

GREATER JAMAICA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION



GJDC @ 45



45 YEARS OF MAKING A PLACE FOR PEOPLE



Downtown Jamaica circa 1980.



Downtown Jamaica 2012.

Forty-five years ago, America's downtowns were in a downward spiral, as housing, jobs, and shopping began moving to the suburbs. Downtown Jamaica was not immune: by the 1960s, what had been a thriving commercial hub, boasting major department stores, government and corporate offices, banks, and houses of worship, was struggling.

In 1967, a group of visionary business and community leaders, challenged and supported by Mayor John V. Lindsay, came together with Regional Plan Association to tackle the problem, and Greater Jamaica Development Corporation (GJDC) was born. It was among the very first community development corporations in the nation, and like many new ideas, it was greeted with skepticism.

Some four decades later, the skeptics have become believers as they see Downtown Jamaica again bustling with life and promise. They see a superb transportation infrastructure that has been improved and vastly expanded, with a noisy, blighting overhead elevated transit structure removed and replaced. They see institutions of learning and culture – one on a spacious new campus, another in a historic church. They see beautiful old buildings that have been saved, and new ones rising on vacant lots. They see parks blooming and streets brightly lit and lined with trees. They see businesses moving into abandoned storefronts, new government anchors, refurbished office buildings, and historically significant structures preserved.

With all the tearing down and building up, it's easy to assume that GJDC is in the real estate business, but that misses the point: what GJDC has done for 45 years is



to create places for people. Places for people to live in comfort and safety. Places for people to work. Places for people of all ages to dance, sing, paint, and learn. Places for people to shop, dine, and stroll for an evening. GJDC's mission, a prominent member of Jamaica's clergy once said, is "human development through physical development."

At the heart of the turnaround has been GJDC's vision of Jamaica as a vitally important regional hub, whose robust transportation infrastructure, deeply rooted community institutions, and proximity to the city's two major airports would be the keys to its resurgence. In a pattern that would become standard operating procedure throughout its history, GJDC engaged government in productive partnerships and reached out to community groups and residents, elected officials, government agencies, local businesses, and private developers to come up with a sensitive and cohesive plan

for sustainable development. That plan, the work of so many hands, became the roadmap which GJDC and its partners have followed for 45 years.

The following pages describe 45 projects, large and small, that have contributed to the fulfillment of that original vision. GJDC is appreciative of the partnerships initially propelled by Mayor Lindsay's Office of Jamaica Planning & Development Commercial Revitalization Program, which continues to date in the New York City Department of Small Business Services. GJDC is proud of the many individual initiatives that have put Jamaica on the road to greatness, and looks ahead to accomplishing so much more. What we are proudest of is the role we have played in partnering with others to create a place for people: a community that people of all nationalities and incomes are happy to call home, and a destination that a growing number of people, from far and wide, are eager to visit.

IMAGINE

1

CREATING A “TOWN CENTER.” *Jamaica Market*, Downtown Jamaica’s veritable “town center,” was initiated in 1974 by GJDC, which assembled the site; planned and designed the project; and secured private and public funding, including \$5.1 million in loans from The Equitable, JPMorgan and Chase Banks, and Empire State Development Corporation, and grants from US Economic Development Administration, NYC Economic Development Corporation, and Empire State Development Corporation. Construction was managed by EDC. Individual components of the complex were funded by Citibank, Bank of America, HSBC US Bank, and the US Department of Health and Human Services. GJDC manages and operates this combination food court, farmers’ market, conference center, and office space, where Downtown workers mingle, and community groups gather at the Harvest Room – a special-events venue, whose funding was sponsored by Councilman Archie Spigner.

2

HIGHER LEARNING. *York College*, City University of New York’s newest senior college, calls Jamaica home, thanks to a unique partnership comprising of Regional Plan Association and local civic, community, and business leaders, led by GJDC. The parties joined forces in 1968 to begin advocacy, feasibility, planning, and development of the 50-acre campus. Governor Hugh L. Carey and Borough President Donald Manes were leaders in advocating the college’s development through the economic doldrums of the 1970s. It opened its Academic Core Building in 1986. It has since added its Physical Education and Performing Arts Centers, and freestanding childcare center. The college provides 490 jobs. York offers its 8,000 students a choice of courses in more than 40 disciplines, including a recently launched baccalaureate in aviation management.

