

2021 DRI Application

BASIC INFORMATION

- REDC Region: Mid-Hudson
- Municipality Name: Town of Carmel
- Downtown Name: Downtown Mahopac
- County Name: Putnam
- Applicant Contact(s) Name and Title: Kenneth Schmitt
- Applicant Contact(s) Email Address: ks@ci.carmel.ny.us

VISION FOR DOWNTOWN

The Town of Carmel is a municipality that has always been in touch with the natural assets that give it its sense of place. Bearing many different names under many different county jurisdictions throughout history, the community that makes up Carmel today has never departed from the beauty of Lakes Mahopac, Gleneida, and Kirk. It was this connection with the area's natural beauty that in the mid-19th century created opportunities for Carmel as a tourist destination, catering to New York City's growing cosmopolitan population that began to yearn for the quaintness of the countryside without being too far from the bustling economic core of New York City.

Today Carmel has sought new economic opportunities to capitalize on in the wake of waning rates of tourism, especially throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The Town believes to have found such an opportunity in the form of revitalization by improving existing public infrastructure in ways that can encourage Mahopac's latent potential to flourish in new, exciting, and economically vibrant ways. Through the Town's visioning process, Carmel has identified the downtown area directly south of Lake Mahopac as the site best positioned for dynamic growth, as it represents single point that can accommodate residences, businesses, and recreational spaces to become a place where the community truly comes together. Much of this downtown has struggled not to fall into disrepair even before the challenges of the pandemic, and while the area has begun to recover economically, it still suffers from the superficial aesthetics of blight. One effort by the Town to bring new investment into the area has been the updating of old septic systems with modern sewer lines. This project was invaluable in keeping the commercial district afloat throughout difficult financial times, and over the last five years the Town has managed to extend and maintain sewers to service the downtown in its entirety. While much of Carmel's residential zones continue to use isolated septic systems, the completion of these sewer lines represents a vital step in establishing the downtown as a thriving commercial center that supports existing businesses while drawing in new ones. Swan Cove, a new park to be developed along the lakefront, would serve as the recreational core of this new downtown district as an exciting new place for the community to gather and play. Swan Cove is to be built on land that, within the last two years, only bore the abandoned remains of old municipal buildings. The completion of this park is emblematic of Carmel's longstanding efforts to restore the blighted lakefront and unused land around it into attractive local amenities, serving as a visual symbol of pride for a community that has come out of hard times all the stronger.

JUSTIFICATION

The Town of Carmel lies on the edge of Putnam County, its southern edge sharing a border with Westchester County. Comprised of the hamlets of Carmel and Mahopac, the Town covers 40.7 square miles, over 10% of which is water. With Carmel's connection to the rest of New York via Route 6 and to New York City by rail through Southeast Station, the Town has become a quality destination not simply because of the richness of its natural resources but also the ease by which tourists can visit.

Carmel is made up of a population of about 35,000 residents, over 80% of whom own their own homes. The high rate of home ownership can be partially attributed to the seniors that make up 17.1% of the town population, reflecting a storied community that has made Carmel their home throughout their lives. The Town recognizes this population of seniors not only as a strength to be seized upon, but a sign that Carmel is a desirable community from which residents look to live, work, and cultivate strong community relationships.

Beyond the quality of its natural scenery, the land that makes up Carmel's border also has the distinction of being historically significant. The hamlets of Carmel and Mahopac represent large swaths of the land Cybil Luddington rode through on her midnight ride warning Putnam County militiamen of incoming attacks in Danbury. Luddington is immortalized in statue on the beautiful Lake Gleneida not just as a testament to her acts of service, but as a reminder to the people of Carmel that oftentimes the deepest wells of spirit lie in the most unassuming people and places.

An agricultural center throughout its early history, Carmel changed alongside the urbanization and economic boom of New York City in the mid-19th century. As city dwellers began to yearn for the calm atmosphere and natural beauty of the countryside, Carmel became a popular destination for its scenic lakeside greenery. It was not long before rail lines between Carmel and New York City were established to meet the demand of people traveling to and from the Town.

The Town's ultimate goal is to tap into Mahopac's full potential as a place in which residents and commuters alike can work diligently, play joyfully, and relax peacefully. With the downtown's existing infrastructure of mixed-use residential commercial space being so close to the waterfront, the Town sees immense opportunity in creating a centralized space in which all these activities can coexist and complement one another, a place where the community can truly come together.

Carmel seeks to revitalize its downtown area south of Lake Mahopac to capitalize on its location not just in the center of the Town, but as a hub in which visitors enter by car, rail, or by foot along the Putnam Trailway. The Chamber Park project, soon to be expanded with the adjacent Swan Cove Park, has already begun to serve as a flagship effort by the Town to bring people together in a shared public space along the Lake Mahopac Waterfront, however, there are many challenges that must be addressed before the downtown can flourish to its full potential. Over the last few years Carmel has undergone thorough revitalization efforts to transform severely blighted land into what is now downtown. While commercial activity and foot traffic have noticeably increased as a result of these efforts, the Town has struggled to beautify the dilapidated structures in a way that attracts visitors, thus stifling the commercial core's true economic potential. Furthermore, the Town's efforts to rejuvenate local retailers have revealed a dangerously outdated septic system which is currently undergoing replacement with proper sewer lines.

