Jamaica Brownfield Opportunity Area

Implementation Strategy

Community of Jamaica
Queens County, New York

Study Submitted By:

Greater Jamaica Development Corporation

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IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New York State Department of State formally designated the Jamaica Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) on April 9, 2015. Concurrently with BOA Designation, Greater Jamaica Development Corporation (GJDC) rolled out a brownfield revitalization Implementation Strategy with state funds provided under the BOA program. The Strategy, which unfolded over a four year period from 2011 through October of 2015, developed information and marketing tools and conducted outreach activities that helped catalyze development projects consistent with the Jamaica Station BOA plan.

A wide range of development goals and objectives for the Jamaica BOA were formulated at community meetings held in conjunction with a BOA Nomination Study (2007-2010). The community’s goals most appropriate for development in the Station Area were:

- Improve Quality of Life for residents;
- Improve retail variety and quality, especially amenities such as “tablecloth” restaurants;
- Create economic opportunities, especially creation of quality jobs in Jamaica; and
- Create affordable housing.

Three Immediate Priority sites in the Station Area BOA are currently in construction or are expected to be in construction within one year. The three sites include two hotels, one of which will include a full service restaurant, and 580 units of mixed income housing and retail space.

CONTEXT

The Nomination Study

The boundaries of the Jamaica BOA defined in GJDC’s 2010 Nomination Study enclose 0.2 square miles of land (132 acres). The land includes 40 tax blocks, containing 616 contiguous properties. Of these, 224 were found to be brownfields; 120 were underutilized; and 36 were vacant.

Given the location of the brownfield sites in a downtown area, the size of the properties, the large number of property owners, and the need to accommodate a wide range of uses and functions, GJDC, in consultation with the Department of State, created four distinct, contiguous “Brownfield Sub-Zones” to better identify and...

“Jamaica’s diversity, close knit neighborhood fabric, and anchor institutions provide a strong foundation for growth and opportunity.” - Mayor Bill de Blasio, 2015

Impact of Immediate Priority BOA Development Sites

- Estimated $395MM in total private investment;
- Creation of up to 3,000 construction jobs;
- Estimated 450 permanent jobs created; and
- A projected $12.5MM in new property taxes for the City of New York
analyze high priority development opportunities within the Nomination Study’s BOA boundary.

FOUR CONTIGUOUS SUB-ZONES OF THE JAMAICA BOA PER THE 2010 NOMINATION STUDY

Focus of the BOA Implementation Strategy: The Station Area Sub-Zone

The Nomination Study identified the Station Area sub-zone as the area having the most attractive market conditions for priority redevelopment. Its special advantages for mixed use development were:

- assembled sites allowing for transformational development projects;
- an inter-modal transportation hub to support transit oriented development;
- existing urban infrastructure (sanitation, power, streets and sidewalks) and specialized infrastructure improvements at various stages of design or implementation; and
- up-zoning in 2007 from low density industrial use to high density commercial use.

GJDC identified and invited stakeholders, including community and business groups, realtors, developers, property owners, elected officials, city and state agencies, and the local community board (Queens CB12), to participate on the BOA Advisory Committee. There were four meetings between November, 2012 and March, 2014 and additional meetings between representatives of agencies on the Committee with regulatory authority concerning BOA plans and BOA planning consultants. Advisory Committee members contributed to the evaluation and prioritization of both infrastructure improvements and redevelopment options in the BOA.
The figure below, “Re-Zoning of the BOA Station Area,” graphically demonstrates the extensive number of parcels that were changed from low density, industrial use, to commercial use with of-right Floor Area Ratios (FAR) as high as 12:1.¹

**2007 Re-zoning of Land Use from Industrial to Mixed Use in the BOA Station Area**

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¹ FAR, or Floor Area Ratio, is total square feet of a building divided by the total square feet of the lot on which the building is located. For example, a developer could build 30,000 Ft² of space on a 5,000 Ft² parcel with an allowable FAR of 6. Since higher FARs allow more dense construction, higher FAR parcels are more valuable per square feet of land.

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Infrastructure Improvements Supporting Station Area BOA Development

A range of public infrastructure improvements, either necessary or supportive of development projects in the Station Area BOA, were in the pipeline at the time of the Nomination Study. These projects were recently completed or are now fully planned and funded through programs and sources other than BOA.

- The re-building and redevelopment of the east side of Long Island Railroad underpass at Sutphin Boulevard (“The Shops at Station Plaza”) is complete;
- The Atlantic Avenue Extension/“Two-Way Pair” to ease traffic in and out of the Station Area is fully planned and funded; and
- The creation of a Station Plaza to increase pedestrian safety and ease vehicular congestion in the Station Area is also fully planned and funded.

Resources for GJDC’s BOA Implementation Strategy supported preliminary designs for additional public infrastructure improvements. These were:

- Conceptual landscape design, as well as re-design and engineering studies to improve street lighting, sidewalks or curbs for Archer Avenue between 150th Street and 147th Place; and
- Plans and schematic designs for cosmetic rehabilitation and lighting for the 150th Street Underpass.
The renovations that created the **Shops at Station Plaza** began in fall, 2009. The work transformed a dreary and foreboding loading dock area in the middle of the Jamaica transit hub into a pedestrian-friendly location with distinctive lighting over the street and sidewalk, and 5,600 feet of ground floor retail space.

The **Atlantic Avenue Extension/Two-Way Pair** will open a short stretch of Atlantic Avenue, currently an undeveloped, mapped right-of-way, and link two parallel streets, 94th and 95th Avenues, with each other and with U.S. 687 (Van Wyck Expressway), the primary highway linking JFK Airport with Queens and the interstate highway system. Ninety-fourth and 95th Avenues will be made one-way, creating a smooth, circular flow of traffic into and out of the Station Area from U.S. 687. A new, half-acre green space, Gateway Park, will include a viewing park, a sitting park and a playground straddling the newly opened Atlantic Avenue Extension.

The **Station Plaza project** will realign Archer Avenue at Sutphin Boulevard to provide space where users can change mass transit modes — bus, subway, or rail — in safe and comfortable conditions. Critical elements for the project are fully planned and funded. They include widened sidewalks, additional bus lanes, plazas with relocated subway exits, new lighting, a public information system, landscaping, and bus shelters.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY: FINDINGS AND PRODUCTS**

**BOA PROGRAM-SUPPORTED DESIGN WORK FOR INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS**

BuroHappold Consultants led a Design Team for the **Archer Avenue Improvement Project**, which had an overall goal of improving the pedestrian experience on Archer between 150th Street and 147th Place, a stretch of three blocks in the Station Area BOA that lead vehicles and pedestrians into the transit hub.

Street surfaces and sidewalk paving were documented as being in poor condition throughout and needed repair or replacement. The City of New York is considering designation of Archer Avenue for Select Bus Service, which would preclude widening of sidewalks. GIDC believed there are significant benefits to not implementing Select Bus Service on this route, which would allow the addition of more trees and widening sidewalks for future street furniture and pedestrian ease.

**ARCHER AVENUE EXISTING CONDITIONS**

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*Diagram of Archer Avenue Existing Conditions*

1. United States Post Office
2. Barnes Towing & Fence Service
3. Surface Parking
4. Unknown Building
5. Inner City Physiotherapy Group / Salvation Army Store
6. Archer Avenue N.Y. Auto Collision (Bumpout)
7. Archer Avenue N.Y. Auto Collision (Garage)
8. Bus Hub
9. Unknown Building
10. Parking Garage
11. Community Residence
12. Louisiana Atlantic Hay Bracing
13. Unknown Building
14. Unknown Building
15. Shop 4 Tech
16. Drive Thru Parking
17. Men Look for Saloon
18. Drive Thru Parking
19. Cafer & Reynolds Garage Doors
20. Temple of Restoration
21. Parking
22. Employment Department
23. Tenant Parking
24. Tenant Parking without Buildings
25. Archer Auto Service
26. Ban Auto Service
27. Old Auto Body Work
28. Unknown Building
29. Surface Parking
The primary, realizable, recommended improvements to Archer included identifying locations for planting nine additional trees and converting a small area used for surface parking into green space.

**ARCHER AVENUE RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS**

Given the physical and experiential connection between the Archer Avenue improvement project and the 150th Street underpass beneath the LIRR right-of-way, the BuroHappold design team was an efficient choice for developing plans and schematic designs for cosmetic rehabilitation and lighting for the 150th Street Underpass.

In spite of occasional daylight seeping through spaces between the four LIRR right-of-ways above the street and sidewalks, the poor condition of underpass structural concrete, inadequate lighting, occasional standing water, and poor sanitation, gives a pedestrian an experience akin to walking into an unwelcome cave.

Two design concepts were developed for achieving the primary goals of improving pedestrian safety and creating a more pleasant and inviting experience for those walking through the underpass. Both design alterna-
The alternatives included the restoration of the concrete and steel structures, street and sidewalk resurfacing, and measures to improve a blind corner on the northwest side of 150th Street. The alternatives, “Illuminated Bridges” and “Community Mural,” diverged in ways to improve lighting and how to create a sense of place in the underpass.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Design Elements</th>
<th>Alternative 1: Illuminated Bridges</th>
<th>Alternative 2: Community Mural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enhance Lighting</td>
<td>A series of color-changing LED luminaires embedded in the structure to create an attractive, glowing effect</td>
<td>Mural surfaces washed with LED light. Bounced light from wall surface will illuminate the walkways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance Pedestrian Connectivity/Safety</td>
<td>Add a third layer of functional roadway downlight in the underpass to support safe vehicular traffic. Improve pedestrian safety at the 150th Street/bus depot intersection</td>
<td>LED lighting will pull the eye through the underpass, enhancing the pedestrian experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a more pleasant experience for pedestrians</td>
<td>Wall-mounted lights on the façade perpendicular to the direction of traffic flow for effective pedestrian lighting through the full length of the underpass.</td>
<td>Design competition for local artists to select a commissioned mural in the underpass.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The two alternatives were presented to the Station Area BOA advisory committee on March 12, 2014. The majority of committee members preferred Alternative 2 – Community Mural, primarily because of its connection to neighborhood artists and a general comfort with mural projects, which are already common in the community. GJDC agreed to provide maintenance and periodical replacement of the murals.

The Station Area BOA is central to the Downtown Jamaica business district. Updated market analyses for the downtown included:

- A survey of consumer needs and desires that generated 739 responses from people who live, work,
shop, dine or otherwise visit Downtown Jamaica;

- Interviews with stakeholders from among BOA advisory committee members, including directors of Business Improvement Districts in Jamaica, elected officials, local property owners, Community Board 12 (which includes the BOA), and New York City agencies;

- A sector-based, macro-economic feasibility study for development of Strategic Sites in the Station Area; and

- An assessment of activity growth at JFK Airport and related transit use and their relationship to development potential in the Station Area BOA.

Stakeholders were walked through a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) of the downtown generally and the Station Area BOA in particular. Their views supported the data and provided valuable insights.

**Strengths:**

- unparalleled access to transportation - subways, buses, trains, and planes;
- a growing positive reputation for urban fashion;
- a high degree of ethnic and cultural diversity;
- a wealth of public facilities, including courts, York College, and the federal Social Security Office; and
- it is bordered by solid neighborhoods of middle class residents who could be attracted as shoppers/workers.

**Weaknesses:**

- crime in the area, or more accurately the perception of crime is an issue; actual crime is down in Jamaica, but while recent measures have been successful at pushing crime out, perception lingers;
- inadequate curbside parking or way-finding signage to affordable off-street parking;
- high commercial property rents; and
- inadequate attractions to the downtown—not enough entertainment/recreation/dining in downtown; poor retail mix; poor merchandise quality.

**Opportunities:**

- most stakeholders were enthusiastic about the opportunities to redevelop large portions of Downtown Jamaica—particularly, but not exclusively, the Station Area BOA—and were aware that the 2007 rezoning facilitates this growth; and
- the stakeholders were positive about the benefits to commerce of public events, and supported the development of more and larger events in public spaces like Rufus King Park.

**Threats:**

- crime and the perception of lack of safety was the most often cited threat to commerce;
- the excellent, intermodal transportation system that serves the district as a strength was also cited as a threat to commerce, as it makes it easy to simply pass through, and not stop, in Downtown Jamaica.
The fundamental concept supporting development in the Station Area is Transit Oriented Development (TOD), a mixture of housing, office, retail and/or other amenities in a walkable neighborhood located within a half-mile of mass transit. TOD offers access to jobs, housing, services, culture, shopping and entertainment that is convenient, green, and combines urbanity with a more relaxed lifestyle. Clearly, the Station Area BOA, having a unique, multi-modal mass transit hub and recent up-zoning to high density mixed use, is ideally positioned for TOD.

The sector-based, macro-economic feasibility study found sufficient market demand for development of four sectors in the Station Area BOA. They are, in order of level of market demand:

- Hospitality;
- Retail;
- Housing; and
- Office uses.

**JFK AIRPORT: DEVELOPMENT CATALYST**

There is opportunity to strengthen the connection between the Station Area BOA and the growth, activity, and development at JFK by offering a New York neighborhood experience that can be home to the workforce at JFK, that is convenient for tourists and business travelers alike, and offers a choice of mass transit connections to midtown Manhattan.

- The number of passengers flying through JFK has grown by 67% since 2003, with 53 million passengers in 2014.\(^2\)
- JFK employs approximately 37,000 people; JFK employees living in or near the Jamaica Station Area would have a short AirTrain ride to work and a 19 minute Long Island Railroad trip to Manhattan.\(^3\)
- Since 2003, the year AirTrain opened, the number of people passing through JFK has increased by 60%.
- JFK tenants continue to upgrade terminals and improve amenities to accommodate more passengers, creating demand for more employees and further increasing the flow of people to and from the airport.
- In 2014, 6.5 million people rode the AirTrain to/from Jamaica Station, up 18% from the 5.5 million users in 2011.\(^4\)

**MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS IMPLEMENTATION**

The overall marketing strategy focused a value proposition on developers and to large, anchor tenants that could capitalize on the retail, hospitality, residential and office development potential of the Station Area.

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\(^3\) Ibid.

These investors were essentially pioneers, taking a higher than average risk to revitalize the commercial and residential center in the downtown. The market research data developed by JGSC Group under the BOA program helped the target market appreciate the current vitality of the downtown and the power of Transit Oriented Development to support the transformational change that their investment would bring.

Marketing tools and activities in support of the strategy were developed with a long-term vision, allowing continued Brownfield Opportunity Area marketing and promotional outreach over time. These tactics and activities included, but were not limited to:

- Creation of an integrated social media platform, i.e. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn;
- Extensive use of electronic or internet related activities, e.g., e-news bulletins and email blasts, etc.
- Creation and dissemination of marketing materials at related industry promotion and speaking events;
- Direct outreach to target markets; and
- Publicity and promotion through writing and solicitation of articles and news to be published in print media and on-line portals promoting the Station Area.

The integrated social media campaign under BOA raised brand recognition. Driving visitors to your Web site is a primary metric used to measure the effectiveness of social media and internet-related strategies. The average number of unique visitors per month to GJDC’s Web site more than doubled, from 1,183 to 2,428, following full implementation of the social media plan.

BOA’s marketing and sales consultant, John Markunas, identified the larger shopping mall and outlet store developers and approached the top three candidates with information regarding development opportunities for Strategic Sites 2 and 8, which together represent the largest sites still available for development. One of the three was the Triple Five Group, a shopping mall owner and operator, hotel operator, and real estate development company.

Triple Five expressed interest in development of a “theme park,” high-end retail and parking complex. GJDC had several conference calls and meetings and arranged tours of Downtown Jamaica for Triple Five in March, April and May of 2015. The development company ultimately decided the footprint of BOA Site 2 was too small to incorporate all the elements of the project. BOA Site 8, which is directly across Sutphin Boulevard from Site 2, could add another 71,000 Ft² to the project’s footprint, but it is not yet fully assembled. Triple Five felt that relocation and buy-outs of current business owners and re-location of the New York City Department of Finance, required for full assemblage of Site 8, added too much uncertainty and the possibility of a long-term, costly process.

Stakeholders in Jamaica’s future development would be well served to continue to explore assemblage of these sites and to re-visit mall or mall-related development prospects with Triple Five in the future.

GJDC retained Shane Kavanagh Public Relations (SKPR) to create and implement a BOA public relations strategy as part of the marketing effort. The PR strategy focused on three key messages:

1. Downtown Jamaica is a great place to live, work, shop and recreate.
2. Downtown Jamaica is ripe for investment.
3. The public sector is committed to Jamaica’s revitalization and is providing resources to stimulate the area’s economic growth.

Parallel with the marketing plan’s focus on developers and potential tenants, the public relations program aimed to reach real estate developers, as well as brokers and decision makers in the key business sectors of
dining, hospitality, office and retail. To support and echo the message to the private sector, PR attention was paid to stakeholders, “influencers” such as the Real Estate Board of New York and the Queens Chamber of Commerce, and public officials.

**DEVELOPMENT OF STATION AREA BOA STRATEGIC SITES**

There were a total of 10 Strategic Sites identified in the Station Area BOA. Four sites are classified as “Immediate Priority,” with the expectation that construction will begin concurrent or within one year of the termination date of GJDC’s current BOA agreement. 5 This assessment is based on public statements by ownership, properties going to contract or sold, and the development of architectural plans for construction. Three sites were classified as “Intermediate Term,” based on assessments of similar criteria, with the expectation that they would be in the ground in 2-4 years. And three sites are considered “Long Term Redevelopment Projects,” with an expectation that construction of a number of potential end uses that are consistent with the BOA plan would begin in four-plus years.

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5 Agreement terminates December 31, 2015

“Now is the time to harness the interest of the community, City, and Queens Borough President to set forth an ambitious agenda for a diverse, vibrant, and accessible community around one of our City’s great central business districts and inter-modal transportation hubs – Jamaica, Queens.” –Jamaica NOW Action Plan
IMMEDIATE PRIORITY STRATEGIC SITES

STRATEGIC SITE 1A

Currently planned 225-room, 26-story Hilton Garden Inn with a full-service restaurant, meeting space and, for use by its guests, a gym and pool. The project will be the first of its kind in Jamaica and will employ green building standards for LEED Certification (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). The developer, Able Hotels, has purchased the site. Construction is expected to begin first quarter 2016 and take approximately 18 months to complete. A rendering of the project appears at right.\(^6\)

- Land Cost: $4.5 million
- Estimated Remediation Cost: $150,000
- Estimated Development Cost: $54 million\(^7\)
- Construction Jobs: 305\(^8\)
- Permanent Jobs: 92\(^9\)
- Billable Property Tax 2015/16: $40,600
- Estimated Property Tax After Development: $2.36 million\(^10\)

STRATEGIC SITE 6/11A ASSEMBLAGE

BRP Development Corporation closed on the property on May 18, 2015. Construction is expected to begin in 2015 and be completed by late 2016 or early 2017. The project design is by FXFOWLE ARCHITECTS LLP. The plan for this site—"The Crossings at Jamaica Station"—includes 100,000 Ft\(^2\) of retail and community facilities, 300 underground parking spaces, and 580 units of mixed income housing. The project, to be developed by minority-owned BRP, will feature cutting-edge environmental design, including an on-site co-generation plant, and is expected to receive LEED Silver Certification. Retail will be located on the first 2-3 floors with two housing towers located above. The rental costs will be structured to meet New York City Mayor de Blasio’s proposed 20/30/50 split to be eligible for affordable housing incentives: 20% affordable to households with income of 60% Area Median Income (AMI) or less, 30% to those below 80% AMI and the remainder at a market rate affordable to a maximum of 125% AMI.

- Estimated Land Cost: $18 million\(^11\)
- Estimated Remediation Cost: $3.75 million

\(^6\) This project continues to evolve. While the rendering shows retail on the first two floors, this concept has been replaced by the revenue-generating and market driven need for additional hotel rooms. Still, the rendering provides a sense of scale and bulk of the project and its transformative effect. It will be the tallest building in the downtown by some 18 stories.

\(^7\) Current estimate by Able Development; includes hard and soft costs

\(^8\) Estimate by Able Development

\(^9\) Estimate by Able Development

\(^10\) Calculated as 45% of development costs to obtain assessed value, multiplied by 2014/15 applicable tax rate of 10.684%

\(^11\) Land Cost estimate of $30/buildable Ft\(^2\) based on recent comparables.
• Estimated Development Cost: $280 million
• Estimated Construction Jobs: 2,350
• Permanent Jobs: 180
• Billable Property Tax 2015/16: $331,000
• Estimated Property Tax After Development: $8.4 million

Strategic Site 11b
Site 11b: The developer is building a 338-room dual-branded hotel—approximately 160 rooms as a Marriott Courtyard and 160 rooms for an extended-stay Fairfield Inn and Suites. He overpaid for this 18,000 Ft², C6-3-zoned site (FAR = 8) at the top of the market in 2007/08, but a recovery in equity appears to have made financing for development possible.

• Estimated Land Cost: $6.2 million
• Estimated Remediation Cost: $150,000
• Estimated Development Cost: $61 million
• Estimated Construction Jobs: 500
• Permanent Jobs: 200
• Billable Property Tax, 2015/16: $66,059
• Estimated Property Tax After Development: $2.9 million

Intermediate Term Redevelopment Projects (2-4 Years to Start of Construction)

• Site 2: The site is across 94th Avenue from Site 1a. It fronts on Sutphin Boulevard and on 94th Avenue and, most important to note, this is catty-corner to the JFK AirTrain Station. The site’s footprint is 105,000 Ft² and was re-zoned from M1 to C6-4 (FAR =12:1) in 2007, yielding a maximum developable square footage of 1,260,000 Ft²—the largest potential development site in the Station Area. The site is cleared and remediated. The C6-4 designation permits mixed use, transit oriented development consistent with the BOA plan. Given the size and zoning of the site, it might be the most appropriate site in the Station Area BOA for anchor (“big box”) retail and residential mixed use.

