

# Heart of White Plains

## Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI)

### Round 7 Application



“THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK”  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

THOMAS M. ROACH  
MAYOR

t: 914.422.1411  
f: 914.422.1395

September 27, 2023

Linda Malave, Regional Director  
Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council  
33 Airport Center Drive - #201  
New Windsor, NY 12553

Dear Ms. Malave,

On behalf of all community members who donated their time and energy to this process, the City of White Plains is pleased to submit this application for Round 7 of New York State's Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) to the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council.

White Plains is a dynamic regional hub serving as the gateway to the Mid-Hudson region. Just as our City is the heart of Westchester County, downtown is the “Heart of White Plains”. We believe that strengthening community identity, enhancing public spaces, and improving connectivity between our neighborhoods and downtown will support our transformation into a modern urban community where business, culture, and the arts thrive.

Our community has put great care in crafting the vision, revitalization strategies and projects included in this application. The resources provided by the DRI will bring years of planning efforts to life, solidifying White Plains as the premier regional hub for housing, employment, recreation and commerce.

Sincerely,

Thomas M. Roach

## Heart of White Plains

Downtown Revitalization Initiative - Round 7



### Basic Information

<b>REDC Region</b>	Mid-Hudson
<b>Municipality Name</b>	City of White Plains
<b>Downtown Name</b>	Downtown White Plains - Heart of White Plains
<b>County Name</b>	Westchester
<b>Applicant Contact, Name</b>	Thomas Roach, Mayor
<b>Applicant Contact, Email</b>	troach@whiteplainsny.gov cgomez@whiteplainsny.gov

**Heart of White Plains**

Downtown Revitalization Initiative - *Round 7*

**Contents**

Geographic Area and Justification ..... 3

Vision Statement..... 4

Downtown Identification - Heart of White Plains..... 5

Past Investments, Future Potential ..... 6

Recent/Impending Job Growth..... 9

Life in White Plains ..... 9

Supportive Local Policies ..... 13

Public Support..... 15

Transformative Project Opportunities and Readiness..... 17

Administrative Capacity ..... 21

## Heart of White Plains

Downtown Revitalization Initiative - Round 7

### Geographic Area and Justification

Standing at the gateway to the Mid-Hudson region, just 16 miles north of New York City, White Plains is a small city boasting a vibrant economy, excellent education facilities, premier health services, and livable neighborhoods with a variety of housing choices. The Downtown area, with its **well-defined boundaries**, is the Heart of White Plains and the focus of this application.

White Plains is perfectly poised to catalyze resources available from the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI).

- The City is finishing a **deep comprehensive planning process** that has intentionally prioritized diverse stakeholder agreement and resulted in transformative, consensus driven priorities.
- White Plains has the required civic fabric to best utilize the DRI with active residents, results driven government and civic organizations, and a **“let’s get this done”** attitude.
- **The need is now and the time is right.** Downtown White Plains is going through one of its largest transitions in history. DRI funding will help White Plains craft a model community that skillfully shepherds this change, realizing a bold vision of equity, robust public realm, and sustainable growth.

White Plains is a recognized trailblazer in increasing housing stock. In August 2023, Governor Hochul launched the Pro-Housing Communities Program, a statewide initiative to give priority consideration in state discretionary funds to localities committed to housing growth. Localities must submit documentation that their housing stock has increased by one percent in the previous year or 3 percent over the previous three years (downstate) to qualify for certification as a Pro-Housing Community. White Plains is pleased to affirm that the data the City submitted to NY state in September 2023 places the City solidly at the **forefront of Pro Housing Communities with a 3% increase in housing units in the past year and a 5% increase over the previous three years.**

Another core value for the City of White Plains is **mitigating and adapting to the impact of global climate change.** In 2021, the US Conference of Mayors celebrated thirteen cities for their efforts to address the climate crisis as part of the [Mayors’ Climate Protection Awards](#). The City was among the honorees for our innovative [Community Solar Project](#). In May of 2023 White Plains achieved **bronze certification as a Climate Smart Community** in recognition of the city’s high impact actions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. As a NYSERDA Clean Energy Community the City has received grant funding that supports publicly accessible EV charging infrastructure downtown. A recent \$1,000,000 grant from the US Department of Agriculture will further equitable access to a lush urban tree canopy city-wide.

White Plains has long been a haven for new Americans. In the early 1900’s, the population doubled with immigration from Europe. This history of **welcoming and embracing diversity** continues to this day. Ask a group of White Plains residents what they like most about their City, and inclusion and diversity, will be among the top answers every time. Today, the City is home to many new immigrants from all over the globe. According to the US census, 32% of the residents in White Plains are foreign born and 42% speak a language other than English at home. In 2023, White Plains was one of only three municipalities in the county that welcomed asylum seekers.

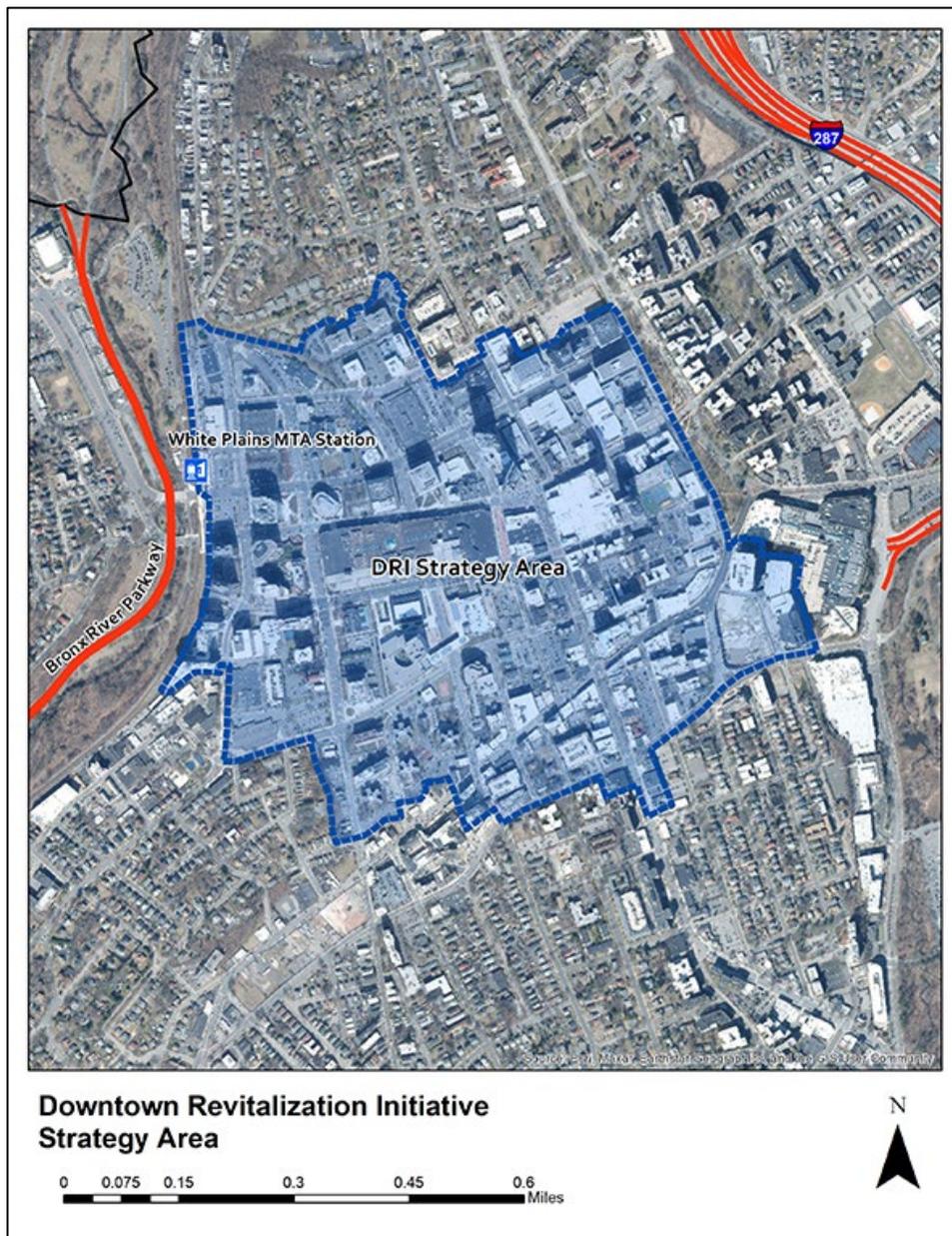
Our City is not just home to its 58,000 residents; a steady stream of employees and visitors also “inhabit” the area on a daily basis, with an estimated daytime population of 250,000. As numbers increase, safety is paramount. A grant from the US Department of Transportation will provide a blueprint to enhance traffic safety with a vision zero action plan. Every visitor is a potential resident, a potential investor in our community. Our centralized geography and our role as the County seat, truly makes White Plains “Westchester’s downtown” and therefore even more worthy of thoughtful planning, deep community engagement and coordinated investment. **White Plains revitalization efforts must be magnetic, perpetually inviting all people in to our livable, green City.**

## Heart of White Plains

Downtown Revitalization Initiative - Round 7

### Vision Statement

The Heart of White Plains is a welcoming, safe, inclusive downtown with housing, employment, education, transportation, and recreational opportunities that fulfill the needs of our diverse population; a modern urban community where business, culture, and the arts thrive; where the natural environment is valued and where public spaces are accessible; where we acknowledge our history and address regional, social, and economic trends to plan for an equitable and sustainable future.