By using DRI funding to implement these necessary changes, Carmel knows that it can tap into the potential of its unique positioning within Putnam County to serve not only its own residents, but the greater community of New York State.

Economic revitalization in Mahopac has already begun, and despite the battering that commercial spaces haven taken throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the downtown endures as a vibrant center for retailers and other businesses. The atmosphere around Lake Mahopac, however, is still struggling to overcome its years of blighted status, with many local sites remaining in apparent disrepair even as economic opportunities return to the area. Efforts to fully restore downtown Mahopac have been steady but slow going, as the Town continuously includes modest but impactful improvements to the lakefront in its planning.

Downtown Mahopac is on the cusp of dynamic growth and has the potential for huge impact, not only for the people who call it home, but all those who choose to spend their time here. The investments implemented downtown today will blossom into new short- and long-term opportunities to attract residents, visitors, and businesses alike. The Town's plan for this revitalization includes: improvements to sidewalks along Route 6N, including a reconfiguration of parking and lighting; redevelopment of the existing Chamber Park and the parking spaces therein; development of a new park, Swan Cove, including a minimum of 82 new parking spaces; and the redevelopment of parking, roadways, and sidewalks along Cherry Lane.

DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION

1) Boundaries of the proposed DRI area.

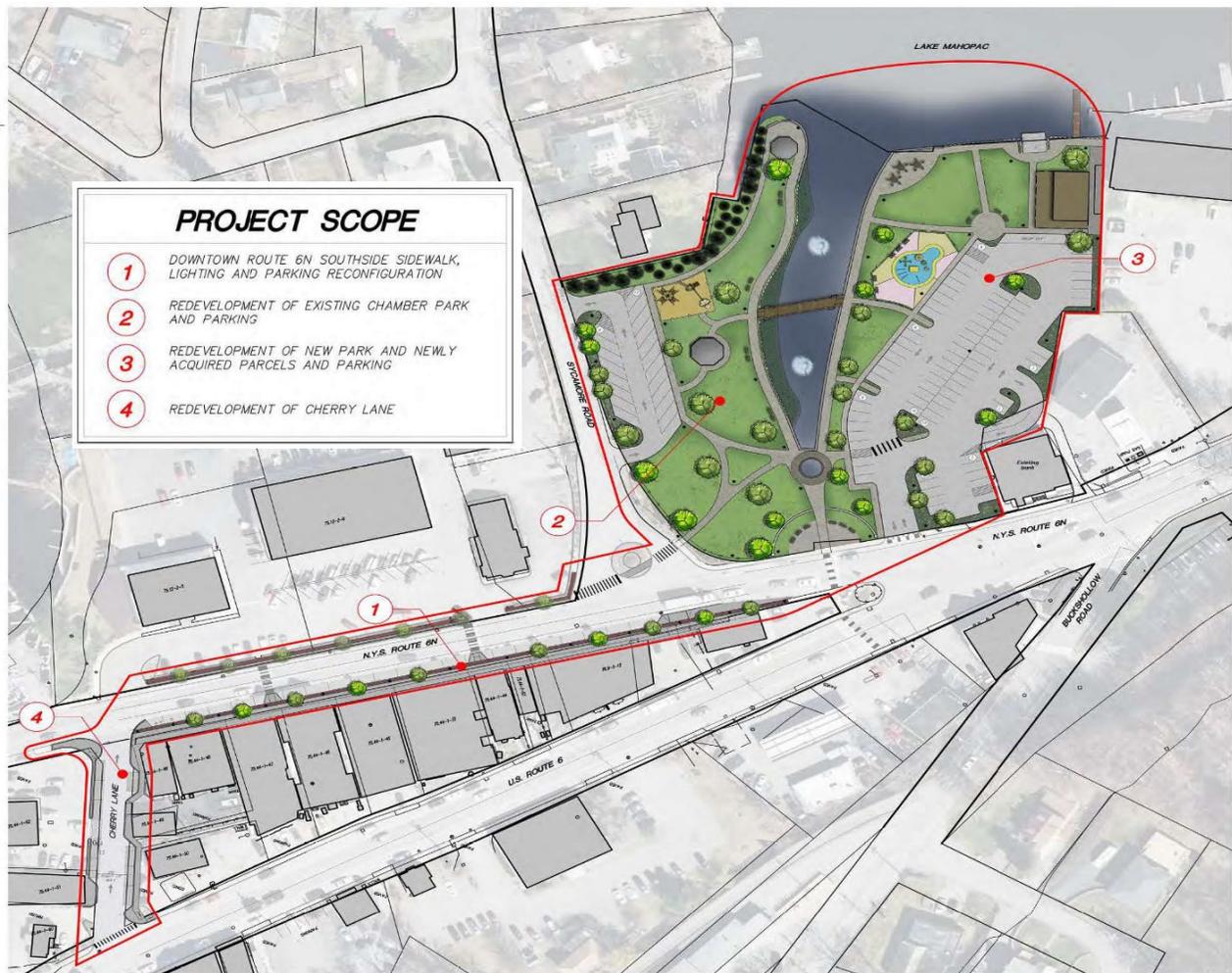
The Town of Carmel's downtown corridor at Lake Mahopac is a clearly defined, compact stretch of parcels along New York Route 6N contained between Cherry Lane to the west, the Tompkins Mahopac Bank to the east, and Lake Mahopac itself to the north. It is made up of relatively small 'row-type', street-facing buildings that provide pedestrian oriented streetscapes.