• Site 3: Graham Associates, a local property owner, controls the site and would like to develop a 200-room, limited-service hotel on the site, which is on the corner of Sutphin Blvd and 95th Avenue. Current design schematics include about 1,500 SF of meeting space, full service restaurant, and a rooftop bar.

• Site 14: This project is expected to be a 155-room, limited-service Sheraton Four Points. The site foot-

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12 Based on construction costs of $375/Ft² in hard costs plus $75/Ft² in soft costs for total of $450/Buildable Ft²
13 Estimates of construction jobs created via a ratio of costs are problematical. Per consultation with one local developer of residential and commercial space in Queens, “While it may exist, I’m not aware of any ratio. The number is very project specific.” Estimates provided here based on related data in the Regional Input-Output Multipliers (RIMS II) from the Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis.
14 Estimate based an average of 549 Ft²/employee for “specialty retail” as calculated by the Institute of Transportation Engineers. Employees for maintenance and services for the residential portion of the development project are not included.
15 Calculated as 45% of development costs to obtain assessed value, multiplied by 2014/15 applicable tax rate of 10.684%
16 Assumes hotel build-out to 135,360 Ft² and employment of one employee per 1,124 Ft² of “lodging,” per the U.S. Department of Energy.
17 Calculated as 45% of development costs to obtain assessed value, multiplied by 2014/15 applicable tax rate of 10.684%
print is 14,950 Ft² and is zoned partially C6-4 (FAR = 12) and partially M1-4 (FAR = 2). Total developable square feet will be approximately 179,400, plus approximately 21 below-grade parking spaces. This hotel will have a full-service restaurant and about 500 Ft² of meeting space. The total project cost is about $30 million.

LONGER TERM REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (4 YEARS-PLUS TO START OF CONSTRUCTION)

Sites 1b, 8, and 12 remain available for redevelopment concepts and for developers to pursue those concepts. All sites are zoned C6 (mixed use including retail, office, hospitality, commercial or residential) with Floor Area Ratios of at least 8:1 and up to 12:1.

- **Site 1b**: 35,000 Ft² footprint; C6-4 zoning; FAR of 12:1 yielding a maximum of 420,000 developable square feet. This site fronts on 94th Avenue and is adjacent to Site 1a, which is under active development by Able Hotels. Site 1b currently hosts light industrial uses, which are not consistent with the BOA plan. The site was up-zoned in 2007 from low density industrial use (M1-1) to medium density mixed use (C-6), allowing for future mixed use, transit oriented development consistent with the BOA plan.

- **Site 8**: is near fully assembled. Aggregation of additional lots will grow the available redevelopment area from its current 61,200 Ft² to a total of 71,100 Ft². The site is zoned C6-3 (FAR=8:1) and the fully assembled site is developable to 568,000 Ft²—the second largest developable square footage in the BOA after Site 2. C6-3 zoning permits mixed use, transit oriented development consistent with the BOA plan. This site fronts on Sutphin Boulevard between 94th and 95th Avenues, immediately south of the JFK AirTrain Station and immediately north of Site 3, which has been under consideration for hotel development by a local owner, Graham Associates.

- **Site 12**: This is a 35,550 Ft² site that was re-zoned to C6-3 (FAR=8:1) in 2007. The maximum developable square footage is 284,000 Ft². This is the only development site within the Station Area BOA that fronts on Jamaica Avenue, making it positioned to catalyze upgraded retail and office space options in Downtown Jamaica.

MANAGING BOA IMPLEMENTATION

The 2007 re-zoning of the Station Area transformed much of the land in the BOA from low density industrial use to high density commercial and mixed use. Projects currently planned for the BOA, and those expected in the future, are both consistent with the BOA Plan and are “of right” per the 2007 zoning.

Detailed design guidelines incorporated into local law through the New York City Zoning Resolution will assure consistency in private sector BOA development projects.

Even so, the City of New York is a complicated machine with many moving parts. Development projects and infrastructure improvement projects run more efficiently when they are supported by leadership from the Office of the Mayor, the New York City Council, the Queens Borough President’s Office, and Jamaica’s Community Board 12. In addition, implementation of any project requires by law approval by a range of agencies and authorities. Greater

"The stimulus provided by the State BOA program has led to real results around the Jamaica Station Area, which in turn has created an economic ripple affect across Downtown Jamaica, Queens. Thanks to the Cuomo Administration and the State Legislature for their commitment to the BOA program and the further revitalization of Southeast Queens." - Hope Knight, President and CEO, Greater Jamaica Development Corporation.
Jamaica Development Corporation, a private, non-profit, community based organization, has longstanding relationships with BOA stakeholders, political leadership, and the full range of city agencies, putting it in an ideal position to help coordinate responsible development projects consistent with the Station Area BOA plan.

The transformative development projects planned for the Station Area BOA, and the future projects they will catalyze, will bring the entire Brownfield Opportunity Area, and in turn all of the Jamaica Downtown, to its full potential as “one of our City’s great central business districts and inter-modal transportation hubs.”18

# # #

FUTURE LAND USES FOR SITES IN THE STATION AREA BOA

BACKGROUND: THE JAMAICA BOA NOMINATION STUDY

The BOA boundary defined in the 2010 Nomination Study is 0.2 square miles (132 acres) in size, covering 40 blocks and containing 616 properties. Due to the history of industrial uses prevalent in the BOA Nomination Study Area, the vast majority of non-residential properties are regarded as brownfields. Based on research conducted for the Nomination Study and the results of the City of New York’s environmental assessment process for the 2007 re-zoning of 368 blocks under their “Jamaica Plan,” a total of 224 of the 616 properties in the Study Area (35.8%) were identified as brownfields. These 224 properties total 38.7 acres in size. This represents 29.3% of the land within the BOA boundary defined in the Nomination Study.

Greater Jamaica Development Corporation (GJDC) submitted an Application for Designation of the Jamaica BOA, including all sub-zones per GJDC’s Nomination Study, to the Commissioner of the Department of State on February 6, 2015. On April 9, 2015, Governor Cuomo announced that the New York State Department of State had completed its review of the GJDC’s Nomination Study and the Jamaica BOA was officially a Designated Brownfield Opportunity Area.

The boundary encompassed a densely populated, dynamic, urban area, where a ten minute walk can move the observer from the multi-billion dollar JFK AirTrain to old and abandoned industrial sites. A 2015 land use survey by the New York City Department of City Planning, identified 42 vacant properties (6.8%) in the BOA Study Area. While many of these vacant properties are brownfields, a large majority of the total of 224 brownfields in the Study Area are in active use. This presents a significant challenge to redevelopment efforts on these properties, a challenge that is compounded by the fact that properties are generally modestly sized, from 2,000 – 65,000 square feet, and have widely dispersed ownership.

FIGURE 1: CURRENT LAND USE WITHIN THE BOA (BOUNDARY SHOWN IS PER 2010 NOMINATION STUDY)¹⁹

¹⁹ Source, New York City Department of City Planning, Queens Office, 2015
Given the location of the brownfield sites in this downtown area, the size of the properties, the large number of property owners, and the need to accommodate a wide range of uses and functions, Greater Jamaica Development Corporation (GJDC), in consultation with the Department of State, created four distinct, contiguous “Brownfield Sub-Zones,” to better understand, analyze and identify high priority opportunities within the Nomination Study’s BOA boundary.

Each sub-zone displayed different land use mixes and each had its own advantages and disadvantages based on its relationship to factors such as access to transportation; already-planned infrastructure projects; the amount and type of changes in permitted land use of parcels in the sub-zone as a result of the 2007 rezoning; and the location of existing residential development in relation to the sub-sector.

The sub-zone approach permitted redevelopment planning in staged intervals; it provided flexibility to target and shift redevelopment efforts based on changing market conditions and opportunities for private investment in the Study Area; and it could better target requests for public support.

**Figure 2: Four Contiguous Sub-Zones of the Jamaica BOA per the 2010 Nomination Study**
THE STATION AREA BOA

The Nomination Study identified the Station Area sub-zone as the area having the best and most immediate market conditions for redevelopment. It has an existing inter-modal transportation hub; additional infrastructure improvements were at various stages of design or implementation; much of it was up-zoned in 2007 from low density industrial use to high density commercial use, inviting private investment; and its assembled sites made it the highest priority for redevelopment and best-positioned to catalyze development of additional mixed use, transit oriented development throughout the four sub-areas of the Jamaica BOA. The figure below, “Re-Zoning of the BOA Station Area,” graphically demonstrates the extensive number of parcels that were changed from low density, industrial use, to commercial use with of-right Floor Area Ratios (FAR) as high as 12:1.20

FIGURE 3: 2007 RE-ZONING OF LAND USE FROM INDUSTRIAL TO MIXED USE IN THE BOA STATION AREA

GJDC’s successful 2010 proposal to develop an Implementation Strategy therefore requested State resources under a Step 3 Reimbursement Agreement for redevelopment of sites in the Station Area sub-zone of the Jamaica

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20 FAR, or Floor Area Ratio, is total square feet of a building divided by the total square feet of the lot on which the building is located. For example, a developer could build 30,000 Ft$^2$ of space on a 5,000 Ft$^2$ parcel with an allowable FAR of 6. Since higher FARs allow more dense construction, they make the parcels themselves more valuable.
BOA. The Implementation Strategy for future uses reported here focuses on the Station Area sub-zone of the Station Area sub-zone of the Jamaica Brownfield Opportunity Area. 

A wide range of development goals and objectives were formulated at community meetings held in conjunction with the 2010 Nomination Study. The goals most attainable through Station Area development were:

- Improve Quality of Life for Residents—bring more environmentally friendly and visually benign uses, such as modern retail or flex manufacturing space. This vision includes elements to improve pedestrian walkways, add green-space or “green corridors” along Archer Avenue, or other amenities associated with redevelopment.

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21 GJDC notes here per their letter requesting BOA designation to the Commissioner of the Department of State dated February 6, 2015, that designation of the Jamaica BOA, i.e., the boundary encompassing all four, contiguous sub-zones, allows for future funding, under BOA or any successor or related program, for redevelopment of brownfield sites in any of the other three sub-zones in the Jamaica BOA.

22 Source, NYC Department of City Planning, Queens Office
• Improve retail variety and quality as part of a vision for an improved quality of life. This included such amenities as a “tablecloth” or “sit-down” restaurant and better quality retail sources for fresh meat and produce.

• Create Economic Growth and Opportunities in the Community—the community identified creation of high-paying, quality jobs in Jamaica as an objective.

• Create affordable housing scaled to community Infrastructure

The Implementation Strategy for Station Area redevelopment was informed by the work of JGSC Group, which was engaged to conduct market research, develop new marketing materials, and assist with identifying potential tenants, investors and developers; and by BuroHappold Engineering, which developed preliminary design studies for infrastructure improvements and metrics on pedestrian and vehicular densities and linkages to JFK Airport that would support and attract private investment. Development was pressed forward by GJDC and additional sales and public relations consultants to catalyze projects that were both supported by market research findings and consistent with community goals.

**Figure 5: Proposed Land Use Map for the Station Area BOA**
MARKET TRENDS ANALYSIS FOR AREA WIDE DEVELOPMENT

The BOA program engaged JGSC Group as marketing consultants for the Implementation Strategy. JGSC conducted market research activities that gathered unique information regarding local needs and desires, as well as macro-economic studies for sector-based development. The following activities were included in a market trends analysis:

- Analysis of Local Needs and Desires
  1. Survey of consumers’ needs and desires
  2. Interview of stakeholders/advisory committee members
  3. Merchant interviews
- Macro-economic feasibility study for sector-based development:
  1. Hotel/hospitality
  2. Retail
  3. Commercial
  4. Residential
  5. Industrial

ANALYSIS OF LOCAL NEEDS AND DESIRES

SURVEY OF CONSUMER NEEDS AND DESIRES

Consumer Survey Findings

JGSC Group conducted a public survey (paper and online) to measure consumer preferences among the people who live, work, shop, dine, or otherwise visit Downtown Jamaica. The survey launched on March 1, 2013, and ended six weeks later on April 18, 2013. The survey collected 739 responses to questions that ranged across a number of fields including interest in housing and hotel use; sense of comfort/security in Downtown Jamaica; ease of access; desire for change; and retail and dining preferences. The high level of response allowed for cross-tabulation of the data and to contrast five groups: Shoppers, Non-Shoppers, people who work in Jamaica, people who live in Jamaica, and York College students and staff. Analysis of the responses led to the following findings, conclusions and recommendations:

1. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of the people that visit Downtown Jamaica live in the 13 ZIP codes (those beginning in “114,” with the exception of 11429) that comprise Southeast Queens and are broadly considered “Jamaica.” Many of the people who are regular visitors to Jamaica do not ever shop there:
   a. 15% of the people who work in Jamaica never shop there;
   b. 30% of York College students never shop in Jamaica; and
   c. 6% of the people who live in Jamaica never shop in Jamaica.
2. People who do shop in Jamaica shop there less frequently than at other places: on average they shop 26 times/year in Jamaica, but 54 times/year at other places.
3. People who shop in Jamaica spend four times more when shopping elsewhere ($5,006/yr) than they do in Jamaica ($1,230/yr).
4. Many regular visitors never dine in Jamaica and when they do, they spend only one-quarter of the amount there ($676/yr) than they do when dining elsewhere ($2,649/yr).
5. 81% of respondents considered hotel development to be important for Downtown Jamaica.

6. 21% of all respondents expressed “strong” or “moderate” interest in new housing located “... within a 10-minute walk of the LIRR station in Downtown Jamaica” (the Jamaica Station Area and environs).

7. Parking is an issue of concern: a significant number of respondents noted that inconvenient or unavailable parking was a main reason they did not visit the downtown more frequently; 41% said that they “rarely” or “never” can find off-street parking (public or private parking lots) when visiting Downtown Jamaica in the daytime, although it is ample.

8. Security is an issue of concern:
   a. Only 8% of Non-Shoppers felt “very secure” in Downtown Jamaica, 51% of Non-Shoppers feel “insecure” in Downtown Jamaica; and 39% of the people who work there also felt “insecure” in the downtown.
   b. More than one-third (37%) of all respondents said they felt very or somewhat insecure when attending outdoor public events; using the public garages; or using the surface parking lots in Downtown Jamaica.

9. Respondents told us that they would visit Downtown Jamaica more often if it offered more full-service restaurants, more cafés and bistros, and more gourmet and specialty food. They also expressed a desire for better merchandise selection and quality.

10. When asked what was most important to accomplish, respondents said that improving storefront appearance (86%), creating more full-time jobs (83%), and attracting more restaurants (82%) were their top goals.

Summary: Consumer Survey Development Preferences

The level of desire for under-served retail categories and full service restaurants, for hotels, and for new housing are classic signposts for mixed use, transit oriented development and suggest that these may be marketable, successful categories for Station Area BOA redevelopment.

Stakeholder Interviews

JGSC interviewed stakeholders from among Station Area BOA Advisory Committee members. Ultimately, 20 subjects were interviewed, eleven as part of a group meeting on December 11, 2012 and the balance in one-to-one meetings at their convenience.

Interviewees included directors of Business Improvement Districts that run through or are adjacent to the BOA, elected officials, local property owners, the district manager of the Community Board 12 (which includes the BOA), New York City agencies, the Mayor’s Office of Environmental Remediation, and a principal of a Jamaica-based architectural firm.

SWOT Analysis by Stakeholders

The stakeholders were guided through a “SWOT” analysis (“Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats”) concerning the vitality and growth of Downtown Jamaica, which has the Station Area BOA as one of its most important hubs. There was fairly strong consensus among the participants.

Strengths:
- unparalleled access to transportation - subways, buses, trains, and planes
• a growing positive reputation for urban fashion
• a high degree of ethnic and cultural diversity
• a wealth of public facilities - courts, colleges, the federal Social Security Office; and
• it is bordered by solid neighborhoods of middle class residents who could be attracted as shoppers/workers.

Weaknesses:

• The top of everyone’s list of weaknesses was crime, or the perception of crime. The consensus view was that actual crime used to be a problem in Downtown Jamaica, but that applied measures have been successful at pushing crime out of the district.

Still, the perception lingers that Jamaica is not a safe place to shop, and that perception is being fueled by a number of factors: less than attractive storefronts on many stores; the presence of loiterers and pan-handlers; boisterous/intimidating youth on the streets after school lets out; drunk or high people lying on the sidewalks and doorways; poor sidewalk lighting; intense vehicular traffic; and aggressive gypsy cab drivers are among the factors that contribute to the feeling that the area is disorderly and unsafe. JGSC noted here that the mere perception of crime as a risk represents a significant threat to the success of commerce in any district.

• Inadequate parking (described variously as insufficient curbside parking; stressful curbside parking due to 1-hour limits; inadequate guidance to off-street parking; expensive off-street parking; insufficient parking for potential commuters using AirTrain; and inconvenient access to parking with respect to preferred shopping/dining destinations).

• High commercial property rents.

• Inadequate attractions to downtown—not enough entertainment/recreation/dining; poor retail mix; poor merchandise quality.

Opportunities:

• Most stakeholders were enthusiastic about the opportunities to redevelop large portions of Downtown Jamaica—particularly, but not exclusively, the Station Area BOA—and that the 2007 rezoning will facilitate this growth. The uses they see as most needed are:
  o hotels
  o new housing
  o office space
  o new industries
  o college expansion
  o space for artists, and
  o national retail

• The stakeholders were positive about the benefits to commerce of public events, and supported the development of more and larger events in public spaces like Rufus King Park.

Threats:

• Crime and the perception of lack of safety was the most often cited threat to commerce.
• The excellent, intermodal transportation system that serves the district as a strength was also cited as a threat to commerce, as it makes it easy for outsiders to simply pass through, and not stop, in Downtown Jamaica.
• Poor relations or misunderstanding between merchants and shoppers. Several stakeholders noted an attitude of disrespect that many merchants have shown for local residents; others considered this disrespect to be the attitude of the shoppers toward the merchants.
• Several stakeholders expressed the concern that the community itself harbors a belief that the neighborhood cannot improve, and this negative attitude may prevent positive change in Downtown Jamaica

Stakeholders’ Vision for the Future

In summary, the stakeholders’ vision for the future was uniform in their desire for commercial growth in Downtown Jamaica. There is near unanimity and passion for more sit-down restaurants. Growth preferences are not restricted to retail/restaurant, but apply broadly to hospitality, housing, industry, office uses and placemaking—the creation of spaces and events that allow for a more friendly, relaxed and comfortable outdoor experience. There is strong desire for change—no one is content with the downtown the way that it is today. Still, there is a common belief that things are improving, particularly with regard to crime (something that the stakeholders consider to now be more a perception problem than its former reality), and a positive outlook with regard to transportation infrastructure and the opportunities for growth that it provides.

These stakeholders believe that Downtown Jamaica has the capacity to become the next break-through community of New York City, and that all this will require is stronger lobbying by local officials to raise the neighborhood’s profile. Redevelopment is the key to that change, and the Station Area BOA is the current focus of their redevelopment attention.

Merchant Interviews

In order to better understand the business community, JGSC walked the commercial corridors along Jamaica Avenue from Sutphin Boulevard to 169th Street, as well as on Sutphin Boulevard, the 165th Street Mall, and within the BOA Station Area, seeking person-to-person interviews with retail owners and managers throughout the month of December, 2012.

Merchants were largely reticent to share specific information, and in fact, JGSC faced difficulty in finding merchants who would agree to the interview. Among the 18 that did, only a very few indicated that they are poised to expand, interested in opening either a second location, or expanding their existing locations. Despite concerns about lower sales, and the ongoing stagnant national economy, merchants were largely satisfied with their current locations, and none stated any intention of relocating.

Merchant Interview Findings

The clearest finding was that merchants—whether retail owners or managers—were fundamentally renters and reflected perfectly an aphorism first popularized in Thomas Peters’ influential book, A Passion for Excellence: “Nobody in the history of the world washes a rented car.” Merchants are not stakeholders in that way. Most were not aware of Business Improvement District (BID) programs or how they could either take advantage of them or be more involved in the BIDs generally. Their more narrow perspective focused concern on lease cost per square foot, satisfaction or dissatisfaction with foot traffic, and the resulting sales receipts. Merchants shared one high priority issue with consumers and stakeholders. The presence or perception of crime—the latter related to a sense of disorder—and the resulting feeling of discomfort by shoppers, had an immediate impact on sales and was therefore a high priority for merchants. Similarly, retailers expressed enthusiasm for recent and potential redevelopment projects that establish name brand retailers with large footprints, which would attract more shoppers and, ultimately, benefit their businesses. Asked what sort of co-tenants merchants would find helpful to their success, many named high profile retail chains, such as Target or Macy’s.
Merchants’ Views of Their Customers and Marketing

When asked to describe their customers, many of the retailers interviewed suggested that the local neighborhood is their primary audience, and only a few retailers indicated that they attract customers from a wider region. Most of the merchants we spoke with were not actively engaged in marketing efforts. Very few maintain a customer database, have a website or any sort of social media presence, or use mailing lists of any kind. A few of the retailers interviewed were managers of chain operations, but don’t engage in local advertising. They instead depend on their corporations to roll out national or regional marketing efforts.

