, higher density developments within its station area downtown.

Merrick's station area falls in line with the prototypical station area along the southern shore of the County in that Sunrise Highway disrupts the connectivity of its downtown to adjacent residential neighborhoods. The community is actively seeking to remedy this problem both through newer, more livable developments and safer, more appealing streets. In response to their inclusion in this study, the North and Central Merrick Civic Association issued a report on development of a business district around the Merrick station. The report listed pedestrian safety, mixed-use development, and improved parking solutions – all



The Merrick community is amenable to complete streets improvements to their commercial corridors.

done with input from the public – as the top three improvements the community would like to see happen to their station area.

Due to the presence of these ubiquitous challenges and opportunities, Merrick is a good candidate station area for the purposes of this study. Enhancements at Merrick could easily be recreated at other similar station areas along the County's south shore and within the Hamlet.

Recent/ongoing plans & studies

- Zoning application for existing office building, 2012
- Report on Development of a Business District Around Merrick Train Station, North and Central Merrick Civic Association, 2012

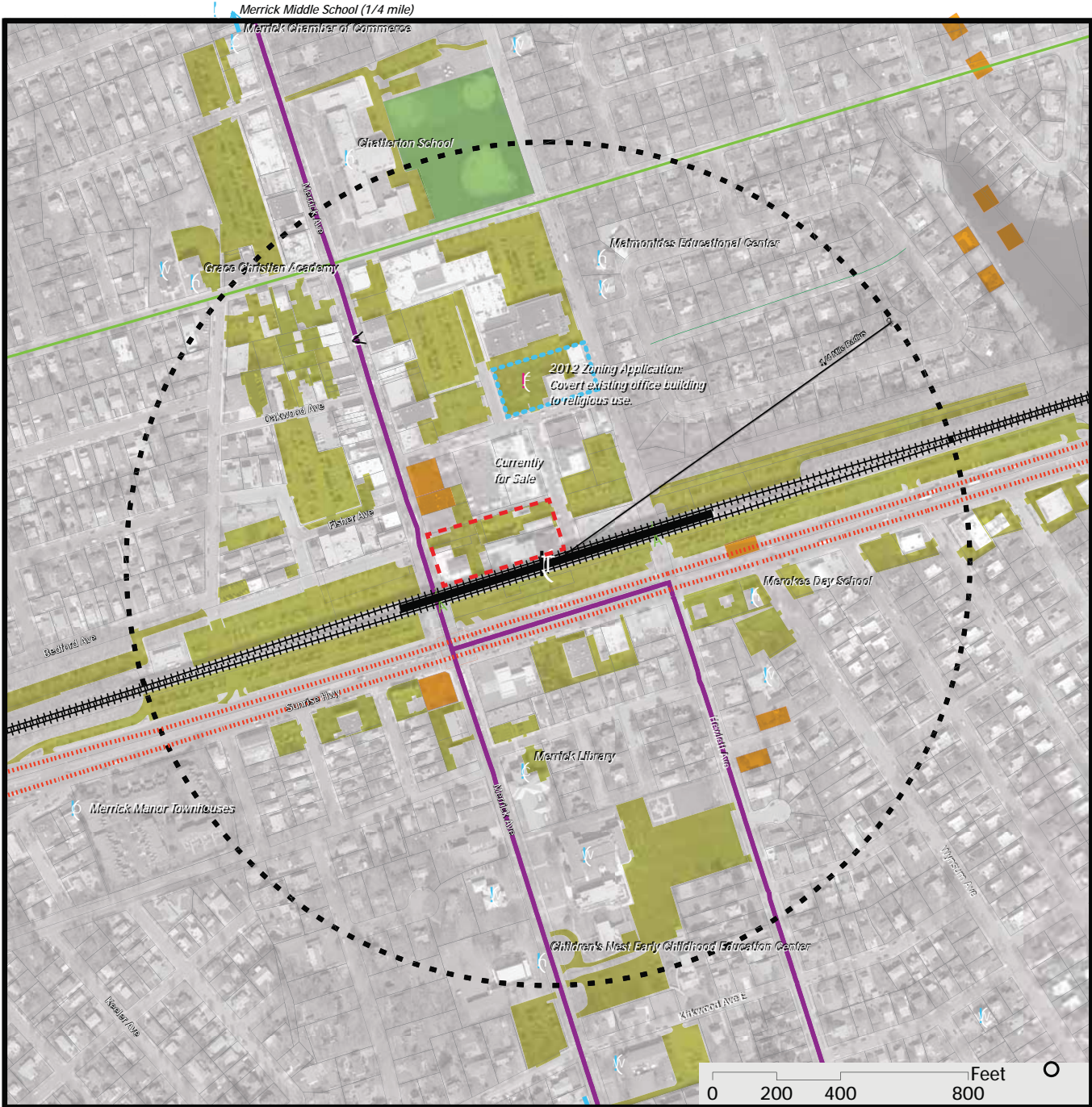
	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	GREAT
community desire	[Blue bar]			[Grey bar]
physical suitability	[Blue bar]		[Grey bar]	[Grey bar]
public sector readiness	[Blue bar]	[Grey bar]	[Grey bar]	[Grey bar]
developer interest	[Blue bar]	[Grey bar]	[Grey bar]	[Grey bar]
leadership in place	[Blue bar]			[Grey bar]
overall	[Orange bar]		[Grey bar]	[Grey bar]

Potential projects



Merrick Station Town of Hempstead

- Transit Station (train)
- 1/4 mile radius from station
- Crossing
- Transit Routes (train)
- Transit Routes (bus)
- Bicycle Facilities
- Wide Roads / Dangerous Crossings
- Limited Access Highway
- Parcels
- Government/Public Buildings
- Community Centers
- Religious Institutions
- Schools, Colleges & Universities
- Arts, Culture & Entertainment
- Recent New Development
- Other Identified Destinations
- Parks & Open Space
- Surface Parking Lots & Parking Structures
- Vacant Land
- Vacant/Unused Buildings and Soft Sites
- Brownfields/Contaminated Sites
- Planned/Proposed Future Development
- Plans / Project Areas
- Potential Development Sites



To Merrick Road (1/4 mile) and South Shore (3/4 mile)

Mineola Station • Village of Mineola

Incorporated. Babylon Branch.

The Village of Mineola has one LIRR station, which is located in the center of its downtown district and is adjacent to a relatively new intermodal center. The station averaged 2,496 westbound morning passengers in 2006 and is supported by the presence of Winthrop University Hospital, which occupies a large number of the sites to the north of the station. The station runs between 1st Avenue to the North, and Old Country Road to the South, dividing the surrounding street grid. With a higher density, a strong transit presence, and a permanent institutional fixture, Mineola has had its fair share of developers interested in its station area. Over the past several years, there have been three major residential project proposals, with the Churchill apartment complex including ground floor retail - approved by the Village in 2012 and receiving economic assistance from the Nassau County Industrial Development Authority.

TSD isn't going to happen in Mineola; it's happening. While the Village is amenable towards additional development, particularly the provision of a true "village square" near to the station, the future of Mineola is taking shape without any needed assistance from the County under this initiative. That being said, with all these new developments taking place, traffic and parking shortages have emerged at the forefront of the Village's concerns, leaving the door open for complete streets and circulation strategies within the area.



Mineola's Intermodal Center has spurred significant developer interest within the Village's downtown.

The Village of Mineola has already established the planning and policy framework, such as its innovative "Development Incentive Bonus" Overlay District", needed to create successful TSD. For this reason, Mineola is not a suitable candidate for the purposes of this study, but the successes of the Mineola station area are sure to prove valuable to the County as a whole.

Recent/ongoing plans & studies

- The Village of Mineola Comprehensive Master Plan, Village of Mineola, 2005
- Revitalizing Communities Award, Vision Long Island, 2006

Recent developments

- Mineola Intermodal Center, 2006
- Winston & Churchill mixed-use apartment complexes, approved in 2012

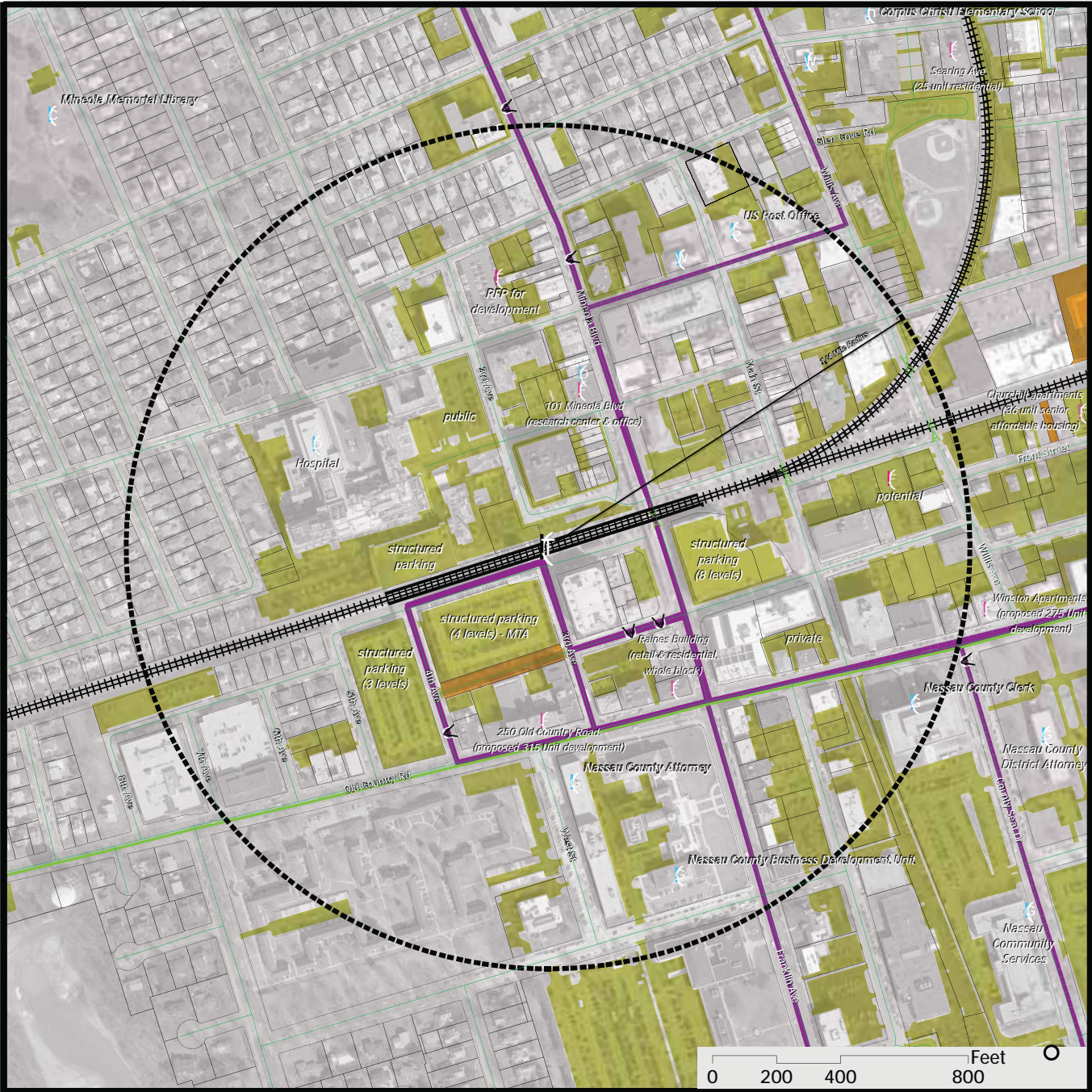
	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	GREAT
community desire	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	GREAT
physical suitability	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	GREAT
public sector readiness	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	GREAT
developer interest	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	GREAT
leadership in place	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	GREAT
overall	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	GREAT

Potential projects



Mineola Station Village of Mineola

- Transit Station (train)
- 1/4 mile radius from station
- Crossing
- Transit Routes (train)
- Transit Routes (bus)
- Bicycle Facilities
- Wide Roads / Dangerous Crossings
- Limited Access Highway
- Parcels
- Government/Public Buildings
- Community Centers
- Religious Institutions
- Schools, Colleges & Universities
- Arts, Culture & Entertainment
- Recent New Development
- Other Identified Destinations
- Parks & Open Space
- Surface Parking Lots & Parking Structures
- Vacant Land
- Vacant/Unused Buildings and Soft Sites
- Brownfields/Contaminated Sites
- Planned/Proposed Future Development
- Plans / Project Areas
- Potential Development Sites



Nassau Boulevard Station • Village of Garden City

Incorporated. Hempstead Branch.

Nassau Boulevard is one of five LIRR stations within the Village of Garden City. The Nassau Boulevard station has the lowest average LIRR ridership among this group, with an average of 372 morning passengers travelling westbound in 2006. The station runs east to west alongside North and South Avenue, sitting in unison to the surrounding street grid. As with the other Garden City stations, Nassau Boulevard’s station area is primarily single-family residences. A large portion of the station’s passengers access nearby Adelphi University, which runs shuttles to and from the station. The station is also walking distance from the Garden City Country Club, which provides yet another amenity for the residents of this station area.

Nassau Boulevard provides a good example of a station area with potential for modestly-scaled and strategically placed TSD. Some of the community’s concerns revolve around the need for additional parking and enhanced pedestrian safety on the streets immediately surrounding the station, making the station area a good place for complete streets plan to help enhance livability.

Overall, while the sites available for infill are few, Nassau Boulevard presents some decent opportunities for TSD within the Village of Garden City. Strategic improvements within this station area could easily be replicated in the remaining three



Any infill within Nassau Boulevard’s station area would need to be small in scale.

station areas in the village and other predominantly single-family station areas throughout the County.

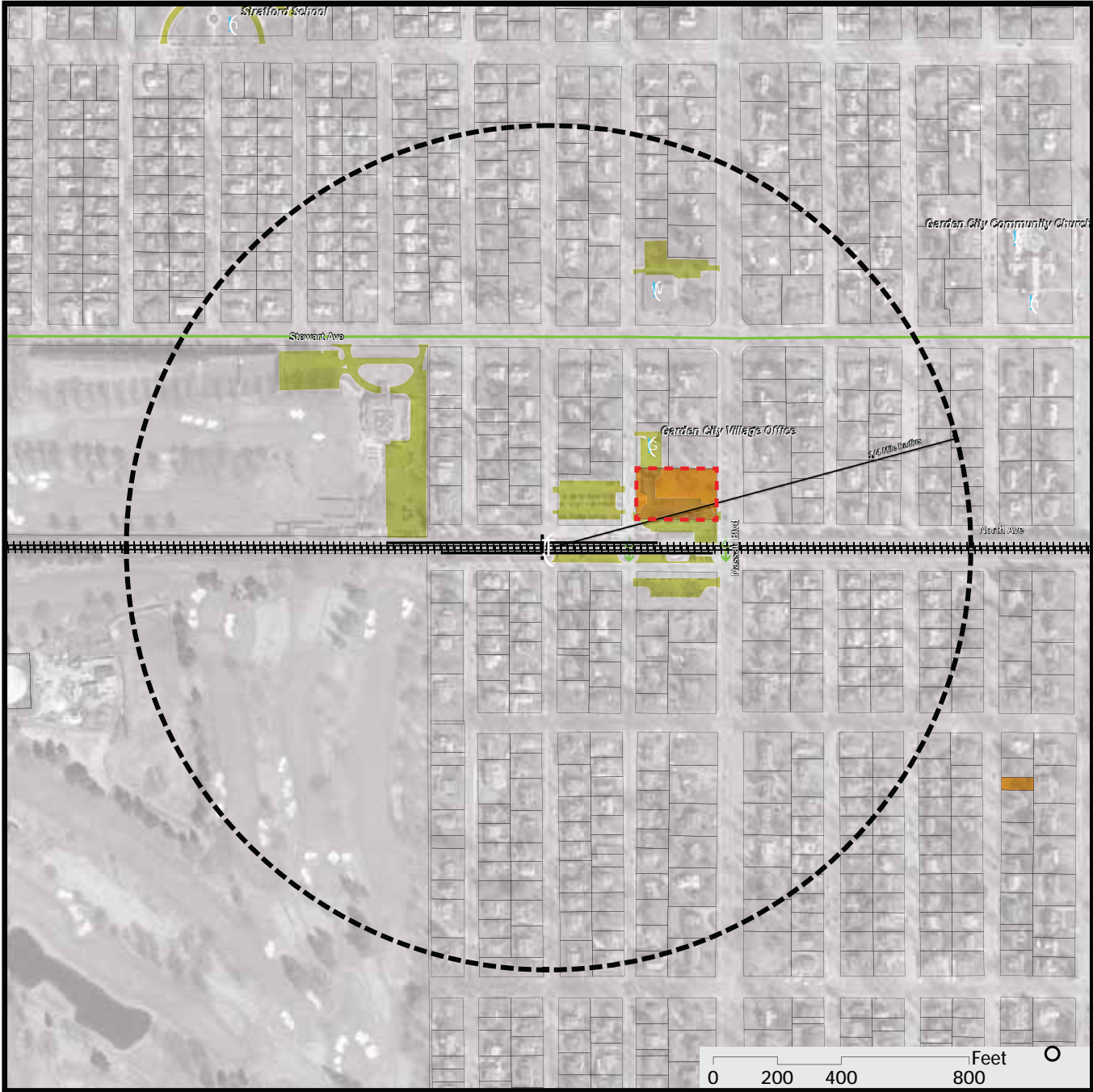
	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	GREAT
community desire	■			
physical suitability	■	■		
public sector readiness	■			
developer interest	■			
leadership in place	■			
overall	■			

Potential projects



Nassau Blvd Station Village of Garden City

- Transit Station (train)
- 1/4 mile radius from station
- Crossing
- Transit Routes (train)
- Transit Routes (bus)
- Bicycle Facilities
- Wide Roads / Dangerous Crossings
- Limited Access Highway
- Parcels
- Government/Public Buildings
- Community Centers
- Religious Institutions
- Schools, Colleges & Universities
- Arts, Culture & Entertainment
- Recent New Development
- Other Identified Destinations
- Parks & Open Space
- Surface Parking Lots & Parking Structures
- Vacant Land
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- Brownfields/Contaminated Sites
- Planned/Proposed Future Development
- Plans / Project Areas
- Potential Development Sites



Rockville Centre Station • Village of Rockville Centre

Incorporated. Babylon Branch.

Much like the other station areas along Sunrise Highway and the LIRR's Babylon branch, the Village of Rockville Centre has one LIRR station, located in the Village's central business district. The station receives a good amount of ridership, averaging 2,209 westbound morning passengers in 2006. The station area itself is an active downtown with a solid commercial base of primarily restaurants/pubs and neighborhood retail. While some vacancies exist, the current Village administration is actively trying to solicit developer interest and is succeeding overall. The recently completed Avalon Rockville Centre apartment complex is an example of a livable development within walking distance of the station that is successfully attracting residents.

With nearby hotels and active development plans, Rockville Centre is well on its way to becoming a more sustainable and livable place. While the community expressed a desire for more diverse development, such as a community center within the downtown area, the Village has the right leadership in place to steward the future vision for the station area.

With all the development successes Rockville Centre has had in recent years, such as the Avalon at Rockville Centre, there is no pressing need for additional TSD within this station area. A pilot project may better serve the County on the whole if located within a station area that is in more



TSD is already occurring within Rockville Centre's downtown.

need of assistance than Rockville Centre. That being said, Rockville Centre's initiative and push for livability enhancements serve as a good example for how successful these improvements can be within Nassau County.

