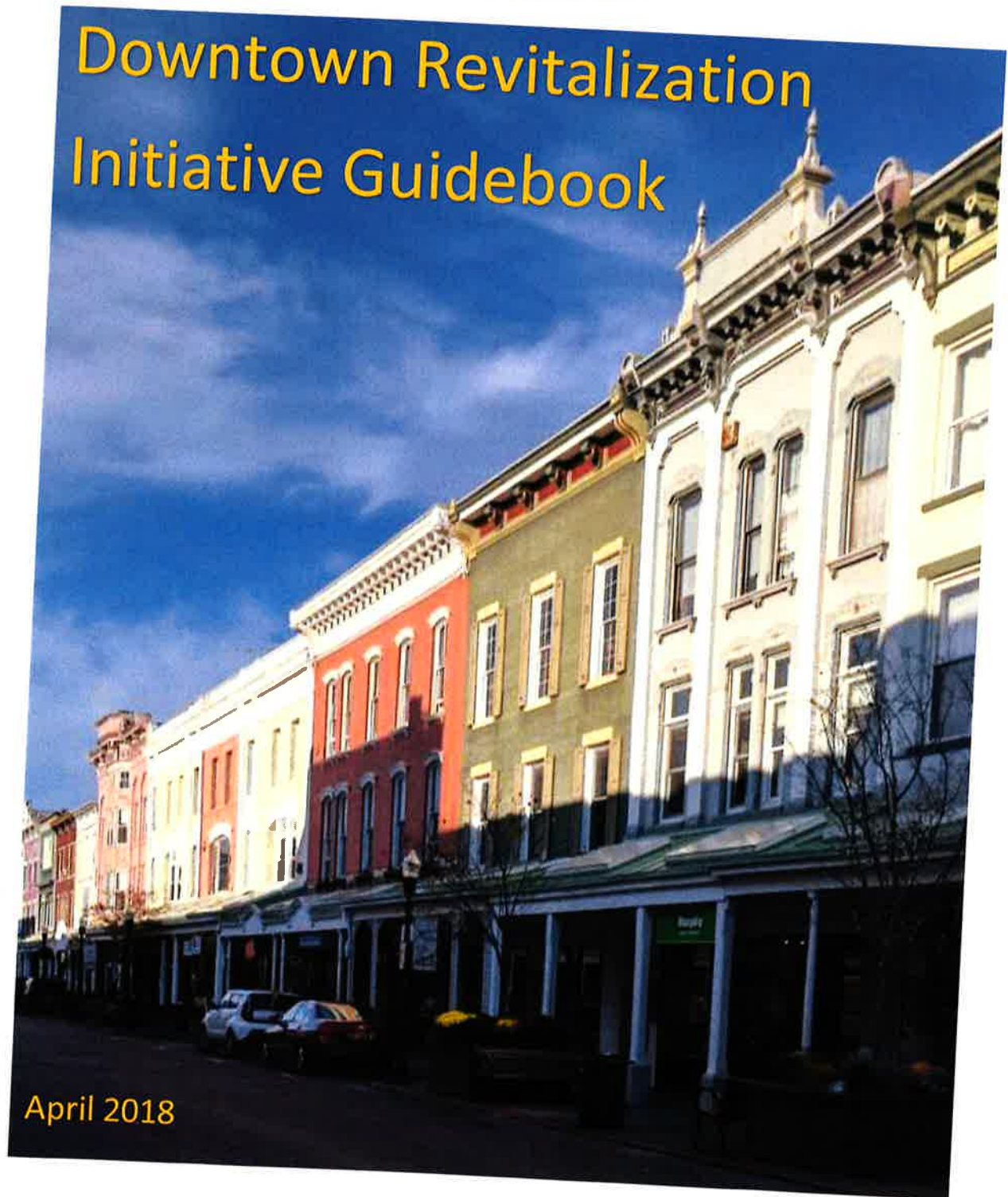




Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Downtown Revitalization Initiative Guidebook

April 2018



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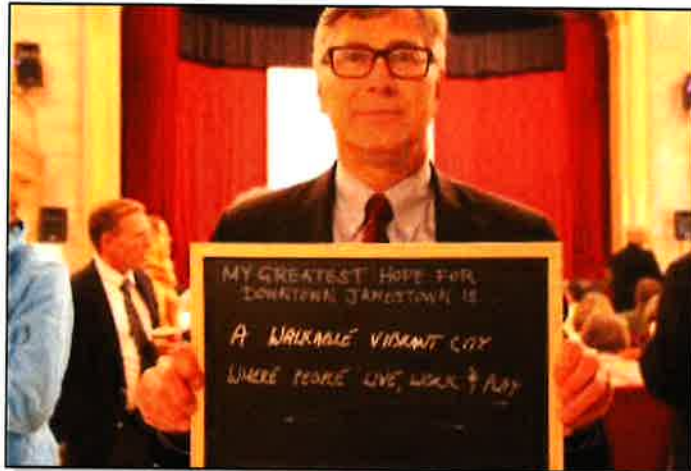
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Downtown Revitalization Initiative

The Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) is a comprehensive approach to boosting local economies by transforming communities into vibrant neighborhoods where the next generation of New Yorkers will want to live, work and raise a family. In its third year, the program will invest \$100 million into 10 additional downtown neighborhoods across the state. Each of the State's ten Regional Economic Development Councils (REDCs) will solicit applications and choose one downtown that is ripe for revitalization and has the potential to become a magnet for redevelopment, business, job creation, greater economic and housing diversity, and opportunity. Applications for the third round must be submitted by 4 p.m. on Friday, June 1, 2018.

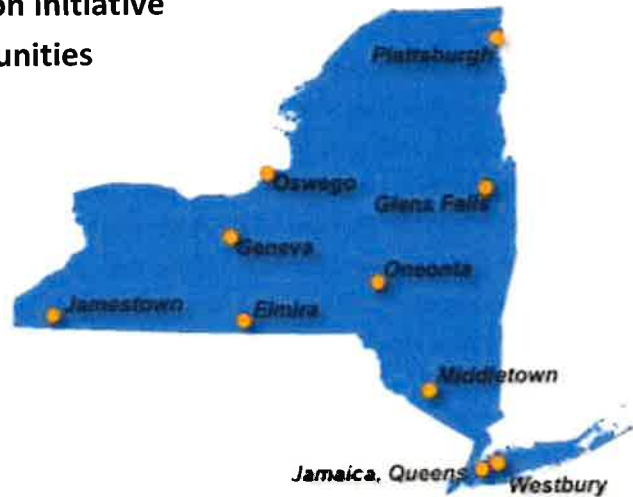
Overview

Business and development leaders recognize that downtown communities which offer a high quality-of-life and a critical mass of diverse public amenities and activities can serve as catalysts for increased and sustainable local economic development. Investments that re-energize urban cores attract a diverse population of new residents and visitors of varying ages, incomes, and interests, which strengthens the customer base for local businesses and provides the reliable workforce needed to attract and retain employers and grow the regional economy. Government leaders recognize that focusing investment in urban centers is also fiscally responsible. Compact development lowers the cost of delivering essential government services (police, fire, emergency medical) and reduces demand for costly new infrastructure, making local government budgets more efficient and reducing the burden on taxpayers.