## Heart of White Plains

Downtown Revitalization Initiative - Round 7

### Downtown Identification - Heart of White Plains

The Heart of White Plains (HWP), the target investment area for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative, comprises the City's traditional urban core. The 0.4 square mile area "has a Walk Score of 98 out of 100, which is considered a "Walker's Paradise", so daily errands do not require a car" according to [walkscore.com](https://www.walkscore.com). HWP is home to numerous multi-family developments, the soon to be redeveloped Galleria and City Center Shopping Malls, a thriving restaurant row and hospitality center and the busiest Metro North train station in the lower Hudson Valley. HWP is bounded to the east by I-287 and Bronx River Parkway to the west - two major arteries linking New York City to the Mid-Hudson and connecting the "tri-states" of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.



HWP's boundary is coterminous with the City's Central Parking Area (represented by the light blue outline) and intersects with the City's Business Improvement District (BID) (red outline), a qualified Opportunity Zone (dark blue outline) and the Transit District Strategic Plan's study area (green outline). Focusing the DRI's resources on these overlapping districts generates a synergistic impact that feeds the economic engine and builds on inclusive community involvement and well-studied analyses to target investments equitably.



## Heart of White Plains

Downtown Revitalization Initiative - Round 7

### Past Investments, Future Potential

The City is **positioned to capitalize on public and private investment and catalyze future investments** in HWP. The area is in the midst of a development boom; where we once projected 10 million square feet of office space we now see interest in mixed-use residential development. Over \$27 million in capital improvements supporting community and economic development in and around HWP have been made since 2015 including improvements to public safety operations, rehabilitation of municipal parking structures and public parks. These public and private investments **align with Mid-Hudson REDC's successful LIVE, WORK and PLAY strategies**.

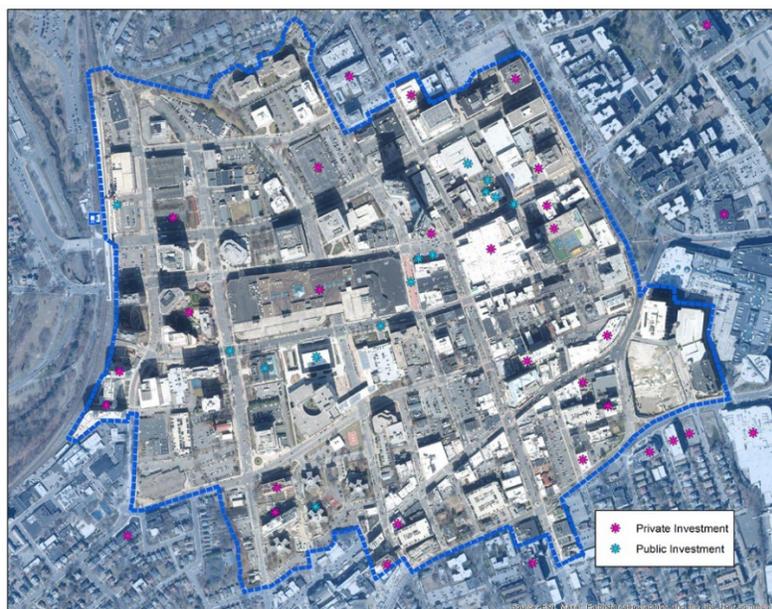
The City actively pursues and expertly implements grant opportunities from foundations, State, and Federal sources. Recent grant funds support initiatives such as pollinator gardens, a fair housing public art exhibition, and EV chargers. New grant projects, including \$1,000,000 to plant trees in economic justice areas and \$500,000 to create a Vision Zero Action Plan, will further catalyze transformation in HWP.

Description	Year	Status
<b>The Mitchell - 131 Mamaroneck Avenue</b>		
434 unit mixed use development, 14 affordable units 8,000 sf park	2017	Leasing
<b>Gateway II - 85 N. Lexington Avenue</b>		
500 unit residential development, 15 affordable units, publicly accessible open space	2021	Under Construction
<b>250 Mamaroneck Avenue</b>		
177 unit mixed use development	2020	Under Construction
<b>City Square - 50 Main Street</b>		
188 unit residential development, converted office building, 12 affordable units	2019	Leasing
<b>440 Hamilton Avenue</b>		
468 unit residential development, 37 affordable units	2017	Leasing
<b>199-201 E Post Road</b>		
18 unit infill residential development, 2 affordable units	2018	Under Construction
<b>Hamilton Green - 200 Hamilton Avenue</b>		
860 unit mixed use transit-oriented development, 78 affordable units	2020	Under Construction
<b>The Duet - 97-111 &amp; 100-114 Hale Avenue</b>		
124 Unit residential development, 13 affordable units	2019	Under Construction
<b>Brookfield Commons - 103 Quarropas Street</b>		
129 units with 90 affordable units and 5,000 sf park	2018	Under Construction
<b>The Continuum P. II - 57 Bank Street</b>		
309 unit residential development, 62 affordable units	2019	Leasing
<b>51 S. Broadway</b>		
134 unit residential development with 16 affordable units and 1,200 sf park	2022	Under Construction
<b>The Esplanade - 1 Lyon Place</b>		
212 unit mixed use development with 13 affordable units and 7,700 sf of commercial/retail space	2021	Under Construction

## Heart of White Plains

Downtown Revitalization Initiative - Round 7

<b>Norden Lofts - 121 Westmoreland Avenue</b>		
65-unit development in converted light industrial building in newly zoned LI-M District	2016	Leasing
<b>White Plains Hospital - 122 Maple Avenue</b>		
Center for Advanced Medicine & Surgery	2018	Recently Completed
<b>White Plains Public Library Improvements</b>		<b>\$3,217,542</b>
Library Plaza, Reading Grove, Interior Improvements	2017-22	Complete
<b>Brookfield Commons Infrastructure Improvements</b>		<b>\$2,037,800</b>
Affordable housing project, water lines, storm water drains and other site improvements.	2019-22	Complete
<b>Court Street Infrastructure Improvements</b>		<b>\$500,000</b>
Upgrade paving, sidewalk repair, installation of electrical outlets and decorative poles for hanging banners and lights	2017-18	Complete
<b>Renaissance Plaza - Business Incubation Space and Plaza Improvements</b>		<b>\$275,000</b>
Remove existing roof at this City owned and leased property and install a new roof and improvements to sidewalk and plaza	2019-22	Complete
<b>White Plains Metro-North Railroad Station</b>		<b>\$93,000,000</b>
Creation of a model station. Upgrades include new heated platforms, elevators, bathrooms, waiting areas, wifi and art.		Recently Completed
<b>Pedestrian and Bike Infrastructure Improvements</b>		<b>\$2,228,300</b>
Includes fully separated two-way bike lane for east-west bike access from core of downtown to Transit District. Mid Block Crosswalk Beacon	2016	Recently Completed
<b>Municipal Facility LED Lighting Upgrades</b>		<b>\$1,200,173</b>
Upgrade lighting in municipal facilities to LED lighting	2020-22	Complete
<b>Druss Park, Gillie Park, Battle of White Plains Park and Delfino Park Improvements</b>		<b>\$973,400</b>
Improvements to expand and upgrade park offerings	2020	Complete



## Heart of White Plains

### Downtown Revitalization Initiative - Round 7

There are a number of properties in the downtown **ripe for redevelopment**. The Urban Renewal era - White Plains Mall is in the process of being demolished to make way for an 860-unit mixed-use development, with 1-acre of publicly accessible open space, 112,000 square feet of ground-floor retail and restaurant space and on-site parking. White Plains Hospital recently took ownership of 6-acre property to provide ample space for their expansion plans. Residents are also energized by the development potential of the Galleria Mall, an 11-acre property located in the center of the HWP. Located in the very heart of downtown, redevelopment of the Galleria is expected to open up the area visually and allow for a more fluid flow through the neighborhood. There is vacant office space throughout HWP that are prime candidates for adaptive reuse purposes.

Every day is a new opportunity for celebrating diverse **arts and culture in White Plains**. HWP **anchor institutions** such as the [White Plains Performing Arts Center](#), [ArtsWestchester](#), [White Plains Public Library Gallery](#) provide the community with access to a full range of performing arts events and activities, culturally enriching entertainment, unique programming, a conservatory theater, day camp programs and a venue for the City's community groups. The DRI projects will further this value as unimproved lots become venues for community celebrations and public art installations highlight our rich cultural heritage.



The City **maintains a strong network of community groups, non-profit organizations and partnership with The Catalyst, Westchester County's IDA** to support the ongoing growth and development of HWP. In 1998, the White Plains Common Council (the Council) established the [White Plains Business Improvement District \(BID\)](#) to offer supplemental services to businesses within the district to enhance its economic, social, and cultural landscape. The BID provides a year round roster of marketing events and promotions and partners with City events such as the Farmer's Market, St. Patrick's Day Parade, and Restaurant Month; these events have a transformative effect on the downtown. [White Plains Beautification Foundation](#) operates the Adopt-a-Park sponsorship program, which groups private funds to support beautification efforts throughout White Plains parks. The organization also works hand-in-hand with the City staff in creating resplendent displays featuring colorful native plants throughout 56 gardens downtown. The Council works closely with [the Catalyst](#), to provide a wide range of benefits to companies looking to relocate to the City, including PILOT opportunities, which support a majority of the mixed-use development under construction or recently completed in White Plains.

