

4 CORNERS REVITALIZATION

OVERVIEW

Our goal is to transform the failing 4 Corners intersection into a revitalized, vibrant neighborhood-focused area. We propose changing the 40-year old, rigid Central Avenue District zoning that now applies to 4 Corners and is a detriment to businesses and the community. It has resulted in business vacancies and the absence of shoppers. One corner is an emblem of blight.

A revitalization rests on three central arcs: the aging of Baby Boomers, the migration of Millennials to the suburbs, and the 4 Corners location, which features an adjacent downtown "sense of place" and an easy, safe walk to transit desired by those fast-growing demographics.

The obstacle is the current zoning. The Central Avenue zoning prohibits mixed-use with residential use. It also prohibits residential use on properties as small as those found at the Corners.

The solution is to mixed-use, form-based zoning. Many municipalities have been using it as a way to revitalize strategic areas.

The vision has earned strong community backing. At every presentation of it to the Hartsdale Neighbors Association (HNA), those in attendance enthusiastically supported it.

Inspired Places LLC is a Hartsdale-based real estate consultancy. The firm is founded by two long-time Hartsdale residents, Patrice Ingrassia, a senior markets consultant, and Christine Broda, an architect who has worked with residents and businesses in Greenburgh for more than two decades.

We are representing several families who are land-owners with long-time commitments to Greenburgh. The Chen's are long-time Greenburgh residents who have owned businesses on the Southeast Corner dating back to the 1980's. They wish to improve their properties. The Corotolo's and Cartelli's invested in the Northeast Corner and over the past two decades moved their law and mortgage brokerage businesses and property management businesses there. Despite all their difficulties in renting properties through the years and the resulting negative cash flows, they have continued to make improvements to them.

CONSISTENCY WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The subject area of opportunity at 4 Corners is designated in the Town of Greenburgh Comprehensive Plan 2016 as the “Hartsdale Four Corners Study Area,” which is a Special Planning Area in the Plan. Building upon a general community-based desire to see improvement at 4 Corners, Inspired Places has conducted extensive research from a land-use perspective, including:

- Existing conditions
- Existing zoning
- Identification of viable uses in this study area
- Market/demographic trends

This research will be a major focus of our presentation to the Town Board at the upcoming April 10th work session. The intent is to have this information and a description of the vision for 4 Corners form the basis for a Supplement to the Comprehensive Plan. The Supplement would be an actionable plan, along with the appropriate guidelines/recommendations, to become a working framework for future redevelopment at the 4 Corners area.

RELEVANT 4 CORNERS RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE EXISTING PLAN

The 4 Corners vision is consistent with numerous recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. The most relevant recommendations are related to Land Use and Zoning, Chapter 12, and Economic Development, Chapter 11 (see below for discussions of both). Other relevant chapters include:

2. Greenburgh (Especially 2.3.2.1 and 2.3.2.2)
3. Sustainability (All sections)
4. Community Well Being (4.2 and 4.7))
6. Environmental Resources and Related Systems (6.3 and 6.4)
7. Parks, Trails, Open Space and Recreational Facilities (7.6)
8. Public Infrastructure (8.3-8.4)
9. Transportation, Mobility and Access (Most sections)
10. Demographics and Housing (Most sections)

LAND USE AND ZONING – THE STUDY AREA DESIGNATION FOR 4 CORNERS

As noted above, In the Land Use and Zoning section of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 12.8.6) the Hartsdale Four Corners Area is designated as a “study area.” The Plan notes that the leasable spaces there “have experienced high rates and concentrations of vacancies than other areas in the Town’s commercial corridors, likely attributed to a lack of convenient off-street parking.” The Plan cites the need at 4 Corners to alleviate the traffic congestion with new signals and turning lanes, as well as the desire for a pedestrian sidewalk on West Hartsdale Avenue.

It also notes that the changes could improve the area's pedestrian network: "There may be an opportunity for a public-private partnership which could include redevelopment in the area."

Since the Plan was written, many things have changed, chief amongst them:

- Some of the land owners have invested considerably in façade and other improvements to try to help the businesses attract more tenants. Yet, the poor business conditions have deteriorated even further. Owners report ongoing vacancies, with tenant replacement "nearly impossible," followed by low success rates for the few tenants that occasionally are replaced.
- Online shopping and digitization of our economy is growing, along with changing purchase trends. Neighborhood residents do not walk to the shops, and because of poor parking and traffic, others do not drive there.
- Hartsdale resident frustration regarding the lack of revitalization has increased.

Conditions have eroded. Today there are glaring vacancies at each quadrant, creating a sense of blight at the Northwest corner. By most standards, the 4 Corners, "known primarily for its existence as an intersection," according to the Plan, is failing. It is failing Hartsdale residents, landowners and businesses at and near the location, as well as taxpayers in the Town of Greenburgh.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS APPLICABLE TO 4 CORNERS

Chapter 11 of the Comprehensive Plan cites many relevant recommendations that support economic development that are especially relevant to Hartsdale and the 4 Corners. A Supplement to the Plan would provide community-supported recommendations for future redevelopment at the Corners discussed in the following sections.

11.10 Development Strategies of the Comprehensive Plan

- Economic Development Implementation Programs
- Livable Communities/Quality of Life
- Workforce Development
- Infrastructure Development
- Business Retention/Expansion
- Marketing Campaign
- Create comprehensive incentive packages for retention and recruitment of businesses

The Town of Greenburgh has the potential to incorporate several of its development strategies into the process for redevelopment at 4 Corners. Acting as a partner for grant opportunities to improve infrastructure (transportation, stormwater, parking facilities, etc.) would bring significant localized and corridor-wide benefits, enhancing the Town's quality of life for existing and future residents, businesses and visitors.

The economic development goals that emanate from these strategies, outlined in Section 11.11 of the Plan, similarly will benefit Hartsdale and the Corners. This vision is aligned to them, as well.

- 11.1 Ensure that private investment strategies are consistent with the Plan
- 11.2 Retain and attract a wide range of business sectors
- 11.3 Improve infrastructure to make commercial corridors more business ready
- 11.4 Foster direct connections between transportation and economic development
- 11.5 Facilitate enhanced investment in our commercial corridors
- 11.6 Leverage economic benefits associated with development
- 11.7 Utilize town staff services and municipal assets to facilitate policies of the plan
- 11.8 Pursue available financial assistance to advance potential for private investment
- 11.9 Maintain a healthy economic environment in Greenburgh

ADOPTING A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SUPPLEMENT

A Comprehensive Plan Supplement will accomplish the following:

- Provide a clear understanding of the opportunities and constraints of the 4C district, including zoning
- Encourage a viable private investment environment
- Identify opportunities for funding, grants, public/private partnership, marketing and engagement of land-owners and the development community
- Greatly increase the potential for obtaining the grants, especially those that can improve infrastructure (transportation, stormwater, parking facilities, etc.)
- Identify opportunities to broaden the Town's tax base and provide the highest potential return for infrastructure investments
- Identify context-appropriate and market-driven development strategies in conjunction with the Hartsdale community's desires, that are aligned to the Town's strategic goals
- Act as a specific land use study which will inform design guidelines that direct the type, character, quality, scale, and density of future development. These recommendations could be employed as a basis for this Study Area, for design plans, and for a district overlay or as form-based code.
- These recommendations could include functional and aesthetic enhancements that establish a dramatic improvement to the identity of the public realm, and which set the stage for future private development and investment within the adjoining properties and businesses