Route 6, which runs along the entirety of the downtown, is the main artery that connects Lake Mahopac with Westchester County to the west and the State of Connecticut to the east. It also serves as an essential gateway for residents and visitors coming to and from New York City. The beautification of the downtown will draw in visitors traveling along Route 6, and the twofold increase in parking and walkability will give them the opportunity to truly explore the community. In 2018, Putnam County engaged in a Planning and Feasibility study overseeing commercial corridors with particular potential for growth, including the Lake Mahopac downtown. Within that study was a consumer survey that found that 73% of people accessing the commercial corridor were out-of-town visitors traveling between other points of interest. 43% reported that they passed through the Town in this way at least 5 times a week. Knowing this, it has become a major priority of Carmel's beautification efforts within downtown Mahopac to draw the eye of passing motorists, using aesthetics to project economic strength and commercial desirability.

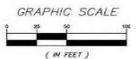
More than just drawing in motorist traffic, the downtown along Lake Mahopac will be directly linked to the Putnam Trailway, a nearly 12 mile stretch of paved bicycle and pedestrian paths stretching throughout Putnam County. By providing a vibrant commercial hub along this length of trails, Carmel can draw patronage from visitors entering the Town on foot as well as residents seeking to dine and shop before or

after utilizing the trails for recreation. The 2018 Feasibility study also identified severely underutilized parking around the local Railway terminal, not even passing 20% capacity on its most congested days. By creating walkable space between this parking site and the greater downtown, the Town hopes to encourage multi-modal transport within the community while giving visitors greater access to the commercial core of downtown Mahopac.

DRI Target Area:



**TOWN OF CARMEL
DOWNTOWN MAHOPAC IMPROVEMENTS
OVERALL PROJECT SITE**
February 2, 2021



Furthermore, this downtown location is one that, despite its small size, is linked to a variety of housing types. To the north of downtown is Mahopac Point, a small but tight-knit community of homeowners living on a peninsula jutting into Lake Mahopac. What was once a collection of summer homes for high-earners throughout New York State seeking guaranteed access to the lakefront has evolved into a community of families living on the lake year round. The population of Mahopac Point represents a swath of high-income residents whose patronage is invaluable to the commercial downtown. Within the downtown itself is a variety of mixed-use space, as numerous commercial storefronts hold apartments on

the upper levels, allowing the workforce to live where they work or rent additional space for supplemental income. The fact that these families of varying income levels live so geographically close to one another is a key reason the Town has identified downtown Mahopac as the location with the potential for investment and revitalization. Park space like Chamber Park and Swan Cove will serve as freely accessible green space in which people from all walks of life can enjoy the natural beauty of the lakefront.

2) Past investment, future investment potential.

Carmel has always recognized the waterfront of Lake Mahopac as one of its most valuable public assets. Unfortunately, the waterfront has been in disrepair for nearly a decade, and the Town has only managed to begin widespread blight mitigation in the last few years.

A major asset guiding the Town throughout this process is the 2018 Planning and Feasibility study undergone by Putnam County, which identified downtown Mahopac as a point of financial strength, analyzed various datapoints regarding business activity and foot traffic, and made recommendations as to how Carmel can seize its economic potential through savvy planning and investment. Among the recommendations made in that independent study that are directly being pursued by this revitalization project are: an increase in parking capacity; shortening pedestrian crossing at intersections; connecting Route 6, the lakefront, and the Putnam Trailway with walkable paths; and designing parking spaces to mitigate motor vehicle accidents. By trusting in the guidance of experts utilizing sophisticated analytic tools, the project managers are confident that their efforts now will produce extraordinary results in the next few years.



