



TOWN OF RIVERHEAD

Yvette Aguiar, Town Supervisor

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Press Release:

Town of Riverhead Seeks Public Participation in Town Square Design Process

Press Conference Riverhead Town Hall on March 22, 2021 at 9:30 a.m.

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Supervisor Yvette Aguiar said the Town of Riverhead has commenced an extensive public participation process on the development of the new Town Square in downtown Riverhead.

“Despite the obstacles of the 2020 pandemic, the united Riverhead Town Board has made unprecedented progress towards the creation of the Riverhead Town Square, which will be the centerpiece of a fully revitalized, thriving Downtown Riverhead,” said Supervisor Aguiar. The Town Square will transform the downtown business district into a thriving regional hub that offer an attractive venue for people to live, work and play here in Riverhead. However, we need the public’s input to ensure that when the Town Square is developed, its creation was the product of fully recognizing the needs and desires of the community,” said Aguiar.

The public input process began last week with two full days of meetings facilitated by the town’s Pittsburgh-based consultant Urban Design Associates (UDA) between the Town Board members, the Community Development Department staff and key stakeholders in the revitalization of downtown Riverhead, including businesses, property owners, the Chamber of Commerce and the Business Improvement District.

The next vital component involves soliciting input from the general public. It will include a website generated through Social Pinpoint, a configurable digital community engagement platform that is designed to generate public participation in planning projects. The website will be linked to the townofriverheadny.gov, <https://www.riverheadrecreation.com>, www.riverheadchamber.com, www.downtownriverhead.org/riverhead-bid and www.riverheadida.org. The website will feature interactive maps and will enable participants to leave feedback, attach photos of suggestions and submission of ideas. Community engagement will consist of a digital survey.

The public input process kicks off with a virtual public Zoom meeting on Thursday, April 1, 2021 from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The meeting will include an opening and closing session for all participants, as well as smaller breakout rooms according to specific topics of interest. The public input process will continue for six to eight weeks, as the town readies itself to submit grant applications for federal and state funding, due by the end of May, 2021.

Upon being awarded an \$800,000 grant from Empire State Development, the Town of Riverhead leveraged \$612,000 in Suffolk County water quality funding and \$400,000 in Suffolk County Jump Start funding to enter into contract to acquire three parcels that will result in the Town Square. The buildings located at 117 and 121 East Main Street will be demolished, while 127 East Main Street would remain in place, although it will be extensively renovated.

Closing on three parcels which are currently owned by Riverhead Enterprises is expected to occur in the very near future. The Town Square will be framed on the west by the new Long Island Science Center at 111 East Main Street. The Long Island Science Center was awarded \$775,000 from Empire State Development to support its expansion to a building adjacent to the Town Square, enabling increased opportunities for families and schools to access its array of educational resources.

Supervisor Aguiar said, “The Town Board has worked diligently and cooperatively to advance the Town Square concept, which will consist of a public gathering space, pedestrian connectivity and open vistas from Main Street to the riverfront. The primary goal of this project is to reorient the pedestrian focus from the traditional Main Street to the Peconic Riverwalk.” The Town intends to repurpose some existing town-owned riverfront parking as public gathering spaces, which may include performance spaces, splash fountains and permeable brick/stone pathways interspersed with rain gardens.

Supervisor Aguiar expressed her appreciation to New York State and Suffolk County for being enthusiastic financial supporters of the revitalization of Downtown Riverhead and the Town Square project. “My office, the Town Board, along with the Community Development Department, the Riverhead Industrial Development Agency and the Town Attorney’s Office, look forward to continuing this collaborative effort with New York State Economic Development and Suffolk County, Riverhead is finally moving forward.”