

## 2021 DRI Application

Applications for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) must be received by the appropriate Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) by **4:00 PM on September 15, 2021** at the email address provided at the end of this application.

### BASIC INFORMATION

- REDC Region                   **Mohawk Valley**
- Municipality Name       **Village of Cooperstown**
- Downtown Name       **Rebuilding a Tourism Base: Hitting a Grand Slam**
- County Name           **Otsego**
- Applicant Contact(s) Name and Title

**Ellen Tillapaugh, Mayor**

**Cynthia Falk, Trustee/Deputy Mayor**

- Applicant Contact(s) Email Address and Secondary Email Address

[etillapaugh@cooperstownny.org](mailto:etillapaugh@cooperstownny.org)

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Jenna Utter, Village Clerk, [jutter@cooperstownny.org](mailto:jutter@cooperstownny.org)

### VISION FOR DOWNTOWN

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

Continuing the dynamic improvements already underway on the Village of Cooperstown's Main Street and Downtown area, we envision increasing the access from Main Street to Lake Otsego, providing support for businesses to attract more year-round business activity and to improve their facades, enhancing municipal infrastructure to foster improved commercial and residential quality, ensuring walkability and accessibility, and assisting in the creation of downtown apartment-style housing.

### 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.*

Why the Village of Cooperstown?

The Village of Cooperstown is known nationally as the location of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. Cooperstown is an economic engine for the Mohawk Valley region. The Cooperstown name is one that benefits surrounding communities, with employment, lodging, and experience opportunities. To give just a few examples, "Cooperstown Baseball World" and "Cooperstown All-Star Village" are baseball camps located in Oneonta, 22 miles to the south,



stimulating that community's restaurant and lodging industry. In the same vein "Cooperstown Dreams Park" and "Cooperstown Inn & Suites" are physically located 4 miles to the south in Hartwick Seminary. A new hotel being built in the Town of Hartwick will be named the Cooperstown Hampton Inn, and in its application for a 4-story hotel cited the nearby availability of the Cooperstown Fire Department aerial ladder truck. These are just a few examples of businesses created or soon to be created, which all capitalize on the tourism phenomenon that is Cooperstown and the resources provided by the Village.

The 2021 MVREDC Annual Report recognizes that during the pandemic the tourism industry took an incredible hit. It is estimated that New York State suffered a \$150,000 million dollar loss in tourism revenue. The impact on the Village of Cooperstown was significant, with close to \$1 million in losses (from our major funding streams of paid parking, as well as Doubleday Field rentals) during the 2020 and beginning of the 2021 summer seasons. One million dollars represents nearly 28% of the Village's annual general operating fund. At a time when we are undertaking significant improvements to the Doubleday Field complex, we had no Field rental income. As a Village, we cannot create a local sales tax and are reliant on sales tax funds shared and distributed to all municipalities in Otsego County. One million dollars spent on our Main Street provides just \$363.36 in sales tax revenue to the Village, in marked contrast to the millions in infrastructure we maintain and provide to support that tourism industry. In a non-pandemic year, our main source of revenue, paid parking during the summer months, can gross \$450,000. In 2020, we experienced a 75% loss in that funding stream alone.

Over the next two years, the federal American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) will provide \$11 million to Otsego County. The Village's largest tourist attraction, the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, which was closed for four months in 2020 and cancelled the Classic Game and the Induction Ceremony, is receiving \$4.7 million this year from the federal Shuttered Venue Operators Grant.

Unfortunately, the Village of Cooperstown was not eligible for any of the federal relief programs instituted early in the pandemic. With a 2019 population estimate of 1,754, the Village is defined as a Non-Entitlement Unit (NEU), a community with a population of less than 50,000. The ARPA, which includes NEU's, is the only program for which we are eligible. In August 2021, the Village received one half of our \$179,165 allotment (\$89,582.50). Obviously a funding program based solely on population does not take into consideration the uniqueness of Cooperstown as a tourism engine for the region, the Village's losses in revenue, or the unique infrastructure requirements of a small community that supports hundreds of thousands of visitors in a non-pandemic year. No other Village of our size and population has to provide equivalent infrastructure needs, while being limited in its revenue-raising ability.

An ESD investment in the Cooperstown community will provide benefits far beyond the Village's borders, will receive national recognition, and will be transformative in reinvigorating New York's tourism economy.

The DRI boundary was chosen to capitalize on our historic downtown and significant improvements in the past few years, which make it ripe for further projects that can address arts programming, recreational enjoyment, business expansion, and housing development.

The DRI boundary includes the Village Hall with the Village Library and the Cooperstown Art Association, the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, numerous businesses as well as several vacant buildings, two municipal parks, Doubleday Field, the Otsego County courthouse and office complex, undeveloped land, and parts of Railroad and Grove streets with room for greater commercial growth.

During the public engagement process initiated as part of the 2016 adopted Comprehensive Plan, many members of the local community identified priority concerns that could be resolved by projects within the DRI area, including:

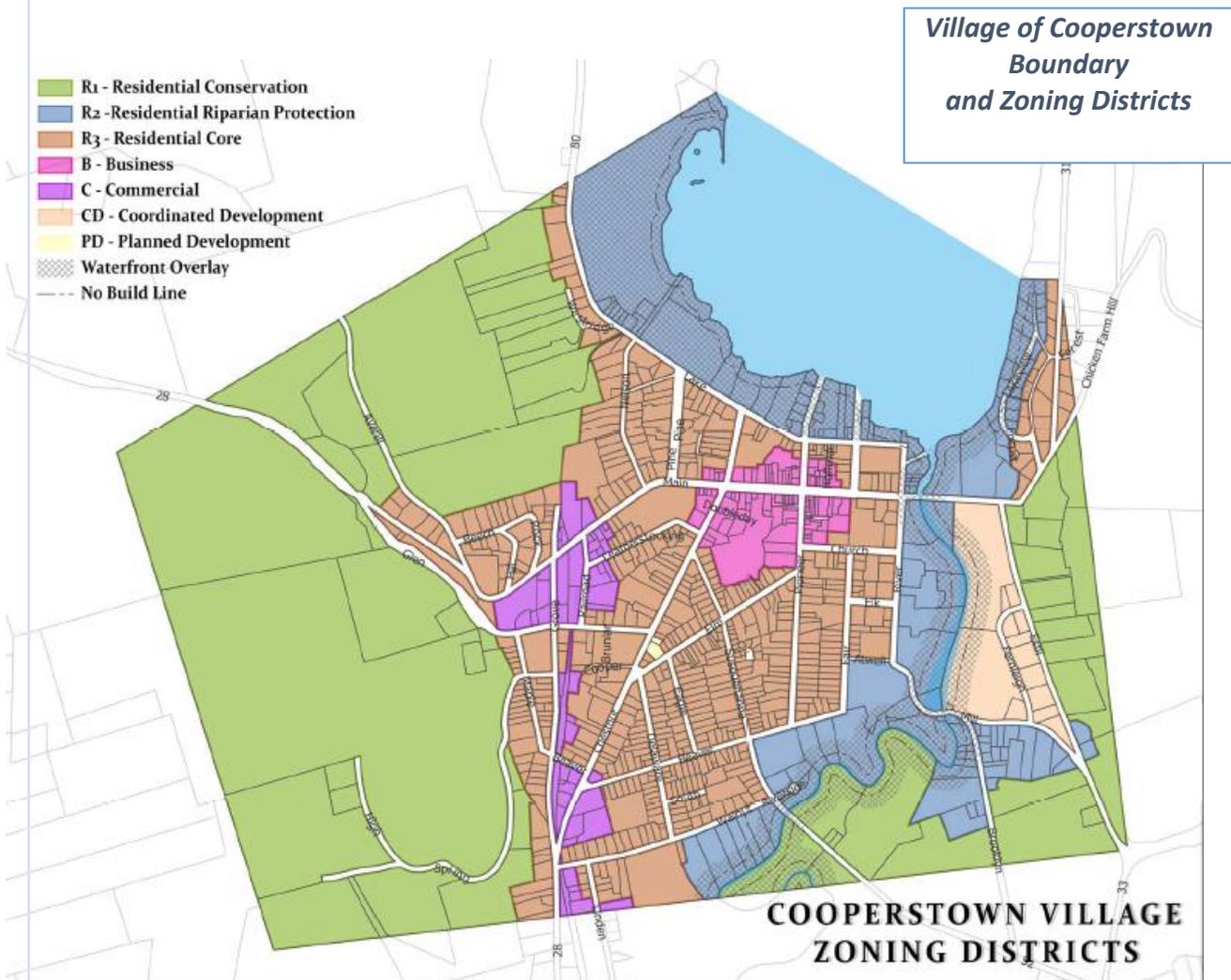
- 1) make the Village Hall a community anchor
- 2) link existing neighborhoods, open space, and recreational areas
- 3) further enhance the viewshed from Main Street to Otsego Lake
- 4) explore feasibility of mixed-use development in the vicinity of Doubleday Field
- 5) ensure greater business diversity for year-round shopping
- 6) encourage development of apartment style housing

Over the past five years, the Village has been focused on those priorities. Prior to submitting this 2021 DRI application, we held discussions with representatives from the Baseball Hall of Fame, Bassett Hospital, and local non-profits including our Farmers' Market. In addition, an online *Priorities for Cooperstown* survey was conducted to determine which Comprehensive Plan actions remain important to our community in 2021 and to see if new priorities, which were not considered in 2016, have emerged. This DRI application is fully supported and driven by the community, ensuring successful implementation of any awarded funds.

**DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION**

1) **Boundaries of the proposed DRI area.** Detail the boundaries of the targeted downtown area or neighborhood, keeping in mind that there is no minimum or maximum size, but that the area should be concentrated and well-defined. Neighborhoods beyond traditional central business districts are eligible if they can meet other criteria making them ripe for investment. Include a map that clearly delineates the area to be included in the downtown revitalization area.

