



TOWN OF RIVERHEAD NEWS

Office of the Supervisor
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PRESS RELEASE

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Press Release: DOWNTOWN RIVERHEAD AWARDED \$10M IN NYS DRI FUNDING

The New Year kicked off on a high note for the residents of the Town of Riverhead when Supervisor Yvette Aguiar announced today that Downtown Riverhead has been awarded \$10M in New York State Downtown Revitalization (DRI) grant funds.

“I am beyond excited that Downtown Riverhead was selected as the fortunate recipient of such a large infusion of state grant funds,” Aguiar said. “I am grateful that the application prepared by the Community Development team was so well received by NYS Empire State Development and ultimately selected by Governor Kathy Hochul as one of this year’s winners.”

“A local planning committee will be formed to provide advisory guidance on how to move potential projects forward in the most efficient and effective manner possible,” Community Development Director Dawn Thomas said. “The DRI award will allow Downtown Riverhead to finally realize its full economic development potential.” She said potential projects identified in the application, include: Riverhead Town Square, the Railroad Avenue Transit Oriented Development Project, implementing downtown flood mitigation measures, improvements to the Suffolk Theater and Vail Leavitt Music Hall.

“After serving on the Riverhead Town Board for 10 years under three administrations and being part of many downtown revitalization efforts, this is the necessary shot in the arm that Riverhead needs to reach the pinnacle in terms of successful downtown revitalization,” Assemblywoman Jodi Giglio said. “I applaud Supervisor Aguiar and the Town Board’s diligent efforts, working closely with the CDA, to take bold action to acquire the parcels necessary for the Town Square and already beginning the demolition process to knock down blighted buildings to make a clear view to the river. That was the start of great things to come for downtown.”

The state’s DRI, a cornerstone of the State's economic development program, transforms downtown neighborhoods into vibrant centers that offer a high quality of life and are magnets for redevelopment, business, job creation, and economic and housing diversity.



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These compact, walkable downtowns are a key ingredient to helping New York State rebuild its economy from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as to achieving the State’s bold climate goals by promoting the use of public transit and reducing dependence on private vehicles,” according to the ESD website. In its fifth year, the program will invest \$200 million in up to 20 additional downtowns statewide.” Participating communities were nominated by the state’s ten Regional Economic Development Councils (REDCs) based on the downtown’s potential for transformation. Within each region, each region’s REDC nominated either one or two downtowns to receive \$10 million each or one downtown to receive an award of \$20 million to develop a downtown strategic investment plan and implement key catalytic projects that advance the community’s vision for revitalization. The DRI is led by the Department of State. Communities receive support from private sector experts and a team of state agency staff led by the Department of State in close partnership with Empire State Development, and NYS Homes and Community Renewal.

Senator Anthony Palumbo said, “Riverhead’s application was truly outstanding and fully deserved to be selected. I am confident that Downtown Riverhead is fully ready for transformative economic redevelopment. I am committed to helping Riverhead accomplish our mutual downtown revitalization goals any way I can.”