3

TO THE PLANE VIA TRAIN. GJDC contributed to the successful multi-year advocacy efforts to realize the *AirTrain* connection between Downtown Jamaica and JFK International Airport. Governor George Pataki successfully prioritized the project’s planning and financing despite public skepticism. The \$1.8 billion, ten-station system with its \$350 million *AirTrain* complex at Jamaica Station, completed by The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey in 2003, and built and now operated by Bombardier, provides quick and reliable airport access, and is stimulating new investment in Downtown Jamaica.



Some of the 8,000 students who attend York College, which opened in 1986 as the newest senior college in the City University system.

“On behalf of Regional Plan Association, which played a critical role in GJDC’s creation, it is gratifying to see how our shared vision of Jamaica as a regional hub has taken shape so beautifully, both in buildings and infrastructure and in the hearts and minds of so many people.”

- Elliot G. Sander, Chairman, Board of Directors, Regional Plan Association

BUILD

4

A FEDERAL ANCHOR. With US Senators Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Alfonse D'Amato, along with Congressmen Joseph P. Addabbo and Reverend Dr. Floyd H. Flake, GJDC assisted in the approval process, and in the development and urban design of a new home for the *US Social Security Administration's Northeastern Program Service Center*, including public art installations. The building, which sits atop the new Jamaica Center subway station, boasts 1 million square feet of floor space. It opened in 1989, and it currently houses 1,500 employees.

5

STRENGTHENING MASS TRANSIT. GJDC was active in guiding station locations and designs, and advocating for the extension of the Queens Boulevard subway line to replace the Jamaica Avenue “el,” which came down in 1978. The *Archer Avenue line*, completed in 1989, provided three new stations in Downtown, including the very active Jamaica Center terminal, which is served by an extensive bus network. GJDC also provided preliminary design, and sponsored City and State funding for a bus passenger shelter at the Jamaica Center terminal.

6

REZONING FOR GROWTH. Led by the office of Mayor Michael Bloomberg and the NYC Department of City Planning, GJDC partnered with Community Board 12, Councilmember Leroy Comrie, and local leaders in planning and advocating for the City's *Jamaica Gateway Rezoning & Redevelopment Plan for Downtown Jamaica* to stimulate sustainable, transit-oriented development in one of the region's most transit-rich environments. In 2012, reflecting the new zoning, the NYC Economic Development Corporation, GJDC, and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority jointly issued requests for proposals for private development of two significant sites – one provided by The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey, and both located directly across from the LIRR Jamaica Station and AirTrain's JFK Terminal.

7

MID-BLOCK REDEVELOPMENT. Started in the 1970s, the goal of this ambitious, ongoing project is the reclamation and transformation of a deteriorated, four-block central section of Downtown Jamaica. GJDC planned and facilitated the area's incremental development of 15 projects, including *Jamaica Market*, the Firehouse, Yorkside Towers, a new Mid-Block garage, and a renovated Parsons Boulevard garage.



The \$350 million AirTrain complex at Jamaica Station is stimulating new investment in Downtown.

RESTORE

8

THE FDA IN JAMAICA. GJDC assisted in feasibility analysis and site selection for the \$85 million *US Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Northeast Regional Laboratory, Headquarters and District Office*, completed in 1999; partnered with a private developer to complete the 260,000-square-foot building, which currently houses 400 employees; and worked with Congressman Rev. Dr. Floyd H. Flake and Borough President Claire K. Shulman to secure legislation to locate the facility at *York College*. GJDC currently supports collaborations and joint programs between the College and FDA.

9

HISTORIC PRESERVATION & ADAPTIVE REUSE. GJDC has managed renovation and restoration of historically significant abandoned and under-used buildings throughout Downtown, restoring them to private commercial use or office space for not-for-profits. GJDC sought and won NYC Landmark status for some, including the Borough Office Building where GJDC has its offices; the former City Register Building, currently occupied by Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning; the Roxanne Swimsuits Building; and the former First Reformed Church, which now houses the Jamaica Performing Arts Center.

10

CIVIC PRIDE. Led by Queens Borough President Claire K. Shulman's office and partnering with the State Supreme Court and the Queens County Bar Association, GJDC participated in advocacy, planning, and site selection for the *Queens County Supreme Court and Queens Family Courthouse* in Downtown Jamaica. These elegantly designed structures solidified Downtown as Queens County's center for civil judicial activity.