The City advances **Smart Growth principals** through zoning amendments, policy updates and site plan approvals that incentivize infill development, adaptive reuse of underutilized structures, require on-site public open space, and allow flexibility to dimensional standards to safeguard environmentally sensitive areas such as rock outcroppings, wetlands and waterbodies. As a condition of approval, the Council often requires developers to invest in **infrastructure upgrades to support the new development**. Combined, these strategies maintain the compact development pattern of HWP that maximizes investment in our infrastructure and upholds the integrity of our critical natural resources.

As we move through the DRI process we will expand potential for development of **energy efficient projects and opportunities for green jobs**. A number of our projects preserve or restore the environment creating additional demand for green jobs. A multi-generational center that uses cutting edge energy efficiency upgrades will **meet the NYS Stretch energy codes** and serve as living example of what communities can do in pairing place making with sustainable efforts.

## Heart of White Plains

Downtown Revitalization Initiative - Round 7

### Recent/Impending Job Growth

The City boasts an employment base that offers opportunities at **entry level, various salary levels, and supports mobility between jobs**. The City's proximity to three major hospitals has been a major draw for medical professionals and support facilities. White Plains Hospital, the City's largest employer, is an award-winning healthcare facility with a regional patient base. White Plains Hospital holds the spot as the number one employer and its plans for growth will further expand HWP's diverse employment opportunities. The City's strong healthcare employment sector makes the downtown more resilient to the impacts of "work from anywhere" and potential future contractions in the daytime population.



Ten major employers are **major job creators**, making up 30% of the total local employment: White Plains Hospital Center, NY Presbyterian Hospital, White Plains City School District, County of Westchester, City of White Plains, Burke Rehabilitation Hospital, Dannon Company, Allied Barton Security Services, Nordstrom, and YWCA. Other large employers include Verizon, Con Edison, New York Power Authority, Amalgamated Life Insurance, ITT, Bloomingdales, Nordstrom Inc., Starwood Hotels and Resorts, J.P. Morgan Chase, Heineken, and Disney Publications. To compliment these major employers, White Plains' small business scene is thriving with food, beverage, retail and service providers on every corner.

As the county seat of Westchester County, White Plains is home to Federal, State and County government operations, which utilize approximately 10% of the available office space. Many of these employers are located within HWP with **easy access to public transportation by foot or bike**.

### Life in White Plains

#### Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Diversity and inclusion are White Plains' super powers. When asked what three words inspire resident's vision for the future of White Plains "Diversity" and "Inclusive" were among the top responses. According to the most recent US census data, our population is 57% White, 31% Hispanic, 12% Black/African American, 8% Asian, and 4% two or more races. Our diversity draws people to the City. A visit to the online site niche.com bears testimony with comments such as "My favorite part [of White Plains] is the amount of diversity and respect held within neighborhoods and people in general. No matter the race, gender, any type of looks, etc, there is no judgement and creates a safe space for everyone to be themselves!" (Niche comment, December 2020).

---

*"Arriving in a new country can be very challenging, but the diversity in White Plains creates a welcoming atmosphere. White Plains offers the immigrant community all the opportunities they can hope for in a new country. The school system welcomes their children with open arms and the employment opportunities are endless. The City is a true heaven to the immigrant." -Isabel Villar, Director of El Centro Hispano*

---

## Heart of White Plains

### Downtown Revitalization Initiative - Round 7

The City's broad array of community volunteer committees provides inclusionary opportunities for everyone including a Youth Board, a Senior Advisory Committee and Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities. In an [analysis by the group ProPublica](#) determining the interplay between race and income in accounting for segregation trends in Westchester they document the current distribution of African Americans in Westchester and the expected distribution of African Americans if black households lived in areas with white households of the same income. While many neighboring municipalities show large differences, White Plains remains fairly constant, indicating a fair amount of equity in the City. White Plains' Public Schools parental choice policy also promotes equity. In White Plains school attendance is not decided based on location, but by parental choice. White Plains City School District (WPCSD) reports that 95% of all parents receive their first choice of elementary school for their child resulting in a relatively ethnically representative student body at each of WPCSD's five elementary schools.

### Community Centers, Spaces, Institutions and Events

Numerous community centers, spaces, institutions and events exist within and serve HWP, **catering to all ages and cultures**. El Centro Hispano assists, supports, and strengthens Hispanic families, helping them become self-sufficient and easing their transition into their new culture while maintaining and enriching their own. The LOFT is Westchester County's first and only LGBTQ+ community center. The Thomas H. Slater Center, located within an Opportunity Zone, provides day care and senior programming to the Haitian Creole speaking community. The Senior Center offers a wide array of programming to seniors of all cultures and incomes.

Several premier health care facilities serve the downtown area. White Plains Hospital Center is the largest employer in the City with jobs at every conceivable entry level. Located within HWP, it is easily walkable and available by public transport. New York Presbyterian, specializing in behavioral health, and Burke Rehabilitation, are known statewide for their expert care. Pace University, with a law school in White Plains, SUNY Purchase, and the College of Westchester all call White Plains home. For their students, HWP, is their college town.

### Recreation, Culture, Entertainment

White Plains has an abundance of recreational, cultural and entertainment choices. The Bronx River Pathway, Jack Harrington Greenway and nine (9) municipal parks are either within or immediately adjacent to HWP. The Performing Arts Center, City Center Cinema and ArtsWestchester are located in the center of the downtown. The Recreation and Parks Department works with the BID to program Jazz Fest, Rock White Plains, and other musical events. White Plains Public Library features an art gallery space that features everything from High School students' projects to photos of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King to folk art installations. As the heartbeat of the County, HWP is home to many regional cultural events. The LGBTQ community Pride Month celebration, the Jamaican Community's Emancipence, the Friends of Recovery observance of International Overdose Awareness Day, the County's Rally Against Hate – these all occur in White Plains, in the middle of our downtown.

---

*As White Plains continues to grow, traffic must be reconfigured, cultural events amped, more night life activities (dancing, food), attract white tablecloth restaurants, beautify storefronts with plants/attractive signs, entertainment with top performers, have more green spaces available." - Respondent to One White Plains, Vision Survey*

---

## Heart of White Plains

Downtown Revitalization Initiative - Round 7

### Housing Variety

To promote continued social and economic diversity of the population, the City ensures that **local housing stock serves a wide array of income levels**. Twelve (12) zoning districts make up HWP, permitting a mix of housing options at a variety of scales. Supportive policies such as White Plains' [Affordable Rental Housing Program](#), ETPA, SCRIE and DRIE rental programs and presence of three (3) public housing developments provide diverse housing options for any income level.

### Food Choice Diversity

From street food to celebrity chef menus, a walk around HWP is an adventure in food diversity. Looking for the best hummus in the county? White Plains has it. Hot dogs? Pizza? Sushi? Falafel? Hawaiian? Mexican? Columbian? Oysters? Steak? Peruvian? Cocktails? Yes – it is all here! And so much more. In addition, there are numerous groceries and delis and a Farmer's Market every Wednesday. Five food pantries provide nourishment to food insecure individuals and families, while Meals on Wheels, with support from the City, delivers meals to homebound seniors. A local Church in HWP has a "caring cupboard" stocked with shelf stable products; people can help themselves to the food they need. The Youth Bureau operates a community garden where youth grown and consume healthy vegetables.

### Retail

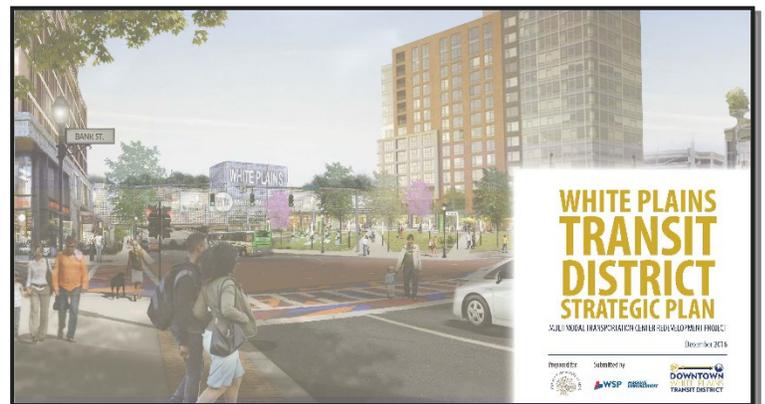
HWP is the largest in size, scale and overall economic impact of the City's nine (9) commercial nodes. With a combined 1.7 million square feet of retail, three regional shopping malls: The Westchester and City Center have regional pull, attracting visitors and spending power from primary, secondary, and to a lesser extent, tertiary trade areas. Community-serving businesses are concentrated along Mamaroneck Avenue, which is characterized by a mix of food and beverage tenants, neighborhood goods, and services businesses. Two-thirds of economic activities are generated by workers, visitors and students from the primary trade area. The following table provides information on commercial classifications and characteristics.