To support downtown investment in New York State, Governor Andrew Cuomo introduced a major new initiative – the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI), in spring of 2016. In the first year of the DRI, ten communities were selected to receive \$10 million each to undertake a bottom-up community planning process and to implement key projects recommended by the community. Each community developed the key ingredients needed for successful downtown revitalization: a clear vision for the downtown; goals and strategies to accomplish the vision; and a strategic plan to implement catalytic projects identified in the plan. An additional ten communities were selected to participate in a second round of DRI in 2017, and in 2018 the enacted state budget included a third round of funding for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative, enabling ten more downtowns to take important steps toward revitalization.

**Downtown Revitalization Initiative
Round One Communities**



**Downtown Revitalization Initiative
Round Two Communities**

The ten communities in each round of the DRI are selected by the Regional Economic Development Councils, each of which may nominate one downtown. Criteria utilized for selection of DRI communities includes: physical environment, past investment, future potential, recent or impending job growth, support for the local vision, and readiness.

In each community, a Local Planning Committee (LPC) comprised of local stakeholders is convened to oversee the development of a strategic plan for revitalization of their downtown. The LPCs receive support and technical assistance from a team of planners from the State, and the consulting team hired by the State.

Consultants will review the vision statement included in the DRI application with the LPC to confirm that it reflects the unique characteristics of the downtown. A clear and concise downtown profile and assessment will be developed to articulate the story of the region and the downtown, and to describe their futures.

Goals will be established that can help achieve the community’s vision for downtown revitalization. Based on the downtown vision and goals, consultants will guide the LPC in development of creative and ambitious strategies and projects to direct future development and investment in the downtown. Strategies will address how the community hopes to accomplish the goals to realize its vision.

The planning process will link the community’s vision, goals and strategies to the projects that will implement those goals. The DRI strategic investment plan for each community will identify a variety of projects. Communities are encouraged to identify projects that will have substantial financial commitment from the community, nonprofit, or private sponsors. DRI seeks to leverage DRI funds with other funding initiatives from public or private sources. Project profiles and the LPC’s recommended funding amounts will be included in the plan.

Broad public outreach is important throughout this process, as public input will help shape and enhance the plan. Public engagement should be undertaken to inform and educate, to solicit and receive input, and to build support for plan implementation.

Projects will be evaluated by a State agency team and projects selected for funding. Project contracts are administered by a variety of agencies and authorities, with the majority held by the Department of State, Empire State Development, and the Housing Trust Fund.

Round One DRI Strategic Investment Plans and award announcements are online at www.ny.gov/DRI.

Region	DRI One Community	DRI Two Community
Capital Region	City of Glens Falls	City of Hudson
Central NY	City of Oswego	City of Cortland
Finger Lakes	City of Geneva	City of Batavia
Long Island	Village of Westbury	Hicksville (T. Oyster Bay)
Mid-Hudson	City of Middletown	City of Kingston
Mohawk Valley	City of Oneonta	City of Rome
New York City	Jamaica, Queens	Bronx Civic Center
North Country	City of Plattsburgh	City of Watertown
Southern Tier	City of Elmira	Village Watkins Glen
Western NY	City of Jamestown	City of Olean



DRI Process



Goals of DRI Program

The Downtown Revitalization Initiative provides a comprehensive approach to improving the physical, social, and economic climate of participating communities. The intention is to provide funding that can help communities on the cusp of economic revitalization tip over into sustained prosperity.

The fundamental goals of the DRI include:

- Creation of an active, desirable downtown with a strong sense of place;
- Attraction of new businesses (including “Main Street” businesses), that create a robust mix of shopping, dining, entertainment and service options for residents and visitors, and that provide job opportunities for a variety of skills and salaries;
- Enhancement of public spaces for arts and cultural events that serve the existing members of the community but also draw in attendees from around the region;
- Attraction of a diverse population, with residents and workers supported by complementary diverse housing and employment opportunities;
- Growing the local property tax base; and
- Providing amenities that support and enhance downtown living and quality of life.

These goals are reflected in the individual Downtown Strategic Investment Plans developed for each community, and the projects identified in each plan. To fully leverage the impact of the DRI, each plan identified projects whose recommended funding would in total exceed the available DRI funds to ensure a continued pipeline of projects that may be implemented with other public and private sources.

Roles & Responsibilities

The DRI accomplishes its goals through a unique state-local partnership that includes the Local Planning Committee (LPC), state agency staff, and a consultant team. The LPC is responsible for representing the interests and priorities of the community, while the state agency staff ensures that the process and deliverables are consistent with the goals, priorities and requirements of the Initiative. In addition, the state agency staff, together with the consultants, provides expertise, guidance, and technical assistance to develop a strategic investment plan that will achieve the vision and goals for revitalization of the downtown as approved by the LPC.



LPC in Watkins Glen



Local Planning Committee

The Local Planning Committee (LPC) is made up of local and regional leaders, stakeholders, and community representatives. Each LPC is led by two co-chairs consisting of the local elected official (or his or her designee) and a member of the Regional Economic Development Council. Other members will be invited to participate by the Secretary of State after consultation with the LPC co-chairs and other state partners.

General membership in the LPC will include representatives from interest groups and organizations, as appropriate to the community. These group may include:

- Local and regional government officials;
- Neighborhood associations, homeowners, and renters;
- Property owners, local developers, and real estate agents;
- Chambers of commerce, local business associations, and business owners;
- Community foundations and community loan funds;
- Local development corporations, housing corporations, industrial development agencies, and business improvement districts;
- Cultural institutions, such as museums, historic sites, and theaters;
- Educational institutions, including administrative and student leadership of area universities and colleges;
- Local non-profit and advocacy organizations that address quality of life, such as bicycle coalitions, park conservancies, arts organizations, and youth organizations;
- Social and public service organizations, such as local police and health care providers, and faith-based organizations; and
- The REDC in which the DRI area is located.

LPC members meet at least monthly to brainstorm ideas, provide direction to consultants, review planning products, and prioritize actions. The LPC members, working with the consultants and state planners, determine the most appropriate meeting schedule to accomplish their goals and to deliver an on-time DRI Strategic Investment Plan.

The LPC will work with the consultant team and state planners to:

- Create a profile of the downtown.
- Refine the vision that was included in the community's DRI application.
- Develop strategies and identify methods to achieve the downtown vision.
- Identify and select projects key to overall downtown revitalization.
- Develop and adopt a Downtown Revitalization Initiative Strategic Investment Plan.
- Develop a community engagement plan and engage the public in the planning process.

As representatives of a variety of interests within the community, the LPC members will be asked to play a central role in identifying the most appropriate approach to community engagement for their DRI area

and to take an active role in public outreach. Outreach should be both to inform the public and to receive suggestions from the public.

The LPC may form work groups to provide an opportunity for some LPC members to dig deeper into an issue, sometimes with the help of non-committee members, such as local business persons, labor specialists, academic experts, and neighborhood activists. Work groups provide an opportunity for brainstorming, for building a sense of community spirit and buy-in of the plan, and allow for better time management at LPC meetings. Work groups may be developed around any topic, such as developing a public engagement strategy, business development, identification of projects and actions, and implementation of the plan. final DRI Strategic Investment Plan by the due date.

LPC members will be asked to agree to a Code of Conduct as a reminder that they must always act in the public interest in their role as Local Planning Committee members. Any member of the committee with a real or perceived conflict related to a specific project will be given the opportunity to recuse from voting on or opining on the project that presents a conflict while still participating in decision-making for other projects.

Consultant Team

A consultant team contracted by the state is assigned to each community. The team will work with the co-chairs and state agency staff to prepare for and staff LPC meetings and public outreach events. Consultants will prepare and implement a public engagement strategy with input and participation from the LPC, whose members are best positioned to recommend strategies appropriate for their community. Consultants will handle meeting logistics and meeting presentations. At the LPC meetings, the consultant will ask LPC members for their ideas and guidance at each step of the planning process.