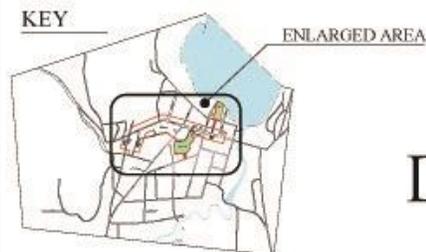
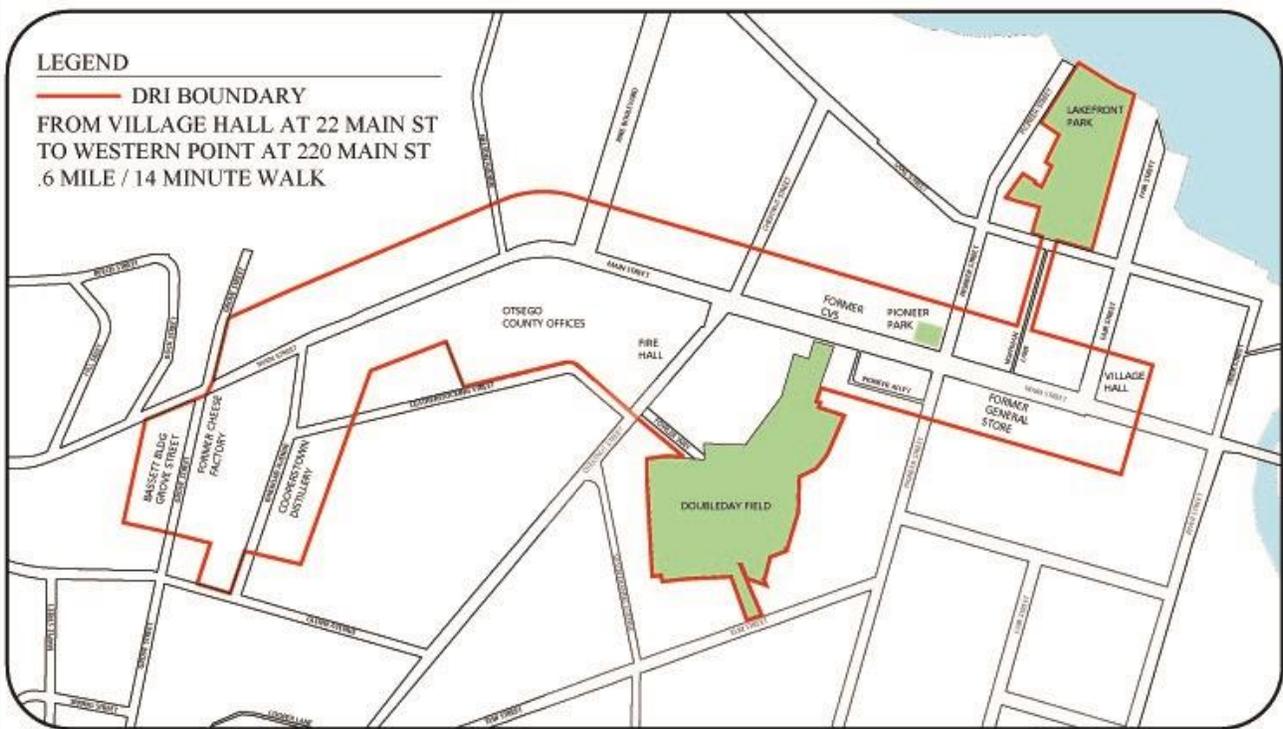
Small in area (1.8 square miles) the entire Village of Cooperstown is easily walkable from one end to the other, and also benefits from the seasonal use in the downtown area of attractive “trolleys” utilized by tourists and locals. The Village as a whole is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places as part of the larger Glimmerglass Historic District.



The proposed DRI area is compact and well defined, the heart of the Village’s business corridor. The boundaries of the targeted downtown area extend along Main Street from the Village Hall on Fair Street as the eastern-most point to Grove Street at the western end of Main, connecting our primary Business District and the developing area to the west. The boundary also includes areas adjacent to Main Street:

- (1) Lakefront Park located on the southern shore of Lake Otsego and Hoffman Lane
- (2) Doubleday Field and access lanes, Pioneer Alley and Fowler Way
- (3) undeveloped property (1.17 acres) on upper Main Street ideal for the creation of apartment-style housing
- (4) portions of Railroad Avenue and Grove Street

It is easily walkable from Village Hall at 22 Main Street to the western most point just beyond Grove Street, in approximately 14 minutes (.6 of a mile).



## Village of Cooperstown Downtown Revitalization Initiative

2) **Past investment, future investment potential.** Describe how this DRI area will be able to capitalize on prior private and public investment and catalyze future investments in the neighborhood and its surrounding areas. Describe recent planning efforts that support public and private investment in the proposed DRI area.

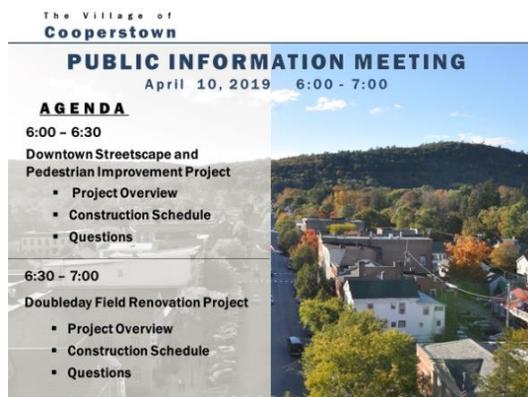
The industry of Main Street Cooperstown is tourism, and we in Village government recognize that and have worked hard over the past decade to maintain and improve our infrastructure so that visitors can enjoy their time in our community and businesses reliant on tourism revenue can flourish. Cooperstown is ideally poised to benefit from an infusion of funds for revitalization of the tourism economy and for downtown revitalization, having begun major renovations to our downtown pedestrian ways and our public infrastructure over the past several years with the help of state and federal funding as well as committed Village financing. The 2021 Annual Report of the MVREDC emphasizes rebuilding our communities with an emphasis on open air dynamics and advancing agribusiness infrastructure. These are elements the Village of Cooperstown has been focused on and with DRI funding can advance even further.

**PAST INVESTMENT – BASES LOADED**

The **2013-14 EFC Green Innovation Grant Program (GIGP)** allowed for the rebuilding of sidewalks, creation of rain gardens, and other amenities to improve the downtown experience from Main Street’s eastern anchor at Village Hall west through the core of the business district.

A DEC grant funded the installation in 2018 of two **EV charging stations** in Doubleday Field parking lot.

A \$2.6 million dollar project, with Village and federal TEP funding for **Downtown Pedestrian Improvements**, began in the fall of 2018, and was completed in 2020. Providing more accessible sidewalks, pedestrian-safe street crossings, bike amenities, a water bottle fill station, and the addition of decorative lamp posts, benches and even solar powered compacting trash receptacles. These physical improvements have rejuvenated and extended our downtown.