11

JAMAICA FIRST PARKING. A nonprofit entity – created in 1998 by GJDC under the auspices of Mayor Rudy Giuliani and supported by the Jamaica business community – Jamaica First manages a public parking system comprising 2,000 spaces to serve Downtown Jamaica's businesses, institutions, residents, and visitors. The first property acquisitions were financed with bonds issued by NYC Industrial Development Agency, secured by a letter-of-credit from a syndicate led by The Bank of New York with participation from Israel Discount Bank of New York and State Bank of Long Island. Chase and TD Bank provided substitute letters of credit. The newest garage opened in May 2005; it was enabled by City funds, and was sponsored by Councilmen Archie Spigner and Thomas White Jr., with additional support from Councilmen Leroy Comrie, James F. Gennaro, and David Weprin.



The Landmark Borough Office Building.

NOURISH

12

NYC'S FIRST FARMERS' MARKET. In 1974, long before the terms “farm-to-table” and “locavore” became fashionable, GJDC began its own Farmers' Market, some two years before New York City introduced its Greenmarket Program. To make farm-fresh food accessible to elderly and low-income residents, vendors at the Market now accept WIC coupons and EBT cards. The Market was enhanced in 2001 with the introduction of the Harvest Festival, a beloved tradition held each October.

13

SUPPLEMENTING MUNICIPAL SERVICES – THE BIDS. GJDC was instrumental in establishing the 165th Street and Jamaica Avenue Special Assessment Districts (in 1972 and 1979 respectively), which served as models for *Business Improvement Districts* throughout New York City. GJDC assisted these pioneering efforts by organizing property owners and providing technical feasibility and best-practices studies to launch, fund, and perpetuate this new way of supplementing municipal services, including streetscape improvements, sanitation, and infrastructure upgrades. GJDC played a leadership role in establishing the more recent *Sutphin Boulevard and 180th Street BIDs*, assisted by grants from JP Morgan, Citibank, and the Booth Ferris Foundation.

14

BIRTH OF A CULTURAL INSTITUTION. To increase Downtown Jamaica's cultural offerings and build on its diverse cultural legacy, GJDC joined forces with local partners and artists, in 1974, to form *Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning (JCAL)*. With initial funds from the National Endowment for the Arts, the NYS Council for the Arts, and New York Community Trust, GJDC secured and stabilized a vacant City-owned building as the Center's home, sponsored the building's landmark designation, and helped establish JCAL as an independent entity with its own board. JCAL is now a member of the City's Cultural Institutions Group, and with the establishment of Jamaica Performing Arts Center, which JCAL administers, is a vibrant symbol of Jamaica's rebirth.

15

A SAFE RIDE HOME. In 2011, following advice from the Committee to Improve Perception of Jamaica, GJDC partnered with the NYC Taxi and Limousine Commission, LIRR, the MTA Police, and a private car service to design, build, and manage a *livery cab stand* that provides organized, safe, reliable taxi service at the Jamaica Station transit hub 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



The annual Corn Roast at Jamaica Farmers' Market, a pioneering effort to bring farm-fresh produce to the community.

“Thanks to GJDC, Southeast Queens is now a diverse zone of emergence where people from many backgrounds and nationalities are moving by choice, and participating as stakeholders in community life.”

- Vincent M. Albanese, Partner, Albanese & Albanese LLP and a GJDC founder

ENLIVEN

16

ARTS IN THE COMMUNITY. “Culture Builds Jamaica,” part of GJDC’s basic mission, leverages the visual and performing arts to support Jamaica’s cultural legacy so as to animate Downtown Jamaica’s public and vacant spaces. GJDC created the program with assistance from Partners for Livable Communities, funding from the Rockefeller Brothers, JPMorgan Foundation, Vincent Astor Fund, and the Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation, and ongoing support from local businesses and BIDs.

17

ONCE A FIREHOUSE, NOW A CLINIC. Part of GJDC’s Mid-Block Redevelopment Project, this \$1.2 million landmark-standard renovation of a vacated firehouse on 162nd Street, was made possible by grants from J.M. Kaplan Fund, New York State, and financing from Bank of America. In 2012 GJDC, which owns and operates the firehouse, leased it to Damian Family Care Centers, Inc. and to the Child Care Center of NY. Damian operates a full-service family clinic, serving both the insured and uninsured, and the Child Care Center offers outpatient counseling for children.