Merchants’ Views on the Challenges and Opportunities of Economic Revitalization and Redevelopment

Issues related to safety and security were raised repeatedly. Specific concerns cited as contributing to this perception included insufficient lighting, lack of security or police presence, drug paraphernalia visible on the street, and litter. Unlicensed vendors were singled out as being particularly problematic, not only because they operate outside of the licensing and zoning regulations, but also because many sell counterfeit or pirated goods, in direct competition with licensed retailers. The aggressiveness of some of these vendors, as well as those of unlicensed taxi drivers, were seen as contributing to a disorderly and threatening atmosphere that discourages shopping.

Additional competition within the same or similar retail categories was appealing to some retailers, but a threat to others. Generally, those who supported additional competition were those who saw the lack of quality goods available on Jamaica’s commercial corridors as part of the problem of stagnant sales.

Other concerns mentioned by retailers included physical improvements, such as additional parking, better lighting, more trashcans, and better maintenance of the commercial corridors to decrease litter. All of these concerns appeared to be reactions to perceptions of disorder or a lack of safety and security.

JFK Airport and Station Area Development

In 2015, GJDC engaged BuroHappold Engineering and Sam Schwartz Engineering to assess the status and growth trends in pedestrian counts, transit ridership, traffic, and development activity in the area surrounding Jamaica Station, to inform discussions of the neighborhood’s ability to provide useful services to JFK airport users. Given the strategic transit link between the neighborhood and the airport, the analysis, contained in the consultant’s report, “Jamaica Station,” evaluated the potential of the area to act as an extension of the airport; as an accessible and affordable portal for tourists to stay in an urban NYC neighborhood and visit the City’s sites; as a convenient place for business travelers to lodge with quick transit connections to the City’s other business hubs; and a place for airport employees who prefer urban living and a quick commute to work.

The opening of the JFK AirTrain completed a multi-modal, mass transit system convenient to JFK Airport to the south and Manhattan to the west, with the Jamaica Station as an unparalleled hub for transit oriented, mixed use development in Downtown Jamaica. BuroHappold reported that on average, over three quarters of a million people pass through Jamaica by foot, vehicle, bus, subway, AirTrain, or LIRR in a single weekday.
The Jamaica Station report by BuroHappold found substantial growth in the volume of pedestrian traffic over the past seven years, as evidenced by weekday and weekend pedestrian counts from 2008, 2010, and 2015\(^\text{23}\) (see Table 1, below). Pedestrian traffic was measured at three intersections along Sutphin Boulevard near the AirTrain Station—Sutphin/Jamaica Avenue, Sutphin/Archer Avenue, and Sutphin/94\(^\text{th}\) Avenue. The results showed a continued increase in pedestrian activity. The Sutphin/Jamaica Avenue intersection saw a 69% increase in weekday usage (to 25,258) and an 81% increase in weekend pedestrians (to 25,258) between 2008 and 2015. The Sutphin/Archer Avenue intersection saw almost double the amount of weekday foot traffic from 2010 to 2015, to 21,827 pedestrians. The same intersection experienced a smaller, but still substantial, 11% increase in weekend usage.

There was no historic data available for the Sutphin/94\(^\text{th}\) Avenue intersection, but the 2015 data of 4,272 pedestrian users on a weekday and 6,772 users on a weekend will be a useful baseline for tracking changes in the coming years, especially as the planned Hilton Garden Inn opens on the northeast corner of this intersection. JGSC’s BOA work in 2012 noted that the sidewalks on Sutphin Boulevard are wide enough to accommodate sidewalk dining and activities.\(^\text{24}\) As more development occurs on Sutphin Boulevard, there is the opportunity to better utilize the sidewalks as public spaces.

\(^{23}\) The 2008 and 2010 counts were conducted by Philip Habib and Associates; 2015 counts were conducted by Sam Schwartz Engineering for the BOA Implementation Strategy. It should be taken into account that the 2015 counts were performed on a Tuesday, whereas in previous years they had occurred on a Friday. Sam Schwartz Engineering reports that Tuesday counts produce conservative numbers as there are typically higher amounts of activity on Fridays.

TABLE 1: PEDESTRIAN VOLUMES AT KEY INTERSECTIONS IN THE STATION AREA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Jamaica Ave. &amp; Sutphin Blvd.</th>
<th>Archer Ave. &amp; Sutphin Blvd.</th>
<th>94th Ave. &amp; Sutphin Blvd.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weekday</td>
<td>Weekend</td>
<td>Weekday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>15,405</td>
<td>13,935</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>18,355</td>
<td>14,230</td>
<td>11,269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>26,088</td>
<td>25,258</td>
<td>21,827</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pedestrian figures at this density, and the impressive growth of these figures in the Station Area, proved especially powerful when presenting the value of the area to potential developers, investors, financial institutions and, in turn, to tenants, local small businesses and community organizations.

VEHICULAR TRAFFIC IN THE STATION AREA

Vehicular traffic was collected from the same three intersections as pedestrian traffic. In contrast to the pedestrian traffic, 94th Avenue and Sutphin Boulevard was the busiest intersection among the three and had the highest peak traffic volume. Based on Sam Schwartz Engineering’s collected data, an average weekday saw over 32,000 vehicles pass through the intersection. Almost 25,000 vehicles passed through on a weekend day. The busiest time for the intersection was during the evening rush hour (5:00 and 6:00 on a weekday), with over 2,000 vehicles per hour, and between 5:30 and 6:30 pm on Saturday when over 1,600 vehicles passed through the intersection. These levels strain capacity. The intersection of Jamaica Avenue and Sutphin Boulevard saw 35% less traffic than the 94th Avenue intersection, and Archer Avenue and Sutphin Boulevard saw 41% less traffic than the 94th Avenue intersection. In total 72,466 vehicles passed through the area in a day, an impressive number.

In fact, it is this high concentration of both vehicles and pedestrians in the same space, complete with multiple cross-walks and turning lanes, that demands the planned improvements incorporated into the Station Plaza project and the Atlantic Avenue Extension/Two-Way Pair project. Station Plaza will make it safer and more pleasant for pedestrians and will ease turning radii at Sutphin/Archer, and the Atlantic Avenue Extension and Two-Way Pair will smooth traffic in and out of the Station Area and reduce congestion at the busy intersection of Sutphin Boulevard and 94th Avenue.

INTER-MODAL MASS TRANSIT IN THE STATION AREA

Subway Ridership

Three subway lines stop at the Sutphin Boulevard/JFK Airport subway station (E, J, and Z lines). Riders can
take an elevator from the subway station to the JFK AirTrain level, then use a modern, indoor passageway to the JFK AirTrain terminal. In 2014, the JFK subway station was the sixth busiest station out of the 78 stations in Queens and ranked in the top fifteenth percentile of ridership in the entire New York City subway system. That year, annual ridership totaled 7,633,725 passengers entering the system at the JFK subway station, an average of 20,914 riders per day. This represents an increase of 4.5% from 2013, significantly greater than the 2.6% average increase experienced citywide and the 2% increase experienced in Queens. During that time, weekday ridership at the station grew by 3.3% and weekend ridership grew by 10.2%. In total, since 2009, annual ridership grew by 19% compared to the citywide average of 11%.

Long Island Rail Road Commuter Trains

Ten out of the eleven Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) lines stop at Jamaica Station. The LIRR stop at Jamaica Station provides a 19 minute commute to New York Penn Station in Manhattan. Passengers can ride a LIRR train from Penn Station to Jamaica and transfer to the AirTrain to access JFK, for a combined 31 minute trip. This trip is over 30 minutes shorter than the E train from Jamaica to Penn Station. LIRR users are the largest group of users in Jamaica Station on weekdays and account for 70% of the riders of the LIRR, subway, and AirTrain. Weekday ridership on the LIRR is over 98,000 riders per day, and there are about half as many riders on the weekends with approximately 51,000 riders on average for Saturday and 44,000 on Sundays.

Bus Ridership

There are 17 bus routes that service the Jamaica Station area BOA; Q6,Q8, Q9, Q20, Q24, Q25, Q30, Q31, Q34, Q40, Q41, Q43, Q44, Q54, Q56, Q60, and Q65. The bus routes serve half a million riders on an average weekday and almost a quarter of a million riders on an average Saturday. On an average weekday, 78% of the people using any of the available public transportation modes (bus, subway, LIRR, AirTrain), are bus users.

JFK AirTrain Ridership

The JFK AirTrain is the linchpin connecting Jamaica to the airport and the world.

JFK is the nation’s leading international gateway, with more than 80 airlines operating from six terminals. To alleviate congestion on roadways leading to and from the airport, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) began construction of the JFK AirTrain in 1998 to provide a much needed, mass transit connection to the airport via public transit. The JFK AirTrain inaugurated service in December of 2003.

Growth is occurring on the other end of the AirTrain line, as well. The number of passengers flying through JFK has grown by 67% since 2003, with 53 million passengers in 2014. JFK tenants continue to upgrade terminals and improve amenities to accommodate more passengers, creating demand for more employees and further increasing the flow of people to and from the airport. In 2014, 6.5 million people rode the AirTrain to/from Jamaica Station, up 18% from the 5.5 million users in 2011.

Increasing use of the JFK AirTrain, combined with the growth and planned investments in JFK International Airport, translate into development opportunities for the Station Area BOA that meet the needs of travelers on business or pleasure, airport employees, commercial enterprises linked to airport activities, and highly a-

25 The subway stations in Queens that had higher ridership in 2014 were 74-8way/Jackson Hts.-Roosevelt Avenue (14th), Flushing-Main Street (12th), Forest Hills-71 Avenue (41st), Jamaica Center/Parsons-Archer (25th), and Kew Gardens-Union Turnpike (44th).
26 Google Maps.
tractive residential opportunities for the 37,000 on-airport employees reported by the Port Authority.

**COSTS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT OF STATION AREA DEVELOPMENT**

Acquisition costs of property in the Station Area, based on recent transactions, are estimated to be $30 per buildable square foot. Similarly, estimated construction cost based on budgets for development projects currently in the Station Area pipeline, including soft costs, is $450/buildable square foot. The re-zoning of strategic sites in the Station Area from industrial to commercial/mixed use created far greater flexibility for future land use, but from a development, economic impact and strategic planning perspective, it is perhaps more important to be mindful that the 2007 up-zoning increased Floor Area Ratios from 1:1 to FARs that ranged from 8:1 to as high as 12:1.

The sample figures below demonstrate the geometric increases in costs and estimated property values and resulting property taxes as Floor Area Ratios increase for the same, 10,000 Ft² parcel.

**TABLE 2: SAMPLE FIGURES FOR ACQUISITION, CONSTRUCTION, AND ESTIMATED PROPERTY TAXES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FAR</th>
<th>Buildable SF</th>
<th>Acquisition</th>
<th>Construction</th>
<th>Total Dev’t Cost</th>
<th>Est. Prop Tax³⁰</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
<td>$4,500,000</td>
<td>$4,800,000</td>
<td>$230,774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>$2,400,000</td>
<td>$36,000,000</td>
<td>$38,400,000</td>
<td>$1,846,195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>120000</td>
<td>$3,600,000</td>
<td>$54,000,000</td>
<td>$57,600,000</td>
<td>$2,769,293</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While costs for construction for residential space are somewhat higher per square foot than construction costs for office or retail space, the differences are not significant enough for consideration in the context of area-wide development. What may prove to be significant are the incentives available to encourage development of mixed income housing as compared to commercial development. The New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) offers below market rates for financing construction of affordable housing. The low rates can help close the gap in costs and generate sufficient return for private investment in BOAs, which might otherwise be perceived as too risky because developers must depend on the transformational character of these projects in undervalued communities.

**LAND USE ALTERNATIVES FOR THE STATION AREA BOA**

**OVERVIEW: SECTOR FEASIBILITY**

The overall approach to determine market feasibility of future private sector land uses in the Station Area BOA was to identify redevelopment options that were both consistent with community-defined preferences and desires and could demonstrate macro-economic demand sufficient to attract private investment.³¹

Key community preferences for land use voiced during the course of the Jamaica BOA Nomination Study, which was completed in January of 2010, included:

³⁰ Calculated as 45% of development costs to obtain assessed value, multiplied by 2014/15 applicable tax rate of 10.684%
³¹ Per the Development Feasibility Analysis, dated July 12, 2013, conducted by JGSC Group for the Implementation Strategy. See attached appendices for JGSC’s complete study
• environmentally friendly and visually benign uses, such as flex manufacturing space;
• improved retail variety and quality, including fresh meat and produce;
• more “tablecloth” or “sit-down” restaurants;
• job creation was seen as important, as well as retaining the good jobs already available; and
• create affordable housing.

The input from the advisory committee and other public outreach during the Nomination Study also revealed sensitivity to the need for improved pedestrian walkways, added green-space or “green corridors” along Archer Avenue, which is a primary local street leading into and out of the Station Area BOA. These public infrastructure investments and their importance for the overall attractiveness of the Station Area will be discussed separately in the section below, “Implementation Projects to Support BOA Revitalization.”

The 2013 market research by JGSC, including the consumer survey and interviews with stakeholders and merchants discussed above, generated expressions of interest for specific land uses, amenities and goals for the Station Area BOA that echoed the preferences expressed in the Nomination Study:

• The area needs more hotels
• Improve storefronts
• Create jobs
• Attract full-service restaurants
• Improve diversity and quality of retail merchandise
• Housing makes sense in the Station Area

The 2007 up-zoning of much of the developable land in the Station Area BOA from low density industrial use (M1) to medium and high density commercial and mixed use (C4 and C6), including up-zoning of 100% of the land adjacent to and in the immediate area of the AirTrain and Long Island Railroad stations, opened the possibility for major redevelopment in the Station Area.

The strength of support found in the 2013 consumer survey for under-served retail categories (especially full-service restaurants), hotels, and new housing development tracks well with the results of community input during the Nomination Study. This suggests that these remain desirable categories for Station Area redevelopment and are consistent with BOA area-wide planning to date. The Implementation Strategy includes a feasibility analysis of land uses to test their ability to attract private investment to the Station Area BOA.

The five sectors analyzed for feasibility using macro-economic data were:

• Hospitality
• Residential
• Industrial
• Office
• Retail

National and regional performance was considered where possible for each sector to the extent that this may impact local deci-

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32 The Station Area BOA includes lands occupied by the Jamaica Long Island Railroad Station, an historic building; the JFK AirTrain Station; and considerable property that remains as M1 for use as LIRR right-of-way. These lands either do not require or are unavailable for redevelopment.
sion-making. Ultimately, feasibility was determined on the strength of five measures:

- Unmet demand within the sector, and within select categories of business in that sector;
- Suitability/sustainability of that category/sector for the Station Area BOA location;
- Potential relationship of that category/sector to JFK Airport;
- Importance of transit access to that category/sector; and
- Regional competition for that category/sector.

To analyze regional performance, JGSC used their consumer survey to define the boundaries of a “Trade Area” served by commerce in Downtown Jamaica, that is, the geographic area from which the large majority of Downtown Jamaica’s consumers derive. In this case, consumers of Downtown Jamaica’s goods and services were found to come largely from 13 ZIP codes in Queens County.  

FIGURE 7: FEASIBILITY STUDY AREA AND TRADE AREA

ANALYSIS: HOSPITALITY SECTOR

Hotel commerce is driven by demand from three primary markets: commercial; meeting and group events; and leisure. The commercial segment represents the travel needs of the business sector; the meeting and

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33 Sixty-four percent of all respondents to the consumer survey gave one of the Jamaica ZIP codes (11411, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 32, 33, 34, 35, and 36) as their place of residence.
group segment can be local organizations that host regular meetings at the hotel or major organizations that mount larger scale conferences and conventions; and the leisure segment comprises tourism travel. Demand for Jamaica-based hotel accommodations can be generated by all three market drivers.

The Station Area BOA is tethered to JFK International Airport by the JFK AirTrain and to Manhattan by the Long Island Railroad Jamaica Station, which can deliver a rider from Jamaica to Penn Station/Madison Square Garden in 19 minutes. Airline business (for commercial travelers and airline staff) is a key demand sub-category for a Station Area BOA hotel, as is New York City tourism, not to mention a host of Queens-based attractions such as Aqueduct and Belmont Park racetracks (the latter being host for the third leg of the triple crown of thoroughbred horse racing), the U.S. Open Tennis Tournament at Flushing Meadows Park, and the Resorts World Casino. A full service hotel could attract both local meetings and be attractive to busy, fast-moving international executives who can land at JFK, AirTrain to a hotel in the Station Area BOA, and get back to the airport with total round trip ground travel of less than an hour.

More broadly, the hotel category is underserved in Jamaica. There is a 15% smaller share of hotel business in the Downtown Jamaica trade area of Southeast Queens than there is in a 10-mile radius around Downtown Jamaica—a surprising finding considering the high concentration of public transit available in Downtown Jamaica. And, as noted under Community Preferences, a consumer survey found that 81% of respondents, across various consumer audiences (shoppers, workers, college students, local residents) had substantial interest in the development of more hotel rooms in Downtown Jamaica. Hotel business in Jamaica is currently below 1% of all commercial activity, while the average level of hotel business in cities with international airports is 2.6%. The leading city, Denver, achieved 11% of its commercial activity through hotels.

The inarguable attraction of Manhattan-based hotels notwithstanding, these figures suggest considerable room for economic development through the hospitality sector for Downtown Jamaica.

In 2008, HVS Consulting and Valuation Service performed an analysis on hotel demand in Downtown Jamaica.34 This report included a RevPAR35 analysis that forecast positive economic opportunity for hotel development in Jamaica, with a very attractive RevPAR penetration rate of 111%.36 In 2009, a study by Bay Area Economics (BAE) took a broader look at housing, office, and retail development, but in the process commented upon the proposed development of four hotels in Downtown Jamaica and recommended that the Port Authority of NY & NJ, and the Greater Jamaica Development Corporation should “… promote the development of hotel uses as a top priority for the immediate AirTrain area.”37

Both reports were released just after the collapse of U.S. residential real estate markets and the triggering of the international recession in 2007. Despite this backdrop, the reports remained bullish about hotel devel-

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35 “Revenue Per Available Room is a performance measurement of the hotel industry. It is a product of a hotel’s average room rate times its occupancy rate to project anticipated revenues.
36 “RevPAR Penetration” measures how a hotel’s RevPAR compares relative to those of its competitors. A hotel’s RevPAR penetration is calculated by dividing its RevPAR by the combined RevPAR of its competitors, and is expressed as a percentage. A RevPAR penetration number of 100 is average, and above 100 is positive
development for Downtown Jamaica. The HVS study stated that “redevelopment of the neighborhood, combined with existing connectivity to various demand generators, is forecast to bode well for the operation of the subject property [a hotel proposed for the Station Area BOA].” The BAE study made reference to the economy when it stated that, “For a variety of reasons including the global recession begun in 2007, development around the AirTrain Station has not occurred as rapidly as originally expected. As markets gradually recover, however, the AirTrain Station is well-positioned to capture renewed investment activity due to its unique position as a ‘cross-roads’ of air passengers, local workers, and residents.”

And clearly, markets—and particularly the hotel market—are recovering. The U.S. Census Bureau reported that “the value of construction put-in-place in the [hospitality] sector expanded 11.6% between January 2012 and January 2013. One month later, the year-over-year comparison improved to 16%.” According to STR [Smith Travel Research], which tracks hotel supply and demand, 2,728 projects (totaling 320,397 rooms) are active in the U.S. hotel development pipeline as of February 2013. This represents a 10.1% increase in the number of rooms in the total active pipeline from February 2012 and a nearly 40% increase in rooms under construction.

**ANALYSIS: HOUSING SECTOR**

The national economy is improving with job market conditions showing progress as evidenced in the decreasing annual average unemployment rate, which fell 3.4% since its peak in 2010 (9.6%) to 6.2% as of December 2014.\(^{38}\) As a result, the national housing market also is gaining momentum and creating job growth in construction and related industries.

The economic outlook for most of the New York boroughs continues to be strong, especially for Queens, which has the lowest unemployment rate of all the “outer boroughs” (Queens, Brooklyn, Bronx and Staten Island) at 5.7%\(^ {39}\). Queens’s economy remains strong in large part because it is home to New York City’s two major international airports, JFK and LaGuardia. The volume of air traffic coming through Queens ranks third highest in the nation with over 49 million regional, national and international travelers passing through the area annually\(^ {40}\). Delta and JetBlue Airlines continue to make investments in their hubs at JFK.

The diverse neighborhood of Jamaica, Queens is positioned for high-density commercial and residential growth. Three million workers live within a 45 minute commuting distance to Downtown Jamaica and more than half a million people live, work, or use Downtown Jamaica’s commercial, educational, governmental, and transportation services on a daily basis. Its robust transportation network includes easy access to JFK (AirTrain), the Long Island Railroad (LIRR), the subway system, the 165th Street Bus Terminal, and, closer to the Station Area, 12 bus stop locations—a “longitudinal bus depot” serving 17 bus lines—along Archer Avenue running east from 150th Street.

In the past four years, the apartment and condominium market has remained strong. Sales are robust in primary markets like Manhattan with activity spreading to secondary and tertiary markets, like Queens and specifically, Jamaica, because these markets offer good value as compared to primary markets. The National

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38 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics  
39 Ibid  
40 See “The Port Authority of NY & NJ March 2013 Traffic Report”
Association of Home Builders’ (NAHB) Multifamily Production Index (MPI) for market rate rentals across the country remains strong at above 60 out of 100 for seven consecutive quarters. For-sale units are not doing as well, dipping to 42, while low-rent units rose two points to 55.41

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)—a mixture of housing, office, retail and/or other amenities integrated into a walkable neighborhood located within a half-mile of mass transit—offers access to jobs, housing, services, culture, shopping and entertainment that is convenient, green, and combines urbanity and a more relaxed lifestyle. Clearly, the Station Area BOA, having unique access to JFK through the JFK AirTrain Station, the Long Island Railroad’s primary station linking Jamaica to all of Long Island and to midtown Manhattan, three subway lines, myriad bus lines, and its recent up-zoning by the New York City Department of City Planning to high density mixed use, is ideally positioned for TOD that includes housing.