With direction from state agency staff and guidance from the LPC, consultants will prepare program documents, such as the downtown profile and assessment; the downtown vision; revitalization strategies to achieve the vision; the DRI Strategic Investment Plan; and fulfil other tasks within their scope of work, such as research and market studies.

Consultants will assist the LPC in identifying key projects for implementation using DRI funding, and will prepare detailed project profiles and analyses that demonstrates the feasibility and potential impact of projects

State Team

State agency staff from the Department of State (DOS) and Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) will be assigned to each LPC. The DOS planner, with assistance from HCR staff and the Empire State Development (ESD) Regional Director, will manage the consultant team assigned to the LPC, and assist the consultants and LPC in meeting preparation, as well as preparation and review of DRI documents. The HCR representative will bring to the planning process their knowledge of the community and expertise in housing development, CDBG, and HCR grants and programs. The ESD Regional Director provides a wealth

of knowledge of past, present, and proposed development in an around the downtown. When needed, state agency staff will facilitate assistance from other State agencies.

The state team will also work with the consultants to ensure project profiles include the appropriate level of information needed for state evaluation of projects. Once projects are selected for funding by the State, the State team will prepare contract work plans or incentive proposals for projects assigned to their agencies, or work with others within their agency to supply needed information for work plans or incentive proposals.

Municipal Staff

Municipal staff from the DRI community may provide local assistance to the consultants and state planners when local resources or expertise are needed. Municipal staff may assist with meeting logistics, such as identifying accessible space; provide necessary background data and information; help identify municipal programs and resources that can be leveraged to advance the DRI planning process; and act as local point of contact for public engagement.

Public Engagement

Broad public outreach is important throughout the DRI planning process, as public input will help shape and enhance the plan. Outreach is a great way to educate residents and other community members about the DRI planning process and other related community goals and policies - such as comprehensive plans, local waterfront development programs, and other economic development initiatives – and how they can be involved.

Public engagement should be undertaken to inform and educate, to solicit and receive input, and to build support for plan implementation. LPC members will play a pivotal role by helping to identify key individuals, organizations, and entities that should be involved in the planning and implementation process and by determining the best way to involve them. If some of the key individuals are not people who typically would attend public meetings and workshops, other techniques will need to be identified that will engage them.



Hudson Public Engagement Event

Informing and educating the public can be done through formal public meetings and workshops, open houses, websites, social media, presentations at meetings of community organizations, and other means of communication.

Full meetings of the LPC should be open to the public. The extent that the public will be able to actively participate in a meeting will depend on the purpose and structure of the meeting. In general, meetings will fall into three categories:

- **LPC Meeting** – These sessions are working meetings conducted by the LPC co-chairs to provide for discussion among the LPC members and presentations on scheduled topics. At the discretion of the LPC, meeting agendas may include time for public comment or other engagement exercises.
- **Open House** – These sessions will be largely conducted by consultants to educate the public and get the public’s reactions to information and ideas. LPC members may also be present.
- **Workshop** – These sessions will be held to solicit ideas from the public, and comments on various planning topics. These public engagement workshops, charrettes, and focus groups are intended to be very interactive, with participation by both the public and LPC members.

The LPC may form work groups to provide an opportunity for some members to dig deeper into an issue, and to provide an opportunity for non-committee members – such as local business persons, labor specialists, academic experts, and neighborhood activists – to work interactively with LPC members. Work groups provide an opportunity for brainstorming, for building a sense of community spirit and buy-in of the plan, and allow for better time management at LPC meetings.

One-on-one conversations may also take place. Some of these conversations may be scheduled interviews, but others may be more casual, such as encounters with interested citizens outside of a meeting, at a school event, or when grocery shopping. While LPC members are free to engage in conversations with people, members should also encourage them to share their ideas in writing or during a public comment session so other committee members can benefit from their input.

FOCUS ON ACCESSIBILITY

Several accessibility efforts were undertaken in Watertown to make the DRI process and products as accessible as possible, including:

- Allowing requests for accessibility accommodation to be made directly to the community or through the City website
- Providing accessibility accommodation information on print materials and through electronic outreach
- Holding meeting in accessible locations and facilities with sound systems and roving microphones
- Providing audio recordings of all presentation materials (handouts and Power Point presentations) at public events on iPads
- Making documents compatible with screen reader formats
- Making all materials (audio and visual) available on USB
- Providing large format printed meeting materials

Public Engagement Strategy

The consultant, with input from the LPC, will develop a public engagement strategy to enable residents, public and private agencies, community organizations, local businesses, and institutions of learning to work towards a shared vision for a more vibrant downtown. Public engagement should occur early and consistently throughout the process and should encourage participation from a broad and diverse population. Consultants should design events that encourage openness and innovation.

DRI communities are asked to plan a minimum of three public events. Events will be held at important milestones for the project, as described in the public engagement plan, including one event where proposed projects are presented to the public for comment.

A variety of public engagement techniques should also be used to engage a wider range of participants, such as use of social media, traditional media, email blasts, online forums, surveys, and making speakers available for meetings of local organizations.

In addition to the public meetings or workshops, outreach should include an interactive web presence. Each DRI municipality has an individual page on the State DRI website for posting meeting materials, links to draft products, surveys, and accepting comments. DRI municipalities may also use their own websites for posting DRI information, providing links to the State DRI website. Additional activities may include but are not limited to charrettes, surveys, information booths, and storefront information centers.

Examples of some public engagement methods used by consultant teams are shown below.

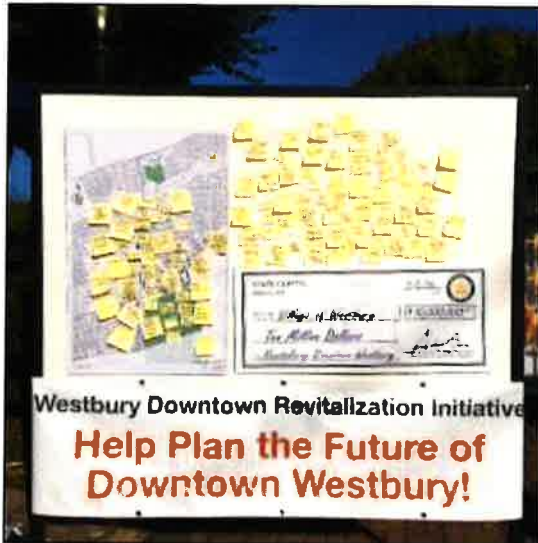


GENEVA'S STOREFRONT ENGAGEMENT

For DRI One, a downtown storefront in Geneva was donated by the property owner for use by the consultant team for the duration of the planning process.

Weekly "open hours" provided opportunities for the public to stop in and talk with city staff or a member of the consultant team regarding project ideas, process and document feedback.

The storefront served as a hub for consultant team members when in town.