PROJECT ELEMENTS	
1	REPLACE ANGLED PARKING WITH 19 PARALLEL PARKING SPACES
2	EXPAND SIDEWALK ON SOUTH SIDE AND ENHANCE WITH TREES AND UPDATED LIGHTING
3	PROVIDE CURB BUMPOUTS TO SHORTEN CROSSWALKS AND FOR TRAFFIC CALMING
4	SERVICE PLAZAS ON NORTH SIDE SIDEWALK AND PROVIDE HANDRAIL ACCESS

TOWN OF CARMEL
DOWNTOWN MAHOPAC IMPROVEMENTS
Route 6N Parking & Sidewalk Improvements
 February 2, 2021

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GRAPHIC SCALE
 1" = 100'

One of the major endeavors currently being undertaken is the completion of updating Carmel's sewer lines, a process that began in 2016 as the Town replaced outdated septic systems with sewers to increase quality of life and attract businesses to the downtown. While much progress has been made, Carmel seeks to put the groundwork in place an even more dynamic expansion of the sewer lines throughout the Town as it increases the capacity for water treatment in the future.

Sewer Lining C236- Bid in 2016, work completed in 2017- \$993,993: This project represents the first step in a long process to build opportunities for residents and businesses alike. Unlike waterfront revitalization, which can be observed by the community as it slowly progresses towards completion, sewer relining is a project whose benefits are largely invisible. If anything, the average citizen's interaction with large-scale plumbing restoration is that of small annoyances from increased traffic or decreased parking availability. Even without the flash and flare of more exciting projects, the Town nonetheless recognized the need to make these modifications, as a contemporary sewer system will be the bedrock upon which the downtown will begin to thrive. Access to a network of large-scale sewers rather than isolated septic units is a major factor in attracting the newest suite of businesses to Carmel's downtown corridor along Lake Mahopac. The new sewer systems not only make the downtown commercially competitive, but increase the quality of life for those living in these mixed-use spaces.

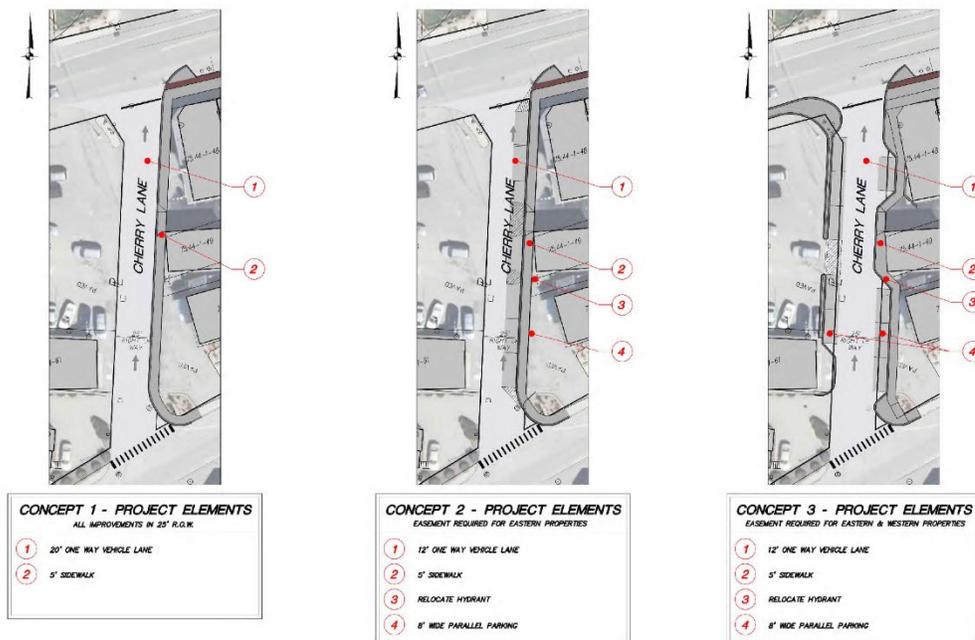
Mahopac Bank Sewer Lateral- Proposal in 2019, work completed 2019- \$16,000: In 2019, the Mahopac National Bank's sewer lateral was broken and in need of repairs to connect with the sewer system that had been finished two years prior. The efficacy and expediency with which the Town was able to address this public infrastructure issue is emblematic of the diligence with which it will be able to accommodate new businesses along the Route 6 Corridor. Since the sewer line along Route 6 is a major factor in keeping the downtown commercial district economically viable, it is worth recognizing the means by which the Town will be addressing growing infrastructure needs.

Sewer Main extension C251- Bid in 2020, work completed in 2020- \$342,507.50: Like so many municipalities in the region, throughout 2020 Carmel has had to exercise caution in its public policy not just for the sake of health, but for the sake of financial stability as so many previously established sources of income became precarious. Nevertheless, Carmel continued its commitment to the replacement of old septic systems to pursue the twofold benefits of quality of life and commercial viability. While continuing this process was not without potential risk, the Town recognized that abandoning the project at that time could potentially spell disaster for the future of the downtown. By extending the sewer main to serve greater portions of the Town, Carmel continued to lay the groundwork for the economic boom it is confident this downtown revitalization will usher in.

