



TRI-STATE TRANSPORTATION CAMPAIGN



Grants Awarded to Support Development near Transit Hubs In Tough Economic Times, Program Helps Towns Plan for a Vibrant Future

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release: March 19, 2009

Contact: Kate Slevin, Ryan Lynch
Tri-State Transportation Campaign
P: 212-268-7474 C: 917-833-9259

Today, the One Region Funders' Group and the Tri-State Transportation Campaign (TSTC) awarded three small grants to Westchester municipalities that are actively promoting more equitable and sustainable development around transit hubs.

The three grants, totaling \$50,000, were awarded to the Village of Ossining, the City of Peekskill and the City of Mount Vernon, to support transit-oriented development, or mixed-use development within a quarter to a half mile of train and bus stations.

The Village of Ossining will receive \$12,500 to support a community planning process to create a vision plan for redeveloping a former Department of Public Works site next to the Ossining train station. The City of Peekskill will receive \$18,750 to hire a planning consultant to study streetscape improvements between the train station and downtown. The City of Mount Vernon will receive \$18,750 to undertake a community visioning process for the Mount Vernon West train station area and create a transit oriented development ordinance.

The grant awards mark the first year of the transit centered development grant program supported by One Region Funders' Group and administered by TSTC.

"The One Region Funders' Group is thrilled to support such innovative and forward thinking projects that will promote transit use, create walk-able communities and spur investment in our downtowns and cities," said Catherine Marsh, executive director for the Westchester Community Foundation, a member of the One Region Funders' Group. "We believe our downtowns are part of the solution, not the problem."

Similar grants were awarded to Brookhaven and Babylon in Long Island, Stratford in Connecticut, and Newark and Trenton in New Jersey. The eight awardees were chosen from over forty applicants.

“These three communities have the opportunity to become leaders in transit oriented development in Westchester,” said Helen Chin, environment program officer at the Surdna Foundation, also a member of One Region. “We hope these grants help the towns plan for a greener and more equitable future and serve as models for other towns in our region.”

“Promoting mixed-use development around existing transit service is good for the economy, environment and quality of life,” said Kate Slevin, executive director of the Tri-State Transportation Campaign.

“After three and a half years of work the all volunteer citizen Comprehensive Plan Committee and the Village Board of Trustees identified the long-abandoned former DPW site as the key to linking our spectacular Hudson River front and transportation hub to our Downtown Business District, one quarter mile away and approximately 120 feet higher in elevation”, said Mayor William R. Hanauer. “This grant will allow us to continue the public process of determining the highest and best use of this property.”

“Peekskill’s downtown and waterfront are in the midst of a wonderful renaissance,” said Mayor Mary F. Foster. “Linking these areas with our train station will only accelerate the revitalization of our City. The funds provided by the Tri-State Transportation Campaign and the One Region Funders’ Group will go a long way to helping Peekskill achieve this goal.”

“Being chosen as a recipient of the Transit Centered Development (TCD) Grant Program will enable Mount Vernon to capitalize on the things that make our city great, like our diversity, our location, our manageable size and our dedicated citizenry,” said Mayor Clinton I. Young, Jr.

“The planning efforts funded through this grant will allow us to begin a community wide listening process. It is our intention to find out from the stakeholders of Mount Vernon West how they currently view the area and hope to see it develop and prosper in the future,” said Jeff Williams, Commissioner of Planning & Community Development. “Our success in developing an effective plan is directly related having all segments of the Mount Vernon West Community work collectively towards the common goal of enhancing the best qualities of the area.”

"The development of transit hubs is integral to both the Westchester customers of Metro-North as well to the surrounding municipalities and their businesses and residents," said Metro-North President Howard Permut. "This environmentally astute coordination of people, place, and transportation will provide nearby shopping and business, "walk-to" transportation, and-especially for Westchester residents-improved downtown streetscapes, a new, open availability for recreation, parkland, and a closer connection to the Hudson River."

The One Region Funders' Group is a partnership of private funders from Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey learning and working together to advance and support transportation planning and reform in the Tri-State region. Foundations participating in the One Region Funders' Group and contributing toward this initiative include the Westchester Community Foundation, Surdna Foundation Fairfield County Community Foundation, Long Island Community Foundation, New York Community Trust, Rauch Foundation, Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation.

The Tri-State Transportation Campaign (TSTC) is a non-profit organization working towards a more balanced, transit-friendly and equitable transportation system in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.

####