Recent/ongoing plans & studies

- Proposed streetscape improvement plan on Park Avenue from Lincoln Avenue to Hillside Avenue, 2012
- Village Downtown Master Plan, ongoing
- Street improvements along Maple Avenue, 2012

Recent developments

























- Avalon Rockville Centre Apartment Complex, 2012

	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	GREAT
community desire				
physical suitability				
public sector readiness				
developer interest				
leadership in place				
overall				

Potential projects



Rockville Centre Station Village of Rockville Centre

-  Transit Station (train)
-  1/4 mile radius from station
-  Crossing
-  Transit Routes (train)
-  Transit Routes (bus)
-  Bicycle Facilities
-  Wide Roads / Dangerous Crossings
-  Limited Access Highway
-  Parcels
-  Government/Public Buildings
-  Community Centers
-  Religious Institutions
-  Schools, Colleges & Universities
-  Arts, Culture & Entertainment
-  Recent New Development
-  Other Identified Destinations
-  Parks & Open Space
-  Surface Parking Lots & Parking Structures
-  Vacant Land
-  Vacant/Unused Buildings and Soft Sites
-  Brownfields/Contaminated Sites
-  Planned/Proposed Future Development
-  Plans / Project Areas
-  Potential Development Sites



Valley Stream Station • Village of Valley Stream

Incorporated. Long Beach & Far Rockaway Branches.

Bordering Queens, the Village of Valley Stream sits on the doorstep of New York City. The Village has two LIRR stations, Valley Stream station, which averaged 1,754 morning westbound passengers in 2006, and Gibson station, which is not included in this study. The station runs parallel to Sunrise Highway to the South, incorporated into the surrounding grid to the north, and separated from the grid to the south by the Edward Cahill Memorial Park. The Valley Stream station is ideally situated at the intersection of the Babylon and Far Rockaway branches, a good location for development centered around transit. While the Village has a solid commercial base and a good variety of land uses within their downtown, the Village is looking to spur even more development that takes advantage of its close proximity to New York City and JFK International Airport. While plans for a new mixed-use apartment complex were recently approved, both the Village and the community are actively pursuing a hotel development and have made strides in achieving one.

TSD within Valley Stream has a strong chance of success regardless of whether or not the County assists in realizing it. Recent changes to the Village's zoning code have made it increasingly feasible for interested developers to explore options for mixed-use and hotel developments within the station area and the Village recently adopted



There are strong opportunities for complete streets improvements within Valley Stream's station area.

a new downtown master plan that provides the framework for a more walkable and active downtown.

TSD is happening in Valley Stream and the Village is ready and desirous for further livability enhancements to their station area, making them a strong candidate for the purposes of this study. Success within Valley Stream - at one of the gateways to Nassau County - will benefit all those station areas that follow and the Village has taken all the right steps to make their vision a reality.

Recent/ongoing plans & studies

- Village of Valley Stream Master Plan, 2011

Recent developments

- Valley Sun apartment complex, approved in 2010

	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	GREAT
community desire	[Blue bar]			[Grey bar]
physical suitability	[Blue bar]			[Grey bar]
public sector readiness	[Blue bar]		[Grey bar]	[Grey bar]
developer interest	[Blue bar]			[Grey bar]
leadership in place	[Blue bar]		[Grey bar]	[Grey bar]
overall	[Orange bar]			[Grey bar]

- Village approved plans and granted variances for the construction of 39 residential units, 2012
- Hawthorne Court apartment complex, completed in 2010
- Dutchgate senior housing complex, completed in 2012

Potential projects





Valley Stream Station *Village of Valley Stream*

- Transit Station (train)
- 1/4 mile radius from station
- Crossing
- Transit Routes (train)
- Transit Routes (bus)
- Bicycle Facilities
- Wide Roads / Dangerous Crossings
- Limited Access Highway
- Parcels
- Government/Public Buildings
- Community Centers
- Religious Institutions
- Schools, Colleges & Universities
- Arts, Culture & Entertainment
- Recent New Development
- Other Identified Destinations
- Parks & Open Space
- Surface Parking Lots & Parking Structures
- Vacant Land
- Vacant/Unused Buildings and Soft Sites
- Brownfields/Contaminated Sites
- Planned/Proposed Future Development
- Plans / Project Areas
- Potential Development Sites

Wantagh Station • Town of Hempstead

Unincorporated. Babylon Branch.

The hamlet of Wantagh has one LIRR station, which had strong ridership in 2006, averaging 2,353 morning westbound passengers. The station runs prallal to Brooklyn Avenue to the North and Railroad Avenue to the South, situated in unison to the larger surrounding street grid. Like all Sunrise Highway station areas, Wantagh suffers from poor pedestrian safety around its station and the community has actively pushed for safer, more complete streets within this area. In development terms, Wantagh has a strong commercial base with a high occupancy rate, although most of the station area's stores are located along Sunrise Highway and Merrick Road, not necessarily directly within the Hamlet's downtown. The opportunity exists for targeted infill within the station area's core and the community has expressed interest in mixed-use developments that promote walkability within their downtown.

While Sunrise Highway provides easily vehicular access to the station area, its current state presents a formidable barrier to true livable development within Wantagh's station area and for every station area along the highway. The layout of Wantagh's station area is ripe for complete streets, safe intersections, and smartly designed mixed-use development close to the station itself.

The opportunities for successful TSD exist within Wantagh. The challenge remains breaking away from traditional developments and pursuing



Pedestrian safety is a serious concern within Wantagh's station area.

those that address the community's needs more directly. Successful TSD within Wantagh would serve the community and similar stations within Nassau County well.

Recent/ongoing plans & studies

- Image Committee of Wantagh, Wantagh Chamber of Commerce, ongoing

Recent developments

- Retail center at 3340 Sunrise Highway approved, 2013

























	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	GREAT
community desire	[Blue bar]		[Grey bar]	[Grey bar]
physical suitability	[Blue bar]			[Grey bar]
public sector readiness	[Blue bar]		[Grey bar]	[Grey bar]
developer interest	[Blue bar]	[Grey bar]	[Grey bar]	[Grey bar]
leadership in place	[Blue bar]	[Grey bar]	[Grey bar]	[Grey bar]
overall	[Orange bar]		[Grey bar]	[Grey bar]

Potential projects





Wantagh Station Town of Hempstead

-  Transit Station (train)
-  1/4 mile radius from station
-  Crossing
-  Transit Routes (train)
-  Transit Routes (bus)
-  Bicycle Facilities
-  Wide Roads / Dangerous Crossings
-  Limited Access Highway
-  Parcels
-  Government/Public Buildings
-  Community Centers
-  Religious Institutions
-  Schools, Colleges & Universities
-  Arts, Culture & Entertainment
-  Recent New Development
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-  Parks & Open Space
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-  Brownfields/Contaminated Sites
-  Planned/Proposed Future Development
-  Plans / Project Areas
-  Potential Development Sites

to Jones Beach Causeway (1/2 mile) and Jones Beach (5 miles)

Westbury Station • Village of Westbury

Incorporated. Ronkonkoma & Port Jefferson Branches.

Located in the center of Nassau County, the Village of Westbury has one LIRR station, located within its central business district. In 2006, the station averaged 1,255 westbound morning passengers. Located between Union Ave and Railroad Ave, the Westbury Station is integrated into the Westbury street grid. Westbury has an active downtown with few vacancies, but a major complaint among the community is the amount of truck traffic on Post Road, a major north/south arterial bisecting Nassau County, and the safety and convenience issues it creates. Any new developments within Westbury's station area should incorporate traffic calming as part of its overall strategy.

The development landscape within Westbury is defined by Post Avenue that serves as its downtown, the two large condominium projects along Post Avenue and Maple Avenue that were both completed in 2006, and the recent renovation of the Village's local theatre. Both the Village and the community are looking to build off of these successes and the general success of Westbury's downtown. The Village has expressed interest in a parking structure near to the station to reduce the amount of land dedicated to surface parking, particularly those lots just to the south of the station, freeing up space for additional mixed-use development. The Village also mentioned the ongoing redevelopment of underutilized and vacant sites in a former light industrial area along the north



There are strong opportunities for mixed-use development near Westbury Station.

side of Union Avenue to the west of School Street. Civic and Chamber members stressed the importance of creating a "Main Street" feel on the sections of Post Ave and Maple Ave that enclose the commercial area just north of the station.

Westbury has the readiness and desire to realize successful TSD and livability enhancements within their station area, making it a strong candidate for the purposes of this study.

Recent/ongoing plans & studies

- Downtown Inventory: Westbury, Nassau County Planning Commission, 2005

Recent developments

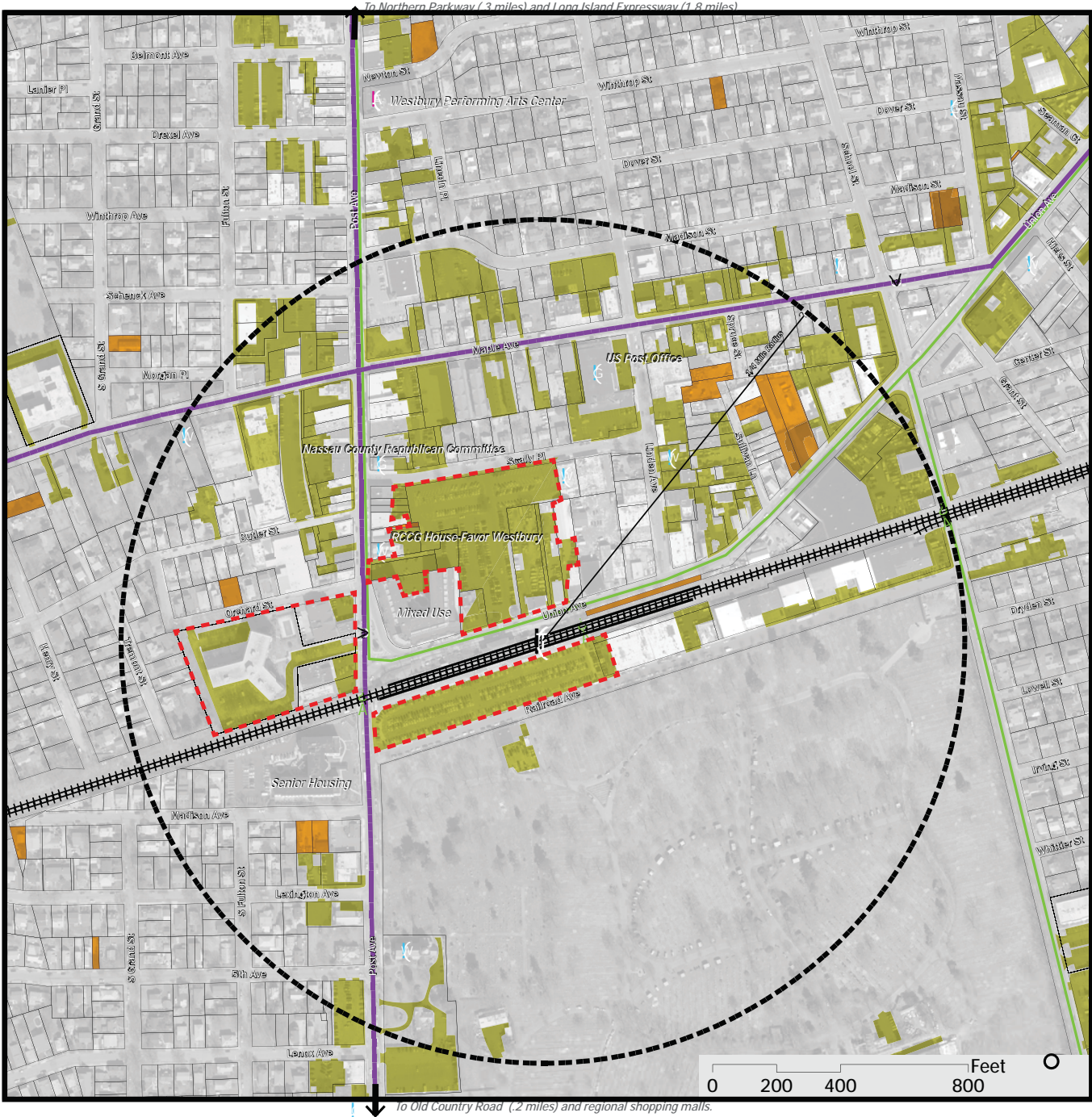
- 130 Post Road apartment complex, 2006
- 242 Maple Avenue apartment complex, 2006
- Westbury Theatre renovation, ongoing

	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	GREAT
community desire	[Blue bar]			
physical suitability	[Blue bar]			[Grey bar]
public sector readiness	[Blue bar]			[Grey bar]
developer interest	[Blue bar]			[Grey bar]
leadership in place	[Blue bar]			[Grey bar]
overall	[Orange bar]			

- Downtown Inventory: Westbury, Nassau County Planning Commission, 2005

Potential projects





Westbury Station Village of Westbury

- Transit Station (train)
- 1/4 mile radius from station
- Crossing
- Transit Routes (train)
- Transit Routes (bus)
- Bicycle Facilities
- Wide Roads / Dangerous Crossings
- Limited Access Highway
- Parcels
- Government/Public Buildings
- Community Centers
- Religious Institutions
- Schools, Colleges & Universities
- Arts, Culture & Entertainment
- Recent New Development
- Other Identified Destinations
- Parks & Open Space
- Surface Parking Lots & Parking Structures
- Vacant Land
- Vacant/Unused Buildings and Soft Sites
- Brownfields/Contaminated Sites
- Planned/Proposed Future Development
- Plans / Project Areas
- Potential Development Sites

West Hempstead Station • Town of Hempstead

Unincorporated. West Hempstead Branch.

West Hempstead is one of three LIRR stations in the hamlet of West Hempstead, along with Hempstead Gardens and Lakeview. All three are included in this study. Of the three, West Hempstead averaged the fewest number of 2006 morning westbound passengers at 154. Running north to south and parallel to Woodfield Road, the West Hempstead station divides the street grid to the south. The station area boasts a large amount of land within the station area used for commercial purposes, anchored by the presence of National Wholesale Liquidators on a large parcel near the station. With several other large sites within the station area that the Hamlet is looking to repurpose, there are some key opportunities for TSD at West Hempstead.

The hamlet is actively pursuing these opportunities with the West Hempstead Urban Renewal Plan, which looks at the feasibility of a mixed-use land use scenario for the parcels surrounding the station. An apartment complex was recently completed adjacent to the station itself and its construction was a byproduct of new “transit-oriented housing zone” regulations adopted by the Town of Hempstead that encourages more livable development. The LIRR is considering restoring weekend service to the station because of its success. Both the Town and the community feel strongly about the development potential of their station area and are partnered in their vision for a



TSD is already occurring within West Hempstead’s station area.

more livable environment around the station. The community is looking for help from the Town to designate West Hempstead as a strong potential growth area.

West Hempstead is a strong candidate for the purposes of this study. The station area has the right factors in place to make development within West Hempstead successful. TSD within this station area would provide a compelling case for TSD on an appropriate scale.

Recent/ongoing plans & studies

- West Hempstead Urban Renewal Plan, Town of Hempstead, 2007
- New “Transit-Oriented Housing” zoning code, 2008

	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	GREAT
community desire	[Blue bar]			[Grey bar]
physical suitability	[Blue bar]			[Grey bar]
public sector readiness	[Blue bar]	[Grey bar]	[Grey bar]	[Grey bar]
developer interest	[Blue bar]			[Grey bar]
leadership in place	[Blue bar]			[Grey bar]
overall	[Orange bar]			[Grey bar]

Recent developments

- Alexan at West Hempstead apartment complex, 2012

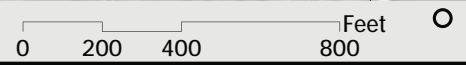
Potential projects





West Hempstead Station Town of Hempstead

- Transit Station (train)
- 1/4 mile radius from station
- Crossing
- Transit Routes (train)
- Transit Routes (bus)
- Bicycle Facilities
- Wide Roads / Dangerous Crossings
- Limited Access Highway
- Parcels
- Government/Public Buildings
- Community Centers
- Religious Institutions
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- Brownfields/Contaminated Sites
- Planned/Proposed Future Development
- Plans / Project Areas
- Potential Development Sites





Baldwin Station

Section IV

Piloting Sustainable Development

A primary goal of this study is to select three suitable examples of sustainable development and station area livability enhancements that exist throughout Nassau County. Our approach seeks to designate three station areas that meet all of the requisite criteria for transit-supported development (TSD) and will most effectively illustrate to other communities how TSD can be successful elsewhere in the County and throughout the region. These three sites, selected from our review of representative stations, are both ready and willing to usher in a new era of sustainable development and station area livability enhancements within Nassau County, based on HUD's six livability principles: **provide more transit choices, promote equitable and affordable housing, enhance economic competitiveness, support existing communities, coordinate policies and leverage investment, and value communities and neighborhoods.**



Baldwin



Baldwin's LIRR station parking lot.

Lynbrook



Sunrise Highway near Lynbrook's LIRR station.

Valley Stream

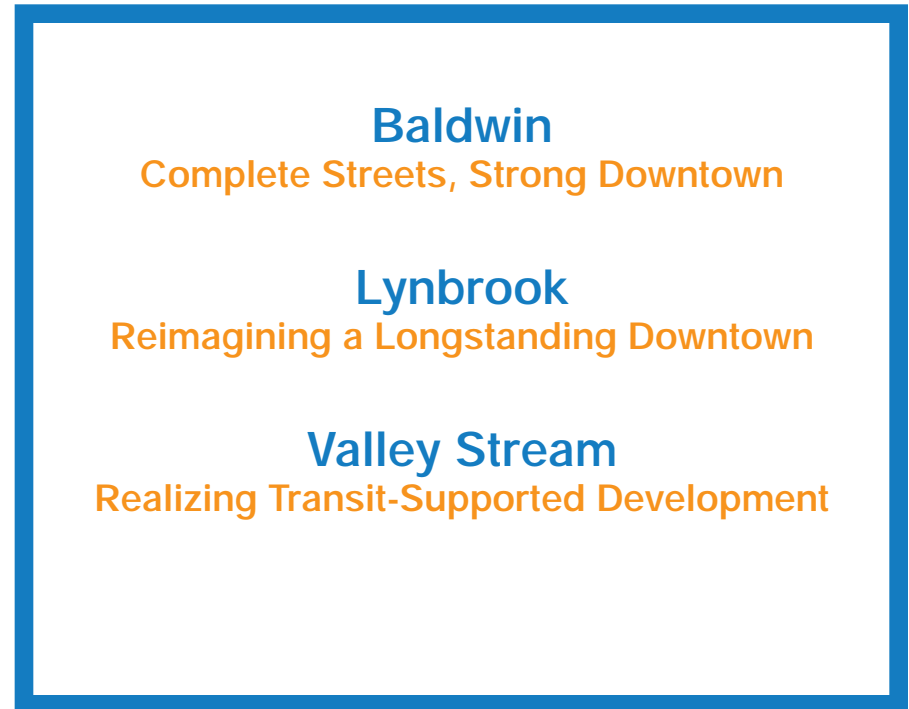


Valley Stream's Rockaway Avenue bisecting LIRR tracks.

Three Pilot Station Areas

Nassau County selected three station areas that would provide valuable and replicable sustainable development pilot projects for the county. While the potential projects for all finalist station areas of Baldwin, Hicksville, Lynbrook, Valley Stream, and Westbury should be considered, the three discussed in this section provide the best opportunities to spearhead sustainable development in the near term. Based on public feedback, deliberations, knowledge of the political context, and evaluations conducted during the selection process, County administration decided to pursue partnerships with the following three station areas: *Baldwin, Lynbrook, & Valley Stream*.