An ESD award for **Village Hall** in 2016 has allowed projects to begin to revitalize that space, which also houses the Village Library and Cooperstown Art Association. Work to date has included window restoration on the main floor, with additional funding contributed from the Library Construction Fund. All approvals and funding are in place for replacement of the Village Hall elevator ensuring improved accessibility to our historic 1898 municipal building. A 2018 grant award from the OPRHP for the restoration of the skylights in the much-used community space, the ballroom, is now underway and will re-establish an environmentally friendly, passive cooling system.

The first two phases of the Village's \$6 million in improvements to the historic **Doubleday Field** complex are now complete. Funded by the Village with DASNY and ESD support, the first phase, featured a redesign of the entrance to Doubleday from our Main Street with accessible pathways for all, and the second phase featured renovation of the historic 1939 grandstand.



Work is underway on the construction of the 3<sup>rd</sup> base building, which will provide 19 public bathrooms (including much needed accessible facilities), locker rooms and storage space, and is scheduled for an early summer 2022 completion date. Additional funding is being secured for the accessible bleachers.



The Village is in the final steps of completing a replacement and upgrade of our **Waste Water Treatment Plant** to increase capacity and meet more stringent environmental standards. This \$9.1 million infrastructure improvement began in the summer of 2019 and will be completed this month. Funding has been provided by DASNY, CWIA/EPF Water Quality Improvement Project Grant, and the Environmental Facilities Corporation, in addition to user fees.

An agreement with MID-TEL of Schoharie County, funded through an ESD award, will soon have **Wi-Fi hotspots** on Main Street utilizing units installed on the Village's lampposts.

A 2018 OPRHP grant has funded the design and construction plan for an accessible **Viewing Platform** on the southern shore of Lake Otsego in the Village's Lakefront Park. A 2021 CFA was submitted to the Office of Parks and Recreation to fund the construction of the Platform.

In 2019 the Village funded a \$160,000 renovation of **Pioneer Park**, at the central corner of Main Street in our downtown. The improved design is fully accessible from Village sidewalks and has a stage for weekly Music on Main performances during the summer months.



The Village worked collaboratively with the Fenimore Art Museum to locate a **public mural** in Pioneer Park in order to advertise the Museum's exhibit, *Keith Haring: Radiant Vision* and to create a vibrant public art space. Plans are in place for a Wyeth-inspired mural in the park for 2022.

Following receipt of a nearly \$300,000 **Climate Smart Community Award** grant, the Village is right sizing a culvert along Willow Brook, which flows through the Village including through the Doubleday Field complex and is a tributary of Lake Otsego. This infrastructure improvement on

Grove Street will greatly reduce the risk of future flooding, and will allow the Village to promote future growth along the upper Main Street corridor without concerns arising from storm events.



Cooperstown Distillery on Railroad Avenue

Along that Willow Brook corridor, the Village has just completed its first **Community Development Block Grant**, which assisted the Cooperstown Beverage Exchange in building a 7000 square foot addition to its business and add 12 FT positions.

The Village, with federal funding, has further invested in the creation of a **Village Gateway** to the south of downtown, which includes a peripheral parking lot serviced by a “trolley” system to bring visitors to the heart of the designated DRI area.

All of these initiatives have been accomplished without an increase in the tax levy in the past eight budget cycles. Cost cutting and creating new revenue streams including paid parking on Main Street in the summertime and successful grant applications have allowed us to not burden our property owners. There are slightly over 800 tax-paying parcels in the Village. This careful stewardship of the Village’s finances has helped reinforce the community’s involvement in and acceptance of the numerous improvements.

## **FUTURE INVESTMENT POTENTIAL**

The Village’s efforts have already begun to pay off. Consistent private investment in Cooperstown can be seen from Bassett Healthcare and the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. Additionally, new investment has developed around the “beverage trail,” which centers on the Cooperstown Beverage Exchange on Main Street and the Cooperstown Distillery located on Railroad Avenue, all areas within the proposed DRI boundary. As already noted, the Distillery, with support from Otsego Now and sponsorship of the Village, utilized CDBG funding to assist in its significant building expansion and to support additional employment positions. Ultimately this support allowed them to increase their staff by twelve individuals.

With design plans complete, the construction of an accessible **Viewing Platform** in Lakefront Park will provide greater access to Otsego Lake for visitors and residents. Located just one block from the Village's Main Street via Hoffman Lane, this 2.6 acre dedicated park land has benefited from Village investment in floating boat docks, a boat wash station, and improvements to the Fish Road boat launch to provide greater recreational opportunities. The construction of an accessible platform will further improve access to Lake Otsego for all, particularly for non-boaters.

In the recent survey, providing better visual and pedestrian access to the waterfront was selected as one of the top three priorities under Recreation. The Viewing Platform will provide this accessibility.

The Village has applied for CFA funding to undertake a planning grant addressing stormwater concerns and necessary improvements to both **Hoffman Lane**, which links our Main Street to Lakefront Park, and **Pioneer Alley**, which links Pioneer Street to our Farmers Market and Doubleday Field. Improvements to Pioneer Alley were the number one (54.7%) priority indicated on our survey in the Infrastructure section.

Recently, a Village Housing Committee composed of community residents and Village Officials updated municipal zoning laws and regulations to ensure that nothing within the laws inhibits greater density of housing. A representative of Bassett Healthcare attended those sessions and provided a Housing Survey completed by Bassett staff. The survey indicates a great desire for employees to live closer to their place of work, preferably within walking distance, and a great demand for housing, both single family and apartment style within the Village itself. Bassett has confirmed that the availability of housing is a limiting factor in attracting and retaining professional staff and is moving forward with plans to identify and create more housing within the Village. Potentially, depending on negotiations, a property within the DRI boundary may be used for this **new housing**.