Atlantic Station in Atlanta, Georgia, is a 138-acre TOD project located on a site formerly used for heavy industry—the shuttered Atlantic Steel Mill. The project turned this abandoned industrial site into a range of compatible uses—housing, hotels, green space, mixed-use residential and commercial lofts, student residential apartments, and retail and entertainment amenities. The successful Atlantic Station TOD project started with the same attributes as the Station Area BOA—brownfield sites, access to major transportation hubs (train station, international airport, and bus network), and proximity to other retail and commercial outlets. While significantly larger than the 40 acre Station Area BOA, it is remarkably close to the 132 acres proposed for the overall BOA boundaries in the 2010 Nomination Study. This bodes well for future development and additional diversification of land uses in the other three sub-zones of the Jamaica BOA.

Housing as part of a TOD project at The Station Area BOA is also supported by demographic trends, as well as by ethnic and cultural diversity.

The U.S. Census Bureau reported total Queens population in 2010 at 2,235,000, an error of less than 2% from the projections made in 2006 by the New York City Department of City Planning, which suggests predictive accuracy for 2020 and 2030 (Table 3).

The projections for the 2000-2030 period overall was for Queens to grow 15.1 percent, the highest rate other than Staten Island’s, which has a much lower population as a starting point. More important for residential development in the Station Area BOA, Queens’ best rate of growth is expected to be in the 2020–2030 period, at 7%, and it will have the largest share of overall growth in that same period—168,000 of the 427,000 person increase in citywide population.

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41 National Association of Home Builders, “Apartment and Condominium Market Remains Strong After Small Correction in the First Quarter of 2013”
TABLE 3: POPULATION GROWTH PROJECTIONS FOR NYC BY BOROUGH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>Increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYC</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>8.40</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>9.12</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronx</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooklyn</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queens</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staten Is</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Queens is a very diverse community with 50.4% of the residents reporting as white, 24.3% as Asian, and 21.0% as Black. More than one-quarter (27.8%) of all Queens residents are Latinos, which may be of any race. Once a predominantly African-American community, Jamaica has been experiencing an influx of other ethnicities including people of Caribbean, Arab, and Russian descent. There is an opportunity for unique and interesting cultural dining and entertainment venues in the BOA that would be attractive to a wide demographic, but perhaps especially for the large age cohort of so-called “Echo Boomers” or “Millennials” (born 1980 to 2000), who are concerned about their physical environment, tend to be more sensitive to their carbon footprint than older-aged cohorts, and embrace cultural diversity.

TABLE 4: POPULATION GROWTH FOR QUEENS BY AGE COHORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>POPULATION PROJECTIONS FORQUEENS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers (1940 – 1960)</td>
<td>152,426</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A successful TOD project for the Station Area BOA could offer diverse multi-family housing (rental, for-sale, temporary stay, and student housing) with hotel-like amenities at a competitive price point and nearby shopping, dining, and entertainment. Cultural diversity could underscore the dining and entertainment choices to create a walkable, vibrant, attractive community.

ANALYSIS: INDUSTRIAL SECTOR

For this analysis, JGSC examined those industries that would take greatest advantage of the proximity of the Station Area BOA to JFK International Airport. Manufacturers of goods for export; suppliers of goods or services needed by the airlines; manufacturers of equipment or supplies utilized by airports or freight handling

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42 New York City Population Projections by Age/Sex & Borough 2000-2030", The City of New York, Department of City Planning, December 2006
businesses; off-airport cargo businesses (customs brokers, freight forwarders); and related industries were in our focus.

JGSC began with an evaluation of JFK International Airport itself. Air cargo capacity is currently 1.3 million tons/year. Disturbingly, the role of JFK as a cargo gateway has been declining over the past decade; there was a particularly concerning slide between 2006 and 2009, when cargo output decreased by 490,000 tons. 43

This erosion has been caused by several factors. After 9/11, the industry engaged in several security procedures that added to the cost of air shipment and made truck shipment a more attractive option for domestic cargo. Improvements at secondary airports have also challenged JFK’s dominance as the gateway for European freight, as international airports at Dallas, Houston, Atlanta, Washington (Dulles), and Philadelphia have taken market share from JFK.

Other local factors have affected JFK’s performance: the higher cost of doing business in New York City, the difficulty of moving freight through the highway access points to JFK (53 foot long trailers, the industry standard, are restricted from these routes), and the fact that the Port Authority of NY & NJ eliminated their marketing budget for air cargo have all contributed to the downturn. 44

One might gather from this trend that the outlook is negative for air cargo-related industries in Queens, but that is not necessarily the case. In fact, the NYC Economic Development Corporation together with the Port Authority of NY & NJ are taking aggressive action to reverse the trend and pursue remedial action to recapture lost business and grow the air cargo business at JFK. The agencies are in the process of identifying supportive funds and attracting developers to create new air cargo facilities at Springfield Gardens, as well as to make related improvements to the airport property itself. Their objective is to almost triple JFK’s cargo processing, from the current 1.3 million tons/year, to 3.5 million tons/year by the year 2040. 45

McKinsey & Co., a global management consulting firm, prepared an analysis 46 of manufacturing industries that identified trends in global manufacturing and manufacturing employment that may be helpful in identifying industries that might be appropriate for Downtown Jamaica. They developed taxonomy of five manufacturing sectors: global innovation for local markets; regional processing; energy and/or resource-intensive commodities; global technologies/innovators; and labor-intensive tradables.

The United States, once the leader in each of these sectors, has ceded the top role to China in all but two of these categories—regional processing and global technologies/innovators. China is particularly dominant in labor-intensive tradables, with 36% of the world’s production. That segment, as the name implies, drives the most employment and is therefore most sensitive to differentials in wage rates; however, domestic employment in all five manufacturing sectors has fallen steadily since 1995 and has fallen the most in the labor-intensive tradables category. As less advanced economies like China, India, and Indonesia assume ever-increasing roles in each of the manufacturing sectors, the United States’ share of the global manufacturing pie diminishes: it now represents only 12% of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product (it was 24% in 1970 and, for comparison, is currently 33% of China’s GDP).

Any attempt to build manufacturing of any sizable scale in Downtown Jamaica must recognize this declining

43 “NYCEDC to Study Decline in JFK’s Freight Volume,” Air Cargo World, April 12, 2011
44 “JFK Air Cargo Study,” Landrum & Brown, January 2013, pp. 2-3
45 Ibid, p. 4
trend, the difficulty to build employment in non-labor intensive industries, and the rising competition. One of the industries in which the United States continues to lead—global technologies/innovators—requires considerable investment costs and specialized capacities for research and development.

In any case, the vast majority of Station Area BOA was re-zoned from industrial use to commercial/mixed use in 2007. Bay Area Economics performed a market and financial analysis of a site in Downtown Jamaica in 2009 which is now Strategic Site 2 in the Station Area BOA. Their finding for highest and best use at that time were mixed use retail/office, in terms of both residual land value and number of jobs created; the other uses that they examined were retail alone and mixed use with residential above retail.\(^{47}\)

Clearly, global trends and local conditions are poor for labor-intensive, mass production of finished or semi-finished goods. However, on a smaller scale, and in other sub-zones of the Jamaica BOA, the outcome for industrial development and job creation is more promising. The success of small manufacturers in a high cost environment such as New York (or for that matter, given today’s global economy, the success of any U.S.-based manufacturing company) is to be an efficient manufacturer of high value-added products. Examples of ways to boost product value and therefore increase profit margins would be superior understanding of, and the ability to serve, a niche market’s special preferences and tastes; proprietary production knowledge; or unique product design.

Manufacturers of specialty or crafted products are succeeding in the high cost environment of New York City, especially the outer boroughs of Brooklyn, the Bronx and Queens. Boutique manufacturers like the small industries of Red Hook in Brooklyn that import, grind and package coffee beans (Stumptown Coffee Grinders); make unique kitchen items (Brooklyn Slate); craft custom cabinetry and millwork (Premium Millwork); design and make custom handbags (Kempston & Co.); or even distill small-batch whiskey (Cacao Prieto), are finding success.

The Tuckerton sub-sector of the Nomination Study boundaries of the Jamaica BOA (see Figure 2), was also re-zoned in 2007, from M1-1 to M1-4, i.e., from industrial use with a maximum FAR (Floor Area Ratio) of 1:1 to industrial use with a maximum FAR of 2:1, doubling the amount of usable space that can be developed on each square foot of land. Tuckerton lies between the Station Area and the campus of York College, a four-year liberal arts institution within the CUNY system (City University of New York). The York campus also houses the Northeast Regional Labs of the Food and Drug Administration. The long term prospects for Tuckerton’s redevelopment, which is now blighted by junk yards and other noxious uses, for flex manufacturing space, manufacturing-related R&D facilities (especially food and pharmaceuticals), logistics support for JFK, or other benign, job-generating industrial and transportation businesses should not be forgotten. While the Station Area BOA is without doubt the highest priority for redevelopment as a catalyst for more expansive, area-wide redevelopment, Tuckerton is without doubt the most blighted and needy area for redevelopment and at the same time the most challenging.

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Jamaica’s future as an office center was launched when Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia dedicated the Supreme Court building in 1939. The choice to move the court from Long Island City to the location in Jamaica was based on convenience of access:

“The Sutphin Boulevard location was selected because it was close to the Jamaica station of the Long Island Railroad, near the major shopping center in Queens, and a block from the proposed IND subway station at Sutphin Boulevard and Hillside Avenue. Being at the nexus of transportation was important.”

The Family Court building followed in 1966, and today there are four Borough Courts that operate in Downtown Jamaica: the Supreme Court-Civil; the Family Court; the Civil Court; and the Surrogates Court. All of this judicial activity prompted the co-location of law offices in the surrounding neighborhood, and there are now nearly 300 law offices/law-related businesses in the three-mile radius around Downtown Jamaica.

The Joseph Addabbo Federal Building opened in 1988 as a 14-story, one million square foot processing center for the Social Security Administration, with a capacity to accommodate 3,000 employees. Their site selection was no doubt based primarily on ease of public transit access, as was the Supreme Court.

The Jamaica Hospital Medical Center is another service with a long history in the community (it was first established in Jamaica in 1891) and, while not classifiable as an “office business” itself, it has fostered the concentration of over 700 medical professional offices/health service businesses within the 3-mile radius around Downtown Jamaica.

Another major office user in Jamaica is the Queens Workforce1 Career Center, a City-funded agency occupying the second floor of 168-25 Jamaica Avenue. Like the courts and the Social Security center, Workforce1 serves all of the people of Queens and needed to be located near public transit.

The trend in Jamaica has been for government to situate offices here; the question becomes whether Jamaica has the drawing power to attract a major private business to locate its offices here. Certainly, Jamaica offers advantages that would appeal to office businesses. It offers a New York City location and convenient access to Manhattan without the high-cost of a midtown address, and Jamaica has the added advantage of AirTrain linkage to JFK Airport—only Jamaica and Howard Beach have this direct connection.

The consumer survey that JGSC Group performed for GJDC gives some indication of the obstacles that may confront an attempt to attract private tenants to new office space at the Station Area BOA. Survey respondents who self-identified as people who work in Downtown Jamaica expressed significant concerns with safety and security, difficulty with parking, and little variety/poor quality of the shopping and dining choices now available there. The survey made clear that the public perceives Downtown Jamaica as an unsafe place to work, and this perception may outweigh Jamaica’s many advantages in terms of attracting desirable tenants for new office space. Any plan to develop new office space and recruit office tenants should therefore include a program to address actual safety issues, and the public’s perception of them.

Connection to shopping and amenities like restaurants, dry cleaners, and pharmacies are equally important to office workers as they are to neighborhood residents, and while the retail and food options in Jamaica are many, there is widespread agreement that their quality and range is a barrier to development. The Consumer Survey conducted in conjunction with this plan’s Implementation Strategy found that 82% of respondents

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48 “Origin of the New York State Supreme Court Building, Jamaica, Queens,” by Jeff Gottlieb, Central Queens Historical Association, Inc., Kew Gardens, NY, December 28, 1998
said that attracting more restaurants should be among the top goals for a revitalized Downtown Jamaica, and that based on consumer perceptions, the stores and restaurants of Jamaica capture only about 20% of the business that is available to them.

Another shortcoming for the attraction of private office tenants is the quality of office space in the wider neighborhood: there is no Class “A” and little Class “B” office space currently available for private lease in Downtown Jamaica. To be competitive in the hunt for major corporate space users, these better classes of office space must be available. Of course, new office space could be developed at the Station Area BOA to meet the architectural standards of these classes, but there is a non-architectural component of Class “A” and Class “B” space that has to do with the quality of the location of the building, and to meet this Downtown Jamaica must address the oft-cited concerns of safety, parking access, and the quality/seLECTION of shopping and dining amenities.

The challenge for Downtown Jamaica is the rise of Long Island City as an office center with closer proximity to Midtown Manhattan. Long Island City has transit accessibility similar to Jamaica’s, and it also hosts the criminal courts building. It does not currently offer the extensive retail district that Jamaica does, and it is not as pedestrian-friendly as Jamaica. Nevertheless, the fact that it is one subway stop from midtown Manhattan, and the rents (and the hotel costs) are much less than Manhattan, have proven to be reason enough for major corporations (Citigroup, MetLife, JetBlue), as well as non-profit institutions (CUNY Law School) and government offices (NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene, U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Office) to locate or re-locate there.

The JetBlue decision is one of particular significance for the future of office development in Jamaica. Three years ago, JetBlue opted to re-locate from Forest Hills to Long Island City, and to consolidate their Darien, CT office into the new location in the process. Given that their primary service hub is JFK Airport, an office location in Queens was a logical choice, although the company spent more than a year evaluating urban locations all over the country. Published reports, unconfirmed by JetBlue, indicated that Orlando, Florida and Jamaica were the main contenders for the new location, and that transit access would be key to the decision. It would seem that Downtown Jamaica would have been a more practical choice, as it is better linked with those two airports than Long Island City, had strong political support, and JetBlue could have built a new corporate headquarters adjacent to the JFK AirTrain station. It is quite likely that the decision turned on the economics of a sub-let deal from MetLife in Long Island City, but it would be fair to say concerns about security and the lack of quality amenities also had an influence.

Based on the new growth in demand (particularly for Class “A” space), Jamaica’s transit options and proximity to the strongest office market in the country, and the retail base that has made Jamaica desirable for some office use, JGSC concluded that new office-use space is feasible for development in the Station Area BOA. This is particularly true for office space developed as a mixed-use project with retail at grade to cater to the needs of office workers above. However, success in this sector will be linked to downtown Jamaica’s ability to overcome negative perceptions and re-establish its reputation as a 24-hour destination with a desirable quality of life that will appeal to office managers and workers.

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49 “Mass Transit is Key as JetBlue Mulls HQ Re-location,” by Elizabeth Butler Cordova, Crain’s New York Business, April 8, 2009. As the title of the article implies, the company was reputed to be searching for a location with most convenient transit access.

50 Greater Jamaica Development Corporation proposed to build a new office building with 500,000 SF of Class “A” office space beside the AirTrain station, and Congressman Gregory Meeks endorsed this approach with the statement, “We think the best place for JetBlue to permanently land is Jamaica.” See: “NY Officials Scramble to Land JetBlue’s HQ,” by Elizabeth Butler Cordova, Crain’s New York Business, April 9, 2009.
On the national level, the office sector has not been the preferred sector for commercial real estate investment for many years and saw vacancies peak during the 2007-2010 recession. But there has been steady improvement in this sector, and the second quarter of 2013 has demonstrated the best growth since the recovery began in 2010.\textsuperscript{51}

“Demand for U.S. office space strengthened during the second quarter of 2013, as 60 out of the 82 metros tracked registered positive gains in occupancy, according to Cassidy Turley. U.S. office markets absorbed 15.1 million square feet of office space in the second quarter, compared to 5 million square feet in the first quarter. The current reading represents the third strongest quarter in the recovery, which began in 2010. Vacancy rates in the second quarter inched down 10 basis points to 15.3 percent. Vacancy is now 1.9 percent lower than its recessionary peak of 17.2 percent.”\textsuperscript{52}

The report quoted Kevin Thorpe, chief economist for Cassidy Turley, with regard to the high demand for new office space:

“It is interesting to observe that tenants are consistently gravitating to newer buildings, and yet, that segment remains supply constrained,” says Thorpe. “New development remains 30 percent below the norm. So this one sliver of the market, new space, is entering into a tight supply/strong demand scenario. Rents could very well soar for the new office space that delivers to the market over the next 12 to 24 months.”\textsuperscript{53}

The report went on to say that New York City has the strongest demand of the top 10 markets for office space in the U.S., with 1.7 million square feet of net absorption capacity.\textsuperscript{54}

But is it enough to plan to build new office space within the strongest market in the country? Earlier this year, the Urban Land Institute (ULI) published their annual review of emerging real estate trends, and with regard to office use, they emphasized that office tenants are more interested now in the location of the building, and the quality of life offered there, than ever before:

“Investors must focus more than ever on location. ‘That means urban, dense, vibrant places,’ preferably with diversity provided by universities and medical centers. Buildings win if they can offer tenants flexibility allowing cost-effective layout changes to accommodate open-space plans and Wi-Fi technologies. Green buildings with high ratings under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program and energy-efficient systems leapfrog the competition: tenants calculate operating savings and find they can attract young talent who favor ‘cool space’ and nods by their employers to environmental correctness.”\textsuperscript{55}

It is, after all, the workforce that must be attracted by the company, and the quality of the office environment—including the surrounding neighborhood—is of paramount importance for attracting the best workforce:

“Tune in to work attributes favored by younger hires, who place emphasis on connectivity and social interaction over privacy and their own space. Also, pay more attention to the neighbor-

\textsuperscript{51} “Office sector fundamentals strengthen during the second quarter,” staff report, Business Online, France Publications, Inc.; Washington, D.C., July 2, 2013
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid
\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Emerging Trends in Real Estate®-2013}, PricewaterhouseCoopers and Urban Land Institute, Washington, D.C., p. 56
hoods where the Gen-Y crowd wants to live and work; ‘Their influence cannot be underestimated.’”

ULI also recommended that that the medical office sector be seriously considered as a growth opportunity:

“Although a niche sector, medical office space presents compelling investment opportunities as the nation’s health care industry balloons to take care of graying Baby Boomers.

“Undersized properties may ‘make it hard to put money out,’ but the demand from doctors, clinics, labs, and rehab providers is ‘crazy to ignore.’”

To better capture its share of the current office market, the Station Area BOA, indeed the entirety of the BOA’s downtown environs, must address the perception of neighborhood security and improve the “accoutrements” that attract dynamic commercial businesses – the variety and quality of retail and restaurant options. And in spite of TOD’s ability to provide a car-free, hassle-free living space for those that live within walking distance of the TOD, parking issues need to be addressed to attract shoppers from outside that will add both zest and revenue to new retail and dining options.

The development of a full service hotel; mixed use market rate housing that includes retail, and intelligently designed commercial space with attractive, ground floor retail space, could create the kind of 24-hour vitality that, in turn, would address the safety and amenity concerns held by some employees. This would catalyze creation of new, high quality office space as part of an area wide plan for brownfield redevelopment.

**Analysis: Retail Sector**

The recent national recession was a devastating period for retail in America. High unemployment impacted discretionary retail spending to such an extent that a number of major national retailers went out of business. Major shifts occurred that continue to impact the way Americans shop: big-box stores are downsizing; internet sales are growing; many mall properties and suburban strip centers are closing or consolidating into “power centers”; and new retail construction has been down virtually across the board.

Most segments of retail, including regional malls and community shopping centers, are slowly climbing, but have not yet attained levels of performance last seen in 2006. However, there is one retail segment that has been more stable and actually seen growth in investment and in sales performance through this period: the urban business district. The International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) is the leading trade association for the retail industry, and they have been reporting on the growth of urban retail against the trend of national decline. In a recent issue of their publication, “Shopping Centers Today,” ICSC reported on record-breaking retail property deals in New York City and that overall, “Manhattan sales of urban retail properties jumped from $670 million in the second quarter of 2011 to $3.2 billion in the fourth quarter of 2012.” The article went on to predict still greater growth:

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56 Ibid, p. 57
57 Ibid, p. 57
58 During the period 2007-2011, these well-known retailers permanently closed their doors: Bennigans (of nearly 300 locations in 2007, only 31 franchisee-owned restaurants remain open), Bombay Company, Borders Group, Circuit City, CompUSA, Crabtree & Evelyn, Fortunoff, Goody’s Family Clothing, Hollywood Video, KB Toys, Linens N Things, Ritz Camera Centers, Steve & Barry’s, Sym’s Corporation, The Sharper Image, Wilsons Leather, and Woolworth Group, among many others.
59 **Emerging Trends in Real Estate ®2013**, op. cit., p. 54
60 “Big City, Bigger Deals,” by Ben Johnson, Shopping Centers Today magazine, July 2013, p. 52.
“Despite all of the deal making, it is unlikely that the nation’s urban retail markets have peaked, or that the major buyers are ready to sit contentedly on their piles of cash, observers say. ‘They all certainly have a lot of money, so I don’t see this stopping,’ said [Faith Hope] Consolo [chairman of retail leasing and sales for Prudential Douglas Elliman].”

A survey of commercial investors reported in Emerging Trends in Real Estate 2013 demonstrated enthusiasm over urban opportunities:

“Chains and specialty retailers, including some offshore brands, ‘cannot find enough space in the [select] places [New York primarily] where they want to showcase their brands.’” (Selection includes the quote of a survey respondent.)