An "idea wall" for public comment at a Westbury Street Fair



Spanish language flyer for a public event in Kingston



Supporting proposed projects with "Rome" dollars at a public session in Rome



Watertown DRI community website

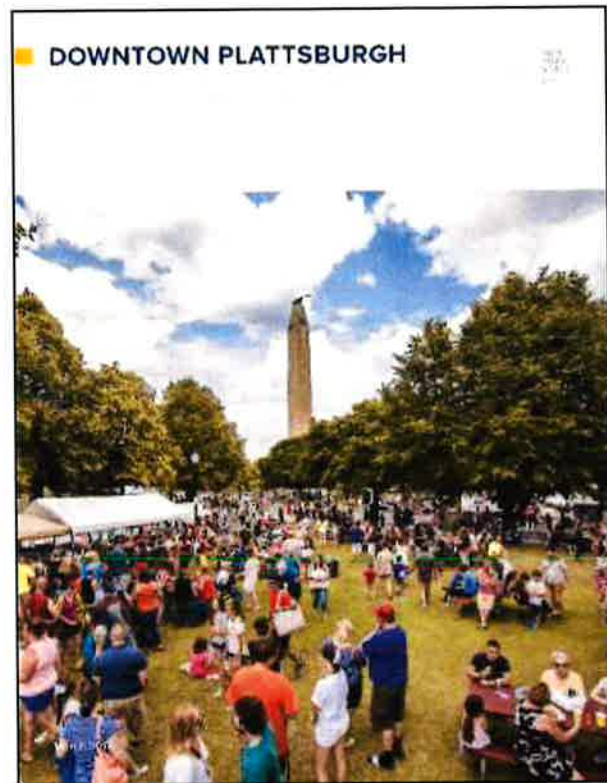


In Hudson, a local group filmed LPC meetings and posted them on YouTube

Strategic Investment Plan Components

Building on the community's vision for downtown revitalization and the projects identified in the DRI application, strategic investment plans will examine local assets and opportunities, and include creative and ambitious strategies to achieve the downtown vision and direct future development and investment in the downtown. The DRI Strategic Investment Plan will also include detailed project profiles for key economic development, transportation, housing, and community projects that will advance the community's vision and leverage additional investment. Plans may also include brief descriptions of additional projects and initiatives the LPC wishes to include in the plan without a recommendation for DRI funding.

Consultants will work with the LPC to identify and prepare the information, analyses, etc. that will be needed to complete robust profiles that best position projects for implementation.



DRI Area Boundaries

Each community that applies to the DRI will clearly identify the boundary of the downtown area which it proposes as the focus of planning efforts in its application for the program. As a selected community proceeds through the planning process, it may choose to modify the initial boundary of its downtown to address newly identified issues or to capitalize on opportunities outside of the original boundary. The resulting DRI area, however, should be generally consistent with the area proposed in the DRI application and continue to follow the guidelines of a compact and well-defined area.

Downtown Profile and Assessment

Working with the LPC and key municipal representatives, and drawing on any existing plans and strategies, the consultant will prepare the DRI downtown profile and assessment that provides a clear, concise, and compelling narrative that articulates the story of the region and the downtown. It should allow a reader to understand why *this* downtown will benefit from the DRI and provide a logical basis for the projects recommended for funding.

The profile and assessment should give the reader a sense of the downtown – its unique characteristics, its strengths, and its challenges. It is not intended to provide a comprehensive technical description of the downtown akin to what would be included in a comprehensive plan. While the consultant will collect, analyze and evaluate the demographics, economics, and other characteristics of the downtown to ensure that the proposals included in the DRI plan are realistic and appropriate, the downtown profile and assessment will contain only a summary of this information.

Topics to be addressed in the downtown profile and assessment should include, as appropriate:

- A description of the boundary of the DRI Area and its context within the region.
- A summary of past planning efforts.
- A description of how potential revitalization of the DRI Area relates to strategies and priorities in Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) plans.
- A description of present conditions in the DRI area, such as:
 - critical issues;
 - current advantages and opportunities;
 - socio-economic characteristics;
 - housing availability and characteristics;
 - physical characteristics;
 - historic and cultural resources;
 - environmental constraints;
 - transportation and infrastructure;
 - retail outlets for healthy and affordable food;
 - anchor institutions and significant employers; and
 - the regulatory context, including existing land uses, recreational opportunities, vacant and underutilized sites, and status of zoning and other land use regulations.
- Key findings from retail, housing, or other relevant market analyses.
- A description of recent, ongoing and planned projects.
- A description of the local organizational and management capacity to effect change.

Vision, Goals & Strategies

As part of the DRI application, communities provide a brief statement of their vision for downtown revitalization. At the start of the planning process, the Local Planning Committee (LPC) will review the initial vision and make modifications if desired to best reflect the unique characteristics of the downtown.



VISION FOR THE VILLAGE OF WATKINS GLEN

The vision of the Watkins Glen Downtown Revitalization Initiative is to leverage the accessible Seneca Lake waterfront, famous wine trails, vibrant arts scene, internationally recognized racetrack with a storied auto-racing heritage, and world class State Park for progressive community development that retains and enhances our unique character to sustain a year-round innovative and prosperous economy that is supported by our community.

Goals and strategies will be established that can help achieve the community's vision for downtown revitalization. Goals should be detailed, attainable, and action-oriented with measurable strategies that will guide the implementation of the DRI vision. They should incorporate, as appropriate, the following fundamental objectives:

- Creation of an active, desirable downtown with a strong sense of place;
- Attraction of new businesses (including "Main Street" businesses), high-paying jobs, and skilled workers;
- Enhancement of public spaces for arts and cultural events;
- Building a diverse population, with residents and workers supported by different housing and employment opportunities;
- Growing the local property tax base; and
- Amenities to support and enhance downtown living and quality of life.

Based on the downtown vision and goals, consultants will guide the LPC in development of creative and ambitious strategies and projects to direct future development and investment in the downtown to realize its vision and goals. Projects that are recommended for implementation using DRI funds, whether included in the community's DRI application or identified by the LPC during the planning process, should align with the goals and strategies.

CITY OF OSWEGO DRI PLAN

GOAL: Increase downtown residential living

STRATEGIES:

- Develop new residential infill on vacant and underutilized lots
- Redevelop vacant building upper stories, including residential units
- Revitalize adjacent residential neighborhoods
- Increase evening and weekend programming to create vibrant 18-hour setting
- Build new and improved parks, gardens, and street trees

PROJECTS:

- Implement a transformative redevelopment of the underused Flexo Wire site to provide 75 units of new mixed-income housing and 8,000 sf of ground floor commercial space.
- Transform the Global Buffet site at the core of downtown Oswego by renovating the restaurant space, creating 12 new housing units, and providing a rooftop deck.
- Provide riverfront dining and six housing units in a historic building while also building six new townhomes on the same site to create additional housing choices.

CITY OF MIDDLETOWN DRI PLAN

GOAL: Make downtown a more attractive, walkable and functional place for residents, employees and visitors.

STRATEGIES:

- Enhance the appearance of Downtown's buildings, sidewalks, signage, streets, and open spaces.
- Improve streetscapes to make the Downtown pleasant, accessible, and safe for people of all ages and abilities.
- Support and build on the Paramount Theatre as a cultural destination by increasing activity in its vicinity and by enhancing its connection to the downtown core.
- Make parking options in the Downtown more efficient, attractive, and accessible.
- Support venues and events for the City's arts, cultural, and educational activities and institutions.
- Create a more vibrant street life by encouraging outdoor dining and use of open spaces.

PROJECTS:

- Redevelop the Woolworth Building into Rail Trail Commons
- Bring the Orange County Accelerator Program to Middletown
- Install Public Wi-Fi Mesh Network

Downtown Management and Implementation Strategy

The DRI Strategic Investment Plan will address local capacity, describing how the implementation of the proposed projects will be managed and sustained. The Plan will identify an existing or propose a new management structure to guide downtown revitalization in a fiscally sustainable manner and will identify where there is a need to create or enhance local capacity to support ongoing implementation of the DRI Strategic Investment Plan. For example, downtown development could be spearheaded by an existing or proposed downtown business improvement district, a local development corporation, or a special unit in the mayor or town supervisor's office.