As a result of these zoning law revisions, the development of a 12-unit, **net-zero** apartment complex is underway on two adjoining properties, which have been under-utilized for nearly three decades. Located just a half block from Main Street, Chestnut Crossings is a project funded by private developers and is being promoted by the Glimmerglass Festival, which recognizes the need for apartment-style housing adjacent to our downtown for work force housing, not only for their staff but also others in our community.

Revisions to our zoning law, including the addition of **Planned Development Districts**, have encouraged economic development. The first PDD was created in 2018 for the Bank of Cooperstown and its expansion. The second PDD allowed for an expansion of the New York

Pizzeria to increase its kitchen and serving areas, as well as provide for more parking. These adjoining Districts have economically re-energized an area along the Route 28 corridor in the Village and both have expanded job growth.

Improvements at Village Hall will continue this year as second floor windows are repaired in order to ensure **energy efficiency and greater safety**, with protective metal work on the window exterior.

**3) 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.

Even during the pandemic Cooperstown proved to be an economic engine for Otsego County tourism, as agencies promoted the outdoor recreational aspects of the Village. In particular, Destination Marketing Corporation for Otsego County (DMCOC), whose website is [www.thisiscooperstown.com](http://www.thisiscooperstown.com), recognizes and utilizes the Village's drawing power related to abundant natural resources in its marketing campaign. Pre-pandemic in 2019, DMCOC documented 3,440 tourism jobs with a total of \$97,941,000 in tourism wages in Otsego County. DMCOC has determined that 14.6% of all jobs in the county are directly or indirectly dependent on tourism.

In addition to businesses and careers associated with the tourism industry, the Village of Cooperstown itself offers a variety of employment offerings, from highly skilled to seasonal entry-level positions. These include professionals employed in the fields of law, accounting, banking, education, and marketing. Our largest employer, Bassett Healthcare, employs approximately 3000 individuals on its Cooperstown campus alone.

In addition, our community has experienced job growth related to the food and beverage industries. The number of restaurants in our downtown has increased. Existing coffee shops and businesses have expanded to meet growing demand. As noted previously, with the assistance of the Village and a Community Development Block Grant, the Cooperstown Distillery has tripled its production and storage space and added 12 new jobs.

In many respects, job growth is limited not by employment opportunities but by the lack of housing opportunities within our community. Bassett Healthcare is in constant need of nurses, but the lack of affordable, year-round housing within the Village limits the desirability of working in Cooperstown. In particular, there is a great demand for apartment-style housing, which could be used by single professionals as well as older Village residents who wish to no longer be burdened by maintenance of a three- or four-bedroom home. The creation of

apartments or townhouse facilities would therefore free up additional housing stock within the Village.

- 4) Quality of Life.** 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.



Cooperstown is a fundamentally attractive and livable community, and it possesses numerous attributes that encourage locals, regional residents, and tourists to frequent it. The Village is often compared to a Norman Rockwell painting or a Christmas card scene. Cooperstown boasts natural beauty: the view of Otsego Lake and the surrounding hillsides from Lakefront Park is stunning. Cooperstown has also embraced the

preservation of its historic buildings and landscapes. The entirety of the Village is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places, and a local ordinance provides for architectural review of exterior architectural changes.

Cooperstown has more than just good looks, though. The Village is a cultural center with arts activities occurring year round. Downtown is anchored by the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum and is also home to the Cooperstown Art Association and the Smithy Center for the Arts. The Fenimore Art Museum and The Farmers' Museum are located just outside the Village's boundaries. Musical events, including the Cooperstown Concert Series, Glimmerglass Festival, Cooperstown Summer Music Festival, Lakefront Park Concerts, and performances at Brewery Ommegang and Doubleday Field cater to all tastes. Pioneer Park, located right on Main Street, features Music on Main performances to enliven our downtown scene.

Events keep Cooperstown lively through the year. Special offerings in the fall include the Pumpkin Glow on the porch of Village Hall, the Glimmerglass Film Festival, and the Rotary's Fall Fling in the Doubleday parking lot. In December, Santa prepares for the holiday season from his house in Pioneer Park. During February, the Village comes out of hibernation to venture downtown for Winter Carnival. Add to this two major Hall of Fame events, the Hall of Fame Classic over Memorial Day weekend and Induction weekend in July, both featuring happenings on Main Street and in Doubleday Field.

For residents of Cooperstown a wide variety of amenities make Cooperstown an extraordinary place to live. U.S. News and World Report ranked the Cooperstown Junior/Senior High School in the top 10 percent of high schools in New York. In 2018, 92% of Cooperstown's sixty-five graduating students received a Regents diploma and 55% earned a Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation as compared to the NYS average of 33% for the Advanced Regents. State statistics for Cooperstown are often skewed low by the fact that in some years 10% of students in a class avail themselves of a very active Rotary Foreign Exchange Program, spending a year abroad for cultural and international diversity. Those highly successful students are not included in state graduation data, which only measures a four-year cohort.



The Village of Community has a more diverse population than would be expected for a small, rural upstate community. Demographic data indicates our community is predominantly white (84%), with the balance composed of the following ethnicities: Asian (8%), black (4%), Hispanic (2%) and other (2%).

Village government has taken a leadership role in ensuring Cooperstown is a Welcoming Community. Policies and protections are in place for all residents, regardless of citizenship, sexual orientation, ethnicity or religious faith. In June 2019 the Village revised and readopted its Welcoming Community Resolution and incorporated that resolution as a cornerstone of

our 2021 Police Reform Plan, with its emphasis on Community Policing.

For those interested in a healthy lifestyle, the newly renovated Clark Sports Center offers a wide variety of activities from organized sports and classes, to tennis and squash courts for individual play, to lap swimming, to sports camps. Cooperstown boasts six public parks, including four with lake access. The Village is walkable, and biking is encouraged with "sharrows." Bassett Healthcare's presence in the Village ensures the availability of high-quality, state-of-the-art medical care.