Core Downtown District	Downtown	Mamaroneck Avenue
Gross Leasable Floor Area	800,000+	200,000+
Anchors	City Center, Train Station	Bloomindale's, Dick's Sporting Goods, Whole Foods
Resident Population (0.5 mi)	12,684	8,979
Commercial Classification	Super-Regional Mall	Community Center
Predominate Trade Area	Primary, Secondary, Tertiary	Primary, Secondary

*White Plains Economic Development Diagnostic & Findings - Streetsense, 2022*

### Transit Center

White Plains Transit Center is one of the City's greatest assets, serving as a terminal/transfer point for countywide Bee-Line Buses, intercity buses, and taxicabs. Located just across Ferris Avenue is the recently renovated White Plains Metro-North railroad station and access to the Bronx River Parkway. In partnership with NYSERDA, the City completed a Transit District Strategic Plan in 2016, which outlined a number of improvements to the area including station upgrades, change to traffic circulation and



## Heart of White Plains

### Downtown Revitalization Initiative - Round 7

other strategies to enhance the pedestrian experience around the station. The Transit District is heavily trafficked with daily commuters traveling into and out of White Plains. Hop on the train and within 40-minute ride one could travel to Grand Central in New York City, Fairfield County Connecticut or Putnam County New York.

### Walkability/Bikeability

HWP's compact development pattern creates a walkable area that spans no more than 0.8 miles from end to end. To enhance this inherent walkability, the City secured a \$1.2 million grant through the NYS Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) to enhance existing bike and pedestrian infrastructure. Projects included Westchester County's first fully separated two-way bike lane on the south side of Martine Avenue to provide east-west bike access from to the core of the downtown to the Transit District. This protected bike land added to the existing five miles of bike lanes and shared bicycle routes. The grant also provided a secure bike corral at the Metro-North station, three major crosswalk enhancements, as well as upgrades to existing bike paths. To encourage a "pedestrian-first" mentality on our streets, the City installed a HAWK beacon signal connecting public open space with the Galleria Mall. With the push of a button, pedestrians can activate a red light for traffic, offering a mid-block crossing for safely crossing the street, and reducing the time spent walking the remainder of the block. The grant funded Vision Zero Action Plan will further promote walkability/bikeability.

### Environmental Sustainability

White Plains has established itself as a regional leader in developing and implementing clean energy projects and sustainability measures. In 2014, the Council adopted the New York State Unified Solar Permit, resulting in over 400 roof-mounted solar panels on commercial and residential structures citywide. To take **decarbonization** one-step further, the Council approved the [Community Solar Project](#) transforming eight (8) City-owned facilities to urban renewable energy production sites. With a maximum generating capacity of 6.8 MW, these facilities produce enough clean energy to power more than 700 single-family homes each year.



To continue making the transition to renewables accessible, using NYSERDA's model solar ordinance as a guide, the Council adopted a zoning amendment allowing the installation of solar parking canopies, streamlining the permitting process for smaller scale arrays and establishing comprehensive oversight for installations over 1 MW.

Leading by example, the City has 14 electric vehicles and 26 hybrid electric/gas vehicles; it is the City's policy to transition the fleet to low- or zero-emission vehicles when they reach the end of their useable life. All municipal parking lots and garages have at least one electric vehicle charging station. All streetlights and lighting in municipal buildings, parking garages and athletic facilities have been upgraded to LED lights. Several City buildings are enrolled in a "demand reduction" campaign, voluntarily reducing usage when the grid is at peak levels. The City requires LEED certification standards for Site Plan Approval and charges reduced building permit fees for projects that meet LEED certification standards.

## Heart of White Plains

Downtown Revitalization Initiative - Round 7

### Broadband Accessibility

Data indicate that 92.4% of White Plains households have a computer and 100% of White Plains residents have access to broadband (*2018 FCC Broadband Deployment Report*). State of the art computer access and mobile hotspots are available free of cost at the local public library. However, the digital divide is real and the City is committed to expanding equitable access to broadband; broadband in current and new parks would be one-step in the right direction while also encouraging people to get outside and use the free amenities.

## Supportive Local Policies

### White Plains Business Improvement District (BID)

Founded in 1998, the **White Plains Business Improvement District** (BID) is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) corporation that offers supplemental services to the White Plains Central Business District to enhance its economic, social, and cultural landscape. The White Plains Downtown BID encompasses 142 properties, and over 300 businesses with approximately 5.9 million square feet of office and retail space. Membership includes small business owners, national retailers, Fortune 500 Companies, and industry leading commercial property owners. The BID's Board of Directors represents the diversity of business interests in downtown White Plains and is committed to creating an environment conducive to economic development and business growth. The Bid is a committed implementation and thought partner of the City as evidenced by their strong letter of support for this application.

### Affordable Rental Housing Program

In order to ensure the continued social and economic diversity of its population, a defining characteristic, the City established a policy requiring Affordable Rental Housing to be included in developments with more than ten (10) dwelling units. This program has created 303 affordable housing units in 17 buildings since the program's inception in 2012. These units are available to households earning between 50% and 110% of the Area Median Income in Westchester County. An additional 137 affordable units are currently under construction and 141 units are approved for development. As a component of this program, the City is also building the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, which accepts payment in-lieu of providing units on site, to be used to deepen affordability citywide.

---

*"Building an affordable apartment building for senior citizens has long been our dream. Thanks to the city's support – through zoning amendments and funding – we are finally seeing this dream become a reality." - Dr. Gregory Robeson Smith, Senior Pastor, Mount Hope AME Zion Church*

---

### Zoning

As an outcome of the Transit District Strategic Plan, the City created its first transit-oriented development zone. The TD-1 district promotes transit use, walking, and biking; reduces reliance on motor vehicles; encourages the provision of publicly accessible open space; provides ground floor commercial uses that enhance the pedestrian experience and creates connectivity to the downtown core area; and implements design guidelines that ensure that new development is compatible with adjacent properties.

The Westmoreland Avenue corridor was rezoned from a Light Industrial (LI) Zoning District to a Light Industrial Mixed Use (LI-M) Zoning District to capitalize on the area's proximity to White Plains MTA Station. The new zoning district encourages transit-oriented, mixed-use development and the adaptive reuse of industrial buildings and

## Heart of White Plains

### Downtown Revitalization Initiative - Round 7

underutilized properties for residential uses. As result, several properties have been targeted for redevelopment; including a 190-unit multi-family residential project at 39 Westmoreland, where a portion of the existing building's façade will be retained to maintain the character of the neighborhood, and the recently completed, 65-unit Norden Lofts at 121 Westmoreland, where a former industrial building was converted into loft-style rental apartments.

To reduce the amount of parking that is required on-site, zoning permits shared parking for uses with varying peak times. When projects are located in proximity to municipal parking lots and garages developers are able to pay a fee in-lieu of providing parking. These alternative methods of providing parking create more efficient parking practices, committing less space to vehicles and more space to people.

## Climate Smart Community / Clean Energy Community

The City formalized its pledge to be a Climate Smart Community in 2015 and obtained Bronze Certification in 2023. In recognition of our leadership in reducing energy use, cutting operating costs, and driving clean energy locally, NYSERDA designated White Plains as a Clean Energy Community in 2017. The City is currently participating in a Climate Action Plan Institute.

## Complete Streets Policy

"Complete Streets" became a City policy in 2013, directing the Department of Public Works to explore the feasibility of implementing the complete streets design features and recognize that the needs of users of the road network vary in the planning stages of each project. Following the adoption of this policy the City established the first dedicated bike lane in Westchester County, made improvements to pedestrian crossing signalization, and have improved the visibility of curb ramps and crosswalks. The open streets component among the DRI projects advances the Complete Streets goals. In 2023, the City received a Safe Streets for All Grant that will provide additional resources to strengthen the Complete Streets agenda.

## Non-Discrimination Laws/Protection of Diverse Populations

Non-Discrimination and protection of diverse populations is paramount to life in the diverse downtown of White Plains. Equitable impact is considered in all endeavors. In late 2020, the City formed a Police Reform Committee. Headed up by the local chapter of the NAACP, the committee's work was informed by three overarching and intertwined principles. Procedural justice includes treating people with dignity and respect. A sanctity of life mindset, reinforced not only in police department policies and procedures, but in training, disciplinary proceedings, and interactions with the public, means that officers have the tools and judgment to refrain from use of force were possible. The guardian mindset conveys that police officers must first and foremost view themselves as defenders and protectors and it is through this lens that officers should view their interactions with the public.

The **Community Development Block Grant** administered by the Planning Department is entirely dedicated to assisting low- and moderate-income residents and communities. Under this grant, the City affirmatively furthers fair housing choice, provides funding to a variety of service providers. A vulnerable population that specifically concerns the City is our seniors. Using **AARP's eight domains of livability**, the City tracks progress in meeting this group's needs; a shiny new multi-generational center could transform the lives of White Plains seniors.

Application of **smart cities innovation technology** is a critical element to the City's operation and long-range planning. Comprehensive, real-time data offers the ability to watch events as they unfold, understand changes in demand patterns and respond with faster and lower-cost solutions. White Plains uses data-based platforms such as ArcGIS, Building Blocks, and Muncity to inform decision making and improve the quality of life.

## Heart of White Plains

Downtown Revitalization Initiative - Round 7

### Public Support

Stakeholder engagement has been a multi-year iterative process with numerous opportunities to refine and focus ideas. The initial efforts built off community engagement efforts from the [White Plains Transit District Plan](#) (2016) and the [One White Plains Comprehensive Plan](#) "Imagine" Phase(2021). Both processes were informed by feedback received at numerous public meetings, community events and online outreach. A website and social media hosted a series of surveys in English and Spanish. A Listening Tour with Spanish, Haitian Creole, and English capabilities visited food distributions, tennis matches, the High School and other venues to ensure broad based involvement from often-unengaged communities. Ultimately, over 4,500 people shared their vision.