18

PRESERVING AN ART DECO GEM. GJDC was responsible for financing the sensitive renovation of a significant, eight-story, 1929 Art Deco building and for securing its designation as a New York City Landmark. The former *Suffolk Title and Guarantee Company Building* was donated to GJDC in 1980 by Fred C. Trump. It was designed by Dennison & Hiron with embellishments by the noted sculptor Rene Paul Chambellan. The building serves as headquarters for GJDC which renovated it with financing from The Equitable, Manufacturers Hanover Bank, and Citibank. GJDC practices high standards of building maintenance and operations, and rents out space to other tenants, giving priority to nonprofits and government agencies.

19

TAKING A LOWLY UNDERPASS TO NEW HEIGHTS. The transformation of a dark, unsightly loading dock into a brightly lit *pedestrian arcade* was completed in 2012, enhancing the environment around the neighboring *AirTrain* terminal and Long Island Railroad headquarters. To initiate and complete the \$11 million project, which includes significant upgrades to LIRR infrastructure and public-space improvements, GJDC secured seed money from The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey, a key partner. Capital funds were sponsored by Congressman Gregory W. Meeks, Senators Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, Councilmember Thomas White, Assemblymember Vivian Cook, the US Department of Transportation, New York State Department of Transportation, New York City Department of Transportation, and the NYC Economic Development Corporation, which co-managed the project with GJDC.



“Let there be light”: the lighting of the Shops at Station Plaza on Sutphin Boulevard.

“Clearly, Greater Jamaica Development Corporation’s numerous, substantive accomplishments have made Jamaica a better place to shop, live, and do business.”

- Archie Spigner, Former Deputy Majority Leader NYC Council

GREEN

20

PRESERVING HISTORY, PROMOTING RECREATION. GJDC has been a leader and catalyst for significant improvements to *Rufus King Park*, the Downtown's most important open green space, and the setting for *King Manor*, the only historic house museum in Southeast Queens. GJDC was instrumental in obtaining \$4 million from public sources for the park's reconstruction, including installation (by the City of New York) of an artificial turf field to accommodate active recreation. With Queens Borough President Claire K. Shulman and a grant from J.M. Kaplan Fund, GJDC also participated in the \$2.1 million restoration of King Manor Museum, including assisting in initiating and developing the Museum's board, and continues to provide administrative support. With the generosity of the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development, and the support of Councilmembers Leroy Comrie and James F. Gennaro, the park purchased dozens of café tables and chairs and installed wi-fi so that hundreds of visitors each day can access the internet.

21

KEEPING STREETS SAFE. Under the umbrella of the *Jamaica Alliance*, a coalition of community stakeholders, GJDC funds, administers, trains, and supervises a small force of unarmed New York State certified personnel, drawn from the community, to patrol Downtown; provide visitor services; and address quality of life concerns, such as noise, disorderly conduct, and public nuisances.

22

HELPING SMALL BUSINESSES FLOURISH. Established and capitalized in 1980 by the US Economic Development Administration, the small business *Revolving Loan Fund* is a capital-access program that provides low-interest, flexible loans to nearly bankable small businesses, particularly those owned by women and minorities. GJDC has also received capital from the Empire State Development Corporation, NYC Department of Small Business Services, NYC Comptroller's office, as well as private-sector support from Citibank and Chase Bank.

23

A PARK IS BORN. *Jamaica Green* provides respite for a community in need of more open space. GJDC conceptualized the transformation of an unused lot, which surrounded a vacant City-owned building. GJDC also secured US Community Development funding and with the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development, commissioned design of the park and installed historically appropriate fencing. GJDC continues to provide ongoing maintenance of trees, lawn, and landscaping.



"It's My Park Day" in King Park was supported by funds from the J.M. Kaplan Fund.

PRODUCE

24

KEEPING INDUSTRY IN JAMAICA. From 1985 to 2005, GJDC operated the City-sponsored *Jamaica In-Place Industrial Park (IPIP)*, following GJDC's preparation of a business-retention and development plan for that area. GJDC currently operates IPIP's successor, the *Jamaica Industrial Business Zone (IBZ)*, monitoring needs in the area, recommending public improvements, and providing technical assistance to businesses and property owners in the IBZ. This work is supported by NYC Department of Small Business Services program, NYC Business Solutions.