An integral component of the station area plans is a detailed assessment of how TSD will increase access to jobs, incentivize and facilitate use of public transit, and encourage mixed-income housing options. In line with the New York – Connecticut Sustainable Communities Consortium’s Fair Housing and Equity Analysis (FHEA), TSD encourages diversity and access to employment opportunity and fair housing options while promoting economic advancement in racially concentrated areas of poverty and areas of opportunity. The station areas selected in this study represent not only worthy pilots for TSD, but opportunities to realize the goals of FHEA within each community.



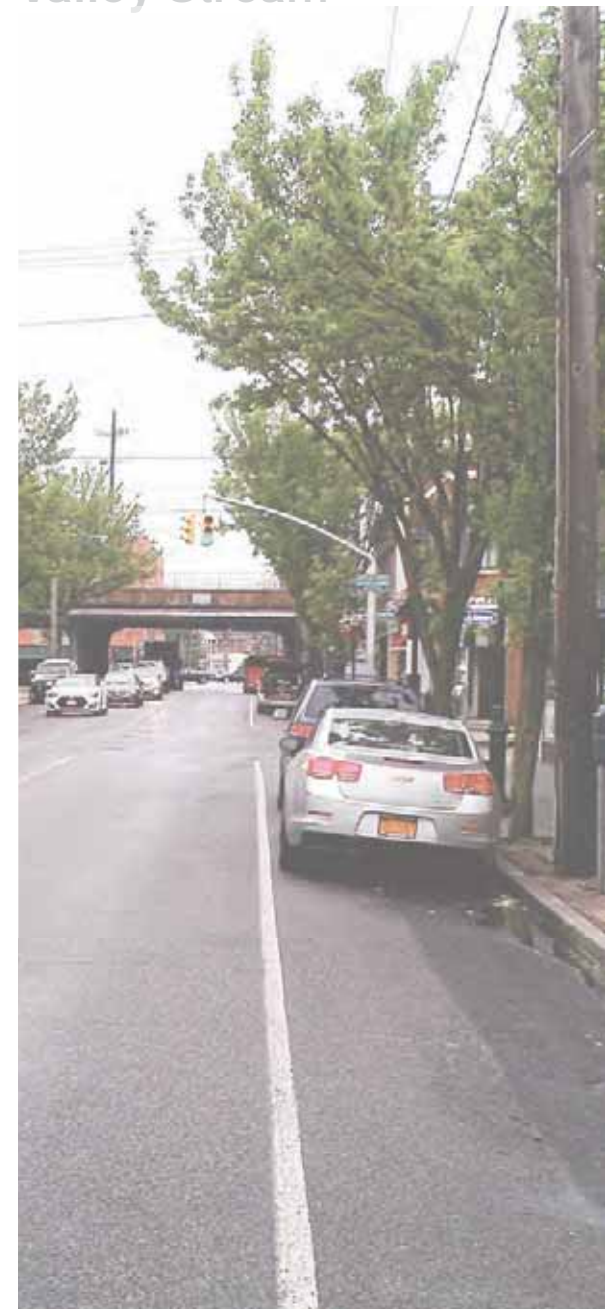
Baldwin



Lynbrook



Valley Stream



Baldwin

Complete Streets, Strong Downtown





Baldwin Station Town of Hempstead

- Transit Station (train)
 - 1/4 mile radius from station
 - Transit Routes (train)
 - Crossing
 - Potential Development Sites
 - Key Commercial Corridors
 - Barriers to Movement
 - Priority Pedestrian Improvement Locations
 - Major Intersection
- Pertinent Land Use**
- Commercial/Retail
 - Civic



Baldwin's Grand Avenue at Sunrise Highway.

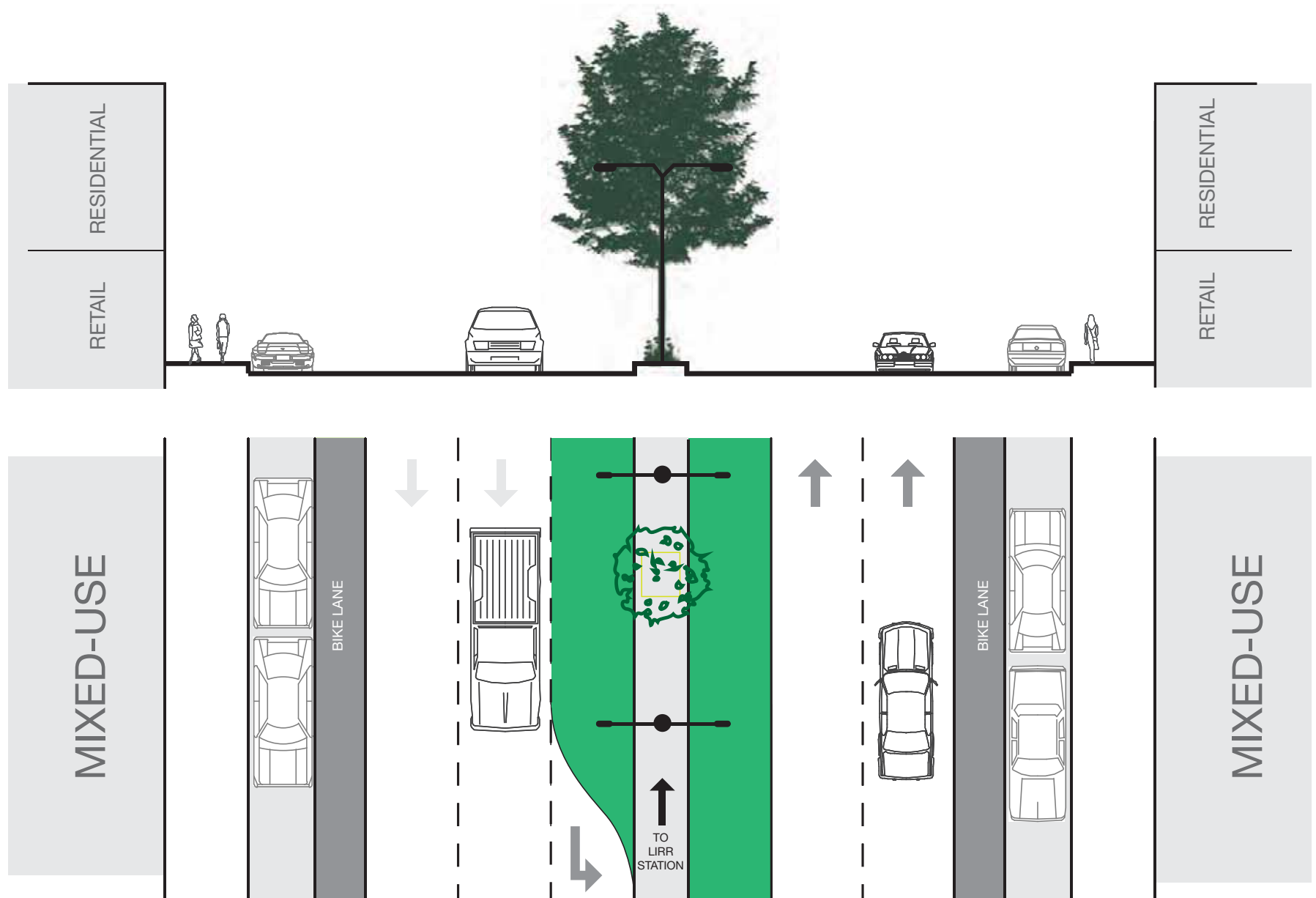
Introduction

Baldwin Station parallels Sunrise Highway along the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) Babylon Branch. Not only in Baldwin, but in workshops with the communities for all of the LIRR Babylon Branch stations, the project team heard the recurring theme from residents and business owners that Sunrise Highway is dangerous to pedestrian safety, and represented a significant barrier to connecting development opportunities north and south of the station area. The opportunity to develop complete street and pedestrian safety strategies for the crossing of Sunrise Highway is an important consideration at Baldwin Station. Improvements to the intersection of Sunrise Highway and Grand Avenue could translate into improvements for similar downtown intersections along the corridor and spur nodes of pedestrian-oriented development typologies— which are integral to the success of a station area’s downtown – throughout the County. Baldwin’s station area exhibits an interesting mix of uses but lacks an identity that would distinguish Baldwin as a destination.

The roadway network of Grand Avenue, Milburn Avenue, and Brooklyn Avenue, surrounding the municipal parking lot to the north of the LIRR station, coupled with “Main Street” scale of Grand Avenue, provides a foundation for a walkable district. There are key infill opportunities around the station that could support Main Street commercial use. The larger quarter mile area is a mix of residential uses with a pocket of industrial automobile-related services that front onto Brooklyn Avenue adjacent to the station. As a small commercial district with its primary retail on a busy and heavily trafficked street of Grand Avenue, the station area will struggle to bring in new tenants and higher rents unless the commercial district is expanded or connected to the retail corridor south of Sunrise Highway. The station area could serve as a new northern anchor, building off the activity that the station creates. A streetscape strategy for Grand Avenue, coupled with a safe crossing of Sunrise Highway, would draw more pedestrians to the corridor and to the station and increase activity along Grand Avenue, which would in turn increase commercial viability along the corridor. The commercial corridor culminates at Grand Avenue and Merrick Road and there have been ongoing attempts

to anchor this end of the commercial corridor with an urban renewal project. Any redevelopment at the southern end of the Grand Avenue commercial corridor should strive to complement the adjacent Baldwin Bowling Center and the Baldwin Public Library that together, serve as an anchor of the commercial corridor and a destination for those in the Baldwin community. Just to the south of the intersection of Grand Avenue and Merrick Road is Parsonage Creek inlet, Silver Lake and Silver Lake Park, providing recreational amenities in close proximity to the downtown. The major challenges to Grand Avenue remain the discontinuity of uses along the corridor which compromises density and walkability, the lack of pedestrian amenities to attract a larger population of users, the crossing of Sunrise Highway and the lack of a commercial center at the Baldwin station that would serve as the northern anchor to the corridor.

Baldwin’s desire and readiness for a mixed-use development to anchor its downtown complements the development occurring in the urban renewal plan area on Grand Avenue south of the station, making Baldwin an ideal pilot project. Additionally, Baldwin residents were some of those hardest hit by Superstorm Sandy in 2012, making the need for sustainable development – especially housing and neighborhood-scale businesses – that much more important for the future of the community. Furthermore, these potential improvements to Baldwin’s station area fall in line with the community’s shared vision for their downtown. In their feedback, civic organizations expressed a strong desire for a complete visioning plan for their downtown that focused on complete streets, mixed-use/multi-family developments, and the creation of a true “green” community that held sustainability in high regard.



A plan and section of typical complete street design features.

Complete Streets Overview

Complete Streets Design Guidelines

Complete streets are intended to create a “Main Street” feel along major community corridors, creating an attractive, safe, and active public realm that encourages people to drive less and walk, bike, and take the train or bus more often, enabling safe access for all users, not just the automobile. While there is no singular design prescription - as each instance should be designed in community context - complete streets may include wider sidewalks with ample plantings, bike lanes, clearly designated and frequent crosswalks with pedestrian signals, comfortable and accessible public transportation stops, and narrower travel lanes. Additionally, complete streets are typically accompanied by mixed-use buildings with street facing frontage, making it easy for a wide range of residents, shoppers and workers to walk and shop on their way to and from transportation stops.

With partnership from the State of New York, complete streets along Baldwin’s Grand Avenue will create the opportunity to realize a safe crossing along Sunrise Highway and easy access to the LIRR station. Additionally, complete streets would encourage landlords and tenants to take stock in their storefronts and maintain a certain aesthetic. If designed properly and within the appropriate scale and context, a complete Grand Avenue can serve as a catalyst for other land-use and building design initiatives in downtown Baldwin that would require the cooperation of the local property owners and the Town of Hempstead.

Economic Benefits of Complete Streets

As part of the Baldwin Pilot Project, the project team identified three case studies where communities implemented a complete streets project that resulted in local economic benefits in addition to improvements to pedestrian safety. These findings suggest that a complete streets project would support further development along Grand Avenue and Baldwin in the following ways:

- **A small-scale complete streets project can produce long-term economic benefits while also strengthening municipal budgets.** A relatively small investment in complete streets can create long-running economic benefits while boosting sales tax receipts.
- **A complete streets project can help nearby local businesses withstand an economic downturn.** Streetscape improvements can help local retail withstand challenging economic conditions.
- **A complete streets project can be used as an effective base for broader economic redevelopment efforts.** Municipal leaders can use streetscape improvements to Grand Avenue as a way to set the stage for larger, more ambitious economic development efforts in the medium and long term.

In many examples, public sector investment into a complete streets project resulted in private sector returns, be it through the incentive of private land owners to maintain their properties or through the creation of a viable market where new businesses set up shop along the corridor and flourished.

Existing Conditions

Overview

Baldwin consists primarily of single-family residences, with several pockets of multi-family housing. Nearly 7 percent of the total population lives within the downtown station area. Zoning in the hamlet is governed by the Town of Hempstead zoning ordinance. While the majority of the hamlet is zoned for single-family residences, the Town of Hempstead ordinance features a floating residence zoning code that allows for higher density multi-family residences. This designation could be applied to any single parcel or assemblage of parcels having a certain minimum land area and located adjacent to public transit facilities or along a major thoroughfare and could serve as a vital tool for creating transit-supported development within downtown Baldwin.

Within the downtown, only 33 percent of existing commercial space is utilized. As a result Baldwin has one of the lowest commercial densities in all Nassau County downtowns. Given the availability of commercial space, coupled with the strong presence of downtown residents, Baldwin has substantial opportunities for sustainable infill development along Grand Avenue. While there are many vacancies along the corridor, there remain some small businesses with street-facing frontage, which provide precedent for the creation of a “Main Street” walkable environment.



Baldwin's car-oriented LIRR station.

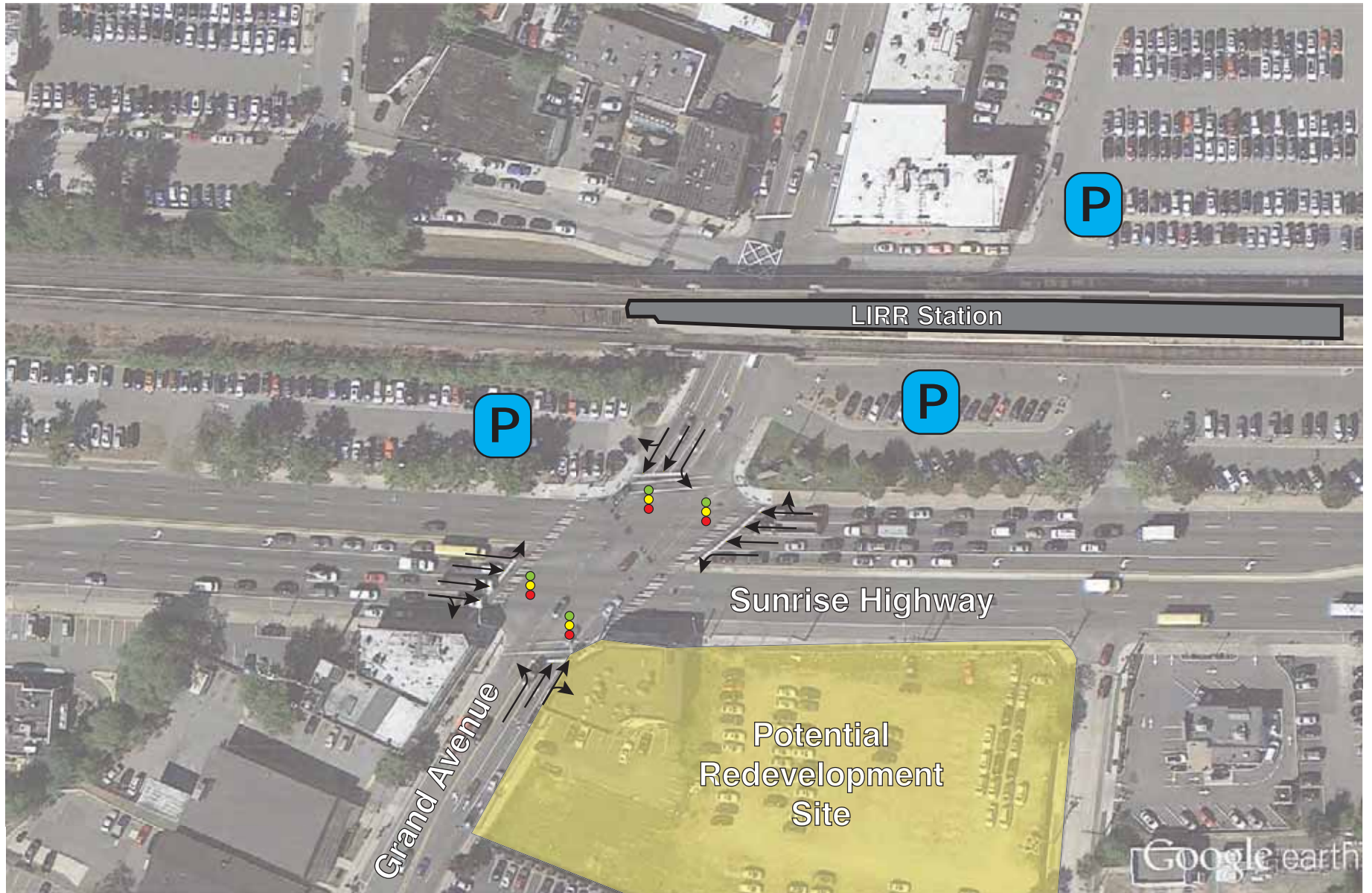
Existing Conditions

Demographics

A culturally diverse Long Island community, Baldwin is a prosperous hamlet located along Sunrise Highway on the South Shore of Nassau County that attracts middle-class families through its high quality of life and inclusive spirit. The LIRR connects the hamlet to Manhattan with fast and frequent service while nearby Jones Beach and Wantagh Park offer residents access to some of Long Island's premier outdoor destinations.

Selected Demographic Attributes	Baldwin, NY	Nassau County
Population	32,203	1,343,698
White	50%	72%
Black	34%	12%
Asian & Pacific Islander	5%	8%
Other	11%	8%
Households	10,817	450,503
Average Annual HH Income	\$115,853	\$118,295
% of HH below \$50K	24%	25%
% Owner-Occupied	82%	79%
% Renter-Occupied	18%	35%
Workforce Commuting to Major City	38%	35%
Distance from Midtown, New York City	25 miles	Varies

Note: Baldwin demographic data combines Baldwin and Baldwin Harbor U.S Census data.



Existing conditions at the intersection of Grand Avenue and Sunrise Highway.

Existing Conditions

Grand Avenue at Sunrise Highway

A key physical challenge facing the Baldwin station area is the Sunrise Highway/Grand Avenue crossing. The crossing is currently design-oriented towards cars and trucks and is dangerous for pedestrians who rely on streetlights and long, narrow crosswalks to traverse Sunrise Highway to get to the LIRR station and points north. The intersection is anchored on the two southern corners by decades-old masonry buildings, including the former Sunrise National Bank, and on the two northern corners by the LIRR station entrance and surface parking lots. These corners, if redeveloped appropriately, provide the physical blueprint for a strong central anchor to a complete Grand Avenue.

The Grand Avenue intersection with Sunrise Highway (NY 27) is located just south of the LIRR Baldwin Station. Grand Avenue is a two-way road with narrow lanes and parking along both sides of the road along much of the thoroughfare, making for a much more pedestrian-oriented experience with slower moving cars separated by parking from the sidewalks. Sunrise Highway mimics its name, a four-lane high-speed highway in both directions with intermittent on-street parking, curb cuts for cars and automobile oriented uses. As the aerial on the preceding page shows, the thoroughfare dominates the intersection and dictates the nature of the built environment around it. The irregular geometry of the intersection also increases the distance in the north/south pedestrian crossing.