“Big-box formats continue to wrestle with how to shrink into urban streetscapes to capture business from move-back-in trends, and multi-family developers similarly accommodate necessity retail components—supermarkets, drugstores, and cleaners—into their infill projects. ‘Urban retail development has major potential.’” (Selection includes the quote of a survey respondent.)

The move-back-in trend is real: Generation Y (born between 1980 and 2000) is growing, leaving the suburban nest, and is opting for the urban lifestyle. Robert Charles Lesser & Co., a real estate advisory group, prepared a chart demonstrating the impact of this transition on urban real estate.

**TABLE 5: GROWTH OF AGE COHORT BORN 1980-2000 AND DEMAND FOR URBAN LIFE STYLES**

![Chart demonstrating the growth of Generation Y and demand for urban life styles.](chart.png)

Considering that not only Gen Y, but also aging Baby Boomers are abandoning suburbia for the car-free convenience of urban neighborhoods, it is understandable that investors are excited about opportunities for ur-

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61 Ibid, p. 52.
ban retail to meet this growing demand.

Analysis by the BOA consultant, JGSC Group, corroborates that opportunity for new retail abounds in the BOA and all of Downtown Jamaica. Moreover, there were several distinctly local characteristics revealed by the Consumer Survey and through a comparative analysis that are well worth stating here:

1. Downtown Jamaica retailers draw most of their customers (64% of them) from 13 contiguous Jamaica zip codes, all of them in Southeast Queens—the “Trade Area” (Figure 7).

2. Over one-half million people live within the trade area, and spend $4.425 billion/year on retail goods and services. They spend only $1.766 billion of that within the trade area; the remainder—more than 60% of their expenditures—is spent outside of the trade area and is classified as “unmet demand.” Unmet demand from the trade area alone is $2.659 billion per year.

3. Not reported in the available spending data are the expenditures of non-resident populations within the trade area, but JGSC projected values for them:
   a. 1,545 people work in offices in the Downtown Jamaica commercial districts alone and they spend $8.9 million/year, most of which is not captured.
   b. There are 52,438 office workers within the Trade Area and they spend over $303 million/year on retail goods and services near their workplaces—judging by the responses received from people who work in Jamaica to the consumer survey, the stores and restaurants of Downtown Jamaica fail to capture their share of this spending.
   c. There are nearly 30,000 college students at York College and St. Johns University combined, and their discretionary retail spending is estimated to be $62 million during the 10 months of the school year. The consumer survey responses of the York College population indicate that Jamaica stores and restaurants have a very low rate of capture of this business; we may safely presume that even worse is true for the St. John’s University community, since York College is located within easy walking distance of the Station Area and St. John’s campus is over a mile away.

4. Those people that shop and dine in Jamaica do so less frequently and spend less money per visit than when they shop or dine at other locations.

5. The Trade Area falls largely to the south of Jamaica Avenue, but retail demand is equally high to the north of Jamaica Avenue, where the residents have even higher household incomes and tend not to shop in Downtown Jamaica.

The inference from those five points is that while Downtown Jamaica is a retail destination, drawing shoppers from a fairly wide area, it is failing to capture more than a third of the retail demand that surrounds it.

There are remarkable amounts of unmet demand for retail across virtually all categories in Jamaica. Consider these levels of unmet demand for Jamaica that demonstrate the capacity to support multiple new retail stores and restaurants in each category:63

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63 Source: ESRI
### Table 6: Unmet Retail Demand Available to Downtown Jamaica

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Trade Area</th>
<th>3-Mile Radius</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grocery stores</td>
<td>$360.1 million</td>
<td>$502.6 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department stores&lt;sup&gt;64&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>$177.2 million</td>
<td>$250.8 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-service restaurants&lt;sup&gt;65&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>$161.5 million</td>
<td>$230.1 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing stores</td>
<td>$132.8 million</td>
<td>$165.2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited-service restaurants</td>
<td>$100.3 million</td>
<td>$140.5 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronics/appliances</td>
<td>$99.2 million</td>
<td>$141.1 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture stores</td>
<td>$31.5 million</td>
<td>$46.8 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home furnishings</td>
<td>$30.6 million</td>
<td>$42.3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoe stores</td>
<td>$20.6 million</td>
<td>$30.9 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialty food stores</td>
<td>$11.8 million</td>
<td>$16.1 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewelry/luggage/leather</td>
<td>$10.6 million</td>
<td>$18.6 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A marketing plan should include specific sub-categories of retail and supply individual prospects within those categories that will enable Jamaica to capture greater shares of the audience within its current Trade Area, from visiting populations, and from the wider areas around the downtown that its retailers are not currently serving.

**Land Use Implementation Techniques to Ensure Desired Land Uses Materialize**

GJDC was a long term advocate, beginning in the 1990s, for re-zoning of much of Downtown Jamaica. This became more urgent following the commitment by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to build a light rail link to JFK Airport and to place the JFK AirTrain Terminal adjacent to the existing Long Island Railroad station and three New York City Subway lines, creating a powerful, intermodal transit hub. The opening of the JFK AirTrain Terminal in 2003 raised the profile of the Station Area and its potential for Transit Oriented Development. However, this development could not go forward given its 2003 zoning, which had been unchanged since its institution in the 1960s. That left all of the parcels immediately adjacent to the LIRR Station/JFK Airtrain transit hub to the east, southeast, south and southwest zoned for industrial use with a developable floor area ratio (FAR) of only 1:1. In effect, redevelopment could only take place through an extensive and costly petition to the City’s Board of Standards and Appeals for a zoning variance—a petition with no guarantee of success. (See Figure 3 for areas re-zoned from M1 to C6/C4 in 2007.)

GJDC was robust in its support for rezoning studies conducted by the Queens office of the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP). Beginning in 2005-06, preliminary ideas for rezoning evolved and DCP began extensive community outreach with the proposed changes, as well as conducting and publishing a complete

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<sup>64</sup> These numbers certainly justify (and no doubt informed) the decision of the Blumenfeld Development Corp. to build 160,000 SF of new department store space in downtown Jamaica, even in the absence of an existing lease with an anticipated tenant.

<sup>65</sup> Contrast this number with the total amount of sales made by full-service restaurants within the downtown Jamaica study area (the combined commercial districts): only $1.2 million. This is clearly the biggest missed-opportunity in downtown Jamaica.
Environmental Impact Study for the proposed zoning changes. DCP’s “Jamaica Plan” was adopted on September 10, 2007 and affected 386 blocks in Jamaica, the largest re-zoning by the City up to that date. Virtually all the blocks in the Station Area BOA were re-zoned.

Most of the re-zoned blocks in the Station Area were up-zoned from M1-1 (industrial use with a FAR of 1:1), to C6-2, C6-3 and C6-4 (commercial mixed use with FARs of 6:1, 8:1 and 12:1 respectively).

Development projects envisioned by the Implementation Strategy are consistent with the BOA area wide plan and are within the permitted uses and densities of the new zoning for the Station Area. No re-zoning or modification of existing zoning as adopted in 2007 is required to move BOA implementation forward.

**Figure 8: Zoning Map of the Station Area**

**Design Standards and Guidelines**

The City of New York, through its Department of City Planning, has extensive, highly detailed design standards for new construction. These guidelines are institutionalized within the two-volume, 800-plus page Zoning Resolution for the City of New York. The Resolution covers every conceivable sub-set of building construction. Most applicable to Station Area BOA redevelopment are the baseline regulations covering bulk for Commercial or Community Use Buildings in Commercial Areas, followed by exceptions or modifications of these basic regulations for Residential Buildings in Commercial Areas, followed by exceptions or modifications of the basic regulations affecting bulk for Mixed Use Buildings in Commercial zones. In addition, in conjunction with the 2007 rezoning of 386 blocks in Jamaica, the blocks located within the primary commercial and industrial areas of the downtown were designated as a Special District, which allows for more generous development options and density in the Station Area, which is within the Special District.

Basic bulk regulations covered in the Zoning Resolution include:
• Floor Area Ratio
• Height
• Setbacks
• Yard and Court space
• Minimum distance between walls or windows and lot lines
• Required off-street parking spaces
• Bicycle parking
• Requirements for pedestrian circulation
• Public plazas, arcades and parking lots

These regulations, in conjunction with development sites and BOA planning being consistent with the 2007 re-zoning plan generally, assure that future development and associated structures within the Station Area BOA will be compatible with the site, adjacent land use, and overall community character.

ECONOMIC DISTRICTS OR DESIGNATIONS AFFECTING BOA REDEVELOPMENT

URBAN RENEWAL AREA

The 2007 re-zoning also created the Gateway Urban Renewal Area, encompassing three blocks adjacent to the AirTrain station. As part of an Urban Renewal Plan, the properties within these blocks are available for public acquisition to further area redevelopment goals.

FIGURE 9: GATEWAY URBAN RENEWAL AREA

SPECIAL DOWNTOWN JAMAICA DISTRICT
The Designated Jamaica BOA is within the Special Downtown Jamaica District created by the New York City Department of Planning. The Special District’s exceptions to the standard zoning regulations are contained in Article XI, Chapter 5 of the City’s Zoning Resolution, which states that “The ‘Special Downtown Jamaica District’ established in this Resolution is designed to promote and protect the public health, safety and general welfare of the Downtown Jamaica community.” The Special District regulations affect bulk regulations and allowable uses, as well as broadening the eligibility for incentives available through the construction of affordable housing.

JAMAICA NOW! ACTION PLAN

“Now is the time to harness the interest of the community, City, and Queens Borough President to set forth an ambitious agenda for a diverse, vibrant, and accessible community around one of our City’s great central business districts and inter-modal transportation hubs – Jamaica, Queens.” –Jamaica Now Action Plan 66

In April 2015, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio announced the “Jamaica NOW! Action Plan,” which recognized Jamaica’s potential and brought together Greater Jamaica Development Corporation, Regional Plan Association, York College, the Queens Borough President’s office, the community, and the private sector.

The vision and energy of a new mayor and a new Queens Borough President, building consensus with all stakeholders, developed a 21-initiative roadmap with short, medium, and long-term goals to increase quality jobs and small business support, promote commercial growth and economic development, and improve livability in Jamaica, Queens. 67

Among the 21 projects listed in the plan, seven in particular support development efforts and streetscape improvements around Jamaica Station:

1. Complete the Station Plaza project;
2. Construct new water mains to allow the system to accommodate new development;
3. Fund and install NYPD cameras to improve the safety of the neighborhood;
4. Fund a $250,000 study to determine the potential scope of work and cost for Jamaica Avenue streetscape improvements;
5. Examine the potential for the creation of a downtown BID for all of Jamaica;
6. Fund redesigns for storefronts on Sutphin Boulevard, and
7. Promote a new, mixed-use development on the site of the former 168th Street New York Police Department garage.

The focus on these initiatives suggests continued support from the City for the economic development of Jamaica.

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) have been important partners in the economic development of New York City for more than 20 years. Their creation requires a planning stage whereby potential stakeholders and members of the BID determine the goals and activities for a proposed BID; outreach to local property owners, who must agree to pay an assessment to operate the BID and implement its activities; and legislative action by the New York City Council that creates a non-profit entity and formally establishes a formula by which the assessment will be calculated.

Assessments are paid by private property owners in the BID. It is calculated by a formula based on assessed value, frontage footage, or gross building square footage. The objective is to develop an assessment formula where the amount each property owner pays is roughly proportional to the benefit received by the property. The BID is governed by a board of directors made up of local property and business owners, as well as an ex officio representative of the City, to assure proper governance of expenditures. Clearly, BOA development projects that increase the total square feet of buildings within a BOA’s boundaries will provide the BID with additional resources to provide more services and marketing power for their district. BIDs use their resources to provide services to the businesses in their catchment areas—enhanced sanitation, technical assistance to access incentives, liaison to City agencies, promotional events and marketing collaterals.

There are three commercial BIDs in Jamaica’s Downtown. The 165th Street Mall Improvement Association provides supplemental sanitation and maintenance services, as well as promotional and marketing support, for retail activity in a pedestrian mall along one block of 165th Street between Jamaica and 89th Avenues. Trees and decorative sculpture mark the block and there is a free flow of pedestrian traffic using both the ex-
isting sidewalks and the street itself, which is closed to traffic. The BID is about three-quarters of a mile—about a 15 minute walk—from the Station Area BOA.

Two larger commercial BIDs are adjacent to or run through part of the Station Area BOA. The Jamaica Center BID is the most extensive BID in the downtown. It runs east-west on Jamaica Avenue from 168th Street on the east to Sutphin Boulevard on the west, a stretch of nearly one mile on what is inarguably the primary commercial strip in the downtown. Jamaica Avenue marks the northern boundary of the Station Area BOA.68

The Sutphin Boulevard BID runs north-south from Hillside Avenue on the north to 94th Avenue on the south. This carries the Sutphin Boulevard BID into, but not entirely through, the heart of the Station Area. The BID reaches the JFK AirTrain station, but does not continue south to reach BOA Station Area Strategic Sites 2, 3 or 8 (see Figure 26, BOA Strategic Sites).

Leaders of both of these BIDs were active participants in the advisory committees and ancillary meetings discussing BOA planning and progress. Both are looking forward to the redevelopment of BOA Strategic Sites as sources of new retail space and additional residents that will increase the already vibrant and dense pedestrian traffic in the downtown.69

POTENTIAL EXTENSION OF THE SUTPHIN BOULEVARD BID

Prior to submitting their proposal for Implementation Strategy work under the BOA program, GJDC explored with the Sutphin Boulevard BID the possibility of extending their BID southward through the entire length of the BOA. There was interest by the BID in such an extension and GJDC included in its Implementation Strategy proposal that it would “provide advisory services to the BID to lengthen it southward on Sutphin Boulevard to Liberty Avenue, which would extend it fully through the Station Area….”

The resulting conversations, meetings and activity surrounding the Sutphin BID’s growth opportunities took place in a dynamic development environment that brought many changes to the Station area after the Implementation Strategy proposal was submitted in 2010. The Shops at Station Plaza opened; there were a series of public announcements of housing, retail, and hotel development projects in the Station Area and other locations in the downtown; the City of New York announced in 2013 it was preparing to re-issue a Request for Proposal for development of affordable housing and retail on a 45,000 Ft² site in the downtown;70 and Blumenfeld Development Corporation unveiled plans for a roughly $50 million retail strip that would anchor the eastern end of Jamaica Avenue at 168th Street and house the downtown’s first major department store in 30 years.

Additional Station Area projects that were south of the existing BID boundaries were in the planning stages while still other assembled, strategic sites were being marketed to developers and investors. GJDC worked with the Sutphin BID to analyze extending the BID three additional blocks south along Sutphin Boulevard (from 94th Ave to Liberty Ave). GJDC not only examined the new businesses and storefronts that would be included in an expanded Sutphin BID and how much assessments would increase, but also looked at increasing the current assessment from 23 cents per square foot of gross building space to potentially 35 and 50 cents per square foot. The BID moved forward and obtained support from its board and City approval for an increase in the current assessment. The new revenue will be used for a storefront improvement program.

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68 A single BOA Strategic Site of 35,550 Ft² is adjacent to the Jamaica Avenue boundary of the BID.
69 Recent estimates of average daily pedestrian traffic in the downtown is 86,000+
70 The New York City Economic Development Corporation issued the original RFP in 2007, following the adoption of the rezoning plan in November of that year. The “great recession” stalled the effort and the RFP was withdrawn.
The combination of new leadership and an increasing tempo of investment and interest in Jamaica encouraged the City to include in the Jamaica NOW! Action Plan their support for consolidation of the three Jamaica BIDs into a single entity. This initiative will have a high priority and impact. We believe it would be fair to say that BOA work—both in terms of promoting development and in terms of encouraging the Sutphin BID to think outside the box—was helpful in preparing the ground for this significant and challenging evolution, an evolution that will reduce costs and provide the benefit of scale to future BID work, as well as create a more consistent look and feel for Jamaica’s Downtown. The consolidation effort will present an opportunity for GJDC to continue to advocate for a BID expansion within the context of that consolidation.

IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS TO SUPPORT BOA REVITALIZATION

A range of public infrastructure improvements, either necessary or supportive of development projects in the Station Area BOA, are in the pipeline. Recently completed or fully planned projects that are funded through programs or sources other than BOA are discussed below under “Construction Ready Projects.” Design studies for additional infrastructure improvements that were supported with through BOA Implementation Strategy funding are discussed separately below under “Preconstruction Activities.”

CONSTRUCTION READY PROJECTS

REBUILD EAST SIDE OF SUTPHIN BOULEVARD UNDERPASS — “THE SHOPS AT STATION PLAZA”

Re-building and redevelopment of the east side of Long Island Railroad underpass at Sutphin Boulevard (“The Shops at Station Plaza”) is complete. 71

The renovations, which began in fall 2009, transformed a dreary and foreboding loading dock area in the middle of the Jamaica transit hub into a pedestrian-friendly location with distinctive lighting over the street and sidewalk, 5,600 feet of ground floor retail space, and significant upgrades to LIRR infrastructure, including a new commissary, loading dock, and emergency generators to strengthen resiliency. The “Shops at Station Plaza” leverage a location that is directly across Sutphin Boulevard from the LIRR and JFK AirTrain into an opportunity for business development, jobs, and public amenities. The first space was tenanted in March of 2013.

The project cost $12.7 million. Seed money was provided by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, a key partner. Capital funds were sponsored by Congressman Gregory Meeks, New York Senators Schumer and Gillibrand, New York City Council Member the late Thomas White, Assembly Member Vivian Cook, the U.S. Department of Transportation, the New York State and City Departments of Transportation, and the city’s Economic Development Corporation, which co-managed the project. Projects of this type, which require the cooperation and approvals of multiple agencies and must access multiple funding streams, present unusual challenges to their completion, in spite of a clear need and public benefit.

71 This project was conducted by GJDC outside the BOA work plan and without funding from the BOA program.
FIGURE 11: THE SHOPS AT STATION PLAZA

Sutphin Underpass Before Redevelopment

Sutphin Underpass After Redevelopment

Retail space has been leased to Resorts World Casino for seating and coffee as an amenity for customers waiting for free shuttle bus to and from Aqueduct Race Track or the Resorts World Casino. Two local businesses have leased additional space, one for a Dunkin’ Donuts franchise and the second for an independent sandwich shop.

**IMPROVE VEHICULAR ACCESS TO THE STATION AREA – ATLANTIC AVENUE EXTENSION/“TWO-WAY PAIR”**

A short stretch of Atlantic Avenue, currently an undeveloped, mapped right-of-way, will be opened and paved, linking two parallel streets, 94th and 95th Avenues, with each other and with U.S. 687 (Van Wyck Expressway), the primary highway linking JFK Airport with Queens, the Bronx and the entire interstate highway system. The pair of one-way streets will seamlessly carry traffic into and out of the Station Area from the Van Wyck, which runs north-south, to the east-west one-way pair (Figure 12, below). A new, half-acre green space, Gateway Park, will be integrated into the project. It will include a viewing park, a sitting park and a playground straddling the newly opened Atlantic Avenue Extension (Figure 13, below).

Final plans and funding are in place with a total project budget of $20 million, including land contributions by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey of $2.3 million and acquisition of property by the City of New York for $5.1 million. Capital funding for the project is committed from the Federal Highway Administration, the City of New York and the Queens Borough President’s Office. The project is being co-managed by GJDC and the New York City Economic Development Corporation.

FIGURE 12: ATLANTIC AVENUE EXTENSION/TWO-WAY PAIR PROJECT SHOWING GATEWAY PARK

72 This project was conceived and managed by GJDC outside the BOA work plan and without funding from the BOA program.
FIGURE 13: PLAN VIEW FOR GATEWAY PARK
CREATE A STATION PLAZA TO INCREASE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AND EASE VEHICULAR CONGESTION
IN THE STATION AREA\textsuperscript{73}

The Station Plaza project will realign Archer Avenue at Sutphin Boulevard to create a transit plaza where users can change mass transit modes—bus, subway, or rail—in safe and comfortable conditions. The portion of the project that is fully planned and funded will include widened sidewalks, additional bus lanes, plazas with relocated subway exits, new lighting, a public information system, landscaping, and bus shelters.

The creation of the green space as part of this project will require additional funding for construction and adoption of an on-going maintenance plan, which at this time are problematical. Should resources be found, the Urban Renewal Area designation would be helpful in supporting a process to obtain the parcel of land fronting on Sutphin Boulevard in which to place this public amenity. However, the plan for green space shown in the preliminary plan is currently on hold.

\textbf{FIGURE 14: STATION PLAZA}

\textsuperscript{73} GIDC recognized the potential for, and the importance of, this project independently of the BOA program. GIDC, in partnership with NYC Economic Development Corporation, contracted with design and engineering firms to generate preliminary plans and renderings as early as 2004 in anticipation of the re-zoning of the Station Area, which was adopted by the City of New York in 2007.
BOA-SUPPORTED PRECONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES

OVERVIEW

Design activities for infrastructure improvements undertaken as part of the Implementation Strategy included:

- Conceptual landscape design, re-design and engineering studies to improve street lighting, and sidewalks and curbs for Archer Avenue between 150th Street and 147th Place; and
- Plans and schematic designs for cosmetic rehabilitation and lighting for the 150th Street Underpass.

