



**GOVERNOR**  
KATHY HOCHUL



 [Economic Development \(/keywords/economic-development\)](/keywords/economic-development)

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# Governor Hochul Announces Transformational Projects for Riverhead as Part of \$10 Million Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Eight Downtown Revitalization Projects Enhance Streetscapes and Public Gathering Places, Expand Arts and Cultural Activity and Increase Housing and Business Opportunities

Governor Kathy Hochul today announced eight transformational projects in the Town of Riverhead as part of the \$10 million Downtown Revitalization Initiative award. The awards will enhance streetscapes and public spaces, expand arts and cultural activity, and increasing housing and business opportunities.

"We are committed to revitalizing Long Island, and these investments will create a more walkable, vibrant downtown that will benefit generations of New Yorkers who call Riverhead home," **Governor Hochul said.** "These projects will enhance public spaces and create more affordable housing opportunities, and my administration will continue to prioritize transformational projects that will strengthen communities across New York."

The Town of Riverhead sits at the junction of the North and South Forks on the East End of Long Island; its location at the mouth of the Peconic River provides access to beaches and other natural resources. Unlike communities further west, the Town is largely rural and agricultural and has become one of the state's burgeoning wine-growing regions. Riverhead's DRI awards will knit existing and new investments together to create a safe, pedestrian-friendly community with better connectivity within the downtown area and between the downtown and the riverfront.

The investments are part of the Governor's ongoing efforts to revitalize the Long Island economy and create more opportunities. The DRI is led by the Department of State, which provides technical assistance as each participating community develops a Strategic Investment Plan identifying specific projects with a unique vision for the revitalization of the downtown area.

The specific projects to be funded through the DRI support several goals and

strategies contained in the community's Strategic Investment Plan, such as enhancing streetscapes and public gathering spaces, expanding arts and cultural activity, and increasing housing and business opportunities. The \$9.7 million State investment in these projects through the DRI will leverage additional public and private sector investments as the revitalization process proceeds and builds momentum.

The projects include:

### **Enhanced Streetscapes and Public Gathering Places**

#### **Creating a New Town Square - DRI Award: \$3,240,000**

Build a new public plaza and gathering space that can facilitate year-round activation and provide accessible pedestrian connections and vistas from Main Street to the riverfront.

#### **Enhancing Peconic Park with an Adaptive Playground - DRI Award: \$245,000**

Construct a playground and park space with a water feature and educational activities that relates to the waterfront location and utilizes green infrastructure and design to aid in downtown resiliency efforts.

#### **Enhancing the Pedestrian Realm Along Main Street - DRI Award: \$750,000**

Install traffic calming design elements to improve pedestrian safety along Main Street at two prominent intersections, including curb bump-outs, raised crosswalks, and pedestrian signalization. Install new street trees and landscaping.

#### **Building a New Town Rowing Facility - DRI Award: \$250,000**

Construct a floating ADA accessible community boat launch facility in the Peconic

River with space to maneuver and launch crew boats and, if feasible, racks to store the crew boats.

### **Expanded Arts and Cultural Activity**

#### **Implementing Public Art Program - DRI Award: \$250,000**

Engage local artists to build permanent public artworks in Downtown Riverhead, building on success of existing community artworks.

#### **Expanding the Suffolk Theater - DRI Award: \$2,000,000**

Expand an existing, historic theater stage and add green room and back of house functions, all as a component of a larger development with residential units that include workforce housing.

#### **Building a New Entrance and Welcome Center for the Library - DRI Award: \$215,000**

Provide a new accessible entrance and pedestrian path with signage, lighting and landscaping and include interior space for a self-serving visitor center providing promotional materials for Downtown businesses and events.

### **Increased Housing and Business Opportunities**

#### **Creating a Mixed-Use Development at Griffing Avenue - DRI Award: \$2,750,000**

Construct a new mixed-use development consisting of workforce housing and retail/commercial space lining a public parking structure.

**New York Secretary of State Robert J. Rodriguez said,** "With picturesque beaches, a flourishing arts and cultural scene and its strategic location in the

celebrated Long Island Wine Region, downtown Riverhead is being rediscovered and reimagined through key investments that leverage the community's existing assets. These eight new projects complement improvements already being made in this burgeoning town by enhancing walkability and connectivity between the downtown and the riverfront, building multi-generational public gathering places and constructing new mixed-use developments to increase housing and business opportunities, all making Riverhead an ideal place to live, work and visit. I'm excited to see the positive impact these projects will have on this community for generations to come."

**Empire State Development President, CEO and Commissioner Hope Knight said,** "These transformative Riverhead projects show how the DRI recharges communities, by creating access that reinforces connection. By making it easier for pedestrians and cyclists to get around, and with the Peconic River as the main attraction, this Long Island community will draw more visitors, businesses and economic activity."

**New York State Homes and Community Renewal Commissioner RuthAnne Visnauskas said,** "Today's eight awards for Riverhead will build upon the town's natural assets and help the community grow as an arts and cultural hub in Suffolk County. Through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative, New York is making strategic investments in municipalities all over the state that result in more vibrant and walkable downtowns with quality housing opportunities and stronger local economies."

**State Senator Anthony Palumbo said,** "I am pleased that Riverhead has secured this important funding for the redevelopment of their downtown. This critical grant funding will boost economic development throughout the region, while fostering a greater sense of community with the riverfront as a focus."

**Assemblymember Jodi Giglio 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."

**Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone said,** "In Suffolk, our downtowns are the heart of our communities, and over the last few years, Riverhead has worked incredibly hard to reinvigorate their business districts and bring new life into their communities. These transformation projects, made possible by Governor Hochul, reinforce our ongoing revitalization efforts."

**Riverhead Supervisor Yvette Aguiar said,** "For millions around the world, this is the season for 'believing'. Thank you Governor Hochul, for 'believing' in the future of Downtown Riverhead."

### **Downtown Revitalization Initiative**

New York State's DRI, a cornerstone of its 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. Led by the Department of State with assistance from Empire State Development, Homes and Community Renewal and NYSERDA, the DRI represents an unprecedented and innovative "plan-then-act" strategy that couples strategic planning with immediate implementation and results in compact, walkable downtowns that 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. More information on the DRI is available [here](#).

## **Contact the Governor's Press Office**

 **Contact us by phone:**





















Albany: [\(518\) 474 - 8418](tel:(518)474-8418)


New York City: [\(212\) 681 - 4640](tel:(212)681-4640)

 **Contact us by email:**

[Press.Office@exec.ny.gov](mailto:Press.Office@exec.ny.gov)

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