There exists both the need and the potential to turn Grand Avenue from a left-behind main street into a sustainable, economically prosperous, and complete street. By following complete streets design guidelines, encouraging a strong north-south connection on either side of the LIRR station, and altering the street to be safe for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers alike, a complete streets project along Grand Avenue that could bring substantial economic returns to the Baldwin community.



The locations of successful complete streets projects in communities similar to Baldwin.

Case Studies

To select case studies for evaluation, the project team reviewed the impact of 15 complete streets projects from communities across the United States, using the following criteria to guide its selection process:

- **Demonstrated Economic Impact** – Clear evidence that a complete streets project resulted in positive economic benefits for the community, as observed by an increase in real estate market values, local business revenues, sales tax receipts, or other quantitative measures.
- **Demographics** – Similar demographic attributes to those of Baldwin.
- **Proximity to Major City** – Within a 90-minute drive of a major metropolitan area.
- **Transit Access** – Available transit service to the nearby major metropolitan area.

On this basis, the project team selected the town of Lancaster, located in Los Angeles County, California; the village of Hamburg, outside Buffalo, New York; and the city of University Place, adjacent to Tacoma, Washington. The project team found few studies that demonstrate the benefit of complete streets improvements independent of wider investments in transit, and since Baldwin is not considering significant transit investments at this time, The project team chose studies where economic benefits had been attributed solely to complete streets projects.

In each case study, the project team includes a demographic summary of the community, an overview of the prior physical conditions, a description of the complete streets project that was introduced, and the direct economic benefits that resulted from the project. Key findings from these case studies areas are as follows:

- **In Lancaster, CA**, local officials used a comprehensive street redesign to tie together a broad program of economic revitalization that included outreach to small businesses, extensive cultural programming, and a city-wide rebranding effort.

- **In Hamburg, NY**, despite the years of slow growth that followed the 2008 Great Recession, an improved streetscape resulted in 97 percent occupancy along the corridor, \$7 million of inward private investment and 33 building projects.
- **In University Place, WA**, prior to the completion of construction observed sales tax receipts for businesses adjacent to the roadway were 2 percent higher than the town average; 11 years after project completion, retail rents along the improved corridor are 60 percent higher than the town average. A durable change was made through a comparatively small investment on a single roadway, a project that set the stage for the long-term economic development and TSD improvements that the city implemented in the following decade.

These case studies demonstrate that a modest investment by municipal officials in a complete streets project can result in significant economic benefits. Across the three projects, an initial investment of \$7 to \$10 million generated economic returns that ranged from \$20 million to over \$100 million. Furthermore, these benefits were realized on projects of small geographic scale, ranging from a half mile to two miles in total length. Finally, these studies highlight the utility of complete streets projects as an effective platform for municipalities to advance broader economic development goals.

Case Study 1: Lancaster Boulevard, Town of Lancaster, Los Angeles County, California

Located 70 miles from Downtown Los Angeles by highway and 2 hours away from Union Station by Metrolink commuter rail, the City of Lancaster in Los Angeles County is a middle-class suburban community. Although Lancaster and Baldwin significantly differ in size, population, and average household income, the local economies of both municipalities rely on their geographic proximity to a large metropolitan economy. Twenty-five percent of Lancaster residents work in metropolitan Los Angeles, similar to the 37 percent of Baldwin residents that commute to New York City for work.

Thanks to the vision of planners and city officials that viewed a complete streets improvement as the central element to the reinvention of their downtown, Lancaster has seen a tremendous return on the initial cost of project investment.

Prior Conditions

Lancaster Boulevard, which bisects Lancaster and forms its commercial core, is near to the city’s Metrolink station. Like many other suburban arterial roads, the four-lane highway had been designed to optimize automobile travel, without consideration for the pedestrian or nearby retail. As a consequence, the thoroughfare suffered from high-speed traffic, inadequate pedestrian amenities, and weak retail sales.

Project Description

In 2008, city officials pursued a bold redesign of a 9-block (0.6 mile) section of Lancaster Boulevard as the centerpiece of the city’s revitalization strategy, which also included the creation of a visitor’s bureau, outreach efforts to support local retailers, and a comprehensive program of arts and cultural events. Far exceeding small-scale cosmetic improvements, Lancaster officials used the introduction of a large-scale, transformative improvement as the driving force behind the creation of a thriving, vibrant, mixed-use retail and entertainment district.

Over a two-year period, and in the face of considerable skepticism from many residents and businesses, city officials installed a new design for Lancaster Boulevard that introduced wider sidewalks, dozens of trees, spaces for public art, and the “Ramblas,” a Spanish-inspired public space that reclaimed the center of the thoroughfare. They also introduced a marketing campaign, re-branding the street as “The BLVD.” As reported by Better Cities and Towns, the total cost for all improvements was \$11.5 million.



The extent of Lancaster’s BLVD complete street.

Results

Outstripping project expectations, the improvements to Lancaster Boulevard had a transformational impact on the economic fortunes of the city. According to summary information from the architecture and urban planning firm Moule & Polyzoides, hired to design and implement the improvements in Lancaster, assessed property values in the downtown area rose 9.53 percent in the 12 months following completion of the project (2011-2012) while assessed property values for the town as a whole fell 1.25 percent during the same period.

The City of Lancaster credits the project with attracting \$130 million of private investment, resulting in the opening of over 48 newly created local businesses and the addition of 1,900 additional jobs, including an underground bowling alley, a microbrewery, an Urban Outfitters, and the new Lancaster Museum of Art & History. Furthermore, the California Redevelopment Association estimates that the project has generated \$273 million in net economic output, an astounding return on the city's initial investment of \$11.5 million.

In 2012, the US Environmental Protection Agency awarded Lancaster the Smart Growth Achievement award for Overall Excellence, owing to the project's unique combination of distinctive architecture and proven economic benefit.

Lessons for Baldwin

The positive benefits of complete streets experienced by Lancaster can provide valuable lessons for Baldwin:

- Complete streets projects can be used as a platform for broader community-wide economic redevelopment. Lancaster's commitment to a transformational improvement of Lancaster Boulevard supported a broad revitalization program that has had substantial economic benefits.
- Community outreach is critical during the design and implementation phase of a complete streets project.

Selected Demographic Attributes	Lancaster, CA
Population	159,666
Average Household Income	\$64,046
Households	47,730
% Owner-Occupied	58%
% Renter-Occupied	42%
Workforce Communiting to Major City	25%
Distance from Nearby City	70 miles



A view of Lancaster's "BLDV." Source: The City of Lancaster.

Case Study 2: Route 62 & Main Street, Village of Hamburg, New York

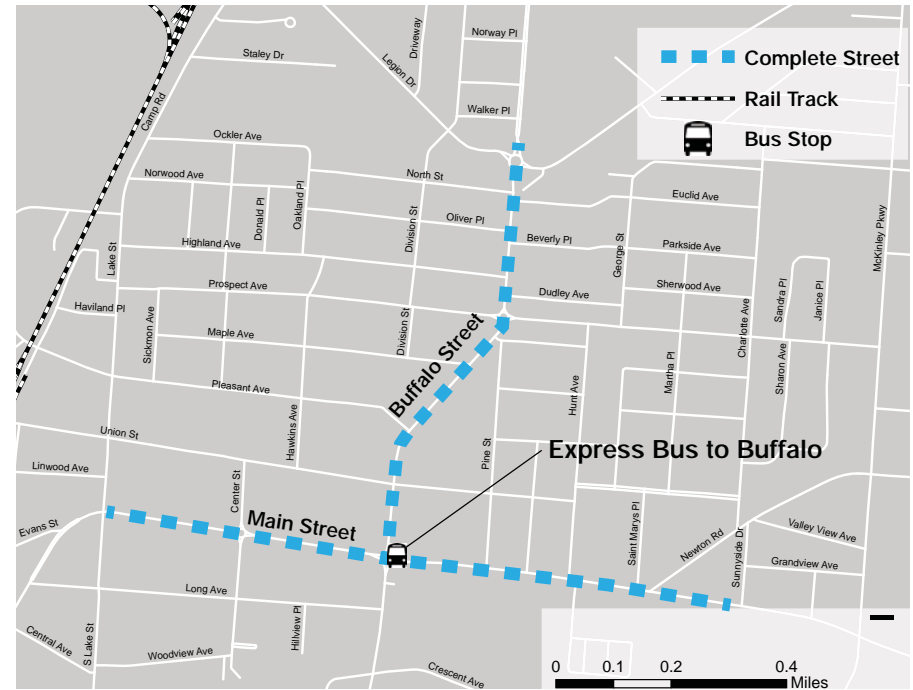
A charming, middle-class suburban community located 13 miles from Buffalo, New York, by highway, and 45 minutes away by commuter bus, the village of Hamburg is known for its “Main Street” feel. While its population is less than half that of Baldwin, the comparative demographic profile of the village within its wider metropolitan area is similar to that of Baldwin. A focused investment in the quality of its downtown streetscape not only significantly improved pedestrian safety within the village; it created an opportunity for retail growth in the face of an underperforming regional economy.

Prior Conditions

The intersection of US Route 62 and Main Street within Hamburg forms the main commercial corridor of the village, and an express bus stop with service to downtown Buffalo departs from their intersection. In 2001, New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) officials proposed to improve total throughput on Route 62 by adding another traffic lane, removing parallel parking, and narrowing sidewalks. Local merchants, whose sales were already threatened by a nearby mall, partnered with local residents, who were concerned with safety, to form the Route 62 Committee.

Project Description

Working in collaboration with the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute (WALC), the Route 62 Committee proposed an alternative redesign for a 0.8-mile segment of Route 62 and a 1-mile segment of Main Street. This design narrowed driving lanes, introduced four roundabouts, created additional space for on-street parking, added trees, and introduced safety lanes. By a 4-to-1 margin, the community voted for the alternative redesign. Construction began in 2006 and completed three years later, in the midst of the Great Recession. According to NYSDOT, total cost for all improvements was \$20 million.



The extent of Hamburg’s complete streets.

Results

Despite a challenging economic climate, the complete streets project reinvigorated Hamburg’s downtown, creating value for landowners and spurring a significant increase in development. As documented by WALC, property values along the corridor have doubled since the village introduced the streetscape improvements. According to Hamburg’s Building Inspection Department, the number of building permits issued in 2010 is over five times greater than the number of permits issued in 2005, and as reported in the New York Times, following the project’s completion, local businesses have spent \$7 million on 33 building projects. A review of real estate market data from CoStar shows that after the completion of the project vacancy rates in the corridor dropped from 7 percent in 2009 to 3 percent in 2011 while village-wide vacancies remained above 10 percent.

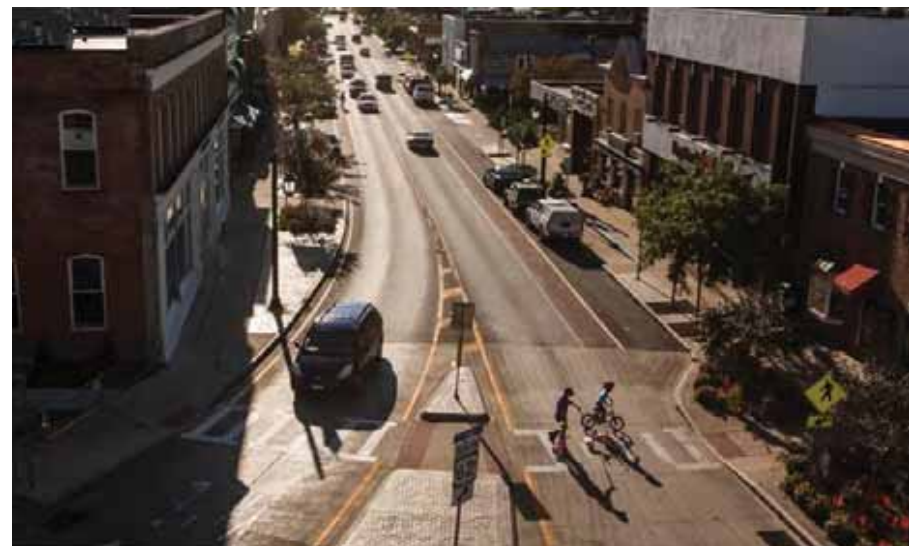
According to the village’s website, in 2013, Hamburg’s economic development department hired Peter J. Smith and Company, a Buffalo-based real estate consultancy, to conduct a real market analysis for the municipality. The consultants determined that the renovation of Route 62 and Main Street had been the most significant public or private economic development initiative in Hamburg in the preceding 10 years.

Lessons for Baldwin

The demonstrated success of Hamburg’s complete streets implementation has meaningful lessons for Baldwin:

- Complete streets projects can create opportunities for growth under challenging market conditions. Even though both Hamburg and the wider Buffalo region were significantly affected by the Great Recession, its complete streets project created a significant market opportunity.
- Complete streets projects can potentially decrease retail vacancy. According to CoStar, retail vacancy rates in Baldwin have hovered between 6 percent and 7 percent over the last 5 years. It is conceivable that a complete streets improvement along Grand Avenue could yield results similar to those observed in Hamburg.

Selected Demographic Attributes	Hamburg, NY
Population	9,431
Average Household Income	\$72,030
Households	3,919
% Owner-Occupied	72%
% Renter-Occupied	28%
Workforce Communiting to Major City	35%
Distance from Nearby City	13 miles



The intersection of Route 62 & Main Street. Source: The New York Times.

Case Study 3: Bridgeport Way, City of University Place, Washington

University Place is a Washington suburb adjacent to Tacoma and 38 miles from Seattle. Similar to other communities in lower Puget Sound, University Place has limited local and express bus service to Tacoma and Seattle. A community with broad demographic similarity to Baldwin, University Place provides an example of how complete streets projects can be used as a starting point for a broader transformation.

Prior Conditions

Bridgeport Way is a major thoroughfare bisecting University Place. Following the city's formal charter in 1995, newly elected local officials concluded that the road's strongly car-oriented design was a drain on the local economy. According to a history of the project collated by WALC, Bridgeport Way was the most heavily used road in Pierce County and supported over 24,000 daily auto trips on five lanes of traffic, lacked sidewalks, and had few pedestrian crossings. City officials and planners viewed its remediation as an essential precondition for broader revitalization efforts.

Project Description

City officials collaborated with Dan Burden of WALC to formulate a moderately-scaled plan for the street's remediation designed to address local community and business concerns while achieving goals for safety and economic development. According to WALC, over a four-year period between May 1998 and June 2002, and at a cost of \$8.2 million, the city improved 1.5 miles of roadway by reducing five lanes of traffic to four, replacing the two-way left turn lane with a landscaped median, adding bike lanes, and constructing sidewalks. In addition, two new mid-block crosswalks were introduced, along with full pedestrian signals.



The extent of University Place's Bridgeport Way complete street.

Results

While limited in scope, the project has had an immediate and durable economic impact on University Place. In a 1999 paper from the Victoria Transport Policy Institute, the Assistant City Manager of University Place observed that prior to project completion, sales revenues at businesses along the corridor had already increased by 7 percent, as compared with a 5 percent increase citywide, along with a 70 percent drop in auto accidents.

A historical review of real estate market data from CoStar shows that while the Great Recession increased vacancies at retail properties throughout University Place, properties adjacent to the improvements on Bridgeport Way demonstrated greater resiliency than those elsewhere, with vacancy rates ranging 1 percent to 2 percent lower than the citywide average throughout the recession. Further analysis of CoStar data shows that ten years after the project’s completion, triple-net retail rents of \$23 per square foot along Bridgeport Way are significantly higher than the citywide average of \$16 per square foot.

Most notably, in 2012 the city of University Place partnered with a local developer to introduce a mixed-use transit-friendly development located near to the center of the Bridgeport Way improvement. Known as “University Place Town Center”, the development includes 100 multi-family units and 12,000 square feet of new ground-floor retail development.



Bridgeport Way following complete streets renovation. Source: The City of University Place.

Lessons for Baldwin

The impact of the complete streets project in University Place has meaningful lessons for Baldwin, particularly over a long timescale:

- Long after their completion, complete streets projects durably increase real estate value. Over 10 years after the project’s completion, average rents along Bridgeport Way are 60 percent higher than those of University Place, and vacancy rates in the corridor demonstrated greater resiliency during the Great Recession than elsewhere in the city.
- Moderately-sized projects – both in geographic and financial terms – can lay the groundwork for long-term changes. In University Place, a simple roadway renovation created the conditions that enabled the city to advance a more substantial transit-oriented development project over a decade later.

Selected Demographic Attributes	University Place, WA
Population	31,616
Average Household Income	\$81,614
Households	12,963
% Owner-Occupied	56%
% Renter-Occupied	44%
Workforce Commuting to Major City	55% (Tacoma) 15% (Seattle)
Distance from Nearby City	5 miles (Tacoma) 38 miles (Seattle)

Community Engagement

In order to best engage the community on the benefits of and steps required to realize a complete streets project, Nassau County partnered with the Baldwin Civic Association in developing a community outreach strategy to effectively engage the hamlet. In implementing this strategy, the team held a public workshop at the Baldwin Senior High School on October 29, 2013. The meeting was well attended and began with a presentation on the benefits of complete streets, followed by three break-out groups where attendees were invited to share their thoughts on a potential complete streets project within their community. The program ended with a wrap-up where each break-out group shared key findings and takeaways. Key takeaways from the community include the following:

- Overall, attendees were in favor of a complete streets project.
- Attendees were concerned over safety issues along their streets.
- Attendees would particularly like to see beautification and smarter design of the public realm along Grand Avenue.
- In general, the community is looking for assistance from both Nassau County and the Town of Hempstead in finding funding sources and getting plans off the ground.
- Attendees were generally in favor of appropriately scaled (3 stories) mixed-use development.
- Attendees voiced concern that a complete streets project along Grand Avenue could create a “shopping mall” effect along the corridor.
- Attendees were particularly concerned about bringing successful, attractive small business to their station area.
- Two of the three break-out groups mentioned the need for an analysis of existing traffic patterns in and around Grand Avenue (from Merrick Road north to Milburn Avenue) to determine the technical feasibility of implementing complete streets improvements. Residents mentioned the observed traffic congestion on Grand Avenue just north of Sunrise Highway in the afternoon as Baldwin Senior High School lets out.

- Residents mentioned that the circulation pattern around the LIRR station causes traffic congestion (afternoon/evenings) as entering/exiting taxicabs block the through-lanes of Grand Avenue just north of Sunrise Highway.
- Two of the three break-out groups mentioned the need to alleviate heavy truck traffic along Grand Avenue. It was noted that heavy trucks in this area are the cause of traffic congestion, noise pollution and pedestrian safety concerns.



Attendees at the Baldwin public workshop.

Next Steps

For Baldwin to advance a complete streets project on Grand Avenue, the project team recommends the following next steps as a starting point.

- **Engage in community outreach to determine the project’s economic development goals.** Outreach and visioning efforts provide a channel for the community to express its preferences on specific improvements and techniques. Furthermore, local public works and transportation departments may not be equipped to assess the potential economic benefits of a “complete streets” project. Through a coordinated planning process, Baldwin can develop consensus around the project’s economic development goals.
- **Conduct a technical assessment of existing conditions on Grand Avenue to define project geography and identify potential project phasing.** Community leaders can proactively partner with Nassau County and the NYSDOT to determine what improvements would be feasible based on current and projected traffic volumes and current policies and guidelines. An open dialogue on the nature of urban state managed roadways should be conducted to develop guidelines for enhanced “complete street” strategies where warranted in an urban context so that streets like Grand Avenue can be piloted as complete street projects.
- **To secure funding, select a specific complete streets project that meets the community’s economic development goals and aligns with the technical assessment of current conditions.** Selecting projects that meet both criteria can help the project secure funding. Community leaders should work with Nassau County officials to identify and apply for funding programs from the state and federal government. One potential source of funding is the New York State’s Department of Transportation, which began focusing on complete streets projects in 2011.
- **Host workshops throughout the process to keep the community engaged and informed.** Streetscape improvement projects are susceptible to misinformation and skepticism, particularly when residents and businesses are unfamiliar with the benefits. Outreach, visioning efforts and continuous updates provide a channel for the community to express its preferences on specific improvements, techniques and project milestones.
- **Coordinate with Nassau County in releasing an RFP for a traffic study along the Grand Avenue corridor within the LIRR station area.** This project would constitute a critical first step in examining existing conditions along the County owned and operated avenue within a complete streets framework. The Nassau County Department of Public Works anticipates initiating a traffic study within the vicinity of the LIRR station in the mid-2014.