The project to improve the pedestrian experience on Archer Avenue within the BOA—the “look and feel” of this important, yet desolate-appearing local through-street—and the cosmetic rehabilitation of the Long Island Railroad’s 150th Street Underpass, are linked in terms of geography, purpose and impact. For clarity of project definition, two RFPs were issued, but the considerable overlap suggested that the most efficient approach was to use the same design team for both projects. The 150th Street Underpass is a primary north-south route carrying automobile and pedestrian traffic from the south onto Archer Avenue and then, with an immediate left turn onto Archer, westward for three short blocks into the heart of the Station Area BOA. Although described in independent sections for this report, the Redevelopment Opportunity Context Map below, which illustrates the full range of infrastructure projects supporting Station Area development, clearly shows the connection of the two BOA preconstruction activities. The reader is encouraged to see the two studies as part of a single project that will enhance entry into the heart of the Station Area BOA.

FIGURE 15: REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY CONTEXT MAP
BuroHappold Consultants led a Design Team of HAKS Engineering, Sam Schwartz Engineering (traffic), and Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architects, for both the Archer Avenue improvement project and the 150th Street Underpass cosmetic rehabilitation project.

During the initial meetings, GJDC worked with the design team to set objectives for the project. The objectives were determined to be the same for both projects:

- Enhance pedestrian safety in area;
- Enhance the environment for pedestrians and encourage pedestrian foot traffic;
- Coordinate design and improvements with adjacent proposed and planned public and private developments;
- Incorporate community insights, preferences and needs into the proposed infrastructure improvements; and
- Contribute to the overall transformation of Downtown Jamaica by leading to a workable plan that meets all City and State requirements, is consistent with best sustainability practices, and results in economical, yet effective, streetscape improvements that will encourage private development.

Similarly, the tasks of the consultant team were the same for both projects. These tasks were to:

- Prepare an existing conditions report;
- Develop design alternatives;
- Evaluate alternatives; and
- Advance the approved design to a preliminary level.

The recently completed redevelopment projects in the environs of the Station Area BOA provide context for these preliminary design studies. These projects include Moda, which set a new standard for Jamaica residential development with 346 units of mixed income housing, a community facility and commercial space; the redesign and rehabilitation of the east side of the Sutphin Boulevard LIRR Underpass into “Shops at Station Plaza”; the opening of Norman Towers, a green building with 101 mixed income residential units, office space for the developer of the project, the Bluestone Organization, and ground floor retail space; improvements to nearby York College; the Mattone Cinema/retail complex; municipal offices and courts; and of course, the JFK AirTrain Terminal in the Station Area BOA.

The Implementation Strategy is channeling this development energy into major Station Area BOA redevelopment projects through additional infrastructure improvements, market research, feasibility studies and an array of marketing and outreach efforts to developers, potential tenants, and sources of financing.

CONCEPTUAL DESIGN AND ENGINEERING STUDIES TO IMPROVE ARCHER AVENUE

The length of Archer Avenue subject to conceptual design and engineering studies—the “Project Area”—is between 150th Street to the east and to 147th Place to the west (see Figure 16). This unsightly length of local road carries considerable traffic, both vehicular and pedestrian, into the Station Area BOA, and connects directly to the future Station Plaza. Similarly, the Archer Avenue project will connect with the BOA-funded preliminary design for cosmetic rehabilitation of the Long Island Railroad’s 150th Street underpass.

GJDC’s overarching strategy for the project was to limit recommended improvements to those that could be realistically implemented, i.e., a workable plan with a capital budget that could be supported with discretionary funding. Given the likely near- or middle-term development along the stretch of Archer Avenue in the
project area and its impact on what streetscape improvements would be needed, or even possible, preliminary designs for sidewalk furniture or similar enhancements of Archer Avenue were deferred.

EXISTING CONDITIONS — ARCHER AVENUE

The study used pedestrian counts, Automatic Traffic Recorders, and field observations to collect data.

The Design Team concluded that any study to improve the pedestrian experience on Archer Avenue would need to consider traffic flow as part of a practical and cohesive approach.

As one of the major east-west arterials serving the Jamaica area, Archer Avenue is a two-way, east-west roadway with one to two moving lanes in each direction.

The study corridor is well-served by transit. Just east of the study area, there is a major bus hub along the curb lanes of Archer Avenue at Parsons Boulevard. Sixteen bus routes to and from multiple points east and south of the Station Area BOA provide transfers to and from the E, J and Z subway lines. This segment of Archer Avenue struggles to meet the needs of multiple users (i.e., vehicle traffic, truck loading, pedestrians, buses, etc.), with frequent congestion, high bus volumes, and roadway alignment challenges.

The LIRR Jamaica Station, to the west of the Project Area, is one of the busiest LIRR stations in the system, as is the JFK AirTrain, which contributes to high pedestrian volumes using an aging sidewalk infrastructure. Within the Archer Avenue corridor study area, there is one bus stop in each direction. On the eastbound side of Archer Avenue, a bus stop is located at the south side of the 149th Street intersection.

This bus stop serves the Q20 A/B, Q24, Q30, Q31, and Q44 bus routes. For westbound Archer Avenue, the bus stop is located to the west (far side) of the 150th Street intersection accommodating the Q20 A/B and Q44 bus routes. Curbside parking is limited to approximately eighteen legal on-street parking spaces on Archer Avenue in the study area (two on the south side and 16 on the north side).

**Figure 16: Archer Avenue Existing Conditions**

[Diagram showing Archer Avenue existing conditions with various land uses and locations indicated.]
Based on recorded observations of 30 minute periods from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm on weekdays and Saturdays, there is limited turnover of on-street parking in the corridor (4 maximum) during any 30-minute period. Many of the spaces (including illegal spaces) are used by the various automotive establishments to store cars both before and after they are serviced, including a number of cars parked without license plates that are rarely moved. In terms of parking utilization, there are spaces available during most of the 30-minute periods surveyed on weekdays and all of the periods on a Saturday. On the weekday, utilization was close to full during the AM period, about 2/3 full in the midday, and about 3/4 full during the PM peak period. On Saturday, the spaces were more than 3/4 full.

The E, J, and Z trains run under Archer Avenue within the Project Area. Subway grates exist in the north and south sidewalks between 147th Place and 148th Street and in the south sidewalk only between 148th and 150th Streets. There are five MTA subway hatches located in the south sidewalk of Archer Ave between 148th and 150th Streets. There are two MTA subway hatches located in the north sidewalk of Archer Ave between 149th and 150th Streets. Subway sidewalk vents exist in the north and south sidewalks between 147th Place and 148th Street and in the south sidewalk only between 148th and 150th Streets. There are also multiple building basement entrances crossing the sidewalk throughout the project area. There are existing building basement entrances on both the south sidewalk and north sidewalk of Archer Ave between 147th Place and 150th Streets.

There are three Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) rail lines that run on an elevated structure to the south of the Project Area. The structure carries multiple through tracks in addition to storage tracks. LIRR’s Main Line Train Station on Archer Avenue and Sutphin Boulevard is one block west of the project area and adjacent to the elevated LIRR lines. The Jamaica terminal of the JFK AirTrain Station is just one block from the LIRR Station, adjacent to the other side of the LIRR elevated lines.

There are underground public and private utilities within the existing Right of Way. Based on further investigation, the following utilities were found to be present under Archer Avenue within the Project Area:

- 12" dia. water main under the roadbed and sidewalk,
- 6" dia. gas main under the road,
- Communications conduits under the roadbed, and
- Electric conduits under the roadbed.

Similarly, five drainage lines carrying combined sanitary waste water and storm water are under the roadbed or sidewalk in the Project Area. There is one, 8" diameter and two, 12" lines under the roadbed; a 10" diameter line under the sidewalk; and a 23" line that runs under both the road bed and sidewalk.

The existing visual environment along Archer Avenue is largely influenced by the high number of automotive related businesses, garages, vacant lots, and parking lots that line both sides of the street. The area has an industrial look and feel.

The existing sidewalk is of various ages, materials, and is in poor condition. The existing street pavement is also in poor condition in the project area. The pavement throughout the project area is composite and most of the wearing surfaces feature only fair or worn asphalt.
Currently, there are only three trees along the three-block length of the project area. None are large enough to provide an overarching canopy. There are two Taxodium distichum (Bald Cypress) trees on the north side of Archer between 148<sup>th</sup> and 149<sup>th</sup> Streets; one Zelkova tree is located on the south side of Archer Avenue between 149<sup>th</sup> and 150<sup>th</sup> Streets. All trees are relatively young and are approximately 4”–6” in diameter. The trees appear healthy, although one of the Bald Cypress trees has lost its central leader.

The location of utilities, subway structures, building entrances, fire hydrants, bus stops, street intersections, curb cuts, and various other elements must be reviewed to assure that the required space needs, or offsets, can be met.
For Archer Avenue, the evaluation of site conditions and the required offsets show that there are limited locations where street trees may be planted.

On the south side of Archer Avenue, the primary factors limiting street trees are the presence of subway grates in the sidewalk and a 12” water line located under the sidewalk. On the north side of Archer Avenue, there are site conditions that currently inhibit street tree planting. Subway grates and utility vaults are two limiting factors, but building entrances, curb cuts, and bus stops also reduce planting opportunities.

Although the north side of the street is directly over the subway tunnel, the subway roof is deep (10’-15’ below existing grade) and is not believed to be a limiting factor for tree planting on that side of the street.
ARCHE AVENUE NEEDS

Recommendations and budget estimates for basic needs transcended issues of future uncertainties. They were:

Pavement Needs: Consistent with any proposed upgrades to Archer Avenue’s streetscape, traffic flow, or enhanced bus operations, resurfacing will be necessary to make the roadway pavement aesthetically pleasing as well as serviceable from an engineering and operational standpoint.

Sidewalk Upgrade: The visual environment is in need of improvement through sidewalk upgrades. Replacement of the sidewalk paving can create a uniform element on the ground plane that visually unifies Archer Avenue.

Street Trees: Where feasible, trees can change the character of the street. Street trees can create a dynamic environment with changing light and shadow, seasonal color, and views that expand and contract as people travel along Archer Avenue.

CONSTRAINTS AND ANCILLARY CONSIDERATIONS AFFECTING ARCHE AVENUE IMPROVEMENTS

Current conditions provide some, albeit limited, opportunities for additional trees. Within the project site, there are plans to develop the parcels assembled by GJDC on the south side of Archer Avenue (Sites 6 and 11a, Figure 26) in accordance with the new zoning. Development is expected to be mixed-use with ground floor retail and residential or office space above. As the street character evolves, there is the potential that businesses and building uses may change, rendering garage doors and curb cuts unnecessary and providing new opportunities for tree planting.

As part of the outreach to stakeholders and critical partners, BuroHappold and GJDC met twice with the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT), the primary agency regulating roadway improvements and a key agency for sidewalk and streetscape enhancements. Archer Avenue improvement needs were explored in depth at the meetings. In addition, the BuroHappold report on Archer Avenue current conditions and suggested improvements was prepared per the format required by DOT. The conversations with DOT and the format together have laid the groundwork for implementation of sidewalk upgrades and tree planting when the limited, realizable discretionary funding necessary for these improvements is obtained.

The meetings also provided an opportunity to learn of plans that might be “in the works” by the City. In the case of Archer Avenue, DOT is considering implementing Select Bus Service (SBS) in the study area.

There have been great strides in New York City over the last two decades to improve mass transit. One of them is SBS. Users of SBS buses purchase tickets from machines at bus stops prior to boarding, using either cash or, more typically, a “Metro Card” with a magnetic strip holding pre-loaded cash or credit card information. There is no cash machine or Metro Card scanner on the bus itself. Passengers leaving or entering the bus can use any door, fundamentally on the honor system. This alone speeds bus routes. In addition, the City strictly enforces a dedicated, “no standing any time” policy along the curbside routes of SBS lines. The lane is marked “buses only” and is strictly enforced to further speed buses through traffic.

If DOT implements SBS on the stretch of Archer Avenue in the study area, buses will need the full width of Archer Avenue. Sidewalks could not be widened anywhere along the route of the study area, limiting room for additional tree planting. On the other hand, implementation of SBS service might include new bus shelters and seating.

Given the various constraints and expected development on Archer Avenue frontage, the design team ex-

74 There are spot checks of buses by Metropolitan Transportation Authority inspectors. Fare-beaters are assessed a $100 fine.
explored two design options linked to two possible conditions: Whether or not NYC DOT goes ahead with implementing SBS on Archer Avenue. This choice, made by the City, will have a fundamental impact on the street profile, options for sidewalk widening, and sidewalk furniture.

**ARCHER AVENUE DESIGN ALTERNATIVES**

All design options considered were developed in accordance with the following policies and/or guidelines:

- NYCDOT Standard Specifications, 2009 with all revisions;
- NYSDOT Highway Design Manual -Chapter 2;
- NYCDOT "Guidelines for the Design of Sidewalks, Curbs, Roadways and Other Infrastructure Components;"
- NYCDEP Water Main and Sewer Design Standards and Specifications;
- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) "A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets";
- LIRR Standard Specifications and Details; and
- NYCTA Standard Specifications and Details.

The improvements to Archer Avenue will connect, physically or experientially, with the other infrastructure improvements that will support future development around the Station Area BOA, primarily Station Plaza. The traffic and environmental studies for Archer Avenue use 2018 as the Build Year, and traffic generation was performed to verify that the Archer Avenue improvements can properly serve potential increases in pedestrian and vehicular traffic related to the build out of key redevelopment sites.

The design team’s estimated schedule for implementing either of the proposed designs for Archer Avenue improvements is that, once the project launches, the preparation of construction documents would take upwards of six months and actual construction would likely take an additional six months.

**Alternative 1: Select Bus Service (SBS) Implemented on Archer Avenue**

**Curb line:** Maintain the existing curb alignment to accommodate a dedicated lane for Select Bus Service. The curb would be replaced to meet the latest NYCDOT standards (See Figure 17).

**Sidewalk:** The existing sidewalk width currently varies between 14’ and 15’ on the north and south sides of Archer Avenue. Where trees are present, the clear sidewalk width is reduced to 10’, still leaving ample pedestrian space. Alternative 1 includes the replacement of these sidewalks in their current location. The new sidewalk materials should be standard DOT flags scored on a 5’ x 5’ grid to match with planned work at Station Plaza.

**Pavement:** Asphalt overlay to be replaced providing a visual improvement to the project site. A new concrete bus pad to be provided for the bus stop at the intersection of Archer Avenue and 149th Street along both the north and south sides.

**Utilities:** Since Alternate 1 does not realign the existing curb lines along Archer Avenue, it is not anticipated that there will be any subsurface utility conflicts.

**Signage:** Once construction has been completed, parking would be returned to the north and south sides of Archer Avenue between 147th Place and 150th Street. NYCDOT could eliminate parking along the south curb
in the future to enable the implementation of an eastbound SBS lane along Archer Avenue to connect with the existing SBS lane east of 150th Street.

**Traffic signals:** At the Archer Avenue and 150th Street intersection, a leading protected green phase of 10 seconds would be added to the westbound approach with a corresponding 10 second reduction in green time for the eastbound approach during all time periods. There are no changes in signal timing proposed for the northbound or southbound approaches.

**Trees:** With no sidewalk widening possible, Alternative 1 does not provide an immediate opportunity to add any street trees to Archer Avenue. Subway structures and utilities make it impossible to obtain required tree offsets anywhere on the south side of the street. The north side of the street has potential planting locations for seven additional trees that are clear of subway structures and utilities, but only if existing depressed curbs and driveways are removed. This action would bring the total to ten trees in the study area (see Figure 17, below).

**Urban design:** Urban design opportunities within the public right of way along Archer Avenue are limited by the need to allocate public lands to street level transportation and sidewalks. However, one opportunity for improvement is the existing concrete median just east of 150th Street, which is currently used for parking (see Item 28 under “Adjacent Land Uses” in Figure 17). Additional planting on the western end of the island would significantly enhance the visual quality of the area and create a gateway as people travel along 150th Street or enter Archer Avenue from the 150th Street Underpass.

**Figure 17: Plan View with Landscape Improvements, Archer Avenue Alternative 1 (SBS Implemented by NYC)**
### Archer Avenue Streetscape Alternative 1: Costs

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**Total Alternative No. 1** $515,990.75

### Alternative 2: Select Bus Service Not Implemented on Archer Avenue

**Curb line:** Alternative 2 involves the realignment of the existing south curb line between 147th Place to approximately 100 feet east of 149th Street to widen the sidewalk. The curb will be replaced to meet the latest NYCDOT standards.

**Bus stop location:** The existing NYCT bus stop located on the south side of Archer Avenue at 149th Street would be permanently moved to the eastbound approach of the 150th Street intersection along the curb once construction begins.

**Pavement:** To provide a visual improvement to the project area, the asphalt overlay would be replaced. Additionally, a new concrete bus pad would be provided for the bus stop at the intersection of Archer Avenue and 150th Street along both the north and south sides of the street.

**Sidewalk:** Alternative 2 includes the replacement of existing sidewalks on Archer Avenue between 147th Place and 149th Street and the widening of the sidewalk on the south side. The north sidewalk remains 14’-15’ wide. A segment of the south sidewalk would expand to 22’ wide, providing additional opportunities for tree
planting. In locations where street trees would be present, the clear travel path would be 17’ wide. The added sidewalk width will create ample pedestrian circulation space and opportunities for outdoor sidewalk seating could be integrated into the planned development (see Figure 18).

Sidewalk materials in this Alternative would be standard colored DOT flags scored on a 5’ x 5’ grid to match with planned work at Station Plaza.

**Utilities:** Alternate 2 would realign the south curb line on Archer Avenue from 147th Place to approximately 100 feet east of 149th Street. This alternative widens the south sidewalk approximately seven feet to the north. To accommodate this new curb line realignment, an existing catch basin, street light, and fire hydrant would have to be relocated. Also, the location of the new curb line would place it close to an existing NYCDEP sewer manhole and Con Edison electric manholes/conduits. Further subsurface investigation will be required and special curb details may be needed.

**Signage:** Once construction has been completed, parking would be returned to the north side of Archer Avenue and permanently eliminated on the south side of Archer Avenue between 147th Place and 150th Street. NYCDOT standard “No Parking” signs would be installed along the appropriate south curb of Archer Avenue to preclude parking. For the southbound approach of the Archer Avenue and 150th Street intersection, the removal of three metered parking spaces would require the installation of NYCDOT standard “No Parking” signs along 75 feet of the west curb.

**Signals:** At the Archer Avenue and 150th Street intersection, a leading protected green phase of 10 seconds would be added to the westbound approach with a corresponding 10 second reduction in green time for the eastbound approach during all time periods. There are no changes in signal timing proposed for the northbound or southbound approaches.

**Trees:** In Alternative 2, the proposed relocation of the curb creates two new locations in the south sidewalk where trees can be planted and still adhere to standard offsets for the waterline and subway structures (See Figure 19). The single existing tree on the south side of the sidewalk will need to shift to the back of the newly aligned curb, so that it is not in the middle of the widened sidewalk. The location of trees on the south side can be coordinated with planned development. On the north side of the street, the alignment remains unchanged, and as with Alternative 1, the opportunities here are dependent on future changes to the adjacent parcels.

**Urban design:** As with Alternative 1, urban design opportunities within the public right of way along Archer Avenue are limited by the need to allocate public lands to street level transportation and sidewalks. As a result, design interventions primarily fall under sidewalk and streetscape improvements that will create enjoyable street spaces, accessible routes, and safe connections to and from neighborhood destinations. Also as with Alternative 1 the existing concrete median just east of 150th Street, which is currently used for parking, can be used for additional planting to significantly enhance the visual quality of the area and create a gateway as people travel along 150th Street or out of the 150th Street Underpass.
Note that maintaining standard bus service on Archer allows for the widening of the south side of the Archer Avenue sidewalk, which in turn creates a set-back for a bus stop at the east end of Archer at 150th Street.

Alternative 2 allows for the addition of nine new trees, bringing the total to twelve, two more than Alternative 1.
RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE FOR ARCHER AVENUE IMPROVEMENTS: ALTERNATIVE 2

Because Alternative 2 allows for sidewalk widening, a greater number of tree plantings, desired traffic calming, and a greater opportunity for future placement of street furniture and similar streetscape improvements, GJDC has selected it as the preferred design alternative.

COSTS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE

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PLANS AND SCHEMATIC DESIGNS FOR COSMETIC REHABILITATION AND LIGHTING FOR THE 150TH STREET UNDERPASS.

CURRENT CONDITIONS – 150TH STREET UNDERPASS

The LIRR right-of-way creates a barrier for travel, impacting pedestrian and vehicular circulation in the area. 150th Street is one of only two streets near the Station Area that have LIRR underpasses that connect all points south of the LIRR right-of-way with those to the north, the other through-street being Sutphin Boulevard.

150th Street is major arterial serving the Jamaica area. It is a two-way, north-south roadway with one or two moving lanes in each direction and limited curbside parking; the roadway ranges from approximately 28 feet to 44 feet in width. The segment of 150th Street proximate to the study struggles with congestion, roadway alignment challenges, aging/broken sidewalk infrastructure, and high pedestrian volumes due to the proximity to the heart of the Station Area immediately to the west and a series 12 bus stop locations – a “longitudinal bus depot” serving 17 bus lines – along Archer Avenue immediately to the east of 150th Street. Pedestrians also use the underpass to access CUNY’s York College to the southeast of the Project Area. The terrain in the underpass steeply slopes upward from south to north.

The existing visual environment along 150th Street between Archer and 94th Avenues—the subject area for this aspect of the project—is dominated by the presence of an underpass beneath Long Island Railroad rights-of-way carrying multiple tracks. Structurally, there are four bridges carrying the various rail lines. The first and second bridges as one walks from north to south have equal truck clearance heights of only 11’5”. They are not parallel and from five to fifteen feet of sky can be seen between them. The third bridge is the same height as the first two, but close to parallel to the second bridge with a great deal of sky visible between them—approximately 35 feet. The fourth bridge is a closely parallel to bridge three, but it is about twice as high, about 25-30 feet. The overall experience is akin to walking into a series of uneven and unwelcome caves.