The City highlighted the DRI initiative as part of the City's ongoing One White Plains Comprehensive Plan process. A survey and preliminary project ideas were shared on the site [onewhiteplains.com/DRI22](http://onewhiteplains.com/DRI22) so the public could shape the vision and projects included in the application. The site received nearly 1,000 "hits" within 24 hours.

In the summer of 2022, Planning Department staff were present at Farmer's Market to hear project ideas, get feedback on preliminary projects, and to advertise the September 2022 public meeting for the Round 6 DRI. A draft vision statement, three revitalization strategies and a preliminary list of projects were embraced and refined. An open call for projects was also made available.



When the 2022 DRI application was not awarded, stakeholder engagement continued, in concert with the ongoing Comprehensive Plan process through online and in person consultation. Over 150 people attended a June 2023 public meeting. Participants voted with color coded dots to indicate which ideas resonated. Following the public meeting, the initiative displays remained in the White Plains public library gallery for additional feedback.

The response was electric. Even some of the City's most vocal critics joined in this process, calling the interactive components of the DRI "hopeful" and "inspirational". We are on to something, here and now. This process has energized the people of White Plains; they own this vision and are ready to enliven our downtown.

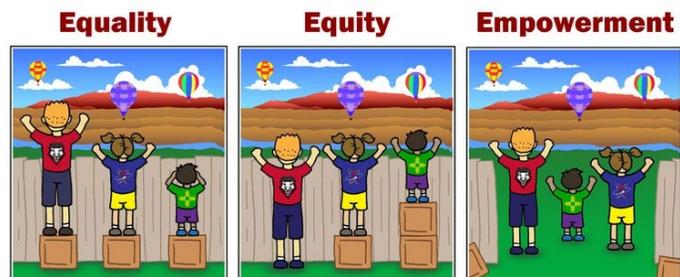


## Heart of White Plains

Downtown Revitalization Initiative - Round 7

An analysis of the combined input illuminated certain principles that members of the public identified as guiding the City's future growth and focusing the efforts of the Heart of White Plains: Ensure Equity and Inclusion; Encourage Sustainability; and Bolster the Quality of the Public Realm.

**Ensure Equity and Inclusion:** For the Heart of White Plains this means creating inclusive opportunities that are inviting to diverse communities. For the Heart of White Plains equity focuses on ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances, have fair access to housing, recreation and business opportunities.



**Bolster the Quality of White Plains' Public Realm:** "Public realm" refers to the shared spaces that are accessible and used by everyone in the community. These spaces include streets, sidewalks, parks, plazas, squares, and other communal areas. Bolstering the quality of the local public realm involves a holistic approach that focuses on creating vibrant, accessible, and people-centered spaces. Ultimately, such investments can enhance local quality of life, promote social interaction, and contribute to the overall vibrancy of the community.



**Encourage Sustainability:** Incorporating sustainability into public and private development and other investments is essential for creating a resilient, environmentally conscious, and socially responsible community. In the Heart of White Plains projects will showcase how the "green" elements can be catalysts for transformative projects that spark the downtown potential.



## Heart of White Plains

Downtown Revitalization Initiative - Round 7

# Transformative Project Opportunities and Readiness

## Strategy #1: Ensure Equity and Inclusion

The more a downtown focuses on equity and inclusion the more welcoming that downtown will be to live, shop, work and play. The projects in this strategy build of the City's commitment and expand equitable opportunities in housing, recreation and business.

### 1.1 Adaptive Re-use of Vacant Office Space for Affordable Housing

\$\$\$\$

*Invest in a state-of-the-art, affordable housing project that transforms vacant office space into historic opportunities for low/moderate income families to access housing in the Heart of White Plains. Stakeholder engagement revealed that initiatives focused on addressing the housing crisis were a top priority. Leverage additional funds from local, state and federal resources. Integrate "green building" principles that result in net zero carbon footprint.*

### 1.2 Dynamic Multi-Generational Community Center

\$\$\$\$

*Invigorate the downtown with a centrally located innovative center that combines the best in design and functionality. The center can be repurposed as temporary shelter in the event of a climate emergency. Meet NYS Stretch Code requirements.*

### 1.3 Equitable Access to Economic Development

\$\$

*Working with the Business Improvement District, entrepreneurs will be offered an Ambassador Program to guide them through the process of siting and starting a new business in the Heart of White Plains. This will include affirmative efforts to outreach to groups that have been historically excluded from equitable opportunities.*

### 1.4 Broadband in Municipal Parks

\$\$

*Build out the City's broadband coverage in parks and public areas to encourage further utilization of the City's parks to bring people together and provide equitable access. The City's existing broadband coverage provides an excellent starting point.*

### 1.5 Downtown Water Feature - Splashpad/Spray Park

\$\$\$

*As global temperatures rise, there is nothing more equitable than a free, accessible cooling water feature.*

### 1.6 Even Safer Access to Downtown

\$\$\$

*Build on the results of planning studies to strengthen routes into Downtown. Repurpose an Urban Renewal-era public right-of-way as a greenway for cyclists and pedestrians. Improve the connection between historic Battle Hill neighborhood and the Heart of White Plains to provide safe accessibility for bikes and pedestrians. This project addresses physical barriers between an adjacent low-/moderate-income neighborhood and HWP.*



## Heart of White Plains

Downtown Revitalization Initiative - Round 7

### Strategy #2: Bolster the Public Realm

Plentiful public spaces that uplift the community, promoting health, happiness, and well-being, that is the goal of this strategy. From open streets, to rooftops, to underpasses, the component projects of this strategy advance the revitalization of HWP by generating vibrant mini "town squares" that connect and inspire.

#### 2.1 Open Streets

\$\$

*Convert underutilized street segments to public space for events, outdoor dining, markets and more. Closing Court Street weekly for the Farmers Market and other large scale community events has had great success and public support. This project would increase the days and hours of Court Street closure and explore other streets to employ this model. Open streets can be fitted with speakers and infrastructure for overhead art displays. Imagine a canopy of artistic umbrellas in April, or a Day at the Beach on a stifling summer afternoon.*

#### 2.2 Branding and Wayfinding

\$\$

*Implement a dynamic branding strategy to augment visits to White Plains, positioning the City for additional investments. Install attractive, functional wayfinding signage to assist residents and visitors in finding the transit center municipal parking, bike lanes, malls, neighborhoods, etc. Utilize technology that allows for people of all abilities to interact with the signage (auditory, visual, tactile).*

#### 2.3 Public Art and Placemaking Fund

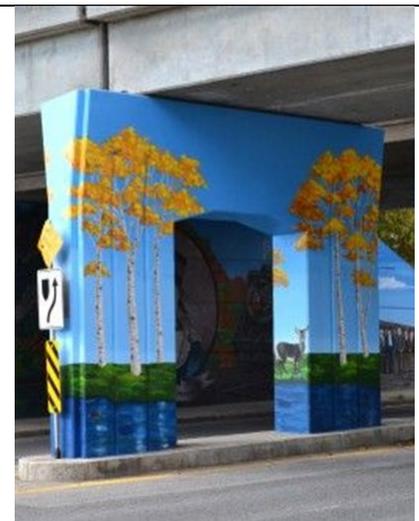
\$\$\$

*Launch a grant fund focused on public art and placemaking to create new opportunities for local artists and organizations representing the diversity of the City. Light up the City with artistic lighting features. Siting art installations in places such as public parking garages and road underpasses, will promote safety as well as place making and provide a warm and welcoming experience.*

#### 2.4 Downtown Gateway Beacon

\$\$

*The clock tower located at the White Plains MTA Station serves as a gateway beacon to the Heart of White Plains and has been in need of repair for years. Over 10,000 utilize the station daily. Transforming the existing clock tower into an operational and attractive welcoming centerpiece for the Heart of White Plains will welcome visitors as they arrive in White Plains by train.*