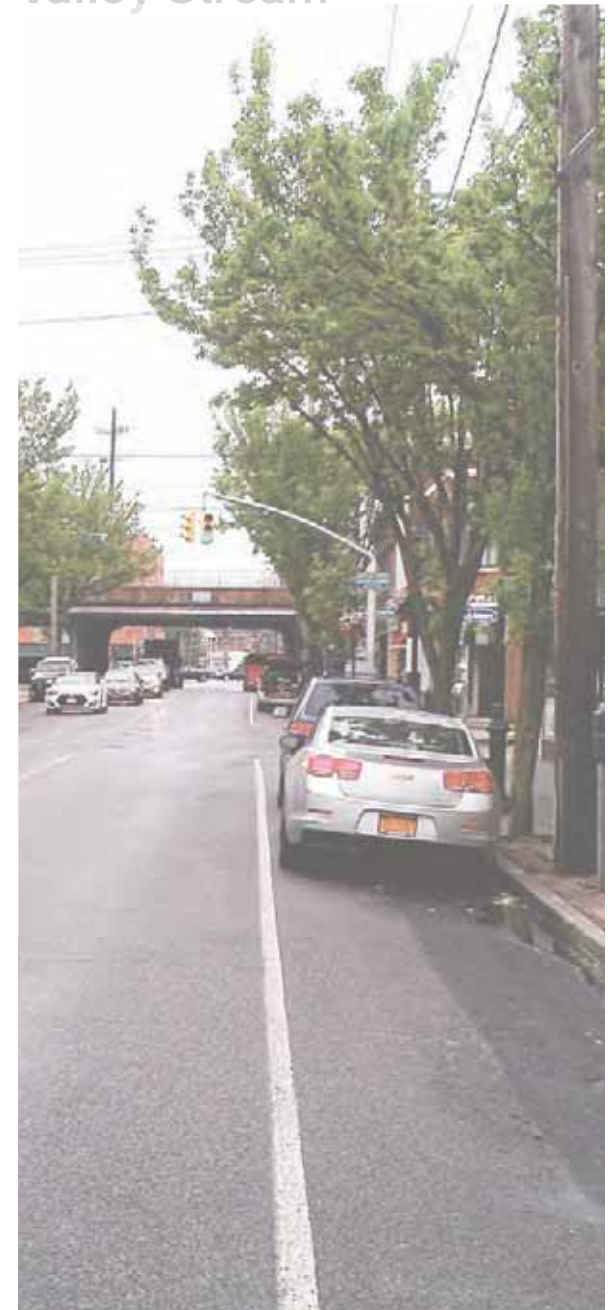
Baldwin



Lynbrook



Valley Stream














Lynbrook

Reimagining a Longstanding Downtown





Lynbrook Station *Village of Lynbrook*

-  Transit Station (train)
-  1/4 mile radius from station
-  Transit Routes (train)
-  Crossing
-  Potential Development Sites
-  Key Commercial Corridors
-  Barriers to Movement
-  Priority Pedestrian Improvement Locations
-  Major Intersection
- Pertinent Existing Land Use**
-  Commercial/Retail
-  Civic

Site A: Proposed Theater Site
Site B: Proposed Hotel Site
Site C: Proposed LIRR Retail Site



Lynbrook's Atlantic Avenue.

Introduction

Nassau County's pilot project in the Village of Lynbrook will focus on building off of recent development projects by creating an environment for further sustainable development to occur within Lynbrook's downtown. A strategy that combines marketing, policy changes, and the potential for specific public realm interventions will help Lynbrook to build upon its recent successful growth and push Lynbrook into the forefront of Nassau County and Long Island as a destination location for working, living and shopping.

Lynbrook is a mature downtown with a strong mix of residential, commercial and office uses in and around the station area. Like Valley Stream, Lynbrook has two LIRR stations, Westwood and Lynbrook, picking up two LIRR branches: Babylon and Long Beach. Similar to other communities and downtowns along the LIRR Babylon Branch in Nassau County, the Lynbrook station area and Sunrise Highway separate the northern portion of downtown from the southern portion of downtown. There is a "Main Street" – Atlantic Avenue – that represents a recognized downtown corridor in the region and multiple soft sites within the corridor are being considered for redevelopment. The core of the downtown, centered on Atlantic Avenue, is strong, with architectural and updated building facades, streetscape treatments, high retail occupancy and a wide range of shopping options. The core is unique in that it extends south past the railroad right-of-way and Sunrise Highway, connecting the core to Lynbrook High School, the library and the Atlantic Avenue elementary school. There is potential for further retail growth south of Sunrise Highway, and importantly, the crossing of Sunrise Highway for pedestrians is established and can be improved.

The project team's objective is to build off of three key development projects that are in various stages of planning and implementation in the downtown by strengthening the commercial core around Atlantic Avenue. Atlantic Avenue is appropriately scaled and presents a walkable environment on both sides of the station and Sunrise Highway. Broadway can strengthen its com-

mercial character both north and south of Sunrise Highway, creating a larger commercial district spanning across Sunrise Highway that could change the pedestrian/vehicular dynamic of Sunrise Highway as it passes through Lynbrook. Joining these two districts will strengthen Lynbrook as a destination and increase stability of the commercial core.

Lynbrook holds great promise as a transit-supported community. With an established downtown, it can carefully and strategically line up infill sites for redevelopment that foster appropriate growth in keeping with The Partnership for Sustainable Community's Livability Principles. Infill development, complete street and district overlay strategies found within Lynbrook could then be used for other similar barriers at other station areas. A partnership between Nassau County, the Village of Lynbrook and community stakeholders to achieve this specific goal could provide a suitable blueprint for inter-jurisdictional accomplishments throughout the county while simultaneously promoting Lynbrook's downtown as an example of what a sustainable station area could look like.

According to Lynbrook's Civics, the community understands that Lynbrook is at - or is nearing - a tipping point. The community and the Village are excited to turn interest and planning into action. A marketing strategy, a TSD overlay for the downtown core, and complete streets strategies for Atlantic and Broadway will significantly help an already prosperous and growing corridor transform itself into a destination downtown.



Lynbrook commuters wait for a bus near the theater, which will be redeveloped.

Existing Conditions

Overview

The demographics and retail character of Downtown Lynbrook, defined as the commercial corridors of Atlantic Avenue and Broadway, have historically shown broad similarities with other communities along Sunrise Highway, such as Valley Stream, Rockville Centre, and Baldwin. In recent months, however, a series of development projects have been proposed for the Village that will distinguish it from its neighbors as a destination location. To help Village leadership capitalize on these projects and ensure that subsequent development will advance long-term redevelopment goals for Downtown Lynbrook, the project team evaluated the health of the real estate market in the immediate vicinity of Downtown Lynbrook. The team assessed current retail conditions with and without the proposed developments, and identified a series of strategic policy recommendations for Village leadership. To support these recommendations, the project team additionally identified three case studies of other communities elsewhere in the New York metropolitan area.

The project team conducted a scan of real estate market conditions in a quarter-mile radius around the LIRR Lynbrook Station area, a geography that includes Downtown Lynbrook, and found an underdeveloped market for residential property, a healthy market for retail property, and an underperforming market for office property. To assess the residential market, the project team evaluated the quantity of housing in the Station Area and contrasted the demographics of its residents with those of the village as a whole. The project team evaluated the commercial market through an analysis of rents and vacancy rates for retail and office uses within Lynbrook's station area and the village as a whole.

Proposed Developments for Downtown Lynbrook

Listed below are the three proposed development projects for Downtown Lynbrook. Each has the potential to change the character and scale of retail development in the village.

- **Theater operator Regal Cinemas has proposed to substantially renovate and expand the United Artists cinema on Merrick Road.** Regal Cinemas is working with the Blumenfeld Development Group to expand Lynbrook's theater from 6 screens to 15 screens, nearly double the number of seats from 1,700 to 2,900, and add extensive amenities and cosmetic improvements. (This project is referred to hereafter as the "Theater.")
- **Browning Hotel Ventures has proposed the development of a 6-story, 156-room Marriott Courtyard hotel on the site of a LIRR commuter lot at the corner of Broadway and Langdon Place.** With a target market comprising of visitors to Lynbrook's business district and short-stay travelers taking advantage of convenient rail access to John F. Kennedy Airport, this will be the first hotel in Downtown Lynbrook. (This project is referred to hereafter as the "Hotel.")
- **The MTA is moving forward with efforts to improve the quality and amount of inline retail located in the concourse underneath the LIRR tracks.** Two retail stores, vacant nearly a decade underneath the LIRR tracks on both sides of Atlantic Avenue, effectively created an imposing gap in the Atlantic commercial corridor. Already a difficult location underneath the tracks, walking past boarded up facilities detracted significantly from the ambiance of the corridor. Working with the MTA, the Village has been able to get these retail locations renovated and leased to area business to fill in an important missing tooth in the Atlantic Avenue corridor.



Downtown Lynbrook has a healthy retail market.

Real Estate Market Scan

The purpose of a real estate market scan is to assess the relative health of a localized property market based on an evaluation of rents, vacancy rates, and planned development. A real estate market scan of the Station Area that encompasses Downtown Lynbrook revealed a healthy market for retail property, an underperforming market for office property, and an underdeveloped market for residential property.

Retail and Office Property Market Conditions

An extract of CoStar data for the Station Area from September 2013 indicates a market for retail property that outperforms the wider village. The 318,000 square feet of retail property in the Station Area comprises over a third of the total retail in the village, and average triple-net retail rents of \$27 per square foot in the Station Area are higher than village-wide average triple-net retail rents of \$23 and the county-wide average triple-net rent of \$25. Conversely, the office property market in the Station Area underperforms the village as a whole. According to CoStar, while over 50 percent of Lynbrook's 827,000 square feet of office property is located in the Lynbrook's station area, the vacancy rates in the area of 16 percent are higher than the village-wide vacancy rate for office property of 13 percent and the county-wide vacancy rate for office property of 9 percent.

Residential Property Market Conditions

Analysis of residential development in Lynbrook's station area finds very limited activity over the past 40 years. According to CoStar data from September 2013, with a total of 31,000 square feet, the total square footage of multifamily residential in the station area is less than 10 percent of the total square footage of the combined retail and office property markets, and the most recent multifamily construction in Lynbrook was built in 1962. As a consequence, although 35 percent of village residents live within a half-mile of the LIRR station, only 5 percent of village residents live within the station area, according to ESRI Business Analyst.

In spite of these limiting factors, the demographics of residents in the Station Area compare favorably to that of the village as a whole. According to ESRI Business Analyst, median household incomes in Lynbrook's station area exceed the village average, and residents within half-mile of the station area earn 95 percent of the average village median household income.

Commuter Trends

According to US Census data, half of Lynbrook's residents work in Nassau County, 40 percent of its residents work in New York City, and the remainder work in elsewhere in the metropolitan region. With daily ridership of 1,800 in a community of 19,400, the LIRR plays a significant role in the local economy. The parking lots adjacent to the LIRR Lynbrook Station were about 75 percent full on the average weekday (2009).

Retail Market Analysis

In addition to the real estate market scan, the project team conducted a retail market analysis of the Station Area that encompasses Downtown Lynbrook, both under present conditions and in light of the addition of the proposed development projects. This analysis concluded that there is retail oversupply in the Station Area, and determined that although the proposed developments would have a positive effect on the Station Area, they would not substantially close the retail gap.

Current Retail Market Conditions

To evaluate the retail market conditions in the Station Area, the project team analyzed the potential retail demand of the current population in comparison to the market’s retail supply. To conduct this retail gap analysis, the project team used ESRI Business Analyst to retrieve aggregate dollar estimates of total retail supply and demand within the Station Area. The project team

calculated the retail gap by subtracting the total demand from total supply, and then used an estimate of sales per square feet to translate the gap into an estimate of square footage. In a retail gap analysis, a positive number provides an estimate of the additional square footage that demand in the trade area would support, and a negative number indicates the amount of retail property that currently exceeds local demand. The project team defined the boundaries of the trade area for the retail gap analysis to be that of the Station Area.

A retail gap analysis shows that aggregate retail supply of \$36.9 million (translated to 78,000 square feet) in the Station Area considerably exceeds aggregate retail demand of \$13.5 million (translated to 29,000 square feet) across the major categories of Storefront Retail, Groceries, and Food & Beverage, leaving a retail gap of \$23.4 million (translated to 49,000 square feet).

Retail Gap Analysis Table

Industry Group	Supply (SF)	Demand (SF)	Retail Demand Gap (SF)
Storefront Retail	41,500	16,800	(25,700)
Groceries	10,300	7,600	(2,700)
Food and Beverage	25,900	4,300	(21,600)
Total Across All Categories	77,700	28,700	(49,000)

Impact of Proposed Developments on Retail Market Conditions

Based on experience supporting town-center redevelopment efforts in suburban communities across the metropolitan area, the project team concluded that neither the proposed Hotel project nor the proposed Theater project will generate sufficient additional local demand to close the retail gap in the Station Area.

In order for the Hotel to play a meaningful role in increasing local retail demand in Downtown Lynbrook, it must build on the momentum of existing and adjacent destinations. At present, Downtown Lynbrook lacks the distinctive retail and unique dining destinations whose presence and appeal the Hotel could amplify. Over the long term, however, the Hotel can play a central and ongoing role in the efforts of the Village to revitalize the retail and dining options in Downtown Lynbrook, given its central location and predictable pipeline of additional visitor traffic.

In comparison, the proposed Theater development could result in additional foot traffic to local bars and restaurants if it were located in a walkable, curated shopping and entertainment district designed to encourage moviegoers to linger in the community. At present the area at the edge of the downtown core surrounding the location of the proposed Theater does not have these characteristics. However, while it may not significantly increase retail sales, the revitalized theater can meaningfully benefit the Village by creating a regional entertainment destination and focal point in Downtown Lynbrook.

Impact of Proposed Developments on Residential Market Conditions

The project team concluded that additional residential development in Downtown Lynbrook would contribute to the absorption of the excess retail outlets. According to the Urban Land Institute, in a suburban commercial district, for every 100,000 square feet of retail, planners and developers should target a minimum of 1,000 dwelling units within a 10-minute walking distance in order to gain the constant and durable customer base of a mixed-use community. The additional demand made possible by increasing Downtown Lynbrook's residential population in line with this ratio would help absorb excess retail supply and increase the area's economic self-reliance.

Strategic Recommendations for Downtown Lynbrook

Based on the market analysis, the project team suggests that the following policy strategies can be used by village leaders to shape the redevelopment of Downtown Lynbrook.

- **Village officials should promote a distinct identity for Downtown Lynbrook and design a tenancing and branding strategy that advances this identity.** To maximize the long-term commercial opportunity of increased development in Downtown Lynbrook, village leaders should define and enforce a unique and distinctive brand and image through a customized tenancing strategy, urban design guidelines and façade improvement programs. The case study for South Norwalk demonstrates the effect of this strategy on similar redevelopment efforts.
- **Village officials should encourage new multifamily residential development consistent with the existing character and scale in Downtown Lynbrook.** Despite fast and frequent train service to Manhattan, very little multi-family residential development exists in Downtown Lynbrook, and no multi-family residential has been constructed in recent decades. It is widely recognized by economic development specialists and policymakers that the successful introduction of multi-family residences to a downtown core can be a highly effective strategy to increase local retail demand and spur economic revitalization. The case study for South Orange outlines how municipal leaders used the addition of integrated multifamily residential and retail development to attract new and distinctive retailers to their town center.
- **Village officials should leverage proven redevelopment techniques to implement rebranding efforts and encourage additional residential development.** Village officials should create an active and engaged economic development entity that can work closely with local businesses, political leadership, and community organizations to advance a coordinated rebranding effort for the Village. Officials should make sure to include streetscape improvements and beautification programs as part of these efforts. To manage the introduction of multi-family residential development and create a walkable, vibrant retail district, Village officials can enact an overlay to the Downtown Lynbrook zoning code. The case

studies for South Norwalk, South Orange, and Rahway all demonstrate how these techniques have been used to implement a redevelopment agenda, introduce a distinctive aesthetic character, and drive further economic growth in similar communities elsewhere in the metropolitan area.

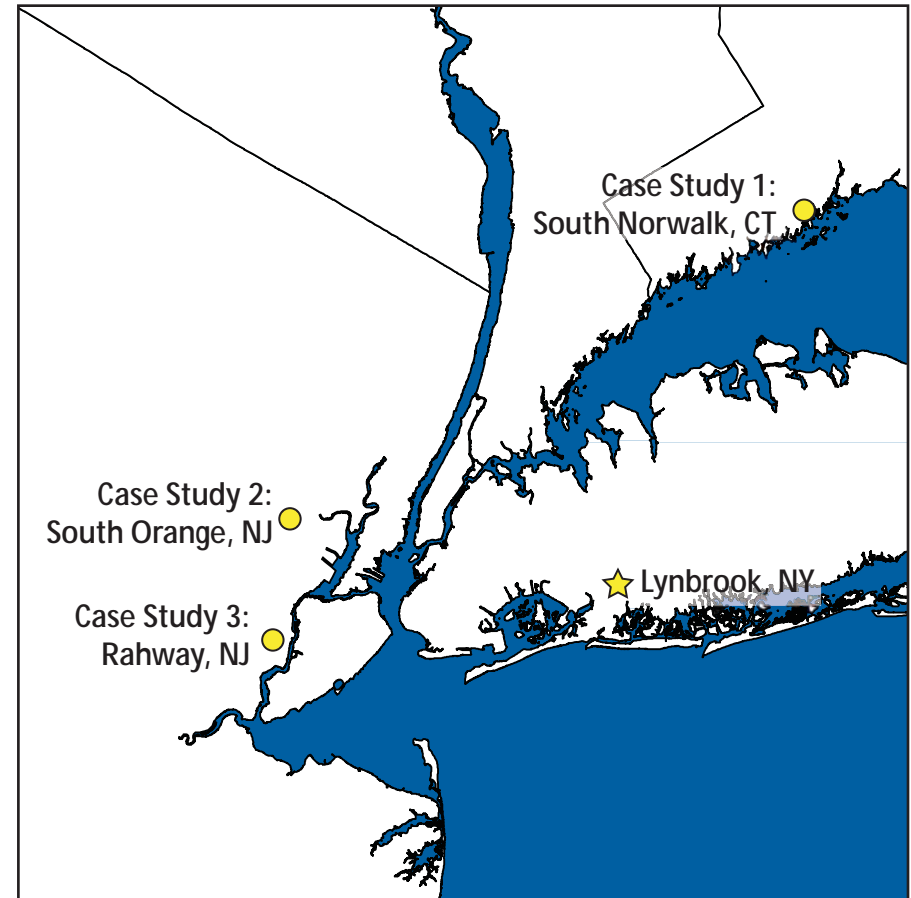


The MTA is planning new retail beneath the LIRR overpass.

Case Studies

To demonstrate the potential impact of these policies in Lynbrook, the project team selected three case studies in the metropolitan area where similar policies were implemented to address comparable conditions.