The Plan will also present a realistic timeframe for implementation of the projects recommended in the Plan.

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE FOR GLENS FALLS DRI PLAN

The DRI Plan was developed by a Local Planning Committee (LPC) comprised of business owners and leaders from local organizations and institutions. The local lead to oversee implementation of the plan will be the Greater Glens Falls Local Development Corporation (GGFLDC), working under the direction of the Mayor and Common Council and in coordination with other City departments and staff as needed.

Most of the projects recommended for DRI Funding are capital improvement projects that will be undertaken by the City and GGFLDC. Any changes to local laws or preparation of plans or studies will also be undertaken by the City, potentially through use of a private consultant.

Some projects will require participation by private entities or non-profit organizations (e.g., the components of the Glens Falls Downtown Revitalization Fund; SUNY Adirondack Culinary School relocation). All projects that provide a benefit to a private business, property owner or non-profit have the support of the City and will be coordinated with the City during project implementation. In the case where the potential recipients of DRI funding are known . . . the capacity of the business owner or non-profit entity to implement the project has been evaluated through the DRI process and determined to be sufficient.

Projects for which the recipient(s) of the benefit is a business, property owner, or non-profit organization that has not been clearly identified in the plan, the recipient(s) will be selected through a competitive process. Criteria for that process will be developed by the City in coordination with the state agency administering the DRI funds, and will include demonstration that the recipient has the capacity to implement the project as outlined in the DRI Plan.

Projects

During the application process, communities are asked to describe a range of transformative projects that could become part of the community's DRI Strategic Investment Plan to demonstrate that the community is ready to move forward with thoughtful and catalytic projects that will benefit a growing downtown. However, the application form notes that all projects submitted in the DRI applications will be further vetted by both the community and the state during the plan development process. The open, community-based planning process is designed to encourage creative and innovative approaches to downtown revitalization, and will result in a list of potential projects, including some that were contemplated in the initial application and others that arose during the process.

The LPCs will evaluate the full list of potential projects to select a slate of projects for inclusion in their DRI Strategic Investment Plan that will most effectively advance the community's DRI strategies; that will have the greatest public benefit; that are primed for implementation; and that enjoy broad stakeholder support. In total, the projects selected for inclusion in the Strategic Investment Plans will should exceed the DRI funding available for implementation to allow flexibility in funding awards and to account for the potential for other funding to come forward and for complications that might arise that impact viability of a recommended project after the plan is complete.

The LPCs are encouraged to choose projects that will be catalytic and that present the strongest likelihood of jump-starting or continuing downtown revitalization and investment in the community. Each LPC will develop tailored criteria for project selection that are appropriate for their DRI's vision, goal and strategies, as well as the goal of the DRI program.

Recommended projects may range in cost and scale from small improvements to large-scale construction projects, from zoning updates to major infrastructure projects. There is no specific local match requirement for DRI-funded projects. However, while DRI funding may be used to cover the entire cost of a project, leveraging of investment dollars from other sources (i.e., private, local, federal, or other state sources) is strongly encouraged, especially for private developments.

The recommended projects must clearly implement the vision, goals, and strategies for revitalization of the downtown, and taken together, should represent a holistic approach to downtown revitalization. We are looking for SYNERGY, which essentially means that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. To convey context and the interconnectivity of projects, the consultants will prepare a graphic representation that presents recommended projects on a map in relationship to each other and to the downtown area.

If desired, the LPC may also include brief descriptions of additional complementary projects in the Strategic Investment Plan that that could advance the vision and goals for the downtown with other funding sources.

CORTLAND PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA

All projects were first categorized as either City (typically, public infrastructure related), Private (typically, residential and commercial development) or Arts (typically, relating to the development or preservation of a cultural or entertainment venue). The categorization of projects in this way allowed projects of like type to be compared by one of three subcommittees: (1) arts and entertainment, (2) private development, and (3) municipal projects.

Market objectives were then identified, based on the overarching goals of Cortland's DRI application.

A simple scoring/weighting system was developed, whereby a higher market objective score/weight was allocated to a project, based on the project's likelihood to contribute towards achieving the market objective. A score of 3 suggests the project's strong likelihood of achieving the objective; a score of 2 suggests the project will likely achieve the objective but have a lesser effect than projects scoring a 3; a score of 1 suggests the project will have little chance of achieving the objective. A score of 0 suggests the project is not expected to contribute anything material towards the achievement of the market objective.

Consultants for the Cortland DRI Local Planning Committee developed a spreadsheet that listed the project proposals, included their market designation, and listed standard criteria to evaluate projects in all goal categories. Criteria included the following:

- **Transformative Potential** – Does the project fundamentally change the downtown and how it is perceived?
- **Catalytic Potential** – Will the project be able to make other things happen? Will it create momentum?
- **Sustainability** – What is the long-term impact of the project? Will it be successfully managed and maintained over time?
- **Return on Investment** – What will be the economic benefits to the community in return for the state/private investment (e.g., job growth, tax revenue)?
- **Feasibility** – Can the project sponsor reasonably participate in the project financially? Is it ready to go based on DRI timelines? Is there other support for the project? Are there any regulatory hurdles? Is the project out-of-scope with respect to the vision for the downtown?

Project Types

It is expected that the majority of DRI funds will be used for capital projects that will transform the physical environment of the downtown in ways that will benefit current residents and future generations. However, certain non-capital projects will also be considered to the extent that they will contribute to the revitalization of the downtown and are consistent with the community's vision and goals. Projects will generally fall into the following categories:



Public Improvement Projects - These may include infrastructure projects such as broadband and other communications connectivity, storm water, green infrastructure, streetscape improvements, transportation, recreational trails, parking, signage, open space improvements; public art; and other public realm projects that will contribute to revitalization of the downtown.



New Development and/or Rehabilitation of Existing Downtown Buildings - Projects in this category may include development or redevelopment of real property for mixed-use, commercial, residential, or public uses.



Revolving Loan Fund or Grant - Examples of activities that could be funded through a revolving loan fund and/or grant fund include façade improvements, residential improvements, public art and public realm improvements, and physical improvement to existing and/or vacant commercial space. Projects that are significant, such as new construction, should not be proposed for a revolving loan and instead should be proposed as their own individual project.



Branding and Marketing – Examples include downtown branding and marketing projects that may target residents, investors, developers, tourists, and/or visitors. The costs eligible under this category must be one-time expenses, such as those to develop materials and signage. Ongoing operational costs, such as to fund a downtown manager or maintain a website, are not eligible for DRI funding.

Project Sponsors

DRI funding may be awarded to public, not-for-profit, and private entities to implement projects in the final DRI plan. Each project profile will identify a project sponsor that has both the capacity and the legal authority to undertake the project and to whom the DRI funds may be awarded. A final determination will be made by the State following award announcement as to the entity that will hold the DRI contract.

Ineligible Activities

There are very few restrictions on the use of DRI funds other than the requirement that the projects can be implemented quickly and, as a whole, will have a transformational impact on the downtown. However, a few specific activities have been identified as ineligible for DRI funds and should not be included in projects proposed for DRI funding. These include:

- Planning activities. Following the preparation of the DRI Strategic Investment Plan, all DRI funds must be used for projects that directly implement the plan. Utilizing DRI funds for additional planning is not the goal of the program.
- Operation and maintenance. DRI funds cannot be used for on-going or routine expenses, such as staff salaries and wages, rent, utilities, and property upkeep.
- Pre-award costs. Reimbursement for costs incurred before the DRI plan is complete and before funding awards are announced is not permitted.
- Property acquisition. A DRI project profile may include the cost of acquisition in the budget of a larger redevelopment, but it must also show that the acquisition itself will be, or has already been, covered by another funding source.
- Training and other program expenses. DRI is a one-time infusion of funds, and cannot be used to cover continuous costs, such as training programs, that would cease to exist once the DRI funds have been expended.
- Expenses related to existing programs. DRI is not intended to supplement existing programs or replace existing resources.