25

GOT MILK! GOT JOBS! *Elmhurst Dairy*, part of the local economy since 1919, and the last fluid-milk processor in New York City, is now the anchor of a 16-acre industrial compound in Jamaica. GJDC worked closely with the City to promote assemblage of the property by relocating incompatible uses, de-mapping streets, structuring lease arrangements, and working with the Long Island Railroad and the City to provide off-site parking for employees. Creation of the compound and Elmhurst's processing capacity attracted other food distribution companies. There are now 750 workers on the site, many from the local community.

26

THE GREENING OF JAMAICA. When springtime rolls around, Downtown Jamaica blooms, thanks to a *horticulture program* run by the Jamaica Alliance, the consortium of community stakeholders organized by GJDC. Along Sutphin Boulevard, the program features tubs planted with Alberta spruces and seasonal flowers. On Sutphin and adjacent to GJDC properties, hanging baskets are maintained overhead. In addition, the program maintains plantings near transit entrances at Jamaica Station and Archer Avenue, on the grounds of the Jamaica Performing Arts Center, and at GJDC's headquarters. It also assists the NYC Department of Parks with maintenance of Rufus King Park.

27

JAMAICA IN A NEW LIGHT. In partnership with Downtown Jamaica Business Improvement Districts and local community groups, GJDC helped secure City funds to replace deteriorated 1970s-era streetlights with new fixtures along Jamaica Avenue and environs. The revamped lighting scheme, to be completed by the end of 2012, boasts the first use in Queens of the brighter and more energy-efficient Cosmo light. Funds were provided by Assemblymembers Vivian Cook and William Scarborough, and Councilmembers Leroy Comrie and Jim Gennaro.



Elmhurst Dairy is the anchor in a 16-acre industrial compound, which employs 750 people, many from the local community.

"For upwards of a half-century, GJDC has been an economic engine that has helped this community to grow and attract investment from the public and private sectors. Today, it continues to be creative and resourceful as it carries forward its mission."

- Queens Borough President Helen M. Marshall

BEAUTIFY

28

THE PLAZA AT QUEENS SUPREME COURT. Proponents of more usable open space for Downtown Jamaica scored a victory in 2010 when workmen dismantled the high metal fence separating the elegant Queens Supreme Courthouse from the Downtown community. The effort to open up the plaza for community use was spearheaded by the Downtown Jamaica Open Space Coalition, and was aided by Chief Judges Jonathan Lippman and Judith Kaye, Mayor Bloomberg's Criminal Justice Coordinator, Councilmember James F. Gennaro, and New York Landmarks Conservancy President Peg Breen.

29

PROMOTING OWNER-OCCUPANCY. Providing affordable space for nonprofits is a vital part of GJDC's mission. To that end, under a development lease through NYC Economic Development Corporation, and with funding from Sterling Bank, GJDC renovated a city-owned building on 162nd Street, and conveyed it to Neighborhood Housing Services of Jamaica, Inc., a nonprofit committed to preserving, protecting, revitalizing, and stabilizing Southeast Queens neighborhoods. The purchase of a second building on 163rd Street by Community Mediation Service (CMS) was assisted by GJDC. CMS was established in 1980 to divert and service cases from Family Court.

30

A BOOST FOR SMALL BUSINESSES. *Jamaica Business Resource Center (JBRC)* was established in the 1980s to provide technical assistance, access to capital, and loan programs for local small businesses, particularly women and minority-owned establishments. GJDC purchased, custom-designed, financed, and renovated a vacant building for adaptive reuse by JBRC, which became the nation's first US Small Business Administration's "One Stop Capital Shop." Since its inception, it has served more than 3,500 clients. The Queens Minority Business Development Center, supported by the US Department of Commerce, with the sponsorship of Congressmen Floyd Flake and Gregory Meeks, is housed with JBRC.

31

PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY. *Jamaica Pathways*, a system of enhanced pedestrian routes, boasting amenities such as improved lighting, repaving, way-finding information, and landscaping, created safe and attractive environments that encourage visitors to explore Downtown Jamaica on foot. The \$8.4 million project was conceived and administered by GJDC through a funding agreement with NYC Economic Development Corporation, and with support from the Federal Highway Administration, the NYC Council, and Department of Environmental Protection. GJDC's local partners were *York College*, the *Sutphin Boulevard Business Improvement District*, and the *Jamaica Market*. Special support was also received from Borough President Helen M. Marshall, Congressman Gregory Meeks, Councilmembers Leroy Comrie, James F. Gennaro, and Thomas White, and former Councilman Archie Spigner.