- **In South Norwalk, Connecticut**, local officials used the creation of a historic district to repurpose derelict buildings as mixed-use developments in order to attract distinctive retailers and restaurants.
- **In South Orange, New Jersey**, municipal officials used financial incentives and zoning changes to support the development of a high-end supermarket that included multifamily residential, which both attracted additional outside demand and increased local retail self-sufficiency.
- **In Rahway, New Jersey**, civic leaders redeveloped their village as an arts district and introduced retail, hotel, and residential developments around this theme.



The locations of successfully redeveloped downtowns in communities similar to Lynbrook.

Case Study 1: South Norwalk, Connecticut

South Norwalk is the historic urban core of Norwalk, Connecticut, a city of 86,000. The role of the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency in the ongoing revitalization of South Norwalk provides an instructive example for Lynbrook of how a local development entity such as a development agency or business improvement district can play a vital role in the transformation of an underperforming suburban town center into a distinctive local destination.

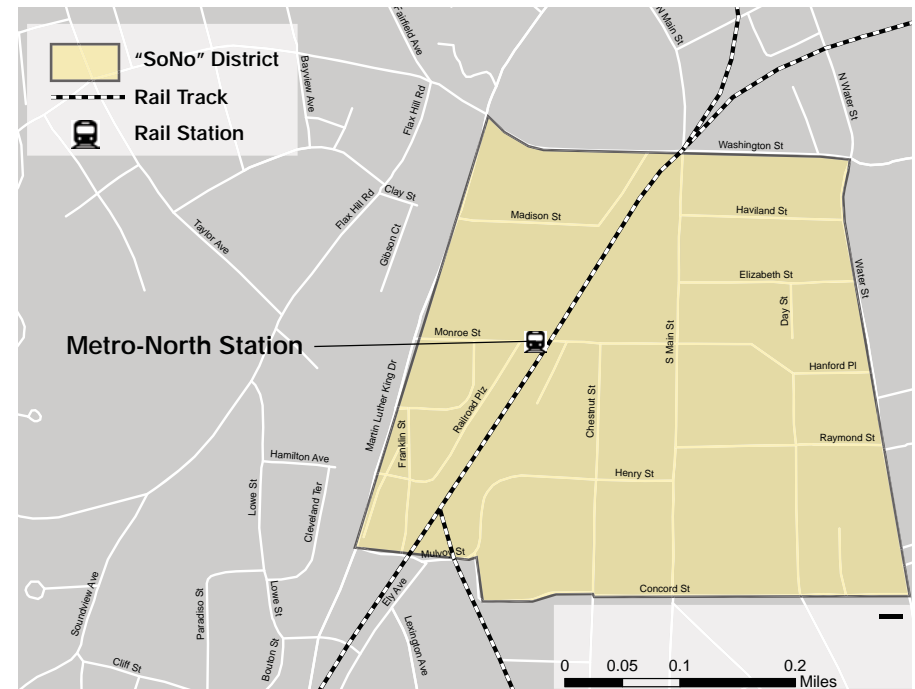
Summary of Redevelopment Efforts

Formed in the early 1950s, the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency has assumed a central role in successful long-term redevelopment of South Norwalk. The area experienced fitful growth from 1950 through 1970 as a suburban exodus drained the area of businesses and residents, leading to rapid commercial turnover and destabilization of local retail demand. By the mid-1970s, many buildings were vacant and slated for demolition. The Norwalk Redevelopment Agency was charged with the responsibility to create a long-term program of urban revitalization that would leverage its existing assets after the election of Mayor Bill Collins.

As a first step, the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency spearheaded the creation of the South Main and Washington National Historic District in 1977, later rebranded as “SoNo.” The Norwalk Redevelopment Agency used the creation of the District to spur the redevelopment of architecturally distinctive industrial and warehouse properties in South Norwalk. The formation of the district enabled city officials to secure \$10 million of discounted financing in order to encourage mixed-use development. Based on this initial success, the District was expanded twice – first in 1985 and then in 1999.

In recent years the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency has continued to support the further redevelopment of South Norwalk by offering tax abatements, small business loans, and location assistance. Thanks to the efforts of the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency, the SoNo district has become the largest center for arts and culture in Fairfield County. Over 30 retailers are now based in the area, ranging from national brands such as American Ap-

parel to most recognized restaurants and specialty shops. Recent articles in the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal have examined South Norwalk’s resurgence and transformation into a distinctive retail and residential neighborhood.



The extent of South Norwalk’s “SoNo” District.

Lessons for Lynbrook

The multi-decade impact of the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency on the revitalization of South Norwalk has valuable lessons for Lynbrook.

- **A local development entity can play a central role in formulating and sustaining a new identity for a retail corridor throughout changing market conditions.** Over a 40-year period, the NRA has worked hard to create and advance a new image for South Norwalk, one which has received significant press coverage and shaped local tastes.
- **A local development entity can provide the tools and financial incentives required to lure desired tenants.** The Norwalk Redevelopment Agency helped facilitate discount financing to incentivize development at the creation of the SoNo district and continues to offer tax abatements and discount loans to prospective tenants.



A rendering of South Norwalk's retail corridor. Source: The New York Times.

Case Study 2: South Orange, New Jersey

South Orange is an economically diverse, inner-ring suburban municipality of 16,000, located 30 minutes from Penn Station on NJ TRANSIT. The new residential development that resulted from a change to the South Orange zoning code suggests the character of the potential gains that a similar strategy could bring to Lynbrook.

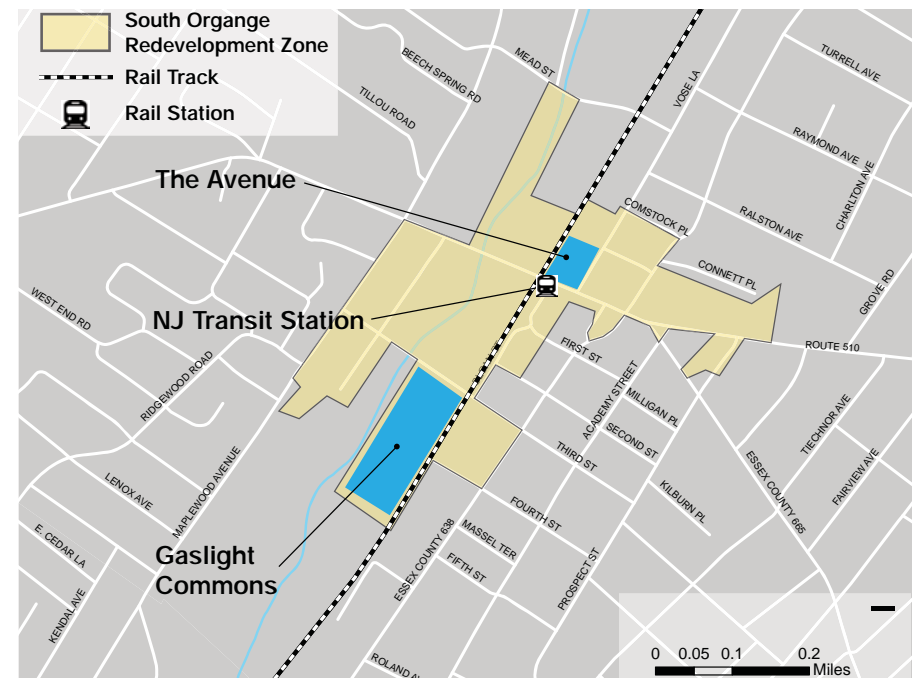
Summary of Redevelopment Efforts

In 1996, the Village of South Orange approved a redevelopment plan for property in the vicinity of its NJ TRANSIT station. This plan included flexible zoning and PILOT (Payment In Lieu Of Taxes) incentives to attract developers, with a primary goal to encourage high-density, mixed-use development. Near to the time that this plan was introduced, NJ TRANSIT introduced Mid-TOWN Direct, a rail project that cut commute times to Manhattan by 20-40 minutes for riders of the Montclair-Boonton line. South Orange, a station on this line, saw a substantial increase in ridership as a result.

In 1999, South Orange was designated a Transit Village by the New Jersey Department of Transportation, and as part of this effort, they create a Transit Village Overlay District around the NJ TRANSIT station. That same year, the closure of a ShopRite created an opportunity for South Orange to take advantage of the new zoning overlay and introduce a large-scale mixed-use development. Rather than permit immediate redevelopment of the existing property, South Orange officials acquired the site, as well as nearby lots and easements, to assemble a parcel of sufficient size to attract private capital for mixed-use development. Thanks to its PILOT program, South Orange was able to secure a commitment from Sterling Properties to build a large-scale mixed-use development on the merged site. Working in partnership with South Orange, Sterling Properties secured Eden Gourmet Markets as the anchor tenant of the development, which opened in 2008 as the “Avenue.”

With 79 residential units built around the grocery, and fronted by an attractive café and restaurant, the development has improved the character of the area around the train station. Other nearby developments have also taken

advantage of the zoning and incentive programs of the Village. For example, Gaslight Commons is another up market condominium property near to The Avenue of over 200 units.



The extent of South Orange's Redevelopment Zone.

Lessons for Lynbrook

The successful introduction of mixed-use redevelopment in the central retail district of South Orange has the following lessons for the further redevelopment of Downtown Lynbrook.

- **Significant zoning changes may take years to result in transformative development projects.** Although a change in zoning code can create the conditions for transformative redevelopment, finding the right development opportunity requires patience from municipal leaders. Nine years passed between the closure of the ShopRite in South Orange and the opening of the Avenue.
- **Whether through a development entity or through direct assistance, local officials must be willing to use incentive programs to help reinforce developer interest.** Although MidTOWN Direct had considerably improved the accessibility of South Orange to Manhattan, incentives were still required to induce Sterling Properties to invest on the site.
- **Distinctive retail can attract residents.** The high-end appeal of the Eden grocery at the Avenue helped attract tenants that could afford premium real estate prices, with benefit to the property tax collections of South Orange.



The Avenue in South Orange, NJ. Source: Flickr.

Case Study 3: Rahway, New Jersey

Rahway is a city of 27,000 in Union County, New Jersey, whose redevelopment efforts have centered on the development of cultural amenities to draw outside visitors. This strategy has relevance to Lynbrook as it considers how to develop a new identity to distinguish itself from neighboring communities.

Summary of Redevelopment Efforts

Historically a manufacturing center, Rahway experienced an economic decline in the decades following World War II. The growth of suburban office parks near to highways drew away many of its businesses, which led to depopulation and blight in its downtown. Former Mayor James Kennedy, who led the city from 1991 to 2010, pursued a strategy of revitalizing Rahway through renovating its streetscapes, improving its infrastructure, and reclassifying its zoning. Much of this effort was centered on the creation of a Special Improvement District, an economic development entity akin to a Business Improvement District that coordinated and implemented infrastructure improvements.

Threaded throughout its revitalization efforts has been an effort by city leadership to position Rahway as a major cultural center for northern New Jersey. In 1999 the city renovated the 18th-century “Merchants and Drivers Tavern,” turning it into a historical museum. Shortly thereafter, the city renovated its public library through a unique public-private partnership that included market-rate office space, and transformed a downtrodden cinema into the 1,300 seat Union County Performing Arts Center (UCPAC) over a 15-year period. In September 2012, the city opened the Hamilton Stage for the Performing Arts, a \$6 million, 199-seat theater that currently hosts seven performing arts groups.

These initiatives have generated substantial results. Over a 20-year period the city has added over 700 market-rate housing units, several new restaurants, and has expanded the local YMCA. The city also added the Hotel Indigo, a 100-room upscale boutique hotel.

In addition, Rahway has linked the development of its arts district with larger goals for residential development. Across the street from the UCPAC, the Actors Fund Housing Development Corp has proposed a project of 68 housing units targeted at performers and their families.



The extent of Rahway's Special Improvement District (SID).

Lessons for Lynbrook

Rahway's arts-focused strategy has meaningful lessons for Lynbrook.

- **An arts-focused strategy can also include residential components.** As part of the development of its new theater, Rahway has proposed to add 68 units of affordable housing for performance and visual artists.
- **Challenging conditions in the regional economy can thwart the best of efforts.** Although Rahway successfully renovated the streetscape of its downtown, attracting retailers and well-regarded restaurants, as of 2011 the anemic housing market continued to limit their growth, closing some and putting all under pressure.

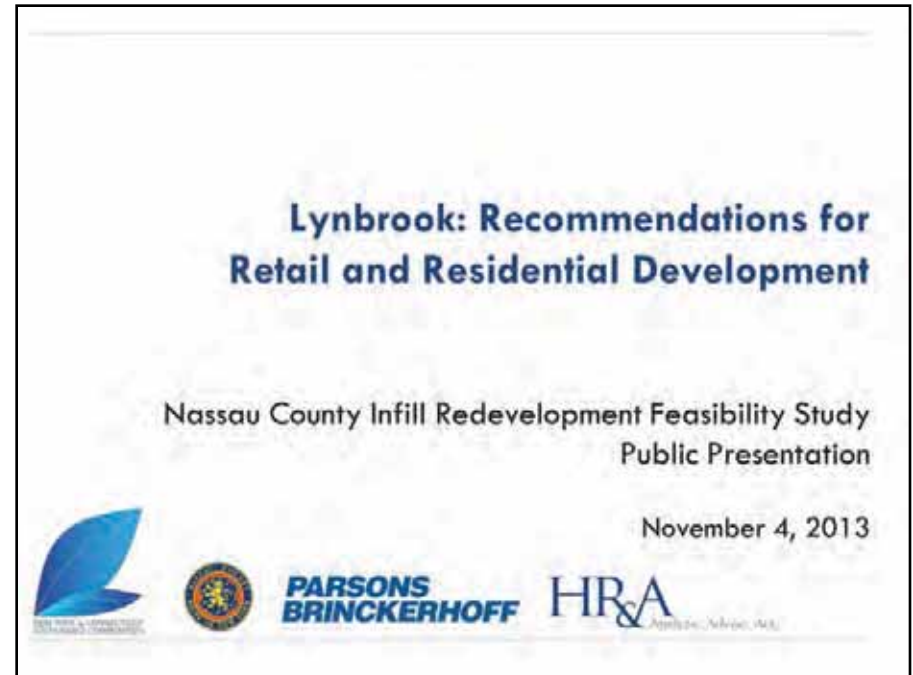


Hotel Indigo in Rahway, NJ. Source: RahwayRising.com.

Community Engagement

In order to best engage the community on the benefits of and steps required to revitalize Downtown Lynbrook, the project team and Nassau County partnered with the Village of Lynbrook to hold a presentation and question and answer session at a Village of Lynbrook Board of Trustees regular public meeting, held on November 4, 2013. The meeting was well attended and televised throughout the Village. Attendees were given the opportunity to give their input during the meeting and several community members who watched the presentation from the comfort of their homes followed up with the Village on their questions and concerns on their own time.

Overall, community members welcomed the recommendations put forth by the project team. While some community members raised concern over a multi-family mixed-use building undermining the character of the downtown, they were assured by both the project team and the Village of Lynbrook that any proposed developments will be well in character and scale of the existing neighborhood while at the same time introducing much needed diversity of uses into Downtown Lynbrook.



A slide from the Lynbrook Town Hall public presentation.

Next Steps

By promoting a distinct identity for Downtown Lynbrook, encouraging new multifamily residential development near the LIRR station, and leveraging proven redevelopment techniques such as zoning overlays, Village officials will take the necessary steps to revitalize their downtown station area into a sustainable, livable, and economically viable place for all users. These strategies will encourage downtown development, increase activity around the LIRR station, and create a strong, coherent identity for Downtown Lynbrook that would set it apart from neighboring Villages.

The next steps for Lynbrook should include the following.

- **Ensure the successful implementation of existing planned developments.**
- **Work with a specialty consultant to design and enact a zoning overlay and/or form based code for the commercial center.**
- **Continue to engage the community on potential redevelopment strategies .**
- **Develop complete streets strategies for Atlantic Avenue and Broadway.**
- **Continue to work with Nassau County to ensure that progress within Lynbrook serves as a pilot for other Villages and hamlets.**
- **Work with Nassau County in obtaining key data, input, precedents, and best practices in developing a marketing strategy for downtown Lynbrook.**
- **Coordinate with Nassau County efforts in order to facilitate permitting and monitor opportunities for grant assistance to aid Lynbrook in implementing active development proposals.**
- **Aid Nassau County in prioritizing a complete streets traffic study for relevant avenues within downtown Lynbrook.**



Traffic along Sunrise Highway with the LIRR Lynbrook Station in the distance.

Baldwin



Lynbrook



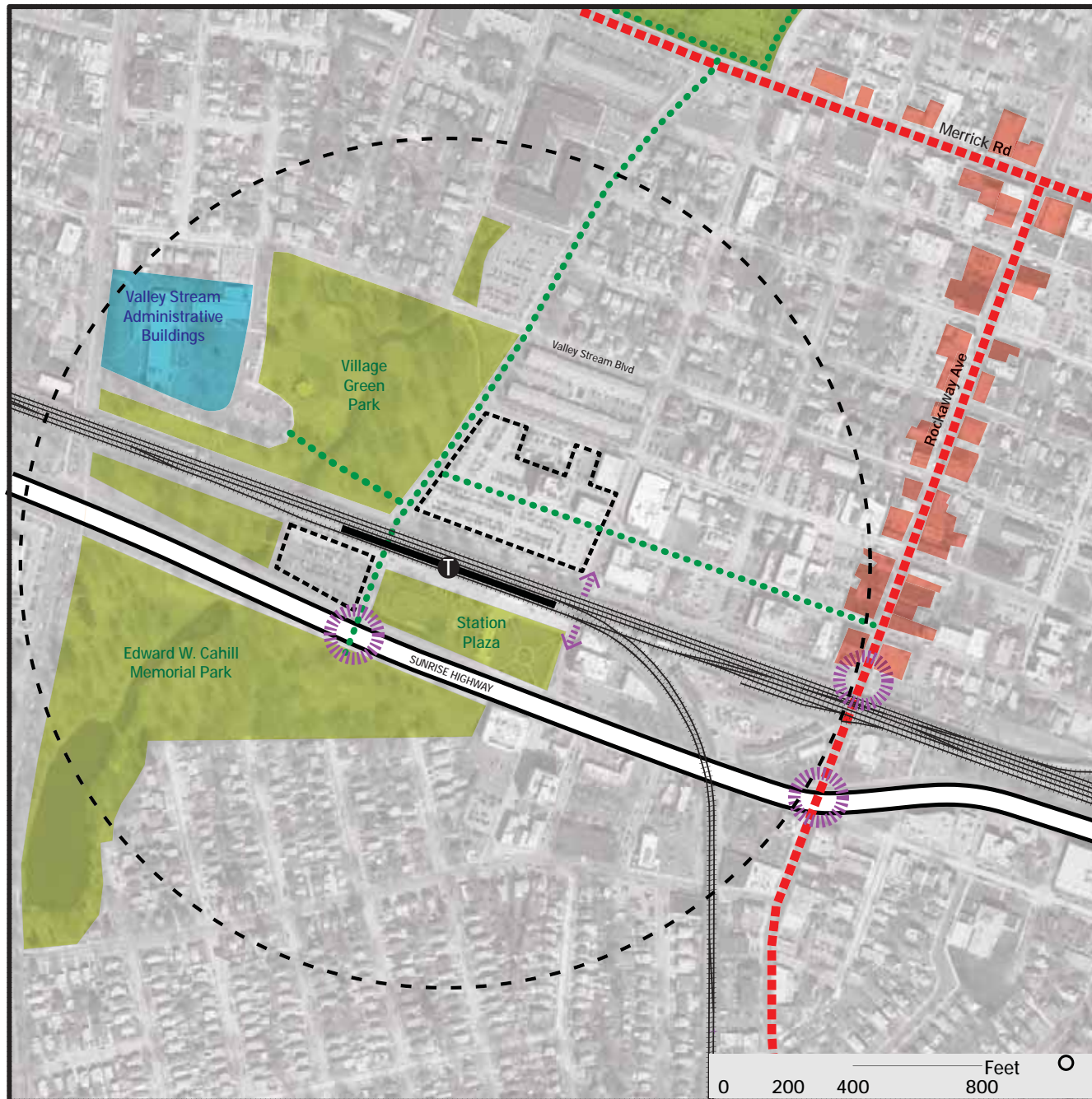
Valley Stream



Valley Stream

Realizing Transit-Supported Development





Valley Stream Station Village of Valley Stream

- Transit Station (train)
 - 1/4 mile radius from station
 - Transit Routes (train)
 - Crossing
 - Focus Sites
 - Key Commercial Corridors
 - Barriers to Movement
 - Priority Pedestrian Improvement Locations
 - Major Intersection
- Pertinent Land Use
- Commercial/Retail
 - Civic



Valley Stream's Rockaway Avenue.