Project rendering of new transit hub and garage renovation in Oneonta

Project Profiles

Each project that will be included in the Strategic Investment Plan and recommended for DRI funding must have a project profile. The content of the project profiles is expected to evolve throughout the planning process, with the final project profiles providing sufficient information and a level of detail to allow for accurate evaluation of the transformational potential of the project and to provide an assurance that, if the project receives DRI funds, it will be able to move quickly to implementation.

Complete project profiles will present the project in the context of the overall revitalization plan, and describe the relationship of the project to other projects recommended for funding. Each project profile will include the project, its location, ownership and partners. Among the other details to be provided will be a description of the capacity of the project sponsor to implement and sustain the project; the budget and source of project funding; a construction and project cost estimation; regulatory requirements; conceptual design; and project readiness and a timeframe for implementation. A chart indicating the information that is required for each project type appears below.

Additional information beyond the minimum requirements in the profile may also be provided as appropriate to better position the project for implementation. Supplemental information can assist project evaluations and increase project competitiveness if it supports project readiness, transformative properties, and impact on the DRI area. For example, consultants may develop economic assessments, market studies, feasibility studies, pro-forma, or other analyses as appropriate to demonstrate the feasibility and potential impact of a project on the overall economic health of the downtown area and surrounding region.



Project rendering from the Batavia DRI Strategic Investment Plan

Information Category	Project Type			
	Public Improvements	New Development or Rehabilitation of Downtown Buildings	Revolving Loan and Grant Funds	Branding and Marketing
Project Title	X	X	X	X
Sponsor/Contracting Entity	X	X	X	X
DRI Funding Request and Total Project Cost	X	X	X	X
Project Description	X	X	X	X
Project Location/Address	X	X		X
Property Owner/Sponsor	X	X	X	X
Project Partners	X	X	X	X
Strategies	X	X	X	X
Anticipated Revitalization Benefits		X	X	X
Public Support	X	X	X	X
Project Location	X	X		X
Jobs Created		X		
Project Ownership	X	X		X
Acquisition of Real Property		X		
Capacity	X	X	X	X
Anticipated Revitalization Benefits		X	X	X
Future Use of Structure		X		
Project Budget and Funding Sources	X	X	X	X
Funding Sources	X	X	X	X
Feasibility and Cost Justification	X	X	X	X
Regulatory Requirements	X	X		
Images of Current Conditions	X	X	X	X
Images of Current and Proposed Conditions	X	X	X	
Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness	X	X	X	X
Project Reporting	X	X	X	X

Implementation

After Local Planning Committees complete the DRI Strategic Investment Plans, the state will select projects to be funded through the DRI from those proposed in plans. In total, \$9.7 million of DRI funds will be awarded to implement projects in each downtown.

Project Selection

Projects will be selected following a careful review by the state. Every project recommended for funding in a community's DRI Strategic Investment Plan will be evaluated based on how well it meets the following criteria:

- **State and Local Goals** – The project is aligned with state and local goals and demonstrates strong community support.
- **Project Readiness** – The project is well developed and poised to proceed in the near term in a way that will jumpstart the redevelopment of the neighborhood
- **Catalytic Effect** – The project is likely to have a significant positive impact on the revitalization of the downtown by attracting other public and private investment.
- **Co-Benefits** – The project will result in secondary benefits to both the community and project developer, beyond the primary goal of the project itself, which will generate additional economic activity, grow the local property tax base and improve quality of life in the neighborhood.
- **Cost Effectiveness** – Investment of public DRI funds in the project would represent an effective and efficient use of public resources.

Contracting

Projects selected for a DRI award will be assigned to an appropriate state agency to manage the contract for implementation of the project. The state agency selected and method of contracting and funding disbursement will be dependent on the specific project. However, while there may be some variation between agency administration and the project type, in general awarded project funding will be provided on a reimbursement basis.

It should be noted that DRI funds may be used as match for other grant funding if permitted by the granting agency. However, the priority is to fund projects that are ready for implementation. Therefore, DRI funds will not be held as matching funds for other grants whose award or implementation cycles are in the out-years.

DRI awards will be subject to all requirements typically attached to state funding, including but not limited to minority- and woman-owned business enterprise (MWBE) goals, competitive procurement, and prevailing wages, as appropriate. For example, prevailing wages will be required where required by state

law. Prevailing wage provisions would need to be met for public works projects (such as those projects subject to the Wicks Law, etc.) or if it is a requirement of a funding source (as it is for HUD CPD programs-Davis-Bacon).



Governor Cuomo announces Downtown Revitalization Initiative funding for projects in downtown Geneva

2018 DRI Application

The Regional Councils will solicit interest in the program from communities in each of their regions, accepting revised applications from communities that requested consideration in 2017, and new applications from communities that didn't participate last year.

Applications from interested communities must be submitted electronically to the Regional Council for their region at the email address in the table below. All applications should be prepared using the Downtown Revitalization Initiative Application, which is available on the Regional Economic Development Council website and the DRI website at ny.gov/DRI. A sample application is included at the end of this document. Applications must be received by the REDC no later than 4:00 PM on June 1, 2018.

Region Webpage	E-Mail Address	Region Webpage	E-Mail Address
Capital Region	NYS-CapitalDist@esd.ny.gov	Mohawk Valley	NYS-MohawkVal@esd.ny.gov
Central New York	NYS-CentralNY@esd.ny.gov	North Country	NYS-NorthCountry@esd.ny.gov
Finger Lakes	NYS-FingerLakes@esd.ny.gov	New York City	NYC-DRI@esd.ny.gov
Long Island	LIREDC@esd.ny.gov	Southern Tier	NYS-SouthernTier@esd.ny.gov
Mid-Hudson	NYS-MidHudson@esd.ny.gov	Western New York	NYS-WNY-REDC@esd.ny.gov

Each Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) will review proposals from interested communities, and may request representatives from interested communities to make presentations before the REDC or a subcommittee of the REDC. Presentation may include all applicants, or may be limited to a smaller pool of communities with the most promising applications.

Each REDC will nominate one downtown in their region which they consider best positioned to take advantage of the DRI. Previously selected DRI communities will not be considered. Nominations are due July 13, 2018. The Regional Council may utilize an existing subcommittee or form a specific subcommittee to advance this project.