Jamaica Pathways, a system of safe, attractive pedestrian routes, invites people to explore Downtown Jamaica.

INSPIRE

32

NEW LIFE FOR A LANDMARK. The landmarked *Chapel of the Sisters* (1857), on the York College campus, suffered from decades of neglect. Working with the New York Landmarks Conservancy and the Prospect Cemetery Association, GJDC procured and managed consultants and construction contracts for restoration of the Chapel, which now functions as a 75-seat community performing arts facility, named for legendary jazz saxophonist Illinois Jacquet. Funding came from Queens Borough President Helen Marshall's office, and from the State of New York via a funding agreement with NYC Economic Development Corporation. GJDC also raised funds and procured and managed contracts for current restoration of the adjacent City-owned 4.5-acre, 17th-century *Prospect Cemetery*.

33

A HOME FOR THE ARTS. The historic First Reformed Church building located at the corner of 153rd Street and Jamaica Avenue, stood vacant for more than 12 years. During that time, GJDC assisted in the preservation, protection, and restoration of the structure; covered maintenance, insurance, and holding costs; and enlisted recommendations for alternative uses. In 2009, after a \$22 million renovation by the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, sponsored by the Queens Borough President's office and the Queens delegation, it opened as the Jamaica Performing Arts Center (JPAC), a 400-seat, state-of-the-art facility managed by Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning.

34

IMAGE MAKEOVER. The *Committee to Improve Perception* (CTIP) is a coalition of community groups and individuals, organized by GJDC, which meets quarterly to identify and act on issues and opportunities for quality-of-life and other improvements and activities along the Sutphin Boulevard corridor. Membership includes representatives from: Jamaica's three BIDs; Community Board 12; the Jamaica Performing Arts Center; LIRR, MTA, The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey, NYC Department of Transportation, and Taxi & Limousine Commission; NYPD 103rd Precinct; Queens Borough Public Library; State and County Courts; York College; and Sterling Bank.

35

TURNING BROWNFIELDS TO GOLD. With a \$1.2 million grant from New York State's *Brownfields Opportunity Areas* program (BOA), with the vital support of Assemblymember Vivian Cook, as well as from the Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation and LISC. GJDC is fast-tracking planning efforts and implementation for an *AirTrain* Station in Downtown Jamaica. The area – comprising 40 acres including 70 potential brownfield sites – has potential to be home to airport and aviation-related businesses that will enhance the operations and efficiency of nearby JFK International Airport and will bring hospitality services and amenities such as hotels, to the Downtown.



The Illinois Jacquet Performance Space in the landmarked Chapel of the Sisters (1857), located on the York College campus.

"For the past 45 years, Greater Jamaica Development Corporation has pursued a grand vision of commercial and community revitalization and infrastructure development that has created thousands of jobs for area residents. I look to the future confident that GJDC will continue to play a key role in tackling the challenges ahead, and taking advantage of new opportunities emerging on the expanding horizon of the redevelopment of Greater Jamaica." – Congressman Gregory W. Meeks

MENTOR

36

INCENTIVES FOR INDUSTRY. In 2009, GJDC successfully facilitated and advocated local legislation that approved two Southeast Queens industrial firms, Flying Food Group and Epic Pharma, LLC, as *Regionally Significant Projects* under the State's Empire Zone program. This advocacy received the active support of Councilmembers Leroy Comrie and James Sanders. The approvals helped retain more than 650 jobs and positioned the two firms to claim tax credits through 2012 based on job growth and capital investments.

37

SPACE EXPLORATION. Downtown Jamaica's pressing need for more quality open spaces – parks, streetscapes, and public squares – led GJDC to assemble and convene the *Open Space Coalition*, a group of community stakeholders that meets regularly to identify opportunities for new public spaces, and to tap the resources needed to maintain existing open spaces. The coalition's priorities include *Signature Park*, a green space at *AirTrain's* terminal, called for in the City's rezoning plan for Jamaica.