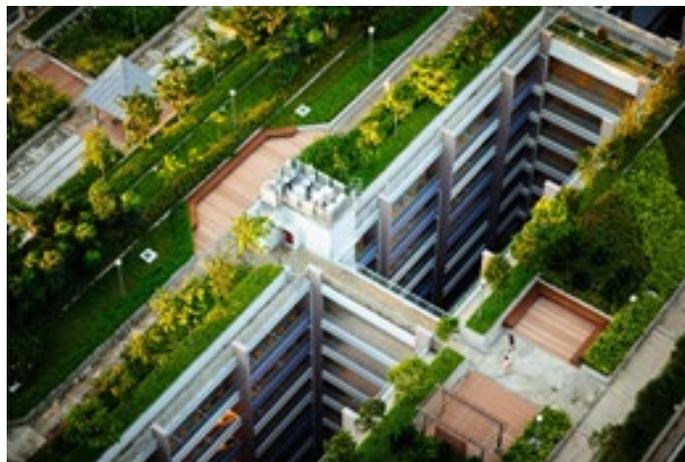
## Heart of White Plains

Downtown Revitalization Initiative - Round 7

### Strategy #3: Encourage Sustainability

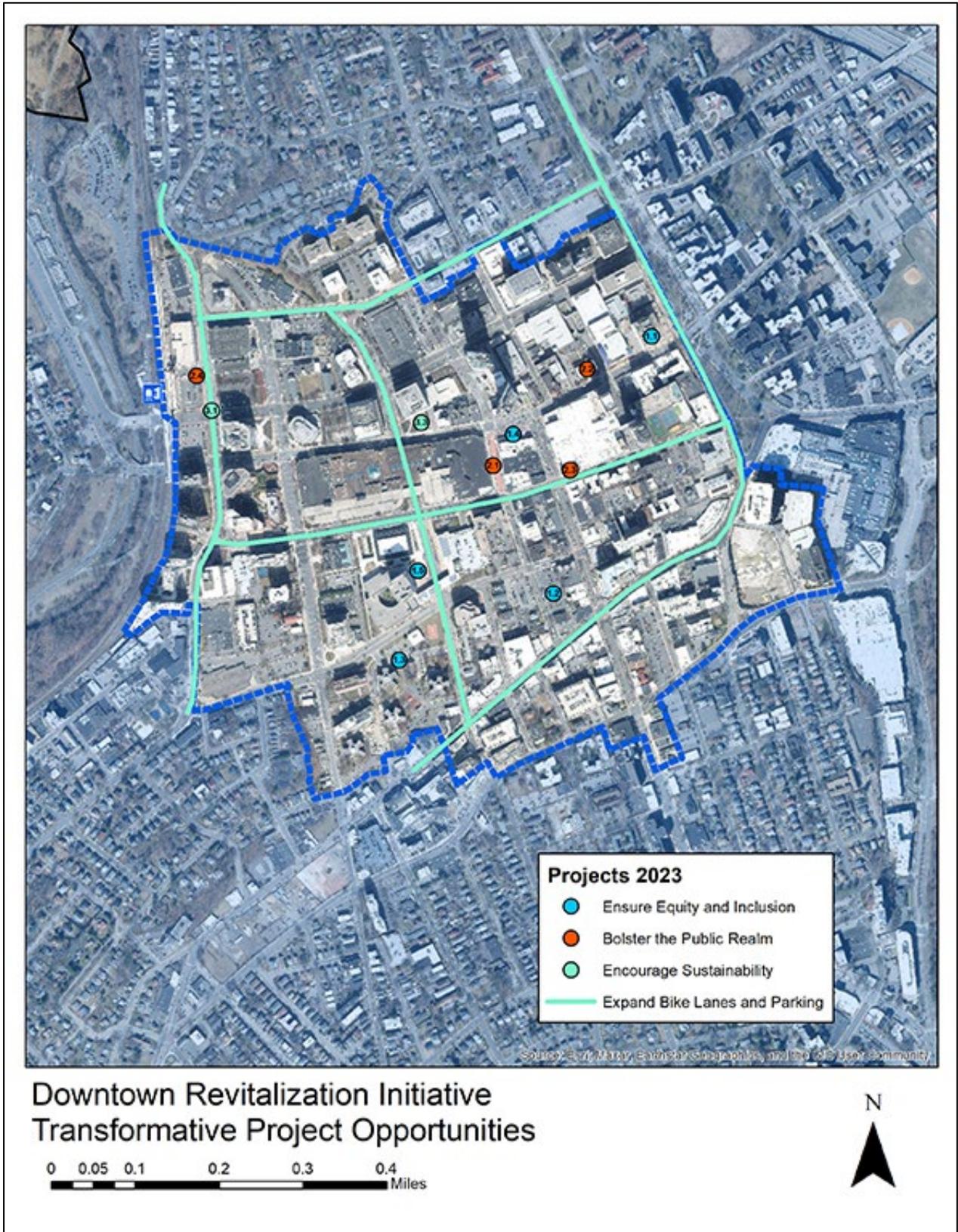
A verdant downtown that provides ample opportunities for biking, walking and public transportation is both welcoming and climate friendly. The projects within this strategy aim to mitigate against the current climate challenges while simultaneously creating a more attractive, fresher, cleaner, inviting downtown experience.

<b>3.1</b>	<b>Expand Bike Lanes and Bike Parking</b>	\$\$\$\$\$
<i>Implement specific Transit District Strategic Plan and Safe Streets for All Action Plan recommendations to encourage non-motorized modes of transportation by expanding the network of bikes lanes, and providing additional bike parking at the City's municipal parking garages in the the Heart of White Plains.</i>		
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Green Roofs at Municipally Owned Facilities</b>	\$\$\$\$
<i>Convert underutilized spaces atop municipal facilities into green roofs to reduce stormwater runoff, encourage pollinators, reduce the urban heat island effect, and to create a passive recreation space for residents. The Hamilton-Main Parking Garage is an excellent location to pilot this transformation and provide much needed additional green space in HWP.</i>		
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Train Station Circulation</b>	\$\$\$\$
<i>As envisioned in the Transit District Strategic Plan and further studied in the Safe Streets for All Action Plan, expand the pedestrian walkway along Hamilton Avenue and reconfigure station pick-up/drop off area in front of White Plains MTA Station, enhancing circulation and connecting the station with downtown. The easier it is for people to circulate, the more vibrant the downtown will become.</i>		
<b>3.4</b>	<b>Transform Unimproved Lots into Pocket Parks</b>	\$\$\$
<i>Identify and transform unimproved and/or underutilized lots into welcoming, green oases within the downtown. Initiate public-private partnerships to further enhance and create public accessibility to invite people to linger and enjoy. Possible locations: 45 Bank Street, 12 Quarropas Street, and 111 Main Street.</i>		



# Heart of White Plains

Downtown Revitalization Initiative - Round 7



## Heart of White Plains

Downtown Revitalization Initiative - Round 7

### Administrative Capacity

The City has a strong team with proven experience in leading and administering transformative projects from planning to implementation.

**Mayor Thomas Roach** provides the vision and leadership to drive the DRI. Mayor Roach is passionate about environment and sustainability; he has spearheaded banning the dirtiest heating oils, creating the first protected bike lane in Westchester County, and establishing a network of electric vehicle charging stations in municipally owned parking structures. Under his direction, in partnership with NYPA the City created a large-scale Community Solar Project using a portfolio of City-owned sites. In total, these installations will generate up to 6.8 megawatts of power per year, tripling the amount of solar energy produced in Westchester County.



Mayor Roach's long-term vision for the city is to continually enhance the downtown environment for businesses and residents. With Mayor Roach's leadership, the city completed a complex transaction to take control of the dilapidated, privately held garage and replace it with a state of the art city-owned garage, which has provided needed parking and an economic boost to the city. Under his initiative, the City received grant funding to enhance Court Street, where a number of these events occur, as a premier event space.

As Commissioner of Planning for the City of White Plains, **Christopher Gomez**, AICP, will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the DRI grant. During his tenure, the city has embarked on a multitude of exciting planning initiatives, including a multi-year community process to reimagine the downtown transit district, adoption of a new city-wide affordable rental housing ordinance, and the implementation of various adaptive-reuse and transit oriented development regulations. Currently, the city is in the midst of creating a dynamic new comprehensive plan: One White Plains that will serve as a community-based, equitable development vision to guide sustainable growth over the next 20 years. Mr. Gomez heads up this work, liaising with the consultants the Department has retained to assist with the plan.



Mr. Gomez's department includes a deep bench of talent who will assist with the DRI project. The team members include three AICP certified planners whose combined expertise includes preparing numerous plans and projects of all sizes, feasibility studies, zoning amendments, and long-range planning efforts; this team drafted groundbreaking solar, environmental, and affordable housing ordinances that have served as models for communities throughout the region. Planning Department staff also has expertise in GIS to collect, analyze, and manage data to create thematic maps, web applications and informational dashboards for a variety of end users. The Community Development component of the Planning Department is dedicated to serving low- and moderate-income individuals, families and communities. Their expertise will help ensure a focus on equity and inclusion in all of the DRI's strategies and projects. Together, the team has led various robust community and stakeholder outreach efforts, and has facilitated countless public workshops, meetings and hearings.

**CHAIR**  
Education

**COMMITTEES**  
Cities 2

Corporations, Authorities  
and Commissions

Elections

Judiciary

Labor

Rules

**THE SENATE  
STATE OF NEW YORK**



**SHELLEY B. MAYER**  
**SENATOR, 37<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT**  
**DEPUTY MAJORITY LEADER FOR  
STATE/FEDERAL RELATIONS**

**Albany Office:**  
Room 509

Legislative Office Building  
Albany, New York 12247  
(518) 455-2031 Office  
(518) 426-6860 Fax

**District Office:**

235 Mamaroneck Ave., Suite 400  
White Plains, NY 10605  
(914) 934-5250 Office  
(914) 934-5256 Fax

smayer@nysenate.gov

September 18, 2023

Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council  
33 Airport Center Drive - #201  
New Windsor, NY 12553

**RE: Letter of Support - Downtown Revitalization Initiative, City of White Plains**

Dear Members of the Mid-Hudson Region Economic Development Council:

As the senator representing White Plains in the NYS Senate, I am pleased to submit this letter of support for the City of White Plains' proposal to be designated as a participant in New York State's Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI).

My staff and I have been fortunate to participate in the many community meetings surrounding the White Plains DRI Strategic Investment Plan. With additional and ongoing public input built into this proposal, I know that improving connectivity, enhancing accessible public spaces and strengthening community identity will positively benefit downtown White Plains and all its residents.

I support the projects included in this proposal such as developing a state-of-the-art intergenerational community center, improving bike and pedestrian access to a variety of transit options, and installation of vibrant murals and public art to promote a thriving downtown.

White Plains has seen enormous public and private investment. Local business, cultural, educational and civic communities are robust and engaged. The DRI resources will build upon the City's ongoing efforts to improve quality of life, attract and maintain a diverse workforce, and strengthen climate resilience.