For food aficionados, the year round Farmers' Market provides locally sourced, organic foods and products. Successful year-round restaurants provide varied cuisine within the business district.

Businesses in the Village benefit from an active Chamber of Commerce. Communications needs are met by private providers, with internet access and cell service being superior to many other

parts of the county. Public transportation includes national service (Trailways), regional service (OPT), and local “trolley” service.

**5) Supportive Local 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 that support livability and quality of life in downtown are not currently in place, describe near-term efforts by the municipality to create and implement such policies.

The Village of Cooperstown has been active in updating its zoning, tax, and other local laws to foster economic development and downtown revitalization. Those changes include:

- 2016 Adoption of the Village’s Comprehensive Plan for Downtown Revitalization
- Completion of *2021 Cooperstown Priorities* survey
- Adoption of 485-a (residential-commercial urban exemption) and 485-b (commercial, business, industrial real property) tax abatement
- Addition of a Planned Development District to the zoning code
- Redefining of permitted uses in the commercial district to include multiple family dwellings, mixed occupancy, restaurants, personal service shops, small-scale retail, offices, artist studios, and light manufacturing.
- Addition of mixed use as a permitted use in the business district
- Reduction/elimination of parking requirements for most uses in the business district
- Establishment of opportunities for outdoor dining on the street frontage for restaurants
- Certified Local Government status recognized by the State Historic Preservation Office
- Major revisions to the Sign Law to reduce clutter and aid in the approval process
- Adoption of Complete Streets Resolution
- Adoption of Climate Change Resolution
- Participation in Climate Smart Communities
- Revision of tourist accommodation regulations to ensure availability of year-round apartments and other housing options
- Loading zone survey conducted in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce that led to a streamlining of the local law related to deliveries
- Review of accessible parking to ensure compliance with federal guidelines resulting in minor changes to improve usage
- Adoption of 2020 revisions to the zoning law to allow greater density in residential areas including accessory dwelling unit style housing
- Property taxes held in check by identifying other revenue sources and streamlining Village operations

- Installation of bike racks, bike repair station, 51 street benches, and drinking fountains/water bottle filling stations
- Installation of two downtown EV stations

**6) 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. Characterize the commitment among local leaders and stakeholders to preparing and implementing a strategic investment plan.

This DRI application is predicated on our 2016 Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Revitalization Strategy, which was developed with a great deal of community engagement. More recently, an online survey was conducted for several weeks to assess any shift in priorities, especially as a result of the pandemic. Given concerns about COVID due to high transmission rates in Otsego County, an online survey provided the best means to encourage widespread public participation. The *2021 Cooperstown Priorities* survey responses further refined Village goals and confirmed resident support for work completed and proposed.

During the comprehensive planning process, the Village hosted five well-attended community events including the required public hearing. Community engagement included a brainstorming session, a charrette to explore the ideas generated, an open house for additional information gathering and a second open house to allow for input on a draft vision, goals, and recommendations. In addition, working with Elan Planning of Saratoga, tourists were interviewed during the busy summer season. These activities led to the adoption of our community-supported Comprehensive Plan in the fall of 2016. That plan has not sat on a shelf. Annually there are frequent references to and reviews of the Implementation Matrix.

Over the past several weeks, there were 116 respondents to our online survey, which summarized action items from the Comprehensive Plan and asked individuals to rank their top three choices in the various categories of neighborhoods, business and economic development, recreation, environment and sustainability, government, and infrastructure. Respondents were also asked to note anything they now saw as a priority that hadn't been considered when developing the Comprehensive Plan.

Many of the completed projects noted in this DRI application are a result of guidance from the Comprehensive Plan. More critically, the proposed transformative projects in this DRI application are further guided by our 2021 Priorities survey, with plan and survey responses

noted for the respective projects. All of these completed and proposed investments in our community have been well supported because they originate with community input.

In addition, the Village government consistently remains engaged with the public, especially those who live and work in or near the Main Street corridor. Projects to improve walkability, park access, environmental sustainability, and municipal infrastructure have led to regular public information sessions. These have increased awareness of village initiatives but have also allowed for more public engagement. During question and answer sessions, for example, one business owner requested that a tree not be planted adjacent to a loading zone, something the professional planners had missed.

Prior to submitting this application, discussion occurred with representatives from the Baseball Hall of Fame, Bassett Hospital, local non-profits, Otsego Now, the business community, and Chamber of Commerce. These discussions along with the goals outlined in the Comprehensive Plan and further updated with the online Priorities survey have dictated the scope of our DRI boundary and our proposed Transformative Opportunities.

**7) Transformative opportunities.** Describe opportunities to build on the strengths described above by providing a list of transformative projects that could 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). Projects may be public or private, and could address economic development, transportation, housing, and community development needs. Project descriptions should include demonstration of readiness, proposed cost and funding sources, and identification of the project sponsor. For private for-profit projects, DRI funds may not exceed 40% of the total project cost (with a 10% bonus available for projects that commit to meaningful carbon reduction goals, including full electrification and net-zero building performance). While DRI funding may be used to cover the entire cost of a public or not-for-profit project, leveraging of investment dollars from other sources (i.e., private, local, federal, or other state sources) is strongly encouraged.

Also identify any other transformative opportunities that may be explored during the planning process, such as reuse of vacant and developable properties and underutilized buildings; projects to address unmet needs in the downtown, including housing, retail, and community services; and activities that will build upon regional strengths and trends.