Sewer Jetting C263- Bid in 2020, services for 2020-2023- ~\$12,800 annually: With the installation of new sewers being such a recent endeavor, the Town has needed to reallocate funds in such a way that they can be properly maintained. As a result, Carmel is now prepared to perform annual maintenance on its new sewer lines through 2023. This is not a reflection of the Town abandoning its assets at that time, but a benchmark reflective of when the Town anticipates the expansion of local sewer lines to move forward. At that time, the Town expects to adjust the budgetary demands of sewer jetting, though it is unclear at this time how maintenance costs will be affected by completing this comprehensive network of sewers.

Survey at Cherry Lane- Proposal in 2020, work completed 2020- \$3,875: While improvements to the local sewer system are integral to the development of Carmel’s downtown, it is not the only piece of critical infrastructure to be improved and modified. Cherry Lane represents a thoroughfare that is underdeveloped to the point of being a potential hazard. Cherry Lane is a small patch of road that connects Route 6 North with Route 6 before they merge at the end of South Lake Boulevard, making it an attractive thoroughfare for motorists exiting or moving between the two highways. Additionally, despite having no sidewalks and no formally demarcated parking spaces, Cherry Lane’s adjacency to local businesses makes it a popular space for traffic by foot and by car.

The Town has sufficiently surveyed the stretch of Cherry Lane that connects Route 6 and Route 6N and has produced three potential plans for redevelopment that will be contingent on town support and the effectiveness of easement in claiming space in commercial lots to be reworked into more efficient pathways. Even if the easement process proves ineffective, the Town’s current model to install sidewalks and parking spaces stands to be a major improvement as the downtown continues to grow.



TOWN OF CARMEL
DOWNTOWN MAHOPAC IMPROVEMENTS
Cherry Lane Improvements



Scale: 1" = 30'
February 2, 2021



Foundation Removal at Swan Cove- Proposal in 2020, work completed in 2020- \$23,180: Swan Cove Park, one of the most vital of the Town’s independent revitalization efforts, is set to be built upon an area of concentrated lakeside blight. In 2020, work was proposed to remove a then defunct Chamber of Commerce building and a large pile of rocks from the site that would become Swan Cove. This work to develop Swan Cove is emblematic of the Town’s efforts thus far, transforming dilapidated, blighted properties into new assets in the form of economically viable mixed-use buildings or space for public recreation. Swan Cove also has the potential to be a nexus for recreation in the new downtown, lying at

the center of other locations of interest such as the local library, Putnam Trailway, Chamber Park, and any waterfront activities accessed via the marina.

3) Recent or impending job growth.

The efforts to redevelop downtown Mahopac are not new, and the growth that Carmel seeks to facilitate in its local job market have already begun to flourish. With much of the area surrounding the lakefront falling to blight at the turn of the 21st century, Mahopac struggled to attract new businesses to fill the vacant spaces in the downtown area. With most of Carmel's high-income residents working by commute, beautifying the lakefront area was not seen as a community priority since much of the community had not utilized public space for years. The sense of place in Mahopac was deteriorating along with its historic lakefront, the very assets that put the Town on the map so many years ago as a premier tourist destination.

This began to change in the last three years when the Town Board began to assess the resources and natural assets available to the Town, and the means by which those assets could be capitalized upon. Through these efforts the Town Board recognized downtown Mahopac as the site in which these assets were more concentrated and potent than anywhere else.

Downtown Mahopac is at a prime intersection of residential and commercial life in Carmel that makes it an ideal candidate for redevelopment funding. It is the precise junction at which the high-income housing at Mahopac Point meets the mixed-use commercial residential space along Route 6, making it a thoroughfare that is already largely used in the Town. By creating public space to accommodate residents and visitors as they shop and play, this project can create a sense of space that not only draws attention to downtown Mahopac but maintains that attraction in a way that sustains local business.

Despite the financial uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, local businesses throughout the downtown have managed to endure and continue to serve residents and visitors alike. While the past 10 years have seen a 6% decrease in local jobs, the Town's investment in the downtown since 2019 has yielded new economic growth to mitigate those numbers. Foot traffic and activity has already seen an uptick near the already established Chamber Park on Lake Mahopac, a reminder that the natural beauty that first made Carmel a destination town nearly 150 years ago has not lost its luster with time.

The Town is confident that it has laid the groundwork for a downtown that will not just survive the tribulations of social distancing and lockdowns, but one that can truly thrive as the center of a community. Carmel recognizes that the key to this kind of enduring community building will be economic growth, as a thriving commercial core will be indispensable in attracting new businesses while retaining those that exist today, especially ones owned by young people. The robust suite of mixed-use facilities along Route 6 has the framework to facilitate exactly that kind of economic growth. By beautifying the downtown and improving access to visitors and residents alike, the commercial center south of Lake Mahopac can become a major economic hotspot.

Carmel's geographic location is one of the major assets driving the potential growth of this economic core. The 2018 Feasibility study recognized the Mahopac downtown as a commercial hotspot, identifying that the median income within a five-minute drive of the downtown was nearly \$6,000 greater than the median income of Putnam County as a whole. The Town's southern boundary borders Westchester

County, and less than seven miles to the east is the Connecticut state border. New York City is not much further, with many residents of Carmel making the ninety-minute commute several times a week for work. Carmel seeks to attract and cater to clientele from these disparate places, creating a space that is not just significant locally, but regionally.