I strongly endorse this application, and I look forward to supporting the work ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Shelley B. Mayer'.

Shelley B. Mayer



CHRIS BURDICK  
Assemblymember 93<sup>rd</sup> District  
Westchester County

THE ASSEMBLY  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

CHAIR  
Subcommittee on  
Employment Opportunities for  
People with Disabilities

COMMITTEES  
Banks  
Correction  
Environmental Conservation  
Housing  
People with Disabilities  
Veterans' Affairs

Secretary, Majority  
Conference

September 18, 2023

Mid- Hudson Regional Economic Development Council  
33 Airport Center Drive #201  
New Windsor, NY 12553

**RE: Letter of Support - Downtown Revitalization Initiative, City of White Plains**

Distinguished Members of the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council,

As the NYS Assemblymember representing the 93<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District, I am pleased to submit this letter of support for the City of White Plains' proposal to be designated as a participant in New York State's Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI).

I join with so many other members of our community that have contributed to the projects identified in the White Plains DRI Strategic Investment Plan. I recognize that improving connectivity, enhancing accessible public spaces and strengthening community identity will positively benefit downtown White Plains.

This office fully supports the projects included in this proposal such as developing a state-of-the-art inter-generational community center, improving bike and pedestrian access to a variety of transit options, and installation of vibrant murals and public art to promote a thriving downtown.

White Plains has seen enormous public and private investment. Local business, cultural, educational and civic communities are robust and engaged. The DRI resources will leverage the City's ongoing efforts to improve quality of life, attract and maintain a diverse workforce, and strengthen climate resilience.

I strongly endorse this application. Please do not hesitate to contact me for any further information.

Sincerely,

Chris Burdick  
Assemblymember 93<sup>rd</sup> AD



AMY R. PAULIN  
Assemblywoman 88<sup>th</sup> District  
Westchester County

THE ASSEMBLY  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

CHAIR  
Committee on Health

COMMITTEES  
Education  
Rules

TASK FORCES  
Women's Issues  
Puerto Rican/Hispanic

September 21, 2023

Linda Malave  
Regional Director  
33 Airport Center Drive #201  
New Windsor, NY 12553

Dear Ms. Malave:

I write to offer my strong support for the City of White Plains in their pursuit to be designated as a participant in New York State's Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). I recognize that improving connectivity, enhancing accessible public spaces and strengthening community identity will positively benefit downtown White Plains immensely.

This proposal includes developing a state-of-the-art intergenerational community center, improving bike and pedestrian access to a variety of transit options and installation of vibrant murals and public art to promote a thriving downtown.

White Plains has seen enormous public and private investment. Local business, cultural, educational and civic communities are robust and engaged. The DRI resources will leverage the City's ongoing efforts to improve quality of life, attract and maintain a diverse workforce and strengthen climate resilience.

I strongly endorse this application and I welcome the opportunity to be part of the team that gets this work done. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Paulin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Amy" and last name "Paulin" clearly legible.

Amy R. Paulin  
Member of Assembly

September 26, 2023

To Whom it May Concern:

On behalf of the Downtown White Plains Business Improvement District, we are pleased to submit a letter supporting the City of White Plains' application for a Downtown Revitalization Grant (DRI).

There are several reasons why we believe this application should be seriously considered:

- **The City is finishing a deep comprehensive planning process that has intentionally prioritized diverse stakeholder engagement and input in the visioning of a future White Plains.** From this process, very thoughtful and consensus-driven priorities have emerged: a large number having to do with the economic stability and vibrancy of local business and improvement of the public realm (specifically in terms of beautification, placemaking and safety) in downtown White Plains. The natural next step for the soon-to-be finalized plan is to build upon/finely refine these consensus-based priorities, and then implement them. DRI funding would support both of these required next steps and leverage the deep investment this community has already made in researching and prioritizing downtown improvements.
- **The City of White Plains has the required civic fabric in place to best utilize the DRI.** Prior to taking the helm of the White Plains BID, I was Executive Director of the Jamaica Center Business Improvement District in Jamaica, Queens. Jamaica was one of the state's earlier recipients of the DRI grant. One of the reasons Jamaica met nearly all objectives in its DRI planning process (commonly known as "Jamaica Now") can be attributed to the tightly-knit and active social, government, civic, and economic development organizations that partnered to make the initiative a success. White Plains is very similar: it has a very active and thoughtful citizenry, purposeful and results-driven civic and nonprofit organizations, and a "get along and get things done" culture that has resulted in many jointly-presented public improvements and cultural collaborations over the years. This magic formula of cooperation and action will ensure the DRI project has wide support and is successfully implemented.

- **Our municipality has the infrastructure and capacity to oversee this grant.** This City's administration is comprised of exceptionally strong departments and department heads (Public Works, Parks, Parking, Safety and Planning to name just a few) that have a track record of working together (and with community groups) to get things done. There is a culture of excellence at the highest levels of City government, with fine attention paid to details in service delivery. The Mayor and the Common Council serve as strong advocates and cheerleaders for the City. Annual DRI funding is limited; the State can be assured that if chosen, White Plains would be a thoughtful and responsible fiduciary partner with these funds. Further, due to its high-functioning capacity, White Plains would be able to test and implement more complex projects to improve its downtown, opening opportunities for future smaller communities undertaking the DRI to benefit from the learning process, successes and models of our City.
- **The need is present and the time is now.** As outlined in the application, downtown White Plains is going through one of its largest transitions in decades, with two outdated traditional shopping malls being repurposed to other commercial and residential uses, and major downtown developments resulting in an additional 10,000-12,000 residents to White Plains. DRI funding will help White Plains craft a model community that artfully shepherds this change and builds a success story upon it with necessary upgrades. And because so much change is occurring during this time period, it could be economically advantageous and efficient to make DRI investments at the same time that other construction projects and planning processes are taking place. In a few short years, with the State's help, downtown White Plains can and will serve as a model downtown. Also consider White Plains' role as the official county seat for Westchester and its centralized position within this highly populated zone. By granting our community the DRI, the State is not only investing in White Plains' downtown, but also what is essentially the *County's* downtown as well.

From the perspective of the Downtown White Plains Business Improvement District (a nonprofit that has provided supplemental sanitation, business support, beautification and advocacy services for over 300 businesses and 5 million gross commercial floor area since 1998), we are particularly excited by the proposal's calls for placemaking support on Court Street, public art, improved connections between rail and downtown, increased downtown green spaces and third spaces (e.g. addition of downtown splash pad), and appointment of a much-needed Citywide business liaison.

Our BID (both staff and our committed Board of Directors) will serve as a committed thought, implementation, and (in certain cases) ongoing maintenance partner, just as we envision other major stakeholders, including but not limited to Arts Westchester, the White Plains

Beautification Foundation, major civic-oriented property and business owners and area higher educational institutions, doing the very same.

Thank you again for your serious consideration of the City's DRI application. If further questions arise regarding our organization's support, please do not hesitate to contact us.



Jennifer Furioli  
Executive Director



Bonnie Silverman  
Chairwoman



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
SUSAN FOX

September 19, 2023

**RE: Letter of Support - Downtown Revitalization Initiative, City of White Plains**

Distinguished Members of the Mid-Hudson Region Economic Development Council,

I wish to convey my support for the City of White Plains' proposal to be designated as a participant in New York State's Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI).

We recognize that improving connectivity, enhancing public spaces, and strengthening the community will not only positively benefit downtown White Plains, but also enhance the overall health of the citizens of White Plains. Many of these initiatives directly address social determinants of health that are important in ensuring overall health and well-being.

We fully support the projects identified in the White Plains DRI Strategic Investment Plan including the development of an inter-generational community center that could be instrumental in engaging with families and community groups. Further, improving bike and pedestrian access will not only encourage more physical activity, but also help our community members connect to a variety of transit options. In addition, numerous studies have shown that exposure to the arts can lead to lower anxiety and depression and the proposed art installations will serve to enhance an already thriving downtown.

White Plains Hospital has always been an enthusiastic supporter of the city's initiatives. We strongly endorse this application and are proud to be a member of the community in helping to build a healthier and more robust White Plains.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Susan Fox', written over the word 'Sincerely,'.



WHITE PLAINS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

EDUCATION HOUSE  
FIVE HOMESIDE LANE  
WHITE PLAINS, NEW YORK 10605  
914-422-2000  
www.wpcsd.k12.ny.us

Joseph L. Ricca, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

September 14, 2023

Mid-Hudson Region Economic Development Council  
33 Airport Center Drive - #201  
New Windsor, NY 12553

**RE: Letter of Support - Downtown Revitalization Initiative, City of White Plains**

Distinguished Members of the Mid-Hudson Region Economic Development Council,

As the Superintendent of Schools of the White Plains City School District, I am pleased to submit this letter of support for the City of White Plains' proposal to be designated as a participant in New York State's Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI).

We join with so many other members of our community that have contributed to the projects identified in the White Plains DRI Strategic Investment Plan. We recognize that improving connectivity, enhancing accessible public spaces, and strengthening community identity will positively benefit downtown White Plains.

We fully support the projects included in this proposal such as developing a state-of-the-art inter-generational community center, improving bike and pedestrian access to a variety of transit options, and installation of vibrant murals and public art to promote a thriving downtown.

White Plains has seen enormous public and private investment. Local business, cultural, educational, and civic communities are robust and engaged. The DRI resources will leverage the City's ongoing efforts to improve quality of life, attract and maintain a diverse workforce, and strengthen climate resilience.