COUNTIES WITHIN EACH REGION

- WNYREDC: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Niagara
- FLREDC: Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates
- STREDC: Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins
- CNYREDC: Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga, Oswego
- MVREDC: Fulton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Oneida, Otsego, Schoharie
- NCREDC: Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence
- CRREDC: Albany, Columbia, Greene, Saratoga, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Warren, Washington
- MHREDC: Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, Westchester
- NYCREDC: Bronx, Kings, New York, Richmond, Queens
- LIREDC: Nassau, Suffolk

Desired Attributes

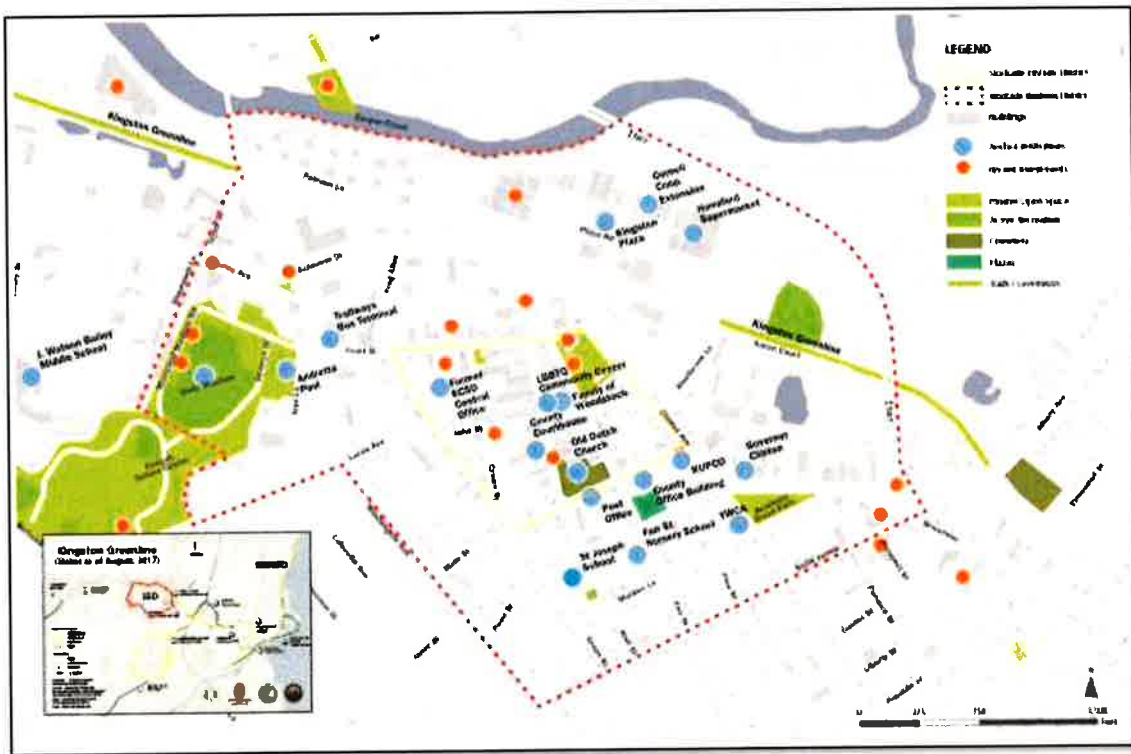
Each Regional Council should nominate a downtown that closely meets the list of desired attributes for participation in the DRI. A description of those attributes is provided below.

Well-defined boundaries. The downtown should be compact, with well-defined boundaries. There is no absolute minimum or maximum size for a downtown, but it must be a concentrated, defined area and should be easily walkable. A downtown can range from a corridor or few block(s) of a neighborhood to the municipality’s traditional central business district (for smaller municipalities). Core neighborhoods beyond the central business district are also eligible. For example, an arts or entertainment district could be the focus of the DRI if it’s shown that investments in these areas complement an existing downtown.

**DESIRED ATTRIBUTES
FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE DRI**

- Well-defined boundaries
- Sufficient catchment area
- Past investments, future potential
- Recent or impending job growth
- Attractive physical environment
- Quality of Life policies
- Support for the local vision

Sufficient catchment area. The municipality, or the downtown’s catchment area (the area from which the downtown draws most of its customers, visitors, and workers), should be of sufficient size to support a vibrant, year-round downtown. It should have a sizeable existing or increasing population within easy reach for whom this would be the primary downtown destination.



Kingston DRI Area with insert showing DRI Area outlined in red, a neighborhood within the city

Past investments, future potential. The downtown should be able and ready to capitalize on prior public and private investment or catalyze future investments in the neighborhood and its surrounding areas as evidenced by:

- The presence of nearby investments planned or undertaken through the REDC or with other public or private funding;
- Continuity with the Regional Council's previously articulated vision for the area/region and consistency with recent planning efforts for the area;
- The existence of developable properties within the downtown, including properties that can be utilized for varying levels of housing affordability and mixed uses;
- The growth potential and community involvement of anchor institutions in or near the downtown;
- The municipality's current investment commitment to the downtown, as demonstrated by business improvement districts, actively engaged IDAs and land banks, or partnerships with non-profits;
- The ability of existing infrastructure to support development of the downtown, and the potential to maximize recent infrastructure upgrades;
- Application of Smart Growth principles;
- Potential for development of energy-efficient projects and opportunities for green jobs; and
- Investments in arts and cultural institutions and activities.

Recent or impending job growth. A crucial characteristic is recent or impending job growth within or near the downtown, which may be a result of Regional Council commitments or other public and private investments. The attraction of professionals to an active life in the downtown will support redevelopment and make growth sustainable in the long-term. Job growth should also be accompanied by:

- The presence of major job-creating projects and initiatives near the downtown;
- The existence of new and expanding employers;
- Accessibility of new and existing jobs from the downtown by foot or public transportation; and
- Diversity in area job opportunities, with different salaries and entry levels and the potential for mobility between jobs.

Attractive physical environment. The downtown should be an attractive and livable community for diverse populations of varying ages, income, ability, mobility, and cultural background. The following physical properties and characteristics are desired:

- Housing at different levels of affordability and type;
- Commercial and retail main street businesses;
- An assortment of food choices, including restaurants, healthy and affordable food markets, and farmers' markets;

- Multi-modal transportation to and from employment centers, other downtowns, and/or regional attractions;
- Walkability and bikeability, within the downtown and connecting the downtown to surrounding open space networks and regional destinations;
- Accessible recreational amenities, waterfront trails, parks and gathering spaces;
- Access to health care facilities;
- Community spaces, institutions and events that reflect the ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity of the population of the state;
- Academic, cultural and entertainment amenities;
- Broadband accessibility; and
- Community design and/or housing that caters to all ages.



Quality of Life policies. The municipality should already embrace or be able to create and implement policies that increase livability and quality of life for all New Yorkers, including:

- Planning and implementation documents that may include but are not limited to economic development, brownfield cleanup and redevelopment, community development, housing affordability, affirmatively furthering fair housing, and civic engagement;
- Use of modern zoning codes and development standards that promote smart growth principles such as a mix of uses, compact development, transit-oriented development, shared parking, and walkability;
- Adaptive re-use policies, program, incentives or laws;
- Strategies and actions that cut energy use, reduce emissions, and adapt to climate change such as those required for certification as a Climate Smart Community or Clean Energy Community;
- Existence of a management structure, such as a downtown manager or downtown business improvement district;
- Application of Complete Streets principles that add to the enjoyment of amenities by all abilities and ages;
- Presence of expansive non-discrimination laws and/or other protections of diverse populations;
- Application of Smart Cities innovation technology; and
- Policies that would make the community eligible for Age-Friendly Community Certification from AARP/WHO.

Support for the local vision. The municipality has conducted an open and robust community engagement process resulting in a vision for downtown revitalization and a preliminary list of projects and initiatives that may be included in a DRI Strategic Investment Plan. Specific local leaders and stakeholders are committed to working together to advance revitalization efforts.

Readiness. The municipality is prepared for near-term implementation of projects that will advance downtown revitalization. It has identified a range of transformative projects that will be ready for implementation with an infusion of DRI funds within the first one to two years (depending on the scope and complexity of the project) and which may leverage DRI funding with private investment or other funds. Examples of the ways project readiness may be demonstrated include, but are not limited to, completion of feasibility and market studies, preliminary site design, site control of key properties by willing partners, funding commitments, and/or expression of interest by developers and investors.