Developing space in which people can both live and work will be a major component in ensuring that downtown Mahopac accommodates a wide breadth of earners. The buildings along Route 6 are already constructed to facilitate this work-life mixed usage, and as Carmel continues to develop the downtown, more businesses will be actively bidding to set up shop in those spaces. By giving these buildings' facades a long overdue facelift, the Town can create a firm link between the natural beauty of the area, new housing, and the creation of new jobs. This beautification effort will not only incentivize business owners to stay as the value of their property increases but will provide a worthwhile benefit to local commerce and culture as fellow residents and visitors explore the newly renovated downtown area.

Historically speaking, Carmel is a Town that has benefitted greatly from the scenery of the land it is built on. Tourism is what first spurred Carmel to evolve from its humble roots as a farming village to become a well-established point of interest on an ever-changing map of New York State. Approximately one third of the Town is zoned as Open Space for the sake of recreation and conservation, reflecting a long-held commitment to maintaining Carmel's natural scenery. No matter what name it held or what county it was technically a part of, the combination of beautiful landscapes at home and industrious peoples close by made Carmel a hotspot for recreation and leisure. While recent economic uncertainty has allowed lakefront to grow blighted, Carmel has readied itself for a new generation of regional prestige.

4) Quality of life.

Carmel has various local assets that already contribute to the quality of life of its residents which, once properly invested in, will yield even greater public benefit. The most visible of these local assets is Lake Mahopac, the natural beauty of which has drawn visitors to Carmel for over 150 years. The lakefront that has lied dilapidated for nearly a decade has already seen significant improvements over the last few years as unused buildings are demolished to restore visibility of the lake from all along Route 6. As Carmel continues to invest in its commercial downtown, it is simultaneously seeking ways to draw tourism towards Lake Mahopac to spur local business.

By drawing in business from the neighboring region, Carmel is confident that it will be better able to curate a vital balance within the municipality between its diverse residents. The two most significant age demographics in Carmel are people over 65 making up 17.1% and people under 18 representing 21.3%. This presents a subtle balancing act as development progresses, creating a space that is at once desirable and stable enough to live in through retirement as well as one that is economically vibrant and engaging enough to encourage young people to stay. The solution, Carmel theorizes, is in the erection and maintenance of local parks and green space around Lake Mahopac. Ideally, this can cater to both demographics as a place of leisure for Carmel's elder population while appealing to the younger generation's appreciation for sustainability and clean, safe communities to live, work, and play in.

Affordable housing will be a key component of providing a greater quality of life for all residents, not just those with the means to own their own homes. The rate of owner-occupied housing lies at 80% in Carmel, a number that is complicated by the diversity of housing values in the Town. While some homes, especially those at Mahopac Point, are highly valuable, the mixed-use housing along Route 6 has depreciated in a way that has left residents financially insecure. By investing in the downtown, creating new means of drawing attention to downtown businesses, and increasing access to those businesses, Carmel expects to increase local property values in a way that encourages new business occupancy while also reaffirming that existing businesses ought to remain in Carmel.

Facilitating this evolution of the downtown will be in Carmel's updated Comprehensive Plan, which will include modernized zoning ordinances and plans to facilitate more flexible usage in spaces similar to and adjacent to the downtown. While the final Comprehensive Plan has not yet been published, Carmel's focus on incorporating resident feedback serves as an assurance that it will be guided by the needs of the community.

Restructuring parking and streetscapes around the downtown not only creates greater economic opportunities but also increases walkability and multi-modal transport throughout the Town. With more secure sidewalks, right-of-way improvements, and enhanced lighting, pedestrians will all benefit from extensive safety measures throughout the downtown. Safety and walkability in the downtown have the potential for exponential benefits since the appeal of this downtown area south of Lake Mahopac is its adjacency to homes, businesses, and recreation. People engaging in any given activity can seamlessly transition to the next without the need to return to wherever their car is parked and drive.

Creating more functional motorways has another important benefit, reducing congestion for the Mahopac Fire Department, whose headquarters lies on Route 6 directly adjacent to the downtown. Currently, the Town has yet to install traffic light controllers for the sake of emergency services, and so the response time for emergency services can vary depending on traffic patterns. This can be especially problematic on Route 6 where the current parking layout can make it challenging for motorists to yield to first responders, further complicating the responsiveness of local firefighters.

The Putnam Trailway presents another important avenue by which the Town can provide greater quality of life. Pedestrian safety measures are not only vital to residents accessing the downtown, but also for residents wishing to visit the trailway. Whether it be the existing Chamber Park, the new Swan Cove Park, or the Putnam Trailway, Carmel can build a deep network of recreational green space for its residents to enjoy.

5) Supportive local policies.