We strongly endorse this application, and we welcome the opportunity to be part of the team that gets this work done.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Joseph L. Ricca', is written over a circular blue stamp. The stamp is partially obscured by the signature.

Joseph L. Ricca, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools



September 20, 2023

**RE: Letter of Support - Downtown Revitalization Initiative, City of White Plains**

Distinguished Members of the Mid-Hudson Region Economic Development Council,

As the Interim Executive Director at Sustainable Westchester, I am pleased to submit this enthusiastic letter of support for the City of White Plains' proposal to be designated as a participant in New York State's Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI).

We join with so many other members of our community that have contributed to the projects identified in the White Plains DRI Strategic Investment Plan. We recognize that improving connectivity, enhancing accessible public spaces and strengthening community identity will positively benefit downtown White Plains.

We fully support the projects included in this proposal such as developing a state-of-the-art inter-generational community center, improving bike and pedestrian access to a variety of transit options, and installation of vibrant murals and public art to promote a thriving downtown.

White Plains has seen enormous public and private investment. Local business, cultural, educational and civic communities are robust and engaged. The DRI resources will leverage the City's ongoing efforts to improve quality of life, attract and maintain a diverse workforce, and strengthen climate resilience.

We strongly endorse this application, and we welcome the opportunity to be part of the team that gets this work done.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Kuster", written in a cursive style.

Jim Kuster  
Interim Executive Director  
Sustainable Westchester



**El Centro Hispano, Inc.**

**Isabel Elsa Villar**

295 Central Ave

White Plains, NY 10606

914-289-0500

elcentrohispano1@gmail.com • www.elcentrohispano.org

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Cecilia Bikkal, Esq.  
*President*

Nicholas Wolff  
*Vice President*

Jhuriko Then  
*Treasurer*

Dr. Martha Duval  
*Secretary*

Luz H. Barrera  
Chris Cabanillas, Esq.  
Lucille A. Fontana, Esq.  
Keyla Garcia-Cabrera  
Ronny Hersch  
Lourdes Lopez- Valle  
Dr. Scott MacDonald  
Ingrid Ordoñez-Street  
Dr. Annette Rotter  
Dr. Norberto Torres-Otero  
Leslie Zane

Robin Bikkal, Esq.  
*President Emeritus*

Isabel E. Villar  
*Founding Executive  
Director Emeritus*

H. Judith Aucar  
*Executive Director*

Daisy Flores  
*Deputy Director of  
Administration*

Claudia Malaga  
*Deputy Director of  
Finances*

**RE: Letter of Support - Downtown Revitalization Initiative, City of White Plains**

Distinguished Members of the Mid-Hudson Region Economic Development Council,

As the Executive Director of El Centro Hispano, Inc. I am pleased to submit this enthusiastic letter of support for the City of White Plains' proposal to be designated as a participant in New York State's Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI).

We join with so many other members of our community that have contributed to the projects identified in the White Plains DRI Strategic Investment Plan. We recognize that improving connectivity, enhancing accessible public spaces and strengthening community identity will positively benefit downtown White Plains.

We fully support the projects included in this proposal such as developing a state-of-the-art inter-generational community center, improving bike and pedestrian access to a variety of transit options, and installation of vibrant murals and public art to promote a thriving downtown.

White Plains has seen enormous public and private investment. Local business, cultural, educational and civic communities are robust and engaged. The DRI resources will leverage the City's ongoing efforts to improve quality of life, attract and maintain a diverse workforce, and strengthen climate resilience.

We strongly endorse this application and we welcome the opportunity to be part of the team that gets this work done.

Sincerely,

H. Judith Aucar  
Executive Director

**RE: Letter of Support - Downtown Revitalization Initiative, City of White Plains**

Distinguished Members of the Mid-Hudson Region Economic Development Council,

As the Chief Operating Officer of ArtsWestchester, I write in enthusiastic support for the City of White Plains' proposal to be designated as a participant in New York State's Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI).

As Westchester's leading funder and advocate for the arts, we know how vital creativity is to building sustainable and inclusive communities. We applaud the City of White Plains for embracing the arts as part of their placemaking strategies, and are proud to call the city our home. We recognize that improving connectivity, enhancing accessible public spaces and strengthening community identity will positively benefit downtown White Plains. We are excited by the projects included in this proposal such as developing a state-of-the-art inter-generational community center, improving bike and pedestrian access to a variety of transit options, and of course, the installation of vibrant murals and public art to promote a thriving downtown.

White Plains has seen enormous public and private investment. Local business, cultural, educational and civic communities are robust and engaged. The DRI resources will leverage the City's ongoing efforts to improve quality of life, attract and maintain a diverse workforce, and strengthen climate resilience. We join with so many other members of our community that have contributed to the projects identified in the White Plains DRI Strategic Investment Plan.

We strongly endorse this application and we welcome the opportunity to be part of the team that gets this work done.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Reckling  
COO, ArtsWestchester  
September 27, 2023



**"We cannot always build a future for our youth,  
but we can always build our youth for the future."**

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

September 18, 2023

Judy Mezey  
Deputy Commissioner of Planning  
City of White Plains  
70 Church Street  
White Plains, NY 10601

PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
CITY OF WHITE PLAINS  
2023 SEP 26 AM 9:29

**RE: Letter of Support - Downtown Revitalization Initiative, City of White Plains**

Dear Judy and Distinguished Members of the Mid-Hudson Region Economic Development Council,

As the Board President of Friends of White Plains Youth Bureau, I humbly submit this letter of support for the City of White Plains' proposal to be designated as a participant in New York State's Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI).

We join with so many other members of our community that have contributed to the projects identified in the White Plains DRI Strategic Investment Plan. We recognize that improving connectivity, enhancing accessible public spaces and strengthening community identity will positively benefit downtown White Plains.

We fully support the projects included in this proposal such as developing a state-of-the-art inter-generational community center, improving bike and pedestrian access to a variety of transit options, and installation of vibrant murals and public art to promote a thriving downtown.

White Plains has seen enormous public and private investment. Local business, cultural, educational, and civic communities are robust and engaged. The DRI resources will leverage the City's ongoing efforts to improve quality of life, attract and maintain a diverse workforce, and strengthen climate resilience.

We strongly endorse this application, and we welcome the opportunity to be part of the team that gets this work done.

Very truly yours,

Renée Willis Smith, Board President, Friends of White Plains Youth Bureau



# WHITE PLAINS BEAUTIFICATION FOUNDATION, INC.

PO Box 1614, White Plains New York 10602  
e-mail: [info@wpbf.org](mailto:info@wpbf.org) or visit [www.wpbf.org](http://www.wpbf.org)

**Hon. Thomas M. Roach**  
Mayor, the City of White Plains  
*Honorary Chairman*

September 25, 2023

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Terry Hanson**  
*President*  
**P. Lynn Oliva**  
*First Vice-President*  
**Cecelia Spilotros**  
*Vice-President*  
**Diane Taylor**  
*Secretary*  
**Cormac Daly**  
*Treasurer*  
**Angela Vitellas**  
*Assistant Treasurer*  
**Jean Bello\***  
*Adopt-A-Park Chair*  
**Deborah Donahoe\***  
*Garden Chair*  
**Mary Ann DeRosa\***  
*Immediate Past President*

## DIRECTORS

Patricia Bernstein  
Sue Jacobine Brennan  
Mary Briante  
Dorothy Chervinsky  
Kate Collins  
Ann Marie Dougherty  
Ann Edwards\*  
Nancy Giges  
Micaela Kelly Goldberger  
Melanie Kolby  
Blaine Levenson  
Ruth Manecke  
Marie Silverman Marich\*  
Kathleen Masterson  
Mary Merenda\*  
Barbara Ramsdell\*  
Nancy Rice  
Dorothy Schere\*  
Beth K. Wallach\*  
Stuart Werner  
Peter G. Wilcox  
Nick Wolff

## HONORARY DIRECTORS

Barbara T. Vrooman\*  
Brian Wallach\*

## COUNSEL

Lucia Chiochio, Esq.  
Cuddy & Feder

## ADVISORS

Comm. Wayne D. Bass  
Comm. Stefania Mignone

\*Past President

## **RE: Letter of Support - Downtown Revitalization Initiative, City of White Plains**

Distinguished Members of the Mid-Hudson Region Economic Development Council:

As a director of White Plains Beautification Foundation (WPBF), an independent, all-volunteer not-for-profit encouraging gardens and green spaces in our City, I am pleased to submit this enthusiastic letter of support for the City of White Plains' proposal to be designated as a participant in New York State's Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI).

White Plains Beautification joins with so many other members of our community contributing to the projects identified in the White Plains DRI Strategic Investment Plan. We recognize that improving connectivity, enhancing accessible public spaces and strengthening community identity will positively benefit downtown White Plains.

We fully support the projects included in this proposal such as developing a state-of-the-art inter-generational community center, improving bike and pedestrian access to a variety of transit options, and installation of vibrant murals and public art to promote a thriving downtown. Such projects augment our own that are designed to promote a healthy and welcoming environment with public gardens filled with plantings and outdoor art for beauty, enjoyment and relaxation.

White Plains has seen enormous public and private investment. Local business, cultural, educational and civic communities are robust and engaged. The DRI resources will leverage the City's ongoing efforts to improve quality of life, attract and maintain a diverse workforce, and strengthen climate resilience.

We strongly endorse this application and we welcome the opportunity to be part of the team that gets this work done.

Sincerely,

Nancy S. Giges