38

SPOTLIGHT ON YOUTH. GJDC convened the *Jamaica Youth Initiative*, comprising community leaders, nonprofit groups, public servants, elected officials, and educational leaders, to address issues associated with Jamaica's disengaged and underserved young adults. The Jamaica YMCA and *Safe Space* are providing leadership and coordinating the efforts of others, with the goal of creating programs and environments that promote motivation, learning, and growth. JPMorgan Chase provided essential funds to support this work.

39

A TREE GROWS IN JAMAICA. In fact many trees now enhance Downtown Jamaica's thoroughfares. As part of the Downtown-wide open-space plan – prepared by GJDC in collaboration with the NYC Department of Parks – GJDC purchased and planted flowering trees on strategic Downtown block-fronts, and provides ongoing maintenance.



Jamaica Alliance's Greeters Program puts friendly faces on Downtown streets, while providing opportunities for neighborhood youth.

MOVE!

40

A ROLE FOR COMMUTER VANS. Private passenger vans enhance community mobility, and are an important part of Jamaica's robust transportation network. GJDC secured federal funding to analyze the industry; worked with local government and community groups including York College to implement new licensing and compliance measures; and collaborated with van operators on the development and implementation of safety and operational improvements, such as coordination with bus routes and lay-ups.

41

CULTURE BUILDS COMMUNITY. Convinced that culture builds community, GJDC helped form Cultural Collaborative Jamaica (CCJ), a coalition of local arts groups and businesses which sponsors arts activities including the annual JAMS street festival and events in King Park. GJDC helped to raise start-up funds for the group (from New York Community Trust) and provided office space, board-building assistance, and initially served on the start-up board.

42

NEW LIFE FOR A STRATEGIC SPOT. With funds from The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey, GJDC purchased a noxious, dirty facility strategically located across the street from the *AirTrain* Terminal. This future development site has been transformed for interim use into a *Marketing Center* – a venue for on-site presentations and conferences on the development of the *AirTrain*/Jamaica Station, and a meeting space that is available free of charge for community use.



Young dancers from Edge School of the Arts perform as part of Dance Jamaica! on the steps of the Jamaica Performing Arts Center.

“Greater Jamaica Development Corporation has been a beacon of hope and a conscience for thousands of young people and their families who live and pass through Jamaica. They have done so much to assist in the development of this population, which is so often overlooked in a Downtown business environment.”

- Cedric Dew, Executive Director, Jamaica YMCA

SHELTER

43

PROVIDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING. Over a ten-year period, GJDC – working with owners, lenders, tenants, and government agencies – initiated and provided technical assistance for *Jamaica Housing Action Group*, which helped facilitate rehabilitation of 3,700 low and moderate-income units in 60 apartment buildings, facilitating \$16.6 million in capital investments. GJDC secured funding for the project from the Robert Sterling Clark and Ford Foundations and NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development, as well as grants from Brooklyn Union Gas for external improvements to several buildings. *Yorksides Towers*, part of GJDC’s Mid-Block development, was completed in 2005 by the Ciampa Organization – the first market-rate rental housing built in Downtown Jamaica in 30 years. This project was financed through the NYC Housing Development Corporation and the Department of Housing Preservation & Development’s New Housing Opportunities Program (NewHOP). Another mixed-income housing development of 100 units incorporating retail and office space, broke ground in 2012. The project, funded by New York City, New York State, and private sources, is being developed by the Bluestone Organization, which will relocate its headquarter operations from Fresh Meadows to the new building.

44

TRAINING YOUTH FOR THE WORKFORCE. With loaned executives from Metropolitan Life and New York Telephone, and under contract with the NYC Department of Labor, GJDC administered a two-year training program under the *US Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA)*, which employed 180 young adults in public-works projects around Downtown Jamaica, clearing the sites of York College’s campus and the Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning. Ambassadorial services along Jamaica Avenue led to the establishment of a special assessment district there.

45

BLUE STREAK. During the 1980s GJDC organized an annual *5K Fun Run* event, jointly planned and operated by the Jamaica YMCA and GJDC, which introduced new audiences to the changing face of Downtown Jamaica, and to the YMCA’s expanding programs.



MODA, a mixed-income residential complex, was opened on the corner of 89th Avenue and Parsons Boulevard in April 2010 by The Dermott Company.

“The outstanding redevelopment of Downtown Jamaica is largely due to the efforts of the Greater Jamaica Development Corporation and the leadership and vision of its Executive Director, Carlisle Towery.” – Claire K. Shulman, Former Queens Borough President

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