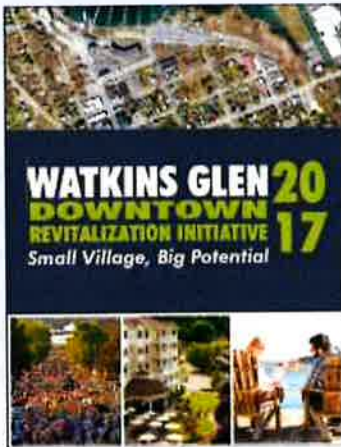
WATKINS GLEN DRI APPLICATION EXPERIENCES

The story of the Watkins Glen Downtown Revitalization Initiative is one of perseverance, partnership, and big dreams.

Watkins Glen's first attempt at being selected by the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council (STREDC) as its nominee to be the region's DRI Area got off to a very late start. A focused five-day effort right before the application was due resulted in selection as a finalist by the STREDC. The tourism and marketing director for the village Chamber of Commerce made a presentation developed by a group of stakeholders from the community. Despite these efforts, the STREDC recommended the DRI Area in the City of Elmira for the program in 2016.

Immediately following the announcement of first round DRI Areas, the Schuyler County Planning Director and Chair of the FLX Gateway Community Development Corporation (Kristen VanHorn) began working on materials for round two. She studied applications, final plans, and awards booklets provided for every community designated as DRI participants in 2016 to identify the strengths of winning applications and to build off those strengths. The new application used basic information from the original application, and was infused with information that would illustrate the community's creativeness, enthusiasm, innovation, and the residential stability evidenced by families remaining in the village and its catchment area for multiple generations.

Ms. VanHorn assembled support for another DRI bid, taking pains to make sure community input was gathered and reflected in the plan. A public workshop was held to ask participants to help Watkins Glen dream BIG!



The group developing the round two presentation to the STREDC brainstormed ways to show creativity while highlighting specific goals for the DRI Area; deciding to incorporate a 360-degree virtual reality video that would be produced by the experienced son of the SCOPED Executive Director. A presentation team was assembled that would amplify the strengths of the village by sharing their passion, enthusiasm, and continued commitment to the success of Watkins Glen. The team represented new comers, multi-generational families, and Millennials, and included presenters from the Watkins Glen International Raceway, Schuyler County Planning Office, a local family-owned winery, Village Council, and the Schuyler County Administrator. The group made their case and was selected by the STREDC as the second-round DRI Area.

These are the lessons the village wants to share from its application experience:

- **Think outside the box.** Using virtual reality, the village presentation put the members of the Regional Council on the sidewalks to see firsthand the village's strengths and challenges, sailed around Seneca Lake, hiked through Watkins Glen State Park, and took a lap around Watkins Glen International Raceway.
- **Have data ready.** Federal, State, and local sources can be used to support the plan, but other information may need to be collected. To collect information related to investments made in and around Watkins Glen in the past two years, the village tapped the planning and code official, as well as local businesses that had made major investments. They also checked with businesses and organizations to learn about pending investments.
- **Show you can hit the ground running.** Demonstrate in your application that your community is ready to go. Propose key community members for the local planning committee. Assemble background information about your community and recent planning efforts that shows readiness to the REDC and will help focus the work of state-provided consultants.
- **Utilize your assets.** While the mayor or other traditional leaders can participate in REDC presentations, the village found success in using everyday people who live and work in the community. When paired with information-rich application materials, the presentation time could be used to provide highlights of the application and make the case why the community should be chosen as the DRI Area for the region.

Sample Application

Applications for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) will be received by the Regional Economic Development Councils (REDCs). Applicant responses for each section should be as complete and succinct as possible. Applications must be received by the appropriate REDC by **4:00 PM on June 1, 2018** at the email address provided. Copies of the application will be available on the DRI webpage found at <https://www.ny.gov/programs/downtown-revitalization-initiative>.

Applicants must demonstrate that the community was engaged during the preparation of the application, and that public input received is reflected in the community vision, potential projects, and other elements of the application as appropriate.

BASIC INFORMATION

- REDC Region
- Municipality
- Downtown Name
- County

VISION FOR DOWNTOWN

Provide a brief statement of the municipality's vision for downtown revitalization.

JUSTIFICATION

Provide an overview of the downtown area nominated for the DRI program, highlighting the area's defining characteristics and the reasons for its selection. Explain why the downtown is ready for Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) investment, and how that investment would serve as a catalyst to bring about revitalization.

DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION

- 1) Boundaries of the proposed DRI area.** Detail the boundaries of the targeted neighborhood, keeping in mind that there is no minimum or maximum size, but that the neighborhood should be concentrated and well-defined. Neighborhoods beyond a traditional downtown or central business district are eligible, if they can meet other criteria making them ripe for investment. Attach a map that clearly delineates the area to be included in the downtown revitalization area.
- 2) Description of catchment area.** Outline why the proposed DRI area, or its catchment area, is of a size sufficient to support a vibrant, year-round downtown, with consideration of whether there is a sizeable existing or increasing population within easy reach for whom this would be the primary downtown destination.
- 3) Past investment, future investment potential.** Describe how this DRI area will be able to capitalize on prior private and public investment, or catalyze future investments in the neighborhood and its surrounding areas.

- 4) **Recent or impending job growth.** Describe how recent or impending job growth within or near the DRI area will attract professionals to an active life in the downtown, support redevelopment, and make growth sustainable in the long-term.
- 5) **Attractiveness of physical environment.** Identify the properties or characteristics that the DRI area possesses that contribute, or could contribute if enhanced, to the attractiveness and livability of the downtown for a diverse population of varying ages, income, gender identity, ability, mobility, and cultural background. Consider, for example, the presence of developable mixed-use spaces, varied housing types at different levels of affordability, walkability and bikeability, healthy and affordable food markets, and public parks and gathering spaces.
- 6) **Quality of Life policies.** Articulate the policies in place that increase the livability and quality of life of the downtown. Examples include the use of local land banks, modern zoning codes, comprehensive plans, complete streets plan, transit-oriented development, non-discrimination laws, age-friendly policies, and a downtown management structure. If policies achieving this goal are not currently in place, describe the ability of the municipality to create and implement such policies.
- 7) **Public Support.** Describe the public participation and engagement process conducted to develop the DRI application, and the support of local leaders and stakeholders for pursuing a vision of downtown revitalization. Describe the commitment among local leaders and stakeholders to preparing and implementing a strategic investment plan. Identify an initial local lead for the program that will work with outside experts to convene a local DRI Planning Committee to oversee the plan.
- 8) **Project List to Demonstrate Readiness:** Describe opportunities to build on the strengths described above by providing a list of transformative projects that will be ready for implementation with an infusion of DRI funds within the first one to two years (depending on the scope and complexity of the project) and which may leverage DRI funding with private investment or other funds. Such projects could address economic development, transportation, housing, and community development needs. While such projects should have demonstrated public support, it is recognized that projects will ultimately be vetted by the Local Planning Committee and the State. Explain how most projects proposed for DRI funding demonstrate their readiness for implementation.
- 9) **Administrative Capacity.** Describe the extent of the existing local administrative capacity to manage this initiative, including potential oversight of concurrent contracts once projects are selected for award.
- 10) **Other.** Provide any other information that informs the nomination of this downtown for a DRI award.

*Don't forget to attach a map that clearly delineates the proposed DRI Area. (See item 1.)