If a loan or grant fund is proposed, please identify who might be an appropriate entity with capacity to manage the fund. If candidate projects have been identified, please include them to demonstrate potential demand for the fund. Funds are typically capped at \$600,000.

## TRANSFORMATIVE OPPORTUNITIES -- HITTING A GRAND SLAM

Cooperstown's strengths are manifold – environmental beauty and recreational access, arts and cultural organizations, accessible healthcare, and community walkability. The proposed transformative opportunities build on those strengths and were developed to address goals and actions in the Village's adopted Comprehensive Plan & Downtown Revitalization Strategy and its *2021 Cooperstown Priorities* survey. Language and priorities in ***bold italics*** are taken directly from the Plan and Survey. Community members involved in this DRI application further refined these proposed opportunities.

Some of these opportunities can be implemented within one to two years of receiving a DRI as plans and groundwork are already in place. The larger projects, involving construction of a Public Safety building or an apartment complex would be long term.

### **Business and Economic Development**

- ***Create a vibrant atmosphere; outdoor dining, public art, music and entertainment (#1 priority; 58%)***
  - ***Market the Village to attract and recruit businesses (#2 priority; 43%)***
  - ***Market Cooperstown as a year round destination for tourists (#3 priority; 40%)***
- Provide a grant and/or no interest loan fund to support and improve Main Street facades, signage, and building upgrades. **\$ 600,000**
  - Hire a Main Street Manager to help market the Village of Cooperstown. The Manager would work with local businesses, recruit to fill vacant storefronts, and develop and implement an advertising campaign.

A major focus would be one large, 10,000+ square foot buildings on Main Street that is currently vacant and has been unused since 2018.



It is a privately held building that was rented for many years to the CVS company. In 2018, CVS constructed its own building at the south end of the Village. The prior building owners had little impetus to fill the space as they wanted to sell it. As a result, it is an empty, unattractive eyesore in the heart of the Village, just across Main

Street from the entrance to Doubleday Field. The property recently sold and the possibility

exists to work with the new owner to better market and utilize this retail space. A DRI award to the Village could provide incentive for the private owner to rethink the potential of this space, particularly if marketing assistance is provided to secure a year round business which would cater to local needs as well as being a tourist draw. This initial funding would spur future private dollars to redevelop the space. **\$ 500,000**

**Community Development/Municipal Infrastructure**

➤ ***Public Safety. Continue to ensure local law enforcement presence/actively recruit and support funding for volunteer fire service and EMS***

- Redevelop with a second story addition, the Village’s Fire Hall so that the Village Police Department can be located there, creating an integrated public safety complex. Currently the Police Department is in crowded quarters on the lower level of the Village Hall. Placing all the public safety services in one building, which is more visible in the community, would allow for shared services and greater efficiency.
- Create an Ambulance/Emergency Services Corps with the capacity to bill insurance for ambulance service. Enhance funding to provide remuneration to volunteer Fire Department personnel. **\$ 2,500,000**

**Recreational Facilities and Programming**

➤ ***Further enhance the viewshed and access to Lakefront Park from Main Street***

- Re-develop, one-block long Hoffman Lane to connect Main Street to Lakefront Park.



Hoffman Lane from Main Street



Lakefront Park as accessed from Hoffman Lane

- Provide for greater access to Lake Otsego by constructing a Viewing Platform in Lakefront Park. These projects have shovel ready plans in place (Viewing Platform) or design and planning projects are underway (Hoffman Lane).



Proposed Fishing and Viewing Platform

\$ 2,200,000

➤ ***Improve Pioneer Alley access to the Farmers Market and as a connector to Doubleday Field (#1 Infrastructure priority; 54.7%)***



Pioneer Alley, looking towards Doubleday Field

- Re-develop Pioneer Alley to link newly renovated Pioneer Street to businesses, the Farmers Market and Doubleday Field. Provide visual improvements and ensure safe and accessible pedestrian access.

\$ 2,500,000

**Doubleday Field**

- *Provide a safe route for pedestrians from Main Street and Chestnut Street*
- *Market Doubleday Field as a baseball and multi-use event venue (#2 priority; 38%)*
- Create a pedestrian and vehicle safe pathway along Fowler Way. Construct an archway entrance from Chestnut Street similar to the one installed at the Main Street entrance.



Fowler Way entrance to Doubleday Field

**\$ 1,300,000**

- Complete the Doubleday Field renovations with the installation of accessible bleachers along the 3<sup>rd</sup> base line. Significant and unexpected soil conditions following the 2019 removal of the 1950’s deteriorated concrete bleachers, required over \$620,000 in soil remediation, leaving decreased funding for the installation of bleachers. Following completion of the Doubleday complex, work with Destination Marketing or other agencies to market Doubleday Field rentals for events and games.

**\$1,000,000**

**HOUSING**

- *Encourage a mix of year-round housing types in a variety of price ranges, including rental housing options, to meet the needs of a wide range of Village residents, including families, seniors, and the workforce.*
- *Create more workforce housing (#2 priority; 57%)*
- The designated area provides opportunities for new housing development by rehabilitating and expanding existing structures, such as the former cheese factory. Village zoning allows for the creation of a PDD that would facilitate development other than single-family houses on sizable lots by allowing for higher density. Bassett Healthcare has conducted a housing survey with employees that suggests apartment and townhouse-style housing at reasonable

prices is in high demand and that employees would prefer to live closer to work in the Village if such options were available.

**\$ 3,000,000**

- Assist the development of the upper floors on Main Street buildings to serve as office and housing spaces. Provide assistance including low interest loans and grants, to building owners to meet necessary safety upgrades.



**\$ 1,000,000**

**8) Administrative Capacity.** Describe the existing local administrative capacity to manage this planning and implementation initiative, including the ability to oversee contracts for awarded municipal projects using existing staff and resources.