Introduction

The Valley Stream station area has a number of characteristics that support TSD in a community that has been planning for growth for several years. The Village downtown is centered on the segment of Rockaway Avenue, between Merrick Road to the north and Sunrise Highway to the south. While the station is a few blocks west of Rockaway Avenue, it remains well within a half-mile radius of the downtown core. Connecting the station to the downtown will lead to the infill development of several sites that would extend the downtown commercial vibrancy to the station area with a mix of office, commercial and residential uses. Creating a mixed-use anchor around the station would be an important first step in developing a connected mixed-use district. The Village currently has designs on multiple potential redevelopment sites. Its hope is to catalyze significant developer interest with an initial development proposition and the pursuit of favorable strategies to create developer-ready site infill opportunities.

The necessary physical framework of a successful community-based TSD strategy is in place in the Valley Stream station area. Opportunities to connect to the public library and the neighboring Village Green Park provide recreational outlets that could attract people to the station area. With effective complete street strategies, parks and destinations surrounding the station could be linked into a network of attractions and amenities that could service new development. One important connection would be linking Edward W. Cahill Memorial Park, which lies to the south of Sunrise Highway and the Babylon Branch right-of-way, to Village Green Park, the library, Valley Stream Central High School, and the Arthur A. Hendrickson Park and Recreation Center to the north. Connecting these significant park spaces would enhance both parks as regional recreational attractors that serve as assets for the local community. This north-south connection would create a recreational and institutional corridor that connects parks, schools, and libraries all along a single link.

The opportunities for local TSD district growth hinge on the ability to connect commercial mixed-use – both those in place and those envisioned – on sites north of the station to the development opportunity sites south of

the station and south of Sunrise Highway. With effective connections across Sunrise Highway, the station would act as a central node to a larger commercial, mixed-use, and/or residential transit-friendly district with significant recreational amenities. These improvements would make the Valley Stream station area a distinct and attractive place with a special identity within the patchwork series of downtowns that run along the southern side of Long Island.

Valley Stream also benefits in the regional context by its proximity to Queens and its denser population centers. Coupled with its direct connection to Jamaica Center and JFK Airport, both significant economic generators, Valley Stream stands to attract its fair share of development propositions. As with many of the communities in Long Island, Valley Stream will need to overcome some significant challenges that a pilot project could help to resolve. To increase development opportunity, Valley Stream hopes to continue to attract ridership to and from the station, making an effective parking strategy a necessary component of growth in this suburban context. New development also engenders parking needs that could compete for space with station parking. An analysis of parking needs and strategies to adjust parking requirements based on shared-use and creatively plan for parking as a component of development could reduce parking costs and act as a difference-maker in attracting development. A financial analysis that includes strategies to accommodate parking will be a very important component of a development pro forma. Development at the station, combined with an effective strategy for developing walkable connections between the station, the downtown, and nearby amenities will help to knit the community together as a connected village-scaled TSD area.

Existing Conditions

A prosperous and racially diverse South Shore community, Valley Stream benefits from fast and frequent LIRR service to Manhattan. However, CoStar data shows that the area within one-quarter mile of the LIRR Valley Stream Station is underdeveloped, with a startling 1 percent of Village multifamily units and only 11 percent of Village retail located proximate, much of it in older buildings. These conditions are similar to those found in many station areas in Nassau County. According to CoStar, in the last five years only ten projects (representing 1,160 units) have been built in Nassau County. Eighty-five percent of the housing stock in Nassau County was built before 1970.

Valley Stream’s leadership has established the pursuit of new mixed-use development as a policy priority. In January 2013, under the leadership of Village Mayor Ed Fare, Valley Stream revised its zoning regulations to standardize the review process for mixed-use development. The Village also began a coordinated effort to encourage the attraction of new businesses to the Rockaway Avenue commercial corridor. Building on these efforts, the Village joined with Nassau County to participate in the Nassau County Infill Redevelopment Feasibility Study (NCIRFS), identifying the three Village-owned parking lots (labeled as focus sites) adjacent to its LIRR station as conceptual redevelopment sites.

Key Commuter Attributes	
Time to Penn Station via LIRR	35 minutes
Daily Peak Riders	1,800
Commuter Parking Lot Usage	80% full during peak
• Cost of Resident Parking Permit	\$40
• Cost of Non-Resident Parking Permit	\$425

Demographics

Valley Streams’ 37,511 residents feature a median household income of \$78,000, lower than the \$95,000 average for Nassau County on the whole. At 10,773 persons per square mile, Valley Streams’ population density within Nassau County is surpassed only by Hempstead, making it an ideal candidate for TSD.

Existing Projects

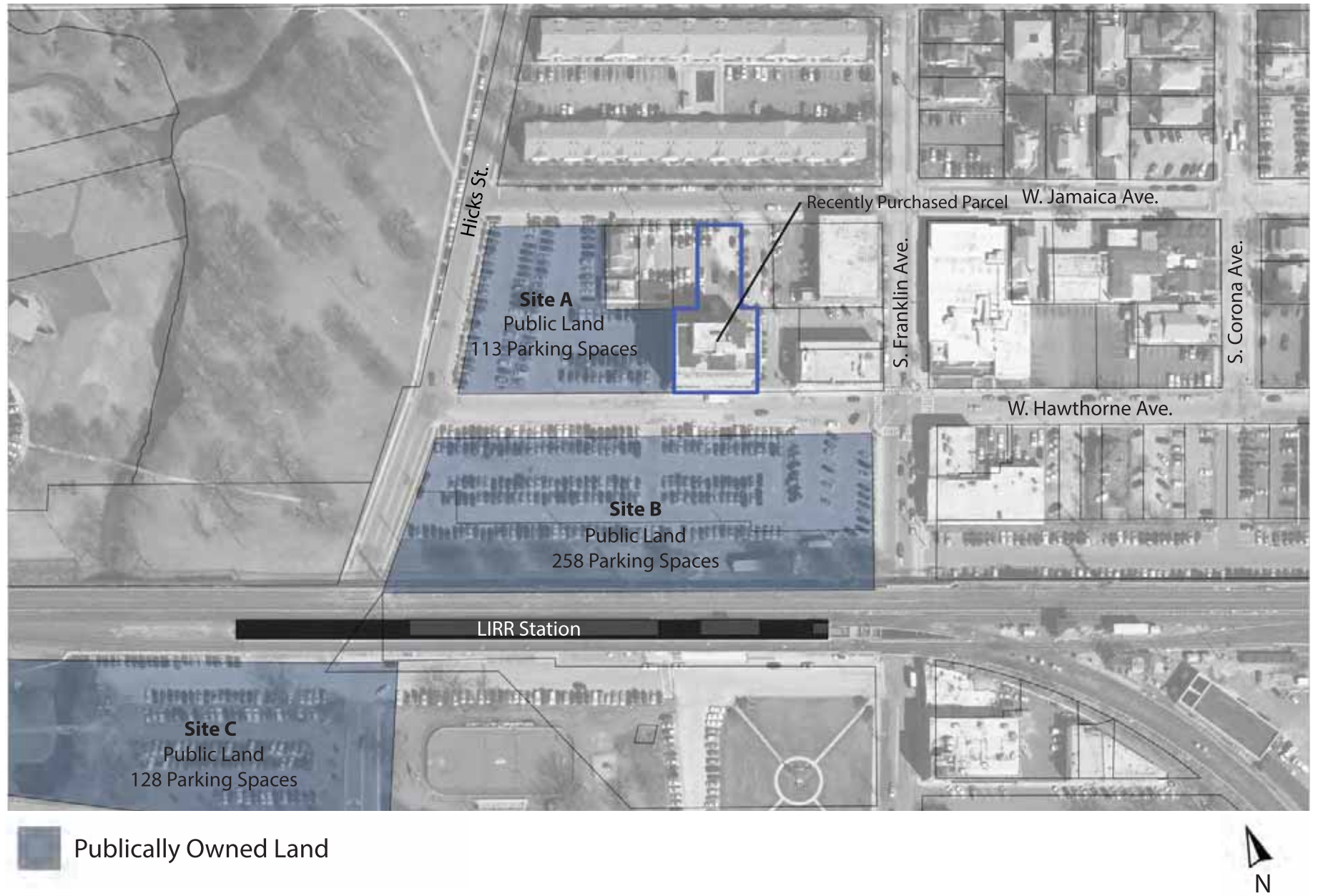
High density residential development near the LIRR Station is far from a foreign concept for Valley Stream. Two large scale developments, Sun Valley Towers and Hawthorne Court, are slated to open in Valley Stream’s downtown in early 2014. At 137,000 square feet, Sun Valley Towers will house 72 residential units and feature 13,000 square feet of ground floor retail along Brooklyn Avenue. The 100,000 square foot Hawthorne Court will feature 90 residential rental units along Cottage Street. Both developments are within walking distance of Valley Stream’s station area and could provide the cornerstones of a vibrant downtown if coupled with the pilot project proposed in these pages.

Additionally, the Village of Valley Stream is planning on relocating their court house to a location within the station area. This would generate increased activity in the focus area, particularly during court events and hearings. This relocation would further centralize the station area as Valley Stream’s true downtown and add to an already diverse mix of uses for the neighborhood.

Selected Demographic Attributes	Valley Stream, NY
Population	37,511
Median Household Income	\$78,000
Households	12,189
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % Owner-Occupied 	78%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % Renter-Occupied 	22%
Workforce Commuting to Major City	44%
Population Density (persons per sq. mile)	10,772.8



Projects in close proximity to the focus area.



Focus Area Existing Conditions

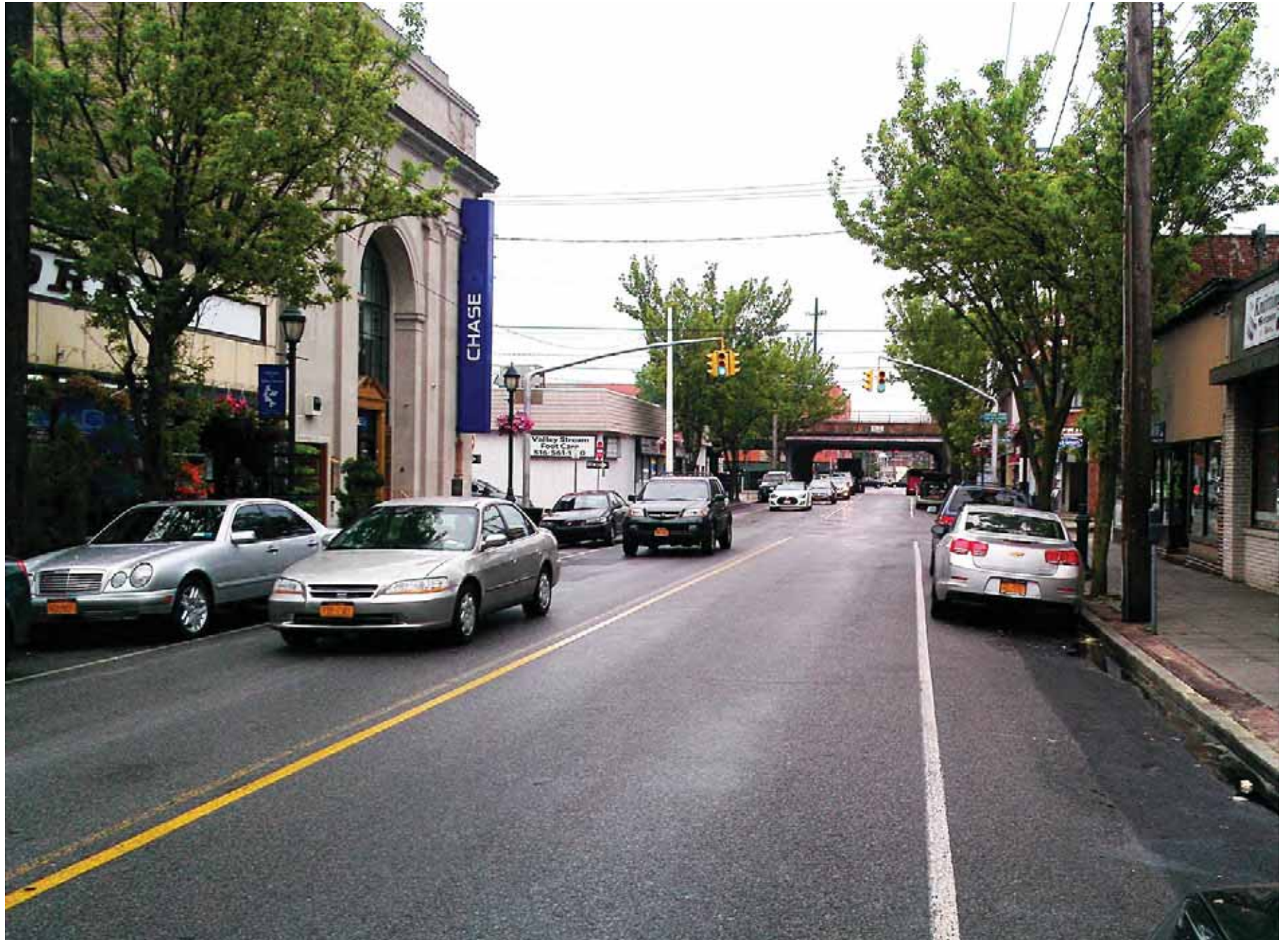
In identifying opportunities for TSD within the Valley Stream station area, the community and the Village identified a preferred site for potential infill development, discussed here as the focus area. The focus area for the Valley Stream pilot project includes three focus sites in the immediate vicinity of the LIRR station, ideal candidates for transit-supported development. All three sites are currently used for commuter parking. Site A consisting of 0.9 acres (Section 37, Block 333, Lot 17), located on the northeast corner of Hicks Street and West Hawthorne Avenue, and Site B consisting of 2.3 acres (Section 37, Block 337, Lots 5 and 301), located immediately adjacent to the northern boundary of the station and to the east of Hicks Street are currently permitted parking lots. Site C consisting of 1.1 acres (Section 37, Block 337, p/o Lot 401), located to the west of Hicks Street and abutting the LIRR right of way to the south, consists of metered parking spaces and is primarily accessible via Sunrise Highway. All three sites are owned and operated by the Village of Valley Stream.

A key development challenge within the focus area is the presence of a now defunct portion of the Brooklyn Water Works Sunrise Highway Aqueduct System. Between the LIRR Station and Focus Site B lies a sealed off brick conduit that has lain dormant for decades. The conduit is underneath a landscaped area that slopes from north to south, resulting in a significant change in elevation between the parking area and the access to the station. While the conduit may provide some design challenges with any potential redevelopment scenario, it is currently owned by Nassau County, which could facilitate its removal.

An additional consideration for the focus area is the recent purchase of the mid-block six-story former office building (Section 37, Block 333, Lot 167) directly adjacent to Site A. Regarded by the Village as a potential redevelopment site for many years, the private parcel was sold in fall 2013 and is planned for use as condominium office space.



Focus Site B is currently the permit parking lot just to the north of the LIRR Valley Stream Station.



Valley Stream's Rockaway Avenue serves as its main commercial corridor.

Conceptual Development Scenarios

For the purposes of this project, the project team developed two conceptual development scenarios for the focus areas. These scenarios are not meant to serve as specific blueprints for development, but rather as possible development configurations that could achieve the shared goals of creating an optimal use for the site, meeting the needs of the Village and its community, and realizing the HUD livability principles. These scenarios were developed in discussion with the Village of Valley Stream the Long Island development community, and Nassau County. The project team estimated that the Site could support between 150 and 300 residential units and a limited amount of amenity retail, along with current levels of resident and non-resident commuter parking and additional capacity to accommodate new residents and visitors.

While the following scenarios focus on program and massing, other factors such as street design, architecture, and public realm amenities are equally important to successful TSD. Any potential development scenario within the focus area will also feature complete streets along West Hawthorne Avenue, Hicks Street, and South Franklin Avenue, safe pedestrian connections around the station area, and buildings that fit within the community aesthetic. All these factors play important roles in creating an active downtown place and should be taken into consideration for any development scenario put forth for Valley Stream's station area.



Valley Stream's LIRR Station.

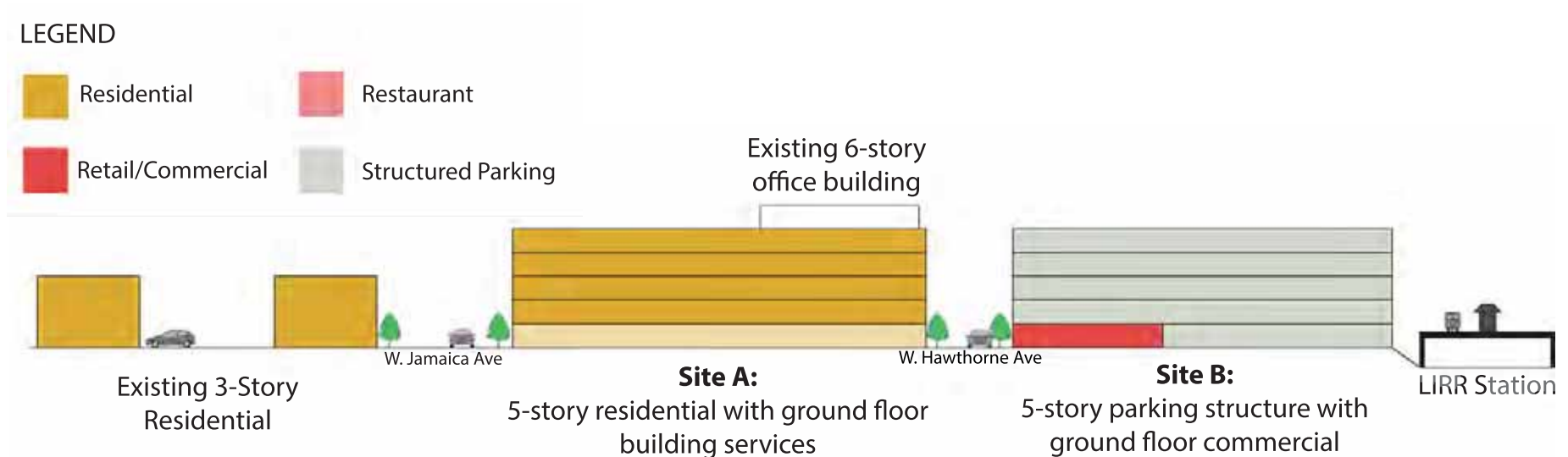
Development Scenario 1

Development Scenario 1 features 5-story residential building on Site A with a 3-story parking structure with ground floor retail on Site B. Site C remains surface parking.