The Town of Carmel is undergoing its first update to its Comprehensive Plan in over 20 years. While the final plan has not been published as of this application, the Town is at a phase in which a mostly complete draft has gone to the public for input and approval. Collecting support from residents will refine Carmel's Comprehensive Plan, driving it to be a more perfect reflection of the community at large. While it has been a significant stretch of time since the Comprehensive Plan was updated, Carmel's timing to do so now has the potential to yield important benefits. The COVID-19 Pandemic and lockdowns have placed

an undeniable burden on local business. Being able to draft a plan in the wake of those struggles can accommodate the needs to the community in ways that a plan drafted in 2019 would have failed to anticipate.

One of the most promising aspects of this updated Comprehensive Plan, especially as it pertains to the Downtown Revitalization Project, is its approach to zoning policy. Large swaths of Route 6 represent Carmel's largest continuous commercial zone, with the site of downtown development lying squarely in the center. Currently, single-family and waterfront multifamily dwellings are permitted to exist within the commercial zone, creating the mixed-use layout that is so integral to the economic health of many of the downtown's businessowners who live in apartments situated above their storefront. The Town has also drawn up conditional provisions to allow facilities like hotels, social club buildings, and recreation centers to be included in the commercial zone, a nod to the numerous residents and visitors whose chief complaint about the existing downtown was a lack of activities other than shopping.

Another major policy initiative worth mentioning is the replacement of septic tanks with sewer lines along the Route 6 corridor. This represents a single large project with a twofold public benefit: first increasing the overall quality of life of those living connected to those sewer lines, and second increasing the economic viability of the downtown to draw in new businesses.

6) Public support.

Carmel has been thoroughly gauging community support, dedicating Phase 3 of its revitalization project to hosting virtual Town Hall events to solicit feedback from local business owners and residents. With the previous phases being dedicated to planning and drawing up potential project maps, residents were able to offer feedback in more constructive ways with a firmer grasp of the project at large. Given how thoroughly Carmel intends to restructure the downtown, it has been an important goal of the Town to ensure the community has its voice heard.

What began as slideshows presented via digital conference calls has become an ongoing conversation as residents offer feedback and support for the proposed project's vision. These discussions have grown more focused as the Town approaches a final project scope, pertaining to subjects like the affordability of housing, public safety, the balance between traffic and parking, streetscaping, development and blight mitigation on the waterfront, and the public benefit of green space.

Carmel residents have also been actively engaged with feedback as the Town approaches the completion of its new Comprehensive Plan, the first update since 2000. The process of updating the Comprehensive Plan has largely gone hand-in-hand with Carmel's downtown revitalization project, as most of the most dynamic changes from the original 2000 Plan will be in mixed-use zones such as this downtown as opposed to purely residential spaces which have largely gone unchanged in the last few decades. Being on the cusp of such dramatic change puts downtown Mahopac in a perfect position to ready itself for redevelopment through the DRI Program.

One subset of the local population that was vital to gauge the support of was local businessowners, since they will be feeling the impact of this redevelopment work most acutely. Business owners were quick to

identify Lake Mahopac as a major boon to businessowners, especially restaurateurs who provided outdoor seating within view of the waterfront. Additionally, while businessowners saw the benefits of the ‘downtown-feel’ of mixed-use row-type architecture, they made clear that there was room for improvement in Route 6’s current layout in terms of parking and walkability. Many of the businessowners made clear the need for improved parking not just for the sake of access to clientele, but pedestrian safety.

7) Transformative opportunities and readiness.

Carmel’s efforts at downtown revitalization are multifaceted and complex. It is a demanding undertaking, but one with the worthwhile goal of creating a space that has a high quality of life, is economically stable, and can serve as an anchor to bring the community together. While goals such as ‘community betterment’ may be difficult to quantify, the Town’s objectives in approaching those goals are far more concrete.

First, the Town intends to improve the sidewalks along Route 6. While street facing businesses are what gives downtown Mahopac its cosmopolitan feel, foot traffic will always be limited if pedestrians do not feel that these corridors are safe and walkable. These improvements will take the shape of parking reconfiguration to provide greater ease for motorists entering and leaving their streetside parking spaces, reducing general congestion while also ensuring greater safety for pedestrians crossing the street. Crosswalks will also be improved with bump outs that lessen the total distance in motorways while also breaking up the flow of on-street parking to further mitigate motor traffic. With the inclusion of proper lightning fixtures to ensure nighttime safety (most of the commercial corridor sees an uptick in activity after 5pm), the Town can encourage foot traffic by assuring its pedestrian population that their safety and security is a chief priority.

Next is the Town’s effort to develop Swan Cove Park, adjacent to the existing Chamber Park, expanding lakeside greenspace to encompass previously blighted land on which a defunct municipal park once stood. The aim is twofold. First, to create a sense of place within the town as visitors are attracted to lakefront amenities such as picnic areas, sunrise promenades, open green space, playgrounds, and kayak/canoe launches. Second is to provide 80 new parking spaces for municipal employees managing the park and the numerous visitors anticipated to be exploring the downtown. The 2018 Feasibility Study undergone by Putnam County found that most of the vehicles occupying parking in the downtown are from non-residents and that parking along Route 6, especially on Cherry Lane, regularly approaches maximum capacity on its most busy days. The newly established parking at Swan Cove coupled with the Town’s newfound walkable space will double the downtown’s commercial capacity by accommodating a new influx of patronage.