The bridges were originally designed and constructed in 1913. In general the area is uninviting for pedestrians due to its industrial look, degrading concrete structures, poorly maintained steel structures and abandoned utility lines, all of which contribute to the unpleasant conditions pedestrians face when walking under the bridges.

The most common deficiency is failing concrete. In some cases, it will require attention within a few years if not sooner. The observed presence of spalling (concrete showing cracks and pockets because the reinforcing bar underneath has rusted and the expanding rust “blows out” the concrete surrounding it) and delamination can create safety hazards for traffic below as time and weather further weaken the concrete.

The bridges creating the 150th Street Underpass between Archer and 94th Avenues are owned and maintained
by Long Island Railroad (LIRR). The design team corresponded with LIRR regarding maintenance of the bridges, which are in fair condition at best, with many factors in poor condition. The northernmost of the four bridges was rehabilitated some time ago and is slated for future repairs under a LIRR contract. The other three were found to be under construction under an operating LIRR contract. According to LIRR, this work includes bridge rehabilitation work covering new bearings and bridge seats, and repairs to abutments, concrete deck, piers, and structural steel. Above-deck work includes waterproofing and drainage installation.

Bridge lighting and bridge painting were not included in the current LIRR construction contracts. Based on the age of the bridges, it is likely that the bridges contain lead paint that would need to be contained and properly disposed of during a painting project. LIRR could not provide any information regarding painting schedules for these bridges at the time of this report.

Sidewalk lighting in the underpass is minimal. The existing sidewalk is of various ages, materials, and is in poor condition.

A building on the north-west corner of 150th Street and Archer Avenue extends beyond the bridge abutment alignment, creating a blind corner that creates apprehension in pedestrians and impedes their movement.

The ownership and maintenance jurisdiction of the sidewalks, curbs, street, traffic signals and street lighting are the responsibility of the NYC Department of Transportation (NYCDOT).

The pavement of the existing roadway throughout the Project Area is composite. A visual inspection of the pavement found that most of the wearing surfaces show fair to worn asphalt.
A wide range of underground public and private utilities exist within the existing Right-of-Way limits of the project site. They include water and sewer lines; gas mains; telecommunications ducts; and Con Edison electric infrastructure including sub-surface conduit runs, pull boxes, manholes, and transformer vaults. Given the limited scope of the project to provide preliminary design concepts for cosmetic rehabilitation of the underpass, underground infrastructure is not expected to interfere with future implementation.

150TH STREET UNDERPASS NEEDS

Project Level Needs

Consistent with proposed upgrades to Archer Avenue’s streetscape, a resurfacing of the pavement in and adjacent to the 150th Street Underpass will be necessary to make the roadway pavement aesthetically pleasing as well as serviceable from an engineering and operational standpoint.

Sidewalks and curbs, which are in poor condition, need to be repaired or replaced, especially after the structural work to the steel columns foundations is completed.

Design Options should seek to eliminate or ameliorate the unsafe pedestrian condition at the northwest corner of the underpass, caused by a building extending beyond the bridge abutment at that corner.

Design options should seek to address the sidewalk lighting and the pedestrian crossings along 150th Street between Archer and 94th Avenues, i.e., the cross-streets immediately outside the underpass itself. The stretch of sidewalk within the underpass needs a lighting overhaul to enhance the sense of safety for pedestrians. Lighting and surface treatment should create visual continuity from one side of the underpass to the other to encourage people to pass through it.

Area/Corridor Needs

The improvements to the 150th Street Underpass are in line other infrastructure improvements intended to support future development around the Station Area BOA—the Atlantic Avenue Extension/One-Way Pair; Gateway Park; Station Plaza; and the Shops at Station Plaza. The 150th Street Underpass improvements feed directly into the stretch of Archer Avenue that is the focus of preliminary design improvements developed as part of this BOA Implementation Strategy and which, in turn, leads directly into the inter-modal heart of the Station Area BOA—the LIRR station, JFK AirTrain Station; and three New York City subway lines (see Figure 15, “Redevelopment Opportunity Context Map”).

To best position the project’s suggestions for future implementation, the design concepts were developed in accordance with the same, rigorous policies and guidelines used for the Archer Avenue Project with which it connects:

- NYCDOT Standard Specifications, 2009 with all revisions;
- NYCDOT "Guidelines for the Design of Sidewalks, Curbs, Roadways and Other Infrastructure Components;"
- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) "A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets;"
- LIRR Standard Specifications and Details; and
- NYCTA Standard Specifications and Details.
- "Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices", MUTCD.
The Critical Design Elements for 150th Street Underpass Rehabilitation were:

- Rehabilitation of the existing rail viaduct concrete and steel structures;
- Rehabilitation of street, sidewalks, pavement and curbs;
- Address the blind corner on the North West side of 150th Street in order to improve pedestrian flow and comfort;
- Enhance street and sidewalk lighting along 150th Street and under the 150th Street Underpass;
- Enhance pedestrian connectivity and improve pedestrian safety; and
- Create a more pleasant and inviting experience for pedestrians using the 150th Street Underpass

Special constraints or challenges placed design limitations on enhanced lighting:

- Ability to leverage standard lighting fixtures; and
- GIDC would be responsible for the maintenance and renewal of design elements that are outside the scope and general maintenance of the City and State entities. Therefore, the Design Team was asked to minimize maintenance costs.

**TWO DESIGN ALTERNATIVES FOR THE 150TH STREET UNDERPASS**

Within these design parameters, the Design Team looked at a variety of potential solutions that would help achieve the project objectives and try to create a sense of place. The team assessed opportunities around sidewalks, curb cuts, landscaping, open space, lighting and signage. The design alternatives considered included the restoration of the concrete and steel structures, street and sidewalk resurfacing, measures to improve the blind corner on the northwest side of 150th Street, and various lighting options. For lighting, the Design Team studied a number of options: general roadways lighting combined with specialized steel structures lighting, special lighting over the sidewalk and general roadways lighting, indirect sidewalk lighting (reflected by bridge abutments), and standard roadways lighting. All these alternatives were evaluated considering feasibility requirements, budget implications and aesthetic considerations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Design Elements</th>
<th>Alternative 1: Illuminated Bridges</th>
<th>Alternative 2: Community Mural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rehab of viaduct concrete and steel</td>
<td>Currently under contract with LIRR/MTA</td>
<td>Currently under contract with LIRR/MTA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehab street, sidewalks, pavement, curbs</td>
<td>Asphalt overlay, new sidewalks, replace steel curbs to provide visual improvement to the project site</td>
<td>Asphalt overlay, new sidewalks, replace steel curbs to provide visual improvement to the project site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address blind corner</td>
<td>Build a modular wall made out of painted, perforated, or corrugated metal panels on steel studs or a concrete wall; the resulting interior space could be secured and used for streetscape storage, traffic signs/tools/equipment storage</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance Lighting</td>
<td>A series of color changing LED luminaires embedded in the structure to create an attractive, glowing effect</td>
<td>Mural surfaces washed with LED light. Bounced light from wall surface will illuminate the walkways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Design Elements</td>
<td>Alternative 1: Illuminated Bridges</td>
<td>Alternative 2: Community Mural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance Pedestrian Connectivity/Safety</td>
<td>Add a third layer of functional roadway downlight in the underpass to support safe vehicular traffic. Improve pedestrian safety at the 150th Street/bus depot intersection</td>
<td>LED lighting will pull the eye through the underpass, enhancing the pedestrian experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a more pleasant experience for pedestrians</td>
<td>A series of wall mounted lights hung from the façade perpendicular to the direction of traffic flow creates a datum that pulls they eye through the underpass while creating safe, effective lighting for pedestrians</td>
<td>Design competition for local artists to commission a mural in the underpass; prior to mural work, repair and prepare concrete walls for mural; walls treated with sealant / primer for a smooth, leveled surface</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RECOMMENDED DESIGN ALTERNATIVE: COMMUNITY MURAL**

In accordance with the overall approach of developing implementable projects that could be realistically funded with discretionary funding, the Design Team eliminated potential alternatives with high capital and operational costs as well as those that were too “over the top” for an underpass. These include a larger glowing surface in the NW corner of the underpass where a dead-zone currently exists and an option to add concave mirrors sparkling in colored light over the entire vertical wall surfaces of the underpass.

The two alternatives described were the presented to the Station Area BOA advisory committee on March 12, 2014. The majority of committee members preferred Alternative 2 – Community Mural, primarily because of its connection to neighborhood artists and a general comfort with mural projects, which are already common in the community. GJDC agreed to provide maintenance and periodical replacement of the murals. There were no negative feelings towards Alternative 1 – Illuminate Bridges, but rather a strong preference for Alternative 2.
WORK PLAN OUTLINE FOR THE RECOMMENDED DESIGN ALTERNATIVE: COMMUNITY MURAL

The selected design alternative includes the following major work:

- Repair/ resurface sidewalks, replace missing curbs, resurface 150th Street between Archer and 94th Avenues, provide new street and pedestrian crossing marking, provide new street signage.
- Address blind corner on the northwest side of 150th Street through a solid partition (cementitious boards fastened to heavy gauge steel studs); prepare surface for artwork. Incorporate a movable partition within the barrier, creating space that could be secured and used for street landscape.
- Repair cracks (structural and non-structural) on concrete walls (bridge abutments) and seal the concrete surfaces.
- Paint viaduct steel structure and underneath of the concrete decks.
- Provide uniform lighting of the bridge abutments on both sides of 150th Street that provides, by reflection, the general lighting of the sidewalks.
• Meet NYCDOT lighting standards for street lights.
• Address lack of pedestrian crossing on 150th Street at the bus depot parking lot.
• Provide artwork (murals) for abutment walls on both sides of 150th Street. GJDC will maintain and organize periodic replacement of the murals.

**PROCESS TO IDENTIFY AND COMMISSION UNDERPASS MURAL**

Process: GJDC would design and manage a design competition to identify and commission a local artist(s) to paint three to four murals over a two year period. If successful, this process will be repeated every two years to ensure fresh content and clean walls.

Timeline: The competition process would take an estimated six to eight months to complete, from kick-off to award, and would include the following tasks and milestones:

- stakeholder engagement to design the competition;
- competition design process, development and release of competition briefing;
- marketing of competition, including through art groups and on GJDC’s website;
- submission of proposals;
- evaluation of submissions; and
- award.

Evaluation criteria: Evaluation of the submissions will follow a transparent and consistent process, providing weight to those criteria most important to key stakeholders. Evaluation criteria may include

- relevance of the mural themes and story (e.g., neighborhood history, community diversity, historic infrastructure);
- quality of the design and its ability to engender a sense of place and community identity;
- artist’s relevant experience and ability to complete work on time and keep to the terms of the competition award and/or agreement; and
- ability to allow LIRR and others to investigate and maintain the embankment wall.

Evaluators: A panel of judges would select the preferred design. The panel would include representatives of the Queens Borough President, GJDC, the Long Island Railroad, Jamaica Center for the Arts and Learning, and Community Board 12.

Timeline: Over the course of two years, three to four murals would be installed. Changing the murals every six to eight months will continuously revive the area.
MARKETING PLAN

JGSC worked with GJDC to develop a marketing plan and marketing materials consistent with market research findings and community goals.

The essential components of the marketing plan are:

- Achieve consensus for the marketing goal and marketing message;
- Publish the marketing message generally through website and public relations;
- Identify specific developers, investors, and tenant prospects that are consistent with the marketing goal;
- Publish the marketing message in a highly targeted way to the identified prospects;
- Follow-up with individual prospects to accomplish their response and, ultimately, successful attraction of some of the prospects; and
- Conduct a public relations campaign to raise the profile of the Station Area and Downtown Jamaica generally.

75 The cost estimates, calculated by HAKS of the BuroHappold Design Team, do not include:
- “Panels for Artwork display”; the murals depicted in the proposed design option are painted directly on the concrete wall surface, once the bridge abutments are repaired as needed and the concrete surface sealed.
- Costs related to the selection process and implementation of the artwork.
Implementation of the marketing plan was led by John Markunas, an independent consultant experienced in branding, marketing and sales. Mr. Markunas worked directly out of an office at GJDC. Public Relations efforts were spearheaded by Shane Kavanagh Public Relations (SKPR).

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MARKETING PLAN

The overall marketing strategy focused its value proposition on developers and to large, anchor tenants that could capitalize on the retail, hospitality, residential and office development potential of the Station Area. These investors were essentially pioneers, assuming a higher level of risk to revitalize a downtown commercial and residential center. The market research data developed by JGSC Group under the BOA program helped the target market appreciate the current vitality of Downtown Jamaica and the transformational power of Transit Oriented Development made possible by the Station Area’s public transportation infrastructure and how this transportation hub would support investment and reduce risk.

JGSC’s findings demonstrated the area’s desire, need and capacity to support additional retail, hospitality and residential development in the downtown. That information, included in the sales message, sought to further reduce the perception of risk. These approaches made clear the target market’s potential to re-brand Jamaica as a revitalized commercial destination attractive to visitors, JFK Airport travelers, shoppers and workers in the area, not just a transportation hub.

Marketing tools and activities in support of the strategy were developed with a long-term vision, allowing continued Brownfield Opportunity Area marketing and promotional outreach over time. These tactics and activities included, but were not limited to:

- Creation of an integrated social media platform using Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn;
- Extensive use of electronic or internet related activities, i.e. e-news bulletins, email campaigns, etc.
- Creation and dissemination of marketing materials at related industry promotion and speaking events;
- Direct outreach to target markets; and
- Publicity and promotion through writing and solicitation of articles and news to be published in print media and on-line portals promoting the Station Area.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

GJDC’s Social Media Platform offered news, industry trade articles and imagery related to the economic development and business components of Jamaica. Content included information on the JFK AirTrain and real property in the Station Area, both of which are of particular importance to Station Area BOA development, as well as information and updates on Jamaica’s multi-cultural vitality, history, retail services and local events.

The social media platform integrated four social media components: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn.

Facebook

The line between personal and professional use of Facebook has blurred: more than 400 Fortune 500 companies have corporate Facebook pages. The GJDC Facebook page has been in use for several years and blends announcements of interest to the community and stakeholders with information for those who may be learning about Jamaica and its development potential for the first time.

Facebook was linked to a Twitter page—postings about development in the Station Area automatically post
on Facebook. This allowed long-term followers of Greater Jamaica Development Corporation on Facebook to see redevelopment efforts—a cross-pollination of two social media components.

**Twitter**

Creating a Twitter account (twitter.com/GJDCPrez) connected companies and individuals that were outside of the existing GJDC and Jamaica network with development progress and expanded brand awareness.

Tweets were linked to industry news and events in Downtown Jamaica, JFK AirTrain, JFK International Airport, Long Island Rail Road and the transportation hub specifically.

The GJDC/Jamaica Twitter account gained immediate traction when created in March of 2015. It has been very useful in growing the brand with tweets that are numerous, current, relevant and interesting.

Through persistent posting of relevant and high-quality content tweets on a daily basis, use of imagery and hash-tags, re-tweets and “favoriting” other tweets, the growth of Twitter followers since GJDC’s Twitter inception shows healthy and consistent increases over time.

**GJDC Twitter start-up date: March 20, 2015**

- Current follower audience size: 624
- Avg. number of new followers/month: 89
- Number of tweets to date: 754
- Average number of tweets/week: 27.0
- Average number of tweets/day: 5.4 (5-day week)

**YouTube**

YouTube allows members to store and serve video content at no cost to them. BOA funding supported creation of content for a GJDC YouTube page or “channel” in the first quarter of 2015, and began posting videos pertaining to GJDC and Jamaica. There are currently 16 videos posted in the GJDC/Jamaica YouTube channel. As Jamaica development projects move forward, this YouTube channel will be an effective platform to showcase videos that support additional redevelopment in the Station Area and Downtown Jamaica.

**LinkedIn**

LinkedIn has been referred to as a “brand builder,” a marketing platform and a networking channel. In the case of Downtown Jamaica, it has allowed us to build up the Jamaica redevelopment brand by demonstrating completed real estate and related projects, projects under construction, and available expertise and experience through posts and connections with other LinkedIn members.

Prior to 2015 GJDC had only a single page—a simple “home page”—as its total LinkedIn exposure. The outreach power of LinkedIn is its postings, which were started in March of 2015 with BOA support. LinkedIn for Jamaica’s postings focused on news and developments with a target market of businesses, real estate brokers, developers, and the business community at large. It has provided a wealth of information that assists GJDC in building rapport and connections to the target market for development. The LinkedIn platform was often used to identify and communicate with potential developers, tenants and other stakeholders using LinkedIn private and internal messaging service—a mainstay of LinkedIn’s networking and outreach potential.

GJDC’s LinkedIn site had tremendous follower growth. Currently, there are 728 “Followers,” an increase of 229 followers since January 1, 2015.

- LinkedIn Postings started March, 2015
- Current follower audience size: 728
Average number of new followers/month: 23 (January-October, 2015)
Number of postings to-date: 151
Average number of postings per month: 22
Average number of postings per week: 5

Driving visitors to your Web site is a primary metric used to measure the effectiveness of social media and internet-related strategies.

The social media effort kicked off on February 27, 2015. In the period October 9, 2014 through March 9, 2015, the average number of unique visitors per month to the GJDC Web site was 1,183. For the period from March 9, 2015 to October 8, 2015, which followed the kick-off, the average number of unique visitors was 2,428, more than double the previous period.

**ELECTRONIC MARKETING  E- NEWS BULLETIN & EMAIL CAMPAIGNS**

An electronic newsletter or bulletin can be an effective way of reaching GJDC’s target markets. A Downtown Jamaica e-news bulletin was created, carefully targeting the commercial real estate markets such as developers, brokers, corporate real estate executives and related industry groups. The news bulletin focused on BOA Station Area related issues—site availability, projects under construction, projects completed, proposed projects, or announcements of new Station Area tenants.

The BOA marketing effort developed a comprehensive email list of approximately 900 people in the target market. E-mail blasts were used for leads and to maintain contact with the target market.

The e-newsletter had a very successful open rate of 30%—significantly higher than average for these types of electronic newsletters—due to its relevant and high quality content.

The size of recent investments and joint ventures in development projects from Chinese firms in New York real estate has commanded headlines. The wave of Chinese investment in New York City property is being led by some of the biggest names in real estate in the People’s Republic. To try and capture Chinese investors, and especially development companies, the marketing effort included a direct email and LinkedIn messaging campaign targeted to this market. Unfortunately, we believe partially due to current economic conditions in China, Chinese investors and developers were not responsive to our electronic outreach at this time.

**DIRECT OUTREACH — CASE STUDIES**

BOA consultant John Markunas identified the larger shopping mall and outlet store developers and approached the top three candidates with information regarding development opportunities for Strategic Sites 2 and 8.

**Simon Property Group, Inc**

An American commercial real estate company with a national footprint, Simon Property is ranked #1 in the United States as the largest real estate investment trust. Simon is a fully integrated real estate company which operates from five retail real estate platforms: regional malls, Premium Outlet Centers, The Mills, community/lifestyle centers and international properties.

Simon Property Group was approached with the development idea to capitalize on their premium outlet and regional mall expertise. However, the group needed a minimum footprint of 200,000 Ft². The largest site in the Station area, Site 2, is fully cleared and remediated, but unfortunately has a footprint of only about 100,000 Ft².
BFC Partners/Empire Outlets

This local, Brooklyn-based developer is behind the massive Empire Outlets mall project on the Staten Island waterfront.

The partners at BFC were solicited several times with a proposal to duplicate, albeit on a smaller scale, their Empire Outlets mall in the Station Area. Feedback from BFC indicated they were too busy with the 1.1 million Ft² project in Staten Island to consider other development sites or options at this time.

Triple Five Group

Triple Five is a shopping mall owner and operator, hotel operator, and real estate development company based in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. They are well known for their ownership of two of North America’s largest malls.

Triple Five expressed interest in development of a “theme park,” high-end retail and parking complex. GJDC had several conference calls and meetings and arranged tours of Downtown Jamaica for Triple Five in March, April and May of 2015. The development company ultimately decided the footprint of BOA Site 2 was too small to incorporate all the elements of the project. BOA Site 8, which is directly across Sutphin Boulevard from Site 2, could add another 71,000 Ft² to the project’s footprint, but it is not yet fully assembled. Triple Five felt that several unresolved pre-development issues, primarily the buy outs of multiple property owners and relocation of business tenants, as well as the re-location of the New York City Department of Finance, all required for full assemblage, added too much uncertainty and the possibility of a long-term, costly process.

PROMOTION OF STATION AREA VIA NEWS ARTICLES

Solicitation of articles and news for both on-line and print media were utilized extensively to promote Jamaica and the BOA Sites in the Station Area.

Markunas, the Marino Organization and Shane Kavanagh were successful in placing local, regional and national stories in magazines, newspapers and on-line portals. The stories were in all areas related to Downtown Jamaica and its interests—economic development and the availability of sites for corporate space, hospitality/hotel, and aviation-related uses.

PUBLIC RELATIONS MESSAGING

In March 2015, GJDC retained Shane Kavanagh Public Relations (SKPR) to create and implement the public relations portion of the marketing program.