The Village of Cooperstown has successfully completed both state-funded and federally-funded projects including the Gateway project (FHWA), downtown GIGP project (NYS EFC) and EV charging stations (NYS DEC) as well as Village Hall improvements (SAM/DASNY), Main Street TEPP project (FHWA), WWTP replacement and upgrades (SAM/DASNY; NYS EFC), and Village Hall renovations (NYS ESD, OPRHP) are underway. These projects total over \$30 million in municipal improvements, and all have been capably handled by Village administrative staff.

The Village's Superintendent of Public Works, Mitch Hotaling, is a fourteen-year employee with the Village. He is capably handling all reporting requirements associated with the NYS Grants Gateway, as well as with ESD submissions.

Jenn Utter, Village Clerk, has overseen and completed submission requirements on several village grants, including all of the DASNY funding. She is well versed in state and local contract policies and other requirements for state funding, and she has a proven ability to manage multiple contracts simultaneously. She is assisted by Marcia Nye, Deputy Village Clerk, a recent hire whose professional experience prior to moving to Cooperstown has allowed her to rapidly become a valuable and contributing staff member. Marcia will be attending the NYCOM training for municipal clerks and is eagerly augmenting her knowledge and training.

Accurate financial accounting is handled by Village Treasurer Deborah Guerin who was recently recognized as a credentialed finance officer by the New York State Society of Municipal Finance

Officers and will be receiving a commendation at the upcoming NYCOM meeting. She is assisted by Deputy Treasurer, Kathleen Caffery.

In February 2020 Moody gave the Village of Cooperstown an Aa3 rating reflecting the village's consistently balanced operations and strong reserves and liquidity. It also reflects Cooperstown's moderately sized tax base and fiscally responsible budgeting.

The Village annually audits its financial records to ensure compliance with all OSC requirements as well as federal grant requirements, and in 2019 completed a federally required audit for funding relative to the FHWA grant.

In addition to administrative staffing, the elected officials of the Village of Cooperstown have demonstrated the ability to work amicably with partnering organizations to ensure successful implementation of projects and programs. The Cooperstown community itself has proven with prior initiatives to have a high level of civically engaged residents with the commitment and energy for community involvement and service.

The individuals who were instrumental in the creation of this application, and who represent Village government, Main Street businesses, arts & business organizations, non-profits, the Baseball Hall of Fame, Bassett Hospital, and the tourism industry will form the nucleus of the Local Planning Committee (LPC). They will be augmented by other stakeholders as needed, all assisted by consultants and state planners.

**9) Other.** [Provide any other information that informs the nomination of this downtown for a DRI award.](#)

As a village of limited geographic area, \$10 million has the potential to be truly transformative for Cooperstown in a way it would not be for a larger city. Yet little Cooperstown receives national and international attention. Cooperstown welcomes tourists from around the nation and around the world. National news media know the village. Cooperstown will shine a spotlight on this program in a way other communities cannot.

The pandemic created significant economic losses to the tourism industry and the Village of Cooperstown. Despite that fact that funds from the ARPA will replace less than 10% of Village revenue losses, we have proven we can capably manage multimillion projects and provide results. DRI funding will reinvigorate a small community, and consequently provide robust support to the tourism industry.

## **SUBMISSION**

Applications from interested communities must be submitted electronically to the relevant Regional Economic Development Council at the email address in the table below. Proposals for areas within New York City must be sent to the relevant Office of the Borough President, which will select two applications for submission to the NYC Regional Economic Development Council.

- Capital Region [NYS-CapitalDist@esd.ny.gov](mailto:NYS-CapitalDist@esd.ny.gov)  
Counties: Albany, Columbia, Greene, Saratoga, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Warren, Washington
- Central New York [NYS-CentralNY@esd.ny.gov](mailto:NYS-CentralNY@esd.ny.gov)  
Counties: Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga, Oswego
- Finger Lakes [NYS-FingerLakes@esd.ny.gov](mailto:NYS-FingerLakes@esd.ny.gov)  
Counties: Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates
- Long Island [LIREDC@esd.ny.gov](mailto:LIREDC@esd.ny.gov)  
Counties: Nassau, Suffolk
- Mid-Hudson [NYS-MidHudson@esd.ny.gov](mailto:NYS-MidHudson@esd.ny.gov)  
Counties: Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, Westchester
- Mohawk Valley [NYS-MohawkVal@esd.ny.gov](mailto:NYS-MohawkVal@esd.ny.gov)  
Counties: Fulton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Oneida, Otsego, Schoharie
- North Country [NYS-NorthCountry@esd.ny.gov](mailto:NYS-NorthCountry@esd.ny.gov)  
Counties: Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence
- Southern Tier [NYS-SouthernTier@esd.ny.gov](mailto:NYS-SouthernTier@esd.ny.gov)  
Counties: Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins
- Western New York [NYS-WNY-REDC@esd.ny.gov](mailto:NYS-WNY-REDC@esd.ny.gov)  
Counties: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Niagara
- New York City - Submit to the appropriate office below.
  - Bronx: James Rausse at [JRausse@bronxbp.nyc.gov](mailto:JRausse@bronxbp.nyc.gov)
  - Brooklyn: Josh Levin at [JoshuaLevin@brooklynbp.nyc.gov](mailto:JoshuaLevin@brooklynbp.nyc.gov)
  - Manhattan: Elka Morety at [EMorety@manhattanbp.nyc.gov](mailto:EMorety@manhattanbp.nyc.gov)
  - Queens: Shurn Anderson at [SAnderson@queensbp.org](mailto:SAnderson@queensbp.org)
  - Staten Island: Lashay S. Young at [LYoung@statenilandusa.com](mailto:LYoung@statenilandusa.com)