Greater access to parking and improvements to existing parking along downtown Mahopac will assuredly yield economic benefits, but Mahopac identifies safety as an even higher priority when it comes to reshaping the streetscapes of downtown. Pedestrians and motorists alike have struggled to utilize the downtown safely during peak business activity. Between 2014 and 2017, 396 motor vehicle crashes occurred within the boundaries of the DRI Target Area. The 2018 feasibility study calculated that similar two-lane, undivided highways in New York had accident rates of 3.5 accidents per million vehicle miles, whereas the stretch of Route 6 running along Lake Mahopac had a rate of 5.2 accidents per million miles.

Curbing these statistics is a core objective of this project, since there can be no community or proper sense of place in a downtown in which people do not feel assured of their safety.

Establishing new parking structures is not the end of this development project, however. Improvements along Cherry Lane, a small but crucial corridor for local business, will be another vital aspect of the Town's overall project scope. Despite having no clearly demarcated parking spaces, Cherry Lane is already used extensively for parking by motorists given its adjacency to the heart of the downtown. Making Cherry Lane a one-way street, expanding the curbs to increase pedestrian safety, and painting official parking spaces will all serve to transform Cherry Lane into a safe, secure corridor by which the Town's greatest assets can be explored. Three concepts have been prepared for how Cherry Lane's development will move forward, a recognition of the easement and construction complications therein for such a small parcel.

While incredible progress has been made extending and maintaining the Town's sewer lines, Carmel has not yet completed what it considers to be the end-goal of its plumbing network. Being such a recent endeavor, the Town recognizes that the financial support and expertise provided by the New York Department of State would be invaluable in completing this project and establishing reasonable projections for what methods are best utilized to provide ongoing maintenance and emergency repairs to the sewer lines.

Finally, the Town is seeking a widespread beautification initiative to the storefronts along Route 6 for several reasons. First is the impact that appealing facades have in driving local business, especially knowing that a vast majority of shoppers in the downtown are driving past it on a regular basis. Secondly is the ability for relatively simple aesthetic improvements to spur an increase in property values, which is especially worthwhile knowing how many storefronts along Route 6 also serve as domiciles. Lastly, these improvements will serve to better create a sense of place in downtown Mahopac, creating an unbroken line of beautiful views from the lakefront, to the park, to the street-facing shops serving the community.

8) Administrative Capacity.

This project and its grant activities would be administered by Carmel's Town Supervisor Kenneth Schmitt, Director of Recreation James Gilchrist, Town Engineer Richard Franzetti, and the Town Board at large. These individuals possess decades of experience dealing with the establishment and management of large public projects. The Town of Carmel has maintained an Aa1 Bond Rating as reviewed by Moody's, putting it on excellent financial standing to pursue highly ambitious investments such as those in the proposed downtown site. The Town is the seat for Putnam County and has worked hand in hand with the County in the past for initiatives of this scale and scope. Its high median income provides a deep tax base from which to draw on, which has funded many past improvements to roadways and amenities before the Town fell into times of relatively disarray. The Town of Carmel has already begun much of the work it identifies as crucial to the establishment of the downtown and is ready to take on what work remains to realize its vision for a more perfect community.

9) Other.

The Town of Carmel recognizes a unique opportunity in downtown Mahopac not just to create a commercial hub that is regionally competitive, but a place that can serve as the bedrock for building new

local communities. Having a place to call home, a place to work, and a place to socialize are all essential components for tightly-knit communities, and Carmel's unique geography south of Lake Mahopac presents the chance to host all three types of places in one compact downtown.

The work that the Town has put forth already, breaking ground on infrastructure and quality-of-life projects while also engaging with residents every step of the way, showcases the commitment of project leaders to the goal of downtown revitalization as well as the confidence they share that local investments can produce substantial results. Furthermore, the Town's High Quality Aa1 rating from Moody's showcases the efficacy and expertise of the Town in seeing this project through to its conclusion.

Carmel, like so many municipalities, has had to endure unprecedented challenges throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, often tackling complicated problems without clear precedent to guide decision-making. Carmel's ability to endure financial hardship while prioritizing public health is reflected in the socioeconomic vibrancy that is present in downtown Mahopac today and serves as a testament to the stewardship of local leaders

The Lake Mahopac Hamlet stands to be a regionally significant point of interest not just for its geographic closeness to places like Westchester County, the State of Connecticut, or New York City, but also as the seat of Putnam County. This status as a regional center has helped Mahopac Hamlet survive turbulent economic times, but with proper investment those strengths can be the bedrock upon which the downtown can truly prosper. The Town of Carmel appreciates your consideration in this region's DRI application.