This scenario is intended to create a strong east-west retail corridor along West Hawthorne Avenue, connecting to the existing retail corridor along nearby Rockaway Avenue. This scenario would create a band of activity leading from Village Green Park to the west to the restaurants, shops, and businesses of Rockaway Avenue to the east. Multi-level parking, activated by ground floor retail, would create an incentive for commuters to shop before getting in their cars and heading home. This structure could also feature a pedestrian bridge that connects directly to the elevated station platform, a convenience for commuters during inclement weather.

Development Scenario 1 Program		Total SF / Units (Floor)
Site A	Residential	155,600 SF (2-5) 155 Units
	Retail	49,200 SF (1st)
Site B	Structured Parking	645 Spaces (372 commuter / 273 program)

Section Along Hicks Street





- | | | |
|--|--|---|
|  Residential |  Structured Parking |  Recently Purchased Parcel |
|  Ground Level Retail
Upper Level Parking |  Landscaped Area |  Existing Surface
Parking |



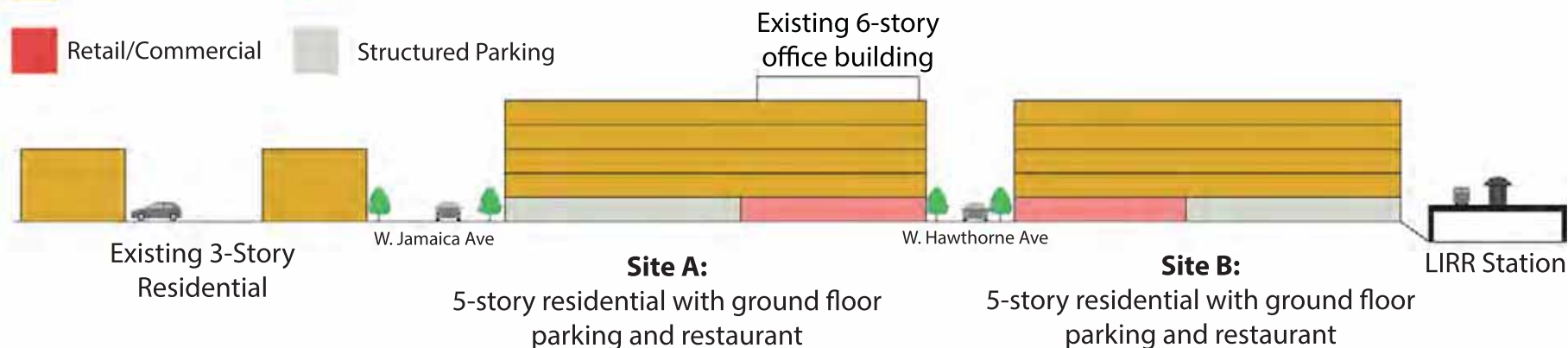
Development Scenario 2

Development Scenario 2 features paired 5-story residential buildings on Sites A and B with ground floor surface parking and restaurants facing the Village Green Park. Site B also features a stand-alone 4-story parking structure, which is bookended by the residential building facing the park and a second, 5-story mixed-use building along South Franklin Avenue. As in Scenario 1, Site C remains surface parking.

This scenario focuses on supplying sufficient new residential units to establish a relatively dense station area activated by restaurant space, small scale retail, and immediate adjacencies to both the park and the LIRR Station. This scenario encourages people to live a short walk to the train station and to make use of the nearby Village Green Park and its numerous recreational amenities, while at the same time creating a strong anchor to the west of Rockaway Avenue and providing complementary retail space to that which already exists along the Rockaway Avenue corridor. By surrounding the parking structure with mixed-use buildings, the structure itself fades into the background of an otherwise active and multi-faceted neighborhood.







Section Along Hicks Street

LEGEND



Development Scenario 2 Program		Total SF / Units (Floor)
Site A	Residential	131,600 SF (2 - 5) 130 Units
	Retail	5,000 SF (1st)
	Surface Parking	90 Program Spaces
Site B	Retail	19,800 SF (1st)
	Residential	178,000 SF (2 - 5) 178 Units
	Structured Parking	690 Spaces (372 commuter / 318 program)



- | | | |
|---|---|--|
|  Ground Level Parking/
Upper Level Residential |  Ground Level Commercial/
Upper Level Residential |  Recently Purchased
Parcel |
|  Ground Level Restaurant/
Upper Level Residential |  Structured Parking |  Existing Surface
Parking |



Partnerships

In developing this pilot project, Nassau County and the project team developed a comprehensive outreach strategy that involved the three key stakeholders of any development process: the Village of Valley Stream, several mixed-use developers working within Long Island, and the Valley Stream public community. Through this outreach, the project team was able to put forth a pilot project proposal that each stakeholder group had a hand in developing.

Village of Valley Stream

Expressing an active interest in the NCIRF study since its beginnings, the Village of Valley Stream and its leadership has been an integral part of developing this pilot project and the development scenarios put forth in this report. Throughout the effort, the project team has met with the Village to fine-tune the conceptual development scenarios, engage potential developers, and create a public outreach strategy that best informs the Valley Stream community.

Through this communication, the project team found that the Village is actively working to establish a vibrant, successful downtown for their community and is looking to break away from the typical types of sprawling and car-oriented developments that take place on Long Island in favor of mixed-use, appropriately scaled TSDs. In doing so, the Village hopes to create a more robust residential base, bringing in new families to live, work, and grow up in Valley Stream and paving the way for a diverse community within the Village. The aim of this new way of municipal thinking is for the Village to take advantage of its close proximity to New York City and its two LIRR stations situated near the border of Queens. Through its efforts, the Village is encouraging people to travel and live more sustainably and breaking away from the car-oriented lifestyle that is so prevalent throughout Long Island.

The Developer Community

The project team contacted developers active in Long Island and the metropolitan area to assess market interest in pursuing transit-adjacent development in Nassau County. Through these interviews, the project team found that residential developers believe a clear demand exists for such developments, but noted that the uncertainty of permitted density and the absence of clearly-defined zoning codes could hobble the pace of development and drive up costs. Many developers commented on the essential role of tax credits and discount financing to offset Long Island's high construction costs.

Building on these conversations, Nassau County hosted a developer workshop at HR&A's New York City offices on October 24, 2013, where conceptual development scenarios for the focus area were presented to representatives of five development companies active in Long Island and the metropolitan area. Local officials from Valley Stream participated in the session and reiterated their interest in encouraging new development. The developers in attendance expressed interest in and optimism for transit-oriented development at the focus area, with consensus on the strategic advantages of fast rail access to New York City and Kennedy Airport. The developers also emphasized the importance of discount financing to offset construction costs and the strong local market demand for substantial on-site parking. There was wide agreement among the development companies present that establishing clear guidelines on scale and character – while offering flexibility on the maximum amount of density permitted – would help developers respond to changing market conditions during the pre-development process and would significantly contribute to the success of any redevelopment proposal.

Community Engagement

In order to best engage the community on the proposed Valley Stream pilot project, the project team and Nassau County partnered with the Village of Valley Stream and the civic group Envision Valley Stream in hosting a community open house to present the pilot project to the general public and gain their insight and comments on what improvements they would like to see for their downtown station area. The open house was held on November 7th, 2013 at the Valley Stream Community Center.

Overall, while somewhat divided on the exact type of development they would like to see, community members welcomed the recommendations put forth by the project team. Feedback was generally positive and supported the project's goals. Some comments from this public open house include:

- Any future construction should be aesthetically interesting and appropriate to Valley Stream local context/setting.
- The proposal, either Scenario 1 or 2, is essential for increasing the population within the downtown area. The downtown needs revitalization and greater activity.
- Multi-family residential is necessary to increase activity in the downtown to generate demand for new businesses, in turn, lowering the tax burden on existing enterprises.
- For existing conditions, ensure that the relocation of the court house to the downtown – which is currently underway – is mentioned in the final report. This will attract significant activity, including during the evenings when night court is in session.
- It is important to emphasize the importance of the LIRR service at Valley Stream; there is the convergence of three LIRR branches which provides high frequency train service to NYC.
- A high-end restaurant would not be appropriate under either scenario as it would draw business away from other restaurants in the downtown area. Appropriate commercial at the station would be anything supportive of LIRR users such as a deli, dry cleaner, newsstand, etc. but not competitive with Rockaway Ave.

- Streetscape improvements are required along Hawthorne Avenue, including beautification and lighting.
- A parking analysis should be required as a part of the development proposal.
- Any proposal for a parking structure at the station should be designed to address user safety (ex. appropriate lighting, sight lines, etc.) and aesthetics/architectural detail.



Attendees at the Valley Stream open house.

Developer Solicitation Process

The selection of a developer to implement the proposed redevelopment of the focus area is one of the most crucial steps in successfully realizing the Site's projected economic, fiscal, and urban design benefits for the Village. Not only must the Village identify and successfully negotiate with the development company best suited to the task, the process of selecting that company must be done in a way that is perceived by the development community and the public as objective and fair.

The primary objective of the developer selection process is to identify and complete an agreement with a highly capable development company with the requisite skills, experience, financial resources and access to capital to fully implement a proposed development program for the Site, subject to specific financial and performance terms to be negotiated.

The project team envisions that the developer selection process would proceed through four distinct, but overlapping, stages.

1. Pre-Solicitation Soundings with Developers

The first step would consist of senior Village staff and members of the Board of Trustees conducting a series of initial meetings with a range of development companies known to be capable of fulfilling the developer role. The purpose of these initial meetings, or "soundings," would be to assess developer interest in responding to the Village's selection process (as discussed below), and to discuss in general terms the Village's intended process, solicitation response requirements and general business terms and conditions. These soundings would provide an opportunity to further acquaint prospective bidders with the status of the project and the Village's intentions for developing the Site, and obtain feedback on the intended process prior to formal advertisement for proposals. In addition, the meetings will help Village officials and Trustees assess which public-sector incentive programs may be required to ensure market interest in the development of the focus area.

2. Request for Qualifications

The next step would be to issue a developer Request for Qualifications (RFQ). Responses are intended to focus on the responding development companies' relevant skills, experience and financial resources for developing the Site, and the experience and skills of the design, engineering, entitlements, financial and other professionals that would be members of the developer's project team. The primary purpose of this step would be to identify a short-list of the most highly qualified development companies to participate in the subsequent RFP process. There are a number of options for how the recommendation formulation task described toward the end of this step in the process might occur, including use of an appointed panel to review the technical review and evaluation results prior to forwarding a selection recommendation to the Village Board of Trustees. Specific RFQ implementation tasks would likely include:

- Drafting the RFQ;
- Review and approval of the RFQ by the Trustees;
- Identification of candidate developers to be notified about the RFQ;
- Managing the RFQ distribution and public notification processes;
- Managing the process of briefing prospective bidders and responding to questions during the response preparation period;
- Conducting a structured and objective review and evaluation process for the submitted responses, including independent verification of developer experience and financial resources, and ranking of the responses in terms of the RFQ's quantitative and qualitative selection criteria;
- Conducting interviews with a subset of respondents, if desired by the Village;
- Formulating recommendations on which developers should be selected by the Village to proceed to the next step in the process; and
- Notification to all bidders and the general public of the selection decisions.

3. Request for Proposals

Developers selected on the basis of the RFQ process would then be asked to prepare formal implementation proposals. It is anticipated that the RFQ would include a draft contract spelling out all of the key business terms and Village expectations, to which the development proposals will need to provide specific responses and counter-proposals, as applicable. Accordingly, the Village should engage outside legal counsel with experience drafting complex real estate transaction agreements of this type. This engagement should occur during the RFQ phase of the process so that work on the draft agreement to be included in the RFP can commence well in advance of the scheduled RFP release date. The primary purpose of this step would be to identify at least two semi-finalist developers with whom the Village staff would be directed to conduct negotiations for final developer selection by the Trustees. There are a number of options for how this final selection might occur, including use of the RFQ review panel described above and/or public presentations by the candidate developers to the Trustees. Specific RFP implementation tasks are similar to the RFQ tasks and would likely include:

- Drafting the RFP;
- Village review and approval of the RFP;
- Managing the RFP distribution processes;
- Managing the process of briefing prospective bidders and responding to questions during the proposal preparation period;
- Conducting a structured and objective review and evaluation process for the submitted proposals, including independent verification of the proposed financial and other business terms and conditions, and ranking of the responses in terms of the RFP's quantitative and qualitative selection criteria;
- Formulating recommendations on which developers should be selected by the Village to proceed to the next step in the process and assisting the Village in reviewing that recommendation; and
- Notification to all proposers of the selection decisions.

4. Final Negotiations and Developer Selection

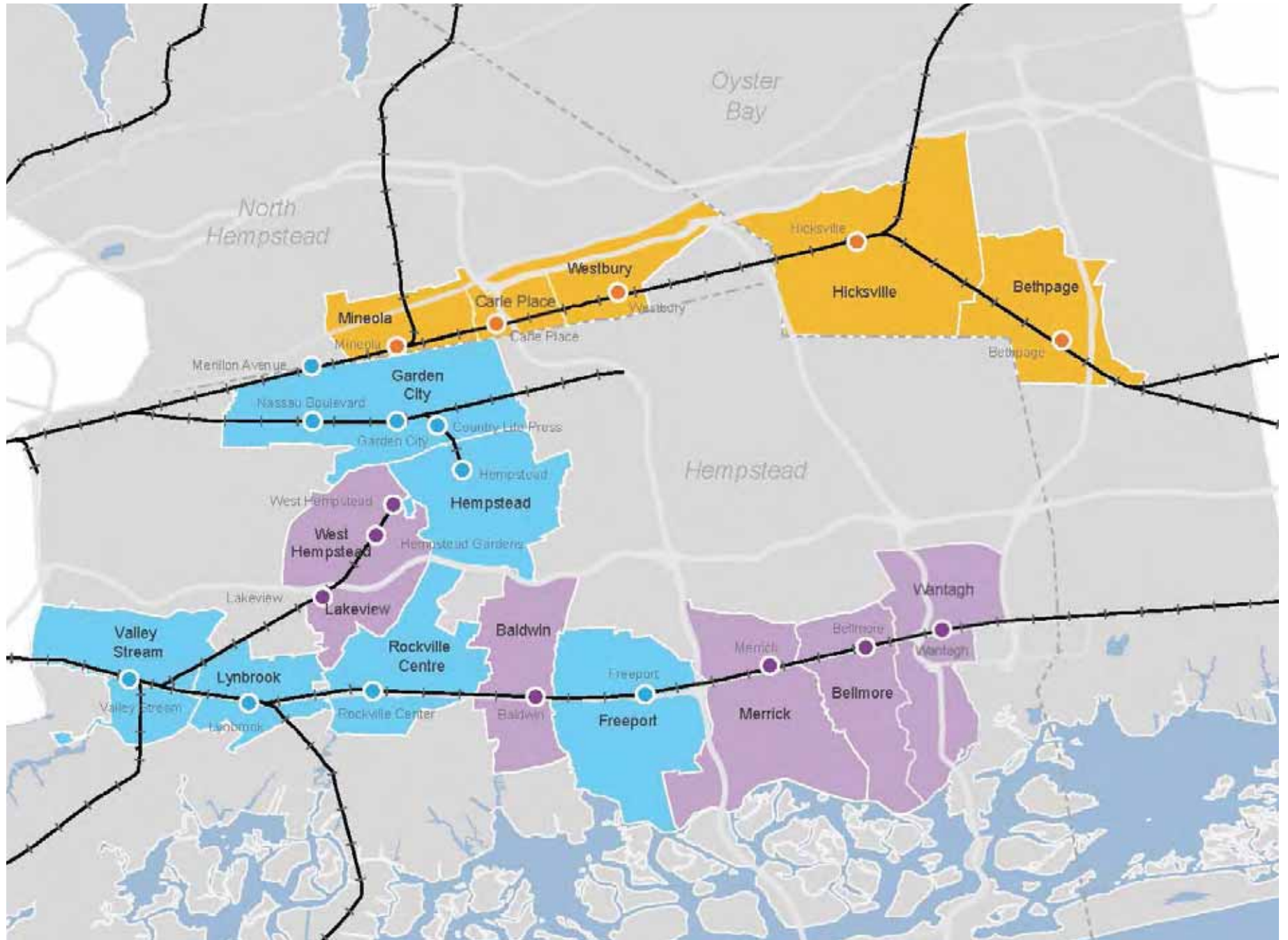
The final step in the process would involve simultaneous negotiations between Village staff and the top two development companies selected during the preceding RFP step in order to reach a recommendation for final selection and execution of a development agreement and related documents. These negotiations would be expected to focus primarily on financial and business terms and conditions as well as the schedule of performance as contained in each developer's response to the model development agreement included with the RFP. Once a developer has been selected, the Village should host a community meeting that provides an update on the development proposal and provides an opportunity to answer the questions of local residents and businesses.

Next Steps

In order to fully realize a sustainable transit-supported development within Valley Stream's station area, the project team recommends that the Village pursue the following next steps in advance of initiating the developer selection process that is outlined in the prior section (RFP/RFQ).

- **The Village should conduct pre-RFP meetings with local developers to generate specific ideas for redevelopment.** These meetings would permit Village officials to conduct open-ended discussions with local developers on the development potential of the Site.
- **The Village should identify a set of public-sector incentive programs that will ensure ongoing developer interest and the submission of financially viable proposals.** These programs may include such strategies as discount financing, targeted zoning overlays, additional parking fees to finance development, and the introduction of local streetscape improvements near to the Site.
- **The Village should conduct outreach efforts that target third parties who may have a specific interest in Site redevelopment, including private owners of adjacent parcels and the LIRR.** This initiative would set the stage for ongoing collaboration between the Village and said third parties throughout the pre-development and development process.
- **The Village should coordinate with Nassau County for the support of the authoring and execution of a RFP for development of key municipal parking lots adjacent to the LIRR Valley Stream Station that is consistent with transit-supported principles set forth in the concept plans.**
- **Nassau County should coordinate with State and Federal agencies to facilitate the development of downtown Valley Stream.** Agency coordination, especially when spearheaded by the County, will ensure that the Site is shovel-ready while also exploring the possibility of using State or Federal financial incentives for mixed-use development and structured parking.

As part of this process, the Village is already well on its way to realizing a successful transit-supported development within its station area and paving the way for similar developments throughout Nassau County. These recommendations are meant to provide a guideline as to how the Village and its stakeholders may take their plans and turn them into a project that pilots sustainable development within Nassau County and offers a glimpse as to what the built environment and life on Long Island could look like in the future.



Piloting TSD to Transform Nassau County

The station areas of Baldwin, Lynbrook, and Valley Stream represent examples of the opportunities for sustainable development and livability enhancements that exist throughout Nassau County. By working with the municipalities and other key stakeholders of these three station areas, the County hopes to use its efforts to cultivate sustainable development projects that may spur development in other station areas where similar opportunities exist. Each provides an element or multiple elements of “replicability” for the County. Lynbrook includes an adaptive reuse in the station area, station access and complete street elements. Baldwin includes strategies for strengthening a commercial corridor, pedestrian safety, and new private development strategies. Valley stream requires connectivity and urban design strategies that integrate mixed-use developments and existing amenities to create a viable downtown, station area, and connection between. The ability to analyze these critical issues and develop specific implementation strategies will provide local municipalities with the tools to set new standards for livability around station areas that can be replicated in other downtown and station area contexts throughout the County. The cultivation of sustainable opportunities throughout Nassau County begins with these three, but it certainly doesn’t end with them. By pursuing the creation of livable communities in Baldwin, Lynbrook, and Valley Stream, Nassau County - in partnership with both the involved regional planning agencies and local municipalities - is paving the way to a sustainable future for Long Island in the years to come.



Nassau County

Infill Redevelopment Feasibility Report




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