The communications goals SKPR established were:

- Support the Jamaica Station BOA marketing initiative through a sustained media presence;
- Position the area around the Jamaica Station as a prime location for private sector investment; and
- Increase visibility of Jamaica as a great place to live, work and shop

The target audiences that the public relations program aimed to reach included:

- Real estate industry
  - Real estate decision makers in key sectors:
    - Dining
- Hospitality
- Office
- Retail
  - Commercial real estate brokers
  - Residential real estate brokers
  - Real estate developers
- Stakeholders and Influencers
  - Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY)
  - Queens Chamber of Commerce
  - Jamaica-area Business Improvement Districts
  - MTA/LIRR
  - Local property/business owners
  - PANYNJ
- NYC public officials
  - Cuomo Administration
  - NYS Legislature
  - City Hall
  - NYC Council
  - Borough President
  - Community Boards
- General public

The key messages that SKPR utilized when working on media placements were:

- Downtown Jamaica is a great place to live, work, shop and recreate.
  - It is a regional retail destination offering a range of “mom & pop shops” to national brands attracting more than 100,000 shoppers daily.
  - It is a major regional transportation hub accessible by all forms of mass transit and just 20 minutes from midtown Manhattan.
  - In 2014, 6.5 million people rode the AirTrain to/from Jamaica Station, up 18% from the 5.5 million users in 2011.
  - It is a civic and legal center with Federal, State and City government offices and courts.
  - It is a vibrant residential neighborhood with new apartment and condo properties recently opened and in construction.
  - It has an in-place social infrastructure – including culture, education, health care and services.

- Downtown Jamaica is ripe for investment.
  - The Jamaica Station Area BOA presents an opportunity for private sector investment, especially residential development, hotels, restaurants eateries, and office space.
  - Several sites have been assembled and ready for “as of right” redevelopment.
  - It is proximate to commuter rail, subway connections, and more than a dozen bus lines, and thus has a key advantage of supporting transit-oriented development.
  - There is a demand in Jamaica from consumers and business for higher quality and more diverse retail offerings, hotels and restaurants.
  - A recent wave of development activity is bringing private sector investment including new office and residential buildings and hotels.
The public sector is committed to Jamaica’s revitalization and is providing resources to stimulate the area’s economic growth. Since 1998, PANYNJ, the City of New York, and New York State have completed a series of planning processes and invested more than $1.5 billion to date in the area. Current and planned commitments include:

- **State:**
  - Designation of the Jamaica Station area as a Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA)
  - Provided financial support to help activate underutilized spaces.

- **City:**
  - Jamaica NOW Plan – 21 strategic actions to further the revitalization and growth of the area was unveiled in April 2015.
  - Atlantic Avenue Extension – traffic-improvement project to begin fall, 2015.
  - NYCEDC will designate a developer for a site at 92-33 168th Street to transform a parking deck into a mixed-income/mixed-use project of up to 428,000 SF.

A series of tactics were utilized to gain media attention. (Tear sheets of story placements can be found in the appendices to this report.)

- **Events:**
  - “Jamaica Revealed” Brokers Event (April 23, 2015)
    - NY1 News
    - Real Estate Weekly
    - NY City Lens
  - M/W/DBE Contractors & Subcontractors Information/Networking Event (July 17)
    - Queens Chronicle
    - Queens Courier
    - Jamaica Times Ledger
    - New York Real Estate Journal

- **Story pitches:**
  - Jamaica’s revitalization: The New York *Times*
  - Neighborhood profile: *amNewYork*
  - Hotel development activity: *Hotel Business* magazine

Articles placed included:

- **NY City Lens, April 24, 2015, SUTPHIN BOULEVARD: THE NEXT TOURIST HOT SPOT?**
- **Time Warner Cable/NY1 News, April 24, 2015, ‘JAMAICA REVEALED’ EVENT AIDS TO BOOST NEIGHBORHOOD APPEAL (w/ video link)**
- **Real Estate Weekly, April 29, 2015, JAMAICA’S RICH PICKINGS DRAWING BUILDERS ON HUNT FOR CHEAP LAND**
- **Queens Chronicle – April 30, 2015, OPTIMISM ‘REVEALED’ FOR JAMAICA’S FUTURE - ANNUAL GATHERING OF DEVELOPERS, BUSINESS POINTS TO NEW MOMENTUM IN SE Queens**
- **NY Times – July 21, 2015 - DEVELOPERS HOPE TO CHANGE THE FACE OF TRANSIT HUB IN JAMAICA, QUEENS**
- **Queens Courier - July 23, 2015, COMPANIES TIED TO JAMAICA DEVELOPMENT BOOM LOOK TO HIRE LOCAL CONTRACTORS**
- **Time Ledger – July 28, 2015, JAMAICA DEVELOPERS BRING JOBS TO LOCAL BIZ**
RE-USE OF STRATEGIC SITES—COST-BENEFIT SCENARIOS FOR STRATEGIC SITES

OVERVIEW

The BOA Station Area strategic sites available for redevelopment total 9.2 acres (401,245 Ft²).

Based on the market analysis, the highest and best use for redevelopment of the Station Area BOA is mixed-use, mid-rise buildings with retail at grade, especially when development projects front on or near Sutphin Boulevard. Mixed use could include residential, hospitality, or office space above retail. Returns on investment can vary widely depending on many factors, future use being a prime driver on the revenue side and remediation and construction on the cost side. A reasonable, estimated range of return on investment is 8%-16%.

Figure 25: Proposed Land Uses for Station Area Strategic Sites

Substantial improvements in the infrastructure to support Station Area redevelopment have been completed or are fully planned and funded and poised for implementation. The “Shops at Station Plaza,” which created new retail space under the Sutphin Boulevard underpass, transformed an ill-lit row of loading docks into a creatively lit, better-used, tenanted walkway. The extension of a mapped street (the Atlantic Avenue Extension project) and creation of a one-way pair of streets to smooth traffic flow from U.S. 678, the limited access highway leading into and out of JFK to the Jamaica Station Area, is fully planned and funded. The Atlantic Avenue Extension will also enable creation of green space, Gateway Park, west of the Station Area. The Station Plaza project, which will widen streets and create pedestrian amenities where Archer Avenue meets Sutphin Boulevard, the key intersection in the Station Area, is also fully planned and funded. In addition, preliminary plans for improving the pedestrian
experience entering the Station Area along Archer Avenue or via a Long Island Railroad underpass marking the eastern edge of the Station Area, were developed as part of this BOA Implementation Strategy.

These improvements are discussed at length in this report’s section on Preconstruction Activities.

Existing brownfield conditions and future environmental compliance issues in the Station Area were thoroughly and exhaustively considered as part of the NYC Department of City Planning’s (DCP) Environmental Impact Statement, required for the 2007 re-zoning of the Station Area.

GJDC’s Step 2 BOA Nomination Study found no record of spills or enforcement actions by environmental regulatory agencies on any lot within the Strategic Site blocks. On the other hand, virtually all Strategic Sites contain lots that received one or more “E-designations” from the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP).

Per Chapter 11 (Hazardous Materials) of DCP’s Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Jamaica Plan (i.e, the 2007 re-zoning), “An assessment of potential hazardous materials impacts was performed for the projected and potential development sites for a number of reasons. For example, rezoning of manufacturing lots to a residential use can lead to exposure of future residents to hazardous materials. Therefore, as part of the process of rezoning a manufacturing zone to allow commercial or residential uses or development adjacent to a manufacturing zone, a hazardous materials assessment is appropriate.”

Per DCP, “E-designations are proposed to avoid impacts on projected or potential development sites with respect to hazardous materials, air quality (heating systems and industrial sources), and noise.” Prior to rezoning, since all of the blocks in the Jamaica Station Area BOA were wholly or partially zoned for manufacturing for the prior half century, all but two (9988 and 9997) received E-designations for Hazardous Materials on some, most, or all of the lots within a given block. This is not a statement that hazardous materials will be found; per DCP, it indicates only that “Sites with this (E)-designation have the potential to be adversely impacted by hazardous materials. For all sites with this designation, Underground Gasoline Storage Tanks Testing Protocol is required.”

That is, E-designations for hazardous materials are prophylactic recommendations based on potentials only for projects proposed in the BOA plan, all of which are of-right under the revised zoning.

Given the up-zoning from industrial to commercial and residential uses, as well as the significant increases in density allowed under the new zoning, DCP created E-designations for Air and Noise for many sites in the BOA.

Utilizing the general procedures recommended in the City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual DCP characterized “potential air quality impacts from the proposed actions” (emphasis added). In the case of development in the Station Area, which is within a densely populated urban area, Air Quality E-designations were near-universal in the BOA, but all concerned limiting emissions or new development by limiting “Direct impacts (that) stem from emissions generated by stationary sources associated with the proposed actions, such as emissions from fuel burned on site for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems.” It did so by simply specifying that “Any new residential and/or commercial development must use natural gas as the type of fuel for HVAC systems.”

Similarly, E-designations for Noise looked at potential impacts and conducted analysis for the proposed actions in three ways:

1. A screening analysis to determine whether there are any locations where traffic generated by the proposed actions would have the potential to cause significant noise impacts;
2. A detailed analysis at any location where traffic generated by the proposed actions would have the potential to result in significant adverse noise impacts, to determine the magnitude of the increase in noise level; and
3. An analysis to determine the level of building attenuation necessary to ensure that interior noise levels within the study area satisfy applicable interior noise criteria.

In reviewing the E-designations for Noise of Strategic Sites within the BOA, there were no references to impacts from traffic. This was not an issue. Rather, noise-related E-designations were expressed as maximum dBs permitted in the interior of new developments and ranged from 30-35 dB. This level of interior noise abatement is not a problem for modern construction and window technology.

The BOA, being within an otherwise long-occupied urban area, has fully developed drainage and sewage systems in place. Jamaica is low-lying, and some sections outside the Station Area are subject to short term flooding following severe weather. This has not been an issue in the Station Area.

All new development in New York City must be coordinated with the City’s Department of Environmental Protection to assure that pipelines installed by the developer are sufficient to carry effluent from a completed project to the main sanitary sewer lines maintained by the City. Unlike most sanitary lines in the City, Yu Associates, under an agreement with the BOA consultants at BuroHappold Engineering, found that the sewer lines in the Station Area are separate from storm water lines. This reflects their more recent installation compared to other areas. The system serving the Station Area is served primarily by 12” pipe, with the smallest pipes adjacent to development sites being 10” diameter. Yu Associates noted that a 10” line would readily handle the flows that would be generated by proposed development.

**Prioritized Development of Strategic Sites**

![Figure 26: BOA Station Area Strategic Sites](image)
IMMEDIATE PRIORITY REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (CURRENT TO ONE YEAR TO START OF CONSTRUCTION)

STRATEGIC SITE 1A

Currently planned 225-room, 26-story Hilton Garden Inn with a full-service restaurant, meeting space and, for use by its guests, a gym and pool. The project will be the first of its kind in Jamaica and will employ green building standards to meet LEED Certification (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). The developer, Able Hotels, has purchased the site. Construction is expected to begin first quarter 2016 and take approximately 18 months to complete. A rendering of the project appears below.  

- Block 9998, Lots 42, 43, 47, 48
- Site Footprint: 9,200 Ft²
- Of-right development to: 110,400 Ft² (Zone C6-4, FAR = 12)
- Land Cost: $4.5 million
- Estimated Remediation Cost: $150,000
- Estimated Development Cost: $54 million
- Construction Jobs: 305
- Permanent Jobs: 92
- Billable Property Tax 2015/16: $40,600
- Estimated Property Tax After Development: $2.36 million

This project continues to evolve. While the rendering shows retail on the first two floors, this concept has been replaced by the revenue-generating and market driven need for additional hotel rooms. Still, the rendering provides a sense of scale and bulk of the project and its transformative effect. It will be the tallest building in the downtown by some 18 stories.

Current estimate by Able Development; includes hard and soft costs

Calculated as 45% of development costs to obtain assessed value, multiplied by 2014/15 applicable tax rate of 10.684%

FIGURE 27: RENDERING FOR STRATEGIC SITE 1A DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
BRP Development Corporation closed on the property on May 18, 2015. Construction is expected to begin in 2015 and be completed by late 2016 or early 2017. A street level view rendering of the project, designed by FXFOWLE ARCHITECTS LLP, appears below. The plan for this site—“The Crossings at Jamaica Station”—includes 100,000 Ft² of retail and community facilities, 300 underground parking spaces, and 580 units of mixed-income housing. The project, to be developed by minority-owned BRP, will feature cutting-edge environmental design, including an on-site co-generation plant, and is expected to receive LEED Silver Certification. Retail will be located on the first 2-3 floors with two housing towers located above. The rental costs will be structured to meet New York City Mayor de Blasio’s proposed 20/30/50 split: 20% affordable to households with income of 60% Area Median Income (AMI) or less, 30% to those below 80% AMI and the remainder at a market-rate affordable to a maximum of 125% AMI.

- Block 9998, Lots 83, 86,87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 93, 94, 95, 101
- Site Footprint: 76,050 Ft²
- Of-right Development to: 628,080 Ft² (Mixed Zone C6-4, FAR = 12 and Zone C6-3, FAR = 8)
- Estimated Land Cost: $18 million
- Estimated Remediation Cost: $3.75 million
- Estimated Development Cost: $280 million
- Estimated Construction Jobs: 2,350
- Permanent Jobs: 180
- Billable Property Tax 2015/16: $331,000
- Estimated Property Tax After Development: $8.4 million

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79 Land Cost estimate of $30/buildable Ft² based on recent comparables.
80 Based on construction costs of $375/Ft² in hard costs plus $75/Ft² in soft costs for total of $450/Buildable Ft²
81 Estimates of construction jobs created via a ratio of costs are problematical. Per consultation with one local developer of residential and commercial space in Queens, “While it may exist, I’m not aware of any ratio. The number is very project specific. When we estimate jobs, we have to quantify the specific subcontractors we will mobilize on the site, and estimate their crew size based on the size of the job. Sorry I don’t have any easier answer.” Estimates provided here based on related data in the Regional Input-Output Multipliers (RIMS II) from the Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, which develops the multipliers for calculating economic impact. Extrapolating from the limited data available, a figure of 10 jobs per $1 million in hard construction costs appears reasonable for estimating purposes.
82 Estimate based an average of 549 Ft²/employee for “specialty retail” as calculated by the Institute of Transportation Engineers. Employees for maintenance and services for the residential portion of the development project are not included.
83 Calculated as 45% of development costs to obtain assessed value, multiplied by 2014/15 applicable tax rate of 10.684%
Site 11b: The developer is building a 300-room dual-branded hotel—150 rooms as a Marriott Courtyard and 150 rooms for an extended-stay Marriott Fairfield Inn and Suites. He purchased this 18,000 Ft², C6-3-zoned site (FAR = 8) at the top of the market in 2007/08, but a recovery in equity appears to have made financing for development possible.

- Block 9998, Lot 110
- Site Footprint: 18,000 Ft²
- Of-right Development to: 135,360 Ft²
- Estimated Land Cost: $6.2 million
- Estimated Remediation Cost: $150,000
- Estimated Development Cost: $61 million
- Estimated Construction Jobs: 500
- Permanent Jobs: 20084
- Billable Property Tax, 2015/16: $66,059
- Estimated Property Tax After Development: $2.9 million85

84 Assumes hotel build-out to 135,360 Ft² and employment of one employee per 1,124 Ft² of “lodging,” per the U.S. Department of Energy.
85 Calculated as 45% of development costs to obtain assessed value, multiplied by 2014/15 applicable tax rate of 10.684%
INTERMEDIATE TERM REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (2-4 YEARS TO START OF CONSTRUCTION)

- Site 2: The site is across 94th Avenue from Site 1a. It fronts on Sutphin Boulevard and on 94th Avenue and, most important to note, this makes it catty-corner to the JFK AirTrain Station. The site’s footprint is 105,000 Ft² and was re-zoned from M1 to C6-4 (FAR =12:1) in 2007, yielding a maximum developable square footage of 1,260,000 Ft²—the largest potential development site in the Station Area. It was the former Merkel Meat processing plant, but the abandoned facility has been demolished and the site is cleared and remediated. The C6-4 designation permits mixed use, transit oriented development consistent with the BOA plan. Site 2 parcels straddle 148th Street, with one narrow parcel lying east of 148th. The 2007 rezoning de-mapped that one-block long stretch of 148th, allowing future development of a single site with no intervening roadbed—a very attractive “bonus” for future developers. Given the size and zoning density of the site, it might be the most appropriate site in the Station Area BOA for anchor (“big-box”) retail and residential mixed use.

- Site 3: Graham Associates, a local property owner, controls the site and would like to develop a 200-room, limited-service hotel on the site, which is on the corner of Sutphin Blvd and 95th Avenue. Current design schematics include about 1,500 Ft² of meeting space, a full service restaurant, and a rooftop bar. The property owner created the plans for this project three to four years ago, but has since put it on hold.
• Site 14: This project is expected to be a 155-room, limited-service Sheraton Four Points. The site footprint is 14,950 Ft² and is zoned partially C6-4 (FAR = 12) and partially M1-4 (FAR = 2). Total developable space will be approximately 179,400 Ft², plus approximately 21 below-grade parking spaces. This hotel will have a full service restaurant and about 500 Ft² of meeting space. The total project cost is about $30 million. The Four Points Sheraton was expected to go into construction sometime in the fourth quarter 2013 or early 2014, but the project remains on hold due to financing constraints.

LONGER TERM REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (4 YEARS-PLUS TO START OF CONSTRUCTION)

Sites 1b, 8, and 12 remain available for redevelopment concepts and for developers to pursue those concepts. All sites are zoned C6 (mixed use including retail, office, hospitality, commercial or residential) with Floor Area Ratios of at least 8:1 and up to 12:1. C-zone development projects do not require off-street parking proportional to overall size; residential development as part of a C-zone mixed use project comes under parking space requirements for multi-family development projects.

• Site 1b: 35,000 Ft² footprint; C6-4 zoning; FAR of 12:1 yielding a maximum of 420,000 developable square feet. This site fronts on 94th Avenue and is adjacent to Site 1a, which is under active development by Able Hotels. Site 1b currently hosts light industrial uses, which are not consistent with the BOA plan. The site is another one of many in the Station Area BOA that was up-zoned in 2007 from low density industrial use (M1-1) to medium density mixed use (C-6), allowing for future mixed use, transit oriented development consistent with the BOA plan.

• Site 8 is near fully assembled. Aggregation of additional lots will grow the available redevelopment area from its current 61,200 Ft² to a total of 71,100 Ft². The site is zoned C6-3 (FAR=8:1) and the fully assembled site is developable to 568,000 Ft²—the second largest developable square footage in the BOA after Site 2. C6-3 zoning permits mixed use, transit oriented development consistent with the BOA plan. This site fronts on Sutphin Boulevard between 94th and 95th Avenues, immediately south of the JFK AirTrain Station and immediately north of Site 3, which has been under consideration for hotel development by a local owner, Graham Associates.

• Site 12: This is a 35,550 Ft² site that was re-zoned to C6-3 (FAR=8:1) in 2007. The maximum developable square footage of this site is 284,000 Ft². Prior to the re-zoning, the site was split approximately in half into two land use zones and densities. The southern half of the site, which faces on Archer Avenue, was zoned M1-1 (industrial use, FAR = 1). The northern half, which faces the primary commercial strip of Jamaica Avenue, was zoned C4-2 (commercial mixed use, FAR = 3.4). This is the only development site within the Station Area BOA that fronts on Jamaica Avenue, making it positioned to catalyze the spread of upgraded retail and office space options in Downtown Jamaica.

LOCAL MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE TO IMPLEMENT BOA

The 2007 re-zoning of the Station Area by the Department of City Planning set the table for private investment that would revitalize the BOA. The re-zoning transformed much of the land in the BOA from low density industrial use (FAR = 1:1) to high density commercial and mixed use (FARs from 8:1 to 12:1). This change, plus overall design guidelines incorporated into local law through the New York City Zoning Resolution, are the underlying structures guiding private sector BOA development projects.

Private projects currently planned for the BOA, and those expected in the future, are both consistent with the BOA Nomination Study and “of right” development per the 2007 zoning.
Even so, the City of New York has been described as a very complicated machine with many moving parts. Both development projects and infrastructure improvement projects require coordination with a range of agencies and authorities. While Greater Jamaica Development Corporation is not in position to provide overall management of the BOA, it is in an ideal position to assure that coordination takes place and environmental compliance issues are known and met.

On infrastructure projects, such as Station Plaza, the Shops at Station Plaza, and the Atlantic Avenue Extension/Two-Way Pair Project, GJDC has taken a direct role in planning and managing their implementation in partnership with the New York City Economic Development Corporation, the Long Island Railroad/Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the Queens Borough President’s Office, and the New York City Departments of Transportation and City Planning.

GJDC works closely with the Mayor’s Office of Environmental Remediation to assure that potential or active developers from the private sector are guided on options for obtaining approval for remediation plans and certificates of completion, as well as obtaining all the information they need to decide on going forward with applications for Brownfield Tax Credits. Similarly, the NYC Departments of City Planning, Transportation, Buildings, and Environmental Protection are key agencies overseeing and managing their respective areas of responsibility. Greater Jamaica Development Corporation can play a coordinating and facilitating role in helping developers and the community implement projects that are consistent with the BOA plan.

The 2015 Jamaica NOW! Action Plan describes Jamaica as “one of our City’s great central business districts and inter-modal transportation hubs.” The transformative development projects already planned for the Station Area BOA, and the future projects they will catalyze, will bring the entire Brownfield Opportunity Area, and in turn all of Downtown Jamaica, to the full realization of that potential. Said GJDC’s President and CEO, Hope Knight, ”The stimulus provided by the State BOA program has led to real results around the Jamaica Station Area…. Thanks to the Cuomo Administration and the State Legislature for their commitment to the BOA program and the further revitalization of Southeast Queens.”

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